

Pastoral Support and Inclusion Policy

Referral pathways for pastoral and inclusion support

CoreEd Limited

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out the formal procedure for referring learners at CoreEd Limited for enhanced pastoral or inclusion support. Its purpose is to ensure that every learner receives timely, appropriate and effective support to overcome barriers to learning, whether those barriers are social, emotional, mental health related, or specific learning needs.

It establishes a clear pathway from the initial identification of a concern, by anyone involved in recruitment, screening and onboarding, or raised by tutors at learner or caseload review, through structured intervention by inclusion or pastoral staff, to closure. The intention is that no learner falls through the gap when responsibility transfers between roles.

Where a learner is at risk of withdrawal through loss of placement, CoreEd places the learner at risk of non-completion. The learner is referred to the Senior DSL for pastoral support and guidance. The Learner Support Lead coordinates additional CV review and Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG). Business Development actively pursues alternative employment. Senior leadership and MIS oversight is maintained at the monthly Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, including tutors, assessors, functional skills tutors, IQAs, and staff working in business development, recruitment, screening and onboarding. The named roles referenced throughout are the Senior DSL (Head of Safeguarding and Welfare), the Learner Support Lead, and the Director and CEO.

At CoreEd's current size, the pastoral support function and the inclusion support function are not staffed as separate teams. Each is led by the named role, the Senior DSL for pastoral and the Learner Support Lead for inclusion, and delivered with input from tutors, assessors and other staff as appropriate. Where this policy refers to a function, it describes a coordinated set of activities, not a separately staffed unit.

The policy covers all learners on any CoreEd programme, including apprenticeships, regulated qualifications, adult learning and commercial provision.

3. Definitions

Referrer	The staff member, usually a tutor, identifying the need for additional support.
Pastoral support function	The work undertaken to provide wellbeing, emotional and practical non-academic support. Led by the Senior DSL, with input from tutors, assessors and other staff as appropriate.

Inclusion support function	The work undertaken to provide specialist learning support, SEND coordination and access arrangements. Led by the Learner Support Lead, with input from tutors, assessors and other staff as appropriate.
PSP	Pastoral Support Plan, a time-bound action plan agreed with the learner.
ILP	Individual Learning Plan, a learning support plan setting out reasonable adjustments and specialist strategies.
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead. At CoreEd the Senior DSL is the Head of Safeguarding and Welfare.
LSL	Learner Support Lead. Responsible for quality assurance of inclusion support, EHCP liaison and complex needs cases. Works directly with the local authority SEND case officer, who is the statutory coordinator, on EHCP matters.
LDD	Learning Difficulties and Disabilities, screening and assessment.
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan.
CEIAG	Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance.
This is Me	The initial assessment every learner completes during onboarding. It captures the learner's own account of how they learn, what they find difficult, and what support has helped them before. The traits it identifies inform initial support planning and may themselves prompt a referral under this policy.
Family Help	The coordinated system of support for children and families introduced by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, replacing what was previously described as early help.

4. Pastoral Support

Pastoral support focuses on the personal development, wellbeing and welfare of the learner. It is distinct from academic support, which is the tutor's role, and from specialist learning support, which sits within the inclusion function. It is led by the Senior DSL.

- mental health and emotional wellbeing, including anxiety, stress and low mood
- personal issues affecting attendance, including housing, finance and family circumstances
- behavioural and engagement challenges
- confidence, resilience and motivation
- safeguarding and Prevent concerns, alongside the safeguarding response

5. Inclusion Support

Inclusion support focuses on learning needs, disabilities and educational access, and ensures CoreEd meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015. It is led by the Learner Support Lead.

- screening and initial assessment for learning difficulties, for example dyslexia, ADHD and autism
- EHCP liaison: holding the EHCP on file, implementing EHCP-specified support within CoreEd's remit, and contributing to the local authority's annual review process when requested by the case officer
- exam access arrangements, for example extra time, a scribe or a reader
- reasonable adjustments in learning sessions and in the workplace
- specialist one-to-one learning support sessions

Identification at onboarding

Every learner completes the This is Me initial assessment during onboarding. It records how the learner describes their own learning, the things they find difficult, and any support that has helped them previously. The traits it identifies are reviewed as part of onboarding and are one of the routes by which an inclusion or pastoral need is first recognised, alongside SupportConnect screening and tutor observation during the programme.

6. Dual Referral Pathways

CoreEd operates two complementary referral pathways. Staff can refer to either, and the two cross-refer to ensure holistic support. The aim is to keep learners on programme by addressing wellbeing and learning barriers proactively. Learners at risk of non-completion or early withdrawal are tracked through the active phase of either pathway until exit criteria are met.

Safeguarding overlay: applies to all pathways

If at any point a learner discloses abuse, neglect, self-harm or radicalisation, or there is an immediate risk of harm, do not continue with the standard referral process. Escalate immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and follow the Safeguarding Policy (P-013) and the Prevent Duty Policy (P-014). Pastoral support may run alongside DSL oversight. Where the concern indicates a need for wider family support, the Senior DSL considers a Family Help referral.

Pathway 1: learning need suspected (inclusion)

Concern identified, learning or SEND need suspected, referral to inclusion support, triage and screening by the Learner Support Lead. Where assessment is required it is completed and an ILP or adjustment plan created; where it is not, strategies are agreed and shared. Specialist support is delivered and progress reviewed. Where needs are met the referral is closed and handed back to the tutor. Where they are not, the case is cross-referred to pastoral support.

Pathway 2: wellbeing need suspected (pastoral)

Concern identified, wellbeing or personal need suspected, initial tutor support through a one-to-one conversation, referral to pastoral support, triage and priority rating by the Senior DSL. Where a safeguarding concern is identified it is escalated immediately and support continues alongside. Otherwise a pastoral assessment is completed and a PSP created, intervention is delivered and progress reviewed. Where needs are met the referral is closed and handed back to the tutor. Where they are not, the case is cross-referred to inclusion support.

7. Referral Triggers

Pastoral triggers	Inclusion triggers
Attendance: a drop below 85% or an inconsistent pattern	Cognition: difficulty retaining information, processing speed or working memory
Behaviour: disruption, sudden change in character, or disengagement	Literacy and numeracy: significant difficulty with reading, writing or maths despite quality teaching
Mental health: disclosure of stress, anxiety, depression or self-harm	Diagnosis: the learner discloses a diagnosis and needs adjustments
Welfare: housing, finance, benefits or relationship breakdown	Exams: the learner requests or may need exam access arrangements

Pastoral triggers	Inclusion triggers
Progress: a sudden decline not linked to ability	EHCP: the learner has an Education, Health and Care Plan
Physical health: a health issue affecting learning capability	

8. Step-by-Step Referral Process

Step	What happens
1. Identification	A concern is identified against the triggers above, by a tutor or other staff member, or by the traits recorded in the learner's This is Me initial assessment at onboarding. The tutor attempts first-line support, such as a supportive one-to-one conversation, unless the issue is high risk.
2. Discussion and consent	The tutor discusses the concern with the learner and asks whether they would like extra support. Verbal consent is obtained before referring, unless the matter is a safeguarding issue, in which case the referral proceeds without consent in line with the Safeguarding Policy.
3. Referral form	The tutor completes the Pastoral, Inclusion and Welfare Referral Form (SD-008), indicating whether the need is primarily pastoral, inclusion, or both, and submits it to Referral@CoreEd.co.uk. The mailbox is monitored by the safeguarding team only.
4. Triage and allocation	The Senior DSL triages every referral within one working day. Safeguarding matters are escalated within the safeguarding response. Pastoral matters are actioned by the Senior DSL with input from the tutor. Inclusion matters are forwarded to the Learner Support Lead, who does not have access to the mailbox and receives cases by allocation.
5. Initial contact	The allocated function lead, the Senior DSL for pastoral or the Learner Support Lead for inclusion, makes first contact with the learner within 24 to 72 hours depending on priority, to arrange an initial support meeting. The tutor is copied in so they remain informed. First contact at this step sits with the function lead, not the tutor.
6. Assessment and planning	On the pastoral route the Senior DSL meets the learner, assesses need and creates a PSP with targets. On the inclusion route the Learner Support Lead conducts or arranges an LDD assessment or screener, and where a learning need is confirmed creates an ILP or adjustment plan.
7. Intervention and review	Support is delivered, for example mentoring, counselling, external referral or specialist tuition. Progress is reviewed every two to four weeks.
8. Cross-function referral	Where pastoral support identifies a learning need, or inclusion support identifies a wellbeing need, the case is referred across and the learner is temporarily handed to the other function for that intervention.
9. Completion and handover	The Learner Support Lead passes assessment results and strategies back to the Senior DSL or the tutor. The Senior DSL confirms the learner is stable and ready to return to standard tutor support.
10. Closure	The referral is formally closed and a closure summary email is sent to the tutor setting out strategies to maintain progress.

9. Learner Ownership During Each Phase

Phase	Who holds the learner	Key activity
Pre-referral	Tutor	Monitoring, initial conversation, identifying need.
Active phase	Senior DSL or Learner Support Lead, depending on route	Assessment, creating the PSP or ILP, delivering one-to-one support and mentoring. The tutor receives updates but the function lead drives the intervention and makes first contact.
Dual support	Joint ownership	Where both functions are involved a lead professional is agreed, usually the one addressing the most pressing need. Mental health takes precedence over a learning need where both are active.
Post-closure	Tutor	Referral closed. The tutor resumes full responsibility, implementing the strategies advised by the function leads.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Tutor or assessor	Identify signs, gain consent, complete the referral form, and implement the strategies advised by the Senior DSL and the Learner Support Lead in teaching sessions.
Senior DSL (Head of Safeguarding and Welfare)	Leads the pastoral support function and holds overall accountability for this policy. Triage referrals, conducts pastoral assessments, creates and manages PSPs, provides mentoring, refers to external agencies, receives safeguarding escalations, maintains the pastoral register, and reviews this policy annually.
Learner Support Lead	Leads the inclusion support function. Conducts or arranges specialist assessments, applies for exam access arrangements, provides specialist learning strategies, advises tutors on adjustments, quality assures inclusion support, and maintains the inclusion dashboard and the EHCP register. For EHCP learners, holds the plan on file, ensures EHCP-specified support is implemented, contributes to the local authority annual review when requested, and works directly with the case officer on complex matters.
Functional skills tutor	Deliver English and maths tuition, and flag any learning need or wellbeing concern arising in sessions through the standard referral route.
Business Development	Engage employers where workplace factors affect pastoral or inclusion matters, and coordinate the re-engagement procedure where placement loss is a factor.
Director and CEO	Strategic oversight at the monthly Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting. Approves policy changes. Acts as Deputy DSL when the Senior DSL is unavailable.
Learner	Engage with the support offered, attend scheduled sessions, and communicate openly about needs.

11. Records, Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All records are stored securely in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. The tutor receives only the strategies needed to support the learner. The full case history is shared only where necessary for safety.

Registers

CoreEd maintains two separate registers of active cases, each owned by the function lead responsible for it. They are distinct records and are not merged.

Register	Maintained by	What it holds
Inclusion dashboard	Learner Support Lead	Active and closed inclusion cases, including screening outcomes, assessment status, adjustments agreed and exam access arrangements.
Pastoral spreadsheet	Senior DSL	Active and closed pastoral cases, including priority rating, PSP status, review dates and closure summary.
EHCP register	Learner Support Lead	A SharePoint record of every learner holding an Education, Health and Care Plan, the issuing local authority, the named case officer, the date of the last annual review, and the date the next is due.

Supporting systems

- SharePoint holds supporting documents, including PSPs, ILPs, LDD assessment outputs, EHCP documentation and adjustment plans, in a restricted-access area
- Aptem holds working notes recorded against the relevant learner record
- MyConcern holds formal and complex safeguarding cases, with the internal safeguarding dashboard used for low-level concerns and aggregate oversight, as set out in the Safeguarding Policy

The registers described above and the internal safeguarding dashboard are separate systems serving distinct purposes and must not be conflated.

Access

- full access to all pastoral and inclusion records: the Learner Support Lead, the Senior DSL and the Director and CEO
- all other staff: need-to-know basis only, limited to the strategies and information needed to support the learner in their role

All records are held in line with the General Data Protection Policy and Procedure (P-012), the GDPR and Privacy Policy (P-007), and the Learner Data Sharing Agreement (P-019). Retention follows the Document Retention and Secure Storage Policy (P-020).

12. Timescales and Priority Levels

Priority	Criteria	Response time
High	Severe mental health crisis, homelessness, immediate risk of dropping out, safeguarding risk.	Same day, and within 24 hours
Medium	Significant drop in attendance, multiple complex needs, declared disability needing assessment.	3 working days
Standard	Low motivation, routine check-in, non-urgent exam access arrangement request.	5 working days

13. The Pastoral Support Plan

Where a pastoral referral is accepted, a Pastoral Support Plan is created collaboratively between the Senior DSL and the learner. It must set out:

- current reality: what is happening now, for example attendance at 70%
- goal: what we want to achieve, for example attendance at 90%
- SMART targets: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound
- actions: who will do what, on both sides
- review date: when progress will be checked

14. Case Review and Monitoring

- weekly triage: the Senior DSL and the Learner Support Lead meet weekly to review new and open cases. Day-to-day allocation does not wait for that meeting, as the Senior DSL triages within one working day
- monthly joint case review: a monthly meeting between the two function leads to discuss stuck or complex cases, particularly where a learner is accessing both functions
- tutor updates: tutors receive a brief email update on the first of every month on any of their learners with an active PSP

15. Exit Criteria

A learner is exited from pastoral or inclusion support when one of the following is true:

- targets met: the goals in the PSP have been achieved and sustained for four weeks
- assessment complete: the inclusion assessment is finished, the report written, and strategies handed over to the tutor
- disengagement: the learner declines to engage despite three attempts at contact, and a safeguarding check has confirmed they are safe
- withdrawal: the learner has left CoreEd

16. Training and Professional Development

Staff involved in pastoral and inclusion support maintain current knowledge appropriate to their role. Completion is recorded and available for inspection.

- all staff: safeguarding and Prevent training at induction and annually, together with awareness of the referral routes in this policy
- tutors and assessors: recognising the referral triggers at Section 7, and implementing agreed adjustments and strategies
- Senior DSL: DSL-level training refreshed at least every two years, with knowledge updated at least annually
- Learner Support Lead: current knowledge of the SEND Code of Practice 2015 and of the local authority annual review process for learners holding an Education, Health and Care Plan, together with training appropriate to the specialist assessments and access arrangements the role undertakes

Where a specialist requirement arises that exceeds the current expertise of the function lead, CoreEd will commission external specialist input rather than proceed without it. This applies particularly to EHCP matters, where the local authority case officer remains the statutory coordinator.

17. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

The Senior DSL monitors the operation of this policy, covering the number and nature of referrals received across both pathways, time from referral to first contact against the priority standards, PSP completion rates and outcomes against SMART targets, inclusion assessment volumes and adjustments implemented, cross-referral patterns between the two functions, and aggregate trends reported to the Director and CEO at the monthly Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head of Safeguarding and Welfare, aligned to the CoreEd review cycle, or earlier where there are significant changes to statutory safeguarding or SEND guidance, where an incident reveals a gap, or where the learner profile or delivery model changes in ways that affect provision.

A copy is available to all staff via SharePoint and is published on the CoreEd website.

18. Associated Documentation

- Safeguarding Policy (P-013)
- Prevent Duty Policy (P-014)
- Whistleblowing Policy (P-015)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (P-006)
- Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy (P-016)
- GDPR and Privacy Policy (P-007)
- General Data Protection Policy and Procedure (P-012)
- Learner Data Sharing Agreement (P-019)
- Document Retention and Secure Storage Policy (P-020)
- Apprentice Code of Conduct (P-018)
- Online Safety and Remote Learning Policy (P-036)
- Learner Attendance and Punctuality Policy (P-038)
- Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Policy (P-039)
- Complaints Procedure (P-004)
- Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy (P-029)
- Re-Engagement of Apprentices Following Placement Breakdown (operational procedure)
- Learner Support Guide (SD-001)

Appendix A. The Referral Form

One mailbox, triaged by the Senior DSL

Referral@CoreEd.co.uk receives both referrals under this policy and safeguarding concern records under P-013. Access is restricted to the safeguarding team. The Learner Support Lead does not have access and receives inclusion cases by allocation from the Senior DSL, normally the same working day.

This means every referral passes through the Senior DSL. It is a deliberate arrangement: it keeps safeguarding records within the restricted group required by P-013, and it means no case reaches the inclusion function without a safeguarding view having been taken first.

Referrals under this policy are made on the Pastoral, Inclusion and Welfare Referral Form (SD-008), which is held on SharePoint and is the single form for all pastoral and inclusion referrals.

The form is not reproduced here. Holding it as a separate registered document means it can be amended without reissuing this policy, and it avoids two versions of the same form being in circulation.

What	Where
The referral form	Pastoral, Inclusion and Welfare Referral Form (SD-008), on SharePoint
Where completed forms are sent	Referral@CoreEd.co.uk, monitored by the safeguarding team only
The trigger lists and pathways at a glance	Pastoral and Inclusion Referral Quick Reference (SD-005)
The support plan template	Pastoral Support Plan (SD-006)
What to do about a safeguarding concern	Safeguarding Reporting Process (SD-007), and the Safeguarding Policy (P-013). A safeguarding concern is never recorded on the referral form

CoreEd Limited is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Policy owner: Head of Safeguarding and Welfare

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