

Welcome to this December edition !

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SAFEGUARDING TOPIC OF THE MONTH

Know your boundaries: Consent and Pornography explained

Understanding consent and the impact of pornography is essential for building respectful and healthy relationships – both in life and at work. These topics might feel awkward to talk about, but having the right knowledge helps you make informed decisions and respect yourself and others.

Consent Matters

Consent is more than just a simple “yes” or “no.” It means giving clear, voluntary, and enthusiastic agreement to any sexual activity. Consent must be freely given, informed, and can be withdrawn at any time. Without consent, any sexual activity – including sharing intimate images or messages – is considered harassment or assault, with serious legal and emotional consequences. Understanding consent helps you communicate effectively, respect boundaries, and build trust in all relationships.

'If you're still struggling to understand consent, just imagine instead of initiating sex, you're making them a cup of tea.'

Pornography: Real vs. Unreal

Pornography is widely available online and can seem normal, but it often presents unrealistic, exaggerated, and sometimes harmful portrayals of sex. Many pornographic videos do not show mutual respect, consent, or healthy communication, which can distort your ideas about relationships. Over-reliance on pornography may affect your self-esteem and expectations, making it harder to understand real-life intimacy. Being aware of this difference is key to maintaining healthy relationships.

Consent in Sexual Activity

A Real “Yes”

- Saying, “Yes”
- A “Yes” by someone sober
- A thumbs up or nod if you've already established that they mean “Yes”
- An ongoing conversation throughout sexual activity
- The ability to change your mind at any time during sexual activity

A Real “No”

- Saying, “No”
- If someone is being quiet or gives a non-answer
- Saying, “Maybe” or being unsure
- Body language that indicates someone is upset: pulling away, freezing, crying, not participating, and more
- If someone is intoxicated or incapacitated by drugs or alcohol
- If someone is guilted, pressured, threatened, or forced

Tips for Safe and Respectful Relationship

- Always communicate openly with partners and check in with how they feel.
- Respect personal boundaries, both yours and those of others.
- Recognise that intimacy is built on trust, empathy, and honesty, not pressure or unrealistic portrayals of sex.
- Remember that consent applies in every situation, not just sex – it includes touching, sharing images, and private messages.

Support is Available

If you ever feel unsure about consent, pornography, or relationships, there are confidential support services you can reach out to. Our Safeguarding Team is always a safe place to start. You can also contact organisations such as Brook, The Mix, and Rape Crisis for guidance and advice.

By learning about consent and the realities of pornography, you can make confident, respectful choices that protect your wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. These are life skills that go beyond apprenticeships – they help you navigate relationships with confidence, clarity, and respect.

CAREERS: SUSTAINABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Sustainability isn't just a buzzword; it's becoming a core part of how modern workplaces operate. As apprentices, you're stepping into industries that are increasingly focused on reducing environmental impact and promoting responsible practices. But what does sustainability in the workplace really mean, and how can you play your part?

What is Workplace Sustainability?

At its heart, sustainability is about meeting today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. In a workplace setting, this often translates into reducing waste, cutting energy use, and making smarter choices about resources. It's not just about recycling paper, it's about creating a culture where every decision considers its environmental footprint.

Why Should we Care?

Businesses are under growing pressure to operate responsibly, not only because of regulations but because customers and employees expect it. Sustainable practices can save money, improve efficiency, and even boost a company's reputation. For apprentices, understanding these principles early on gives you a competitive edge and shows employers you're forward-thinking.

Simple Steps You Can Take

Here are a few practical ideas that you can do:

Reduce energy use

Switch off lights and equipment when not in use.

Think before you print

Go digital where possible to cut down on paper waste.

Bring your own cup

Reusable mugs and bottles help reduce single-use plastics.

Share ideas

If you spot a way to make a process greener, speak up! Employers value fresh perspectives.

The Bigger Picture

Sustainability isn't just about the environment; it's about people too. Fair working conditions, supporting local communities, and promoting diversity are all part of the sustainability conversation. By embracing these values, workplaces become better for everyone.

As apprentices, you're the future of the workforce. The habits you form now will shape the industries of tomorrow. So, start small, think big, and make sustainability part of your everyday working life.



PREVENT TOPIC OF THE MONTH

Spot the Signs: Understanding Extremist Grooming Tactics

Extremist groups often target vulnerable individuals, using manipulation and pressure to draw them into harmful beliefs or actions. Understanding how these tactics work can help apprentices recognise risks early and take action to protect themselves and others.

How Extremists Target Individuals

Extremists use a variety of grooming tactics to influence and control people. Some common methods include:

- **Online Grooming:** Social media, messaging apps, and online forums are used to build trust, isolate individuals, and introduce extremist ideas.
- **Peer Pressure:** Extremists often exploit the desire to belong, using peer influence to encourage risky or harmful behaviours.
- **Ideological Manipulation:** They may present extreme beliefs as exciting, justified, or morally correct, appealing to emotions and personal frustrations.

These tactics are designed to make people feel understood, needed, or special, which can make it difficult to recognise the risks. Grooming often happens gradually, so early awareness is key to stopping radicalisation before it escalates.

How to Stay Safe and Support Others

- Be cautious online and question anyone who tries to control or manipulate your opinions.
- Talk to someone you trust if a friend or peer seems influenced or pressured by extreme ideas.
- Remember that extremists often exploit emotions, isolation, or personal challenges to recruit others.

The UK's current national threat level is
SUBSTANTIAL – An attack is likely.

To find out about your local risk, check out the police website [here](https://www.police.uk/pu/yourarea/) and type in your postcode:
[police.uk/pu/yourarea/](https://www.police.uk/pu/yourarea/)

If you are concerned about someone within 'Buttercups Training, then please contact safeguarding@buttercups.co.uk or report a concern through your b-Hive'.

Support and Resources

If you ever feel unsafe or concerned about someone being groomed, confidential support and guidance are available. Key resources include:

- [Educate Against Hate](#) – Provides advice on recognising and preventing radicalisation.
- [CEOP – Grooming Awareness](#) – Offers information on online safety and recognising grooming tactics.

Being aware of extremist grooming tactics empowers apprentices to protect themselves and their peers. Recognising the signs early, asking for help, and understanding how manipulation works are vital skills that safeguard personal safety, promote wellbeing, and build a resilient community.