

Safeguarding Risk Assessment Panels

1. Purpose and content

The purpose of this appendix of the College Safeguarding Policy is to provide a clear set of guidelines to applicants, parent/carers, learners and staff regarding safeguarding risk assessment panels, including their role in the admissions process.

The College Safeguarding Policy has been developed in line with statutory guidance and the locally agreed inter-agency procedures put in place by the Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board. The policy applies to all learners and all staff (including agency and hourly paid staff) irrespective of anyone's position or role in the College, together with governors and any workers who are at the College on a voluntary/placement/other professional basis.

Please note that the term 'College' is used throughout this appendix, as a generic term that encompasses all organisations within the wider College group; namely Stockton Riverside College, Redcar & Cleveland College, NETA, Bede Sixth Form College, The Skills Academy and Tees Valley Catering. The term 'staff' is also used as a generic term that encompasses all groups of workers as outlined in the paragraph above.

2. Safeguarding risks

Learner applications

- All applicants are required to confirm whether they have any unspent criminal convictions on enrolment forms. Applicants for courses that will involve a placement working with children and/or vulnerable adults are required to confirm whether they have any criminal convictions that have not been filtered under the Rehabilitation of Offenders (ROA) Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013)
- Applicants who declare they have convictions will be provided with a standard College form to provide details of the offence/s, the date the offence/s was committed and the circumstances arising at the time/s, if appropriate
- Applicants will also be provided with a letter that explains why the College is asking for the information and the risk assessment process that will be undertaken. Disclosures will be treated confidentially and placed in a sealed envelope and passed directly to the Department Administrator for Higher Education, Health and Care who will log the information before passing it for review to the College Designated Lead for Safeguarding

- The Designated Lead for Safeguarding, in conjunction with the relevant head of department, will review the disclosure and make one of the following judgements:
 - Approved: The offence/s disclosed is judged to have no implications for safeguarding of the College community or others in any placement the learner may undertake as part of their programme
 - Approved with Careers Guidance: The offence/s disclosed is judged to have no implications for safeguarding of the College community, however, there may be some placement considerations or possible implications when applying for jobs in the sector (e.g. due to issues such as a history of theft). Potential Decline: The offence/s disclosed is significant (e.g. sexual offences and those involving violence, terrorism and the supply of drugs) and is judged to have implications for safeguarding of the College community or others in any placement the learner may undertake as part of their programme
- Where an 'Approved' rating has been applied the applicant will be informed they can progress to the next stage of the enrolment stage as appropriate
- Where an 'Approved with Careers Guidance' rating has been applied the applicant/learner will be informed that they can progress to the next stage of the application/enrolment stage as appropriate but they may be provided with appropriate IAG by the course team and the relevant head of department will review, and may amend, planned placements or transfer to another more suitable course. Where a "Potential Decline" rating has been applied the Designated Lead for Safeguarding, or the Assistant Principal Curriculum in his absence, will invoke a safeguarding risk assessment panel and will chair the panel. The panel will involve the relevant head of department and another appropriate manager. Written records of the risk assessment panel and outcomes will be maintained by the Designated Lead for Safeguarding. The applicant/learner will be informed of the outcome of the safeguarding risk assessment panel, normally by letter.

Other circumstances

The College reserves the right to conduct a risk assessment on any applicant or any learner at any time. Risk assessment panels may be invoked by the Designated Lead for Safeguarding, or the Assistant Principal Curriculum in his absence, when an applicant has already been made an unconditional or conditional offer of a place on a course and when learners are already on course. This may be in response to a range of circumstances including information on a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate that was not disclosed at the application/enrolment stage and information received from social services, the police and other relevant agencies or organisations.

3. Risk assessment panel outcomes

The risk assessment panel will determine whether:

- An applicant should be:
 - offered an unconditional place
 - offered a conditional place and what those conditions should be
 - refused a place at the College
- An offer of a place on a course that has already been made to an applicant will:
 - be upheld with no conditions
 - have identified conditions applied
 - be withdrawn
- A learner who is already on a course:
 - can continue, with no conditions
 - can continue, subject to identified conditions
 - will be withdrawn

If the outcome is that an applicant is refused a place at the College, an offer of a place to an applicant is withdrawn or a learner on programme is withdrawn, the decision will be communicated in writing to the applicant or learner. This letter will be copied to the parent/carer for a learner under the age of 18.

4. Timescales

An initial review will be carried out within two working days of the information being received. Subsequent timescales will be dependent on a range of factors including the potential need to obtain further information from external sources (e.g. social services or previous educational providers) but the process will be carried out in a timely way to resolve application/enrolment status at the earliest possible opportunity. Please note a learner already on programme may be suspended during this process.

5. Appeals

Applicants who have been refused a place at the College or have had an offer of a place withdrawn; and learners on programme who have been withdrawn due to a safeguarding risk assessment panel, may appeal against this decision. Appeals must be made in writing and must be received by the College within 15 working days of the date of the panel outcome letter.

The appeal should be sent to the Executive Team and Secretariat Manager Cath Turner at the main College address: Harvard Avenue, Thornaby, Stockton on Tees TS17 6FB or by email to catherine.turner@stockton.ac.uk. Appeals will be heard by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, usually the Deputy Principal, who will consider each individual case and confirm their decision to the applicant or learner in writing.

For the purposes of this policy, an appeal is defined as a request for a formal review of the outcome of a safeguarding risk assessment panel. The appellant may appeal a decision regarding the outcome of the panel if they feel that the panel was not conducted in accordance with this policy or that the decision did not take account of the available evidence or was unreasonable, given the evidence available. In making an application for an appeal, the appellant must state on which of these grounds the appeal is being made.