

Safeguarding in a work based learning provider



ProVQ Ltd is a Work Based Learning (WBL) training provider who works in partnership with leading vehicle manufacturers and the UK vehicle aftersales market to provide motor vehicle apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships on a national basis. There are approximately 500 fully employed apprentices, based throughout the UK, accessing apprenticeship training through ProVQ Ltd. ProVQ Ltd employ 43 staff, which consists of directors, managers, field-based assessment staff and administrative support.

Apprentices attend 24 weeks “off the job” training on a residential block release basis, at a specified training centre, over a three-year period. ProVQ, and its partners, have a duty of care to safeguard apprentices whilst away from home on block training and to ensure that their employers are aware of the safeguarding measures required whilst the apprentice is in the workplace.

Identifying the need:

The Learning Support Services Manager (LSSM) identified that a considerable amount of work was likely to be needed in order for the organisation, and its partners, to meet the new safeguarding and safer recruitment legislation, and fulfil the requirements of the new Common Inspection Framework.

Due to the complexity of the geographic locations of apprentices and the block release elements of the apprenticeship, she felt that she needed support and guidance on how to implement the safeguarding requirements in these areas.

The LSSM completed the four LSIS on line e-learning modules, the one-day LSIS Safeguarding Facilitators workshop and the Designated Person training. It was essential that the directors and managers of ProVQ, and its partners, had a thorough understanding of the safeguarding agenda and their responsibilities and accountabilities within it. The LSSM brought together the directors and managers and, using the “*LSIS Towards Excellence*” resource, facilitated a half-day session, which resulted in the directors and managers agreeing an action plan for embedding all aspects of safeguarding across their organisations.

This action plan included:

- full staff training,
- an audit of all existing policies and procedures,
- liaison with Local Safeguarding Boards in order to put a comprehensive safeguarding policy in place,
- a safeguarding risk assessment of the accommodation used by learners on block release,
- development of safer recruitment policies and procedures,
- updating of the apprenticeship handbook to include Safeguarding, and
- training & appointment of Designated Persons.

The directors agreed that all staff (including themselves) would be required to complete the LSIS online e-learning modules and attend a one-day face-to-face safeguarding workshop. The LSSM facilitated a series of face-to-face workshops, attended by ProVQ staff, the partners and some employers that they work with. To date approximately 70 people have been trained.

The LSSM spent a day with the ProVQ HR manager and used the “*LSIS Reviewing the Processes and Making them Safer*” resource to audit the existing processes to identify changes that would be necessary. The LSSM & HR Manager, then used the LSIS recruitment proformas as a guide to redesign ProVQ’s own corporate HR documents and forms. The HR Manager amended the staff induction checklist to include safeguarding training for all new staff being employed by the organisation.

Involving apprentices:

ProVQ promoted the active involvement of apprentices within the Safeguarding process by amending the apprenticeship review form to include standard questions relating to safeguarding at every review. This enabled ProVQ designated people to identify potential safeguarding issues within the programmes and take action to resolve the issues.

Involving staff:

The LSSM worked with teams of staff across the organisation to write the Safeguarding Policy and train staff on how to work within the policy. To ensure that the organisation had sufficient coverage for dealing with any safeguarding issues, concerns or allegations, three more members of staff attended LSIS Designated Persons Workshop. ProVQ now has a team of four Designated Persons. This team form the basis of a “Safeguarding Team” who meet on a regular basis to review the Safeguarding Action plan; plan staff training and support for staff; review any safeguarding issues or concerns that are being dealt with and ensure that action is being taken, and processes amended, in the light of any safeguarding issues that have arisen.

Measuring the impact:

The process that ProVQ, and its partners, have been through over the past year has made a significant impact on the organisation, its staff and most importantly, the apprentices. All ProVQ staff are now aware of their roles, responsibilities and professional boundaries within safeguarding and know that they have a supportive structure in which to work to the “5 R’s” procedure. The HR processes were designed to meet with the new ISA requirements, but, even though some of those requirements are now under review, ProVQ are still operating to those standards and guidelines. ProVQ is now fully aware of the legislative requirements for safeguarding & safer recruitment and are working within those requirements. ProVQ apprentices are now better safeguarded whilst on residential training blocks, particularly in the accommodation centres where major reviews of health, safety and safeguarding have taken place.

Looking to the future:

Over the next 12 months ProVQ will continue to make progress against the safeguarding action plan. Staff will receive update training within the year using the new updated LSIS modules. ProVQ will continue to work with its partners to prioritise safeguarding throughout the organisations with the particular focus of increasing learner involvement and participation in the safeguarding agenda. ProVQ is planning to make use of the new “Learner Safeguarding e-learning modules” when they become available and has offered itself as a pilot centre for these modules to LSIS.