

Safeguarding at Adult Community Learning, Essex



Adult Community Learning (ACL) Essex is part of Essex County Council's Adult Health and Community Wellbeing directorate and has centres covering the whole of Essex. Courses are attended by approximately 30,000 part time learners aged from 16 upwards; also available are family learning programmes, where parents are taught skills alongside their children.

The curriculum covers a wide range of subjects from all subject areas and offers a variety of qualifications including work-based vocational courses. It is funded through the Skills Funding Agency, with additional funding to deliver neighbourhood learning in deprived communities. ACL employs approximately 1300 staff, 400 full-time equivalents of these are tutors.

Developing staff skills within the safeguarding agenda:

One of the five curriculum managers (CM) for the discrete provision for adults with learning disabilities felt that she would like to complement the adult safeguarding training that she had completed internally. She wanted to access training that was in more depth and in context with the role of tutors, managers and staff within the organisation. She attended the LSIS face to face facilitator's training and completed and passed the LSIS online safeguarding training. This gave her the resources, knowledge and approval from LSIS to offer face to face training within ACL.

Since completing this training, the curriculum manager has delivered face to face training to the tutors she manages and others within her curriculum area. She has encouraged and supported tutors and staff across the organisation to complete the LSIS online training. The knowledge and information that she gained from the training has also given her more confidence when liaising with the designated person (DP) and making referrals to the Safeguarding unit.

What has been the impact?

The curriculum manager was invited to join the ACL Safeguarding group, whose remit is to look at cross-service training and organisational procedures. Within this group she has a specific responsibility for representing specialist learning disability issues. She attends LSIS update meetings, which enable her to keep the group informed of changes and new developments. Her involvement in this group has meant that she has been able to assist by informing improvements in procedures and embedding safeguarding in the observation of teaching and learning both within the OTL handbook and proforma.

An example of how this training has really made a difference, is where a tutor was able to act effectively and promptly when a learner disclosed to them. The Curriculum Manager discussed the situation with the designated person, made the referral, and the process of taking out a SOVA (Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults from abuse), went ahead. This process resulted in action being taken which enabled the person to make informed choices, thus resulting in changes being made to

his circumstances, improving his quality of life. He is reported to be a changed person and described as happy and confident. The Curriculum Manager's training also meant that she had the confidence to support the tutor involved, who found the consequences of her referral quite challenging to have to deal with.

The Curriculum Manager is now working with LSIS to develop and pilot a safeguarding module for learners with learning disabilities. She intends to continue to be part of the organisations safeguarding task group with a responsibility for leading on safeguarding within the Learning Disabilities curriculum.