

Learn with Confidence

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Trauma-Informed Practice Policy v1.1

1. Purpose of this Policy

This policy sets out Learn with Confidence's trauma-informed approach to supporting learners. It reflects our commitment to relational practice, emotional safety, neurodiversity-affirming environments, and high-quality alternative provision. Trauma-informed practice is embedded across all teaching, pastoral and operational systems at LwC.

The policy ensures staff understand how trauma affects learning, behaviour, communication and regulation, and outlines expectations for consistent, sensitive and supportive practice.

2. Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice at LwC

2.1 Safety

Learners must feel physically, emotionally and psychologically safe. Staff create predictable routines, calm environments and clear expectations. Safety includes sensory safety, relational safety and safeguarding awareness.

2.2 Trust and Transparency

Relationships are built on honesty, consistency and clear communication. Staff explain expectations, boundaries and decisions in a supportive, non-punitive way.

2.3 Choice and Collaboration

Learners are offered choices wherever possible. Staff work collaboratively with learners to agree strategies, routines and approaches that support regulation and engagement.

2.4 Empowerment

Learners are supported to understand their needs, develop self-advocacy skills and build confidence. Staff recognise strengths and celebrate progress, however small.

2.5 Cultural, Neurodiversity and Trauma Awareness

Staff recognise that trauma, neurodiversity, racism, discrimination, sensory needs and past experiences shape how learners engage. Practice is anti-discriminatory, inclusive and responsive.

2.6 Strength-Based and Ability-Focused Language

LwC staff use language that:

- highlights learners' strengths, interests and capabilities
- avoids deficit-based descriptions
- frames challenges as understandable responses to need, not personal failings
- reinforces the learner's identity as capable, resourceful and growing
- supports self-esteem and reduces shame
- acknowledges effort, resilience and progress

Examples include: "You're showing great persistence with this task." "You've found a strategy that works well for you." "You're communicating clearly what you need right now." "You're building confidence in this area."

Strength-based language is a core part of trauma-informed practice and must be used consistently across all staff interactions.

3. Understanding Trauma in Alternative Provision

Many learners at LwC have experienced:

- school avoidance or EBSA
- exclusion or placement breakdown
- bullying or peer conflict
- unmet SEND needs
- mental-health difficulties
- family stress or instability
- previous negative experiences with education

Trauma can affect:

- regulation and emotional responses
- concentration and memory
- communication
- attendance
- relationships with adults
- tolerance for demands
- sensory processing

Staff interpret behaviour as communication and respond with curiosity, not judgement.

4. Trauma-Informed Practice in Daily Teaching

4.1 Regulation-First Approach

Staff prioritise regulation before learning. This may include:

- offering breaks
- co-regulation
- sensory strategies
- grounding techniques
- supported transitions
- flexible pacing

4.2 Predictable Routines

Learners benefit from:

- clear session structures
- advance notice of changes
- visual supports
- consistent expectations

4.3 Reduced Demand and Gentle Prompting

Staff use:

- low-arousal communication
- step-by-step instructions
- negotiated boundaries
- collaborative problem-solving

4.4 Relationship-Centred Teaching

Staff build trust through:

- warmth and consistency
- active listening
- shared interests
- positive reinforcement

- non-judgemental responses

4.5 Flexible Engagement

Learners may engage through:

- discussion
- creative tasks
- movement breaks
- special interests
- supported use of regulation tools (e.g., smartphones, fidgets)

4.6 Strength-Based Communication in Teaching

Staff embed ability-focused language into teaching by:

- naming what the learner *can* do
- highlighting progress rather than gaps
- reframing difficulties as needs, not deficits
- acknowledging effort and resilience
- using language that builds identity, confidence and self-worth

This approach reduces shame, supports regulation, and strengthens relationships.

5. Trauma-Informed Behaviour Support

5.1 Understanding Behaviour

Behaviour is seen as communication of need, not defiance. Staff consider:

- sensory overload
- anxiety
- past trauma
- unmet needs
- fear of failure
- relationship dynamics

5.2 De-Escalation

Staff use:

- calm tone
- reduced language
- space and time
- co-regulation
- grounding strategies
- supportive presence

5.3 No Punitive Approaches

LwC does not use:

- sanctions
- shaming
- removal of basic needs
- confrontational behaviour management

5.4 Collaborative Repair

After incidents, staff support learners to:

- reflect safely
- rebuild trust
- understand triggers
- plan supportive strategies

6. Trauma-Informed Safeguarding

Staff must:

- recognise trauma as a safeguarding indicator
- be alert to emotional changes, withdrawal, shutdowns or fear responses
- understand how trauma affects disclosure
- respond calmly and sensitively to concerns
- follow safeguarding procedures immediately

Trauma-informed practice does **not** replace statutory safeguarding duties.

7. Staff Training and Support

All staff at Learn with Confidence receive training in the core practices that underpin our trauma-informed, relational and neurodiversity-affirming approach. This includes:

- **Trauma-informed practice:** understanding how trauma affects regulation, communication, learning and behaviour, and responding with sensitivity and relational support.
- **De-escalation and co-regulation:** using low-arousal communication, calm presence, grounding strategies and collaborative approaches to reduce distress and support emotional safety.
- **Safeguarding and KCSIE:** maintaining up-to-date knowledge of statutory guidance, recognising indicators of harm, understanding disclosure, and following procedures promptly and confidently.
- **Mental-health awareness:** recognising emotional changes, shutdowns, anxiety, dysregulation and other mental-health indicators, and responding in a supportive, non-judgemental way.
- **Positive behaviour practices:** using strength-based, ability-focused language; interpreting behaviour as communication; avoiding punitive approaches; and supporting learners to develop regulation, confidence and self-advocacy.

Staff are supported through supervision, reflective practice, access to senior leaders, and ongoing professional development to ensure consistency and high-quality relational practice across the provision.

8. Working with Families and Professionals

LwC works collaboratively with:

- parents/carers
- schools
- Local Authorities
- mental-health services
- therapists
- social care

We share information sensitively and focus on building supportive, trusting relationships with families.

9. Monitoring and Review

Trauma-informed practice is reviewed annually and informed by:

- learner feedback
- staff reflections
- safeguarding trends
- attendance patterns
- behaviour and engagement data
- emerging research and national guidance

Adjustments are made as learner needs evolve.

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Notes
1.1	28 August 2026	K. Perry	First draft