

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Updated: June 2023


BUCKS
STUDENTS' UNION

Safeguarding policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Union has a duty of care to safeguard from harm all vulnerable adults and young people. The Union has adopted this safeguarding policy to ensure the safety and protection of all vulnerable adults and young people involved directly with personnel acting on behalf of the Union in the course of their activities.
- 1.2. The safeguarding principles apply to Union's activities within the office or on any premises where the Union is hosting Students' Union activity.
- 1.3. This policy is divided into nine sections:
 - a. Recruitment and selection of staff
 - b. Code of practice
 - c. Confidentiality and information sharing
 - d. Recognition
 - e. Response
 - f. Reporting
 - g. Recording
 - h. Referral

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all Union employees, contractors, casual workers, agency workers and Trustees.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1. Chief Executive Officer:
 - a. ensure that the policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed.
- 3.2. Human Resources and Development Manager:
 - a. act as Safeguarding Officer
 - b. maintain monitor and review this policy to ensure effectiveness
 - c. ensure the contents of the policy is communicated to managers and other appropriate individuals
 - d. support individuals who have received information regarding safeguarding issues
 - e. support any young person or vulnerable adult who raises a safeguarding issue
 - f. maintain confidentiality of information
 - g. support any subsequent action required by third party or internal inquiry
 - h. ensure staff recruitment, induction and HR practices policies and procedures reflect safeguarding best practice
 - i. ensure the Safeguarding Policy is available to all staff, contractors, casual workers and trustees
 - j. receive concerns about safeguarding

- k. respond to the concerns by identifying the most appropriate course of action
- l. act as a link with any external agencies
- m. keep confidential records of concerns and actions
- n. submit high level report/s of any safeguarding issues

3.3. Line managers

- a. must ensure that their teams are familiar with the contents of the policy and appropriate responses required if a safeguarding concern arises.

3.4. All employees

- a. report any identified safeguarding issues in line with this policy

4. Definitions

- 4.1. Young person: A child; someone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.
- 4.2. Vulnerable adult: Someone of 18 years or over who:
 - a. May be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and
 - b. is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.
- 4.3. Child Abuse: can be through inflicting harm, or failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be physical, emotional or sexual and may take place in a family, institutional or community setting by those known to them or by a stranger.
- 4.4. Neglect: can be through inflicting harm, or failing to act to prevent harm. Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.
- 4.5. Abuse of Vulnerable Adults: A violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.
- 4.6. Physical Abuse: when someone physically hurts or injures by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting or scalding; suffocating, drowning or otherwise causing physical harm.
- 4.7. Sexual Abuse: any sexual act to which a child or vulnerable adult has not consented, could not consent or was pressured into consenting. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex or fondling, showing pornographic books, photographs or videos, or taking pictures for pornographic purposes.
- 4.8. Psychological/Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional ill treatment such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to someone that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may occur if someone is subjected to constant criticism, name-calling and sarcasm, bullying, racism or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently.

- 4.9. Bullying: Deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It may be:
- physical e.g. kicking;
 - verbal e.g. racist;
 - emotional e.g. ignoring and isolating; or
 - sexual, e.g. unwanted physical contact
- Bullying may also include more general activities that have the potential to create significant harm, such as downloading or using inappropriate material.
- 4.10. Financial/Material Abuse: This includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- 4.11. Discriminatory Abuse: Includes racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- 4.12. Patterns of Abuse: Most incidents of abuse contain prior indications of the potential for abuse that have been missed, ignored or overlooked. These might include:
- offering extra support to individual young persons or vulnerable adults;
 - placing themselves in closed rooms;
 - a series of minor concerns about physical contact; or
 - a history of frequent moves from jobs.

5. Recruitment and Selection of Staff

- 5.1. All prospective staff will complete an application form which asks for information about the applicant's post. Where roles require, an agreement to be checked if applicable by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will be made.
- 5.2. Two references will be requested, either from their previous employer or from someone known to them personally, but not a relative. Evidence of identity will be required, such as a passport or a driving licence with photograph.

6. Code of Practice

- 6.1. These are guidelines for employees, contractors, casual workers, agency workers and Trustees when in contact with vulnerable adults or young people:
- Do not have lone contact with vulnerable adults or young persons. If this is unavoidable, ensure someone else is advised of what is taking place and why. Employees of the Advice Centre and HR departments should observe their departmental guidance.
 - Conduct contact in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations.
 - Maintain a safe and appropriate distance from each person. Do not have physical contact without that person's permission.
 - Ensure that language is appropriate, clear and cannot be misinterpreted.
 - Encourage open communication.

7. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- 7.1. Ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately.
- 7.2. If in doubt about confidentiality, seek advice from the Human Resources and Development Manager.
- 7.3. The Human Resources and Development Manager will disclose any information about an individual to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis, taking account of the best interests of the individual.
- 7.4. Colleagues must be aware that information a vulnerable adult or young person discloses regarding abuse of themselves or another person must be shared as appropriate, and cannot be kept secret.
- 7.5. Confidentiality is designed to safeguard the best interests of the individual and must not be confused with protecting the management interest of Union.
- 7.6. The Union operates Whistleblowing and Grievance policies if staff have any concerns about the conduct of their colleagues.

8. Recognition

- 8.1. The ability to recognise behaviour that may indicate abuse or other safeguarding issues is of fundamental importance. Abuse can occur in a range of situations in which the vulnerable adult or young person may find themselves.

9. Response

- 9.1. Appropriate response is vital. No report of a concern about possible abuse or other safeguarding issues should ever be ignored. In order to determine the most appropriate response, find out whether the allegation is from a young person or vulnerable adult against an employee, contractor, casual worker, agency worker, Trustee or another.
 - a. Is the disclosure from an individual alleging abuse to themselves or to another?
 - b. Is it the reporting of a concern or suspicion?
 - c. What, precisely, is the alleged to have happened?
- 9.2. Detailed clarity is vital. If you suspect or are told an adult or young person is being abused:
 - a. stay calm;
 - b. listen carefully to what is said;
 - c. allow them to speak, but be very careful not to say anything that may suggest or prompt a particular answer;
 - d. accept at face value what they say;
 - e. reassure them that they are being carefully listened to and do not promise to 'keep it confidential'. Make it clear that it may be necessary to tell someone else who can help to sort things out;
 - f. reassure them they have done the right thing in speaking about the issue;
 - g. tell the adult or young person what will happen next and with whom the information will be shared;
 - h. Immediately report all Safeguarding concerns to the Human Resources and Development Manager; and
 - i. ensure your line manager is also made aware.

10. Reporting

10.1. You are not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is the task for the professional agencies, following a referral from the Human Resources and Development Manager. Any concerns regarding allegations of abuse must be in the first instance, be reported to the Human Resources and Development Manager. Once you have completed a Safeguarding Issue Reporting Form, the record will be kept confidential and the information will only be viewable by the referrer, the Human Resources and Development Manager.

11. Recording

11.1. An accurate record should be made of what has been alleged, using the words of the vulnerable adult or young person. Add, if appropriate, factual observations about the physical or emotional state of the individual sharing their concerns. Information will be recorded and stored securely, in line with Union's Employee Data Privacy Statement, and will only be accessible to those who need to access it as part of action to resolve a complaint or allegation.

12. Referral

12.1. Only the Human Resources and Development Manager, Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive can make a decision to refer a complaint or allegation, having gathered and examined all relevant information.