

NORTH STAFFS AND SOUTH CHESHIRE DISTRICT (NSSC)

NSSC District Branch Meeting Minutes

February 6th 2017

Handson Safety Services

The Training Centre
Wistaston Road Business Centre
Wistaston Road
Crewe
CW2 7RP

Apologies: Chairman, Douglas Leech could not attend the branch meeting tonight and sent his apologies.

Stuart Bailey from the Manchester Branch very kindly stepped in and volunteered to lead the CPD/IPD session and the Branch would like to thank Stuart for his time. Any member wanting to attend any future sessions must bring their own laptop.

Vice Chairman, Ralph Stubbs introduced our presenter for the evening, Colin Jackson while based at South Cheshire College, Crewe, has been safeguarding apprentices for 3 years and started off the session by playing "Tell me there's a heaven" by Chris Rea. The lyrics have relevance and poignancy which take in to account the topic of conversation.

Members were encouraged to talk about their experiences with safeguarding and a few spoke out to discuss their individual roles. Safeguarding primarily stems from the evacuation of children during the War and their vulnerability when placed in foster homes. Just as health and safety law has changed over the years, safeguarding has also seen changes a series of changes in legislation through history up to the present day.

Anyone under the age of 18 is classed as a child and must be safeguarded. Anyone over the age of 18 but is vulnerable also requires safeguarding.

It's crucial that companies and organisations have safeguarding policies (signed) in place which are used in conjunction with a young person's risk assessment (The Management of Health, Safety at Work Regulations 1999).

Colin showed us a small video clip, showing children and their views on what makes them feel safe and secure. Some examples included; "there needs to be rules in place to stop bullying", "I feel happy and protected when I feel safe. Colin pointed out that although they may feel safe they don't know what they don't know, so are not always necessarily aware of the dangers around them.

The question, "Is bullying actually bullying or banter"? was put to the group. The answer is "It depends on the individual and how it's perceived and interpreted". Some might take it and think nothing of it, but to another, not so. A question about Facebook and Cyber bullying was brought up and as it is now a worldwide issue people may need to be safeguarded against it. The safeguarding person must enforce rules in the classroom right from the start and must be mindful of its effects inside and outside the classroom.

Colin explained that the person responsible for safeguarding should always be observing whilst teaching and looking for signs and signals like self-neglect, self-harming, withdrawal, drug and alcohol abuse and much more. They must be able to connect and know their students whilst commanding respect and authority, but at the same time, be approachable.

Reactions can be so different from person to person. As adults, we are protective and duty bound to protect children and the vulnerable. Safeguarding is there to protect and help bring people on. It is important to keep an eye on things and manage the situation professionally.

Abuse can take many forms and can happen anywhere, from the family home, classroom, entertainment / leisure business and more recently the allegations of abuse at local and national level football clubs.

The suitability of staff is paramount and at this point Colin showed the group a short documentary on the Soham murders 2002. Communication is key when safeguarding and the authorities, police, councils, parents and schools should all work together. In order to protect children and vulnerable persons we need to make sure we have the fullest of pictures beforehand.

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An interesting conversation arose regarding staff and undergoing the relevance of DBA checks as they may only be applicable literally at the time and don't always expose or reveal all the facts, as in the case of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman.

Colin pointed out that one of the most important aspects is to safeguard oneself.

Vice Chairman, Ralph Stubbs thanked Colin for giving such an interesting and important subject.

No Committee meeting was held tonight.

Minutes compiled and prepared by: Liz Jackson (Committee Member / Branch Secretary)

End of NSSC District Branch Meeting 6th February 2017