

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

October 2021

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The latest version of this document is always to be found at:

<http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-020.pdf>

Summary

What is this document about?

This Policy outlines how the University seeks to deliver its social, ethical and legal responsibilities to protect and safeguard children and vulnerable adults to the highest possible standards.

Who is this for?

All staff who work with children and vulnerable adults on the University's premises or who engage in activities controlled by the University.

How does the University check this is followed?

The University will review any safeguarding incidents involving children and vulnerable adults to ensure that there was full compliance with this Policy and to identify any need to amend or review the Policy in the light of experience.

Who can you contact if you have any queries about this document?

Further information, guidance and interpretation of this Policy should be sought from the Executive Director of Corporate Governance by contacting 023 9284 3195 or adrian.parry@port.ac.uk

Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all members of its community. This policy outlines how the University seeks to deliver its legal, social and ethical responsibilities to the highest possible standards to protect and safeguard children, vulnerable adults and others.

2. The Purpose of this Policy

- 2.1 This policy sets out the University's corporate arrangements for safeguarding those who attend its premises or who engage in activities controlled by the University. It sets out the steps that the University will take to ensure that concerns about an individual's welfare or any risk of harm or abuse to them arising from activities connected with the University or their membership of the University community can be addressed swiftly and appropriately.
- 2.2 Some faculties and departments within the University operate additional procedures for safeguarding in accordance with specific guidance from relevant professional, sponsoring or regulatory bodies. They are required to ensure that these additional procedures comply with the requirements of this overarching corporate policy.
- 2.3 The University will keep this policy under review to ensure that it continues to comply with developments in legislation, regulations and good practice.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 The University uses the following definitions for the purposes of this policy:
 - "Safeguarding" refers to measures to protect the health, welfare and human rights of individuals, which allow people — especially children, young people and vulnerable adults — to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. It includes abuse, harm or neglect that is inflicted on others or abuse, and harm or neglect that an individual might inflict upon themselves.

- “Child” or “children” refers to a person or persons under the age of 18 years.
- “Vulnerable adult” refers to a person who is aged over 18 years who is or may be in need of community care services for reasons of mental health or other disability, age or illness, is or may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.
- “Controlled posts” refers to posts that have frequent or intensive contact with children or vulnerable adults or have frequent access to sensitive information about children or vulnerable adults.
- “Regulated activity” refers to activities and work that a person who has been barred by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) must not do. It encompasses:
 - Activity involving contact with children or vulnerable adults that is of a specified nature (e.g. teaching, training, care, supervision, advice, medical treatment or, in certain circumstances, transport) and carried out on a frequent, intensive and/or overnight basis;
 - Activity involving contact with children or vulnerable adults in a specified place (for example, schools or care homes), conducted either frequently or intensively;
 - Fostering and childcare; and
 - Certain specified positions of responsibility (for example, a school governor or the director of a health and social care trust responsible for the delivery of personal social services, and trustees of certain charities).

These are activities that, generally speaking, may place a child or vulnerable adult at risk, for example, through a relationship of trust or dependency.

- “Professional relationship” refers to a relationship that involves assessment, supervision, tutoring, teaching or pastoral support or to a role providing administrative or technical support to an individual.
- “Serious incident” refers to an incident or experience of sexual misconduct and/or bullying, harassment, intimidation, violence or any discrimination involving protected characteristics.
- “Harassment” refers to unwanted and/or illegal conduct, activity or behaviour that others find offensive and/or demeaning to their dignity and respect.
- “Sexual misconduct” refers to all unwanted and/or illegal conduct/activity of a sexual nature.

4. The University’s Responsibilities and Duty of Care

4.1 The University has two overarching responsibilities for safeguarding:

- (a) A specific legal duty to safeguard children and vulnerable adults against the risk of harm and abuse.

The lead member of staff within the University with responsibility for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is the Executive Director of Corporate Governance, or in her or his absence, the Head of Governance Services.

- (b) A broader duty of care to provide a safe environment for all who study at, work at and visit the University, which includes safeguarding all members of its community against the risk of harm or abuse.

The University's Safeguarding Board oversees policies and practices to deliver its broader duty of care for safeguarding students. The Safeguarding Panel reports to the Safeguarding Board and reviews and monitors the safeguarding arrangements made for individual students.

Safeguarding concerns regarding staff should be reported to the Executive Director of Corporate Governance in the first instance, who will identify appropriate support or response mechanisms depending upon the nature of the concern.

5. Identifying Abuse or Harm

- 5.1 Abuse or harm may take many different forms and individuals may have different perceptions of what constitutes harm or abuse. Abuse and harm can be inflicted upon others but an individual can also inflict harm and abuse upon themselves. The University regards harm and abuse as including:

- Physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission that lead to abuse or harm
- Bullying and harassment
- Threats or use of violence

Further guidance on the forms that harm or abuse might take is at Annex A.

- 5.2 The University does not have a statutory responsibility to investigate harm or abuse. However, it has a duty of care to act where there is cause for concern; to protect the welfare of all those within its community; and, where required or deemed relevant, to notify appropriate statutory and regulatory agencies about any concerns.

6. Recruitment and Employment of Staff

Declaration of Offences

- 6.1 It is illegal for an organisation to knowingly allow a person barred by the DBS to work in regulated activity. Certain offences or patterns of offending may also have fitness to practice and/or employment implications for certain roles. The University will therefore:
- (i) Require all applicants for employment at the University to declare any criminal convictions on application forms for employment.
 - (ii) Require persons appointed to regulated or controlled posts to undertake standard or enhanced DBS checks. If the person appointed is from overseas or has lived overseas for a significant period of time then checks will be sought from the countries concerned if feasible. If such checks are not available from the countries concerned then the person appointed will be required to make a declaration concerning their previous life history.
 - (iii) Exercise its legal right to require existing employees occupying regulated posts or undertaking regulated work to reveal their full criminal history, including any spent convictions and/or undertake standard or enhanced DBS checks. The University may exercise this right as an annual requirement for certain roles.
- 6.2 The University takes a proportionate approach to personal and DBS disclosures and will treat all such information in the strictest confidence. The University will not discriminate unfairly on the basis of such information.

Consideration of Offences

- 6.3 Interview panels will ensure that a fair and measured discussion of any declared offences takes place either at the interview or if subsequently arranged. Guidance on the conduct of this discussion should be sought from the Chief People Officer. Guidance should also be sought from the Chief People Officer prior to any offer of employment being made.

- 6.4 If a DBS check contains information that creates a cause for concern in relation to a potential or existing employee then this will be considered by the Executive Director of Corporate Governance, the Chief People Officer and the University Executive Board (UEB) member with responsibility for the area where that individual intends to or already works. They will decide whether the information disclosed is sufficiently serious to constitute an impediment to employment by the University and/or should be referred for consideration under an appropriate University policy. In forming this view, they will take account of factors such as the nature of the conviction or information disclosed, time elapsed, and whether this indicates a pattern of behaviour that may place children or vulnerable adults at risk. A confidential written record of this decision will be retained. Guidelines for informing this decision are at Annex B.

Reporting to the DBS

- 6.5 If the University dismisses or removes someone from regulated activity (or would have done so had they not already left its employment) because they have abused or harmed children or vulnerable adults then it has a legal responsibility to report the person concerned to the DBS. The Executive Director of Corporate Governance will normally make this report following consultation with the Chief People Officer.

7. Responsibilities of Staff

Statement of Good Practice for Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults

- 7.1 The University has established a statement of good practice for those who come into contact with children and vulnerable adults as part of their work or studies with the University. This statement is at Annex E and sets out examples of recommended behaviour towards children and vulnerable adults. All staff are expected to be guided by this statement.

Declaration of Investigations, Cautions and Criminal Convictions

- 7.2 All staff are required to notify the Chief People Officer if they have been or are the subject of an investigation by the police, other safeguarding agency or a previous employer into any allegation of abuse or harm to children and/or vulnerable adults. This information will be treated in strictest confidence. Disciplinary action may be taken against staff who fail to disclose this information.
- 7.3 All staff are required to notify the Chief People Officer if they receive a police caution or a conviction for a criminal offence. Disciplinary action may be taken against staff who fail to disclose this information.

Risk Assessments for Activities Involving Children and Vulnerable Adults

- 7.4 Members of staff with responsibility for activities at the University or run under the auspices of the University that involve children and/or vulnerable adults must ensure that a risk assessment has been undertaken for the activities involved and that appropriate steps have been taken to protect the welfare of those involved. Guidance on producing risk assessments is available from the University's Health and Safety Team at:
<https://staff.port.ac.uk/departments/services/corporategovernance/healthandsafety/managinghands/Under18s/>
- 7.5 Members of staff with responsibility for activities at the University or run under the auspices of the University involving children or vulnerable adults must confirm with the University's Finance Department that the University has appropriate insurances in place to indemnify the proposed activity.

Sexual Relationships

- 7.6 It is a criminal offence for any person in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with someone who is subject to this trust and is under the age of 18 years. The University will also consider this to be a disciplinary issue.
- 7.7 In accordance with the University's Declaration of Interests Policy, staff must disclose any sexual or romantic relationship with a student with whom they also have a professional relationship
<https://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-104.pdf>
- 7.8 Staff must also be aware that unwanted behaviour or conduct of a sexual nature, whether intended or otherwise, can constitute sexual misconduct and harassment and can be considered to be a disciplinary issue. Staff must ensure that their behaviour and conduct does not place them in such a position.

8. Recruitment, Studying and Employment of Students

- 8.1 The University will require DBS checks to be undertaken for the following groups of students:
- (a) All those offered places on professional programmes requiring placements in regulated positions (including teaching, nursing and social work).
 - (b) All those undertaking paid or voluntary work on behalf of the University in a regulated setting.
 - (c) Students undertaking research which requires unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults.

- 8.2 Where such students are from overseas or have lived overseas for a significant period of time, checks will be sought from the countries concerned if feasible. Students from countries where no such checks are available will be required to make a declaration concerning their previous life history.
- 8.3 If a DBS check indicates that an individual is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults then they will not be offered a place on any course requiring placement in a regulated position, allowed to work as a volunteer in such a position, or to undertake research involving children or vulnerable adults. They may be counselled to seek an alternative course if this is appropriate.
- 8.4 If a DBS check indicates that a student is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults, and that student is already engaged in a programme of study leading to regulated employment, the student's registration on the course will be terminated. They may be counselled to seek an alternative course if this is appropriate.
- 8.5 Where a DBS check indicates or the University becomes aware of other evidence of convictions or reasons to suggest that a student poses a safeguarding risk, the matter will be referred to the Criminal Convictions Panel and/or the Safeguarding Cases Panel. Both Panels are able to seek advice from faculties and/or departments on any implications for future study and/or professional practice. Both Panels can recommend that a student should be subject to fitness to reside, fitness to study or fitness to practice procedures. Any student who is subject to such procedures should be advised that they are able to access advice and support from the Students' Union Advice Service.

9. Reporting Suspicions, Allegations or Actual Incidents

- 9.1 The welfare of any individual impacted by a safeguarding concern is paramount. If the impacted individual is a member of the University community then the priority is to ensure they are able to make a supported disclosure (as outlined in Annex C) and are then connected with appropriate further support (as outlined in paragraphs 9.13 and 14.1 to 14.3).
- 9.2 Where a concern arises involving children or vulnerable adults, members of staff have a duty to report safeguarding suspicions, allegations or actual incidents (see Annex D) if they believe that this is necessary to prevent serious harm to others, regardless of whether the information has been disclosed in confidence to them or if they remain unsure of their suspicions. Staff who fail to discharge this responsibility may be liable to disciplinary action.
- 9.3 Staff must not attempt to investigate or resolve a safeguarding suspicion, allegation, or actual incident by themselves but must report it through the channels outlined below. All suspicions and allegations will be taken seriously and will be responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns Involving Staff

- 9.4 Staff are subject to the requirements of the Staff Code of Conduct at all times. Allegations of harm or abuse by members of staff are dealt with under the Code and other relevant University policies.
- 9.5 In the event of any safeguarding suspicion, allegation or apparent abuse affecting a child, vulnerable adult or complaint regarding abuse committed by a member of the University's staff, the matter should be reported to the Executive Director of Corporate Governance as soon as possible. It must be recognised that the Executive Director of Corporate Governance (or their alternate) has a duty to act on all reports received. In circumstances where the information was disclosed confidentially, the person receiving the information must disclose this information to the Executive Director of Corporate Governance if they believe that this is necessary to prevent serious harm to others.
- 9.6 If the urgency or circumstances of the situation do not make it possible to contact the Executive Director of Corporate Governance or the Head of Governance Services, it must be reported to another UEB member. Outside normal working hours, reports of an urgent nature should be made to 023 9284 3418.
- 9.7 On being notified of any suspicion, allegation or apparent abuse involving University staff, the Executive Director of Corporate Governance (or their alternate) shall:
- (a) Take such steps as she or he considers necessary to ensure the immediate safety of the individual in question and any other individual who might be at risk.
 - (b) Liaise with the person who reported the original concern and ensure that a report of the incident(s) or allegation is completed.
 - (c) Consult with other members of staff if deemed appropriate or advice is required.
 - (d) Report the matter to the local social services or safeguarding team, where relevant.
 - (e) Notify the Chief People Officer or, in her or his absence, her or his designated alternate.
- 9.8 If the Executive Director of Corporate Governance is the subject of the suspicion, allegation or the claim of apparent abuse then this must be reported to the Chief People Officer.
- 9.9 Any notification of suspicion, allegation or evidence of abuse or harm may result in the decision to suspend the member of staff concerned whilst investigations proceed. Suspension in this context is not a disciplinary measure and implies no assumption of guilt.

- 9.10 Staff misconduct is dealt with according to the University's staff disciplinary procedures <https://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-048.pdf>. The University may refer a member of staff to the relevant professional body if there are concerns over their suitability to practice and/or remain on the professional register or equivalent. The Executive Director of Corporate Governance will normally make this referral on behalf of the University, in consultation with the Chief People Officer.

Reporting Other Safeguarding Concerns

- 9.11 Disclosures that do not relate specifically to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults can be reported via the University's "Report and Support" tool. This tool is available to students and to staff at: reportandsupport.port.ac.uk
- 9.12 The "Report and Support" tool enables an individual to bring a matter of concern to the attention of the University. It also enables a harmed individual to request and receive confidential support and advice without the need to submit a formal complaint and/or to invoke disciplinary processes. Third parties can also use the tool to request confidential support and advice for a harmed person provided that they have obtained the consent of that person.
- 9.13 A staff member, or anyone else, who has safeguarding concerns about a student should raise these matters with the Executive Director of Corporate Governance in the first instance. The Executive Director of Corporate Governance will ensure that the Student Wellbeing Service is made aware of those concerns so that the student can make use of its Consultation Service to discuss next steps for ensuring ongoing support and safeguarding.

10. Student Conduct and Safeguarding

- 10.1 Students are subject to the requirements of the Code of Student Behaviour at all times. Allegations of harm or abuse by students of the University are dealt with under the Code.
- 10.2 Additional guidance regarding serious incidents has been produced to supplement the Code. This emphasises the priority of safeguarding the harmed student's safety and support. The guidance provides for interim and precautionary measures to be considered in order to address the harm without needing to wait for the outcome of any other process. Students causing harm to others will be held accountable and will be expected to act to redress harm as far as possible.
- 10.3 Any student who has experienced harm or abuse inflicted by another student should be offered support (as outlined in the Student Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy). They should also be encouraged to make a report under the Code of Student Behaviour, so that the harm can be addressed and the offending student held accountable. However, it is the harmed student's choice whether they wish to make a report. In such circumstances, the person receiving the information must disclose this information to the Executive Director of Corporate Governance if they feel that this is necessary to prevent serious harm to others.

- 10.4 If a student engaged in activities with another organisation is alleged to have behaved in a way that has raised safeguarding concerns, the allegation will be investigated using the procedures of the school, hospital or other institution under whose auspices the abuse is alleged to have happened. The member of staff supervising the activity must inform the Executive Director of Corporate Governance of the details of the incident. The Vice-Chancellor, on the basis of advice from the department and/or the lead staff member, may decide to suspend the student for the period of the investigation. Suspension in this context is not a disciplinary measure and implies no assumption of guilt. Depending upon the outcome of the investigation, the student may be liable for further suspension, disciplinary action, or subject to the University's fitness to practice procedures.

11. Reporting Concerns from Placements, Mentoring Schemes, Projects or External Visits

- 11.1 Staff and students who are undertaking activities at the premises of another organisation should familiarise themselves with the host organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures and the name and contact details of the organisation's safeguarding officer.
- 11.2 Staff with concerns about a child or a vulnerable adult with whom they come into contact in a placement setting or in the course of external visits should follow the procedure in place at the school, hospital or other institution concerned. If, for whatever reasons, the member of staff feels that this is inappropriate then they must refer their concerns to the Executive Director of Corporate Governance who will contact the appropriate agency.
- 11.3 Students with safeguarding concerns about an individual with whom they come into contact in a placement, through a mentoring scheme, a project setting or in the course of external visits should follow the procedure in place at the school, hospital or other institution concerned. If, for whatever reason(s), the student feels that this is inappropriate or they lack the confidence to raise their concerns then they should refer their concern to the member of University staff who is supervising their placement, mentorship scheme or project.

12. Safeguarding and Protection from Radicalisation

- 12.1 The University has due regard for the Prevent duty and complies with its statutory duty to help to stop people from being drawn into terrorism or support for terrorism through radicalisation. All members of the University community have the right to speak freely and to express their opinions in line with the values of inclusion, tolerance and freedom of speech. As with managing other safeguarding risks, all members of the University community must be vigilant to the risks of radicalisation and must report any activities or behaviour of concern. Any concerns should be reported either to the Executive Director of Corporate Governance or to the Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

13. Reporting Other Concerns

13.1 There may be instances when a member of staff receives information in the course of their normal duties about safeguarding issues or allegations that are unconnected with the activities of the University or the use of its premises. In such instances, staff must exercise a duty of care and should either encourage the informant to report the matter to the appropriate agencies or, if they remain concerned, make a report themselves. If, for whatever reasons, a member of staff in receipt of an allegation feels that it is inappropriate for them to make the report then they must refer their concerns to the Executive Director of Corporate Governance who will contact the appropriate agency.

Working with Portsmouth City Council

13.2 The University works closely with Portsmouth City Council and other local authorities to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are safeguarded. Local authorities have specific duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults in their area. Local authorities have a duty to undertake enquiries if they believe a child or vulnerable adult has suffered or is likely to suffer harm.

13.3 Every local authority must have a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO is responsible for co-ordinating the response to concerns that an adult who works with children may have caused them or could cause them harm.

13.6 Additionally, Portsmouth City Council has an adult safeguarding team. The adult safeguarding team is responsible for co-ordinating the response to concerns regarding the safeguarding of vulnerable adults or the suitability of an individual to continue to work within a role with responsibilities or implications for safeguarding.

13.4 In the first instance, you should discuss any concerns with the Executive Director of Corporate Governance and, if deemed necessary following this discussion, they will make a report to the LADO or to the adult safeguarding team. If the urgency or circumstances of the situation do not allow for this discussion then you should make a report directly to the LADO or to the adult safeguarding team.

13.5 The LADO should be informed in all cases when it has been alleged that someone has:

- (i) Behaved in a way that has harmed or might harm a child
- (ii) Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child
- (iii) Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that she or he would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children

- 13.6 The LADO for Portsmouth can be contacted on 023 9288 2500 or at LADO@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.
Adult social services can be contacted on 023 9268 0810 or at
PortsmouthAdultMASH@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.

14. Other Sources of Support within the University

- 14.1 There are a range of services available within the University for those who may wish to receive advice or support on safeguarding and related matters.
- 14.2 Staff can access support from our employee assistance programme, from confidential discussions with our harassment advisers, line managers, trade union representatives and Occupational Health if a referral is made [insert contact details]. Generic advice can also be sourced from the Human Resources Department.
- 14.3 Students can access confidential support and advice from:
- (i) Student Wellbeing Service – 023 9284 3466
 - (ii) Students' Union Advice Service – 023 9284 3478

The Students' Union Advice Service is independent of the University but both services work collaboratively to ensure that any student affected by a serious incident or allegation is assigned a liaison officer and so that they have appropriate support and guidance for reporting and further processes.

15. Responsibilities of Parents, Guardians and Carers

- 15.1 The University cannot take responsibility for ensuring the safety and/or welfare of children or vulnerable adults who are on its premises without its knowledge and consent. Parents, guardians or carers who bring children or vulnerable adults onto University premises must take responsibility for their safety and welfare and ensure that they do not place themselves at risk, disturb others or damage property.
- 15.2 Unless they are students of the University or are attending the University as part of an authorised visit or activity, children and vulnerable adults are not allowed to enter learning environments, laboratories, workshops or other premises which present hazards or contain valuable or fragile equipment.

16. Reporting of Accidents Involving Children or Vulnerable Adults

- 16.1 Any accident on University premises or at an event held under the auspices of the University involving a child or vulnerable adult must be reported to the University's Health and Safety Team immediately and formally recorded on the accident reporting system as soon as possible.

17. Confidentiality

- 17.1 As far as possible, the confidentiality of all individuals involved in any allegation, investigation or resulting disciplinary proceedings will be respected by the University. However, there may be circumstances in which it is necessary for the University to share information with parties such as social services, the police, and the parents, guardian, carers or designated emergency contact of the person concerned. Information may also need to be disclosed if there is a public interest imperative. The University cannot therefore guarantee that the confidentiality of any disclosures can be maintained in all circumstances.

18. Communication of the Policy

- 18.1 All staff must be aware of this policy and must abide by its requirements. It will be published on the University's website in the 'Document Warehouse' to ensure that it is available to all those within the University community who have safeguarding responsibilities.

19. Oversight

- 19.1 The Audit and Quality Committee of the Board of Governors will receive an annual report from the University's Safeguarding Board. This will be considered by the University Executive Board as a prelude to submission to the Committee. The annual report will provide an overview of the wellbeing and safeguarding activities of the previous year and will highlight areas of good practice and those where improvements have been identified. The purpose of the report will be to provide assurance to the Committee and to UEB that the University's policies and approaches for safeguarding are working effectively.
- 19.2 The Executive Director of Corporate Governance will be responsible for reporting any significant safeguarding incidents to the Audit and Quality Committee and to UEB. The threshold for reporting individual incidents will normally be whether the incident has required a referral either to or from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Adult Social Services.

20. Key Contacts

Lead staff member for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults (Executive Director of Corporate Governance): 023 9284 3195.

University Security (to contact the University's duty manager outside normal working hours): 023 9284 3418

University of Portsmouth Student Wellbeing Service: 023 9284 3466

University of Portsmouth Students' Union Advice Service: 023 9284 3478

Portsmouth City Council Child Protection Unit: 023 9283 9111

Portsmouth City Council Emergency out of hours: 0300 555 1373

Hampshire Constabulary: 0845 045 45 45

NSPCC (South Hampshire): 023 80 248180

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0800 800 5000

21. Further Information and Guidance

21.1 Further information, guidance and interpretation of this policy should be sought from the Executive Director of Corporate Governance (023 9284 3195 or adrian.parry@port.ac.uk).

21.2 The Disclosure and Barring Service maintains a guidance note of 'relevant offences' that are applicable to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. This can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-barring-referrals-to-the-dbs#referrals-for-automatic-barring-offences>.

22. Implementation Date

22.1 This policy is effective from October 2021. It will be reviewed in July 2022.

POTENTIAL INDICATORS OF HARM, ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Harm, abuse or neglect can take many forms and can include, but not be limited to:

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is deliberately causing physical harm to another person. This might involve punching, kicking, biting, burning, scalding, shaking, throwing or beating with objects or implements. It can include giving a child or vulnerable adult alcohol or illegal drugs.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is where repeated verbal threats, criticism, ridicule, shouting, lack of love and affection causes a severe adverse effect on a child or vulnerable adult's emotional development. It may feature inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child or vulnerable adult, over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child or vulnerable adult from taking part in normal social interaction.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening. This may involve physical contact or it may involve non-contact activities such as involving children or vulnerable adults in watching sexual activities, producing or looking at sexual images, encouraging children to engage in sexual acts or behaviour, or grooming a child or vulnerable adult in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Neglect or Acts of Omission: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs in a way that is likely to result in serious impairment of their health, development or wellbeing. It can include failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), medical care, or protection from physical and emotional harm or danger. It also includes failure to ensure access to education or to look after a child or vulnerable adult whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Online Abuse: Online abuse is any form of abuse that happens via the internet, whether through social networks, online games or mobile telephones. It may involve cyberbullying, grooming in preparation for abuse, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse. In such cases, the abuser may be known to the child or vulnerable adult, they may not be known or they may disguise their real identity.

People can be subject to one or more forms of abuse at the same time. They may display physical symptoms of abuse or neglect in the form of injuries or untreated medical issues; they may exhibit behaviour or knowledge that is inappropriate or unexpected for their age or circumstances; they may appear to be uncomfortable in the presence of certain people or being left alone with them; they may also exhibit aggressive or anti-social behaviour or display symptoms of depression or anxiety.

It is important to recognise that harm, abuse and neglect may be inflicted by others or may be inflicted by an individual upon themselves.

GUIDELINES ON CONSIDERING STAFF CRIMINAL RECORDS AND RELATED INFORMATION

The University must assess an employee's criminal records history within the relevant legal framework and in accordance with the principles of applying public law.

Any decision the University makes on the impact of previous offences committed by an employee or potential employee should be proportionate, fair and reasonable, within its powers, and based upon considerations that are strictly relevant.

The University will consider a number of factors in assessing the risk presented by any employee or potential employee to children or vulnerable adults. These include:

- Whether the offence poses a cause for concern and is relevant to the work or activity to be undertaken.
- Whether the offence was an isolated incident or whether it is indicative of a pattern of behaviour that may place others at risk.
- The time that has elapsed since the offence occurred.
- The age of the individual at the time of the offence.
- Whether subsequent amendments to the law mean that the offence is no longer illegal.
- Whether there were particular mitigating circumstances at the time that led to the offence being committed.
- Evidence of remorse, positive change and rehabilitation since the offence was committed.

It is also a requirement to gain references and to try to make all reasonable efforts to obtain information about any unexplained gaps in an employee or potential employee's life history that may give rise to concern.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS, ALLEGATIONS AND DISCLOSURES OF RISK OR HARM/ABUSE

If you are concerned that there may be a risk of harm and/or receive a disclosure or allegation of harm or abuse then:

DO

- Keep in mind that performance or behavioural issues may be a sign of underlying risk or harm
- Express your concern based on what you have observed, and offer your support
- Be clear about the limits of your availability and, if possible, ensure appropriate privacy
- If a disclosure is made, stay calm and remain objective - pause a moment to gather your thoughts by taking a couple of deep breaths
- Show that you are listening, hearing and taking seriously what they are saying - use empathic nods etc and simple repetition of what you have heard
- Give time to allow the person to say what they want to say - preserving autonomy is always important, and especially when someone has experienced abuse of any kind
- Reassure and explain that they have done the right thing in telling you about the incident, and that your priority is ensuring they receive appropriate support - ask them for their own wishes regarding further support and/or their preferences for next steps before providing any further information
- Communicate clearly about the available options for further support and next steps, seeking consent to share with relevant colleagues and services, as appropriate
- Act immediately guided by the person's wishes and in accordance with the procedure in this policy and associated guidance as listed below, consulting with relevant colleagues and services as appropriate.
- Prioritise the person's immediate safety and welfare - express any of your own concerns about their safety/welfare and check with them if they are concerned and what their preferences are in terms of immediate support
- Check whether the person would like your help in connecting with further support options.
- Make a written record of what was said to you as soon and as accurately as possible using the forms outlined below
- Report the incident in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality about the incident and the people involved
- Practise self-care and allow yourself to express any distress or other emotional response you are left with (to someone appropriate)

DO NOT

- Do not ignore indirect indicators of potential concern, such as changes in mood or behaviour, physical signs of abuse or neglect, or other signs of distress
- Do not pass judgement, diagnose, or ask the person to justify themselves
- Do not create an overly formal atmosphere or otherwise over-dramatise or stigmatise
- Do not panic or over-react - an instant reaction may not be as helpful as you intend it to be
- Do not make assumptions or paraphrase with explanations or justifications for actions - avoid any kind of commentary which might imply blame

- Do not probe for more information - inappropriate questioning may cause further distress or trauma and may influence how the allegation is received or considered by others at a later date
- Do not assume what is needed or impose your own opinion about what should happen next
- Do not promise that complete confidentiality can be maintained even in the absence of consent
- Do not try to deal with the allegation by yourself or take any action without consent, except where there is clear immediate risk, and/or the need to involve emergency or statutory services
- Do not unnecessarily assume control for decision-making - unless the person is clearly at immediate risk of serious (further) harm then it is important for them to remain in control over a decision to involve the police or go to hospital for example
- Do not merely signpost other services without offering support to engage, but do not pressure the person into a referral either
- Do not express your own opinions or conclusions in the report. Do not make the person repeat themselves unnecessarily
- Do not fail to report the incident or delay reporting the incident
- Do not divulge information to people with no role in dealing with the incident
- Do not minimise the potential emotional impact on you of taking a disclosure regarding a serious incident - debrief with an appropriate colleague, preferably using the professional expertise available through the Student Wellbeing Service Consultation Service

REPORTING FORMS

Any allegation regarding a member of the University community should be reported using the Report & Support tool at reportandsupport.port.ac.uk. If the allegation involves a child or vulnerable adult then, in addition, the following form should be completed:

CONFIDENTIAL ALLEGED REPORT FORM FOR INCIDENTS INVOLVING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Details of the Individual Impacted (if applicable)

Full name:

Address:

Home telephone number:

Mobile telephone number:

Gender:

Date of birth:

Nature of alleged injury/harm:

Comments or explanation of the incident:

Details of the Alleged Incident

Date of the alleged incident:

Time of the alleged incident:

Where the alleged incident occurred:

Initial action taken:

Details of the Person Completing this Report

Name:

Contact Details:

Signature:

Date:

STATEMENT OF BEST PRACTICE FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

The University expects all its staff and students to act in an exemplary manner towards children and vulnerable adults and to ensure that their behaviour does not lead to concerns about their integrity and moral standing or to allegations of harm or abuse.

This statement is not intended to present an exhaustive list but sets out general expectations of behaviour in terms of what the University regards as appropriate behaviour.

University staff and students should at all times:

- (i) Treat children and vulnerable adults fairly, equally and respectfully and should not show favouritism or disfavour
- (ii) Be sensitive to the child or vulnerable adult's appearance, race, culture, religious belief, sexuality, gender or disability
- (iii) Act as a good role model and challenge any unacceptable behaviour from others within the University community towards children or vulnerable adults
- (iv) Report allegations or suspicions of harm or abuse of children or vulnerable adults in line with University's Safeguarding Policy
- (v) Work, where possible, in an open environment with children and vulnerable adults so that others can clearly observe and hear you
- (vi) Be aware that physical contact and speaking, acting or jesting in certain ways with a child or vulnerable adult may be misinterpreted
- (vii) Avoid physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult unless it is reasonably necessary for health and safety or their wellbeing
- (viii) Respect the right to privacy of a child or vulnerable adult and do not enter any private room occupied by of a child or vulnerable adult alone unless necessitated by an emergency
- (ix) Avoid unaccompanied journeys in a vehicle with a child or vulnerable adult unless necessitated by an emergency

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