

Safeguarding and Prevent at Boots

Our vision is to be the first choice for pharmacy, opticians, health and beauty – caring for people, customers and communities everywhere. Caring for colleagues and keeping them safe is at the heart of this vision and it's important that we do the right thing to help those colleagues who may be at risk of harm, whether inside or outside of work.

What do we mean by Safeguarding and Prevent?

Safeguarding is about protecting people from being harmed by others. Not letting anything affect their physical or mental health or hold back a young person's development and it's about taking responsibility for helping them get the support they need.

Prevent is a government strategy aimed at protecting people from radicalisation, so they're not drawn towards extremism. Extremism is when someone actively opposes British values like democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and tolerance of different beliefs.

Whose responsibility is it?

It's everybody's responsibility, because any of us might notice that a colleague is not themselves. A change of behaviour could suggest someone is in a vulnerable or difficult situation. The type of things we might notice include:

- being withdrawn
- aggressive behaviour
- being absent from work more
- a sudden and unexpected change in eating habits
- different or new circle of friends
- other signs - out of character appearance, defiance, a sense of persecution and a refusal to conform

Young people and vulnerable adults are at greater risk of exploitation, neglect, radicalisation or abuse, so it's important that we look out for those we work with. We are passionate about supporting our communities and often spend time running activities in partnership with charities or schools. So it's important when we are representing Boots that we are aware of our safeguarding and prevent policy.

Healthcare Professionals have an obligation to consider and act upon safeguarding and prevent issues that they come across in the course of their work, related to vulnerable customers. There are separate policies and training to support this.

If I'm concerned about a colleague, what should I do?

When we notice a colleague isn't themselves, first of all ask them if they are ok. Here are some tips to help with conversations like this:

- choose a place where they can talk openly
- tell them why we're concerned, such as "you seem very quiet, like you have something on your mind"
- make the time to listen to everything they want to say
- stay calm even if the conversation is emotional

- ask open questions without probing, use closed questions to clarify specific points
- we don't need to have the answers, just let them know we'll help them get support

If we still have concerns or feel unable to talk to the colleague, we can tell a manager or contact the safeguarding lead (the HR Business Partner for the region or function). The safeguarding lead will listen and advise on how we can help. We will always refer a case where there is a significant risk or we are certain that abuse or radicalisation has occurred so it's best to contact the safeguarding lead to have a confidential discussion about what to do.

If, after talking to the colleague or the safeguarding lead, we feel that there isn't any need to refer the matter but the colleague might need some support, free and confidential assistance is available through LifeWorks. Information about how to contact them, who they can help and the type of issues they can help with can be found on BootsLive or the [Intranet](#)

The safeguarding lead's role

The two overall safeguarding leads are the Directors of HR for Retail Pharmacy Operations and Change and Support Office Partnering, who will:

- raise awareness of safeguarding and prevent at Boots
- review the policy annually
- ensure suitable training is available for all who need it
- inform the wider leadership team about any general safeguarding issues that need attention

The HR Business Partners are regional/functional safeguarding leads, they will:

- advise colleagues who think there is a safeguarding or prevent issue
- manage the referral process if required
- lead on encouraging take up of the safeguarding and prevent training
- inform Directors of HR about the types of cases they are supporting on

Elearning module – Safeguarding and Prevent

All line managers of apprentices or work experience students need to complete the e-learning training, as well as anyone who represents Boots at community activities, so we understand our safeguarding and prevent responsibilities.