

# Birmingham City University Safeguarding Policy

*Effective from 13 May 2026*

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## 1. Introduction and scope

1.1 This policy sets out Birmingham City University's approach to providing a safe environment in which to work, learn, and research. The University's safeguarding arrangements are underpinned by key principles:

- all individuals, including children, young people and adults at risk, have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual orientation;
- the welfare of the child or adult at risk is, and must always be, the paramount consideration;
- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All individuals acting on behalf of the University are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk;

- the University's approach to the Prevent duty is underpinned by the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 1.2 Although predominantly an adult environment, the University and University staff engage with children and adults at risk across a range of settings. This policy applies to all students, including apprentices and students studying at partner institutions; staff; associates and volunteers; and visitors to the University, including those delivering University-controlled activity. Exceptionally, where it is in the public interest to do so, this policy can be applied to applicants i.e. anyone who has applied to study with the University or any of our franchise or collaborative partners in the next academic intake.
  - 1.3 This policy applies to all activities that take place on campus and in University locations that are not located on campus, as well as online activity.
  - 1.4 If any activities or events are hosted by another organisation, then that organisation's safeguarding policy (or relevant procedures or policies) may need to be taken into account and may take precedence over this policy. The decision in relation to this will be taken at the point that safeguarding concerns are first raised with the University, and a non-exhaustive list of factors to be taken into account will include the nature of the activity or event hosted by the other organisation; the University's relationship with the other organisation; the nature of the referred party's involvement with the organisation; and the nature of the harm to be safeguarded against. In circumstances where another organisation's policy is deemed to take precedence, the University would continue to ensure appropriate support was offered in line with its own relationship with the safeguarded party. Examples of when another organisation's safeguarding policy might take precedence are set out below:
    - Safeguarding concerns arise in relation to a student apprentice in the context of their employment;
    - Safeguarding concerns arise in relation to a student of the BCU International College;
    - Safeguarding concerns arise in relation to a student during a period of study at another country falling within another jurisdiction (e.g. through the Turing Scheme);
    - Safeguarding concerns arise in relation to a student living in third-party accommodation.
  - 1.5 All members of the University community who are representing the University on non-University premises and who expect to be engaging with children, adults at risk, and young people as part of their University activity must familiarise themselves with, and abide by, the host organisation's safeguarding procedures.
  - 1.6 Where concerns relate to third parties, this Policy will not apply; however, support may be offered where possible to ensure that the concerns are appropriately reported and / or addressed.

- 1.7 As necessary, matters raised under this policy may be referred to any other University policy or procedure for further action.

## **2 Relevant legislation and University policies and procedures**

- 2.1 The University is mindful of and recognises its statutory responsibility to safeguard the children and adults at risk with whom it works. Whilst acknowledging that it cannot act in 'loco parentis,' and this responsibility will continue to rest with parents or guardians, the University will work with individuals, parents, carers, and applicable agencies to deliver its safeguarding responsibilities and to promote the welfare of all.
- 2.2 The University has a common law duty of care to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all vulnerable individuals and groups accessing its services and facilities. This includes its obligations under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, the Care Act 2014, and the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
- 2.3 The University's duties are satisfied through application of a range of specific statutory and non-statutory guidance. A list of these documents is provided at **Appendix A**, alongside a list of relevant University policies and procedures.

## **3 Definitions and terminology**

- 3.1 Definitions of terms used in this policy are provided in **Appendix B**.

## **4 Governance, roles and responsibilities**

- 4.1 It is the role of every member of staff and volunteer who works with children and adults at risk to familiarise themselves with this policy and accompanying guidance documentation; and to work in a way that safeguards the welfare of all students, staff and visitors.
- 4.2 The University will seek to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and adults, including adults at risk, by ensuring:
- clear roles and responsibilities for the prevention of abuse and neglect and the reporting and referral of safeguarding related concerns;
  - safe recruitment practices are in place to ensure all staff and students involved in regulated activity are subject to the appropriate DBS clearance procedures;
  - risk assessments and associated internal controls are put in place for activities involving children and/or adults at risk;
  - provision of appropriate safeguarding training for staff, including in relation to the Prevent duty;
  - robust procedures for reporting and handling allegations or concerns about possible abuse and / or neglect of children or adults at risk, including the appointment of suitably trained Designated Safeguarding Officers within the University, and external referral, where required, to local authorities (including the Local Authority Designated Officer where appropriate);

- adequate records are maintained and information is shared appropriately on a need-to-know basis;
- statutory obligations related to the Prevent duty are fulfilled;
- regular consideration of reports relating to safeguarding cases, learning from incidents by improving internal controls as appropriate;
- promotion of a culture which promotes safeguarding, reducing the potential for harm to be caused or threatened.

#### 4.3 Strategic management

4.3.1 The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for ensuring that the University's safeguarding policies and procedures comply with the law and all relevant national guidance, and are effective.

4.3.2 The University Executive Team (UET), through a Safeguarding Board, oversees the implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures, and any adjustments that are required arising from changes to the law and / or national guidance. The UET member with strategic responsibility for safeguarding is the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience; with the exception of the Prevent duty, strategic responsibility for which lies with the Chief Compliance Officer and University Secretary.

4.3.4 The Safeguarding Board is made up of staff from across the University and its specific responsibilities are:

- To co-ordinate University activities associated with safeguarding, with particular focus on responses to safeguarding concerns; training and education for staff and students; monitoring and reporting of safeguarding activity; and safe recruitment practices.
- To improve stakeholder awareness of safeguarding and compliance with safeguarding requirements, including in respect of University policy and process.
- To review safeguarding cases relating to students studying on University courses, including apprentices and students studying at partner institutions, and to reflect on learning taken from those cases.
- To identify aspects of safeguarding practice and activity which require improvement, or which represent risks to student safety, and to support key stakeholders to resource and deliver improvement.
- To identify good practice within the University, the Higher Education sector and elsewhere to inform positive change at the University.
- To produce twice-yearly and ad hoc reports for consideration by UET and the Board of Governors, and other stakeholders as appropriate.
- To analyse data related to safeguarding, including anonymised case studies, and to identify and manage themes identified from the data.
- To arrange for regular audit of safeguarding cases. The regular audit will inform the reports produced for the UET and Board of Governors and will consider additional cases for the purposes of quality enhancement and learning.
- To develop an institutional action plan with actions to embed a culture of safeguarding across the institution and to deliver safeguarding as part of a wider positive student experience.

- To communicate the work of the Safeguarding Board to stakeholders across the University.
- To support and develop institutional understanding of safeguarding issues at a local, regional, and national level; and to ensure such issues are taken into account in planning and taking University actions in respect of safeguarding.

4.3.5 The Safeguarding Board is chaired by the Associate Director Student Services, who has strategic responsibility for delivering the work of the Board and ensuring the Board's activities are reported to UET and the Board of Governors. The Safeguarding Board also includes representation from an external member of the Board of Governors.

4.3.6 The Safeguarding Board provides UET with a twice-yearly report on safeguarding at the University. Upon approval by UET, the report is presented to the Audit Committee of the Board of Governors; and from there is shared with the full Board of Governors. The Board of Governors receives a safeguarding report on a twice-yearly basis.

4.3.7 Members of UET and the Board of Governors also receive safeguarding training upon induction and regularly thereafter.

#### 4.4 Operational management

4.4.1 Operational management of University safeguarding activity associated with students, including co-ordination with any relevant external agencies, is the responsibility of the Head of Mental Health and Wellbeing as Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for students. Where the DSO is unavailable, Deputy DSOs for students are responsible for managing safeguarding activity: see 4.4.3.

4.4.2 For staff, the DSO is the Chief People and Infrastructure Officer. Day-to-day operational management of University safeguarding activity associated with staff will normally be undertaken on behalf of the DSO by the Deputy DSOs for staff: see 4.4.3.

4.4.3 Deputy DSOs are:

##### **Students**

Associate Director Student Services

Senior Mental Health Adviser

Senior Wellbeing Adviser

Wellbeing Casework Co-ordinator

Safeguarding and Support Officer

Head of Security Services

##### **Staff**

Director of People Operations

Head of People Business Partnering

Employee Relations Manager

Strategic People Partners

- 4.4.4 Operational delivery of safeguarding activity is undertaken by trained staff in the relevant departments: Mental Health and Wellbeing for students and People and Culture for staff.
- 4.4.5 For any safeguarding activity associated with third parties, the responsible DSO will be determined by the nature of the individual(s) to be safeguarded and the relevant activity.
- 4.4.6 Operational activity includes:
- promoting, implementing, monitoring and reviewing this policy in accordance with legislation and guidance on the safeguarding of children and adults at risk;
  - acting as the main points of contact within the University for the safeguarding of children and adults at risk;
  - providing University members with information, advice and training on the safeguarding of children and adults at risk;
  - ensuring this policy is easily accessible to staff and students;
  - establishing and maintaining contacts with internal and external key stakeholders; including the police, LADO, and local authority. These contacts will primarily be maintained by the DSO's;
  - undertaking the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the appropriate agencies;
  - maintaining and recommending updates to safeguarding policies and procedures;
  - keeping up to date with current policy and legislation and updating the University accordingly;
  - undertaking risk assessments that are completed prior to any activity involving children or adults at risk;
  - maintaining confidential records of reported child or adult at risk abuse or welfare cases and the action taken in relation to the University member.

## **5 The safeguarding process**

### **5.1 Emergency situations**

5.1.1 An emergency situation occurs when there is an imminent risk of harm to an individual's physical or mental health, such as someone appearing to be unconscious or sharing plans to harm themselves or another.

5.1.2 If you believe that a member of staff or student is at risk of immediate harm either from themselves or another person, you should call the emergency services by dialling 999. If an incident is taking place on campus, then call Security on 0121 331 6969 (extension 6969 from an internal phone) and they can contact the emergency services as appropriate.

### **5.2 Identifying and reporting concerns**

5.2.1 Detailed guidance on how to identify and report safeguarding concerns, including what happens after a report has been made, is provided in **Appendix C**.

### 5.3 Anonymous reports

5.3.1 Anonymous reports or concerns will be accepted and acted on, where reasonably possible, as there may be genuine reasons why an individual may not feel able to disclose their identity. However, anonymous enquiries may not facilitate any internal or external investigation process. The identity and / or contact details of the reporter will be actively sought in circumstances where the University reasonably believes the information is required in order to be able to take further action under this policy; where details are not provided this may limit action that can be taken.

### 5.4 Malicious reports

5.4.1 If a report is determined to have been made frivolously, in bad faith, maliciously, for personal gain or for revenge, disciplinary action may be taken against the person making such an allegation. No disciplinary action will be taken against any member of staff or student who raises a genuine concern that proves to be unfounded.

### 5.5 Reports of allegations against members of the University community

5.5.1 Safeguarding related concerns / allegations made against members of the University community that suggest an under-18 is being harmed or is potentially at risk of harm may be referred to the relevant Local Area Designated Officer(s). The Local Authority Designated Officer is an employee of the local authority and gives advice and guidance to employers, organisations and other individuals who have concerns about the behaviour of an adult who works with children and young people. The relevant DSO will decide whether in the circumstances of the particular case, a report to the LADO should be made.

5.5.2 Where a safeguarding report makes allegations in regard to the behaviour of a member of University staff or a student, such allegations may be considered under the [Staff Disciplinary Policy](#) or [Student Disciplinary Procedure \(Non-Academic\)](#) as appropriate.

### 5.6 Service hours and out of hours support

5.6.1 Safeguarding reports made via Report and Support are monitored during office hours, Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm.

5.6.2 If there is an **immediate risk of harm** to an adult or child outside service hours, contact Security via 0121 331 6969 where the individual is on campus; or call emergency services on 999.

5.6.3 To report concerns outside of service hours, you should also contact the relevant local authority and provide as much information as possible (including where action has already been taken through Security or emergency services):

- CASS (Birmingham Children's Advice & Support Service): 0121 303 1888 or emergency out of hours 0121 675 4806
- Adult Social Care: 0121 303 1234 or emergency out of hours 0121 675 4806

5.6.4 Safeguarding concerns arising outside service hours should still be reported via Report and Support (see **Appendix C**). This helps ensure the report is captured within safeguarding statistics and review processes.

## **6 Quality assurance and monitoring**

6.1 Safeguarding casework data is captured through the Report and Support system and a data report will be presented at each meeting of the Safeguarding Board for the purposes of identifying patterns and trends.

6.2 Twice yearly, the Safeguarding Board will consider anonymised case studies (selected at random) for the purposes of quality checking and learning enhancement. Informed by this exercise, the Safeguarding Board will produce a twice-yearly report for UET and the Board of Governors on safeguarding activity at the University.

## **7 Records and data protection**

7.1 All recorded information relating to safeguarding concerns and disclosures is kept in secure electronic files maintained by Mental Health and Wellbeing or People and Culture. Data is stored, reviewed and deleted in line with the University's [Privacy Policy](#) and [Data Protection Policy](#).

7.2 The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of safeguarding. Information which is relevant to safeguarding will often be data which is considered 'special category personal data' meaning it is sensitive and personal. The Data Protection Act 2018 includes 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent.

7.3 Relevant personal information can be shared lawfully if it is to keep a child or individual at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental, or emotional well-being.

7.4 In order to discharge our safeguarding duties, we may share data (including sensitive and personal data) with third parties if it is necessary in order to manage risk and prevent. A non-exhaustive list of third parties with whom we may share data includes:

- Police and other emergency services
- NHS
- Employer, in particular for student apprentices
- Local Authority
- Next of kin and / or any nominated emergency contacts

## **8 Recruitment, training and awareness**

### **8.1 Recruitment**

8.1.1 The University is registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and has responsibility for ensuring that anyone who will be undertaking regulated activity with children and adults at risk on behalf of the University will be required to undertake an enhanced DBS check.

8.1.2 A person will engage in regulated activity if, as a result their work, they:

- will be responsible on a regular basis for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervision of children;
- will be working on a regular basis in a specified establishment where the work gives opportunity for contact with children;
- will be engaging in intimate or personal care or health care or any overnight activity, even if this happens only once.

8.1.3 For further information, please refer to the University's [Policy on Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\) Checks](#) and [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#).

8.1.4 In addition, where a student engages in regulated activity relating to children or adults at risk, through the University as part of a placement, paid work, or a volunteer position, or is otherwise working with children or adults at risk, the relevant department will ensure that an enhanced DBS check is available, before they commence the activity.

### **8.2 Training and awareness**

8.2.1 All staff are required to complete mandatory safeguarding and Prevent duty training on joining the University, and regular refresher training. Maintenance of training completion records are the responsibility of the Organisational Development and Learning team within People and Culture.

8.2.3 Staff with defined roles under this Policy (as set out at Section 4.4.2) are required to undertake specialised safeguarding training every two years, as well as completing the standard University induction and refresher training.

8.2.4 The University is committed to developing and embedding an understanding of safeguarding (including Prevent) within its community and encourages staff and students to engage in learning opportunities wherever possible. The Safeguarding Board will ensure the production of an annual communications plan to ensure that training opportunities are publicised and to help increase awareness of safeguarding issues.

## **9 Relationships and positions of trust**

9.1 All staff must familiarise themselves with the University’s [Policy on relationships between employees and students](#) and be aware that some relationships are strictly prohibited.

## 10 Research that involves children and young people and / or adults at risk

10.1 All research involving human participants must pass ethical review. For postgraduate research students and staff, the ethical review process is overseen by the Research Ethics team. For other taught students, the ethical review process is overseen within the relevant student’s faculty unless ethical approval has already been granted at module level. [Research Ethics guidance](#) is available on iCity.


## 11 Key contacts

11.1 Key internal contacts include:

- [Mental Health & Wellbeing](#): 0121 331 5188 or [wellbeing@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing@bcu.ac.uk) (Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm)
- [Human Resources](#)
- [Security Services](#): 0121 331 6969 (24/7)

11.2 Key external contacts include:

- [CASS \(Birmingham Children’s Advice & Support Service\)](#): 0121 303 1888 or emergency out of hours 0121 675 4806
- [Adult Social Care](#): 0121 303 1234 or emergency out of hours 0121 675 4806
- [Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership](#): 0121 675 1669 or [Ladoteam@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk](mailto:Ladoteam@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk)
- [West Midlands Police](#). The University has designated police liaison officers and contact details are available on the [West Midlands Police Safer Students website](#).

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Owner	Associate Director Student Services

# Birmingham City University Safeguarding Policy

## Appendix A

### Safeguarding Legislation and Guidance and University Policy and Procedure

This appendix sets out (1) external legislation and guidance; and (2) University policies and procedures, as relevant to the University's Safeguarding Policy. The appendix should be read in conjunction with the policy and its other appendices.

Please note:

- Not all legislation and guidance listed is directly applicable to the University, and the University is not bound by all external documents listed: some legislation and guidance is considered relevant even where it applies only to schools and colleges and not to provision of the University;
- This appendix is reviewed annually in line with the review schedule of the University's Safeguarding Policy. Links are accurate as at the last point of review.

### Safeguarding Legislation and Guidance

- [Children Act 1989 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Education Act 2002](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Care Act 2014](#)
- [Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#)
- [What to do if you are worried a child is being abused \(2015\)](#)
- [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)
- [Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies \(2017\)](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Mental health and behaviour in schools \(2018\)](#)
- [Prevent duty guidance for higher education institutions in England and Wales \(2023\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#)
- [Worker Protection \(Amendment of Equality Act 2010\) Act 2023](#)
- [Online Safety Act 2023](#)
- [Higher Education \(Freedom of Speech\) Act 2023](#)
- [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme \(2023\)](#); also known as Clare's Law
- [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners \(2024\)](#)
- [Office for Students Condition E6 on Sexual Misconduct and Harassment \(2025\)](#)
- [Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy \(2025\)](#)

## **University Policy and Procedure**

- [University statement on compliance with the Prevent duty](#)
- [University Community Agreement](#)
- [Definitions of Harmful Behaviours and Related Issues](#)
- [External Speaker and Event Procedures](#)
- [Freedom of Speech Code of Practice](#)

### *Students:*

- [Student Disciplinary Procedure \(Non-Academic\)](#)
- [Student Gender-Based Violence Policy](#)
- [Student Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)
- [Students with Criminal Convictions Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Student Suspensions Guidance](#)
- [Supporting Student Wellbeing During Online Delivery](#)
- [Guidance for the Use of Social Media by Students](#)
- [Research Ethics guidance](#)

### *Staff:*

- [Staff Disciplinary Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Policy on relationships between employees and students](#)
- [Policy for Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\) Checks](#)
- [Policy for the Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation](#)
- [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)
- [Policy and Code of Practice on Whistleblowing](#)
- [Social Media Policy](#)

## **Birmingham City University Safeguarding Policy Appendix B**

### **Safeguarding Definitions and Terminology**

This appendix provides definitions and explanations of terms used in the University's Safeguarding Policy. The appendix should be read in conjunction with the policy and its other appendices.

Please note:

- If you think any additional definition or terminology should be included within this appendix, please contact the [Mental Health and Wellbeing team](#).
- This appendix is reviewed annually in line with the review schedule of the University's Safeguarding Policy. Definitions and terminology are accurate as at the last point of review.

#### **Child**

Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

#### **County lines**

County lines is defined in the [Serious Violence Strategy](#), which states: 'County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move [and store] the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.'

#### **DBS check**

A pre-appointment safe recruitment check by the Disclosure and Barring Service. The University's [Policy on Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\) Checks](#) sets out the circumstances in which staff will be subject to different levels of DBS check.

#### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but there's no medical reason for this to be done. FGM is also known as female circumcision or cutting, and by other terms, such as Sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahir, megrez and khitan, among others.

FGM is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty starts. FGM is very painful and can seriously harm the health of

women and girls; it can also cause long-term problems with sex, childbirth and mental health.

FGM is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse.

### **Forced marriage**

A forced marriage is one in which one or both people do not or cannot consent to the marriage, but are coerced into it by their families or community.

In an arranged marriage, both participants give their full consent and enter the marriage willingly. In a forced marriage, one or both participants enter the marriage without giving their consent. They go through with the wedding under duress from their families. Sometimes, what starts out as an 'arranged' marriage can quickly escalate to a forced marriage. It is not uncommon for one of the participants to change their mind, even on the wedding day, only for their families to force them to go through with it.

### **Gender-based violence ('GBV')**

GBV is violence and / or abuse directed against a person because of that person's gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately. GBV can occur in all relationships and situations regardless of age, disability, economic status, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender reassignment, marital status and sexual orientation. Everyone can experience GBV, although GBV is statistically most frequently perpetrated by men against women and children and against gender and sexual minorities.

Where GBV constitutes acts of violence or abuse that disproportionately affect women and girls, it is also often known as 'violence against women and girls' ('**VAWG**').

Examples of GBV include (but are not limited to):

- Violence between those in an intimate relationship (including romantic relationships, dating and casual relationships, or domestic relationships such as marriage, co-habitation, or family settings)
- Bullying
- Coercive control
- Commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution, lap dancing, stripping, pornography and trafficking
- Discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived gender and / or actual or perceived sexuality
- Female Genital Mutilation (**FGM**)
- **Forced marriage**
- Intimidation
- **Sexual assault**
- **Sexual harassment**
- So-called '**honour-based**' abuse / violence
- Stalking

## Harm

Harm includes both abuse and neglect.

- *Abuse*: Maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect an individual by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can be perpetrated by adults and/or children.
- *Neglect*: The persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of an individual's health or development.

There are four main categories of abuse that apply to both children and adults at risk:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

There are additional categories of abuse for adults at risk:

- Modern Slavery/Exploitation
- Organisational/Institutional
- Discriminatory
- Financial
- Domestic
- Self-Neglect

The Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance also signposts related safeguarding issues, including:

- Bullying including cyber bullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Domestic violence
- Drugs
- Fabricated or Induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender based violence/ Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- Mental Health
- Private Fostering
- Radicalisation
- Sexting
- Teenage Relationship Abuse
- Trafficking

The same statutory guidance also advises vigilance around issues associated with sexual violence and sexual harassment between young people and the indicators of learners being at threat and/or drawn into serious violence and gang cultures.

## Honour-based abuse (so-called)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse can take many forms, including child marriage, virginity testing, enforced abortion, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, as well as physical, sexual and economic abuse and coercive control.

Honour based abuse is often thought of as a 'cultural', 'traditional' or 'religious' problem. It can affect people of all ages, but often begins early in the family home. It can lead to a deeply embedded form of coercive control, built on expectations about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. Control is often established without overt violence against the victim. For example, family members may threaten to kill themselves or ostracise the victim. Perpetrators are often partners or ex-partners, or family members; and victims often experience abuse from multiple perpetrators, including parents and siblings.

## **Modern slavery**

Modern slavery refers to human trafficking and slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour. The definition of a victim of human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour is set out in [the Slavery and Human Trafficking \(Definition of Victim\) Regulations 2022](#). The essence of human trafficking is that the victim is coerced or deceived into a situation where they are exploited. Human trafficking is not the same as human smuggling. There are common myths about modern slavery, such as misconceptions that UK nationals cannot be victims and that a person cannot be a victim if they reject offers of help.

## **Prevent duty**

The Counterterrorism and Security Act (2015) places a duty on 'specified authorities', including universities, to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism in the exercise of their functions.

The focus of the University's Prevent duty responsibility is on safeguarding students and other members of the University community from being drawn into terrorism, ensuring that those who are vulnerable to extremist and terrorist narratives are given appropriate advice and support at an early stage. Prevent is therefore a specific instance of the University's wider safeguarding responsibilities.

A Prevent-related concern might arise where someone makes radicalised comments in an online chat, or in social media posts. For example, a student might offer approval of terrorist activity or express extremist political views. A non-exhaustive list of such views includes those associated with:

- faith-based extremism e.g. the views of Al Qa'ida (a proscribed group);
- animal rights e.g. harm targeted at individuals working in animal research;
- far right movements e.g. the views of National Action (a proscribed group);
- other forms of violent extremism and potential terrorism e.g. paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland.

## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding of children includes protecting children from neglect and maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health or development, ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children have the best outcomes. For vulnerable adults, safeguarding describes the activity that is undertaken to protect adults at risk from abuse, harm, ill treatment and neglect.

## **Sexual assault**

A person commits sexual assault if they intentionally touch another person, the touching is sexual and the person does not consent.

It involves all unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature and examples might include unwanted pinching, embracing, kissing or touching of intimate body parts; to rape and serious sexual assault which involves penetration without consent. There are links at the bottom of this article which will provide you with further information about sexual assault and what it means.

Sexual assault is a criminal offence.

## **Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which:

- violates your dignity
- makes you feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated
- creates a hostile or offensive environment

You don't need to have previously objected to someone's behaviour for it to be considered unwanted.

Sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments or jokes
- physical behaviour, including unwelcome sexual advances, touching and various forms of sexual assault
- displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- sending emails with a sexual content

## **Vulnerable adult and adult at risk**

An adult is any person aged 18 or over.

A vulnerable adult has needs for care and support; is at risk of or is experiencing physical, mental or emotional harm or neglect; and as a result of their needs, is unable to protect themselves against harm or neglect or the risk of it. Any adult can suffer neglect or be subjected to abuse. There are many factors which can increase an individual's vulnerability: indicators of possible vulnerability include a mental health issue, dementia, a physical disability, a learning disability, a condition within the autistic spectrum, a significant difficulty related to vision (requiring more than correction through spectacles and contact lenses alone), a significant difficulty related to hearing (requiring more than correction through hearing aids alone), complications related to frailty or a serious illness. In considering safeguarding actions, it is important to consider whether a vulnerable adult has support needs because of one of the issues listed above, regardless of whether support is currently being provided.

**Birmingham City University Safeguarding Policy**  
**Appendix C**

**Guidance on Identifying and Reporting Safeguarding Concerns**

This appendix provides guidance on identifying and reporting safeguarding concerns under the University's Safeguarding Policy. The appendix should be read in conjunction with the policy and its other appendices.

Please note:

- If you believe that a member of staff or student is at risk of immediate harm either from themselves or another person, you should call the emergency services by dialling 999. If an incident is taking place on campus, then call Security on 0121 331 6969 (extension 6969 from an internal phone) and they can contact the emergency services as appropriate.
- If you have any doubt about whether an issue constitutes a safeguarding concern, please refer to the Safeguarding Policy; speak to a DSO or Deputy DSO; or contact [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#).
- This appendix is reviewed annually in line with the review schedule of the University's Safeguarding Policy. Processes are accurate as at the last point of review.

**1. Identifying a safeguarding concern**

- 1.1 A safeguarding concern can be raised where either harm has been caused or where there is a risk of harm. We do not expect any student, member of staff, or visitor to decide whether a child or adult has been harmed or is at risk of harm. However, we do expect concerns are raised using this Policy so that appropriate actions may be taken.
- 1.2 Concerns about students or staff may emerge in a number of ways. Some non-exhaustive examples include:
- Verbally – you may become aware of a concern from direct conversation with a student or staff member or through conversations with fellow students or staff;
  - In written communication – you might have an email exchange with the person of concern or with someone known to them that might alert you to a safeguarding issue;
  - In person – you might have face to face communication with the person or observe directly that there is a potential concern about their safety.
- 1.3 Situations in which a concern should be raised include (but are not limited to):
- Either a child or adult declares abuse, harm or other inappropriate behaviour;
  - There is a concern that a child or adult is being harmed or manipulated, or is at risk of harm or manipulation;
  - Changes have been noticed in a child or adult's appearance or behaviour that may be related to harm or manipulation; or

- You become aware that a person presents a risk of harm towards a child or adult in relation to their current or previous behaviour. For example, they have a criminal conviction that involves harming or threatening to harm someone else, or they are involved in the possession of inappropriate images or extremist material.

1.4 Examples of harm are given in **Appendix B**.

1.5 If the concern relates to an individual outside of the university (for example, the child/relative/friend of a student), you should contact the relevant Designated Safeguarding Officer to discuss appropriate steps.

1.6 The University will encourage its staff, students and visitors to report concerns and allegations of abuse and neglect associated with any children, vulnerable adults and adults at risk who are engaged in University-related activities or otherwise using University premises. Acts of abuse or neglect carried out by members of the University community will not to be tolerated and will lead to the instigation of the relevant disciplinary procedures wherever appropriate.

## 2. Reporting a safeguarding concern

2.1 A safeguarding concern should be raised as a matter of urgency by completing a report using [Report and Support](#).

2.2 Ensure to select the 'Report with contact details' option when making a report, and choose 'A safeguarding concern' or 'A Prevent concern' under the field 'I would describe what happened as.' You might wish to speak to the DSO or a Deputy DSO ahead of reporting the concern but in all matters of safeguarding unnecessary delays should be avoided.

2.3 Reports should set out all information that may be relevant to the reason for raising a concern, including but not limited to:

- Names and ID numbers of any student(s) / staff member(s) involved;
- Location of incident;
- Date and time of incident, or date range;
- Contact details for relevant parties;
- Whether or not harm has been caused;
- Nature of harm;
- Any involvement from external agencies / organisations.

2.4 If you have evidence to demonstrate or provide further detail of the concerns raised, this can be attached as part of the reporting process in Report and Support.

2.5 What happens after I have raised a concern?

2.5.1 Safeguarding reports will be assigned to a member of the relevant team (Mental Health and Wellbeing or People and Culture) for appropriate action to be taken. You may be

contacted to seek further information where required. Specific details of actions taken can only be shared where the reported person has given consent.

- 2.5.2 If you receive any further information related to the safeguarding concern following your report you must forward this information to the DSO or a Deputy DSO.
- 2.5.3 All reports received are responded to. However, details of the actions taken in response to a safeguarding report are confidential to the party to be safeguarded and it may not be possible to share details with the individual raising concerns.
- 2.5.4 The University's Safeguarding Board monitors trends and patterns in safeguarding reports at meetings held every two months. The Board also conducts a twice-yearly review of safeguarding cases, considering a random selection of completed cases for the purposes of quality monitoring and practice enhancement. Details of individuals are not included within this monitoring process.

### **3. Data protection and confidentiality**

- 3.1 The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of safeguarding. Information which is relevant to safeguarding will often be data which is considered 'special category personal data' meaning it is sensitive and personal. The Data Protection Act 2018 includes 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent.
- 3.2 Relevant personal information can be shared lawfully if it is to keep a child or individual at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental, or emotional well-being.
- 3.3 There may be occasions where, as part of our duty of care, we are required to investigate a reported incident and take any necessary action against individuals involved, even where the report is made anonymously. This will be done only where necessary due to a significant risk or ongoing duty of care which we have to act upon. If you indicate you do not wish any action to be taken, we will carefully consider why, as well as the safety and wellbeing of anyone else affected.
- 3.4 Providing full details when making a report (i.e. not submitting a report anonymously) is likely to mean that the action taken in response will be more focused and timely than where a report is made anonymously. Although we will act where a report raises safeguarding concerns, reporting anonymously can place limitations on the actions available to us.

