

Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

J Coffey is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all its employees and recognises its moral and legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This policy outlines our commitment to protecting apprentices and young workers (under 18 years of age) from harm, abuse, and neglect, and details the procedures for identifying and responding to any safeguarding concerns. We believe that all young people have the right to be safe, regardless of their age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, sub-contractors, volunteers, and anyone working on behalf of J Coffey who may come into contact with apprentices or young workers, both on and off-site, including company premises, construction sites, training facilities, and any company-sponsored events.

Definitions

Child: For the purpose of this policy, a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

Young Person: For the purpose of this policy, a young person is defined as anyone aged 18 to 25.

Apprentice: An individual undertaking an apprenticeship programme, which may include young people under 18.

Safeguarding: Protecting children and young people from mistreatment; preventing impairment of children and young people's health or development; ensuring that children and young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Abuse: Encompasses various forms including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and online abuse.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): A senior member of staff responsible for overseeing safeguarding arrangements and acting as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns.

Principles

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount. All decisions and actions will prioritise the best interests of the apprentice or young worker.
- Prevention is better than cure. We will strive to create a culture that promotes safety, well-being, and open communication.

- Clear procedures and responsibilities. All staff will be aware of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding.
- Confidentiality and information sharing. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis, respecting confidentiality where appropriate, but never at the expense of a child's safety.
- This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect best practice and legal requirements.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Directors/Senior Management:

- Overall responsibility for ensuring the company meets its safeguarding obligations.
- Allocate adequate resources for safeguarding training, DBS checks, and support where & when required.
- Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and ensure they have sufficient time and authority to fulfil their role.
- Promote a strong safeguarding culture throughout the company.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Name: Gillian Igoe

Email: gigoe@jcoffey.com

Phone: 0208 426 4944

DSL Responsibilities:

- Act as the first point of contact for all safeguarding concerns within the company.
- Provide advice and support to staff on safeguarding matters.
- Liaise with external agencies (e.g., Local Authority Children's Services, Police) as necessary.
- Ensure all safeguarding concerns are recorded accurately and confidentially.
- Monitor and review safeguarding cases.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding legislation and best practice.
- Ensure all relevant staff receive appropriate safeguarding training.
- Lead on the development and review of this policy.

All Employees, Contractors, and Volunteers:

- Read, understand, and adhere to this safeguarding policy.
- Report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL.
- Attend mandatory safeguarding training when requested to do so.
- Be vigilant and aware of potential safeguarding risks.
- Never make assumptions or try to investigate concerns themselves.
- Maintain professional boundaries with apprentices and young workers.

Recruitment and Vetting

J Coffey is committed to safer recruitment practices to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children and young people.

DBS Checks: All staff who will have direct contact with apprentices or young workers, or who will be in a position of trust, will undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Interviews: Interview questions will explore candidates' understanding of safeguarding and their commitment to working safely with young people.

Induction: All new employees will receive a comprehensive induction that includes a thorough overview of this safeguarding policy and reporting procedures.

Promoting a Safe Environment

Code of Conduct: A clear Code of Conduct will be in place for all staff, outlining expected behaviours and professional boundaries when interacting with apprentices and young workers. This will include guidelines on:

- Appropriate language and communication.
- Physical contact.
- Use of social media and personal communication devices.
- Working in isolated situations (e.g., ensuring two adults are present where possible, or clear visibility).
- A robust whistleblowing policy will be in place to encourage staff to raise concerns about inappropriate conduct without fear of reprisal.
- All relevant health and safety legislation will be strictly adhered to, with particular attention paid to the specific risks faced by young workers on construction sites (e.g., restrictions on certain tasks, enhanced supervision). Risk assessments will be routinely carried out and reviewed.
- Apprentices and young workers will receive appropriate levels of supervision, tailored to their age, experience, and the tasks they are undertaking.
- J Coffey will ensure that apprentices have access to appropriate pastoral support, either internally or through referral to external agencies if needed.
- We will foster an environment where apprentices and young workers feel comfortable raising concerns and speaking up if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable. This will include regular check-ins and opportunities for them to provide feedback.
- J Coffey has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying, harassment, and discrimination. All incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Responding to Concerns and Allegations

Reporting a Concern:

- Immediate Action: If an apprentice or young worker is in immediate danger, or if there is a risk of serious harm, call the police (999) immediately.
- Reporting to DSL: All safeguarding concerns, no matter how minor they may seem, must be reported to the DSL as soon as possible, and ideally within 24 hours.

What to Report:

- Any disclosure made by an apprentice or young worker.
- Any observable signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect.
- Any concerning behaviour or statements made by an adult towards an apprentice or young worker.
- Any concerns raised by another employee or third party.

How to Report:

- Verbally to the DSL: 0208 426 4944 or 07824 014 776
- In writing to the DSL: gigoe@jcoffey.com

Do NOT:

- Promise confidentiality (you must explain that you may need to share information to keep them safe).
- Lead or cross-examine the individual.
- Make assumptions or speculate.
- Contact the alleged perpetrator.

DSL Responsibilities upon Receiving a Concern:

- Listen carefully and empathetically.
Document the date, time, who reported it, what was said/observed, and any actions taken, using the Safeguarding Concern Form.
- Determine the level of risk to the apprentice or young worker.
- For concerns about abuse or neglect, contact the Local Authority Children's Services immediately.
- For allegations against staff, contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day.
- For criminal allegations, contact the Police.
- Share information on a need-to-know basis, respecting confidentiality where possible.
- Ensure the apprentice/young worker receive's appropriate support.
- Provide feedback to the individual who raised the concern (where appropriate and without breaching confidentiality).

Managing Allegations Against Staff:

- All allegations against staff will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and fairly, following the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) procedures.
- The DSL will immediately inform the LADO and cooperate fully with any subsequent investigation.
- Staff members who are subject to an allegation may be suspended from duties involving direct contact with young people pending the outcome of the investigation, in line with company disciplinary procedures.
- Support will be provided to the accused staff member, whilst prioritising the safety of the young person.

Information Sharing and Confidentiality:

- Information relating to safeguarding concerns will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.
- Information will only be shared on a "need-to-know" basis, and only with individuals or agencies who have a legitimate reason to receive it, in order to protect the welfare of the child/young person.
- Consent to share information will be sought where appropriate, but information will be shared without consent if there is a risk of significant harm to a child/young person.
- All records will be stored securely and in accordance with data protection regulations (GDPR).

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually, or sooner if there are changes in legislation, guidance, or company practice.

The DSL will report to the Board of Directors/Senior Management on safeguarding matters at least every month, including:

- Number and nature of concerns raised
- Actions taken
- Training undertaken
- Any areas for improvement
- Feedback from apprentices, young workers, and staff will be actively sought to inform policy reviews

Related Policies

- Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy (GDPR)
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Disciplinary Policy

Queries

Any queries relating to this policy should be addressed to the HR department.

This policy applies to all employees and other personnel engaged in J Coffey Construction operations:

Signed: *Eddie Barrett* (Original Signed)

Date: 14/08/2025

Eddie Barrett

Group Managing Director

On behalf of J. Coffey Construction