



**Learner-Provider
Agreement**

March 2024



QA CODE OF CONDUCT 2023 -24



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Version Control

Document History			
Version	Issue Date	Author	Description of change
1.0	September 2023	Stephen Smith	First Document Release
1.1	01/03/2024	Mark Soady	Change to DSL and deputy information Addition of new referral forms Addition of appendices content: Safeguarding Governance Structure, Low-Level Concerns



1 Introduction

1.1 What learners can expect at the QA

The Learner Code of Conduct is agreed with every learner as part of their induction to their apprenticeship. We expect all learners to know what is in the Learner Code of Conduct, to follow it and generally to behave in a respectful, reasonable and acceptable manner including adhering to British Values. We expect employers, staff and learners to be courteous to other learners, members of staff and employers.

1.2 As staff we will:

- I. Value people equally respecting our democratic values of freedom of speech, appreciation of different beliefs, the rule of law and individual liberty and be kind, hard-working, respectful and polite at all times. If you feel that a QA employee has fallen below this expectation please see appendix B.
- II. Give you clear, accurate and fair information, advice, guidance and support to help you choose an appropriate apprenticeship
- III. Promote good learning behaviour and take an evidence-based approach to the methods of teaching, learning and assessment that enable you to make good progress and achieve well
- IV. Give you a good start to your studies through an induction programme and then support you by giving clear targets that help you progress
- V. Provide learning resources and identify support which meet your needs;
- VI. Ensure that assessments and progress reviews with you are fair, clear, regular and positive
- VII. Give you regular and punctual feedback on your learning, work and progress, verbally and / or in writing
- VIII. Provide you with access to a dedicated welfare (QAHE) and Safeguarding Team (QA Apprenticeships) who are trained to support learners facing risk, hardship or difficulties. These professionals are also mental health first aid trained and experienced in supporting learners



1.3 Safeguarding Contacts

1. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at QA:

Mark Soady
Stephen Smith (deputy)
Clare Stuart (deputy)

2. Prevent Lead

Stephen Smith

3. Local officers:

North: 07776652002

South: 07584862122

4. Safeguarding line:

07808 050273

5. Safeguarding mailbox

Safeguarding@qa.com

6. Referral Forms

Complete a [Safeguarding Self-Referral Form](#) if the concern relates to you

Complete a [Safeguarding Referral Form](#) if you are worried about someone else

Complete a [Low-Level Concern Form](#) if you are concerned about the conduct of a QA employee (see appendix B)



**WHAT QA
EXPECTS FROM
OUR LEARNERS**



2 What QA expects from our learners

2.2 Behaviour

- I. Value people equally respecting our democratic values of freedom of speech, appreciation of different beliefs, the rule of law and individual liberty
- II. Apply yourself to your apprenticeship programme and seek opportunities with your coach to stretch your knowledge and better understand your behaviours
- III. Good attendance and punctuality at classroom and online training. If you are unable to attend training, you are expected to let QA know as soon as possible prior to your training event starting. **Note: If you are under 18 and fail to show up for training QA will contact your next of kin in order to check on your safety**
- IV. Willingness to act on the feedback QA gives you and the targets we set together
- V. Observe QA's Equal Opportunities Policy and value all other learners and staff regardless of race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender or age
- VI. Refrain from generating WhatsApp groups as learner conduct cannot be monitored or wellbeing safeguarded
- VII. Comply with any rules or reasonable requests which may be set QA staff in specific circumstances e.g. onsite, during visits, in the event of an incident or emergency

2.3 Working and Learning

- I. Provide us with accurate and up to date contact details and ensure you keep these up to date by informing us of any changes
- II. Complete all parts of your programme of study including welfare and safeguarding elements on your learning platform
- III. Attend 100% of tutor delivery punctually explaining the reason for any absences.
- IV. Act appropriately in training and during learning activities, not to use mobile phones and/or personal stereos during these times. When using technology on a QA site you agree to abide by the QA IT usage policy and you will not access any extreme or terror related sites.



- V. Complete 100% of assignments as directed by members of staff and to submit the work to the set deadlines and to the very best of your ability every time
- VI. Engage in additional activities designed to prepare you for life as a modern citizen, this will include welfare events and feedback requests
- VII. Seek help and support from the Learner Support Team if you are neurodivergent or a person with a disability by completing the following referral forms:
 - [Learner Support Referral Form \(L3/L4\)](#)
 - [Learner Support Referral Form \(degree apprenticeships\)](#).
- VIII. Make learning successful for yourself and others by being a reflective, cooperative and collaborative learner
- IX. Keep cameras on during all activity with QA so we can confirm engagement with learning and ensure you are safe

2.4 Health Safety and Security

- I. Wear a learner lanyard at QA training sites and to show your card if requested by a member of staff;
- II. Familiarise yourselves with Health and Safety rules and emergency evacuation procedures at each training site. These are displayed on boards around the reception areas. Act at all times with due regard for your own safety and that of others
- III. Comply with specific health and safety rules and regulations applicable to your workplace and report any health and safety related issues or incidents to safeguarding@qa.com
- IV. Be responsible for the security of personal items of equipment and clothing
- V. Use any QA car parking facilities in accordance with QA rules and not park in reserved spaces
- VI. Treat quiet rooms with respect by:
 - I. Picking up any items in the room you have used and putting them away before you leave
 - II. Behaving in line with British values with emphasis on: Mutual respect and Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.
 - III. Respecting E&D values while using the room



2.5 Looking after the Environment

- I. Treat QA buildings, facilities and equipment with care
- II. Learners are not allowed to display any notices or posters around QA premises
- III. Report any damage to QA property or equipment to a member of staff.

2.6 Use of Information Technology (IT)

- I. You may not use QA equipment or WiFi to access any materials that are contrary to British values – including extreme content
- II. When using technology on a QA site you agree to abide by the QA IT usage policy and you will not access any extreme or terror related sites.



BRITISH VALUES



3 British values

QA promotes Fundamental British values and learners are expected to uphold British values at all times. Understanding and engagement with British values helps to prepare learners for life in modern Britain.

3.1 Democracy.

Britain is a democracy - this means that the people in Britain vote for the people who make the laws and decide how the country is run.

Within a democracy, exercising a democratic right to vote is the best way to ensure that your views are represented in laws and decision making by parliament / government.

QA promotes voting and encourages all learners who are 18 and over to register to vote, you can get help on registering to vote at the below site: GOV.UK Register to vote <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

You can find out more about UK democracy at the following sites:

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/citizenship/government>

<https://www.gov.uk/voting-in-the-uk>

QA encourages feedback from learners to help shape our services and products. You can feedback to us in two ways – both are monitored and filtered into QA continuous improvement and quality procedures. Regular automated feedback surveys sent to you direct.

You can make a complaint by emailing: qa.complaints@qa.com

3.2 The Rule of Law.

In Britain, all persons, including law makers, and all organisations, including government, have to abide by the rule of law. British governments are held to account by the rule of law and they support democratic society.

Citizens of modern Britain are kept safe by a police force who make sure people do not break the law. Organisations and institutions must abide by the law – most relevant to apprentices are employment law and health and safety.

Find out more about these laws here:

- [Acas | Making working life better for everyone in Britain](#)
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/employing-an-apprentice-technical-guidefor-employers>

QA has defined a number of policies for the protection of staff and learners and to ensure the quality of QA products and services. QA will abide by this code of conduct and expect learners to do the same. A failure on the part of QA, an employer or a learner will be managed in line with QA procedures and in some cases could result in the early termination of an apprenticeship.

3.3 Individual Liberty.

Fundamental to British democracy is individual liberty. We have a right to be free and live freely, this includes understanding the extent that this exists or is limited. British Citizens can live as they choose to and have their own opinions about things as long as they do not break the law.

In choosing to promote individual liberty QA regularly seeks the views and opinions of its learners and employers. QA encourages discussion and debate in the classroom while adhering to British values and promoting equality and Diversity.

3.4 Mutual respect and Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

In Britain we accept that other people might have different beliefs than ours and they may believe in different religions. We expect to be treated how we would treat others and not discriminate against people because of their belief or religion. People are legally protected from discrimination by the Equality Act (2010). Click on the link below to learn more
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>



QA does not discriminate in its recruitment selection or teaching practises. QA promotes equality and inclusion and sets stretching targets which match Government aims in areas such as ethnic minority (formerly BAME) apprenticeship uptake and Female STEM inclusion.

Learners are expected to respect British values while at QA and after finishing their program.



**WHAT QA
WILL NOT
ACCEPT FROM
OUR LEARNERS**

4 What QA will not accept from our learners

4.1 Gross Misconduct

Some transgressions in behaviour and actions are considered by QA to be completely unacceptable. The following are examples of misconduct, which may lead to an early termination of an apprenticeship

4.2 Behaviour

- I. Exhibit antisocial behaviour at any time on any of our sites or during online remote learning that either disrupts the learning of others or could give QA a bad reputation. This includes the use of social media/WhatsApp through posting either text, including sexting, or images, including video of such behaviour
 - II. Verbally abuse people which is either bullying or harassment, including inappropriate and/or unwelcome comments, requests and messages on grounds of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, pregnancy, marital status, disability/learning difficulty or socioeconomic status of another learner or member of staff. This includes use of social media/WhatsApp through posting either text or images, including video. Microaggressions or 'banter' related to the above will not be tolerated and will be raised as a 'low level concern' and investigated
 - III. Persist in failing to meet the acceptable standards of conduct or performance
 - IV. Exhibit physical, violent, dangerous, threatening, bullying and intimidating conduct. This includes, for example the carrying/storing of offensive weaponry, including fireworks and knives, any conduct involving acts of indecency and vandalism
 - V. Receive criminal penalties, for example: serious acts of violence, sexual assault or rape and/or failure to disclose a criminal conviction or caution, unless it is spent
- I. Misuse the available quiet rooms –
 - I. Excluding others on grounds of age, gender, orientation, ethnicity or religious grounds.
 - II. Promoting or condoning extremism or behaviours that run contrary to British values.



- III. Damaging or defacing any items in the quiet room

4.3 Working and Learning

- I. Cheat, plagiarise, utilise AI incorrectly or copy the work of other learners

4.4 Health Safety and Security

- I. Bring or encourage intruders into QA
- II. Possess (other than those prescribed for medical conditions), supply or distribute alcohol or drugs or other illegal substances
- III. Be under the influence of intoxication as a result of alcohol or illegal drugs
(including prescription drugs used in an unauthorised manner)
- IV. Fail to comply with the general and specific Health & Safety Regulations which include failure to wear/show ID, misusing fire equipment, smoking which includes 'vaping', except in designated areas
- V. Employer contraventions of H&S which put learners at risk

4.5 Use of Information Technology (IT)

- I. Access information on pornographic sites or to display obscene pages
- II. Interfere with computer software or data belonging to, or used by, QA
- III. Change the Windows settings on any computer or load software or 'spam' e-mails or 'broadcast' messages or attempt any form of 'computerhacking'
- IV. Access / share or promote extreme materials, this includes any sites that have been identified by Counter Terrorist police as extreme, materials promoting views contrary to British values, calls for harm or death to UK armed forces or the monarch.

4.6 Social media and use of QA's brand

The following applies to current and past learners who have listed QA on any of their personal social media site(s):

- I. Share or promote any views contrary to British values or call for harm to the armed services or the Monarch



- II. Share or promote unsubstantiated negative views about QA
- III. Share or promote extreme materials – including materials that could be related to radicalisation



WHAT QA EXPECTS FROM EMPLOYERS

5. What QA expects from Employers

As an employer you are expected to:

5.1 Equality and Diversity

- I. Promote an equal and diverse workforce, ensure equal opportunity for all peoples
- II. Ensure views or opinions expressed or evidenced contrary to equality and diversity principles or contrary to British values, are dealt with appropriately – usually within company procedure

5.2 Working and Learning

- I. Attend meetings as organised by QA
- II. Provide 20% off the job time for apprentices to study towards their apprenticeship
- III. Support QA in setting reasonable and stretching targets and ensuring QA apprentices make good progress

5.3 Health Safety and Security

- I. Comply with the HSE and other legal duties for the health and safety of workers including apprentices
- II. If employing apprentices aged 16-18, comply with HSE and other legal duties for the health and safety of young workers:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/index.htm>
- III. Provide safe, suitable wash rooms with hand washing facilities for male and female apprentices

5.4 Travel and working practises

- I. Employers cover reasonable expenses for learners travel to and from training
- II. Employers of young apprentices (aged 16-18) must inform safeguarding at QA of any activities that would put the young apprentice into any of the following situations:
 - Unsociable hours (9pm-6am)
 - Lone working
- III. An event requiring an overnight stay
- IV. An event at which alcohol will be served



- V. An unusual work situation or request which falls out of standard work practices and is not risk assessed or covered within employer H&S planning. E.g. sending an apprentice on an 'errand'

5.5 Absences and incidents

- I. QA encourage employers to inform QA of any incidents, accidents observations or disclosures which indicate to the employer that the apprentice may be struggling or at risk
- II. Employers of young apprentices (aged 16-18) must inform safeguarding at QA if:
 - The young apprentice fails to show up for work
 - The young apprentice reports any incident which puts the apprentice at risk E.g. abuse, neglect, self-harm
 - The young apprentice discloses any feelings which put the apprentice at risk E.g. anxiety, depression, suicidal feelings

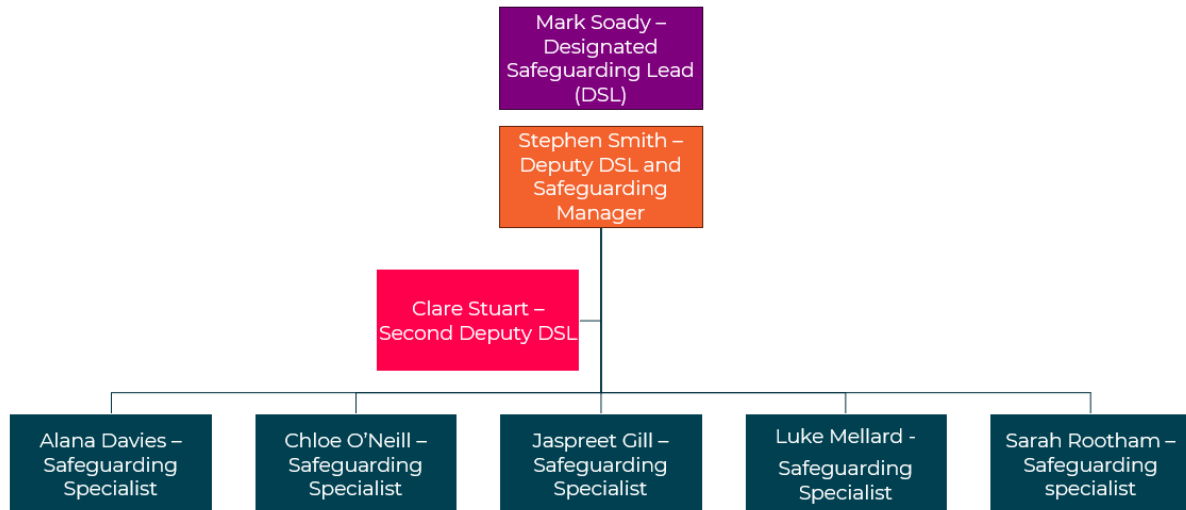
You are encouraged to use our referral form [Safeguarding Referral Form](#) or you can email the team: Safeguarding: safeguarding@qa.com

A member of the Safeguarding Team will contact you within 3 hours of your referral.

QA reserve the right to withdraw an apprenticeship if an employer fails to comply with QA's code of conduct or puts a learner's health, safety or welfare at risk.

Appendix A: Safeguarding Governance

The Safeguarding Team



Safeguarding Governance Board

The safeguarding governance board meets monthly to ensure all appropriate information is shared.

DSL and Deputies

Mark Soady – Designated Safeguarding Lead

Stephen Smith – Safeguarding Manager/Deputy DSL/Prevent Lead

Clare Stuart – Safeguarding Specialist/Deputy DSL

Safeguarding Governor and Board Members

Peter Stacey – Safeguarding Governor

Jo Bishenden – Managing Director of Apprenticeships

Carrie Hooper – Group Head of People Operations

Lou Clark – Vice President of Apprenticeships

Naomi Lavender – Quality Director

Sohail Oosman – Apprenticeship Learning Director

Carly Green – Director of Delivery

APPENDIX B: LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult has behaved in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the DofE and QA code of conduct. This includes inappropriate conduct both inside and outside of work
- does not meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough for the QA to refer to the local authority

Low-level concerns include a spectrum of behaviours which may be:

- intentionally designed to facilitate abuse
- unintentional, inadvertent or thoughtless

The key is that the behaviour is inappropriate and not what QA expects, as set out in Appendix A of the Safeguarding Policy Code of Conduct and the DfE's Code of Conduct. It may take place face-to-face, in writing or digitally such as in online meetings, or via social media or email.

Examples include:

- showing favouritism
- being over-friendly
- using inappropriate language that is sexual, profane, intimidating or offensive
- inappropriate touching or initiating of hugging
- intimidation, punishment or degrading treatment

To support the implementation of this policy, QA will provide support, information and training so that staff and volunteers

- are clear about what is meant by appropriate behaviour and can distinguish this from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour in themselves and others
- can recognise the importance of professional boundaries and when to report concerns
- feel empowered to share any low-level concerns with the DSL and through the reporting system
- know that the response will be measured and proportionate

When receiving low-level concerns, QA will

- ensure all concerns that are raised are handled sensitively and proportionately
- appraise information in order to distinguish between unprofessional behaviour and intentional harm or abuse
- identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour – including any patterns – that may need to be consulted upon with, or referred to, the local authority dedicated officer (LADO) or equivalent officer
- focus on the behaviour, not the language used to describe or report it
- address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage
- identify any areas for development in the organisation's safeguarding system as well as any training needs

The 'Harm' Threshold

An 'allegation of harm' is where it is alleged that a person who works with children or adults at risk has or may have behaved in a way that meets the harm threshold as specified below:

- behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or adult at risk
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or adult at risk;
- behaved towards a child or children or adult/s at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or adults at risk
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children or adults at risk (this behaviour includes inside and outside of the workplace)

In this case, staff and volunteers should follow the Allegations Against Employees Procedures set out in the QA's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and report the matter to the DSL or deputy.

Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold are treated as low-level concerns.

The term 'low level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the adult's behaviour towards a child or adult at risk does not meet the harm threshold.

To confirm, a low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ – that an adult may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with an organisation’s staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegation threshold, or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO or equivalent local authority professional – but may merit consulting with and seeking advice from them.

Staff and volunteers do not need to be able to determine in each case whether their concern is a low-level concern, or if it is not serious enough to consider a referral to the local authority, or whether it meets the threshold of an allegation.

Once the concern has been shared, the determination about thresholds and appropriate action should be made by the DSL or deputies who will follow the appropriate procedures in line with that decision. The DSL or deputies may seek advice from the local authority LADO or local authority equivalent in order to make the determination and decide next steps.

Any low-level Concern must be shared with DSL or DDSL’s by completing the [Low-Level & Behavioural Safeguarding Concern \(office.com\)](#) referral form.

