



EmpowerEd Safeguarding, Child Protection & Safer Recruitment Policy

Date adopted: 1st September 2025

Review date: 1st September 2026

1. Purpose

EmpowerEd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. We believe every learner has the right to feel safe, respected, and valued, and to learn in an environment free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

This policy sets out our approach to:

- Protecting learners from harm.
- Ensuring robust safeguarding systems are in place.
- Embedding safer recruitment and ongoing staff vetting.
- Meeting statutory requirements and best practice guidance.

2. Legal and Policy Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, Sept 2024)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, Dec 2023)
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Education Act 2002 (Section 175)
- Counter-Terrorism & Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Equality Act 2010
- UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018
- Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) procedures for each Local Authority in which we operate

This includes (but is not limited to) Gateshead, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside,

South Tyneside, Sunderland, and Northumberland. Where learners are placed by, or reside in, other Local Authority areas within Tyne and Wear, we will follow the safeguarding protocols of the placing and/or home authority.

The DSL will ensure LSCP escalation policies for each relevant LA are reviewed annually and updated in EmpowerEd's safeguarding file.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All EmpowerEd staff, volunteers, contractors, and visiting professionals.
- All learners, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or background.
- All EmpowerEd activities, including on-site provision, off-site visits, and community-based sessions.

4. Safeguarding Principles

We will:

- Act in the best interests of the child at all times.
- Take a child-centred approach to safeguarding.
- Maintain a safe environment and culture of vigilance.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers, and external agencies.
- Ensure safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

5. Contextual Safeguarding and SEND Vulnerabilities

We recognise that our learners, many of whom have SEND, may be particularly vulnerable to:

- Communication barriers preventing disclosure.
- Reliance on personal care and increased intimate contact.
- Bullying or exploitation due to differences.
- Greater online risks due to social isolation.
- Risks associated with transport, lone working, and community-based sessions.

Risk assessments will specifically address these vulnerabilities and include controls for public venue safety and lone working.

6. Designated Roles

The DSL/Deputy will:

- Lead on safeguarding matters.
- Ensure concerns are recorded, investigated, and referred appropriately.
- Keep detailed, secure safeguarding records.
- Attend multi-agency meetings and complete statutory training.
- Ensure familiarity with safeguarding procedures for all relevant Local Authorities across Tyne and Wear and liaise with the appropriate LSCP where concerns arise.

7. Recognising and Responding to Concerns

Staff will be alert to signs of:

- Abuse (physical, emotional, sexual)
- Neglect
- Peer-on-peer abuse, including sexual harassment and online abuse
- Child-on-child sexual violence
- Exploitation (CSE, CCE)
- Domestic abuse
- Radicalisation and extremist views
- Self-harm or suicidal ideation

Reporting process:

1. Listen, reassure, and avoid leading questions.
2. Record factually, using the child's own words where possible.
3. Pass information to the DSL immediately.
4. DSL will decide on referral to children's social care, police, or other agencies.

If the concern involves Prevent, the DSL will follow the relevant LA referral process to the Channel Panel.

Where a learner's home address or placing authority falls outside the area in which the concern arises, the DSL will consult with both the local LSCP and the learner's home/placing authority to determine the most appropriate referral route.

8. Online Safety

Covered in detail in the EmpowerEd Online Safety Policy, but key safeguarding principles apply:

- Filtering and monitoring systems in place.
- Teaching learners about online risks.
- Reporting and responding to online concerns in the same way as offline safeguarding issues.

9. Safer Recruitment

We will follow safer recruitment practices to deter and prevent unsuitable people from working with children:

- Job descriptions with safeguarding duties.
- Application forms requiring full employment history and explanation of gaps.
- At least two references, including the most recent employer.
- Verification of identity and right to work in the UK.
- Enhanced DBS with barred list checks.
- Overseas checks where applicable.
- Face-to-face interviews with safeguarding questions.
- Conditional offers subject to satisfactory checks.

A Single Central Record will be maintained in line with KCSIE requirements.

10. Induction, Training & Ongoing Vigilance

- All staff receive safeguarding induction before working with learners.
- Annual safeguarding and child protection refresher training.
- Termly safeguarding updates and DSL briefings.
- Prevent awareness, online safety, and safer working practice training.
- Supervision and performance management to monitor ongoing suitability.

11. Safe Working Practices

- Maintain professional boundaries (see Code of Conduct).
- Avoid being alone with a learner unless risk-assessed.
- No personal contact or social media links with learners.
- Use only EmpowerEd-approved communication channels.

12. Allegations and Low-Level Concerns

All allegations that meet the LADO threshold will be referred within 1 working day. Low-level concerns that do not meet the threshold will still be recorded and reviewed by the DSL to monitor patterns of behaviour and act early.

13. Record-Keeping & Confidentiality

- Safeguarding records stored securely, separately from main files.
- Access restricted to DSL/Deputy and senior leaders.
- Records retained for the statutory period (at least until the learner is 25) and transferred securely to the new setting when the learner leaves.

14. Whistleblowing

Staff must report concerns about poor safeguarding practice to the DSL, Director, or via the Whistleblowing Policy. Concerns can also be raised with the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line or Ofsted.

15. Related Policies

Behaviour Support Policy
Online Safety Policy
Data Protection Policy
Code of Conduct
Health and Safety Policy
Whistleblowing Policy
Complaints Policy

16. Review

Reviewed annually or sooner if guidance or legislation changes. All staff must confirm they have read and understood the policy.