Learner Health and Wellbeing Policy

Item	Details
Policy owner	Kirsty Noble
Position	Quality Director
Version	Version 2
Applies to	Learners and Staff
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1. Policy Statement

Skills-UK, Education & Training Limited is committed to supporting the health, wellbeing and welfare of learners and providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which learning can take place.

Skills-UK recognises that physical health, mental health, emotional wellbeing, personal circumstances and wider barriers can affect a learner's ability to participate, progress and achieve.

Skills-UK will promote positive wellbeing, identify concerns where appropriate, provide reasonable support within the boundaries of its role and signpost or refer learners to appropriate specialist services where further support is required.

Skills-UK is an education and training provider and does not provide clinical diagnosis, medical treatment or specialist mental health services.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to:

- promote positive physical, mental and emotional wellbeing;
- provide learners with information about appropriate support;
- ensure staff understand how to respond to learner wellbeing concerns;
- identify where health or wellbeing may create barriers to learning;
- support reasonable adjustments and inclusive participation;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are recognised and appropriately escalated;
- promote healthy and respectful behaviours; and
- provide appropriate signposting to specialist services.

This policy applies to all learners undertaking Skills-UK provision and to all staff and associates involved in supporting learners.

It applies to learning delivered at Skills-UK premises, community venues, employer premises, online and at other locations used for Skills-UK activity.

3. Principles

Skills-UK's approach to learner health and wellbeing is based on the following principles:

- **Person-centred** – learners will be treated as individuals and their circumstances considered appropriately.
- **Inclusive** – health conditions, disabilities or additional needs will not automatically prevent participation in learning.
- **Preventative** – early identification and appropriate support will be encouraged wherever possible.
- **Non-stigmatising** – learners experiencing health, mental health or wellbeing difficulties will be treated with dignity and respect.
- **Proportionate** – support and intervention will reflect the nature and seriousness of the concern.
- **Confidential** – personal information will be handled sensitively and shared only where appropriate.
- **Collaborative** – Skills-UK will work with learners and, where appropriate, external organisations to support positive outcomes.
- **Boundaries** – staff will recognise the limits of their role and seek specialist assistance where required.

4. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

Skills-UK will have regard, where applicable, to current legislation and statutory guidance including:

- Equality Act 2010;
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Care Act 2014 and Care and Support Statutory Guidance;
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 where learners are under 18;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 where applicable;
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 where applicable;
- Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025;
- Health Act 2006 and applicable smoke-free legislation; and
- relevant safeguarding and public health guidance.

Skills-UK will review its arrangements where legislative or statutory requirements change.

5. Promoting Learner Health and Wellbeing

Skills-UK will promote health and wellbeing through appropriate aspects of the learner journey and curriculum.

Depending on the programme and learner need, this may include information and awareness relating to:

- mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- managing stress;
- healthy lifestyles;
- physical activity;
- healthy eating;

- smoking and vaping;
- alcohol and substance misuse;
- healthy relationships and consent;
- sexual health;
- personal safety;
- financial wellbeing;
- online wellbeing; and
- accessing appropriate health and support services.

Skills-UK will not seek to replace specialist health or support services.

Where a learner requires support beyond the competence or role of Skills-UK staff, appropriate signposting or referral will be considered.

6. Identifying Support Needs

Learners will have opportunities to identify health, wellbeing, disability or support needs at appropriate stages of their learner journey.
This may include:

- learner pre-screening;
- initial interview and IAG;
- enrolment;
- initial and diagnostic assessment;
- induction;
- progress reviews;
- one-to-one discussions; and
- information volunteered by the learner during their programme.

Learners are encouraged to make Skills-UK aware of any circumstances that may affect their participation in learning so that appropriate support can be considered.

Learners are not required to disclose detailed medical information unless it is necessary for a specific support, safety or reasonable adjustment purpose.

7. Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Skills-UK recognises that learners may experience a range of mental health and emotional wellbeing difficulties.

These may include stress, anxiety, low mood, bereavement, social isolation or other circumstances affecting a learner's wellbeing.

Staff should:

- listen appropriately and without judgement;
- avoid attempting to diagnose a learner;
- establish whether there is an immediate welfare or safety concern;
- consider whether learning arrangements or reasonable adjustments may help;
- signpost the learner to appropriate support;
- involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead where safeguarding concerns arise; and
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

Where appropriate, learners may be encouraged to seek assistance from their GP, NHS services or an appropriate specialist organisation.

8. Self-Harm, Suicidal Thoughts and Immediate Risk

Any disclosure or indication that a learner may be at immediate risk of serious harm must be taken seriously.

Where a learner discloses thoughts of self-harm, suicide or another serious risk to their safety, staff should not attempt to manage the situation alone.

The concern must be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL in accordance with Skills-UK safeguarding procedures.

Where there is an immediate risk to life or serious harm, emergency services must be contacted without delay.

Where urgent but non-emergency health or mental health support is required, learners may be supported to access appropriate NHS services.

Confidentiality must not be promised where information may need to be shared to protect the learner or another person from serious harm.

9. Stress and Barriers to Learning

Skills-UK recognises that learners may experience pressure arising from learning, assessment, employment, finances, caring responsibilities, personal relationships or other circumstances.

Where stress or another wellbeing issue is affecting learning, staff should consider appropriate support, which may include:

- discussing the learner's concerns;
- reviewing learning or assessment arrangements;
- agreeing manageable actions;
- considering reasonable adjustments;
- providing additional learning support;
- providing appropriate IAG; or
- signposting to external support.

Staff should seek to distinguish between disengagement and circumstances where a learner is experiencing genuine barriers to participation.

Health or wellbeing concerns should therefore be considered before attendance or engagement concerns are treated as disciplinary matters.

10. Disability, Health Conditions and Reasonable Adjustments

Skills-UK is committed to ensuring that disabled learners and learners with health conditions are able to access learning without unlawful disadvantage.

Where a learner identifies a disability, long-term health condition or other relevant need, Skills-UK will consider appropriate reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Adjustments will be considered individually and may include changes to:

- learning arrangements;
- communication methods;
- resources;
- physical access;
- breaks;
- assistive technology; or
- assessment arrangements where permitted.

Where assessment is involved, any adjustment must also comply with the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation.

The existence of a disability or health condition will not in itself be treated as a reason for refusing enrolment or removing a learner from a programme.

The Equality Act continues to require reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage. Legislation.gov.uk

11. Alcohol, Drugs and Substance Misuse

Skills-UK does not permit the possession, supply or use of illegal drugs during Skills-UK learning activities.

Learners must not attend learning or programme activity where the effects of alcohol or drugs mean that they:

- present a risk to themselves or others;
- are unable to participate safely;
- significantly disrupt learning; or
- behave in a way that breaches Skills-UK expectations.

Where there is an immediate safety concern, the learner may be asked to leave the learning activity where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Serious incidents may be managed under the Learner Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedure and may be reported to the police where appropriate.

Skills-UK also recognises that alcohol or substance dependency may be a health and wellbeing issue. Learners experiencing difficulties will be treated respectfully and, where appropriate, encouraged to access specialist support.

Safeguarding procedures must be followed where substance misuse creates a safeguarding concern.

12. Smoking and Vaping

Smoking is not permitted within enclosed Skills-UK workplaces or other enclosed premises used for Skills-UK delivery.

Learners must comply with the smoking and vaping rules of the venue in which learning takes place.

Vaping will only be permitted in areas where the relevant venue allows it.

Skills-UK will support learners who wish to access information about stopping smoking or vaping by signposting them to appropriate NHS or local services.

Smoking remains prohibited in enclosed workplaces and public buildings. Current legislation also now provides powers for additional smoke-free and vape-free places, although some of the new Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 provisions require commencement regulations before taking effect. GOV.UK

13. Healthy Relationships and Sexual Health

Skills-UK recognises that healthy relationships, personal safety and sexual health can contribute to wider learner wellbeing.

Where appropriate to the learner group or curriculum, Skills-UK may provide information or signposting relating to:

- healthy and respectful relationships;
- consent;
- sexual health;
- contraception;
- sexually transmitted infections;
- domestic abuse;
- sexual harassment; and
- specialist sexual health services.

Staff should not provide clinical advice outside their professional competence.
Any disclosure suggesting abuse, exploitation, coercion, sexual violence or another safeguarding concern must be managed in accordance with the Skills-UK Safeguarding Policy.

14. Safeguarding and Adult Welfare

A health or wellbeing concern may also constitute a safeguarding concern.
Where staff have concerns about abuse, neglect, exploitation, domestic abuse, self-neglect or another safeguarding risk, the concern must be reported in accordance with the Skills-UK Safeguarding Policy.

For adult learners, Care Act safeguarding duties are particularly relevant where an adult has care and support needs, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect and, because of those needs, is unable to protect themselves. GOV.UK

Where Skills-UK works with a learner under the age of 18, child safeguarding procedures will apply. Current statutory multi-agency guidance is **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**. GOV.UK

15. Medical Emergencies

Where a learner becomes seriously ill or injured during Skills-UK activity, staff will take appropriate immediate action.
This may include:

- providing first aid where appropriately trained;
- contacting emergency services;
- following the emergency arrangements of the venue;
- contacting an emergency contact where appropriate; and
- recording and reporting the incident.

Staff must not provide medical diagnosis or treatment beyond their competence or training. Where appropriate, learners may be directed to NHS 111 for urgent medical advice that does not require an emergency response. NHS 111 continues to provide access to physical, mental health and other urgent health support in England. NHS 111

16. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Health and wellbeing information will be treated sensitively and in accordance with Skills-UK's data protection arrangements.

Health information may constitute special category personal data and must only be collected, recorded and shared where there is an appropriate purpose and lawful basis.

Information should normally be shared only with those who need it in order to provide support, make an adjustment, manage a safety concern or fulfil a legal or safeguarding responsibility.

Confidentiality is not absolute. Information may be shared without the learner's agreement where this is necessary and lawful to protect the learner or another person from serious harm, respond to a safeguarding concern or meet another legal obligation.

The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 amended aspects of the UK data-protection framework rather than replacing the UK GDPR or Data Protection Act 2018. GOV.UK

17. External Support and Signposting

Skills-UK will maintain access to current information about appropriate external support services.
Depending on the learner's circumstances, this may include:

- NHS services;
- GP services;
- mental health services;
- drug and alcohol services;
- domestic abuse services;
- sexual health services;
- smoking cessation support;
- housing and homelessness services;
- financial and welfare support; and
- specialist safeguarding organisations.

Staff should use current, verified contact information when signposting learners.
Where possible, learners should be supported to make their own informed decisions about accessing services, unless immediate safeguarding or safety concerns require further action.

18. Roles and Responsibilities

The **Quality Director** is responsible for:

- overseeing the effectiveness of this policy;
- ensuring health and wellbeing is appropriately reflected within quality arrangements;
- monitoring learner feedback and identified themes;
- identifying relevant staff development needs; and
- overseeing the formal review of the policy.

The **Operations Manager** is responsible for:

- supporting consistent implementation of the policy;
- ensuring appropriate operational support arrangements are in place;
- supporting staff where learner wellbeing affects participation or delivery; and
- ensuring significant concerns are appropriately escalated.

The **Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSL** are responsible for:

- providing advice where wellbeing concerns also raise safeguarding issues;
- receiving and responding to safeguarding concerns;
- determining whether referral or information sharing is required; and
- maintaining appropriate safeguarding records.

Tutors, Engagement Officers and other learner-facing staff are responsible for:

- promoting positive learner wellbeing;
- being alert to changes or concerns that may require support;
- listening and responding appropriately to learner disclosures;
- identifying potential support or reasonable adjustment needs;
- maintaining professional boundaries;
- signposting learners where appropriate; and
- reporting safeguarding or serious welfare concerns promptly.

Learners are encouraged to:

- take reasonable responsibility for their own health and wellbeing;
- inform Skills-UK where support may be required;
- engage with agreed support arrangements;
- behave in ways that do not put themselves or others at unnecessary risk; and
- seek appropriate professional support where required.

19. Staff Training and Professional Boundaries

Skills-UK will provide staff with appropriate training and guidance relevant to their role.
This may include:

- safeguarding;
- mental health awareness;
- suicide and self-harm awareness where appropriate;
- equality and reasonable adjustments;
- first aid;
- learner support;
- substance misuse awareness; and
- responding to disclosures.

Staff must recognise the limits of their role.
Staff should not:

- diagnose health or mental health conditions;
- provide counselling unless appropriately qualified and authorised to do so;
- provide medical advice outside their competence;
- promise absolute confidentiality; or
- undertake responsibilities that should properly be provided by a health or specialist support professional.

20. Monitoring and Review

Skills-UK will monitor health and wellbeing themes through appropriate quality and safeguarding arrangements.
This may include:

- learner feedback;
- learner voice;
- safeguarding information;
- attendance and retention themes;
- support and reasonable adjustment requirements;
- complaints;
- staff feedback; and
- referrals or signposting activity.

Information will be considered proportionately and with appropriate regard to confidentiality. Identified themes will be used to inform curriculum development, staff training, learner support and wider quality improvement.

The Quality Director is responsible for the formal review of this policy.
The policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier where required because of changes to legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements or Skills-UK delivery arrangements.

21. Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside, where applicable:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Learner Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedure
- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy/Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Information, Advice and Guidance Policy

Appendix 1 - Useful Contacts

Non-Smoking

To find out more about the health and wellbeing benefits of quitting smoking visit: www.nhs.uk/Livewell/smoking/Pages/Betterlives.aspx

Text QUIT to 87023.

For further help to quit, visit www.wequit.co.uk or www.nhs.uk to find out which services are available near you. QUIT – independent charity website: www.quit.org.uk Helpline: 0800 00 22 55

Drugs & Alcohol Advice

NHS Choices -
http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/learnershealth/Pages/Smoking,alcoholanddrugs.aspx
Change, Grow, Live https://www.changegrowlive.org/
East Kent Substance Misuse Team - http://eastkentdrugandalcohol.org.uk/ We are with you: https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/

Other addiction

MIND: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-andservices/addictionand-dependency/addiction-and-dependency-resources/
https://www.addictionhelper.com/legal-highs/

Tel: 0800 9159401
MIND Mental health charity for England & Wales 0845 766 0163 http://www.mind.org.uk/
Domestic Violence

Video Games
http://www.videogameaddiction.co.uk/help/
Tel: 08000 886686

Mental Health
Samaritans - 365 days a year/24 hours a day
0845 7909090
www.samaritans.org
Saneline- 365 days a year - 12noon to 11pm weekdays- 12noon to 6pm weekends 0845 7678000

National Domestic Violence Helpline- 7 days a week. 24 hours a day 0808 2000247
www.refuge.org.uk

Sexual Health
Terrance Higgins Trust

http://www.tht.org.uk/our-charity/Get-help-now
Tel: 0808 802 1221

Eating Disorders
Beat - Beating Eating Disorders
Telephone helplines and email services for people affected by eating disorders, including anorexia
nervosa and bulimia nervosa. Youth helpline for people aged under 25. Provide a listening ear, information and literature. Run a network of support groups, postal and telephone contacts throughout the UK. Formerly known as Eating Disorders Association. How to contact:
Phone: 0845 634 1414 adult, 0845 634 7650 youth; youth line open Mon-Fri 4.30pm-8.30pm, Sat
1pm-4.30pm.
Email: help@b-eat.co.uk Website www.b-eat.co.uk 23