

# Promoting a whole organisational approach to safeguarding



## Background:

**Nova Training** is a West Midlands located Work Based Learning (WBL) provider with a learner profile of approximately 1200 full time learners spread across eight regional centres in Dudley (2), Brownhills, Willenhall, Oldbury and Wednesbury in the Black Country and two Centres in Telford and Shropshire. About 80 staff are employed in total, of which some 60 % are directly involved in delivering, assessing and verifying learning.

Nova delivers a variety of courses. For 14–16 olds there are Schools Vocational programmes in Motor Vehicle Maintenance and Repair and a Multi Craft Award in Construction skills. For 16-19 year olds there is Kick Start Life for NEETS learners, Foundation Learning and Apprenticeships programmes and Train to Gain for 19+ learners. A large proportion of Nova's learners are drawn from areas of high socio-economic deprivation, with some 29 % of all learners declaring learning difficulties and physical disabilities.

## The context:

With the advent of Every Child Matters in 2003, the Bichard Report in 2004 and the increasing focus of Ofsted on the protection of children and vulnerable adults, the Senior Management Team (SMT) realised that, in spite of a well established and very wide-ranging child protection policy, comprehensive training for all staff on the ramifications of the Safeguarding agenda was of paramount importance if they were to maintain their future inspection grades at Level 2 or higher. All new staff received thorough training in Child Protection Awareness (CPA) that was derived from training given by the local authorities in the boroughs in which Nova operates. Whilst it was felt by the SMT that CPA training served its purpose as far as it went, it was important that all staff understood what the greater implications involved in Safeguarding were actually about.

## What changed:

When LSIS introduced safeguarding training in 2008, the SMT designated two of its members, the Quality Improvement Manager and the Staff Training and Development Manager, to attend LSIS events that showcased the safeguarding agenda, such as Leading and Managing Safeguarding in the FE Sector Conference. They also attended LSIS Safeguarding training sessions which ultimately resulted in the Staff Training and Development Manager becoming a registered LSIS Safeguarding Training Facilitator as well as the designated Safeguarding Officer, with the Quality Improvement Manager as Deputy Safeguarding Officer.

Using materials from LSIS courses that had been attended, combined with the material available on the LSIS website contained in the WBL Leadership Learning Environment on Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment, a comprehensive programme of staff training was instigated on a whole organisational approach basis. The Safeguarding Training Programme is structured in a cohesive way to ensure that the training is targeted specifically at job function and level, with focus on Safeguarding topics

particularly relevant to job performance. For example, whilst Safer Recruitment practice features in all safeguarding training, in the case of Centre managers it includes completing the on-line Safer Recruitment modules on the LSIS LLE site. As LSIS developed their Safeguarding resources, so Nova's in-house training programme has evolved into a comprehensive suite of tailored modules at L2 and L3 suitable for all staff.

All new staff now receive comprehensive safeguarding training on joining the company and refresher training on a bi-annual basis. Elements of the safeguarding training have been adapted to suit learner induction and this has resulted in far greater learner involvement and empowerment in safeguarding activities, such as learner forums and learner panels to interview new teaching staff. Learners are also involved in deciding with tutors their preference in a range of value-added activities, such as improving their knowledge of the benefits and dangers of various drugs and lifestyle choices.

At an Osted inspection in April 2010, inspectors were very impressed by the range of safeguarding activities that were clearly apparent throughout all centres and all programmes, with all learners affirming that they felt safe at Nova Training. In the Inspection report, inspectors noted that *"Learners feel extremely safe"*.

Nova Training's next SAR is about to be compiled with the involvement of all staff which will give direction and impetus to continual improvement of safeguarding training, through an inclusive, comprehensive and well differentiated, LSIS-derived safeguarding training programme.