

Safeguarding Newsletter



The Safeguarding Team



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Safeguarding support options, ways to access support at QA if you are worried for yourself or someone else:

- Call us on 07808 050273 or email <u>safeguarding@qa.com</u>
- Complete a Safeguarding Self-Referral Form if the concern relates to you. <u>Safeguarding Self-Referral Form (Learners) QA Ltd</u>



Safeguarding Newsletter oo Contents

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What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the process of protecting people's health, well-being, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect. It's especially important when working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults.



Safeguarding means protecting your right to live safely, free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, or harm. It's about making sure you feel safe and supported whether you're learning at work, online, or in training environments.

It covers: Physical safety, Mental health and Emotional wellbeing Protection from bullying, Discrimination, or Abuse, Online safety, Support with personal challenges.

Safeguarding applies to everyone!

Why You Shouldn't Be Put Off by Safeguarding.

We get it! words like "safeguarding" can sound serious or even intimidating. But here's the truth:

- •It's not about judging you. It's about supporting you.
- •It's not just for emergencies. It's there for everyday wellbeing too.
- •It's not a sign of weakness. Asking for help shows strength and self-awareness.

Safeguarding is here to help you thrive not just survive.

Whether you're struggling with stress, worried about someone's behaviour, or unsure about something online, you deserve to feel safe and heard.





What to Do If You're Worried

If something doesn't feel right, trust your instincts. You can:

- Speak to your Safeguarding Team at QA or your Tutor, DLC or Skills Coach.
- •Use your organisation's reporting channels
- •Reach out to support services- links are at the end of this newsletter.

Just talking to someone is a powerful first step.

Remember:

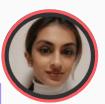
- Safeguarding is for *you*
- You're never wasting anyone's time
- You deserve to feel safe, respected, and supported







Prevent



Jaspreet Hothi Prevent Lead & Safeguarding Specialist

Do you believe everything you see online?

In a world where information is just a click away, it's easy to assume that what we see online is true. But pause for a moment, how often do you question the source, the motive, or the full story?

News articles, social media posts, videos, and memes, they all shape our understanding of the world. But media doesn't always tell the full picture. Stories can be:

- Sensationalised to grab attention
- Selective in what they show or omit
- Biased based on political, cultural, or commercial agendas

This partial storytelling can lead to misunderstanding, division, and even manipulation and then from misinformation to radicalisation.

When people are repeatedly exposed to one-sided narratives or emotionally charged content, it can create echo chambers which are spaces where only similar views are reinforced.

Over time, this can:

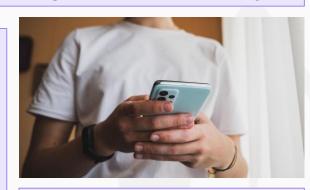
- · Skew perceptions of reality
- Fuel anger, fear, or resentment
- Lead individuals down a path of radicalisation, often without them realising it

Radicalisation doesn't always start with extremist content. It can begin with subtle misinformation, polarising debates, or targeted propaganda.

"The greatest enemy of knowledge is not ignorance; it is the illusion of knowledge." - Stephen Hawking

So, What Can You Do?

- Question everything Who made this?
 Why? What's missing?
- Diversify your sources Seek out different perspectives.
- Think critically Don't let emotion override reason.
- Talk about it Open conversations help challenge harmful narratives.



Talking Point: How do we know when online content is shaping our opinions and not just informing us?





British Values

- + Democracy + The rule of law
- + Individual liberty + Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The Rule of Law: Scam Safe Week 2025

A scam is a dishonest scheme designed to trick people into giving away something valuable usually money, personal information, or access to accounts. Scammers use manipulation, deception, and often urgency or emotional pressure to convince someone to act without thinking. Scams can happen anywhere, online, by phone, in person, or even in the workplace. They are often disguised as something trustworthy or urgent, which is why it's important to stay alert and know the signs.

Online Scam Spotting Checklist:

- Promises that sound too good to be true (e.g., easy money, free gifts).
- Urgent messages pressuring you to act quickly or risk losing something.
- Requests for personal information like bank details, passwords, or ID numbers.
- Unusual payment methods such as gift cards, cryptocurrency, or wire transfers.
- Spelling and grammar mistakes in messages or websites.
- Links that look suspicious or don't match the official website.
- Attachments from unknown sender, these may contain malware.
- Messages pretending to be from someone you trust (e.g., manager, tutor, government).
- Job offers asking for upfront payments or personal data.
- Emails or texts asking you to click on a link to verify your account



How to Report a Scam in the UK

- General Scams or Fraud; https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/ reportscam
- Suspicious Emails; forward the email to: report@phishing.gov.uk
- Suspicious Text Messages; forward the message to 7726 (free)
- Suspicious Websites; report to NCSC:

https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/about-this-website/report-scam-website

- Suspicious Phone Calls; to report the number, text 7726 with the word 'Call' followed by the scam number.





Regional Safeguarding

Men's Mental Health Awareness Month

Regional Support Available



Men Matter - Scotland

Offering peer to peer support, counselling and access to therapy to improve men's mental health and stop suicide.

Website

MENKIND

MenKind - West Midlands

Empowering those facing mental health struggles, abuse, housing instability, and poverty. Offering comprehensive support to help achieve a sense of well-being, safety, and stability.

Website



Man Down

Man Down is a Cornwall-based non-profit Community Interest Company that provides peer-support talking groups and social events for men with mental health concerns.

Website

Qwell - National

On Qwell, you can speak to an experienced professional about anything that's troubling you, while staying totally anonymous. There are no fees, no long waiting lists, and no judgement.

Website

Qwell



Andy's Man Club

ANDYSMANCLUB are a men's suicide prevention charity, offering free to attend peer-to-peer support groups across the United Kingdom and online.

Website

Join Us - Men's Mental Health Live!

Book Now

Men's Mental Health Awareness Month, held each November, aims to highlight the unique mental health struggles men face and encourage open conversations about mental health. While many men experience anxiety, depression, and stress, societal pressures can make it difficult for them to seek help, often resulting in silence and isolation. Help us to break down the stigma by joining our live session. *Trigger warning - the topics covered may be distressing for some.*





Wellbeing



National Self-Care Week: 17th - 23rd November

This year's theme is "Mind & Body" Self-Care a reminder to look after both your mental and physical wellbeing.

As the days grow shorter and the weather turns, it's natural to feel a dip in energy and motivation. That's why this month; we're focusing on **mind and mood** taking time to reflect on gratitude and staying grounded.

Take a Moment; Grounding Techniques to Steady your Mind and Body

5-4-3-2-1

Notice 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste.

Box Breathing

Inhale 4 s → Hold 4 s → Exhale 4 s → Hold 4 s.

Repeat 3–4 times to calm your body.

Pause with Kindness

Take a short break, stretch, or rest your eyes. Small pauses help reset your mind.



Feel Your Feet

Plant your feet on the floor and notice the support beneath you. Breathe slowly and feel grounded.

Use Your Senses

Hold a warm mug or cool glass focus on texture and temperature to reconnect with the present.

Challenge: We invite readers to write down one thing they appreciate each day for a week.





ුරු Safeguarding

Stress Awareness Day is on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, and is an annual event designed to raise awareness about the effects of stress and how to manage it. The day is part of the larger International Stress Awareness Week (November 3-7, 2025) and is supported by mental health charities that host events and share tips for coping with stress.

How Well Do You Know Stress?

- 1. True or False? Stress is always bad for
- 2. What are two physical signs of stress?
- 3. Name one healthy way to manage stress.
- 4. Who can you talk to if you're feeling overwhelmed?
- 5. What's one small thing you can do today to reduce stress?
- *Answers at the bottom of the page!

Stress Buster Challenge

Try one of these today:

- Write down 3 things you're grateful for
- Do a 5-minute breathing exercise
- Go for a short walk
- Send a kind message to someone
- Watch the following video to learn a stress relief technique



STRESS AWARENESS

5th November 2025



What is Stress?

Stress is a natural response to pressure. It can be triggered by work, study, relationships, finances, or health. A little stress can motivate us, but too much can affect our wellbeing.

Common signs of stress:

- Feeling anxious or overwhelmed
- Trouble sleeping or concentrating
- Changes in appetite
- Irritability or withdrawal

Safeguarding and Stress

Stress can be a sign that someone is struggling. As part of our safeguarding commitment, we want every apprentice to feel safe, supported, and heard. If you're feeling overwhelmed, please reach out. We're here to listen, not to judge.

What You Can Do Today

- ✓ Check in with yourself How are you really feeling?
- ✓ Talk to someone A friend, tutor, or safeguarding contact
- ✓ Take a break Even 10 minutes of fresh air helps
- ✓ Use your support tools Wellbeing apps, journaling, or mindfulness

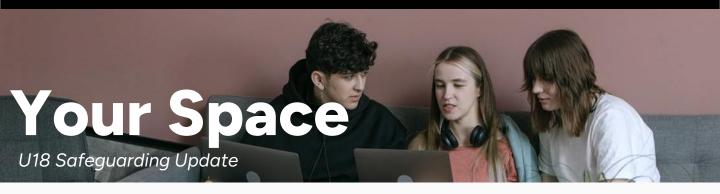
For information on Stress Awareness Day and the support you can receive, visit:

- ·Rethink Mental Illness
- ·Mental Health UK
- Mental Health Foundation

Quiz Answers

False – Some stress can be helpful, but too much is harmful. 2. Exercise, talking to someone, mindfulness, journaling 3. Headaches, fatigue, muscle tension, or stomach issues 4. Safeguarding Team, tutor, friend, family, GP 5.Any of the Stress Buster Challenge ideas!





The Illusion of connection

Are we *really* more connected, or more alone?

16 to 18 year olds are part of the most "connected" generation in history – but are among the least likely to feel heard or understood.

In this months Your Space, we are going to challenge the perception of real communication – online, in relationships, with friends and when asking for help.

Surface vs Substance

"When was the last time you told someone how you really felt - not just what you were doing?"

We talk all the time - messages, Instagram posts, comments, voice notes - but most of it sits on the surface. We share updates, not emotions; reactions, not reflections. Real communication happens when we stop performing and start being honest.

Miscommunication in Real Life

60% of young people say they find it easier to text about a problem than talk about it face-to-face (Mental Health Foundation, 2024).

Most arguments don't start with what's said - but with what's not. Messages lose tone, silence gets misread, and assumptions fill the gaps. We think people should "just know," but no one can read minds. Clear words prevent quiet fallouts.

The Digital Mask

"What would your social media feed look like if you posted how, you actually felt - not how you think you should feel?"

Quality Connections

Listen Without Fixing – When someone talks, listen to understand; not to respond. People want to feel heard and have their feelings validated.

Use Your Voice – If something feels off with a friend, say something! Don't just text 'U OK?'

Be the example – If you open up, others will follow. Talking about mental heath does not make you weak; it makes others feel less alone.





News of the Month

Changes to the Student and Graduate Rules, Visas & Immigration

What These Changes Mean:

🔷 For students:

- From 11 November 2025, students applying under the UK "Student" immigration route will face higher maintenance (living cost).
- You'll soon be able to switch into the Innovator Founder route after your studies offering new flexibility for those wanting to start a business.
- However, visa refusals or delays may more easily affect dependants, so applications must be carefully coordinated.
- Universities face tighter compliance rules, so always check your sponsor's licence status before applying.

Talking Point: Will a shorter Graduate Visa make it harder to attract international talent or encourage faster career progression and innovation?

奪 For graduates:

- The Graduate Visa stay will shorten from 2 years to 18 months (from 2027), meaning less time to find work or switch into a Skilled Worker visa. Start your job search early and seek employers who can sponsor visas. For doctoral (PhD) graduates, the 3year period remains.
- Dependants' eligibility is being tightened and aligned with student rules.
- For universities and employers: Careers teams will need to support faster transitions into work routes, and institutions must strengthen compliance systems to protect sponsored students.

Read more here -



https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/news/studentupdate-changes-to-the-student-andgraduate-rules



Charner Feedback



Jaspreet provided exceptionally supportive and timely guidance throughout the safeguarding process. She took the time to listen carefully, understand the situation fully, and respond with empathy and professionalism. Her calm approach and clear communication helped me feel reassured and confident about the next steps. I especially appreciated how she explained procedures clearly and ensured I felt included in all decisions. Her support made a real difference in resolving challenges smoothly and maintaining a sense of trust and safety. - Degree learner



I cannot thank Alana more for all of the support that she has provided me with. She was patient with me and always understanding of the situation that I was in, and no matter what I was dealing with at that point, she always had advice for me and something new for me to try in the hopes it would help. I always felt listened to and understood by Alana... telling her about my work issues, home struggles and personal difficulties, she not only provided me with useful resources and exercises to manage my stress, but we also just had a laugh every now and again which always made me feel comfortable and more open to have those deeper conversations with someone that I trust. There were times that I would miss a call due to my anxiety or my busy workloads or be terrible at responding to an email because of this as well, but she always continued to stay in touch with me and reach out to support which made me feel really valued. She is an absolute asset to the Safeguarding Team. Thank you Alana for everything.



Be 'on it' with your money, get the HMRC app



Be 'on it' with your money, get the HMRC app

Whatever your age, job or life stage, most of us have jobs on our to-do lists that involve HMRC. The HMRC app makes it easier for you to get them completed quickly, so you can tick them off your list and stop worrying about them.

What can you do on the HMRC app?

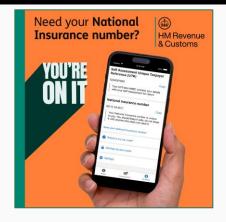
The HMRC app is packed with features to make managing your finances easier. Here are some of the things you can do on the app:

- claim a refund if you've paid too much tax
- easily find your National Insurance number and store it in your phone wallet
- check your tax code to make sure it's right, helping you avoid overpaying or underpaying tax
- check your state pension forecast
- update your personal details, such as your name or address
- view all payments from your employer

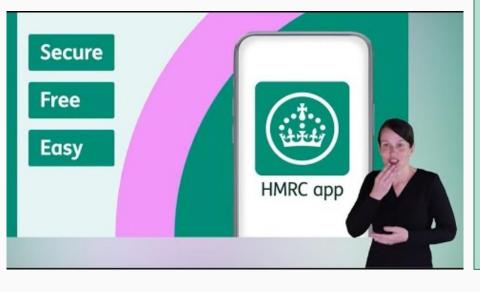
That's not all. If you're a parent, the app makes it much easier and quicker to claim and manage your Child Benefit.

The HMRC app is secure, free to download, and easy to use. Get on it and join the millions taking control of their finances.

To find out more search 'HMRC app' today.



- ✓ Check your tax code, find out if you're due any tax back from HMRC and claim a refund if you're owed one
- ✓ Remind yourself of your National Insurance number, and save it to your phone wallet
- ✓ View or download your income and employment history from the past five years, and use tools like the tax calculator to estimate take-home pay
- ✓ View your State Pension forecast and check for National Insurance contribution gaps
- ✓ Update HMRC on a change



How to download the HMRC app and sign up for an account Download the free HMRC app from:

1.the App Store for iOS.

2.the Google Play Store for Android. If you have an HMRC online account already, sign straight in using your ID and password. If not, you can prove your identity by answering some questions or providing your photo ID.

- •Follow the instructions on screen to complete the app settings.
- •Once you're set up, you can select facial recognition, a short PIN or choose to use your fingerprint to get in quicker.





If you find that either yourself, a learner or a loved one is struggling with either their mental health or other life circumstances please have a look at these helpful links:

Personal Challenges

Mind - support for mental health and informative resources on mental illness https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/

SANE - a leading UK mental health charity improving quality of life for anyone affected by mental illness - https://www.sane.org.uk/

Hub of Hope - Mental Health Support Network provided by Chasing the Stigma | Hub of hope

Samaritans – 24/7 support online or by phone for those struggling – Open Christmas Day http://www.samaritans.org/

Respect Men's Advice Helpline - <u>Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men | Men's Advice Line UK</u> (<u>mensadviceline.org.uk</u>) (Targeted at men)

National Domestic Abuse Helpline - <u>Home | Refuge National Domestic Abuse Helpline (nationaldahelpline.org.uk)</u> (Targeted at women)

Work

ACAS - Acas | Making working life better for everyone in Britain

Accommodation / Homelessness

Shelter - Support for Homelessness - Get help from Shelter - Shelter England

Citizens Advice - Citizens Advice

Help if you're homeless or about to become homeless - GOV.UK

Support for those at risk of homelessness | The Salvation Army

Financial

MIND (Cost of Living Support) - If this speaks to you, speak to us: cost of living - Mind

Turn2us - Tackling Financial Insecurity Together | Turn2us

Step Change - StepChange Debt Charity. Free Expert Debt Help & Advice

Citizens Advice: Financial Guidance

Concerned about a child harmed or at risk of harm? A child is anyone under the age of 18

https://www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline | Free counselling service for kids and young people | Childline

Prevent – extremism and radicalisation, criminal activity

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-a-referral-to-prevent

Independent UK charity taking crime information anonymously | Crimestoppers

November 2025



