



Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The University is committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment for Students, Staff and visitors. The primary purpose of the University is educating adults; however, the University recognises that there are Students and Staff who may be Children or young adults (those aged under 18) or Adults with care or support needs. The University also recognises that in the course of its activities there are circumstances in which Children and Adults come onto University premises or have contact with University Students, Staff or Contractors. Ultimate responsibility for Children will continue to rest with parents and guardians.
- 1.2. This Policy sets out the University's approach to safeguarding Children and Adults with care or support needs and provides links to guidance and procedures in relation to activities or areas of perceived risk including how to report and deal with a cause for concern.
- 1.3. The University aims to provide a safe environment for Children and Adults. There is no legislation in this area that is directed specifically at Higher Education Institutions. The University recognises the definitions set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2022 and the Care Act 2014. The University will follow best practice by putting reasonable structures in place to support safeguarding and will take all concerns seriously, respond to concerns promptly and refer to the local authority and/or police as appropriate.' The University has responsibility under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to follow the Prevent Duty and protect individuals from the risk of radicalisation.
- 1.4. For the purposes of this Policy the definitions are as follows:
 - 1.4.1. **Students:** any person registered to study with the University, whether in Bristol or elsewhere;
 - 1.4.2. **Staff:** any person employed by the University or acting under the auspices of the University, whether paid or voluntary;
 - 1.4.3. **Contractors:** any person undertaking work for the University under the terms of a contract for services who is not employed by the University;
 - 1.4.4. **Children or Child:** individuals who are aged under 18 years old;
 - 1.4.5. **Adults:** for the purposes of this policy are individuals over the age of 18 and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their care and/or support needs. The law no longer labels adults as vulnerable but defines the activities which might lead to an adult being considered vulnerable at that particular

time. The focus is on the activities required by an Adult and not on the setting in which the activity is received.

- 1.4.6. **Care and support needs:** Where, because of mental or physical illness, physical or intellectual disability or frailty, practical support, also known as social care services, is needed. This support might be living in a nursing or residential home, living in a supported living placement, receiving help in their own home to carry out personal care or daily living tasks, or help to access the community.
- 1.4.7. **Safeguarding:** actions taken to promote the wellbeing of Children and Adults and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding applies if a Child or an Adult is experiencing or is at risk of abuse and neglect.

2. Aims

- 2.1. The aims of this policy are as follows:
 - 2.1.1. to actively promote and safeguard the welfare of Children and Adults;
 - 2.1.2. to raise Staff and Student awareness about the University's safeguarding expectations;
 - 2.1.3. to signpost to the procedures in place for dealing with and referring concerns about a Child or Adult's welfare and allegations of abuse;
 - 2.1.4. to signpost to the procedures in place to identify and appropriately support students and staff who might be at risk of radicalisation or exploitation;
 - 2.1.5. to ensure Staff are competent to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities and feel supported in this role;
 - 2.1.6. to ensure consistent good safeguarding practice throughout the University;
 - 2.1.7. to create a culture of safety, equality and protection.

3. Scope

- 3.1. The Policy, along with associated guidance and procedures, applies to all University activities involving Children and Adults. The Policy applies to all University Staff, Students and Contractors who may come into contact with Children or Adults as part of their work.
- 3.2. For guidance in relation to the admission of Students under the age of 18 please refer to the University policy [under-18-applicants.pdf \(bristol.ac.uk\)](#)
- 3.3. For guidance in relation to preventing harm in research please refer to the University policy [PHIR policies | RED | University of Bristol](#)

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1. The University will appoint a Safeguarding Lead who will have leadership responsibility for the University's safeguarding arrangements. The Safeguarding Lead is currently the Executive Director for Education and Students.
- 4.2. The University will appoint two Safeguarding Officers. Currently the Safeguarding Officers are the Director of Student Support and Wellbeing, with responsibility for student safeguarding and the Head of HR Central Services with responsibility for staff safeguarding or their delegated nominees. The Safeguarding Officers will be responsible for:
 - 4.2.1. Implementing and promoting this Policy;
 - 4.2.2. Ensuring that the Policy is monitored and reviewed in accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of Children and Adults;
 - 4.2.3. Acting as the main contact within the University for safeguarding concerns;
 - 4.2.4. Ensuring that appropriate University Staff are provided with information, advice and training on the protection of Children and Adults;
 - 4.2.5. Establishing and maintaining contacts with the external agencies including local Children's and Adult Social Care Services departments and Police;
 - 4.2.6. Referring concerns to the University Prevent Duty Single Point of Contact, where appropriate.
 - 4.2.7. Maintaining confidential records of relevant cases and action taken.
- 4.3. The Safeguarding Officers will take advice from the Secretary's Office on the legal aspects of the above responsibilities.

5. Procedure

- 5.1. The Safeguarding Procedure which sets out the processes by which Students or Staff may report causes for concern about the welfare of a Child or Adult can be found in Annex A.
- 5.2. In order to safeguard its Students and Staff, the University recognises the need to work closely with external agencies (e.g. Social Services, Police, local Safeguarding Boards, NHS, and the Prevent Channel programme).
- 5.3. Students can also report concerns about the welfare of any other Student, even if they are not covered by the scope of this policy, by using the Wellbeing Access Request for Support form: [Request wellbeing support | Current students | University of Bristol](#)

6. Risk Assessment

- 6.1. Risk assessment procedures in relation to allegations of misconduct against students are set out in the Student Disciplinary Regulations [student-disciplinary-regulations.pdf \(bristol.ac.uk\)](#) The Initial Risk Assessment Group (IRAG) and the Risk Assessment Panel (RAP) procedures are also be used to consider allegations regarding staff and safeguarding concerns, including risk of radicalisation or exploitation.
- 6.2. All Staff that intend to, or may be put in the position of, working with Children and Adults should ensure that they understand the implications of this policy before commencing any programme, event, visit or other activity.
- 6.3. A designated member of Staff should complete a risk assessment before any new or changed programme, event, visit or any other activity involving Children or Adults, or before admitting or employing an under-18.
- 6.4. All those involved in the risk assessment process should understand that the risk assessment is not only a way to mitigate or remove any potential risks but may also be a prompt to consider alternative working practices.
- 6.5. There is guidance for staff on the Human Resources webpages relating to providing work experience placements, including guidance on completing risk assessments.
- 6.6. The University's Student Journey Team has a separate [Safeguarding Policy](#) relating to student workers and summer schools, including guidance on completing risk assessments.

7. Recruitment, selection and employment procedures

- 7.1. The University's Guidelines on recruitment, selection and employment procedures can be found here [Resourcing guidance and process | Human Resources | University of Bristol](#)
- 7.2. The University will take all appropriate steps during the recruitment and selection process to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with Children and Adults.
- 7.3. Where a risk assessment has identified that Students or Staff are likely to have regular contact with or encounter Children and Adults, appropriate checks into their eligibility will be required. Such processes will be compliant with the University's Equality and Diversity policy.
- 7.4. The University will ensure that any Staff or Student who will have substantial one-to-one contact with Children and Adults and whose role falls within the eligibility criteria will be checked for relevant criminal convictions by undertaking a

Disclosure and Barring Service (“DBS”) check. See [eligibility guidance](#) for guidance on eligibility for DBS checks or contact the Secretary's Office for detailed advice.

8. Record keeping

- 8.1. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Officers to maintain records of all concerns raised and actions taken.
- 8.2. All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the University's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.
- 8.3. Information about any allegations or suspicions of abuse must be shared on a need-to-know basis only. Documentation related to allegations or suspicions of must be stored in a secure place which is only accessible to those with appropriate knowledge of the suspicions or allegations.
- 8.4. Details of completed risk assessments relating to activities involving Children or Adults must be retained by the relevant department whilst an activity or event is ongoing and for a minimum of five years after it has ceased (or the risk assessment has been superseded).
- 8.5. The University will undertake a regular review of this policy and the University's safeguarding procedures, including an update and review of the effectiveness of procedures and their implementation and the effectiveness of inter-agency working.

Annex A – Safeguarding Procedure

Managing a Safeguarding Concern

The primary purpose of the University is educating adults. However, the University has a responsibility to pass on concerns about under 18s and adults who are unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation and to safeguard individuals from being drawn into terrorism. It is important for all staff to understand the signs and to know how to pass on your concerns for more advice. The University has two Safeguarding Officers, a Safeguarding Lead, a Prevent Point of Contact and a Safeguarding Oversight Board and takes safeguarding extremely seriously.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the University's Safeguarding Policy.

What should I be looking for?

A student may tell you about difficulties their parents or carers are experiencing, for example with mental health, drug or alcohol use, domestic abuse that is happening in the home. A student may report that they have experienced historic abuse or neglect. There may be children, disabled adults or others who may be at risk and who may be vulnerable and unable to advocate for themselves.

A student, their friend or family member may be under the influence of others who are trying to radicalise them. They may be becoming isolated and withdrawn from their usual community; accessing extremist material online; be sharing extreme and violent views.

How can I help?

It is important that you act quickly but appropriately and do not keep safeguarding concerns to yourself. There are people in the University who are used to dealing with safeguarding concerns and can help you.

It is also important to listen carefully and take notes of what you have been told.

It can be helpful to establish who else is in the household, for example do they have younger siblings or does anyone have an illness or disability that might make them more vulnerable. You might also want to understand if there are any protective factors. For example, is there a trusted individual supporting the student and/or their family? Is there someone from a school, social services or a GP practice involved? If a crime has taken place, has it been reported to the police?

If the student has been the victim of a crime or are the subject of the safeguarding concern, are they able to keep themselves safe?

You cannot promise to keep the issue confidential, and you need to explain that you may need to share your concerns with others, particularly if others are at risk.

If you believe that there is an emergency or imminent risk of danger to others you should escalate as quickly as possible, and may need to telephone the police.

If you believe that the situation seems urgent and you are worried that someone may be at risk contact Wellbeing Access by phone on [+44 \(0\)117 456 9860](tel:+441174569860).

If there does not seem to be an immediate risk submit a Wellbeing Access request for support form: [Request Wellbeing Support \(powerappsportals.com\)](https://powerappsportals.com)

What will happen next?

The relevant Safeguarding Officer will contact you for more details and to offer advice. The Safeguarding Officer may take advice from the University’s legal team.

The Safeguarding Officer may decide there is imminent risk and call the Police on 999. They may also make a report to external organisations such as the Local Authority Designated Officer for Safeguarding or the local Prevent team.

The University has a risk assessment process which includes referral to the Initial Risk Assessment Group (IRAG) and the Risk Assessment Panel (RAP). Your concern may be referred to the IRAG or RAP for a decision regarding next steps.

Regular reports are made to the Safeguarding Oversight Board, chaired by the Safeguarding Lead.

Review / Contacts / References	
Policy title:	Safeguarding Policy
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Approving body:	Board of Trustees
Last review date:	September 2024
Next review date:	TBC by Safeguarding Oversight Group
Related internal policies, procedures, guidance:	<u>Legal and compliance / University Secretary's Office / University of Bristol</u>
Policy owner:	Legal Services, University Secretary's Office
Lead contact / author:	<i>Laura Trescothick-Martin, Associate Director of Legal Services</i>