

SAFEGUARDING

NEXT
GENERATION
LEARNING

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Further Education and Skills

Becta leading
next generation
learning

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Safeguarding

in a digital world

Guidance for technical staff

Technology, learning and risk

Technology is part of everyday life. Our learners use it not only as a tool within their learning, but also in their work and leisure time.

Learning providers have always had a duty of care for their learners at the heart of their policies and practice. The duty of care also includes safe use of technology.

Organisations have a key role in helping learners to develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe and secure when using technology for learning, leisure and work. Assessing and understanding risks as they apply to your learners, then taking mitigating action, and empowering learners to protect themselves are key to effective e-safety.



RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Using technology safely is vital to further education staff and learners alike. There are four publications in the **Safeguarding in a digital world** series.

1. Safeguarding in a digital world: An overview for learning providers

2. Safeguarding in a digital world: Guidance for curriculum managers, teachers and training staff

3. Safeguarding in a digital world: Guidance for technical staff

4. Safeguarding in a digital world: Guidance for learners

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Protection in practice



FIGURE 1:
BECTA PIES MODEL

What is the situation in the further education system now?

Organisations are finding that a blocking and banning approach, which merely limits exposure to risk, is not sustainable. You need to focus on a model of empowerment; equipping learners with the skills and knowledge they need to use information and communication technology safely and responsibly whilst managing the risks. This is particularly the case with Web 2.0 collaborative technologies, such as social networking sites, which are becoming an essential aspect of productive and creative social learning.

Your organisation is likely to have learners from the age of 14 upwards with a wide variety of knowledge, needs and vulnerabilities in their use of technology. In particular, under the Children Act 2004, anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a 'child'. You have the same responsibilities to safeguarding vulnerable adult learners when they are working online as you do when they are being taught face to face. Learners with special needs may also need particular care.

Becta's PIES model is an effective framework for approaching safeguarding strategy across learning provision. It offers a simple way of mitigating against risks through a combination of effective policies and practice, a robust and secure technology infrastructure, and education and training for learners and employees alike, underpinned by standards and inspection. In the Common Inspection Framework for further education and skills 2009, safeguarding is one of the limiting grades and is considered to be essential in assuring the safe development and well-being of young people and adults. The grade for safeguarding may therefore limit other inspection grades, including the grades for leadership and management and overall effectiveness.

Inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- safeguarding is prioritised
- learners are safeguarded and protected
- staff take action to identify and respond appropriately to users' welfare concerns.

What are the risks to learners?

Online risks are often characterised by the four 'Cs':

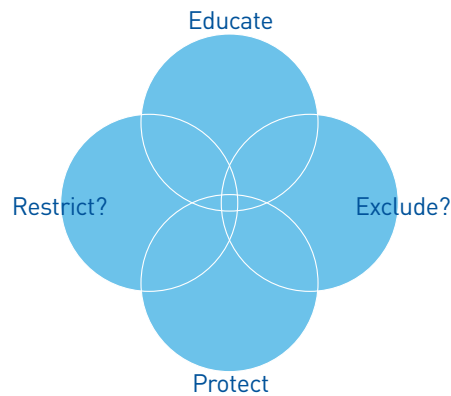
- **Content** – this is content that may be unsuitable or potentially illegal
- **Contact** – this may be unwelcome or inappropriate contact. It could be grooming or sexual contact
- **Conduct** – this could be as a recipient or as an active participant – giving out too much personal information or the bullying of another person
- **Commerce** – this could be phishing or other methods of identity theft.

It's important that as an organisation you have measures in place to manage exposure to this range of risks.

Next steps

Factors influencing e-safety systems, policies and procedures:

Learner
Age
Experience
Pedagogy
Level of supervision
Study environment
Topic of study
Technology mix
Risk evaluation and incident response
etc...



FURTHER INFORMATION

Information from Becta
www.becta.org.uk/safeguarding

JISC research, advice
and guidance
www.jisc.ac.uk

FIGURE 2: OPERATIONAL FOCUS MODEL

What should I do now?

These are points for reflection when you consider enhancing your learners' e-safety:

- Do you have effective filtering and monitoring systems in place to safeguard all learners as appropriate to their age, understanding and courses?
- Does your policy on access to learning materials and online collaborative tools draw on advice from those staff who are involved in delivering learning?
- Are you allowing staff to have appropriate controls over the system so they can moderate learners' access as required?
- Have you enabled your learners to access your organisation's network and virtual learning environment remotely and have you considered the security issues?
- Are you proactive in reviewing system security and operation to ensure that risks are managed and activity does not compromise integrity, system capacity, or misconduct on the network?