



Digital Advantage - Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Definition of Children and Young People

Children and Young People means children and young people up to the age of 18 years, those over 19 years who are receiving services as care leavers (young people who have been 'looked after' children), and those between 19 and 25 years with learning difficulties.

Statement of Values and Principles

Digital Advantage believes that:

- Our company has a duty of care to children and young people who participate in our activities.
- All children and young people should be encouraged to fulfil their potential and inequalities should be challenged.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children.

Designated Persons

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Rav Gehlon who can be contacted at 0161 210 2040 or out of office hours on 07801 542286.

Designated persons are those members of Digital Advantage who have specific responsibility for ensuring effective safeguarding and protection procedures. These include:

- Andy Lovatt
- Ezra Rushen

The role of the designated person is to:

- Receive and record information from staff, employers, apprentices or parents who have child protection concerns.
- Assess the information properly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate and consulting with senior colleagues if necessary.
- Consult initially with a statutory child protection agency to test out any doubts or concerns as soon as possible.
- If necessary, to make a formal referral to a statutory child protection agency without delay.

- Specialist advice and training is available to designated persons if required.

Code of Conduct

All Digital Advantage staff will:

- Treat all children and young people with respect.
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow.
- Ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others.
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned. Be aware that physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted.
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.
- Be familiar with Digital Advantage's harassment and bullying policy.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.

Staff must not:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour/make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people.
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts.
- Either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- Show favouritism to any individual.
- Rely on your good name or that of the organisation to protect you.
- Believe "it could never happen to me".
- Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.

Recruitment of Staff and Appointment of Contracting Personnel

In order to prevent as far as is reasonably practicable unsuitable people working with apprentices within the Digital Advantage's responsibilities, we will:

- Issue a copy of our Child Safeguarding Policy Statement to new starts
- All applicants for these posts will be asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children and **MUST** declare all previous convictions which are then subject to CRB checks, as well as any cases pending against them. All such information will be treated in confidence and will not be used against applicants unfairly.
- At interview for these posts, a question pertaining to good practice in Child Protection will be asked.
- Where required Enhanced DBS checks will be obtained by Digital Advantage for all new members of staff in these posts.

Training

Digital Advantage will provide suitable training to all active personnel in the organisation that is relevant to their particular role. This will include:

- Induction Training which includes familiarisation with the organisation's Child Safeguarding Policy
- Particular skills training
- Child Safeguarding Training is compulsory to all staff and Trustees.

Whistleblowing and Complaints Procedures

Personnel are encouraged to express any concerns they may have about a colleague's behaviour in relation to child protection.

In order to achieve this, staff are encouraged to share any such concerns with a designated person without delay; concerns will be treated seriously and in the strictest confidence.

Response Procedures

We recognise the importance of having clear procedures to enable staff to handle situations where an appropriate response is needed to a child protection concern.

How to respond to an apprentice disclosing abuse:

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully to what is said
- Find an appropriately early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Allow the individual to continue at his/her own pace
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the individual that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing what was said using the individual's own words as soon as possible – note date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
- Contact your designated person

REMEMBER: It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about a child.

Recording and Information Sharing

- An accurate note should be made of:
- Date and time of the incident or disclosure
- Parties who were involved
- What was said or done and by whom
- Any action taken by the organisation to investigate the matter
- Any further action e.g. suspension of a worker
- Where relevant, reasons why there is no referral to a statutory agency

- Names of persons reporting and to whom reported

The record should be clear and factual as it may be needed by child protection agencies investigating the incident and may, in the future, be used as evidence in court.

Reporting should be done using only the “Reporting Suspected Abuse” form below.

Confidentiality, and Retention and Storage of documentation

Personal information that is acquired or held in the course of working with apprentices should be treated as confidential and stored appropriately. Particular care should be taken with sensitive information.

The Data Protection Act 1998 which requires that information is obtained and processed fairly and lawfully; that it is accurate, relevant and not held for longer than is necessary; and kept securely.

Some Definitions

What is abuse? Government guidelines in Working Together to Safeguard Children categorises abuse as:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

What is physical abuse?

Physical abuse includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning or misuse of medications, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

What is emotional abuse?

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on that person’s emotional development. It may involve making the individual feel or believe that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. It may also involve causing the person to feel often frightened or in danger. It may involve exploitation or corruption.

What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or young person is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. Sexual abuse also includes non-contact activities such as involving children or young people in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Sexual abuse may be same sex or opposite sex, may be by other children, young people or adults. People from all walks of life may be sexual abusers.

What is neglect?

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's or young person's basic physical and or/psychological needs, likely to result in the severe impairment of the person's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child or young person from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults

Definition of a Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is someone who is aged 18 years or over who 'is or may be in need of community care services by reasons of mental health or other disability, age or illness' and 'is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'.

A vulnerable adult may be a person who:

- Has learning disabilities
- Suffers from mental illness
- Has a physical disability
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless
- Is in an abusive relationship
- Is in a Looked after Child (LAC)

It should be noted that disability or age alone does not signify that a student is vulnerable.

Abuse of Adults

Abuse can consist of a single or repeated act of harm or exploitation. It may be perpetrated as a result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance. Abuse can be verbal, physical, emotional, psychological, or a result of neglect or an omission to act. Abuse can also occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial arrangement or sexual relationship to which they have not, or could not, consent to or understand e.g. as a result of physical or mental incapacity. What to do if abuse is suspected

If abuse is suspected or reported, employees should act in line with local policies and procedures to:

Take steps to ensure the learner is in no immediate danger

- Contact the police if it is believed a crime may have been committed
- Obtain permission from the vulnerable person before disclosing confidential information about them
- Where appropriate, discuss concerns with the relevant manager or person responsible for overseeing the care of the vulnerable person.
- If, after discussion, abuse or neglect is still considered to be a possibility, referral should be made to the Social Services Department.

Reporting Suspected Abuse Form

<i>Name of child Age and date of birth</i>	
<i>Religion Ethnicity</i>	
<i>First Language Disability</i>	
<i>Any special factors? Parents/carers name(s)</i>	
<i>Home address and phone number (if available)</i>	
<i>Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else?</i>	
<i>Brief Description of what has prompted the concerns: include</i>	

<i>dates, times etc of any specific incidents.</i>	
<i>Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?</i>	
<i>Have you spoken to the child? If so, what was said?</i>	
<i>Have you spoken to the parent(s)? If so, what was said?</i>	
<i>Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details.</i>	
<i>Have you consulted anybody else? If so, give details.</i>	
<i>Your name and position:</i>	
<i>To whom reported and date of reporting:</i>	

Signature

Today's date