

# Safeguarding Newsletter



## The Safeguarding Team

# Meet the Team!



**Mark Soady**

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)  
& Apprenticeships Head of Learner Services



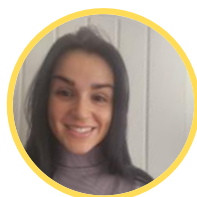
**Clare Stuart**

Deputy DSL  
& Safeguarding Team Leader



**Jaspreet Hothi**

Prevent Lead  
& Safeguarding Specialist



**Alana**



**Sarah**



**Luke**



**Jamie**

**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 [\*\*safeguarding@qa.com\*\*](mailto:safeguarding@qa.com)
- Complete a Safeguarding Self-Referral Form if the concern relates to you. [\*\*Safeguarding Self-Referral Form \(Learners\) QA Ltd\*\*](#)
- Complete a Safeguarding Referral Form if you are worried about someone else. [\*\*Safeguarding Referral Form \(Staff/Employer/Peer\) QA Ltd\*\*](#)



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## Prevent



**Jaspreet Hothi**

Prevent Lead  
& Safeguarding Specialist

# Gaming & Grooming

## Why This Matters :

Online gaming is one of the most popular digital spaces for young people. But it's also a growing space where grooming and radicalisation can occur, often hidden in plain sight. Groomers and extremists know that games build trust, loyalty, and long-term engagement. That makes them the perfect place to recruit, influence, and manipulate.

## Red Flags to Watch For :

- ▶ Sudden change in behaviour or beliefs
- ▶ Increased secrecy around gaming or online friends
- ▶ Talking about conspiracy theories or extreme ideologies
- ▶ Intense loyalty to someone met online
- ▶ Sudden change in behaviour or beliefs

## Why Groomers Use Gaming :

- Builds trust over time
- Appears harmless to parents and teachers
- Shared identity as gamers makes it easier to bond
- Normalises violence or extremist views through play

## What You Can Do :

- **Start conversations early** – Ask who they play with and what they talk about
- **Encourage openness** – Make it safe to talk about online experiences without fear or judgment
- **Learn the platforms** – Know where conversations happen (e.g., Roblox, Fortnite, Discord, Twitch)
- **Spot the signs** – Notice emotional or behavioural changes
- **Know how to report** – Speak to the Safeguarding Team at QA – [safeguarding@qa.com](mailto:safeguarding@qa.com) and in emergencies call 999.



## British Values

### Understanding British Values: Why They Matter in Your Apprenticeship and Beyond

As an apprentice, you're not just gaining skills for a career — you're also developing into a responsible and active member of society. Part of this journey includes understanding and respecting **British values**, which form the foundation of a safe, inclusive, and respectful workplace and community. But what exactly are British values, and why are they important for you as an apprentice?

### What Are British Values?

There are **4 core British values** promoted in education and the workplace:

**Democracy**

**The Rule of Law**

**Individual Liberty**

**Mutual Respect & Tolerance of Different Faiths and Beliefs**

### Why Do These Values Matter in Safeguarding?

- Prevent bullying, harassment, and extremism
- Encourage inclusion and diversity
- Build trust and community
- Promote well-being and safety

### Scenario: Workplace Discrimination

**A UK-based company was found to have failed to promote several employees from ethnic minority backgrounds despite their qualifications and performance. An internal investigation revealed that some managers showed unconscious bias and tolerated a workplace culture where microaggressions and disrespectful behaviour towards minority staff went unchecked.**

#### Core British Values Affected:

##### **Mutual Respect and Tolerance:**

Employees from diverse backgrounds were not treated with respect or understanding, creating a hostile work environment.

##### **Individual Liberty:**

Staff members felt their freedom to express themselves and grow professionally was unfairly limited.

##### **Rule of Law:**

The company violated equality and anti-discrimination laws designed to protect employees.

##### **Democracy:**

Employees' voices and concerns were ignored or dismissed in decision-making processes.

##### **Discussion Question:**

*How can organisations actively promote the core British values of mutual respect, individual liberty, democracy, and rule of law to create a fair and inclusive workplace? What steps should be taken when these values are not being upheld?*



## Regional Safeguarding



Click the pins to see regional news

### Scotland

Just last month, it was reported that £3.6 million per day is paid out in Adult Disability Payments. Stress, anxiety and depression account for 39% of these payments.

### Northern England

A report by the Northern Health Science Alliance (NHSA) estimates the North of England lost £2 billion in productivity during the pandemic which has not fully recovered in 2025

### The Midlands

A report surveying nearly 1900 businesses found 27.5% of firms experienced mental health related absences. Alarming, 47.2% of these are long term

### Southwest England

According to GP Records, 13.5% of adults (around 66,261 individuals) are living with depression. This has seen an increase trend of around 1.5% year on year.

### London & Southeast England

A UK – wide survey found that Londoners are the most likely to experience stress. 91% report feeling stressed at least once a month. Higher than any other region in the UK by nearly 18%



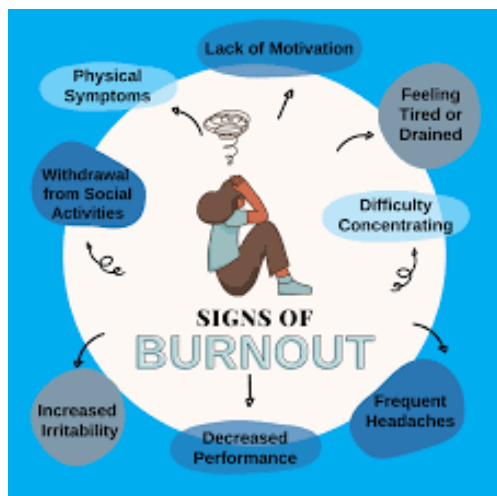
## Wellbeing

# Understanding Burnout

## Recognise it, Manage it, Prevent it

Burnout is more than just feeling tired after a long day. It is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress, often related to work or demanding personal situations. In today's fast-paced world, burnout is becoming increasingly common, affecting productivity, wellbeing, and overall happiness.

### What Does Burnout Look Like?



### Why Does Burnout Happen?

Burnout usually develops when demands consistently exceed your capacity to cope. This can be due to:

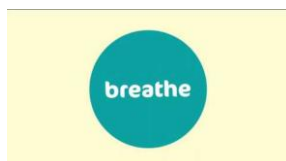
- Heavy workload or unrealistic deadlines
- Lack of control or support at work
- Poor work-life balance
- Feeling undervalued or unappreciated

### How to Manage and Prevent Burnout

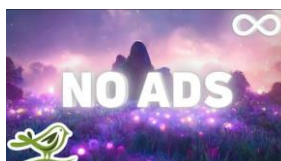
- **Set boundaries** : Learn to say no and prioritise tasks.
- **Take regular breaks** : Short pauses during work help refresh your mind.
- **Stay active** : Physical exercise reduces stress and boosts mood.
- **Connect with others** : Share your feelings with friends, family, or colleagues.
- **Seek professional support** : Don't hesitate to talk to a counsellor or health professional

### Mindfulness : A Powerful Tool to Combat Burnout

#### Mindful Breathing Exercise



#### Relaxing Sleep music





## Safeguarding



### Fast-Food Chain Joins the Fight Against Child Exploitation

Chicken Cottage, which operates over 70 outlets across the UK, has teamed up with national charity The Children's Society to train staff in recognising the warning signs of child exploitation.

As part of this pioneering initiative, employees are being equipped to spot potential cases of grooming, trafficking, or county lines activity, particularly among young people visiting their stores.



*'The Children's Society says groomers often use offers of food and clothes to gain the trust of young people before sexually abusing them, forcing them into slave labour or into criminal activities such as muling drugs and money laundering.'*

[The fast food chain helping tackle child exploitation - Positive News](#)

**#LookCloser  
Campaign**

#### Criminal Exploitation



Criminal exploitation is a type of modern slavery where people are tricked, forced, or controlled by criminals to do illegal work. This can include things like begging, shoplifting, growing cannabis, selling drugs, stealing from ATMs, or selling fake goods.

#### Child Sexual Exploitation



Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse that involves manipulating, coercing, or forcing a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something, such as money, gifts, attention, protection, or basic needs like food or shelter. Often, the child does not recognise the situation as abuse because they may believe they are in a consensual relationship or being cared for.

Head over to the [Children's Society website](#), to learn more.

#### **Do you have concerns about a child you know or work with?**

If you think a child, you know or work with is at risk of exploitation or is being exploited, contact the social care team at their [local council](#).

You can also contact the safeguarding team at [safeguarding@qa.com](mailto:safeguarding@qa.com) for advice and guidance or to talk about how this article has impacted you.



## News of the Month

### Domestic abuse contacts to the NSPCC helpline reaches a record high

New figures reveal a 14% increase in child welfare contacts from adults concerned about domestic abuse in the last year.



Adults said they were worried about children suffering various forms of domestic abuse, including physical abuse, coercive control, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, stalking, and financial abuse.



A third of child welfare contacts about domestic abuse ended in a referral to local agencies including police and children's social services.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, the NSPCC helpline has handled 2,633 child welfare contacts where Coercive/ controlling behaviour was mentioned.

### Coercive and controlling behaviour:

Includes assault:

Threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten a partner or ex-partner.

Children whose parents or carers use or experience coercive and controlling behaviour within their own relationships can feel isolated and frightened and may have poor mental health as a result.

Click [here](#) to learn more

Worried about a child?

You can contact the NSPCC Helpline by calling [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000) or emailing [help@NSPCC.org.uk](mailto:help@NSPCC.org.uk)

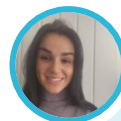


## Learner Feedback



Sarah has been helping me with various difficulties. Sarah has provided me various tools and techniques to manage these difficulties which has had a positive impact on my wellbeing. Sarah's support has helped me massively from a wellbeing perspective which is going to help me meet my potential within my MSc, as well as in life in general. I'm not sure I could have done it without her support, so this is greatly appreciated

**L7 Apprentice**



The support given to me by Alana was nothing short of perfect. I always felt like I could be open and honest with Alana with everything that was happening in personal life and work life. I believe Alana is the benchmark of safeguarding support and should be a mentor for best practice within the industry.

**L4 Apprentice**



## Helpful Links

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

- **Samaritans** – 24/7 support online or by phone for those struggling – Open Christmas Day  
<http://www.samaritans.org/>
- **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](#)
- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** - [Home | Refuge National Domestic Abuse Helpline \(nationaldahelpline.org.uk\)](#) (Targeted at women)
- **Respect Men's Advice Helpline** - [Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men | Men's Advice Line UK \(mensadvice.org.uk\)](#) (Targeted at men)

### 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](#)

