



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 whether that be to themselves or 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.

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, such as:

- Being withdrawn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

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 okay. Here are some tips to help with conversations like this:

- Choose a place where they can talk openly and tell them why we're concerned
- 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 answers, just let me 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 HR Business Partner for the region or function (Functional Safeguarding Partner) or one of the Safeguarding Leads, to have a confidential discussion about what to do. If it's urgent and its outside normal office hours call the People Point out of hours service, this service is available 9am-5pm on Saturdays, 10am-4pm Sunday and bank Holidays.

We have 6 Designated Safeguarding Leads who are:

The Quality & Funding Manager (Apprenticeships), L&D Director Boots UK, Stores HR Director Boots UK, Head of HR South Boots, UK, Senior HRBP Group and Head of HR Boots Opticians.

They are responsible for:

- Overseeing the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the Social Services access team and the Child Protection Officer of the local police, and the local Prevent Co-ordinator, as appropriate.
- Providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child or vulnerable adult protection, and Safeguarding including the Prevent duty.
- Ensure appropriate full records are maintained and stored appropriately
- Liaising with the local Safeguarding Children Boards and other appropriate agencies
- Review policy and arrangements annually for effectiveness and consistency with the Safeguarding Children Board's requirements or guidance
- Ensuring that relevant colleagues are receiving basic training in safeguarding issues and are aware of Boots' Safeguarding and Prevent procedures (refresher training to be completed every 2 years)
- Reporting how they have discharged their duties regularly (at least twice yearly) to the Senior Leadership team through their Safeguarding meetings minutes.

Responsibilities of the HRBP's (Functional Safeguarding Partner)

They are responsible for:

- Support the Designated Safeguarding Leads in providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child protection, and Safeguarding including the Prevent duty
- Liaising with appropriate managers to ensure appropriate safeguards are put in place for apprentices or students on work placements
- Ensuring young people and vulnerable colleagues are aware of our Safeguarding policy
- Completion of safeguarding concern form (SCF) for any concerns raised
- Completing the investigation of complaint or concern, where the concern has been brought to their attention by another colleague
- Dealing with any external referrals as appropriate, ensuring that the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed

E-learning 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.