

Safeguarding Policy

Please note there is a separate policy for Nightline Volunteers

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out our approach to safeguarding the welfare and wellbeing of adults at risk and children who visit Surrey Students' Union or participate in activities with us. It clarifies our ethical and legal responsibilities, and how we intend to practice our duty of care to protect them from harm.
- 1.2 This policy aims to support activities and provide assurance to staff, students, volunteers and visitors, Surrey Students' Union seeks to protect children and adults at risk to keep them safe when engaging with the Union.

2. Context

- 2.1 Surrey Students' Union aims to provide a safe place for children and adults at risk to visit and to participate in activities. We recognise that anyone working with children and adults at risk has an ethical and legal duty to ensure their safety and protection.
- 2.2 All staff have a responsibility to keep staff and students safe from harm and will have training to raise awareness on safeguarding issues.
- 2.3 This policy should be read alongside the University [procedures for safeguarding](#)
- 2.4 This policy should be read alongside the Students' Union Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy, found within the staff handbook.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy covers all Surrey Students' Union employees, students, volunteers and anyone else representing the Students' Union. The guidance applies to any activity organised and/or delivered by Surrey Students' Union or affiliated student groups.
- 3.2 The guidance in this policy should be considered when staff, volunteers, students or anyone representing the Students' Union, run any event which could include vulnerable adults or children.
- 3.3 All external organisations using Students' Union venues for their events will be responsible for their own safeguarding as indicated in the external hire agreement.
- 3.4 Prevent - The Prevent duty is the duty in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 on specified authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
- 3.5 Surrey Students' Union do not have a legal duty to report students at risk of radicalisation or extremism and therefore are not required to report students to Prevent. The SSU do have a duty to report if there is an immediate risk of life, or harm to themselves or others.
- 3.6 This policy recognises that while the University of Surrey values and embraces diverse nationalities, cultures, faiths, and beliefs, all Union staff have a duty to ensure everyone's safety in accordance with UK law. Safeguarding legislation in the UK may differ from that of other countries, but staff must understand and apply this policy within the framework of UK safeguarding laws to take appropriate action.

4. Definitions and terminology

4.1 Maltreatment/Abuse - can be in the form of:

- Physical abuse
- Child sexual exploitation
- Other forms of exploitation e.g. County Lines
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological and/or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery and Child trafficking
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse As outlined by [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (Updated 2024) and [Care Act 2014](#)

4.2 Adult at Risk - an Adult who:

- has needs for care and support,
- is experiencing, or is at Risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the Risk of it.

4.3 Child - For the purposes of this Policy, the University and the Students' Union define a child as a person who is under the age of 18.

4.4 Safeguarding - For the purpose of this Procedure, the University defines safeguarding as protecting Children and Adults at Risk who may be at Risk of exploitation, harm, neglect or abuse as well as promoting the welfare of our community.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the named person responsible for all issues relating to safeguarding in the SSU. They are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policy is implemented across all aspects of Union activity
- Ensuring that staff and student groups are aware of best practice in their activities and where to go if they have a concern
- Ensure that concerns about a child or vulnerable adult are dealt with appropriately and referred to the relevant statutory agency or support service
- Liaising with statutory agencies
- Following up safeguarding concerns

5.2 The Safeguarding Officers (SGO) will ensure policy is implemented within their area and is the first point of contact for concerns from staff or students.

5.3 A student or staff member can speak with any SGO to report concerns

5.4 The SGO is responsible for:

- Ensuring accurate reporting of safeguarding and wellbeing concerns within their area
- First point of contact for concerns
- Ensure policy is implemented
- Follow up on concerns, with support from the DSL

- Risk assessments within their area

5.3 Line managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff are aware of safeguarding policy
- Arrange training for staff where appropriate

5.4 All staff are responsible for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

6. Students under the age of 18

- 6.1 Some University of Surrey students will be under the age of 18 when they enrol.
- 6.2 Students under the age of 18 are full members of the Students' Union. Full members are outlined in the [bylaws](#).
- 6.3 Students under the age of 18 are not permitted hold signatory positions on a committee
- 6.4 Students under the age of 18 are not eligible to hold a full-time elected officer or trustee role (including an appointed trustee role) at the Students' Union i.e. they may not run for President, a Vice-President position, Union chair or, apply for an appointed trustee role.
- 6.5 Where an officer is elected under the age of 18, a risk assessment should be written with the officer, and shared with key staff as identified by the DSL.
- 6.6 Students under the age of 18 are not able to attend Rubix club nights

7. Organising events with children and vulnerable adults

- 7.1 There are a number of activities undertaken or facilitated by the Union which bring children and/or adults at risk into contact with Union staff, officers, volunteers, students and visitors. The following are identified as activities which present key areas of risk:
- Organised visits, events and other activities on Union premises
 - Organised visits, events and other activities undertaken in venues away from Union premises
 - Children and adults at risk of attending events or activities organised or facilitated by the Union (including club and society events)

8. Risk assessment for organised activities

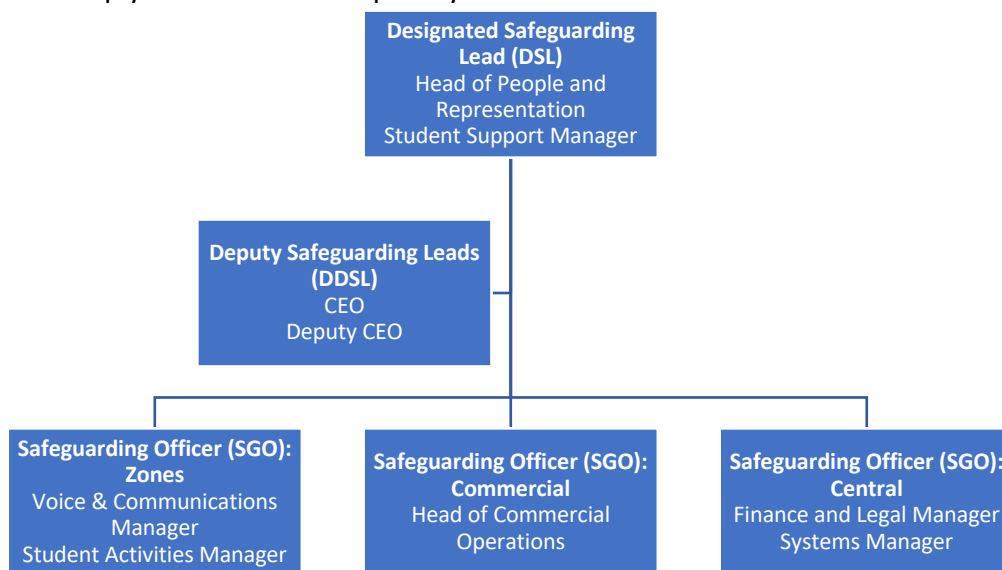
- 8.1 The organisers will ensure that appropriate risk assessments have been completed, and where appropriate liaised with a Safeguarding Officer or DSL.
- 8.2 Where a student group, club or society organises an activity with children and/or adults at risk, it is expected that the appropriate staff member (usually the Student Activities Manager) ensures that the appropriate risk assessments have been completed.
- 8.3 It is expected that for visits by or to schools where members of staff of that school are in attendance, the school will complete their own risk assessment and take on its own safeguarding procedures. Please refer to point 3.3 for external hire use.
- 8.4 When running an event with children and/or vulnerable adults, staff must read the guidance in Appendix 1
- 8.5 The guidance in Appendix 1 should be available to students, volunteers, clubs and societies where they are hosting events for children and vulnerable adults

9. Procedure Principles

The policy is based on the following guiding principles:

- 9.1 All children and adults should be treated with dignity and respect
- 9.2 The welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount and should be taken seriously
- 9.3 All children and adults at risk should be safeguarded from harm

- 9.4 It is everyone’s responsibility to report concerns about the safety of children and adults at risk, following the procedures laid out in this policy
- 9.5 Concerns should be reported in a timely manner to the relevant person
- 9.6 Where children are at risk of harm, the local authority should be informed through the MASH team (Multi agency safeguarding hub) through the DSL
- 9.7 All safeguarding records will be kept in accordance with the Students’ Union’s [Privacy Policy](#).
- 9.8 In order to safeguard those at risk, all staff must:
- Follow safeguarding processes and procedures
 - Seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Safeguarding officers
 - Ensure accurate reporting and record keeping of safeguarding concerns
 - All line managers are responsible for monitoring staff members within their department
 - Complete mandatory training within three months of employment, and complete mandatory safeguarding top up training.
- 9.9 Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action.



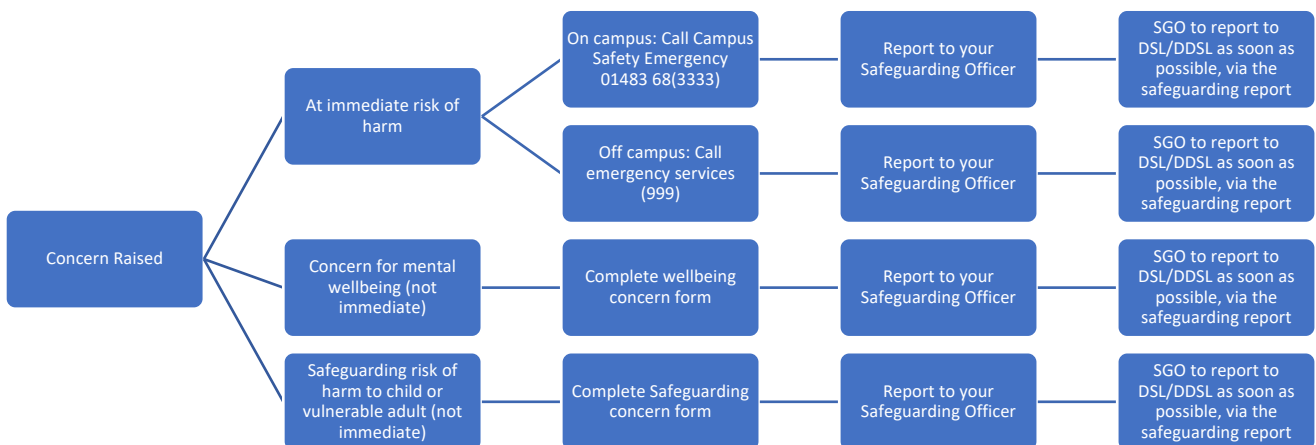
10. Training for Staff

- 10.1 All full-time staff are required to complete the mandatory University safeguarding training within three months of employment with the Union, and every two years thereafter.
- 10.2 All Safeguarding Officers (members of Operations Group) are required to complete the bespoke officers training, and the training outlined in 6.1
- 10.3 All Designated Safeguarding Leads must complete the online DSL training, and the training outlined in 6.1 and 6.2
- 10.4 It is recommended that staff have refresher training every two years

11. Reporting safeguarding concerns

- 11.1 It is possible that staff members working with children or vulnerable adults may suspect or hear that abuse is taking place. You may also have concerns about an individual or you may receive a disclosure about harm to a child or vulnerable adults. You must follow procedures:
- Ensure your own safety
 - Ensure the immediate safety of the person affected
 - Listen carefully and remain calm
 - Do not probe or ask leading questions or investigate what they have said, just listen.
 - Never agree to keep the information confidential, as you will need to report this disclosure

- Make clear and concise notes of what they have said as close to verbatim as possible. Bullet points are useful in ensuring that the information can be passed on in a clear format. Add times, dates, locations, names and what happened in their own words but do not pressure or ask leading questions to gather this information.
- Explain that you will need to report your concerns through safeguarding at the earliest opportunity in the conversation.
- Where there is an immediate risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, call 999 via Campus Safety and follow up with a safeguarding report
- Where there is a risk to wellbeing, complete the [Wellbeing Concern Form](#)
- Where there is a safeguarding risk of harm, complete the [Safeguarding Referral Form](#)
- Follow up with your Safeguarding Officer (SGO) as soon as you can
- Your SGO should complete a [safeguarding report](#) as soon as they can - best practice would be that safeguarding reports or any referrals should be completed by the person that has received the information. All staff can be supported to do this, third or fourth hand information can dilute or exacerbate the facts.
- Ensure all notes taken comply with GDPR



- 11.2 Where allegations are made against a staff member, Head of People and Representation should be informed and an investigation will take place in accordance with the Students’ Union’s people management procedures and whistleblowing policy, a copy of which is available on request.
- 11.3 Where an allegation is made against a volunteer, a concern should be raised through the [Union’s Complaints procedure](#) for investigation. Student volunteers may also raise their concerns through [Report and Support](#).
- 11.4 if you are concerned or unsure if a child or adult at risk is being harmed or at risk of harm, never wait for them to tell you. Seek support from your SGO or DSL if you are unsure.

12. Reports of Safeguarding concerns

12.1 When a safeguarding concern is reporting, the SGO should undertake a risk assessments and:

- Address any serious and immediate risks to a child or an adult at risk
- Preserve any evidence

- Determine if a safeguarding referral is required to the University, or the police
- Identify any internal or external support that may be needed.
- Update the Safeguarding spreadsheet with actions

12.2 Any internal or external referrals should be made by the DSL/Deputy DSL

12.3 The DLS/Deputy DSL will follow up on any referrals with the University or external agencies.

Guidelines for Staff/Student Groups who work with children, young people and adults at risk

These guidelines are aimed to support a 'good sense' approach when relating with children, young people and adults at risk within Students' Union activities. Volunteering your time to benefit community members/others can be a valuable and rewarding experience, so it is worth taking time to consider how you will ensure you create and maintain a safe and caring environment.

The general guidelines below will not cover every possible situation within the wide range of activities undertaken as part of Students' Union activity. Remember your actions should always be in the best interest of the child, young person or adult at risk.

DO:

- Avoid one-to-one situations; you should never be alone with someone under the age of 18.
- Challenge activities that are seen to be discriminatory or abusive i.e. bullying, sexism, racism and homophobia
- Ensure safeguarding i.e. creating and maintaining a safe and caring environment, respecting the dignity of others is considered within your risk assessments for events/activities.
- Where an activity takes place in partnership with another organisation be familiar with their safeguarding procedures and ensure they are aware you will follow the Students' Union. Where you are delivering an activity for another organisation you need to follow their safeguarding procedures.
- Treat all children or adults at risk with respect and fairness, regardless of gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, age, socio-economic background, disability, religious or political beliefs, trade union membership, family circumstance, sexual orientation or other irrelevant distinction.
- Remember that representatives of Surrey Students' Union serve as role models and must act in a responsible manner.
- Where an activity ends between 10pm – 8am, the organisers should ensure that any under 18 or vulnerable adult is able to get home safely e.g. via taxi.

DON'T:

- Arrange to meet or have contact outside of Students' Union activity with a child, young person or adult at risk including via the internet/social media or sharing personal contact details.
- Forget that physical and verbal contact can be misinterpreted. If a child, young person or adult at risk is distressed or emotional DO take into account that any physical touch should be appropriate and initiated by the child, young person or adult at risk.
- Promise to keep secrets, DO consider confidentiality.
- Leave a group of young or at risk people unsupervised.
- Take photographs or videos of children/young people unless you have parental consent

There may be times when you are worried about a child, young person or adult at risk or they may tell you something which makes you concerned for theirs/others safety. This policy provides information on how to deal with this, the flow chart details actions to be taken. Where there is imminent danger or an emergency, if you are on campus call Security on 3333, if you are in a community setting contact the Police on 999.

Always report any concerns, unacceptable behaviour, allegations or suspicion of abuse to a Students' Union Safeguarding Officer and the lead person for the activity.

Top Tips for Safeguarding Children and Adults.

- Safety first- you cannot help the Student/staff member if you are in harms way- seek immediate help if the situation you are in is unsafe/risky. Shout for Help, Call for Help, ask your peers/colleagues for support.
- Listen, be open and honest- you will need to share this information and why.
- Be clear about what you need to do- next steps- discuss with your line manager, SG Lead, DSL.
- Tell them you are going to write down what they are saying as you don't want to get it wrong. Use their own words. Ensure you record important information like dates and names.
- You maybe the first person that the student/staff member has ever spoken to about this- try to remain calm you are in a very privileged position.
- Don't probe or keep asking questions the main aim at this point is to establish that you and the person are safe, then listen and seek further advise and support. (The disclosing party will be asked lots of questions from the right organisations if required. We need to determine, immediate and long term safety then what help, and support can be implemented.
- Seek supervision for yourself- disclosures can be emotionally inflammatory for yourself and draining.
- You can clarify your understanding by asking simple questions if you don't understand.
- Safety- Listen-Take Action- Plan.

Top Tips for Record keeping

- Date, Time, Names of those present and your current location.
- Be factual- write what they have said- direct quotes where possible.
- Include any Names, Dates, Location of Events and Times they tell you.
- Bullet point this will ensure your notes are clear.
- Use simple language
- Make sure your writing is readable. Type up your notes as soon as you can.