

# South West Regional Assessment Centre Limited

Monitoring visit report

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<b>Unique reference number:</b>	54501
<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Kathryn Rudd, Her Majesty's Inspector
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<b>Type of provider:</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Address:</b>	Merley House Merley House Lane BH21 3AA

# Monitoring visit: main findings

## Context and focus of visit

This monitoring visit focused on safeguarding arrangements and was undertaken as outlined in the [operational note on visits carried out from January 2021](#) and with reference to the further education and skills handbook.

South West Regional Assessment Centre Limited (SWRAC) is an independent learning provider offering traineeships, adult learning, study programmes for students with high needs and part time alternative provision. SWRAC have four learning centres in Wimborne, Dorchester and Liverpool, with their main campus located in Bournemouth. The majority of their learners are adults returning to learning, who study on short construction courses. Approximately 14% of their students are in receipt of high needs funding. At the time of the visit there were 110 students studying at SWRAC.

SWRAC was previously inspected by Ofsted in February 2017. This was a short inspection and it was judged as good.

This was an unannounced safeguarding monitoring visit, following concerns that had been reported to Ofsted. The purpose of the visit was to assess whether the safeguarding arrangements at the provider are effective.

Ofsted is aware of the challenges that COVID-19 is currently posing to those we inspect. The impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgements below.

## Themes

**How do governors, leaders and managers ensure that they comply with the relevant safeguarding requirements, and how effectively do they apply safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that all learners are kept safe?** **Insufficient progress**

Leaders and governors do not consistently apply relevant safeguarding requirements, or their own safeguarding policies and procedures.

Staff are routinely recruited without having the required references or Disclosure and Barring Service checks in place. Leaders state that staff work under supervision until these checks are received. However, they were unable to provide inspectors with the risk assessments for these staff. Managers and staff were often unclear about who had the required checks, and who could work safely on their own.

Risk assessments are not in place for all vulnerable students, and for adult learners with criminal convictions. Where risk assessments are in place, they contain insufficient information about the nature of the risk, the potential impact on students and staff, and the mitigating actions taken.

Staff receive safeguarding training which is basic and does not take their previous knowledge into account, or the requirements of the students that they are working with. New staff do not always complete the required mandatory training within their probationary period.

Governors do not ensure they meet the requirements outlined in their own safeguarding policies. For example, they have not ensured the designated safeguarding lead has a job description. Leaders rightly recognise that governors are not sufficiently holding them to account for the safety of their students and have plans to remedy this.

Formal processes for creating, updating and sharing policies and procedures are not clear. Policies do not always reflect the latest legislation or safeguarding requirements. Not all managers understand how to access relevant policies and, therefore, do not use them to make well-informed decisions about their students.

Safeguarding arrangements differ significantly between sites. At the Liverpool centre there are limited procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment issues, and safeguarding and some safety arrangements are given a low priority. However, at the Bournemouth centre, safeguarding arrangements are given a high priority and managers check procedures are understood and followed by staff and learners.

### **How effective are governors leaders and staff at acting on safeguarding concerns when they arise?      Insufficient progress**

SWRAC's safeguarding tracking system is not used effectively to record and share information about student issues. It is not clear how issues are followed up by leaders and managers, and what lessons have been learnt. Referrals to external agencies do not appear to have been consistently or promptly made by staff. Serious issues are not identified on the system as priority concerns. As a result, leaders and governors are not able to reliably assure themselves that students are safe, identify systemic safeguarding issues and ensure appropriate mitigating actions have been taken.

Staff and student knowledge of safeguarding is variable. Many staff do not have sufficient understanding of recent safeguarding legislation or local issues relating to extremism and radicalisation. Most students learn about safeguarding during their induction, and this is not always revisited by staff or shown the importance that it deserves. However, students studying at Bournemouth regularly recap safeguarding topics as part of their curriculum.

Staff do not consistently challenge students who are smoking outside of the designated zones. In the Bournemouth centre, some students take breaks in an area close to a busy road where there is limited direct staff oversight.

Students told inspectors they know who to contact if they have worries or concerns. Students at Dorchester and Bournemouth say staff deal with incidents effectively. For example, staff discuss bullying incidents with both parties, and their families, where appropriate.

Leaders and managers know their students well and regularly discuss any potential concerns. However, many of these discussions are informal and information is not consistently shared with all staff or recorded effectively.

Students are taught about the risks of drug and alcohol abuse. Adult learners understand how these issues could affect their work on construction sites. Students in Dorchester and Bournemouth were clear on the consequences of not adhering to the drug and alcohol rules on the campus.

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