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Resources for education providers: Meeting the revised SETs

# Enabling learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users

**3.17 There must be an effective process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.**

### Why a new standard?

- There are often policies in place in environments that learners work in
- Currently we have no oversight of these policies
- Learners can identify risks for service users, but may not raise these due to power imbalances

### What does the standard mean?

- Helping learners to **recognise** situations where service users may be at risk
- **Supporting** them in raising any concerns
- Making sure **action is taken** in response to those concerns

## Case study 1

### **3.17 There must be an effective process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.**

This standard is about helping learners to recognise situations where service users may be at risk, supporting them in raising any concerns and making sure action is taken in response to those concerns.

**Background:** Sally is a second year dramatherapy student currently undertaking practice-based learning in a local school, where she shadows a registered dramatherapist who visits the school once a week. Sally noticed that this practice educator occasionally loses their temper with pupils who do not understand things, or stop paying attention. Sally has overheard conversations in the staff room that the practice educator is currently going through some personal issues. Sally feels sorry for her practice educator, but she also knows she has an obligation to report anything that she feels may be inappropriate. However, Sally is worried that because her practice educator is responsible for signing of some of her competencies, she may be marked down or failed.

**Action:** Sally remembers a session that all learners undertook at the start of the programme, which went through what her obligations were when in the practice setting. As this was a long time ago, Sally calls her personal tutor to find out what she should do, and is told to read the local school's whistleblowing policy and decide what to do. Sally reads the policy and is clear that she should raise her concerns with school welfare manager. She speaks to the welfare manager and they reassure her that "this will be dealt with confidentially and that no one would know that she was the person who raised the concern."

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## Case study 1

### **Questions to consider:**

1. Could this approach meet the standard?
2. How could this approach be improved?
3. What other standards could be impacted by this approach?
4. How else could this standard be met?

### **Things to think about:**

1. Has the education provider helped Sally recognise the situation?
2. Sally has not remembered what she would need to do from the start of the programme, what more could the education provider do here?
3. This is the School's policy? How does the education provider ensure it is appropriate?
4. What more could the tutor have done to help?

## Case study 2

### **3.17 There must be an effective process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.**

This standard is about helping learners to recognise situations where service users may be at risk, supporting them in raising any concerns and making sure action is taken in response to those concerns.

**Background:** All learners applying to Wessex University for the BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Audiology) programme must have sourced their own practice-based learning before being admitted. Craig, who has been a hearing aid assistant for many years, is about to start the programme, and his employer, Hearing Cares, is supplying Craig's practice based learning, and is paying for him to attend.

**Approach:** During his induction to the programme, Craig is told that he has an obligation to raise concerns if he recognises situations where service users may be at risk. Craig is worried that raising a concern could impact on his practice based learning, or possibly even his employment. He waits until other learners have left the session and talks to the tutor about his fears of raising concerns, especially in practice as this may affect his employment. The tutor explains how it is his professional responsibility to ensure service user safety, and raise concerns when a service user could be at risk. The tutor also refers him to the programme handbook where it outlines the way in which to raise concerns, with examples of what the concerns may be. The tutor suggests that he is going to hold a tutorial session the next week with the other learners, to enable them to have in depth conversations about the policy highlighted in the programme handbook.

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## Case study 2

### **Questions to consider:**

1. Could this approach meet the standard?
2. How could this approach be improved?
3. What other standards could be impacted by this approach?
4. How else could this standard be met?

### **Things to think about:**

1. What does the policy say about protecting learners?
2. Does the tutorial session always happen or is it as a result of the conversation with Craig?
3. There is a clear power imbalance in this situation. Is there anything in the student contract about protecting students? What does the employer need to agree to?