



University of Lincoln Students' Union Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The ULSU Group has a statutory, ethical and moral duty to ensure that it functions with a proactive view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults who are staff, members or visitors of the Students' Union.

1.2 The ULSU Group also has a duty of care and responsibility over its' members and should ensure any concerns for a member's welfare are reported to the appropriate agencies as a vital interest.

1.3 The ULSU Group is committed to ensuring that it:

- a) Provides a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults to work and visit and those children, young people and vulnerable adults are safe and feel safe in their environment.
- b) Identifies children, young people and vulnerable adults who are suffering, or likely to suffer from significant harm.
- c) Takes appropriate action to see that such children, young people and vulnerable adults are kept safe, both in the University of Lincoln Students' Union venues and at home.

1.4 In pursuit of these aims, the Chief Executive will approve and annually review policies and procedures with the aim of:

- a) Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and the promotion of a safe environment for them whilst they are at the University of Lincoln Students' Union,
- b) Aiding the identification of children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk of significant harm, and providing procedures for reporting and acting on concerns;
- c) Establishing procedures for the reporting and handling of allegations of abuse against students and members of staff
- d) The safe recruitment of staff and students.

1.5 In reviewing the relevant policies and procedures, the Chief Executive will consult with and take account of the relevant guidance and good practice, including liaison with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

1.6 The Chief Executive Officer has the lead responsibility for protection of children and vulnerable adults within the organisation and will act as the organisation's Designated Safeguarding Officer. They will also be assisted by and delegate matters to other members of staff to ensure that issues relating to the protection of children and vulnerable adults are addressed promptly and appropriately.

1.8 Safeguarding is the responsibility of all ULSU staff. All staff will therefore receive training to familiarise themselves with protection related issues, as well as the organisation's overarching responsibilities, alongside the ULSU Group's procedures and policies. Training will be reviewed for staff every two years.

1.9 The ULSU Group will refer concerns that a child, young person or vulnerable adult might be at risk of significant harm to Social Services/the appropriate agencies as agreed with the LSCB.

1.10 The ULSU Group will refer any concerns for a member's immediate welfare to the University's Student Wellbeing Centre or the emergency services under the organisation's duty of care responsibility.



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2. Definition

2.1 Throughout this document, reference is made to 'children and young people'. This term signifies those under the age of 18.

2.2 This policy also refers to adults who are vulnerable to abuse. This term is used to mean a person (whether a student, staff member or visitor) aged 18 or over, who has a condition of the following type: (please note that a more detailed description is available in the Vulnerable Groups Act 2006)

- a) A substantial learning or physical disability,
- b) A physical or mental illness or mental disorder, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or,
- c) A significant reduction in physical or mental capacity.

2.3 The University of Lincoln Students' Union recognises the following as definitions of abuse:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse causes harm to a child, vulnerable adult or young person. It may involve assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, and misuse of medication restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions. It may be done deliberately or recklessly or be the result of a deliberate failure to prevent injury occurring.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent or severe failure to meet a child, vulnerable adult or young person's basic physical and/or psychological need. It can result in serious impairment of the child or young person's health or development.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves a child, vulnerable adult or young person being forced or coerced into participating in or watching sexual activity, looking at or being involved in the production of pornographic materials, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. It is not necessary for a child, vulnerable adult or young person to be aware that the activity is sexual, and the apparent consent of the child, vulnerable adult or young person is irrelevant.

Psychological Abuse

Psychological abuse occurs where there is persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection. It causes severe and adverse effects on the child, vulnerable adult or young person's behaviour and emotional condition, resulting in low self-worth. Some level of psychological abuse is present in all forms of abuse.

Financial/Material Abuse

Financial/material abuse occurs when money and/or objects are unreasonably denied to someone who is dependent, money and/or objects may be stolen, misused or information withheld about welfare benefits.

Self-neglect

Self-neglect occurs when an individual neglects to care for their own health, hygiene and/or surroundings. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

2.4 Throughout this document, reference is also made to members of the 'ULSU Group'. This term is used to mean current University of Lincoln students who have opted-in as a member of the Students' Union, as well as students in a position of responsibility. Students in positions of responsibility includes the following roles:

- a) SU Volunteers
- b) Student Staff
- c) Campaigns Officers



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- d) Activities/ Campaigns Committee Members
- e) Student Trustees
- f) Student Representatives

2.5 The University of Lincoln Students' Union recognises the following as definitions of wellbeing concerns:

- Self-harm (eg: Fresh cut marks on skin)
- Suicidal ideation (eg: Voicing the idea of attempting suicide and making comments such as "no one would miss me if I wasn't here")
- Strong opinions not previously voiced (eg: comments about feeling sad or low and 'out of character' comments and dialogue)
- Sudden or gradual change in appearance and/or behaviour
- Impulsive and risk-taking behaviour, such as continuous substance misuse and gambling behaviour

Please note that the examples given above are not an exhaustive list and are provided for illustrative purposes only.

3. Designated Staff with Responsibility for Safeguarding

3.1 All staff and students within the ULSU Group are expected to adhere to the ULSU Safeguarding Policy and report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the Chief Executive.

3.2 The Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive is the designated senior member of staff with lead responsibility for child protection and the protection of vulnerable adults. This responsibility entails raising awareness of welfare issues within the University of Lincoln Students' Union, as well as the promotion of a safe environment within all ULSU venues.

It is within the Chief Executive's remit to ensure that all staff receive training in child and vulnerable adult protection matters and will facilitate refresher training at least every two years.

As the Designated Safeguarding Officer, the Chief Executive is also responsible for:

- a) Oversight of the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies as agreed with LSCB,
- b) Provision of advice and support to staff and students on issues relating to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- c) Maintaining a proper record of any child or vulnerable adult protection referral, complaint or concern (even where that concern does not lead to a formal referral);
- d) Ensuring that parents of children, vulnerable adults or young people within the University of Lincoln Students' Union are aware of the ULSU Group's Safeguarding Procedure;
- e) Liaison with the LSCB and other appropriate agencies;
- f) Liaison with organisations who refer children, young people or vulnerable adults to the University of Lincoln Students' Union to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made;
- g) Liaison with employers and training organisations that receive children, young people or vulnerable adults from the ULSU Group on placements, to ensure that the appropriate safeguarding measures are in place;
- h) Ensuring that staff receive basic training in safeguarding issues, and are aware of the ULSU Group protection policies and procedures;



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- i) Ensuring that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place for the management of contractors on ULSU Group premises;
- j) Ensuring that recruitment and selection policies for staff and students are adhered to and reviewed on an annual basis.

Please note that it is the discretion of the Chief Executive to delegate safeguarding responsibilities to their nominated Deputy, however the Chief Executive shall always maintain oversight of safeguarding operations.

4. Procedures for Dealing with the Disclosure of Abuse and Reporting Concerns

4.1 If a child, young person or vulnerable adult tells a member of staff or a student volunteer about possible abuse, they should:

- a) Listen carefully and stay calm,
- b) Do not interview the child, young person or vulnerable adult, but question normally and without pressure in order to be sure that you understand what the person is telling you. It is important not to ask leading questions;
- c) Do not put words into the person's mouth;
- d) Reassure the person that by telling you, they have done the right thing and try to ensure immediate safety;
- e) Inform the person that you must pass the information on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told. Inform them of to whom you will report the matter and do not offer confidentiality;
- f) Note the main points carefully for your detailed record;
- g) Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the child, young person or vulnerable adult said, did and your questions etc.

4.2. Staff and student volunteers should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves but should report them immediately to the Chief Executive.

4.3 The Chief Executive will assess the level of risk and take action, consulting with colleagues and the Local Safeguarding Children Board ('LSCB') as appropriate. Where the allegation is considered to be either a potential criminal act or indicates that the child, young person or vulnerable adult has suffered, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm; the matter should be reported immediately to the LSCB. This is a 24-hour responsibility.

4.4 A report shall be submitted by the Chief Executive within 14 working days of the disclosure being made; this report shall outline the initial assessment and progress. The Chief Executive will also provide an annual report to the Board of Trustees in relation to all reported safeguarding concerns.

5. Procedures for Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Members of Staff or students

These procedures apply to all staff, whether academic, administrative, management or support, as well as to any student volunteers working in the ULSU Group.

5.1 Allegations against members of staff or students

The ULSU Group recognises that an allegation of abuse made against a staff member or student may be made for a variety of reasons, and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. It is



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imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind, and investigations are thorough and not subject to delay.

The ULSU Group recognises that the Children Act 1989 states that the welfare of the child, vulnerable adult or young person is the paramount concern. It is also recognised that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with a member of staff or student member can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence and career. Therefore, those dealing with such allegations within the ULSU Group will do so with sensitivity, confidentiality and in line with the relevant procedures in place.

5.2 Receiving an Allegation

A member of staff who receives an allegation about another member of staff/student from another student or a child, young person, vulnerable adult or different member of staff should follow the guidelines detailed below, in order to handle the disclosure appropriately.

All allegations should be reported immediately to the Chief Executive, who will obtain written details of the allegation from the person who reported these concerns; these written details should be signed and dated. Where possible information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses should also be recorded.

5.3 Initial Assessment

The Chief Executive will make an initial assessment of the allegation, consulting with colleagues and the Local Safeguarding Children Board ('LSCB'), as appropriate. Where the allegation is considered to be either a potential criminal act or indicates that the child, young person or vulnerable adult has suffered, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the matter should be reported immediately to the LSCB. It is also crucial that this be reported within 24 hours.

It is important that the Chief Executive does not investigate the allegation. The initial assessment should be on the basis of the information received and it shall be at the Chief Executive's discretion to distinguish whether an allegation warrants further investigation.

Under the circumstances of an allegation made against a student member, then the Chief Executive shall inform the relevant University staff members as deemed appropriate.

Where the matter does not require reporting to the local LSCB, other potential outcomes are:

- a) The allegation can be addressed in accordance with the ULSU Group Disciplinary Procedure;
- b) The allegation can be shown to be false because the facts alleged could not possibly be true; therefore, no further action is required.
- c) If in relation to the actions of a student member, the ULSU Student Members Disciplinary may be enacted

5.4 Enquiries and Investigations

Protection enquiries by Social Services or the Police are not to be confused with internal, disciplinary enquiries by the ULSU Group. The ULSU Group may however be able to use the outcome of an external agency's enquiries as part of its own procedures. The statutory agencies, including the Police, have no power to direct the ULSU Group to act in a particular way; however, the ULSU Group should assist these agencies with their immediate enquiries.

The ULSU Group will hold in abeyance its own internal enquiries while the formal police or Social Services investigations proceed; to do otherwise may prejudice the investigation. Any internal enquiries will conform to the existing staff and student ULSU Group Disciplinary Procedures.



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If there is an investigation by an external agency, for example, the Police and the Chief Executive should be involved in and contribute to, the inter-agency strategy discussions. The Chief Executive will be responsible for ensuring that the ULSU Group provides every possible assistance to the investigation. They will ensure that appropriate confidentiality is maintained in connection with the enquiries, in the interests of the member of staff or student about whom the allegation is made. If in relation to a member of staff, the Chief Executive should advise the individual that they should consult with a Trade Union representative.

Subject to objections from the Police or other investigating agency, the Chief Executive should:

- Inform the person making the allegation that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.
- Ensure that the parents/carers of a child or young person making an allegation have been informed that the allegation has been made, and what the likely process will involve. In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to inform the recorded next of kin of a vulnerable adult making an allegation.
- Inform any members of staff against whom the allegation was made of the fact that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.

The Chief Executive will keep a written record of the action taken in connection with the allegation and should consider, with the Deputy CEO, any action under the ULSU Group Disciplinary policies which should be taken - pending the outcome of the full investigation; to safeguard both those who have made the allegation, any others who may potentially be at risk; and the member(s) of staff or student(s) concerned.

5.5 If the matter warrants, during any of the stages under point 5, a report to the Charity Commission by the Chief Executive will be submitted outlining the incident and any other relevant information in order to be complicit with the safeguarding expectations set by the Charity Commission.

6. Duty of Care Responsibility

6.1 The ULSU Group recognises that many of its members will not fall under the definition of a child, young person or vulnerable adult. The ULSU Group nevertheless has a duty of care for all members and should act on any concerns for their immediate welfare as a vital interest.

6.2 If a staff member is concerned that a student is an immediate danger to themselves or others, they should report this concern to the Chief Executive.

6.3 The staff member should inform the student that they are not able to maintain confidentiality due to vital interest.

6.4 Where possible, the Chief Executive, or their nominated deputy will speak with the student and take one of the following actions:

- The student will be referred to The Student Wellbeing Centre for further support. In cases where the student is very distressed, the Student Wellbeing Centre will be called first and a member of the Advice Centre staff shall accompany the student to the Wellbeing Centre or a member of the Wellbeing team will come to collect the student,
- If the student refuses to go to the Student Wellbeing Centre but is considered at risk, the Chief Executive or their nominated deputy will alert the Student Wellbeing Centre;



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- If the student is not deemed to be at risk, the Chief Executive or their nominated deputy will alert the Student Wellbeing Centre that the student has been seen, but no further action outside of the standard Advice Centre procedures shall be taken.

Please note that student volunteers are also able to refer individuals who are considered an immediate risk to the Advice Centre, with the above procedures to be followed as necessary.

- 6.5 If at any point a student is in immediate danger, the member of staff should call the relevant emergency services.

7. PREVENT Duty

As per the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, it is the ULSU Group's legal duty to report any incidences or concerns regarding staff or student members vulnerable to radicalisation. It is therefore the responsibility of the Chief Executive to report these concerns with the necessary authorities.

8. Records

8.1. A record of all safeguarding and duty of care concerns will be kept by the Chief Executive. This will include the date, nature of the concern and the action taken.

8.2 All records will be kept confidentially and securely, with Advice Centre staff, the Deputy Chief Executive and the Chief Executive Officer able to access.

8.3 It is important that documents relating to a disciplinary investigation are retained in a secure place, together with a written record of the outcome and, if disciplinary action is taken, details retained on the member of staff's personal and confidential file, in line with normal Data Protection procedures. Records shall also be kept on student members, should a disciplinary investigation be enacted.

8.4 If a member of staff is dismissed or resigns before the disciplinary process is completed, they should be informed about the University's statutory duty to inform the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

9. Monitoring Effectiveness

Where an allegation has been made against a member of staff, the Chief Executive and the Deputy CEO should, at the conclusion of the investigation, consider whether there are any matters arising from the incident that could lead to the improvement of the ULSU Group's procedures and/or policies and/or which should be drawn to the attention of the LSCB.