

Safeguarding Policy

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Safeguarding Policy

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Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University of Hull places the highest importance on safeguarding, meaning the safety and wellbeing of students is paramount in all University activities. It is recognised that members of staff and volunteers have an important role to play in ensuring the safety and welfare of those that access the University, in particular children, young people and those deemed to be adults at risk.
- 1.2 This policy should be consulted in conjunction with the [University's Code of Practice for under 18 year olds](#), which specifically addresses the safeguarding and duty of care arrangements for those under 18.
- 1.3 The University of Hull is fully committed to undertaking its duties and commitments in respect of safeguarding, in accordance with statutory guidance. This policy cannot be separated from the general ethos of the University, which is that children, young people and adults, are treated with respect and dignity, feel safe and are listened to.
- 1.4 Under the terms of the university's duty of care, this policy also applies to our statutory requirements in compliance with the Prevent Duty Guidance: for higher education institutions in England and Wales (September 2015). This guidance relates to the safeguarding of vulnerable people from the threat of radicalisation. Radicalisation is the process by which someone comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism that lead to terrorism. This may be through contact with extremist individuals or via radicalising material, often online.

2. Definitions

The broad definition of an 'adult at risk', referred to in the 1997 consultation paper, 'Who Decides?' is a person:

who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

This includes anyone aged 18 years or over and **may** be a person who:

- Is elderly and frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment
- Has a learning disability
- Has a physical disability and/or sensory impairment
- Has mental health needs
- Has a long term illness/condition
- Is a Carer, such as a family member/friend, who provides personal assistance and care to adults and is subject to harm
- Is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support.

- Suffers from either a temporary or permanent impairment.

Please note that International Students may also be considered vulnerable because of culture shock, the difference in academic demands, and the fact that they may not have support networks in place.

3. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 Whilst it is impossible to ensure that a child, young person or adult at risk, would never come to any harm, the adoption of this policy, its associated guidelines and the Code of Practice (see Appendix 1) is intended to facilitate the management of the risk associated with the duty to protect such individuals.
- 3.2 The University of Hull aims to identify any children, young people and adults at risk, who are suffering significant harm, or likely to suffer such harm and aims to take appropriate action to help ensure that such individuals are kept safe, whilst providing clear procedures for reporting concerns (see Appendix 2). However, it is recognised, that University staff cannot act “in loco parentis”. Ultimate responsibility will continue to rest with parents and guardians.

This policy, its associated guidelines and the Code of Practice are intended:

- To establish procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff. NB: please also refer to the [University's Policy and Procedure on Disclosures in the Public Interest \(Whistle-blowing\)](#).
- To ensure that safer recruitment principles are adhered to in the appointment of all staff and volunteers.
- To establish appropriate protocols for referral, in the event of concerns that a child or adult might be at risk to the relevant authority, for example, Social Services or the Police.

4. Recruitment, Selection and employment processes

- 4.1 The University of Hull will take all appropriate steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and adults at risk.
- 4.2 Where the risk assessment has identified that students, staff or volunteers are likely to have regular contact with, or encounter members of vulnerable groups, rigorous checks into their eligibility will be required. The University is registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) who will ensure appropriate checks are undertaken for relevant criminal convictions
- 4.3 Under the Prevent guidance, all visiting speakers are subject to the University [External Speaker Policy](#).

5. Risk Assessment

- 5.1 All staff who intend to, or may be put in the position of working with children or other vulnerable groups, via an event, visit or other university-based activity, must ensure that they understand the implications of this policy before commencing such activity.
- 5.2 A risk assessment should be completed prior to any new or changed event, visit or activity involving vulnerable groups, or before admitting (or employing) an under-18. A designated individual should undertake this task, considering if harm could be caused and should then decide whether reasonable steps are being taken to prevent that harm.

- 5.3 Those involved in the risk assessment process should not only look to minimize levels of risk but also to use the exercise as a prompt to consider safer, alternative working practices (see appendix 1).

6. Identifying Harm

- 6.1 Through day-to-day contact with students, staff and volunteers within the University are well placed to observe unusual outward symptoms, or changes in appearance and behaviour. Such symptoms could be due to a wide variety of causes, including mental illhealth, bereavement, changes in family circumstances, drug, alcohol or solvent misuse and relationship problems. If you are concerned about the general wellbeing or welfare of a student, **as opposed to believing they are being harmed or abused by another individual**, please report this to the Student Services by [using the report a concern form](#).

Sometimes, however, the changes could be due to harm caused by others and in those cases the Safeguarding Policy should be adhered to.

Concerns regarding the protection of children or adults at risk may arise because:

- A child or adult at risk discloses that they are being harmed.
- There is a suspicion that a staff member, student or volunteer is harming a child or adult at risk
- The behaviour of a member of staff, student or volunteer, towards an adult at risk, causes concern. This could include bullying.
- The individual exhibits changes in behaviour that could relate to harm, or there are other indicators or suspicions that the individual could be being harmed or at risk of harm (see below for some examples of possible signs/symptoms).

Possible signs/symptoms of harm include:

- Bruises and injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Possible indicators of neglect, which could include, inadequate clothing, poor growth, poor hygiene, frequent hunger.
- Possible indicators of emotional harm, such as excessive dependence on a particular individual or individuals; attention seeking behaviours; self-harming.
- Possible indicators of sexual harm - physical signs such as bruises, scratches or bite marks; or behavioural signs such as, withdrawal or inappropriate sexual behaviour.

Other **possible** signs/symptoms could be:

- Withdrawn behaviour.
- Agitated or anxious behaviour.
- A student being isolated by other students or isolating themselves from fellow students.
- Being reluctant to go home.
- Being overly anxious to please.
- Nervousness when approached.
- Appearing unkempt or unwashed.
- Signs of pain or discomfort.
- Frequent hospital admissions.

- Uncharacteristic changes in behaviour, attitude and commitment e.g. becoming quiet and withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of anger.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or behaviour.
- Fear of particular individuals - especially those with whom a close relationship would usually be expected.
- Comments made via social media or to other members of the University community which could indicate that an individual or group is at risk of abuse/harm

No list of symptoms can be exhaustive and alternative explanations, including psychological, social and medical factors, will most often exist for the signs and symptoms listed above. **Please be aware that the presence of one or more indicators is not conclusive proof that someone is actually being harmed or abused in any way.**

It is the responsibility of every member of staff to record and report any concerns they may have and share them with the Mental Health Support Team (see appendix 2 for contact details and section 7, for how to record and manage this information).

It is in the best interests of the student that your concerns are shared with The Mental Health Support Team, as they are aware of and have access to a variety of specialist services, in areas that include sexual assault, substance misuse and domestic violence.

It is recognised that the University's Occupational Health team are accountable under their independent regulatory body, the Nursing and Midwifery Council. As such they will not always share the details of a student with capacity, who did not consent to the sharing of their information, unless there was significant risk and/or it was deemed in the best interests of the student. It is appreciated that the Occupational Health team would also ensure that any onward referrals and support are offered by them, as part of their role and expertise, as deemed appropriate.

7. Dealing with suspicions or allegations of abuse

7.1 In the event that you suspect or are informed of allegations of abuse you should:

- Reassure the person concerned
- Listen to what they are saying
- Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible (see section 7 for guidance)
- Use the appropriate disclosure method, see appendices 2 and 2, for gathering information and refer to section 7 of the Safeguarding policy, for guidance on how to complete a safeguarding referral.
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief
- Reassure the individual the information will be treated seriously
- Ensure that you clearly understand what is being said so you can refer the matter to your line manager and the Mental Health Support Team.
- Report it to another appropriate manager, if your direct manager is implicated in any way.

Do not:

- Start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions

Promise to keep it a secret

8. Managing and allegation made against a member of staff or another student

- 8.1 The University of Hull will ensure that any allegations made against members of staff are dealt with swiftly.
- 8.2 Where a member of staff is thought to have committed a criminal offence that pertains to this policy, the police will be informed. If a crime has been witnessed the police should be contacted immediately. The safety of the individual(s) concerned is paramount. A risk assessment must be undertaken immediately, to assess the level of risk to anyone coming in to contact with the alleged perpetrator. This will include whether it is safe for them to continue in their role, or any other role within the institution, whilst the investigation is undertaken.
- 8.3 The Mental Health Support Team will liaise with Hull's Safeguarding Adults Board, to discuss the best course of action and to ensure that the Universities disciplinary procedures are coordinated with any other enquiries taking place, as part of the ongoing management of the allegation.
- 8.4 The University of Hull has a Policy and Procedure on Disclosures in the Public Interest (Whistle-blowing). Staff should be aware of this policy and will be supported to use it.
- 8.5 If an allegation is made against another student, the Student Disciplinary Regulations and the Accommodation Misconduct Procedure (where applicable) must be adhered to and a Student Misconduct Report Form must be submitted within a maximum of two working days of the allegation being made. Advice regarding the Regulations/Procedure and/or submission of the report form should be sought from the Student Misconduct Officer if required, either by emailing studentmisconduct@hull.ac.uk or by calling ext: 3421

9. Recording and managing confidential information

- 9.1 If you have a concern regarding a child or adult at risk, or someone makes a disclosure to you, you should record the relevant information in the following ways. This recording can be done in consultation with the Mental Health Support Team if you would prefer, however should they be unavailable, please do not allow this to delay the process.

If a child or adult at risk discloses to you that they are being harmed or at risk of harm, please complete a [Safeguarding Referral](#) as soon as possible and definitely within 24 hours of the disclosure being made. When completing the form, ensure the information provided is accurate and as detailed as possible. Please record the details in the individual's own words and do not try to interpret information yourself. Include the full names of all involved, including any witnesses to incidents, if applicable.

If the adult or child has **not** disclosed to you that they are being harmed or at risk of harm, however you have reason to be concerned that they might be, please complete a [Safeguarding Referral](#) noting in the referral that this is not a disclosure and the person concerned does not know you are completing this form along with your reasons for the concern following guidance for completion as above.

The Safeguarding Referral is sent directly to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team who will retain the record and complete any necessary follow-up work.

Please see appendix 2 for the Mental Health Support Team's contact details.

- 9.2 The University of Hull is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information around Safeguarding issues, should be shared only with those who need to know.
- 9.3 All allegations/concerns should be recorded factually and not based on opinions.
- 9.4 The information that is recorded will be kept secure and in compliance with General Data Protection Regulations. The University's Data Protection Policy must be adhered to.

10. Staff Training and Support

- 10.1 To support staff in the implementation of the Safeguarding policy, mandatory training is accessible to all staff via an e-learning course. In addition, training can be delivered to those requesting it, on Safeguarding awareness and how best to implement the policy.
- 10.2 Support is available to staff via the Mental Health Support Team, for those that would like to discuss any Safeguarding issues or concerns they may have.
- 10.3 Any member of staff affected by a safeguarding concern can access confidential support through the Universities Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provided by Unum Lifeworks or through Focus Counselling. Contact details can be found on the [Healthy Hull Sharepoint Site](#)
- 10.4 Any student affected by a safeguarding concern should be directed to the Student Assistance Programme (SAP) which is available 24/7, 365 days a year or via the Mental Health and Wellbeing team by completing a pathways to support form. Details can be found on the [University Website](#).

Appendix 1: Code of Practice

The following code of practice applies to all University staff, students and volunteers working with children, young people or adults at risk, whether acting in a paid or unpaid capacity:

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Avoid taking members of vulnerable groups alone in a vehicle on journeys, however short.

- Unless circumstances make it impossible to comply, do not take members of vulnerable groups to the toilet unless either (a) another adult is present or (b) another adult is aware (this may include a parent or group leader).
- If you find you are in a situation where you are alone with a member of a vulnerable group, wherever practicable make sure that others can clearly observe you.
- Avoid close personal relationships with members of vulnerable groups in relation to whom you are in a position of trust.
- If a member of a vulnerable group accuses a student or member of staff of abuse or inappropriate behaviour, you should report this immediately to your line manager and/or the Mental Health Support Team.
- The duty to report applies equally to complaints or accusations of historic, and not just recent, abuse/inappropriate behaviour.
- Those dealing with any allegations of abuse or misconduct should adhere to the principles set out in the policy. Any information received should be acted upon sensitively, effectively and efficiently. Wherever possible, those making allegations should be given some information about the outcome.
- The Data Protection Act 2018 provides a framework for the safe sharing of information. The reporting, and any subsequent internal sharing, of information regarding safeguarding concerns should be proportionate to the recipient individuals' need to know. Relevant information should be shared openly with those internal staff investigating the report(s); however information should not be shared indiscriminately. In simple terms information should only be shared with those individuals who require the information in order to appropriately perform their role. It should be borne in mind that excessive sharing of information can have an impact on the alleged victim, those whose conduct is in question (yet who may be found to have done nothing wrong) and the investigation itself. Further guidance and advice can be obtained by contacting dataprotection@hull.ac.uk Information must only be shared with individuals/organisations external to the University if authorised by the Mental Health Support Team
- If the person making the allegation feels they need counselling or other appropriate support from the University, they are encouraged to seek it.

Appendix 2: Reporting abuse

It is the role of the Mental Health Support Team to make a referral, if necessary, to the Hull Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (details below), in conjunction with the person that completed the Safeguarding Referral.

Lead area responsible for Safeguarding Concerns

University of Hull Mental Health and Wellbeing Team

Student Support Services

The Central Support Hub, 1st Floor, Student Central

Tel: 01482 462222

MentalHealth@hull.ac.uk

Named Safeguarding Lead

Head of Student Support and Experience

Rebecca Dennison

Student Support Services

The Central Support Hub, 1st Floor, Student Central

Telephone: (01482) 464642

[R. Dennison@hull.ac.uk](mailto:R.Dennison@hull.ac.uk)

Hull Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board

Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board,

Warehouse 2,

Guildhall Road

Hull

HU1 1HJ

Tel: **01482 379092**

Hull Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (To report abuse or discuss a concern)

Tel: **01482 616092**

Tel: **01482 300304** after 5:00pm or at weekends and speak to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub or download the alerter form available at:

<http://safeguardingadultshull.com/contact>

Or email: sab@hullcc.gov.uk

Appendix 3: Safeguarding Referral

Please refer to section 7 of the Safeguarding policy, for guidance on making a referral.

The [Safeguarding Referral Form](#) is an electronic form which can be used to report both disclosed and non-disclosed safeguarding concerns. The form confidentially logs directly to the University of Hull Mental Health Support Team.

Use this form to report

- A Disclosure of Harm by a Child or Adult at Risk

- A Concern for a Child or Adult at Risk

When making the report please choose the category 'Safeguarding Concern'

[Click here to access the form](#)

The form is also accessible from the student support section of the University of Hull website.

Version Control

Version	Author	Date approved	Relevant sections
8-03	Head of Student Support and Experience	15/3/23 by Senate	Minor updates and amendments.