

## Safeguarding within work-based learning



**Acorn Training Consultants Ltd** is a private training organisation based in Derbyshire covering Apprenticeships and Train to Gain (TTG) delivery. In addition, within their Academy they offer Foundation Learning access to young learners from all areas of the local and wider community. There are 220 Apprenticeship and TTG learners along with 70 Foundation learners. The learner profile covers learners aged from 16 years to 60 years +. The centre works with young people and vulnerable adults. Delivery ranges from in-centre to delivery on employers' premises, comprising several different programmes. The learners are supported by the delivery team of 17 teaching staff; 8 learning support staff, along with maintenance and catering staff in the Academy.

### **Embedding safeguarding practices:**

The Operations Director, who has responsibility for Health and Safety (H&S) along with Equality and Diversity (E&D), attended the LSIS Facilitator and the Designated Person training events. The workshops prompted him to consider the changes that were needed to be put in place to ensure Acorn were embedding safeguarding practices and processes from recruitment through to the courses for learners and staff. The first point of call for the Operations Director was to brief the Human Resources (HR) and Quality departments on policy and procedure with regard to safeguarding. This started the journey towards a whole organisational approach (WOA) to change Acorn's policies and procedures to support the implementation of safeguarding.

### **Implementing the changes:**

Having undertaken the various LSIS safeguarding training, it became obvious that Acorn's organisational policies and procedures had previously been adapted in an ad hoc fashion and mapped against the Every Child Matters framework. This led to the organisation having many single policies which fed the belief that we were practising within the boundaries of compliance. The company has since gone through a major review of their safeguarding policies and procedures; this has resulted in the renewal of all policies and procedures across the spectrum, not only of Safeguarding - but also covering Health, Safety and Welfare, Equality and Diversity, Code of Conduct, Environmental Policy, IIP, IAG, etc.

In addition:

- Safeguarding is now a standard item on “key” meeting agendas including space to discuss issues and reflect on safeguarding and learner needs. The outcomes of these discussions feed directly to the yearly SAR and QIP processes.
- Job descriptions are currently being renewed to include a section to promote and facilitate safeguarding activities within the providers’ learning community.
- Additional staff have undertaken the LSIS Designated Person training. This ensures cover is available across the organisation.
- A short questionnaire was used to establish the starting points for staff with regard to delivery of safeguarding training by LSIS Facilitator-trained staff.
- Staff have committed to undertake safeguarding training as recommended in the continuing learning and development policy.
- All staff have been briefed on the changes to all policies and procedures including safeguarding.
- Acorn’s website has been revamped to include sections relating to safeguarding and as such is freely available to others who might use our services. This is regularly updated by activities that come from a variety of sources.

### **Noticing the impact:**

The LSIS safeguarding training has led to a more defined way of thinking. Acorn has found that by following guidelines they can promote changes more effectively. The changes have been in place for over 6 months and we are noticing a difference in the way staff are thinking about safeguarding issues. The policies and procedural changes and/or updates have been evident in the planning of future courses and delivery; the teachers are clearly thinking about how to include the learners and wider community participants.

Staff have raised safeguarding concerns with the designated person who in turn has allowed more debate and discussion. Within the Academy the learner voice mechanism has been redefined to include and develop safeguarding principles.

To date the following actions have taken place:

- Health, Safety & Welfare Policy updated
- Equality & Diversity Policy updated
- Employer Pack updated
- Employee handbook updated
- Learner handbook updated
- Learner induction booklet produced (new)
- Recruitment of learners updated
- Whistle blowing policy updated
- Code of Conduct produced (new)

- Safeguarding policy produced (new)
- Safeguarding procedures (new)
- Web-site updated
- Application process re-written and updated procedures for staff and learners

**Next steps:**

Staff development has still to be finalised with the commitment to train each member using the LSIS Facilitator resources planned over the next 6 months.

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