

Policy and definitions

This policy sets out Apex's approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. It applies to all aspects of our work and to everyone working for Apex, including all employees and any associates working with Apex.

The UK Government has defined "Safeguarding" in two sets of statutory guidance, as follows:

"Safeguarding children means protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health or development, ensuring that children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes."

Extract from "Working together to safeguard children"

"Safeguarding of vulnerable adults means protecting their right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. People and organisations should work together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, and make sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted, including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. Safeguarding also recognises that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety and well-being."

Extract from guidance under the Care Act 2014.

Purpose and context

The purpose of this policy is to explain how Apex and its staff and associates must follow appropriate procedures in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

The context in which Apex staff and associates are most likely to meet children and vulnerable adults is in an employer's office environment. This is either where apprentices are under 18, or they are aged 18 and over and classed as vulnerable adults.

Apex's procedures for protection of apprentices and prevention of abuse are outlined below and made known at induction stage to apprentices and employers.

Safeguarding procedures at Apex

- 1) All Apex staff and associates, other than purely office-based staff, will require a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check at recruitment stage (Apex employee), or before carrying out work for Apex (associates). Records of checks will be maintained by Apex.
- 2) All Apex staff have received a copy of this safeguarding policy and been briefed on the purpose, definitions and procedures in it. New Apex employees and associates receive a copy and briefing on appointment. It is made clear to them that they must focus on the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults, with whom they work. Apex's Safeguarding policy is also shared with employers and apprentices at the point when we start working with them.
- 3) All Apex staff and associates must complete an online safeguarding training module within 3 months of commencing work with Apex and receive refresher training at least at three yearly intervals after that.
- 4) No Apex employee or associate should investigate concerns about individual children or vulnerable adults who are being or may be abused or at risk of abuse. Concerns about such matters should be reported to the relevant employer, or to their Apex manager. Assumptions that someone else may take care of the problem should not be made and concerns should not be ignored.
- 5) Any Apex employee or associate who is in doubt about what to do in respect of safeguarding should seek guidance from their Apex manager or, if an associate, their lead contact.
- 6) Initially, support and guidance on Safeguarding matters should be directed towards the Apex member of staff running the apprenticeship programme or, if preferred, directly from an Apex Safeguarding officer. All concerns and potential concerns are recorded and investigated by one of Apex's nominated Safeguarding officers (see "Commitment" section below for named reports and contact details).

Monitoring of policy

As part of the annual review of Apex's Safeguarding policy, all instances of referrals to employers or Apex managers, or concerns expressed about safeguarding situations will be considered to assess whether improvements can be made to the policy or further guidance could be given on it.

Commitment to Apex's Safeguarding policy

Some policies and procedures are more sensitive than others in the way in which they should be dealt with. Safeguarding is one of those subjects. It is immediately recognisable as a subject about which great care needs to be taken, and this is emphasised in briefings and training for Apex staff and associates. That is why monitoring of referrals or concerns about safeguarding matters are treated with care and analysed to see whether improved actions could be taken.

As a critically important Apex policy, Safeguarding needs to be embedded as a core policy in all we do with employers and apprentices. This is achieved firstly by Apex's Managing Director taking personal responsibility for the operation and implementation of the policy (see Safeguarding Officers below). Secondly, our Safeguarding policy has total commitment to it from Apex's managers, and the same commitment has been agreed with Apex staff and is agreed on appointment of new staff and associates.

Promotion of the policy is carried out by explaining the policy and Apex's commitment to it at the induction session of all apprentices, and reinforced by discussion at apprentice reviews. The nature of possible abuse is explained. This includes, but is not limited to, bullying and harassment (both in person and online) physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and honour killings. Telephone numbers and email addresses are provided to apprentices for confidential reporting of safeguarding issues. Through commitment to, and promotion of the policy, including training on the range of possible abuses, Apex seeks to maximise the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Apex has a zero tolerance of abuse and discrimination of any form.

Apex's Safeguarding officers and contact methods are:

David Toomey (Managing Director) – Senior Safeguarding Officer

Adrian Toomey (Head of Strategy & Marketing – Safeguarding Officer)

Confidential contact details for reporting Safeguarding concerns are provided to all apprentices

Note: The Guidance given in the OFSTED Safeguarding policy, including references to statutory guidance, was studied and found very helpful in the preparation of Apex's Safeguarding policy.

Date of document and date of next review: This document is dated 24th January 2020 and will be reviewed by Apex by no later than 23rd January 2021.