Safeguarding Policy

Audience	UK Staff Only
Last Review Date	February 2023
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Approved by	Essia Harding
Next Review Date	February 2024
Version Number	6

Signed:

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Paul Kelly

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Name & Position: Paul Kelly – Chief Financial Officer
Signed on behalf of the Board
Date: 3rd March 2023

Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

This policy has been developed to ensure that all staff at Alpha Development understand their responsibilities and work together to promote the safety and welfare of our apprentices. It outlines the management systems and arrangements in place to create and maintain a safe learning environment for all our apprentices and staff.

Safeguarding is vitally important, and this is reflected in the weight it is given in determining the overall grade for Alpha Development in any Ofsted inspection.

Although, Alpha Development Learners work within the Financial Services Industry and based on the demographics of our learners and our employers, Alpha Development may have a lower number of children and vulnerable adults than other providers, safeguarding is still a key element of our responsibility. We will be vigilant about spotting the signs of abuse and understand our duty to report these concerns, no matter how small. We will pay particular attention to the risks of on-line abuse and exploitation, including radicalisation and ensure our learners understand how to spot and report any concerning or suspicious activity

Safeguarding will be embedded within our training materials and as part of the curriculum. This will include how to stay safe, how to spot safeguarding issues, and how to report them.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working within the Apprenticeship Team, including:

- Directors and Managers
- Trainers, Assessors
- Administrative Staff
- Temporary and Supply Staff, either from agencies or engaged directly

Whilst the large majority of Alpha Development Apprentices will be adults as opposed to children or vulnerable adults, it is important for staff to understand that this policy applies at all times and to all learners, regardless of age.

Within the context of this policy "apprentices" will include everyone for whom Alpha Development is receiving ESFA funding for an apprenticeship programme.

Within this document any reference to the Safeguarding Officer includes the Deputy Safeguarding Officers in their absence.

Alpha Development requires that all staff have read and agree to comply with this policy.

Definitions

Child - is defined in the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 'any person who has not reached their 18th birthday'

Vulnerable Adults - a person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs), is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect or as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Policy Aims

The aims of this Policy are:

- To identify our expectations of staff in relation to safeguarding
- To ensure relevant and effective safeguarding practices are in place
- To ensure the right of every applicant and apprentice to learn within a safe environment
- To promote awareness to staff of the need to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and to recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- To ensure that the fundamental rights and needs of our apprentices are observed
- To offer pastoral support to all applicants and apprentices where needed
- To raise awareness of different types of abuse and safeguarding issues (See Appendix 2)
- To provide procedures for staff in handling matters relating to actual or suspected abuse (See Appendix 1)
- To ensure staff act professionally
- To ensure that safer recruitment and employment practices are adhered to
- To demonstrate our attentiveness and vigilance in relation to safeguarding through our website and job advertisements
- To prevent the risk of abuse by ensuring procedures and standards are in place

Underpinning Legislation and Guidance

The legislative frameworks around our policy are:

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 reaffirms safeguarding as everyone's responsibility and the sharing of information between agencies.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 requires all staff to read and understand their responsibilities if engaged in 'regulated' activities with young people.

The Prevent Duty 2015 requires specified authorities, including education, in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Education Act 2002 requires that governing bodies of FE providers have a statutory duty to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people

Sexual Offences Act 2003 makes it is an offence for a person over 18 (e.g. a lecturer or other member of staff) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 sets out the type of activity in relation to children and adults at risk for which employers and individuals will be subject.

Associated Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Alpha Development policies and guidelines:

- Prevent Policy
- Code of Conduct - Apprenticeship Team
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- IT and E-Safety Policy

Additionally, those with designated responsibilities for safeguarding and prevent should ensure that they have read and understood the company's internal procedures setting out roles and responsibilities including internal processes.

Role of the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy Safeguarding Officer

The Safeguarding officer will:

- Act as the first point of contact with regard to all safeguarding matters
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under this policy as part of their induction into Alpha Development
- Receive formal training every two years with regular updates in between times
- Record that appropriate training has been provided and that an understanding of the requirements has been demonstrated
- Support staff to make referrals to other agencies where appropriate and to keep copies of any such referrals
- Keep the safeguarding policy up to date
- Manage and keep secure all safeguarding records
- Maintain industry knowledge and best practice of safeguarding issues
- Create a network of contact to provide additional support and guidance when required. This could include the regional Prevent Co-ordinator at the DfE, and the safeguarding officers of other training providers.

Safeguarding Contact

In the first instance any safeguarding concerns should be reported to:

Safeguarding Officer

Name: Simon Matin

Email: simonmatin@alphadevelopment.com

Mobile: *07538 155 352*

The Deputy Safeguarding Officer is:

Name: Paul Fegan

Email: paulfegan@alphadevelopment.com

Telephone: 07824 701 746

The Deputy Safeguarding Officer is:

Name: Katy Warner

Email: katywarner@alphadevelopment.com

Mobile: *07943 939 161*

Recruitment of Apprenticeship Staff

Alpha Development will only recruit employees to work directly with apprentices if they have the relevant skills and experience to do so and they have passed our vetting checks. With effect from February, 2023 these include:

- Identity verification
- Qualifications
- Work experience
- References
- Employment history

Those employees who will be working in regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to an Enhance Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. All other employees will be subject to a Basic DBS check. An existing DBS check, to the relevant level, carried out by another organisation, or undertaken by the individual, that is less than two years old and meets the criteria for the post can be accepted while the employee is being onboarded and a new check is carried out.

In all cases, a new DBS check will be carried out when the existing DBS check is three years old.

Staff Development and Training

The Alpha Development Safeguarding and Prevent Policies and the Code of Conduct will be issued to all new employees working within Apprenticeships and HR as part of their induction. Employees designated to support Apprenticeships will be required to undertake mandatory safeguarding training every 2 years in line with their specific role (as set out in the Alpha Internal Procedures).

All employees involved in Apprenticeships will be trained to recognise warning signs and symptoms in relation to specific safeguarding issues and will receive regular updates and briefings on safeguarding matters, for example, Sexual Harassment and Violence, Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation, Domestic Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation, Trafficking and Preventing Violent Extremism.

Promotion

The policy will be promoted to staff and apprentices to ensure that everyone is aware of the policy, how to act when there is a concern, and what to do to safeguard our learners. This will include training for employees working within Apprenticeships and HR at induction and as part of our team meetings. Our commitment to the policy will be emphasised as part of this process and stakeholders will take responsibility and retain full awareness of this policy.

The contact details for safeguarding will be highlighted during induction and will feature prominently in any training materials (including textbooks, slide decks and e-learning). The policy and the process for referrals will also be made available on the website.

Safeguarding Procedure   Appendix 1

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Any concerns, no matter how small should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer (or his/her deputy) in the first instance. There does not need to be any firm evidence at this stage. The initial reporting process is to flag that there is a concern and allow an investigation to determine whether further action is required. The principle behind the process is that it is better to report a concern than dismiss it as unlikely, and potentially miss an opportunity to protect the welfare of one of our apprentices.

This duty to report any concerns overrides any request from the apprentice to keep the matter confidential. Employees must report:

- Suspected abuse or harm
- If abuse or harm has been witnessed
- If an allegation or abuse or harm is made
- If an apprentice tells you about abuse or harm

Once a concern has been reported to the Safeguarding Officer, he or she will discuss it with the relevant parties and take the following action:

- Full details of the concern will be recorded on Alpha Development's Safeguarding Concerns Log
- Referrals to external agencies will be considered and made where necessary
- The appropriate members of senior management will be informed
- Records and reports to be stored centrally in a confidential manner and in line with guidance in Keeping Children safe in Education

The person reporting the concern should keep the matter confidential. It should not be discussed with other members of staff, the apprentice, or anyone suspected of misconduct, unless at the request of the Safeguarding Officer where it is deemed necessary for the matter to be resolved.

If a member of staff has an immediate concern about the apprentice's safety, they should stay with them and take any appropriate action to secure their safety and wellbeing.

Dealing with Disclosures

If the apprentice has disclosed information which results in a safeguarding concern:

- Re-assure the learner that they have done the right thing
- Record what the learner said, using their words where possible
- Sign and date the record
- Follow the procedure for reporting the concern
- Listen without judging or giving an opinion or advice
- Stay calm

- Only ask questions which are necessary for you to clarify the concern and ensure that these are open ended.
- Don't promise confidentiality - explain you may need to talk to a safeguarding officer

Image 1 – Reporting Safeguarding Concerns Flow Chart
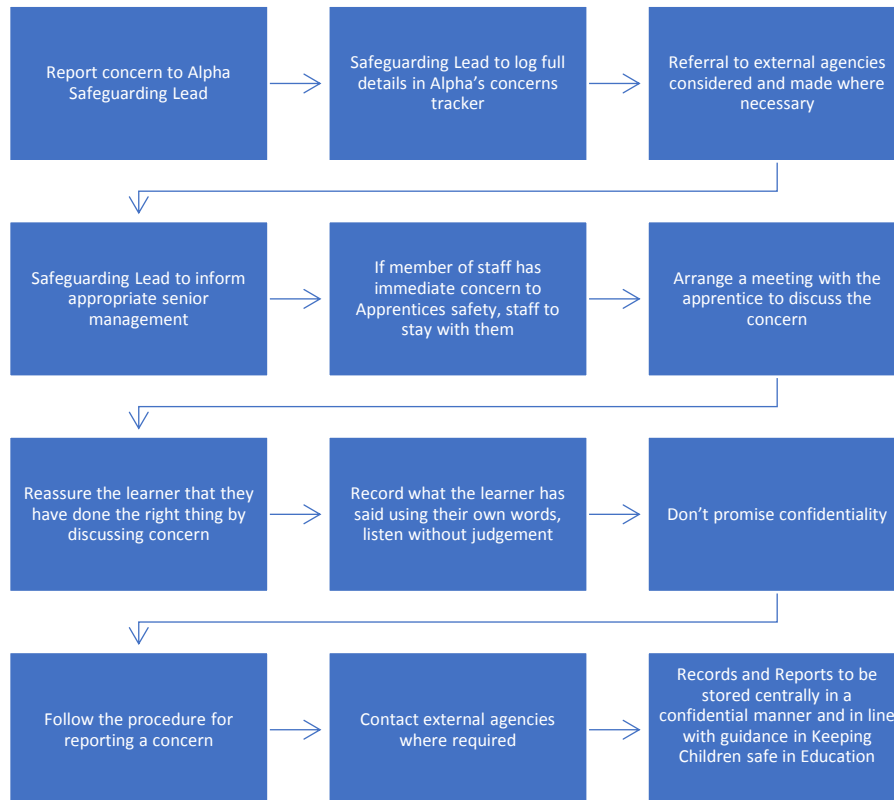
Types of Abuse and Neglect   **Appendix 2**

Through its programme of training, Alpha Development will ensure that all staff involved in Apprenticeship delivery, understand the types of abuse that exist, how to recognise the signs that a learner may be at risks, and their responsibilities to report any concerns.

Abuse - A form of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or child or children.

Physical Abuse - Physical abuse may take many forms e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. It may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child or vulnerable adult. This unusual and potentially dangerous form of abuse is now described as fabricated or induced illness.

Emotional Abuse - Emotional abuse is persistent emotional ill treatment causing severe and persistent effects on the child or vulnerable adult's emotional development and may involve:

- Conveying the message that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person
- Not giving the child or vulnerable adult opportunities to express their views
- Deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- Interactions that are beyond a child or vulnerable adults' developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing from participating in normal social interaction
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children or vulnerable adults to feel frightened or in danger
- Exploitation or corruption of children or vulnerable adults
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in most types of ill treatment, although emotional abuse may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse - Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. These activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) and non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. This may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children or vulnerable adults in looking at, or being involved in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect - Neglect involves the persistent failure to meet basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child or vulnerable adult's health and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to; provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or vulnerable adults emotional needs.

Extremism and Radicalisation – Extremism is defined as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs; and/or calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas." Radicalisation is defined as "the way in which a person comes to support terrorism and encourages other people to believe in views that support terrorism"

Child Sexual Exploitation - Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Child Criminal Exploitation - Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns.

Peer-on-Peer Abuse - Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer on peer abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals**.**

Youth Produced Sexual Imagery – also known as 'sexting' can be defined as images and videos generated by children under the age of 18 that are of a sexual nature or are considered to be indecent.

Online abuse – online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that is connected to the web, for example computers, tablets and mobile phones. Both children and vulnerable adults can be at risk of online abuse from people that they know or from strangers. (see separate policy IT Policy)

Sexual Harassment and Violence - sexual harassment and violence and can occur between two learners of any age and sex and can occur in person or on-line. Alpha Development understands its responsibility to take all reports and concerns seriously, challenge inappropriate behaviour and support both the victim and the perpetrator.

Mental Health - all staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing

one. Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

Domestic Abuse - Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality**.**

Forced Marriage – describes a marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will. Different from an arranged marriage, in which both parties' consent

Female Genital Mutilation - all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for nonmedical reasons. FGM is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003

Trafficking – both children and adults can be victims of trafficking. Trafficking is the act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving a person by means of coercion, deception or abuse of vulnerability for the purposes of exploitation, such as sexual exploitation, slavery, and forced labour.

Faith abuse – linked to faith or belief where concerns for a child's welfare have been identified and could be caused by a belief in witchcraft, spirit or demonic possession, ritual or satanic abuse features; or when practices linked to faith or belief are harmful to a child.

Honour Based Violence – is a collection of practices used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour.

IT Policy – Staying Safe Online

1. Introduction

As an online institution, technology is fundamental to Alpha Development learners. You have access to technology for the purposes of learning through Alpha Development platforms (such as the VLE or webinars), and you might also access non-Alpha Development platforms for the purpose of learning (for instance online research, or the formation of student social media groups). It is the responsibility of Alpha Development to safeguard its learners online. This guidance document establishes how Alpha Development approaches your online safety, and how you may keep safe online.

2. Definitions

Term	Definition
Cyberbullying	Bullying which takes place involving the use of technology (for a definition of bullying, please see the Bullying Procedure).
Sexting	The sharing of sexual imagery (including videos), or sending of sexually explicit messages, using technology.
Grooming	Where an adult forms a relationship with a child (or vulnerable adult) for the purpose of sexual abuse, exploitation or trafficking.
Hate Speech	Communications where hatred is expressed towards a person or group of people due to a protected characteristic (for example, protected characteristics such as race, disability, gender).
Radicalisation	The process someone undergoes whereby they come to support a terrorist group or ideology.

3. Online Do's and Don't's

3.1 Do's - To stay safe when using technology, and to avoid getting into difficulties please:

- Keep usernames and passwords safe and secure. Do not share usernames or passwords, and don't write down or store passwords where they might be stolen or accessed by another person.

- Consider when it is appropriate to share personal information about yourself online, and do not share information about others online.

- Report any unpleasant or inappropriate materials or messages seen online, including in personal social media groups of Alpha Development learners, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- Respect others' work and property by not accessing, copying, removing or otherwise altering any other user's files, without the owner's knowledge and permission.

- Be polite and responsible when communicating with others, do not use strong, aggressive or inappropriate language and appreciate that others may have different opinions.

- Do not take or distribute images of anyone without their permission

- Do not try to upload, download or access any materials which are illegal or inappropriate or may cause harm or distress to others.

- Do not try to download copies (including music and videos) where work is protected by copyright

- Take care to check that the information accessed is accurate when using the internet to find information.

- Ensure that you comply with all of the terms and conditions of the Alpha Development platforms that you use.

3.2 Don't's - To remain safe online, it is important to avoid unacceptable use of technology. Some usage is both illegal and unacceptable, and these have been highlighted separately below for your guidance:

Illegal and unacceptable

- Child sexual abuse images

- Grooming, incitement, arrangement or facilitation of sexual acts against children

- Possession of extreme pornographic image (grossly offensive, disgusting or otherwise of an obscene character)

- Criminally racist material in UK- to stir up religious hatred (or hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation)

- Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (e.g. financial / personal information, databases, computer / network access codes and passwords)

- Promotion of extremism or terrorism

- Infringing copyright

Unacceptable

- Pornography

- Promotion of any kind of discrimination

- Threatening behaviour, including promotion of violence or mental harm

- Any other information which may be offensive to colleagues or breaches the ethos of Alpha Development or brings Alpha Development into disrepute

- Using Alpha Development systems to run a private business not associated with Alpha Development

- Using systems, applications, websites or other mechanisms that bypass the filtering or other safeguards employed by Alpha Development

- Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files

3.3 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which involves the use of technology. It can take many different forms and could involve behaviours such as abusive messaging, intimidation, spreading of rumours or imitating the victim online. Alpha Development regards bullying, in all forms, as unacceptable, and its approach to bullying is set out in its Bullying Procedure.

- Victims of cyberbullying may wish to:

- Report the bullying to the owners of the platform where it has occurred

- Where possible, 'block' the bully on the platform where they are contacting the victim

- Report the bullying to Alpha Development for investigation, or ask Alpha Development for advice or support, by emailing the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- Report the bullying to another party for support (e.g. a family member, or GP)

3.4 Sexting

This guidance has been separated into two sections, due to differences in the law for those who are under the age of 18. Anyone who wishes to receive further advice or guidance on the below can request this by emailing Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Learners aged under 18	All Learners
It is **illegal** to create, possess or share sexual images or videos of a child. This includes situations where a child shares sexual images or videos of themselves (for example where they are in a relationship). When an adult forms a relationship with and sends sexual messages to a child, this is known as 'grooming'. Grooming is **illegal**. Please see section 3.5 for more information. Anyone can report known or suspected illegal conduct relation to online child abuse to the Police or CEOP. If you view child abuse images or videos by accident, you	Consenting adults may choose to share sexual images or videos as part of a healthy relationship. It is advised that once an image or video is shared online, the poster no longer has control of how this content is used or shared. It is possible that content may be used for the purposes of bullying, blackmail or causing harm to another person. Where someone shares sexual images or videos that they have received from another person without consent, this is known as **revenge pornography**. This practice is **illegal**.

3.5   Online Pornography

The internet is a common and easy way to search for pornography. People search for pornography for many reasons- they may be actively looking for it, or it may even appear in a pop-up or be stumbled upon by accident. There are some tips for staying safe when looking at pornography online:

- Some young people use pornography as a way to learn about sex. It's important to remember that pornography isn't real, and the sex in pornography is very different to the way that many people look and have sex in the real world. Do not use pornography to base what a healthy, consenting sexual relationship looks like.

- Be sure that you are clear on consent. If you try something that you have seen in porn, have you discussed this with your partner, and do they consent (remember, consent should be explicit, not implicit)? Have the people appearing in the pornography given their consent- if not, this is illegal and you can get into trouble for watching/sharing it.
- Be aware that watching porn can be addictive. Try to limit the amount that you watch, and ask for help if you feel you have become addicted. You can do so by emailing the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Don't feel pressured to watch pornography if you don't want to. Not everyone watches porn, and this is okay.

3.6 Grooming

In the context of this guidance document, Alpha Development refers to the grooming process which takes place online and where the product of this process is a sexual relationship between an adult and a child (or vulnerable adult) which may take place in person or online. The product of this process is known as Child Sexual Exploitation.

The grooming process may involve a perpetrator (who may pretend to be a young person) befriending a vulnerable young person online. They may develop a relationship with the young person, making them feel listened to or flattered. The young person may be tricked or forced into sending images, text or videos to their abuser online. Abusers may then blackmail or coerce their victims into sending further material, perhaps by threatening to share the material online or with friends and family of the victim.

To protect yourself from grooming, you might:

- Only accept friend requests online from people that yourself or a friend has met before in person
- Try to confirm the identity of who you talk to online- consider whether they have multiple accounts, and whether you can search for the person on the internet
- Scrutinise the things you are told by strangers, and consider whether they make sense or might be untrue
- Do not meet up with someone you have met online. If you do so, make sure it is in public and that you take a friend.
- Report any contact you are uncomfortable with or unsure of to CEOP, the Police, or discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

3.7 Hate Speech

In the UK we have freedom of speech, however there are some restrictions placed upon this by law. For example, we cannot spread hatred against an individual or a group due to a protected characteristic or make threats of violence.

Some guidance surrounding avoiding hate speech includes:

- Considering carefully how you put your opinion across. For example, you can disagree with a certain religion and its principles, but you cannot spread hatred about this religion or make threats towards them.
- Engage with other learners professionally and respectfully.
- Be wary of 'trolls', who may say inflammatory things to get a reaction.
- Be clear on how to block people, or to remove content/conversations which make you feel uncomfortable.
- If you are unsure of whether something is appropriate to discuss, mention it first to your coach or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

3.8   Radicalisation

Radicalisation may occur through several different means, supported by the use of the internet. For example, people may actively search for extremist content, or may stumble across this by accident. They may also be 'recruited' online by a radicaliser.

The internet is a common platform whereby radicalisers recruit people to their cause. The process for radicalisation can be very similar to the process of grooming described above. The extremist selects a vulnerable victim, and may form a friendship. The victim may become gradually isolated from their friends and family, and gradually exposed to more and more extreme content and ideas. The eventual aim may be for the victim to commit and extremist act, or to help recruit further people to the cause. Alpha Development has a comprehensive Code of Practice and Policy in relation to Prevent, and this advice relates to how learners can keep themselves safe online in this area:

- Assess the credibility of websites that you visit. Consider whether they are reputable sites, and whether there are other reputable sites which back up what they are saying.
- If you talk to strangers online, be wary of what they say and/or ask you to do. Never meet up with someone you have met online- and if you do, ensure that this is in a public place and that you take a friend with you.
- Consider the information that you share about yourself online. Radicalisers often look for vulnerable individuals to target, so if you have shared these vulnerabilities online you may be more likely to be contacted.
- Be confident to report sites, content or people that makes you uncomfortable.
- Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead if you are unsure about any of the above, or wish to discuss this further.

3.8   Social Media

3.8.1 Managing your accounts

Social media is a popular way to communicate with others, and Alpha Development acknowledges that many of its learners will use social media accounts. To stay safe when using social media, Alpha Development advises that learners know:

- Who can view their content (both their personal information, and what they post)

- Who can contact them
- How to block someone
- How to stop seeing something which makes them uncomfortable

3.8.2 Social media and your employer

Learners might wish to consider how they appear to others on social media. Many prospective (and current) employers check social media accounts, and posting the wrong content can, and has, stopped people from gaining employment. Some things to think about include:

- Ensuring that any profile pictures or statuses are appropriate- try to avoid pictures where you are drinking alcohol, look inebriated or are doing anything which may be considered 'unprofessional'.
- Don't post any comments about employers on social media- you can be fired for doing so. People often use social media as a place to 'vent' but this is not appropriate in relation to your employment.
- Don't post on social media during working hours (unless this is your job)- it's advertising to your employer that you are doing something other than working.
- Make your profile private- this way people cannot see what you post, if you do choose to do any of the above.

3.9   Online Communities

3.9.1   General tips

Wherever you engage with other people online, you become part of the 'online community' for that platform. Many social media sites have their own community standards, and you are expected to comply with these rules to be allowed to continue to use that site/app. Some general tips for engaging in an online community include:

- Remember that once you have posted something online, it's out there forever- even if you delete it, others might have copies. Don't post anything you might regret.
- Consider whether you are sure what you are posting is true- and how you know this.
- Get involved in debates, but watch out for internet trolls (people who intentionally goes out of their way to annoy/intimidate others online for their own amusement)- it can be easy to get drawn into arguments with these people and can be very frustrating,
- Be polite and respectful- disagree with people, but don't be rude about it.
- Remember, if it's illegal in real life, it's illegal online too- just as things such as harassment are illegal to do in person, you also cannot harass people online.

3.9.2 Tips when using the VLE

The VLE is a good tool available to learners, that allows them to interact with other learners- through the use of the forums, or by messaging others. It's important to remember that the

VLE is primarily designed for education, and so it's not always appropriate to engage with this platform in the same way you would with other platforms (for example with social media).

Some tips regarding this include:

- Think of your fellow learners as your colleagues- if you wouldn't be allowed to say something to your colleague, you also probably shouldn't say it to another student.
- Try to consider other people intentions. It can be easy to misconstrue what people mean when they type things, as you can't hear tone of voice or see facial expressions. If something upsets you, try and think about whether it was meant in a different way.
- If someone gets something wrong, try and explain this to them in a kind way. Everyone is here to learn, and part of that is making mistakes. Be polite in how you tell them about these.
- Report anything you are unhappy with to your tutor, or to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

3.10   Digital Crimes

3.10.1 Hacking and Viruses

Internet criminals use many tactics to cause damage to individuals. They may wish to hack into your computer to gain information (such as your personal details or banking information), or they may even wish to just destroy your machine to make in unusable.

To help keep yourself safe from hackers and viruses, you can follow these tips:

- Have strong, secure passwords- include a mixture of random words, and try to include numbers, capital letters and special characters. Use different passwords for each of your accounts.
- Download antivirus software onto your machine.
- Be aware of what scams look like (see section 3.10.2).
- Try to only visit reputable websites that you have heard before.
- Don't download something if you don't know what it is, or who has sent it.

3.10.2 Scams

Sadly, there are lots of scams online. The aim of many scams is to gather money or personal information from vulnerable individuals. Scams can take many forms:

- Emails from what look like 'reputable' companies (for instance banks or companies that you shop with), saying you owe money or that you need to give them up to date bank details or passwords etc.
- Emails from companies telling you that you have 'won' or been offered something- a prize, a lottery… if you didn't enter/apply for any of these, it's likely that it's a scam.
- Job offers, where you are told that you can make quick money. Scammers will often come up with attractive rouses, informing you that you can make quick money for little work- and that you will need to give them your bank details so that you can be paid.
- Online romances- criminals form an online, romantic relationship, and then ask for money (usually under the pretence that they need money for something such as airplane tickets).
- Fake news- news stories which are made up. They often look like they are real news stories.

To help protect yourself from online scams, you should:

- Not click on links within emails.
- Check email addresses- does the email address look legitimate? If not, it could be a scam.
- Never send personal information about yourself via email. If they require personal information, you should visit the company's legitimate website (not one that they provide a link to within the email) and call the customer services to discuss this. You should never give your password to anyone, even on the phone.
- Do not open attachments from unknown senders, or emails which look suspicious.
- Never send money to someone you have met romantically online unless you have met them face-to-face. If you refuse to send money, and they become very forceful or aggressive, this can be a further sign of a scam.
- Check what you read online, and always question whether the site looks legitimate- does the logo look right, are there spelling mistakes, do the dates add up