

# Birmingham City University Safeguarding Policy

**IMPORTANT: Please note that updates and changes were made to this Policy on 21 September 2021. However, this version of the Policy is temporary, pending final approval of the changes by the University. The final version of this Policy will published on the [student contact webpage](#) as soon as it is available.**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out Birmingham City University's approach to providing a safe environment in which to work, study and research. The policy applies to all students, including apprentices and students studying at partner institutions; staff; and visitors of 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. This policy also applies to staff of the BCU Students' Union and activities arranged and delivered by the Students' Union and its member societies.
- 1.2 As necessary, matters raised under this Safeguarding Policy may be referred to any other University Policy or Procedure for further action.

## 2 Emergency situations

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 If you believe that a member of staff or student is at risk of immediate harm either from themselves or another person, call Security on 0121 331 6969 who can contact the emergency services. If this is not possible, you will need to make the call to the emergency services by dialling 999.

## 3 Legislative context

- 3.1 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 and the Care Act 2014, which included key changes to what was meant by a vulnerable adult and adults at risk.
- 3.2 The University's duties are satisfied through application of a range of specific statutory and non-statutory guidance:
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#)
  - [What to do if you are worried a child is being abused \(2015\)](#)
  - [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners \(2018\)](#)
  - [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(September 2020\)](#)
  - [Prevent duty guidance for higher education institutions in England and Wales](#)

## 4 Definitions

*Safeguarding* The process of protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children and vulnerable adults to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

*Prevent duty* Prevent relates to the University's legal duty to prevent people from becoming radicalised and / or being drawn into terrorism.

A Prevent-related concern might arise where a student 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. Such views might be associated with faith-based extremism, animal rights, far right movements or other forms of violent extremism and potential terrorism.

*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.

*Vulnerable adult and adult at risk* An adult is any person aged 18 or over. Some adults may be vulnerable and entitled to be safeguarded because they are unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. It is recognised that 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. A vulnerable adult may be receiving support services from the local authority, the NHS or a non-statutory agency, but this will not always be the case. When considering if an adult is vulnerable and requires safeguarding, it is important to consider whether the adult has support needs because of one of the issues listed above, regardless of whether support is currently being provided.

*DBS check* A pre-appointment safe recruitment check by the Disclosure and Barring Service, which is carried out on all staff and students involved in "regulated activity."

*Harm* Harm includes both abuse and neglect. Examples of harm are provided beneath this list of definitions.

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.

#### 4.1 Examples of harm

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

- Physical

- Emotional
- Neglect
- Sexual

4.1.2 There are additional categories of abuse for adults at risk:

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

4.1.3 Vigilance is also required around possible harmful online material that may constitute one or more types of abuse. The University's IT department offers guidance on staying safe online and guidance for staff on supporting students who are studying online is available via Mental Health and Wellbeing (see 'Key documents and resources' below).

4.1.4 The [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) statutory guidance also signposts related safeguarding issues, including:

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

4.1.5 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.

4.1.6 Further details of some of these categories is available via relevant pages on the [Mental Health & Wellbeing iCity site](#).

## **5 Application of the Policy**

5.1 The University's safeguarding arrangements are underpinned by key principles:

- all individuals, including children, young people and vulnerable adults, 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 vulnerable adult 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 vulnerable adults;
- 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.

## 5.2 Roles and responsibilities

5.2.1 The University will seek to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and adults, including vulnerable adults, 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 vulnerable adults;
- 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 vulnerable adults, 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.

5.2.2 The following roles ensure that the University will discharge its responsibilities effectively:

*Principal Safeguarding Officer (PSO)*

The University Executive member responsible for the oversight and coordination of the Safeguarding Policy. In relation to the Prevent duty, this is the University Secretary; in all other safeguarding matters, the PSO is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

*Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO's)*

The lead members of staff responsible for the operational delivery and oversight of safeguarding activity, including co-ordination of action between the reporter, operational safeguarding team and other parties as appropriate.

For students, this is the Head of Mental Health & Wellbeing. The Head of Mental Health & Wellbeing is supported operationally by the Mental Health and Wellbeing Casework Coordinator.

For staff, this is the Director of Human Resources.

*Operational Safeguarding Team*

Members of University staff who are trained to receive and respond to reported concerns and/or allegations of abuse or neglect, and to make external referrals if required. A concentrated pool of operational safeguarding staff is identified, drawn from areas responsible for co-ordinating on a regular basis contact with under 18s and vulnerable adults.

For students, this is the Mental Health & Wellbeing team.

For staff, this is select staff within Human Resources.

*Safeguarding Leads*

Safeguarding Leads can be contacted for informal advice and guidance with general queries or specific concerns. It is not intended that Safeguarding Leads will be emergency contacts for high risk concerns, but they can be consulted for an informal discussion or further guidance in signposting or raising concerns. A list of Safeguarding Leads is available on iCity.

5.3 Identifying a concern

5.3.1 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.

5.3.2 Concerns about students or staff may emerge in a number of ways.

- 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.

5.3.3 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;
- Either a student or member of staff declares information about them or a family member which suggests someone may be harming a child or vulnerable adult;

- 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.

5.3.4 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 DSO to discuss appropriate steps.

5.3.5 The University will encourage its staff, students and visitors to report concerns and allegations of abuse and neglect. Acts of abuse or neglect carried out by members of the University community will not be tolerated and will lead to the instigation of the relevant disciplinary procedures wherever appropriate.

#### 5.4 How to raise a safeguarding concern

5.4.1 A safeguarding concern should be raised as a matter of urgency by completing a report using [Report and Support](#). Ensure to select the 'report a safeguarding concern' option when making a report. You might wish to speak to the DSO or a Safeguarding Lead ahead of reporting the concern but in all matters of safeguarding unnecessary delays should be avoided.

5.4.2 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.

5.4.3 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.

#### 5.5 What happens after I have raised a concern?

5.5.1 Safeguarding reports will be assigned to a member of the Operational Safeguarding Team for appropriate action to be taken. Reports made in respect of staff members will be dealt with by HR; all other reports will be dealt with by Mental Health & Wellbeing. You will be contacted to confirm receipt of your report, and to seek further information where required. In all cases you will be given sufficient information to

confirm that appropriate action has been taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the individual reported and/or others. Specific details of actions taken can only be shared where the reported person has given consent.

5.5.2 If you receive any further information related to the safeguarding concern following your report you must forward this information to the DSO.

## 5.6 Anonymous reports

5.6.1 Anonymous reports or concerns will be accepted and acted on, 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 and disclosure of the individual raising the concern is encouraged. Anonymous individuals will be encouraged to give contact details.

## 5.7 Malicious reports

5.7.1 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 who raises a genuine concern that proves to be unfounded.

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

5.8.1 All 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 will be referred to the relevant Local Area Designated Officer(s), as required by statutory guidance. 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.

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

## 5.9 Service hours and out of hours support

5.9.1 Safeguarding reports are monitored during office hours, Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm.

5.9.2 If you become aware of any urgent safeguarding concerns outside of these hours, you should contact the relevant local authority to report this concern.

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



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

## **6 Reporting and monitoring**

- 6.1 Safeguarding casework data will be captured through the Report and Support system and a data report will be presented on a quarterly basis to the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee; Prevent Working Group; and Board of Governors. More regular and / or ad hoc reports will be produced as required.

## **7 Training and awareness**

- 7.1 All staff are required to complete mandatory safeguarding and Prevent duty training on joining the University, and a subsequent refresher course on an annual basis. Training modules are available through ERP.
- 7.2 Staff with defined roles under this Policy (as set out at section 5.2.2) are required to undertake specialised safeguarding training every three years, as well as completing the standard University induction and refresher training.
- 7.3 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 DSO's will produce an annual communications plan to ensure that training opportunities are publicised and to help increase awareness of safeguarding issues.

## **8 Key documents and resources**

- 8.1 The following is a non-exhaustive list of internal documents and resources that support this Policy:

- Under-18's Policy [under revision]
- [Criminal Convictions Policy](#)
- [Policy for Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\) Checks](#) (Staff)
- [Student Disciplinary Procedure \(Non-Academic\)](#)
- [Staff Disciplinary Policy](#)
- [Supporting Student Wellbeing During Online Delivery](#)
- Guidance to students for staying safe online [in development by IT]
- [Prevent duty at BCU](#)

- 8.2 Further information on safeguarding in Birmingham is available here:

- [Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board](#)
- [Birmingham Safeguarding Children's Partnership](#)

## **9 Key contacts**

[Mental Health & Wellbeing](#)

[Human Resources](#)  
[Security Services](#)

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