

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION



SkillsTeam

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INTRODUCTION TO SKILLS TEAM

At Skills Team we have a passion for learning.

Our mission is to “**Make a Difference**” in the lives and workplaces of all our learners and their employers.

We want to see everyone increase their potential through learning and have developed a culture that we believe will provide a positive learning experience designed to motivate learners and staff alike.

When you enrol on a Skills Team programme, it’s not just a training course; it’s a whole programme of learning and development. Not only will you gain skills specific to your job role, but also a wide range of related knowledge and experience to help you become more effective and professional, enhancing your career prospects and your personal and professional capabilities. This includes:

- Developing your skills in maths, English and ICT
- Encouraging you to take pride in your achievements and set stretching targets
- Awareness of the benefits of maintaining a healthy lifestyle
- Ensuring safety for you and others in the online world
- Developing your ability to deal with challenging situations
- Helping you to appreciate, value and bring out the best in others

Our dedicated team is available to help all our learners and staff to meet individual needs. If you have questions about any aspect of your programme, please talk to your trainer or assessor or email any of the designated contacts listed on the following pages.



OUR LEARNING CULTURE

This leaflet provides you with information about our core values and where to find support for different aspects that may affect your learning; so that we can offer a safe, supportive environment that challenges you to reach your potential:

Stretching

In order to achieve your full potential, you will be stretched in your learning and application of knowledge, then challenged to reflect on your progress. We will also help you to set targets for your ongoing career development.

Valuing people

Our inclusive practice will remove barriers to learning and progression. We will always try to adapt delivery to meet your individual needs. Similarly we encourage all our learners to respect and value others, seeking to meet their needs both in the workplace and in wider society.

Inspiring

We recognise and promote achievement and encourage everyone to appreciate and embrace their successes.

Innovating

We are open to new ways of working, with the necessary support, to enable staff and learners to work safely and be inspired in a positive environment.

Integrity and respect

We encourage our staff and learners to act with integrity at all times, setting the right example for standards of personal and professional behaviour. This includes respect for others, exhibiting the “**British values**” of democracy; rule of law; individual liberty; mutual understanding and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs or for those without faith.



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AT SKILLS TEAM

Skills Team believes in the principles of freedom from discrimination for everyone regardless of their age, gender, disability, ethnic background, marital status, sexual orientation, social background or religious beliefs.

Skills Team wants to provide real equality of opportunity for all our learners. We aim to support everyone within our learning community in which equality of opportunity is promoted and diversity is valued.

Skills Team staff will offer you impartial, current and relevant information, answer questions and discuss your ideas to ensure that you:

- Have a good understanding of the learning opportunities available to you
- Find ways of overcoming barriers to learning
- Understand more about yourself, your capabilities and the time it will take to reach your potential

TOPIC OF THE WEEK

As part of our commitment to stretching and challenging learners and to encouraging broad-based personal and professional growth, everyone engages in free discussion about different issues that are topical or in the news, at the start of every session.

The “Topic of the Week” slot is only for ten to fifteen minutes, but can cover anything from the migration crisis to new guidelines on alcohol consumption. This will help you to express your own views and to understand the views of others, as well as broadening awareness of current affairs and social issues.

Some of the discussions may prompt you to review and promote different attitudes in work and to become more watchful for issues that might arise in future.

RAISING AWARENESS OF ISSUES IN SOCIETY

As part of an overall programme of learning and development, Skills Team believes it is important for all learners to be aware of some of the wider issues facing society today. We are particularly keen to promote best practice in safeguarding vulnerable individuals and protecting all our learners and staff from bullying, harassment and extremism.

Safeguarding:

Skills Team is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk of harm, and expects all staff and contractors to share this commitment. Safeguarding can be defined as keeping children and adults at risk safe from harm, such as illness, abuse or injury.

Skills Team will:

- Take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children, young people and adults at risk of harm are minimised
- Where there are concerns about the welfare of children, young people or adults at risk of harm, we will take all appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to local policies and procedures in full partnership with other agencies

Bullying and Harassment:

Skills Team has a zero tolerance policy towards bullying or harassment. If any of our learners or staff feels threatened or offended by the behaviour of other learners or staff members, please contact one of our designated people listed below.

Concerns about Extremism

Skills Team is fully supportive of the government's "Prevent" strategy which aims to challenge ideology that promotes terrorism and extremism, and protect people who are at risk of radicalisation. If you believe that you or any other learners or staff might be at risk from exposure to extremist or radical thinking, please contact one of our designated people listed below.

Designated Contacts

If you, as a learner on a Skills Team programme have any concern about your welfare, safety and rights, or that of other learners or staff, you should speak to your trainer or assessor, or any other member of staff you trust, or contact one of our Designated People below: You can be assured that your concerns will be taken seriously and treated in complete confidence.

Maureen Owens: maureeno@skillsteam.com

Sally Tate: sallyt@skillsteam.com

HEALTH, SAFETY...

Skills Team recognises that ensuring a safe working and learning environment is a key responsibility that is fundamental to its operations. We seek to achieve this by:

- Reducing risk of harm or injury in the learning and working environment
- Safeguarding learners
- Protecting the environment and avoiding losses and liabilities

Skills Team provides:

- equipment and place of work that are safe and where risks are minimised
- suitable health and safety information and training for staff and learners
- monitoring of arrangements for welfare at work

If you have any concerns regarding health and safety issues you should speak to your trainer or assessor, or any other member of staff you trust, or contact Andrew Prince: andrewp@skillsteam.com

..AND WELLBEING

The responsibilities for health and safety are generally well understood but often in a reactive or responsive way.

We also want to encourage learners to be more **proactive** in promoting health and wellbeing for themselves and their colleagues. So as part of your programme, we will explore what makes for a healthy lifestyle and how to achieve the right work-life balance.



DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Data Protection Act 1998 requires that the personal information you provide will be protected and used only for the purpose for which it was collected.

The information that you provide will be passed to our government funding bodies and related organisations as well as the awarding bodies for the certification of your work.

At no time will any information be shared with organisations for marketing or sales purposes. We are, however, required to make disclosure to the police if they require information as part of their investigation into criminal activities.

From time to time you may be contacted to take part in surveys which are aimed at enabling the funding and awarding bodies to monitor Skills Team's performance, quality and provision. This is to improve quality and to plan for the future. Your feedback is valued and will be used to help bring about improvements to educational provision in England. All your responses will of course be treated in confidence.

To learn more about data protection and freedom of information, visit the **Information Commissioner's Office**, the government body that regulates this area: www.ico.org.uk

If you have any questions about the information collected you should speak to your trainer or assessor, or contact: Kevin White: kevinw@skillsteam.com

E-SAFETY AT SKILLS TEAM

In our current technological age it's easy to overlook what we are doing with technology and put the e-safety of ourselves and others at risk. At Skills Team we are committed to providing a safe learning environment and to promoting awareness of the risks involved in using technology.

e-safety covers a wide range of subjects, including:

- **Online behaviour** – understanding what constitutes cyber-bullying and sexting
- **Protecting your online reputation** – understanding both the risks and rewards of sharing personal information online (your digital footprint)
- **Cyber fraud** – understanding how you might become exposed or unwittingly involved in cyber-crime or online fraud which could result in significant financial loss
- **Extremism** – understanding the nature and risks of involvement in extremism and radicalisation
- **Safeguarding** – understanding how to protect your team and family members from exposure

In order to use e-technology safely we need to be sure that you:

- Understand the reliability and validity of online information
- Maintain data security – keeping your personal information safe and being aware of viruses and hacking
- Know what to do if anything bad happens (for instance if you are a victim of cyber-bullying, online fraud or you upload something by mistake)
- Know how to manage business or parental access sensitively



TOP TEN E-SAFETY TIPS

1. Always think of your personal safety first when using ICT or your mobile phone. Remember it is easy for anyone to lie about who they are online, so you can never really be sure who you are talking to.

2. Do not give out any personal information about yourself online to people you do not know. This includes but is not limited to your full name, date of birth, address, postcode, bank or card details. Never give your contact number to anyone who you don't know.

3. Do not "re-tweet" or otherwise circulate content that is negative or malicious as you are then deemed to be "publishing" the material and could be sued for defamation.

4. It's a good idea to use a nickname rather than your real name when registering on certain sites.

5. Don't meet people that you have only spoken to online. If you do decide to meet up with anyone in real life, make sure you take a trusted adult with you and meet in a public place at a busy time.

6. Never give out pictures or go onto a webcam online or over a mobile unless you know the person in real life. It is easy for people to take your images and alter them, send them on, or even pretend to be you.

7. Always use private settings whenever you are setting up a social networking page or an Instant Messenger (IM) account. This is to prevent people who you don't want to from seeing your profile.

8. Anything you post or upload to the internet is there forever – so be very careful what you put online.

9. If you use your employer's equipment to access email or social media for personal use, remember your employer then has rights to view all your messages and this may result in disciplinary action or losing your job.

10. If you receive any messages or pictures that worry or upset you, talk to someone you trust, particularly if this involves pornographic or extremist content. You may also report it through Skills Team, by contacting Andrew Prince: andrewp@skillsteam.com

SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT AT SKILLS TEAM

Skills Team is committed to continuously embedding sustainability in its working practice. This requires working with staff and learners to identify areas in which waste can be reduced and recycling promoted.

Sustainability is assuring the security of the environment, economy and society for present and future generations – promoting awareness of human actions that threaten the natural environment.

At Skills Team we are 'resource conscious' and committed to reducing our consumption. We always seek to improve energy, water and resource efficiency at work; minimising waste and preventing pollution.

Examples of our initiatives include:

- Greater use of technology to reduce travel to and from the office and to reduce the weight of paper carried by our assessors
- Installation of a hot water process instead of a kettle
- Investment in our web site to provide information and course notes in the student resources area instead of on paper
- Redesign of our training materials to reduce waste and the need for printing large quantities
- Online testing facilities
- LPG conversion for company vehicles

If you have any concerns about sustainability or suggestions for how we can improve our performance, please speak to your trainer or assessor, or contact: Sally Tate: sallyt@skillsteam.com



MATHS, ENGLISH AND ICT

Your ability to express your opinions and communicate clearly, both verbally and in writing, has a significant impact on how you are perceived by employers, colleagues and clients. People do notice if you can spell correctly, format documents and communicate accurate and valid information in a way that can be easily understood and relied upon. It's as much a part of looking professional as the way you dress or behave.

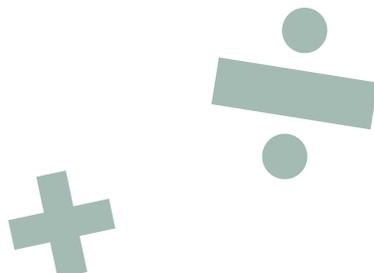
As part of your programme we will challenge every learner to improve their use of English, grammar, punctuation and spelling. We will review and suggest improvements to your use of ICT, particularly formatting of documents and use of software functionality. We will challenge your critical thinking and reasoning including your maths ability, to ensure that information you provide is accurate, reliable and relevant.

We will help you to improve by giving feedback and helping with extra exercises. You may be taking tests to assess your maths, English and ICT skills – but this is only half the challenge. By the end of the programme your written and spoken communication should be more professional and more effective.

If you have any questions about your tests or results please contact:
Nicole Christie: nicolec@skillsteam.com

COURSE PLANNER

Every learner will work closely with their assigned assessor to prepare their work and plan for assessment. The “course planner” is a useful point of reference which can be reviewed and updated at every session so you know what is coming next and the deadlines for handing in work. It's important to try to keep on top of your work.



WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND PLAGIARISM

For several of our programmes you will be asked to submit written assignments. It is important that you avoid direct copying - either from the Internet or other colleagues/learners. Gaining your qualification involves us assessing your knowledge and understanding of course topics and it's therefore important that we can assess what you understand and think and not your ability to copy and paste!

It is also important for checking your understanding that you show us how the knowledge you have gained can be applied into your workplace. So please don't tell us what we already know by regurgitating management theories or technical standards; rather tell us how the theory or standards apply in your own work situation.

You can use diagrams or illustrations and even quotes from online or other sources – but only use a small amount of quotes and then explain why they are relevant to your situation. Always reference the quotes and any other materials you use.

CONTACTS

If you have any questions about your programme or the topics covered in this leaflet, please contact us as follows:

Skills Team telephone: 020 3174 1100

Email: info@skillsteam.com

Designated contacts:

Safeguarding:	Maureen Owens	maureeno@skillsteam.com
Health and safety:	Andrew Prince	andrewp@skillsteam.com
Data protection:	Kevin White	kevinw@skillsteam.com
E-safety:	Andrew Prince	andrewp@skillsteam.com
Sustainability, Equality and Diversity:	Sally Tate	sallyt@skillsteam.com
Functional skills in English, Maths and ICT:	Nicole Christie	nicolec@skillsteam.com
General issues and complaints:	Sally Tate	sallyt@skillsteam.com



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