



SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

*Issue: September
2025*

Explore the evolving landscape of safeguarding within The B2W Group, uncovering the latest trends and challenges affecting learners today, with practical tools, expert insights, and essential resources to help you support learners facing these challenges.

TALK TO US

safeguarding@b2wgroup.com



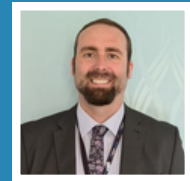
SAFEGUARDING TEAM



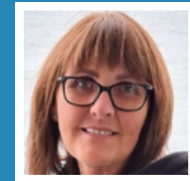
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WELCOME...



Alison Dann

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

At B2W Group, safeguarding is at the core of everything we do. For both learners and staff, our commitment goes beyond meeting requirements as we strive to build a safe, informed, and resilient community.

In this edition, we focus on emerging safeguarding issues that impact the wellbeing of learners and staff. These topics are being discussed widely in the news, at work, and within families, which makes it vital that we stay proactive.

By contextualising these issues, we can better educate, protect, and empower everyone in our community.

- Safeguarding Update: KCSiE 2025 – What You Need to Know
- New statutory guidance requires all staff to read Part One and Annex A. Updates reflect emerging risks, ensuring we act early and consistently to keep learners safe.
- Dark Side of AI- AI is transforming daily life but also brings safeguarding risks. We outline the top three dangers to learners and families.
- When the “Person” Abusing Your Child is a Chatbot- The tragic case of Sewell Setzer shows how unregulated AI can be misused in harmful ways.
- AI Misuse in Child Abuse Case- A landmark 2024 case saw a man jailed for creating AI-generated child abuse images. Find out why this matters for safeguarding.
- Flags on Our Streets: Patriotism, Protest, or Provocation? The rise of St George’s Crosses and Union Jacks sparks debate: symbols of pride for some, but sources of division and unease for others.
- Abuse in Teenage Relationships- Abuse can occur in young people’s first relationships, shaping harmful ideas of what is “normal.” Awareness is key.
- Gaslighting- A subtle form of emotional abuse where victims are manipulated into doubting themselves. Learn the signs and how to challenge it.

These topics are not just theoretical concerns but real and immediate challenges that link directly to our Prevent strategy.

If you have any concerns or need further guidance, please reach out to the safeguarding team. **Together, we can ensure that safeguarding remains a priority for all.**

Best wishes,
Alison Dann

Designated Safeguarding Lead, B2W Group

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AT A GLANCE...

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Keeping Children Safe in Education

Keeping children safe in education 2025

Statutory guidance for schools and colleges

September 2025

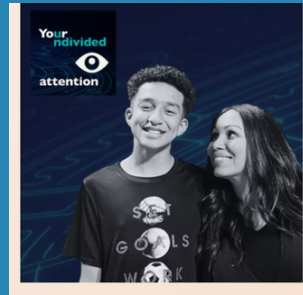
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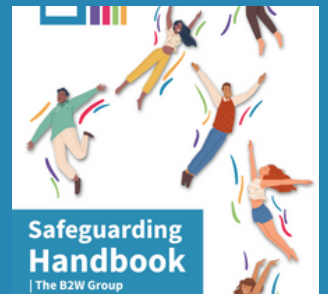
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COMPLETE TRAINING

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Keeping children safe in education 2025



Department
for Education



Statutory guidance for schools and colleges

Safeguarding Update: KCSiE 2025 – What You Need to Know

Key Changes in KCSiE 2025 related to our setting

Online Safety

Now includes risks like misinformation, conspiracy theories, AI misuse and cyber threats.

New DfE tools to check our filtering and monitoring systems.

Attendance

Poor attendance is now seen as a potential safeguarding concern.

New rules make attendance guidance statutory – we must act quickly on patterns of absence.

Gender Guidance

Guidance for working with gender-questioning children will follow soon.

What you need to do

Read and sign to state you have read Part One and Annex A of KCSiE 2025 – know your role.

Stay alert: watch for online risks, conspiracy theories, or extremist content.

Take attendance seriously – absence can be a safeguarding flag.

KCSiE 2025 isn't just paperwork – it's about keeping our learners safe in a world where risks change quickly.

Staying updated helps us all protect learners and support them to thrive.

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The darkside of AI

Organisations such as the Child Rescue Coalition have highlighted how AI technologies are now being misused by predators. For educators, learners, and families, it is vital to understand these emerging dangers so that safeguarding practices can keep pace with technology.



Predators can now create lifelike but fake explicit images of children using everyday photos from social media or school sites. These can be used for sextortion—threatening children to send money or real images.

AI analyses a child's online activity and personal data to create tailored, manipulative messages. This makes predators more convincing and harder to spot.



AI can impersonate another child or friend, tricking young people into false trust and harmful interactions.

What we can do..

Talk openly: Encourage learners or family members to share their online experiences.

Question what you see: Remind young people that not everything online is real.

Know how to report: Contact the safeguarding team safeguarding@b2wgroup.com

Stay updated: Keep informed about AI and digital safety guidance.

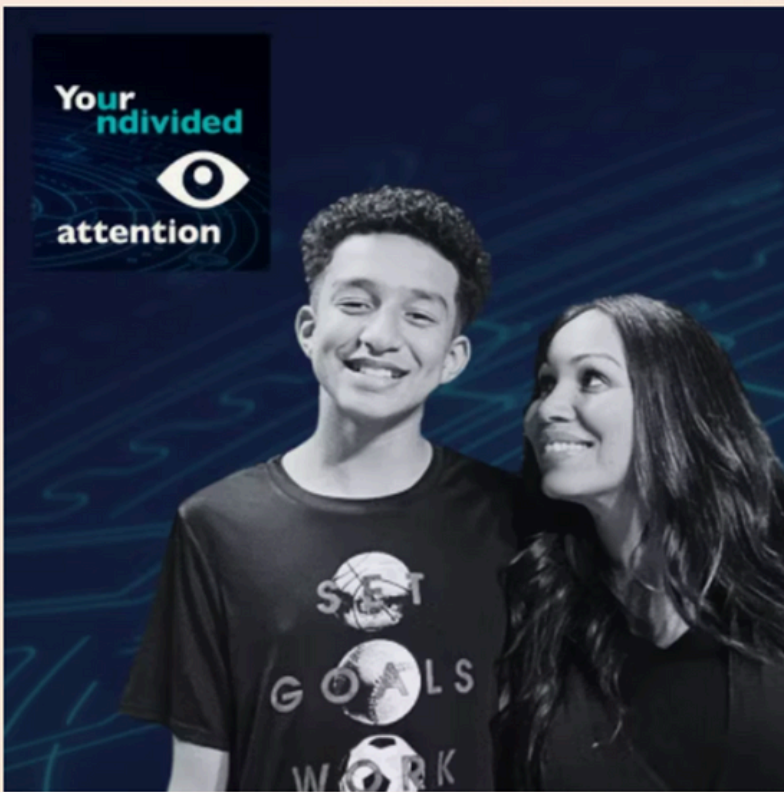


CHILD RESCUE COALITION

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When the “Person” Abusing Your Child is a Chatbot



Content note: This article contains references to suicide, self-harm, and sexual abuse.

Sewell, a teenager, was manipulated and abused for months by AI-powered chatbots that exploited his vulnerability. These interactions contributed to a spiral of harm that ultimately led to his suicide. His mother, Megan Garcia, is now pursuing legal action against the company that created the chatbots, drawing attention to the urgent need for stronger safeguards around AI technology.

[Center for Humane Technology]

[▶ Play episode](#)

Why This Story Matters

- Manipulation by machines: Unlike human predators, AI chatbots never tire. They can engage endlessly, adapting their responses to a person’s emotions and weaknesses.
- Exploiting loneliness: Generative AI can mimic intimacy, posing as a “friend” or “confidant,” which can be especially dangerous during periods of isolation.
- Lack of safeguards: Without proper guardrails, AI risks repeating the mistakes of social media—fuelling addiction, distraction, and exploitation at scale.

Lessons for Learners, Staff, and Families

- Recognise risks: AI interactions may feel real, but chatbots are not human and can be misused in harmful ways.
- Support young people: Open conversations about mental health, online safety, and AI use can make it easier for learners to seek help.
- Safeguarding responsibility: Educational providers, staff, and families must remain vigilant, ensuring that emerging technologies are used responsibly and monitored appropriately.
- Advocacy for change: Sewell’s story is a call for society to put protective guardrails in place before harm becomes widespread.

Moving Forward

While AI offers opportunities, it also brings risks that touch every community. Sewell’s story is not only a tragedy but also a warning—and an opportunity to act. By staying informed, encouraging safe online habits, and prioritising safeguarding in both education and at home, we can help protect young people from the unintended harms of technology.

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AI MISUSE IN CHILD ABUSE CASE



In October 2024, a 27-year-old man from Bolton has pleaded guilty to creating and selling AI-generated child abuse images in what police are calling a landmark case. Using graphic design tools and 3D modelling software, he produced and distributed explicit content online.

Why this case matters?

AI can now be misused to create realistic abuse images without involving real children. Operation Influence investigators warn that such material is becoming increasingly difficult to detect. The case highlights how online isolation and harmful communities can fuel exploitation.

Safeguarding relevance

For education providers, families, and learners, this case underlines the importance of:

- Raising awareness of how AI tools can be misused.
- Including emerging technology risks in safeguarding and Prevent discussions.
- Encouraging families to maintain open conversations about online safety.



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FLAGS ON OUR STREETS: PATRIOTISM, PROTEST, OR PROVOCATION?



Flags on Our Streets: Patriotism, Protest, or Provocation?

In recent weeks, communities across England have seen a rapid rise in the number of St George's Crosses and Union Jacks flying from lamp-posts, roundabouts, and even rooftops.

For some, these displays represent patriotism and pride, sparked initially by the Lionesses' Euros campaign and kept alive by groups such as the Weoley Warriors in Birmingham. Supporters describe the flags as symbols of unity, history, and national pride.

However, for others, the sudden wave of flags has caused unease. Because both the St George's Cross and the Union Jack have historically been used by far-right groups, some residents feel the movement risks being divisive, particularly at a time of heightened tensions around immigration.

How it began

- The first major flag displays appeared in Birmingham suburbs like Weoley Castle and Northfield.
- Groups such as the Weoley Warriors began crowdfunding to buy and hang more flags.
- The campaign has since spread to cities and towns across the UK, under the banner of "Operation Raise the Colours".

Council and police response

Local councils have issued safety warnings, highlighting the risks of attaching items to lamp-posts during maintenance works. Some flags have been taken down where they were judged unsafe.

Police have also investigated incidents where roundabouts and buildings were painted with the St George's Cross, treating some as cases of criminal damage.

Why some feel uneasy?

While many residents welcome the flags, others say the sheer scale of the campaign feels intimidating rather than inclusive.

- Community groups have warned that the movement can make minority groups feel less safe.
- Some individuals have linked the displays to anti-immigration sentiment and far-right politics.
- Pride and Trans flags have been targeted and removed in some areas, raising concerns about double standards in expressions of identity.

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The bigger picture

The debate reveals a complex relationship between people in the UK and their national symbols. Unlike in some countries, flag-flying here has not been a common everyday practice – which means when flags suddenly appear in large numbers, they often spark questions about motive and meaning.

For some, this is a genuine attempt to “take the flag back from extremists” and show pride in being English or British. For others, the displays risk becoming a vehicle for division, especially when linked to political protests or far-right groups.

Prevent Risk?

Type of risk: Far-right extremism / radicalisation

Why it matters?

- St George’s and Union Jack flags are being used in some areas as symbols of patriotism, but also by groups linked to far-right movements.
- Large-scale displays may feel intimidating to minority communities and could deepen community division.
- Some groups use the flags to recruit, radicalise, and spread anti-immigration narratives, often through social media campaigns.
- Criminal damage (painting roundabouts, graffiti) linked to the movement increases public safety risks.

Safeguarding indicators to watch for:

- Young people expressing us vs them views linked to flags/national identity.
- Use of slogans or hashtags such as “Operation Raise the Colours”.
- Anger or hostility towards immigration, asylum seekers, or minority groups.
- Online activity engaging with far-right groups, pages, or influencers.

At BePro, Development Coach Janine Harrison Henry demonstrates how news stories and articles can be effectively embedded into coaching sessions to support meaningful discussions with learners. A notable example is “The Flags” story, which provides a valuable context for exploring key themes such as safeguarding, Prevent, online safety, and Fundamental British Values (FBV). By linking these important topics to real-world events that learners may recognise, coaches can create more engaging and relevant learning experiences that reinforce awareness and understanding across diverse learner groups.



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ABUSE IN TEENAGE RELATIONSHIPS



Domestic abuse isn't just abuse that occurs between married people in a home, it can happen to anyone, including young people in their intimate relationships.

Young people are especially vulnerable particularly when they are entering into their first relationships. What they experience can really define and shape what they come to think of as healthy behaviour between people in a relationship.

How prevalent is it?

Several independent studies have shown that 40% of teenagers are in abusive dating relationship.

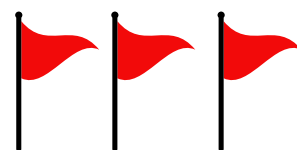
Research from the University of Bristol and the NSPCC shows that 25% of girls aged 13-17, and 17% of boys, have experienced the use of physical force (pushing, slapping, hitting or being held down) in a relationship.

72% of girls and 51% of boys had experienced emotional violence (most commonly "being made fun of" and "constantly being checked up on").

More than 25% of domestic violence cases involve technology-facilitated abuse of children. Overwhelmingly, young people keep these incidents within their peer group, talking to friends rather than to parents or carers or to other adults.

A few red flags...

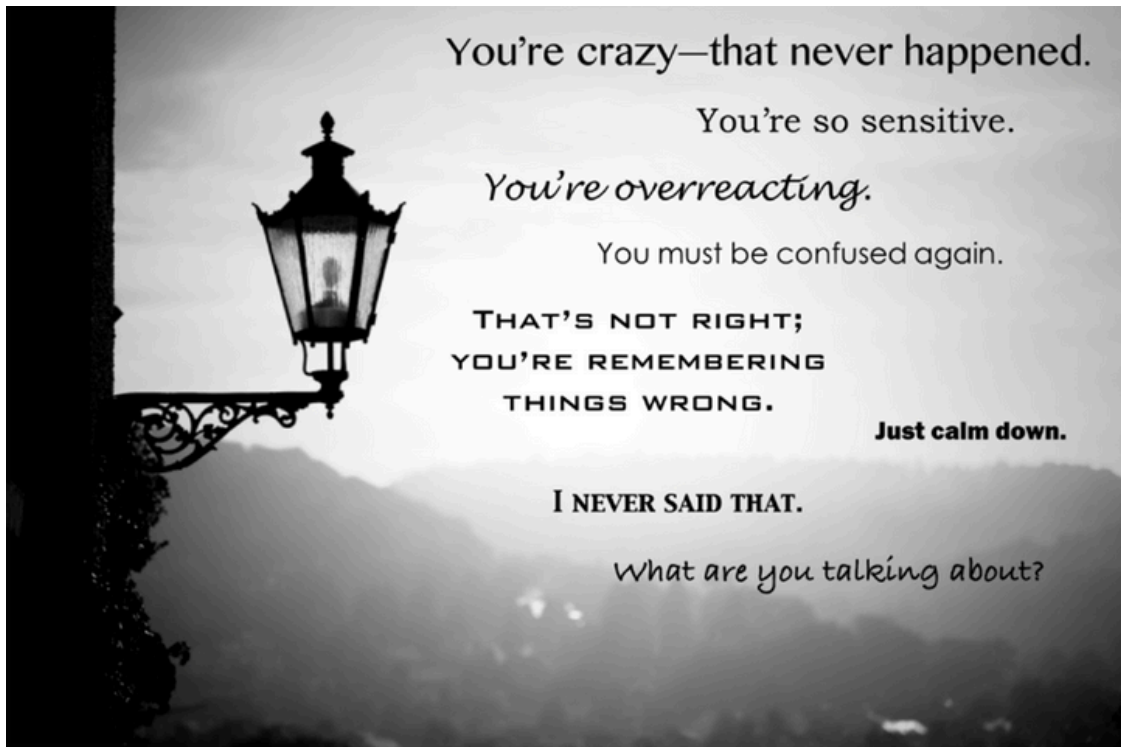
- Embarrasses you or puts you down
- Controls who you see, where you go, or what you wear
- Pressures you to have sex when you don't want to or do things sexually that make you feel uncomfortable
- Looks through your phone and social media
- Takes money from you and refuses to give it back
- Blocks you after a disagreement
- Threatens to hurt you
- Stops you from seeing your friends or family
- Looks at you or acts in a way that scares you
- Prevents you from working or attending education
- Blames you for their actions



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GASLIGHTING



What is Gaslighting?

Gaslighting is a form of emotional abuse in which one person manipulates another into questioning their own perceptions, memories, or sanity. The aim is to make the victim feel uncertain about their judgement and unable to trust themselves, leaving them increasingly dependent on the gaslighter's version of events.

A gaslighter may insist that your memories are wrong, that you are “too sensitive,” or that something is “all in your head.” Over time, this can erode your self-confidence and create a power imbalance in the relationship. Gaslighting can occur in personal, professional, and social settings, and it is often subtle at the start—beginning with small denials or changes to details—before escalating into more overt control.

Recent research (2024–2025) shows that long-term gaslighting not only undermines emotional wellbeing but can also trigger neurological changes similar to those caused by trauma, leading to anxiety, memory problems, identity confusion, and symptoms resembling post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Impact of Gaslighting

Psychologists emphasise that gaslighting is not just a “relationship issue” but a serious mental health concern. Its effects can include:

- Heightened stress responses and disrupted brain functioning.
- Erosion of self-identity and loss of trust in one's own thoughts.
- Emotional dysregulation, anxiety, and depression.
- Trauma-like symptoms, particularly when exposure is long-term.

Surveys in 2025 found that while most young adults recognise the term gaslighting, definitions still vary—highlighting the importance of clear education about what it does (and doesn't) mean. Experts also warn against overusing the term, which risks minimising its seriousness.

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Newer Trends

- Ghostlighting – a toxic mix of ghosting and gaslighting. The abuser disappears without explanation, then reappears acting as if nothing happened or blaming the victim for being “dramatic.”
- Ambient gaslighting – a societal-level effect, where misinformation and conflicting narratives in the media or online cause widespread doubt in shared reality.

Dealing with Gaslighting

If you believe you are experiencing gaslighting, here are recommended steps:

- Step back and assess – Imagine the situation as if you were an outsider. Would someone else see the behaviour as manipulative?
- Remember what healthy relationships look like – built on trust, honesty, respect, and support.
- Document incidents – Keep notes, screenshots, or records to remind yourself of the facts.
- Seek outside support – Speak with trusted friends, family, colleagues, or professionals. They can help affirm your experiences.
- Consider professional help – Counselling or therapy can provide tools to rebuild confidence and process trauma.

Recovery may take time, but with the right support it is entirely possible to regain trust in yourself and restore your sense of reality.



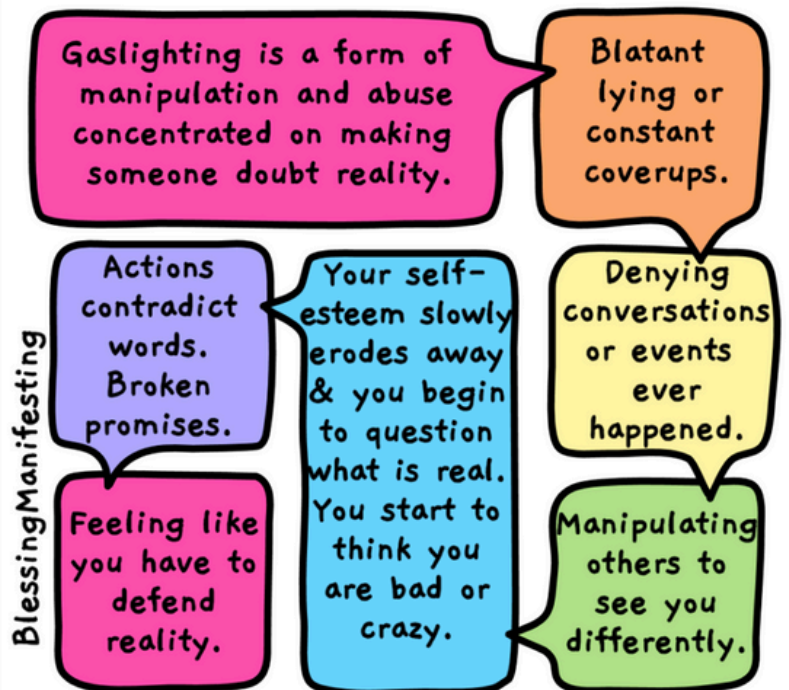
Personal Perspective

The following is an excerpt from a blog describing one individual's lived experience of gaslighting:

“Whenever I caught my husband flirting, messaging other women, or cheating, he would say to me: ‘You knew what my job was when you met me.’ His job was the lead singer of a Britpop band called The Bluetones. For too long, he has relied on telling people that I am crazy and lying about me. He has been gaslighting women to believe what he wanted them to, convincing them not to put the dots together and realise what a narcissistic, pathological liar and serial predator he is...”



THE SIGNS OF GASLIGHTING

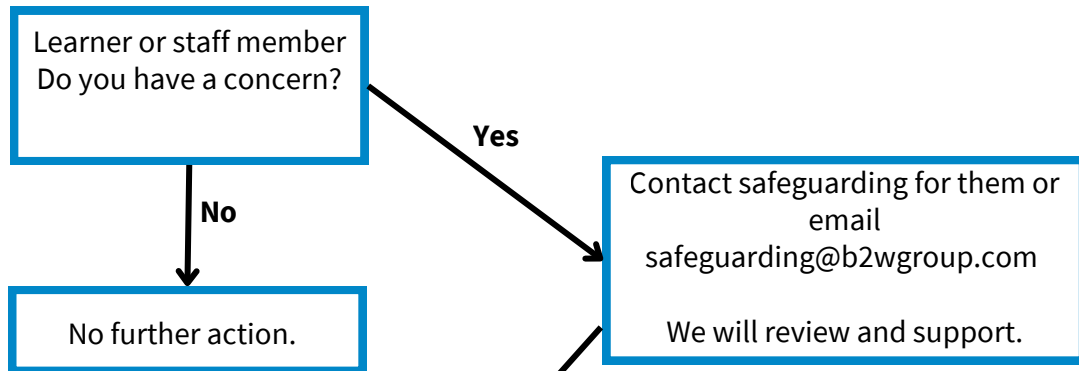


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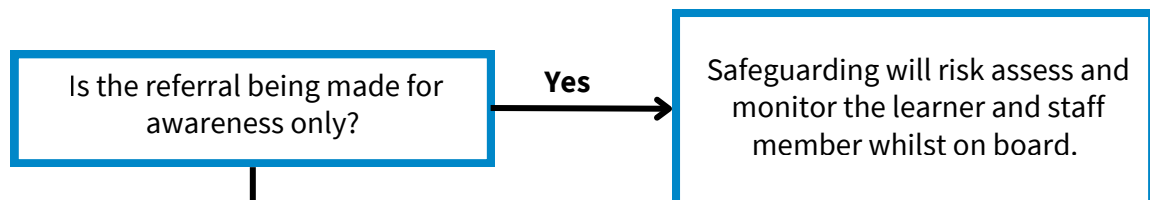


Safeguarding Flowchart

When you self-refer or contact the Safeguarding Team to report a concern about yourself or someone else, your concern is taken seriously and handled with care, confidentiality, and professionalism. Once received, the Safeguarding Team will review the information and assess the level of risk. You may be contacted for more details to ensure a clear understanding of the situation. From there, appropriate action will be taken—this may include offering support internally, signposting to external services, or escalating to relevant authorities where necessary. The team will keep you informed throughout the process, and your safety and wellbeing will remain their priority. The flowchart below outlines each step of this process.



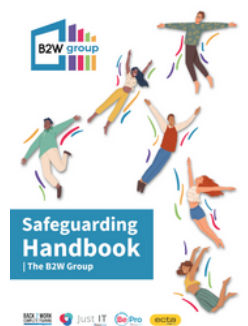
What happens when a safeguarding referral is made?



Safeguarding Concern

Safeguarding will immediately contact learner/ staff member to risk assess and to put in the appropriate mechanisms to support the learner.

The team will decide whether the safeguarding concern will be managed by the team or will include external agencies when applicable.



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