Learner Apprenticeship Handbook

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Introduction

Welcome to Dove Nest Group, where we specialise in leadership and management programmes. We provide apprenticeship training for several large national companies. Currently we deliver the Team Leader Standard at Level 3, Operations Manager Standard at Level 5, Coaching Professional Standard at Level 5 and the Senior Leader Standard at level 7. These can be delivered with or without ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management) Level 3 and 5 or CMI (Chartered Management Institute) Level 3, 5 or 7. We also deliver the Level 6 Project controls Apprenticeship.

We offer training and development across a wide range of leadership and management from strategic view to assessment centres, graduate programmes, coaching, wellbeing programmes and psychology in leadership and management. This includes, but not limited to emotional intelligence training and our Aspects assessment.

Our mission and values are present in everything we do.

Our Mission

To free the world from mediocre leadership, one manager, one team, one organisation at a time.

Our Values

Passionate about Developing People

The development of our learners, delegates, colleagues, and clients is paramount. It unites us all. Its why we come to work.

Give Twice to Receive Once

Delivering to the brief…what was needed and asked for. Then going beyond, acting above the call of duty.

Demonstrate Compassion and Courage

Growth is not always easy or without difficulty. Our aim is to do the right thing, not the easy thing. To be kind and behave with best interests at heart.

Welcome to your apprenticeship programme!

We are pleased you have chosen Dove Nest Group to support you with your goals, whether that be to progress or upskill in your current job role, look for other opportunities, a change of career or to just learn something new, we are with you every step of the way. Our programmes will meet your needs by being available online, face-to-face or blended (a mixture of both) where you will transfer your new learning, to long term memory through our unique experiential approach to education and training. You will have access to your learning materials 24/7 through our online e-learning platform and your trainer is only an email or phone call away. We are sure that you will enjoy this experience and gain the satisfaction of putting the knowledge, skills and behaviours you learn into practice, seeing the benefits of your learning experience early on in your programme, both for you and your organisation.

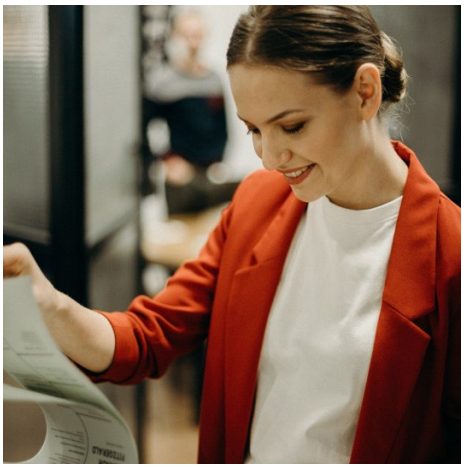
At Dove Nest Group we pride ourselves on our ability to meet client requests with enthusiasm, passion, and most of all with solutions that continue to provide outstanding results. We value our clients' and learners' opinions and for over 40 years our reputation has gone from strength to strength in delivering what's "on the tin".

Our **key USP** is putting **science** into **leadership**. Many organisations either have great trainers and facilitators or have a strong **psychology** base; we combine the two, enabling us to create and **deliver unique solutions**. Your organisations return on investment is important to us and your learning is paramount.

We are committed to ensuring a safe environment in which you can learn, and this handbook sets out the expectations of you whilst on programme, so you have full clarity throughout and have access to key and important information about your apprenticeship programme. Please take time to read through this handbook at the start of your programme and refer to it throughout.

Your programme will be funded using one of the following means, privately (your employer is paying directly for your programme, therefore not an apprenticeship though you may be part of an apprenticeship cohort for your learning experience and content), co-invested (paid partially by your employers levy funding and partially by the Department for Education (DFE)), fully funded by the Apprenticeship Levy (0.5% of your employers payee bill) and as such, we need to make sure we keep in touch with you throughout your journey to satisfy the funding rules which govern us during your programme, as we are fully auditable by the DFE and subject to Awarding Organisation and Ofsted inspections.

We wish you well on your learning journey with us and we are here to support you achieve excellence. Welcome and enjoy your experiential leadership and development programme with Dove Nest Group.



How your apprenticeship funding works

The Apprenticeship Levy is a government incentive Training Tax and is a source of funding introduced in April 2017, to ensure all organisations have access to training and development through apprenticeships in England.

All organisations with more than a £3 million annual payee bill (tax bill) pay an additional 0.5% through HMRC. This is then retained for them in a Digital Account Service, (known as DAS), which they then access to pay for the cost of apprenticeship training, provided by approved apprenticeship training providers.

The government replaced old apprenticeship frameworks (known as NVQ's) with Apprenticeship Standards, which were designed in partnership with employers to ensure that the programmes were fit for purpose and gave learners (apprentices) the skills, knowledge and behaviours, employers required for the specific job role or industry, making the education, training and development of new or current employees more relevant and applicable to the workplace.

Non-Levy paying organisations are smaller and would pay less HMRC, therefore they are limited to the number of apprentices they can have at any one time and instead of paying 0.5% of the payee bill, they make a 5% employer contribution to the cost of the apprenticeship, which is paid directly to the Apprenticeship Training Provider, in a lump sum or installments.

If a levy paying employer does not use all of their levy funds within a 2-year period (1 year from April 2026), then up to 50% of those funds can be transferred to other organisations to be used for apprenticeship training. Smaller organisations can benefit from these funds, as they can then increase their limited number of apprentices and do not have to pay the 5% employer contribution for those.

The apprenticeship levy payments are automatically paid to the apprenticeship training provider, whilst the apprentice is still actively in learning. However, the employer has the right and power to stop the payments at any point, this will result in training ending for that apprentice, until the payments are restarted.

Basic rules of apprenticeships

- From the 1st August 2025, the minimum duration for apprenticeship training is 8 months, followed by Gateway and End Point Assessment (EPA), which is usually around 12 weeks. The full duration of the apprenticeship will be a minimum of 11 months in total. This will vary depending on the qualification completed. Minimum durations for apprenticeships starting before the 1st August 2025, remain at 372 days (inclusive of EPA).

- An Apprenticeship is not complete until the End Point Assessment (EPA) is completed. This is not performed by your apprenticeship training provider but by an approved independent organisation known as an End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO).

- Anyone over the age of 16 who is working is eligible for an apprenticeship, if their contract is for longer than the duration of the apprenticeship.

- Apprentices aged 19 or over, on their first day, have an option to complete Level 2 Maths and English qualifications (known as Functional Skills) during their apprenticeship, if they do not already hold GCSE's or equivalent qualifications at this level. For apprentices aged 16–18 on their first day, completing Level 2 Maths and English qualifications is a compulsory requirement, if suitable qualifications are not already held. Functional Skills will be delivered by your apprenticeship training provider and funded by the Department for Education. If required, Functional Skills must be successfully achieved before you can begin the End-Point Assessment.

- Each Apprentice is required to spend a specified number of their working hours on training; this is called Off-The-Job training. These hours must be logged with details of the training undertaking during working time. The Department for Education has published the minimum Off the Job hours for every Apprenticeship Standard. The minimum number of hours must be completed, regardless of the programme length, prior to progressing into End Point Assessment.

- All learning must take place during the Apprentices paid working hours.

- Apprenticeships can be delivered on-site, online, at the Apprenticeship Training Providers location(s) or a mixture of both.

- All apprentices must produce evidence of learning every month, as a minimum, to remain eligible for the funding of their apprenticeship.

Off the Job Training

Each Apprentice is required to spend a specified number of their working hours on training; this is called Off-The-Job training. These hours must be logged with details of the training undertaken during working time, excluding overtime hours. The Department for Education has published the minimum Off the Job hours for every Apprenticeship Standard.

Examples of off the job training include classroom or workshop training, role play, coaching and mentoring, simulation exercises, online learning, work shadowing, industry visits, self-study and workbooks or assignments completed in your normal working hours, that contribute to the completion of your apprenticeship. Your organisation has signed and agreed to your off the job hours within the apprenticeship agreement, contract of services and commitment statements required for your enrolment onto programme. Your employer must support these activities and provide you the time to receive your allocation of off the job hours.

The total off the job hours required will vary depending on the minimum hours published by the DFE, for the apprenticeship standard you are completing and any prior learning you may hold. Please speak with your trainer or visit your e-learning platform to find out the hours you are entitled to.

The minimum off the job hours must be completed, regardless of the programme length, prior to progressing into End Point Assessment.

End Point Assessment

An End Point Assessment is the final element for apprentices during their apprenticeship. It is designed to be an objective and impartial assessment of an apprentice's knowledge, skills, and behaviours. Activities are different for every apprenticeship, but they all follow the same overall structure. Your trainer will explain to you in detail what your End Point Assessment will comprise of and support you throughout your apprenticeship, to prepare for your final assessments.

An Apprenticeship is not complete until the End Point Assessment (EPA) is completed. This is not performed by your apprenticeship training provider but by an approved independent organisation known as an End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO).

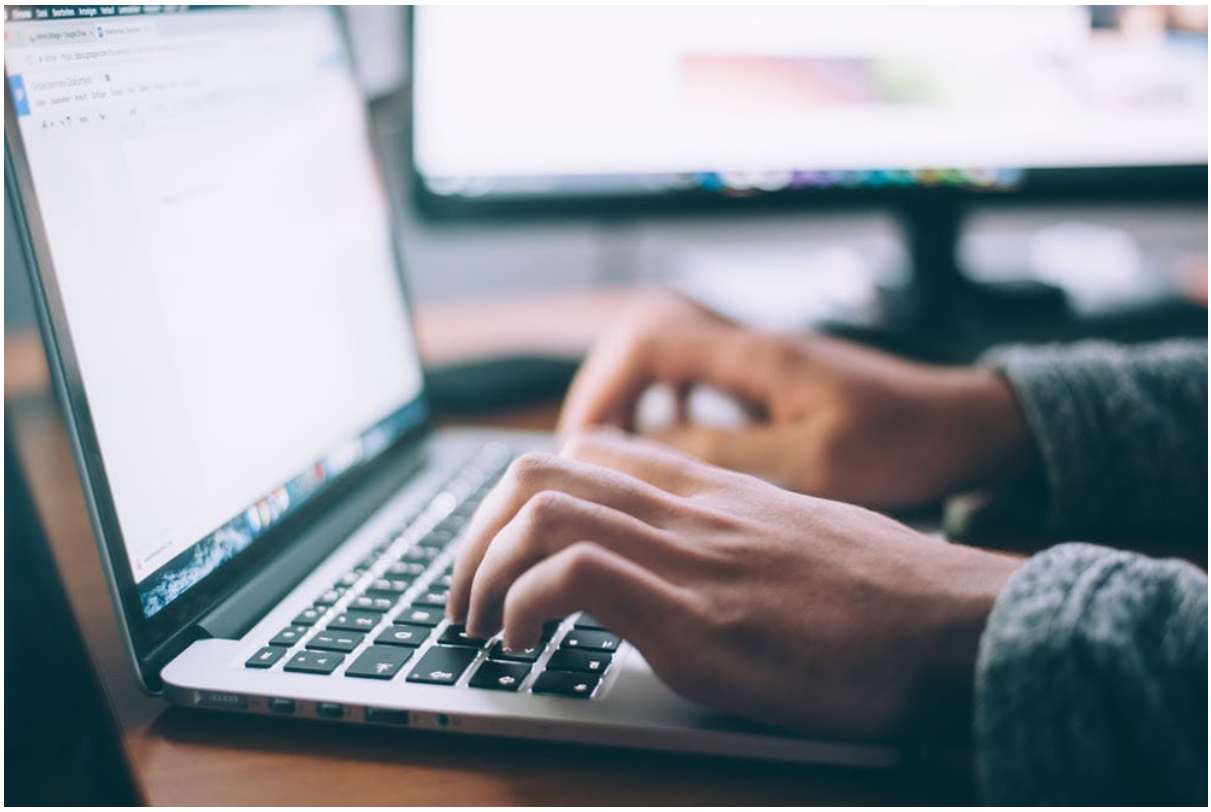
Awarding Organisations

All our apprenticeship programmes are certified by an Awarding Organisation (Awarding Body/AO). We use NOCN, City and Guilds, ILM and CMI as our Awarding Organisations and they are well established and accredited within their field, regulated by Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation), to ensure we deliver an excellent qualification to meet your needs.

We are regulated by these organisations and subject to regular inspection. At times, OFSTED and/or an Awarding Organisation may wish to speak to you and/or your employer to find out how your learning experience has been. If you are selected for an interview, a senior member of the team will call you to schedule an appointment with you and set a time and date and explain the process. This is of course optional.

Surveys

We value your feedback and that of your employer to help us improve our services to you. You may be asked to complete surveys at different points in your programme to provide us valuable insight into the content of your learning, the performance of your trainer(s) and your overall experience with Dove Nest Group. Please complete these surveys when you receive them, either through your online e-learning platform or via email which will connect you to our SurveyMonkey tool.



What to expect

Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG)

You will have been provided information on the programmes available, the suitability of the programme to your needs and that of your employer and guidance on next steps. This information will allow you to make suitable educational and employment decisions. Careers, information, advice, and guidance will continue throughout your apprenticeship programme with your trainer and will be discussed at regular reviews with your employer. The overall aim of effective careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) is to enable you to become effective career decision makers, leading to increased participation in education and training to enhance your employment needs/requirements.

Eligibility and onboarding

You should have completed the following when onboarding (this is how you enrolled onto your apprenticeship).

- An initial assessment for Maths and English to establish your eligibility for the programme
- A diagnostic assessment for Maths and English to establish what level of support you may need towards Maths and English – If required
- Cognassist assessment to establish what additional cognitive development you may need, if any
- Provided evidence of identification and right to live and work in the UK (residency in England – for apprenticeship funding)
- Training Provider Programme Questions
- Skills Scan
- All activities set out in your welcome email and on your e-learning platform
- Eligibility Call with Dove Nest Group Representative

You will then be entitled to

- A dedicated trainer who will be responsible for supporting your learning and development and provide feedback to help you develop.
- Access to your safe and secure online learning (e-learning platform) which details the qualifications and levels you are working towards and the planned achievement dates, resources such as workbooks, additional learning support if needed, the off the job training hours, reviews and action plans. This is also known as your Individual Learning Plan/Journey.
- A safe and healthy learning and work environment
- Equality of opportunity through the support provided to help you achieve
- High quality experiential training, learning and development with access to fair assessment by qualified and experienced staff.
- Access to the Appeals procedure, together with the Disciplinary / Grievance procedures, Complaint's procedure and Safeguarding and Wellbeing information

What we will expect from you

- Attend all appointments and workshops sessions on time and meet deadlines set
- Agree to use safe working practices and not to endanger yourself or others at any time
- Treat everyone you work and/or learn with fairly, equally and without discrimination
- Take good care of any materials provided
- Let us know immediately if you are having any problems so we can support you and resolve them quickly
- Submit work on time and to a high standard, following plagiarism policy and guidance
- To keep in touch with us and return calls or emails promptly.
- To advise us of any change of circumstances to your personal details or situation which may impact your apprenticeship and to help us keep your information current.

Trainers, Functional Skills Trainers, and Internal Quality Assurance

You will be allocated a trainer who will support you throughout your apprenticeship programme and is available to contact through your e-learning platform, via email, telephone, online through Teams or the agreed alternative platform for your organisation. They are there to support you from the start and will regularly check how you are doing and contact you if you haven't met agreed deadlines. This is to make sure they can support if you are struggling, provide additional learning resources and to ensure you complete your apprenticeship on time. They will provide feedback around what you have done well, as well as areas for development and some stretch and challenge where needed.

If you are completing maths, English or both, you will also be allocated a Functional Skills Trainer and will have been provided a week commencing date for your exams, so you are clear on your Functional Skills duration. Your Functional Skills Trainer will support you throughout your apprenticeship to achieve your maths and/or English. They will use BKSB and other resources to support you to complete your Functional Skills. The Functional Skills Trainer will contact you at least once month to support you with your learning and is available to contact through your e-learning platform, via email, telephone, online through Teams or the agreed alternative platform for your organisation. They are there to support you from the start and will regularly check-in with your main trainer on how you are doing overall on your apprenticeship, and they will work together to make sure they can provide the right support if you are struggling, provide additional learning resources and to ensure you complete your apprenticeship on time.

To ensure the integrity of the apprenticeship, your work will be quality assured by our Internal Quality Assurers (IQA'S) who will check the work that your trainer(s) have marked to ensure it meets the Awarding Organisation standards and ensure the best possible outcome. However, sometimes this work may not meet standards and if not, the IQA will refer this back to your trainer providing them feedback for development, which may require you to revisit some of your submissions. If you receive a referral, your trainer will let you know and provide support and guidance on future submissions.

Policies

This section provides you details of our policies and commitments to you whilst on one of our programmes. These are extracts or an overview of/from our policies. However, you can request a full copy of any of our policies from your trainer.

AI, Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism is deemed to be an act of presenting another's work as your own. The following are examples of Plagiarism. The list is not exhaustive and other instances of Plagiarism may be considered and acted upon:

- Using excerpts from published work such as from books or articles without the knowledge and permission of the author and then presenting it as having been created by self.
- Using unpublished work such as that prepared by a fellow student, colleague, family member or friend, without the knowledge and permission of the author and then presenting it as having been created by self.
- Using AI generated work without referencing it appropriately and presenting it as having been created by self.

Cheating is deemed as a deliberate act to deceive. The following are examples of Cheating. The list is not exhaustive and other instances of Cheating may be considered and acted upon:

- Obtaining access to test papers prior to examination
- An individual impersonating another to achieve a desired result
- Using materials that are restricted during examinations
- Using work that is not your own to achieve a desired result
- Making adjustments to examination papers after submission

Plagiarism, inappropriate AI use and Cheating, jeopardises the integrity of the qualification, the Dove Nest Group reputation and that of the Awarding Organisation and any detected or alleged instances will be fully investigated and actioned accordingly.

All workbook submissions are to have signed declaration of authenticity and as an apprentice with Dove Nest Group, you must take a professional approach to learning, therefore you must clearly identify and acknowledge the use of all secondary sources, for example quotations, models, theories etc from books, websites or any other source including work-based products in accordance with all Awarding Organisations and Dove Nest Group's AI, Plagiarism and Cheating Policy.

The use of Harvard referencing is not prescribed but you should use an appropriate referencing system that ensures the original source(s) can be tracked. Referencing must be made directly under, or next to, the source within the body of the work. A bibliography cannot be relied on as showing you have adequately referenced a source. A bibliography is not a requirement but a reference list at the end is required to show a collated list. You should italicise the text when using direct quotes where possible to highlight it is not your own work and should provide your own interpretation of the information.

Health and Safety

The Dove Nest Group recognises and accepts its health and safety duties for providing a safe and healthy learning and working environment (as far as is reasonably practicable) for all its employees (paid or volunteer) and other visitors to its premises under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, other relevant legislation, and common law duties of care.
It is the policy of Dove Nest Group to promote the health and safety of employees, clients, learners, associates and of all visitors to our venues ("the venues") and to that, intent to:

- Take all reasonably practicable steps to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all personnel on the premises.
- Provide adequate working conditions with proper facilities to safeguard the health and safety of personnel and to ensure that any work which is undertaken, produces no unnecessary risk to health or safety.
- Encourage persons on the premises to co-operate with the Company in all safety matters, in the identification of hazards, which may exist and in the reporting of any condition, which may appear dangerous or unsatisfactory.
- Ensure the provision and maintenance of plant, equipment and systems of work that are safe.
- Maintain safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
- Provide sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable everyone to avoid hazards and contribute to their own safety and health.
- Provide specific information, instruction, training and supervision to personnel, who have particular health and safety responsibilities (e.g. a person appointed as a Health and Safety Officer or Representative).
- Make, as reasonably practicable, safe arrangements for protection against any risk to health and safety of clients, visitors, learners, associates and the general public or other persons, that may arise for the company's activities.
- Make suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of employees and of persons not in the employment of the Company, arising out of or in connection with the Company's activities.
- Make specific assessment of risks in respect of new or expectant mothers and young people under the age of eighteen.
- Provide information to other employers of any risks to which those employer's workers on the Company's premises may be exposed.

You can request a copy of our full Health and Safety Policy from your trainer.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Dove Nest Group are committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and will not tolerate discrimination whether by reason of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation or ability. We will promote, set by example and encourage equal opportunities for all, by making your learning and our work environment a safe and welcoming place and intend to treat everyone equally and with same attention, courtesy and respect.

As an organisation we will, where practicable, seek to provide services which meet the specific needs and requests arising from learners/clients ethnic or cultural background; gender; age; responsibilities as carers; disability; religion or belief; sexual orientation or other relevant factors. Complaints of Discrimination will be treated seriously, and action taken where appropriate, concerning all complaints of discrimination or harassment, on any of the protected characteristics made by employees, associates, learners, clients, or other third parties. All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the Dove Nest Groups grievance and/or complaints procedure and the complainant will be informed of the outcome.

Prevent, Safeguarding and Wellbeing

PREVENT is part of the governments counter terrorism strategy and it aims to address terrorism by identifying and addressing the roots causes of terrorism and PREVENT individual or groups from supporting or being involved or aid acts of terrorism.
The three specific strategic objectives under PREVENT are:

- Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it.
- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support.
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address.

Extremism and radicalisation are managed under the PREVENT Duty to safeguard individuals from these political, social altering actions. Extremism is the holding of strong / extreme political views or religious views, and radicalisation is the action or process of causing someone to adopt a totally different political or social change, representing or supporting an extreme or progressive section of a political party.

The Government's Prevent Duty defines radicalisation as *"the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups".*

Extremism as is defined in law as: *'Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.'*

Should you become concerned about the changes in someone's political or religious views as they have become very extreme or widely differ from their fundamental views, or if their behaviour has changed and become very out of character, please raise this with your trainer immediately, who will report any concerns to Dove Nest Group's Designated Safeguarding Officer. You should also follow your own organisations policy in relation to Safeguarding and Prevent.

An awareness of PREVENT and the dangers faced, can help you to keep yourself and others safe.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting individuals; enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect. Safeguarding children, young people and adults is a collective responsibility of all of us.

Those most in need of protection include:

- Children and young people (those under 18 years of age)
- Adults at risk, such as a person (over the age of 18) who is unable to take care of themselves. It can also refer to one who is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. It is important to note that this does not necessarily mean that the adult lacks competency. The adult's circumstances must be unable to be altered or improved, without direct assistance to be classed as vulnerable.

All Dove Nest Group employees, all apprentices on programme, clients and visitors have a responsibility to safeguard children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect and must report any safeguarding concerns to Dove Nest Group's Designated Safeguarding Officer. You should also follow your own organisations policy in relation to Safeguarding.

Wellbeing

Promotion of wellbeing is a central part of safeguarding**.** Simple methods, such as talking and providing support can make an incredible difference to someone's mental wellbeing.

At Dove Nest Group we understand the positive impact that healthy and engaged individuals make to the success of their apprenticeship, and that mental health will play a significant role in a person's state of mind.

We appreciate that individuals can experience periods - sometimes prolonged periods - of poor mental health in the same way as with physical health. We commit to providing support for learners through mental health problems, because we recognise this and want to safeguard those around us. We will work with you, your trainer, and your employer to ensure we provide you as much support, as practicable, to help you succeed and excel on your apprenticeship.

If you are experiencing or have concerns about a colleague or another learner, please contact your trainer for further information and guidance, you should also follow your own organisations policy in relation to wellbeing and safeguarding.

Online Safety

Being aware of and practicing online safety is the only way to mitigate risks. They will always be present but understanding how to manage harmful situations and content, will ensure you are best placed to benefit from your time online, free from harm.

Creating an online space that is led by the principles of online safety, requires all of us to step up – to both practice online safety and to challenge bad and harmful behaviours online.

Forms of online risk to be aware of:

- **Grooming** – Online grooming is when someone builds a relationship with an individual online, because they want to trick or pressure them into doing something that may hurt or harm them, quite often this being sexual abuse. Anyone can be a victim, and no one is immune, although some individuals are more susceptible than others. This process starts by the groomer targeting a vulnerable person, developing a 'friendship' which leads to them building trust.
- **Online radicalisation** – *"the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups".* The internet provides entertainment, connectivity, and interaction for people across the world. However, terrorist groups have also recognised the power of this and are increasingly reaching out to individuals, using the internet as a tool for recruitment and radicalisation
- **Trolling and cyberbullying** – Trolls are people who leave intentionally provocative or offensive messages on the internet to get attention, cause trouble or upset someone.
  Cyber-bullying is the bullying of another person using the internet, mobile phones, and other digital devices. Cyber-bullying can take the form of posts on forums or social media, text messages or emails, all with the aim of hurting the victim.
  Trolling is often seen as a form of cyber-bullying and is generally about provoking a reaction.

Support and links to help keep safe online

Get Safe Online - UK's leading source of unbiased, factual and easy-to-understand information on online safety.

- Website - https://www.getsafeonline.org/protecting-yourself/

Information Commissioners Office - upholds information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.

- Website - https://ico.org.uk/

Child Exploitation and Online Protection - reports can be made to CEOP if you are concerned about the way that someone has been communicating online and you can find useful information, to help you know what action to take in various situations.

- Website - https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/

True Vision - focuses on stopping online hate crime in any form.

- Website - https://www.report-it.org.uk/

British Values

We recognise the multi-cultural, multi faith and ever-changing nature of the UK and understand the vital role we have in ensuring that groups or individuals are not subjected to intimidation or radicalisation, by those wishing to unduly, or illegally, influence them. Therefore, we are dedicated to ensuring we promote and reinforce British Values to all our learners.

The five fundamental British Values are:

Democracy – an understanding of how citizens can influence decision making through the democratic process.
The rule of law – an appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for wellbeing and safety.
Individual liberty – an understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law.
Mutual respect – an acceptance that other people, having different faiths or beliefs (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour.
Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs – an understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

Actively promoting these values means challenging opinions or behaviours that are contrary to fundamental British Values. Employees should not promote, or tolerate to be promoted, views or theories as fact, which are contrary to established scientific or historical evidence and explanation. The aim is to improve safeguarding and standards of spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, and to strengthen barriers to extremism.

The British Values and Prevent duty relate to the Equality Act 2010 as we seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.

Raising Concerns

If you are experiencing or have concerns about a colleague or another learner, please contact your trainer for further information and guidance, you should also follow your own organisations policy in relation to wellbeing and safeguarding.
helen.wilman-scales@dovenest.co.uk
graham.murphy@dovenest.co.uk
Please note these are only to be used to raise safeguarding and wellbeing concerns.

Confidentiality

If you share information with a member of staff, they will treat what you say with confidence. However, if you or someone else is at risk of any form of abuse, they will follow the company safeguarding procedures, which may include sharing what they have been told with appropriate bodies. This is a legal duty to ensure that learners, employees and members of Dove Nest Group are protected.

Appeals Procedure

As an approved centre, Dove Nest Group operates an appeals procedure for learners to use if they wish to challenge an assessment/grading decision made by a trainer. It is our responsibility to make learners aware that they have the right to challenge an assessment decision and make them aware of the appeals process.

If a learner disagrees with an assessment outcome or proposed assessment plan, the learner will be expected to explain the basis of the disagreement to the trainer at the time of the feedback session. The trainer must be able to highlight clearly to the learner, why the outcome has not been met, or the reasons for the proposed assessment plan. This type of 'negotiation' does not constitute a formal appeal.

If the disagreement has not been resolved after a feedback session, both the trainer and learner should request advice promptly from their allocated Internal Quality Assurer (IQA), who will try to resolve the issue. If this is not possible, the appeals procedure, shown below, should be invoked.

If, after an informal discussion with the IQA, a learner wishes to make a formal appeal, the learner must complete the appeals form (available from the IQA) and send it to the nominated IQA. This must be done within 10 working days of receiving the original assessment feedback. The nominated IQA will record this in Dove Nest Group's IQA file and investigate.

Learners can appeal against the following:

- The assessment plan – the learner can appeal if they do not agree with the suggested methods, location, time or timescale.
- The assessment – the learner has the right to appeal if they feel that the assessment differed from what was agreed on the assessment plan, or they feel that they did not receive a fair assessment.
- The assessment decision – the learner can appeal, if they feel the trainer's judgment was unfair.

On receipt of the formal appeal from the learner the nominated IQA will:

- Record all information and decisions at every stage for audit purposes and keep all documents in the IQA file, so they are available to representatives of regulatory bodies or awarding organisations.
- Seek a solution negotiated between the relevant trainer and learner.
- If an agreement cannot be reached, a date will be set for an appeals panel to meet.
- The appeals panel will consist of a minimum of two qualified trainers/IQAs not involved in the original decision. It will meet within 15 working days of the receipt of the appeal, by the nominated IQA.
- The appeals panel will ensure that full original details are obtained in writing from both the trainer originally involved and the learner.

The outcome of the appeal may be as follows:

- Confirmation of the original decision.
- A re-assessment by an independent trainer.
- A judgment that adequate evidence, meeting the assessment criteria, has been shown.
- An opportunity to re-submit for assessment, within a revised agreed timescale.
- The written decision of the appeals panel will be issued to the learner, within 5 working days of meeting.

Dove Nest Group will make every effort to adhere to the time limits stated but reserve the right to extend these should the appropriate people be unavailable. If the learner is not satisfied with the decision at this stage, and this procedure has been exhausted, then the learner can contact the awarding organisation. The awarding organisation should only be contacted when Dove Nest Group's internal appeals procedure, has been fully completed. If the learner is still not satisfied after the awarding organisation has been consulted, then the learner can contact the relevant regulatory body

Complaints Procedure

The procedure is to be followed in the event of a comment or complaint about a member of staff or anyone representing Dove Nest Group, including freelance service providers.

First Stage: Informal complaint or comment
Where it is appropriate, the complainant should raise their concern directly with the person responsible for the matter, or his or her supervisor. It is our experience that most issues can be quickly and amicably resolved, by engaging in dialogue at the earliest opportunity. If this fails to resolve the issue, the complainant should invoke the second stage of this procedure and raise a formal complaint.

Second Stage: Formal complaint or comment
Where the client wishes to make a formal complaint, the following procedure must be followed:

1. The complainant must complete a Client Complaint Form, available by email from enquiries@dovenest.co.uk or by post from any member of Dove Nest Group staff, and returned to the Managing Director, either by email or post.
2. The form should be requested, completed, and returned as soon as the matter arises to avoid any undue delay, which may adversely affect an investigation and subsequent outcome. The complainant will receive an acknowledgement of receipt of the form, by Dove Nest Group within two working days
3. The Managing Director will nominate a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to investigate the complaint, or for more serious matters, and those made against a member of the SLT, investigate it him/herself. The investigation will normally be completed within five working days of receipt.
4. The responsible manager will conduct a diligent and thorough investigation and keep all parties appropriately informed, throughout the process.
5. The outcome of the investigation will be communicated to the complainant within ten working days of the complaint being received by Dove Nest Group.

Complaints Appeals

If the complainant wishes to appeal against the outcome of the investigation, he or she must submit the grounds for their appeal in writing to the Managing Director within five working days of receiving the letter confirming the outcome.

Following a review by the Managing Director of the grounds of the appeal (or by a member of the SLT if it was the Managing Director who conducted the earlier investigation), the outcome will be communicated to the complainant within ten working days of receiving the appeal letter.

For complaints made against a member of staff, not regulated or registered by a professional organisation, the appeal decision will be final.

If the complainant wishes to appeal against a final decision about a member of staff regulated by, or registered with, a professional organisation, they may raise the matter later through the appropriate professional or registration bodies' Code of Conduct and/or Complaints Procedure.

If the complaint is against an assessment decision made by Dove Nest Group or any of its agents, the complainant will have right of appeal directly to the awarding body.

Dove Nest group will be able to provide the escalation details should they be required, and the Appeals Policy will be followed.

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