



Digital Development Programme for Adult Community Education Providers (Digital ACE)

Digital Safeguarding & Prevent Guidance Materials

Guidance on what to consider for moving effective Safeguarding
and Prevent practice online.

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1. Introduction

This document is one of six guidance documents produced for the Digital ACE (Adult and Community Education) programme, as it is recognised that many providers will need to develop new policies that are specific to digital learning. The six guidance areas for digital development include Policy, Safeguarding & Prevent, Developing Materials & Resources, Quality Assurance, Supporting Low Skilled Learners and Underpinning Technology. See the Reference/links section of this document for [additional strand information](#).

The guidance has been drafted by sector representatives to help providers develop their technological solutions, skills, capabilities and policy infrastructure. This guidance document on Safeguarding and Prevent addresses how providers approach their duties around safeguarding learners, staff, partners and visitors in a digital model.

To provide insight into the issues facing ACE services, institutions, colleges and centres HOLEX undertook a baseline survey in Spring 2020 (See [Link 1](#)). This revealed that providers were initially concerned about internet safety and security for their staff and learners during the quick turnaround to online delivery.

Providers now appear to be at different stages of their thinking around providing effective safeguarding and Prevent policies and procedures. Some have undertaken new audits relating to online delivery and they have developed their policies and guidance as a result, whilst others are relying on existing processes and working practices.

According to the survey, it appears that the extent of safeguarding referrals has decreased almost across the board, and providers are starting to identify new approaches to supporting learners. One provider said, “Safeguarding is not necessarily difficult ‘to do’ per se, but it is difficult, as there is a lot to consider”.

These guidance materials provide guidance and best practice to help providers to identify and address all the elements of safeguarding and Prevent that result in effective and safe environments for all learners.

Link 1: [Ufi/HOLEX Digital ACE survey report May 2020](#)

2. The scope and aims of the strand

The aims of the strand are to supply providers with enough information to review and adapt their approach to safeguarding and Prevent to ensure that they are keeping learners, staff, partners and visitors safe in an online model.

This guidance also provides links to examples of good practice and more in-depth analysis of approaches to safeguarding and Prevent relevant to online delivery.

The guidance assumes that all practitioners already have robust policies and processes around safeguarding and Prevent, and it builds on the existing good practice in organisations.

3. How to use these guidance materials

These materials have been produced for providers to use within their service and, as appropriate, with their staff and partners. Each guidance document is supplemented

with a webinar, originally broadcast live and now available to watch online (see **Link 2**). The examples of policies and resources have been drafted to support services and they are available for them to adopt or edit as they see fit.

Link 2: [Recording of Digital ACE Safeguarding & Prevent webinar](#)

4. Safeguarding for digital provision – why it is relevant

Responding to the sudden lockdown at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many providers moving to online delivery with very little notice. Some providers were already further forward than others in their digital approach, however the majority of providers had a lot to consider in a very tight timeframe.

It is of course essential that safeguarding and Prevent practices remain secure and, for many providers, this will mean providing both staff and learners with new information as they continue to work with a digital model of delivery.

All providers should already have a policy and implementation procedures for safeguarding and most of your guidelines will be applicable to online learning. The Digital ACE project guidance materials on policy provide additional guidance on developing your safeguarding and Prevent policy.

Your policies should be adapted following a full audit of your current practices in relation to the increase in online and blended learning models. A separate audit for both safeguarding and Prevent is best practice, particularly as increased online learning and communication can present additional risks of extremism and radicalisation to your staff and learners.

5. Carrying out an audit for safeguarding and Prevent

5.1. What the issues are

Best practice dictates that all providers should have a completed audit for both safeguarding and Prevent that is reviewed regularly. These audits will need a renewed focus on specific considerations for online delivery where you have moved from face-to-face delivery to online provision, and where you have a mixed model of blended- and classroom-based provision.

5.2. What you need to consider

- You will need to ensure that your audit documents and resulting action plans include reference to your approach to ensuring a healthy and safe learning environment for your learners and staff through the use of equipment and online platforms.
- The specific addition of the organisation's approach to the wellbeing of learners.
- Your Safeguarding and Prevent action plans and risk assessments should be updated with your new actions.

5.3. Successful practice and exemplars

As part of this project, a group of providers have developed an audit model for safeguarding and Prevent based on the University of Suffolk model. (**See Annex 1: Online Safeguarding Review (Audit).**) The audit allows providers to self-assess 13 elements of provision against four categories: Reactive, Basic, Embedded and Holistic.

The categories are:

- Staff training
- Learner engagement
- Reporting/Incident response
- Prevent
- Curriculum
- Wellbeing
- Anti-bullying/harassment policy
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Governance Structure
- Safeguarding Policy
- Appropriate Filtering
- Bring your own Device (BYOD)
- Staff and Learner code of conduct/acceptable usage policy

Annex 1: [Online Safeguarding Review](#) (Audit)

6. Policy for safeguarding and Prevent for digital provision

6.1. What the issues are

Policies are the guiding principle related to an aspect of safeguarding that provide the foundation for practice in the institution. It is therefore important to revise policies to include adjustments for online activity.

Recommended policies for review and revision are:

- **Safeguarding and Prevent policy** – either by full revision or an addendum
- **Equality and diversity** – particularly in relation to hate crime and how learners with protected characteristics could be at greater risk
- **Anti-bullying and harassment** – especially in relation to online bullying and harassment, how they are tackled and how sanctions brought into play
- **Data protection** – specifically how you ensure data protection practices are compliant with legislation, where there may be some conflict between data protection and safeguarding
- **Learner charters and acceptable usage policy.**

6.2. What you need to consider

Your audit may result in additional changes to your policy, so it could be pertinent to complete your audit before updating your policy.

Any appendices or revisions to your original policy should be made available on your website and communicated to governors/advisory board members, staff and learners.

6.3. Successful practice and exemplars

Your home working policy will also need to be reviewed to include the temporary home working arrangements for staff. Your organisation may decide to move to a more permanent arrangement for staff working from home which will need to be reflected in your policy.

Annex 2: Southend Adult Community College (SACC) has created an [addendum for its Safeguarding and Prevent Policy](#)

Annex 3: ACL Essex has a [risk register that provides a framework](#) for the ACL Safeguarding Lead on assessing and addressing Prevent and Safeguarding vulnerabilities within ACL by conducting a review of existing policies.

Annex 4: learningSkills has developed a [policy for home working](#)

Annex 5: Gateshead Council has developed [guidance for staff on home working](#).

See also the [Digital ACE materials on Policy](#), for additional guidance on your Safeguarding and Prevent Policy for your digital provision.

7. Training on safeguarding and Prevent for digital provision

7.1. What the issues are

- Clear communication to staff and learners will be essential once the new policy is in place and an audit has identified the new processes required.
- They will also need to know where to find up-to-date information on online-related safeguarding issues
- Additional training for staff, governors, advisory board members and partners will be needed to ensure that they are up to date with current policy and practice.
- Existing training, such as ETF (Education and Training Foundation), can be augmented to include approaches to keeping people safe during online classroom delivery.
- Where you deliver programmes for young people and adults, appropriate guidance relative to legislation and their vulnerabilities should be provided for all relevant staff.
- Where you commission bespoke training from another provider, ensure that it includes an element on online delivery.

7.2. What you need to consider

- Safeguarding training should be refreshed and delivered to staff, governors and partners as quickly as possible.
- Consider e-safeguarding courses that tutors must complete and pass before engaging with learners online.
- Continuous updating of safeguarding and Prevent related information will support staff to understand local issues when supporting learners and to embed current concerns into the curriculum.

- Staff wellbeing whilst working remotely and online is as important as the safety of your learners.

7.3. Successful practice and exemplars

Annex 6: [Southend's FAQ's - from virtual Safeguarding surgery](#)

Case study: Virtual safeguarding surgery

Southend ACC held a virtual safeguarding surgery for staff and turned the questions that came out of the session into FAQs for their intranet. Training was delivered by their safeguarding leads, link governor for safeguarding and HR. It covered all aspects of safeguarding including online safety, mental health, Prevent and concerns about sharing DBS evidence.

Annex 7: [Southend's Safeguarding tips - Staying safe online – avoiding Fraud](#)

Annex 8: [ACL Essex's Keeping Safe Newsletter no 2](#)

ACL Essex has separated **Safeguarding and Prevent news** from their wider newsletters which has proved to be a really powerful tool for Essex. Tutors have been appreciative of the brief newsletters which detail current issues (particularly useful for Prevent). This means that they have an understanding of the up-to-date concerns that they can embed into their courses.

Annex 9: [Stockport Adult Learning's Knowledge Organiser](#) for entry level 3 learners includes information on safeguarding and Prevent.

Stockport Adult Learning has developed a model known as **Knowledge Organisers**. Knowledge Organisers are a central document where staff have placed key content, skills and knowledge relevant to their learning programmes. They are applying the same approach to their safeguarding and Prevent programme. The knowledge organisers will be used to support staff in linking curriculum themes to safeguarding and Prevent and embedding this into their individual subject areas. Themes are identified that will help support/address areas identified as needing development such as: 'feeling safe and secure in my community'; using technology etc. 'We can then naturally embed the relevant themes as well as safeguarding and Prevent.' (See also links to Annexes 10 and 11 below).

Some organisations have worked with their HR departments to share information on staying well whilst working remotely and online. For example, per the Annexes referred to below, **Thurrock Adult Community College** uses Google Sites to create an intranet with a blog powered by Google Blogger and **ACL Essex** has shared links for online support for anxiety.

Annex 10: **Thurrock Adult Community College's** [Staff blog – staying sane and healthy working online](#)

Annex 11: [Essex's Online links for mental health support](#)

- Link 3:** **ACL Essex** has developed a document in Microsoft Sway that helps tutors to think through the impact of coronavirus and the lockdown both for themselves as individuals and for their learners.
<https://sway.office.com/BfJnMk2CUA8PuUMx?ref=Link>
- Link 4:** **ACL Essex's** Sway document for learners aims to help them to reflect on lockdown and think about their wellbeing and what learning will look like in the future.
<https://sway.office.com/PUYRfYkubEf3mP5u?ref=email>
- Link 5:** **LET'S TALK ABOUT IT...**is an initiative designed to provide practical help and guidance to the public in order to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It has an update as to staying safe online.
<https://www.ltai.info/staying-safe-online/>
- Link 6:** **Newcastle City Learning** used Biteables to create simple videos to communicate information around Prevent to their LDD learners.
https://youtu.be/f_7Dju_HbTQ

8. Keeping learners safe online

8.1. What the issues are

- At the beginning of lockdown according to the [HOLEX online survey](#) it was widely acknowledged that, for both learners and staff, understanding of e-safety was not strong enough.
- Learners' induction would need to be amended to include all aspects of online safeguarding.
- Providers are recognising that opportunities for learners to confide in their tutors or pastoral teams are more limited in an online space.
- Filtering systems that work well in networked systems and support organisations to monitor internet usage to safeguard learners and staff are not available whilst learners are working remotely as they are using their own equipment.

8.2. What you need to consider

- A consistent message is key, so a standard induction for learners that covers online safeguarding issues works well.
- How does your organisation monitor internet usage particularly where filtering systems are not available?
- What approaches will you now need to embed in your organisation to ensure that vulnerable adults and young people feel supported and able to make a disclosure?

8.3. Successful practice and exemplars

Providers contributing to this strand of the project are developing the following strategies in online classrooms and meetings that included:

- reminding learners about safeguarding and Prevent issues at the beginning of each session
- using mood checker resources (see **Link 5** below) to help people to identify how they are feeling
- checking for changes in behaviour in online activity, such as learners not using the camera when they normally would or leaving the session abruptly
- providing learners with opportunities to speak to staff individually by being available before and after the meeting
- providing opportunities for learners to self-refer for pastoral support or to speak to a mental health first aider, or equivalent.

Case study: A help button for learners

Thurrock Adult Community College has developed a help button for learners that sits on the online classroom. It links to a referral form that goes to the pastoral or safeguarding team so that learners can seek help independently during a lesson if they are feeling vulnerable. This works for Google Classrooms but could be adapted to any VLE with an interactive form.

Link 7: Mood checker resources such as behavioural psychologist Pip Wilson's Blob Tree can be used to recognise and strengthen emotions and moods. The tree gives an opportunity for people to talk about why they see themselves in that spot.

Note that copyright applies to the images, but pdf's can be purchased, and adapted images have been useful to providers. Both of these links give more information and describe ways that the tree can be used.

<https://www.blobtree.com/pages/frontpage>

<https://glennlimthots.wordpress.com/2016/03/11/the-blob-tree-psycho-emotional-test/>

Link 8: **Case study: A real time cloud-based filtering system**

At **Gateshead Council Learning and Skills**, we are currently implementing a **real time cloud-based filtering system**. The system will allow us to manage and understand what sites our learners are trying to access instantly. The system is ideal for analysing activity and works across social media, online documents, online mail, YouTube, apps, browsers, search engines and more, so you don't miss critical alerts. We are using <https://www.lightspeedsystems.com/en-uk/prevent-duty-guidance/> See the link below, but there are many other options based on your organisation's needs.

<https://www.lightspeedsystems.com/en-uk/prevent-duty-guidance/>

- Link 9:** **ACL Essex** has created a new safeguarding video that covers online elements of safeguarding and Prevent.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebqf6WDDv0E>
- Link 10:** [Zero Suicide Alliance](https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training) (ZSA) provides a range of awareness training options, which provide a better understanding of the signs to look out for and the skills required to approach someone who is struggling, whether that be through social isolation or suicidal thoughts.
<https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training>
- Annex 12:** **ACL Essex** has also developed a Netiquette guide for online learning - [Netiquette Guide for Online Courses](#)

9. Summary of key points

- Your policies for safeguarding and Prevent should be adapted following a **full audit of your current practices** because of the increase in online and blended learning.
- Your safeguarding and Prevent online audits should allow you to **self-evaluate your organisation's current status** and to amend your policy and implementation action plan.
- A **separate audit for both safeguarding and Prevent is advisable**, particularly as increased online learning and communication can present additional risks of extremism and radicalisation to your staff and learners.
- You will need to make sure that your **subcontractors or partner providers understand their responsibilities** in relation to developing effective safeguarding practices for online delivery.
- **Training for staff and governors should be updated**, as required, to cover specific solutions for online situations.
- **Training for tutors should include how to embed the additional risk of online learning** into their courses and learning session. It should also include how to spot concerns, such as by looking for changes in behaviour sudden reluctance to use the video facilities.
- You should ensure that you **communicate to your learners and staff how you are adapting your safeguarding and Prevent processes** for online activity.
- Opportunities for learners to talk to staff about their circumstances are reduced in an online classroom. You should therefore **ensure that you provide opportunities for learners to self-refer to your safeguarding or pastoral team** while in your online classroom.

10. 10 Tips from the sector for the sector

1. **Organisational culture is key to keeping learners, staff and visitors safe online.** A **Safeguarding Group** with representatives from across the organisation is a useful way to coordinate adjustments to your policy and practice.
2. **You should involve HR, where relevant, when agreeing policy and procedures** to keeping your staff safe online.
3. **Give learners time and space to reflect on the COVID-19 situation in class.** This should help them to 'be in a good space' for learning and may prompt disclosures.
4. **Ensure your tutors frequently reinforce the messages** on e-safety, safeguarding and Prevent, and provide regular updates.
5. **Tutors and support staff should adapt how they listen to learners** using their professional curiosity and gut instinct when they feel things are not right online.
6. **Communicate your safeguarding and Prevent messages to learners** in as many ways as you can online, including through induction slides or videos and embedded in course learning materials.
7. **Provide learners with opportunities to talk to someone confidentially,** such as through a tutor staying logged on for 10 mins or signposting learners to pastoral, safeguarding teams.
8. **Provide regular updates to staff on local information,** such as scamming, local radicalisation threats, online fraud, online grooming, gaming etc.
9. **Provide opportunities for learners to engage with staff whilst they are working remotely,** such as through an 'open virtual room', welfare call, or an online welfare form for self-referrals.
10. **Keep staff safe online such as by providing mentoring support and guidance** on home or lone working.

11. Thanks and acknowledgements

This strand was led by Jaki Bradley, Principal at Thurrock Adult Community College. Thanks are given to the following people from the sector who were generous with their time, thoughts and documents:

Name	Organisation	Role
Andy Ashley	Inspire: Culture Learning Libraries	Quality and Contract Compliance Manager
Eleanor Churchward	Family Adult Community Education Services Sheffield	Service Manager
Alex Day	Thurrock Adult Community College	Tutor and Safeguarding Link Governor
Nicholas Doherty	Gateshead learning Skills Service	Safeguarding Officer
Sally Eldridge	Thurrock Adult Community College	Designated Safeguarding Lead

Janet Kolita	Cheshire	Adult Education, Online learning Co-ordinator
David Layton-Scott	Department for Education	FE/HE Prevent Co-ordinator
Jill Newton	ACL Essex	Safeguarding and EDI Lead
Patricia North	Southend Adult Community College	Assistant Principal, Community Learning and SEND
Jean Seaborn	Stockport Adult Learning	Programme Manager Curriculum and Quality

12. References and Links

12.1. Summary of links within this document

- Link 1:** [Ufi/HOLEX Digital ACE survey report May 2020](#). Analysis of the results of the Digital ACE opening baseline survey.
- Link 2:** [Recording of Digital ACE Safeguarding & Prevent webinar](#)
- Link 3:** **ACL Essex** has developed a document in Microsoft Sway that helps tutors to think through the impact of coronavirus and the lockdown both for themselves as individuals and for their learners.
<https://sway.office.com/BfJnMk2CUA8PuUMx?ref=Link>
- Link 4:** **ACL Essex's** Sway document for learners aiming to help them to reflect on lockdown and think about their wellbeing and what learning will look like in the future. <https://sway.office.com/PUYRfYkubEf3mP5u?ref=email>
- Link 5:** **LET'S TALK ABOUT IT...** is an initiative designed to provide practical help and guidance to the public in order to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It has an update as to staying safe online.
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<https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training>

12.2. Further references and links

- Higher Education Online Safeguarding Review Tool – University of Suffolk - <https://www.uos.ac.uk/sites/www.uos.ac.uk/files/Higher-Education-Online-Safeguarding-Self-Review-Tool%202019.pdf>
- Safeguarding video for learners – ACL Essex - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebqf6WDDv0E>
- ETF provides online training modules, resources and bespoke support for providers - <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/professional-development/inclusion/prevent/>
- Safe and Equal provide safeguarding and equality programmes and resources for the learning and skills sector - <http://www.safeandequal.co.uk/>

12.3. Specific Prevent Resources

- **Educate Against Hate** - Prevent Radicalisation & Extremism Government advice and trusted resources for schools to safeguard students from radicalisation, build resilience to all types of extremism - <https://educateagainsthate.com/>
- **ETF Prevent for FE and training** website - The dedicated prevent website provides a range of resources to support employer providers, ITPs, colleges and adult education in engaging with the Prevent duty and ensuring that they are ready for Ofsted inspections. <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/professional-development/inclusion/prevent/>
- The **ACT app** contains advice to all aspects of Counter Terrorism including Prevent and is interactive. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-act-app-launched>
- The **ACT Website** which again is interactive - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/act-awareness-elearning>
- You can find support with your Prevent responsibilities through **Regional Networks and Training support from your local DfE FE/HE prevent Co-ordinator**. The team email address for the Coordinators below, is managed centrally to deal with any concerns or issues and pass them to the relevant coordinator. HEFEPrevent.COORDINATORS@education.gov.uk

12.4. Digital ACE information and strands

Funded after the establishment of a partnership between HOLEX and Ufi VocTech Trust, the Digital ACE project enabled HOLEX to review and collate best practice and recommendations across key areas of online provision.

Digital ACE has been designed to support ACE providers on the next stage of their technological journey and help them develop their digital capability so that they can enhance their offer to students while still maintaining their learner centred and high quality approach to adult learning.

The various Digital ACE resources and materials are available via the [Digital ACE page](#) on the HOLEX website.

Digital ACE Strand	Content of materials
Policy	Guidance on how to develop a digital policy and the areas which should be considered.
Safeguarding & Prevent	Guidance on what to consider for moving effective Safeguarding and Prevent practice online.
Developing Materials & Resources	Guidance to support the training and development of staff in producing and adapting materials, live streaming lessons, use of video and YouTube recordings, online presentations and webinars, use of externally prepared materials, assessment and learner engagement.
Quality Assurance	Guidance around quality assurance for online adult education, including existing externally produced materials and in-house provision.
Supporting Low Skilled Learners	Guidance on how best to determine an online offer which enables providers to engage and induct learners with low level skills.
Underpinning Technology	Guidance around the most effective and cost efficient underpinning technological solutions for adult learning, managing a service in this context, connecting and integrating with learners and communicating with staff.

13. Annexes: Good practice examples to ‘adopt and adapt’

Annex 1 - [Online Safeguarding Review \(Audit\)](#)

Annex 2 - [Southend Adult Community College’s Safeguarding Policy Addendum](#)

Annex 3 - [ACL Essex’s Prevent and Safeguarding Strategy Risk Assessment](#)

Annex 4 - [Gateshead LearningSkills’s Home Working Policy](#)

Annex 5 - [Gateshead Council’s Home working Guidance](#)

Annex 6 - [Southend’s FAQ’s - from virtual Safeguarding surgery](#)

Annex 7 – [Southend’s Safeguarding tips - Staying safe online – avoiding Fraud](#)

Annex 8 - [ACL Essex’s Keeping Safe Newsletter no 2](#)

Annex 9 - [Stockport Adult Learning’s Knowledge Organiser for learners](#)

Annex 10 - [Thurrock Adult Community Learning’s Staff blog – staying sane and healthy working online](#)

Annex 11 - [ACL Essex’s Online links for mental health support](#)

Annex 12 - [ACL Essex’s Netiquette Guide for Online Courses](#)