

Lancaster University Students' Union

Safeguarding Policy
July 2023

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1. Introduction

Lancaster university Students' Union is committed to the fundamental principle of protecting a person's right to live in safety free from abuse or neglect. This is developed and sustained through a positive culture of vigilance, implementing learned lessons from incidences and best practice whilst working in partnership with statutory agencies, partner services and organisations.

The vision of Lancaster University Students' Union is for Lancaster University to be a place where all our students can feel a sense of belonging and know that their students' union is a positive force for change driven by their collective interests and welfare.

Lancaster Students' Union as a registered charity (Charity Number 1172269) is committed to ensuring that a safe and supportive environment exists for all Trustees, staff, volunteers, students, and visitors to the Union. The work of the Union may include children, young people, or adults whose involvement and input to the Union is welcomed, encouraged, and appreciated.

We are here to help everyone have successful learning experiences by being a force for positive change, supporting wellbeing, and offering opportunities for a fulfilling student life.

We recognise that to provide a safe and supportive environment we must place wellbeing and safeguarding at the heart of all our actions and thoughts. We are committed to working together with the University, statutory services, and wider partners to ensure safeguarding remains a priority in the delivery of our services.

Above all, we are here to make sure you get all the support you need while you're at Lancaster. We are here to help with all aspects of student life. We are not just about helping you with your courses, exams, disciplinaries and budgeting, but we are here to help promote your wellbeing and good mental health so you can stay on track to achieve your full potential.

This policy and the supporting procedures seek to ensure that Lancaster Students' Union undertakes its responsibilities regarding the safeguarding of children and adult students. This policy establishes a framework to support all those who encounter the Students' Union, protect them from abuse and maltreatment of any kind and clarifies the organisation's expectations.

Vice- Chair
Amanda Chetwynd

Chief Executive Officer
Misbah Ashraf

2. Scope and Purpose of the Policy

This policy and the associated procedures seek to ensure that Lancaster University Students' Union (hereafter referred to as the Students' Union) undertakes its responsibilities to safeguard people consistently and effectively.

It establishes a framework to support all those who come into contact with the Students' Union in order protect them from abuse and maltreatment of any kind. It clarifies the organisation's expectations of all individuals working for and with the Students' Union including trustees, employees (including temporary staff), volunteers working for or delivering services on behalf of the Students' Union to students and visitors to the Union.

The Students' Union understands its [Common Law Duty of Care and Responsibilities under HSE](#) to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of people that are involved in any activity or interaction for which the Students' Union is responsible.

The Students' Union approach to safeguarding people will operate in line with the key principles of the European Convention of Human Rights, the Human Rights Act 1998, and Equality Act 2010 namely:

- Everyone has the right to live their lives free from coercion, intimidation, oppression and physical, sexual, emotional, or mental harm.
- Everyone has the right to a family life and privacy.
- Everyone has a right to confidentiality in respect of personal information, where this does not infringe the rights of other people.
- Everyone has the right to receive full and comprehensive information to allow them to make informed choices about their own circumstances.
- Everyone has the right to the protection of the law and full access to the judicial process and criminal justice system.

Putting these principles into practice means the Students' Union is committed to the principle that protecting a person at risk of abuse or neglect should be everyone's paramount concern.

All the Students' Union trustees, employees (including temporary staff), volunteers working for or delivering services on behalf of the Students' Union to students and visitors to the Union have an ethical and professional duty of care to act if they:

- witness abuse
- receive information about abuse, suspected abuse or concerns about the care or treatment of a person at risk of abuse or neglect, or
- have concerns or suspicions about possible abuse or inappropriate care.

The Adult & Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures of Lancaster City Council including criminal investigations override other organisational procedures such as disciplinary, complaints, investigations etc.

The Students' Union Safeguarding Statement

Safeguarding is Everyone's business – Lancaster University Students' Union is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children and adults and expects all Trustees, staff, and volunteers to share this commitment.

The Students' Union Modern Slavery Statement

The Students' Union has a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery and is committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all its business dealings and relationships and to implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to ensure modern slavery is not taking place anywhere in its own business or in any of its supply chains.

3. Breach of Policy and Procedures

For the Students' Union trustees and employees, failure to adhere to this policy and associated procedures could lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal. For suppliers or agency staff their relationship with the Students' Union may be terminated. Student volunteers may also be subject to action by the university.

4. Definitions

An adult is a person who is aged 18 and over and a child is a person who is under the age of 18.

Safeguarding Children and promoting the welfare of children and families is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Safeguarding Adults means protecting and adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

An adult at risk of abuse or neglect as outlined in legislation¹ is an adult who:

- a. is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect;
- b. has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs); and
- c. as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect or the risk of it

If the adult fits the above criteria the local authority is required by law to conduct enquiries or to ensure that enquiries are made, these are referred to as '**Statutory Safeguarding Enquiries**' outlined in Section 42 of the Care Act.

Vulnerable Adult may include people with learning disabilities, mental health issues and people with a physical disability or impairment. It may also include adult victims of domestic abuse, self-neglect, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, hate crime, honour-based violence, and anti-social abuse behaviour.

An adult's need for additional support to protect themselves may be increased when complicated by additional factors, such as, controlling, and coercive behaviour, physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, drug, or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, or poverty or homelessness and it is important to note that vulnerability can fluctuate.

Many adults may not realise that they are being abused and/or exploited, particularly where there is an abuse of power, a dependency, a relationship, or a reluctance to assert themselves for fear of making the situation worse.

Abuse is the violation of a person's human, civil or legal rights by another person or persons. Abuse may be a single act, repeated acts and/or multiple acts. It may be physical, verbal, emotional or psychological. It may be perpetrated as a result of deliberate intent, negligence, or ignorance.

Abuse may be an Act of Omission: (failing to act) or neglect. Abuse may involve the person at risk of abuse or neglect being persuaded or forced to enter into a financial or sexual arrangement to which they have not, or cannot, understand or consent.

An abuser may be anyone who has contact with the person at risk of abuse or neglect. This may be a family member, carer, friend, professional staff, support staff, Adult Placement Carer, neighbour, volunteers, people in a position of trust, another service user.

¹ Care Act 2014

Local authorities will sometimes decide to make safeguarding enquiries for an adult who does not fit the Section 42 criteria but is vulnerable. These enquiries are not required by law and are often referred to as '**Non-Statutory Safeguarding Enquiries**'.

5. The Rights of Individuals

People who work for or on behalf of the Students' Union or come into contact with our services will be respected with regards their privacy, dignity, and independence.

The Students' Union recognises that an individual's right to an independent life may sometimes include exposure to risk. In all situations of identified risk the Students' Union employees will assess, manage, review, and minimise harmful situations.

The Student's Union will take account of the 'Six Key Principles'² that underpin all adult safeguarding work, namely:

- **Empowerment:** people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- **Prevention:** It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality:** The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection:** Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership:** Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability:** Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

In addition, the Students' Union will take account of what children have said they want from an effective safeguarding system³, namely:

- **Vigilance:** to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- **Understanding and Action:** to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon
- **Stability:** to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- **Respect:** to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- **Information and Engagement:** to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns, and plans

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

- **Explanation:** to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- **Support:** to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- **Advocacy:** to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views
- **Protection:** to be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination and the right to special protection and help if a refugee.

6. Safeguarding Governance: Roles and Responsibilities

The Students' Union is committed to providing support to all those involved with the organisation. A clear structure of safeguarding accountability supports everyone to understand their individual and collective responsibilities for safeguarding people.

As a registered charity the Students' Union will ensure it has arrangements in place to fulfil its commitment and duties to safeguarding adults and children in accordance with legislation and statutory guidance.

All trustees, employees, officers, and volunteers have a responsibility to read the Students' Union Safeguarding Procedures.

Board of Trustees

Trustees play a vital role in ensuring that they are legally compliant in order to manage the charity's resources effectively and provide a long-term vision and protect the charity's reputation and values. In order to fulfil these responsibilities, the Board of Trustees may delegate some or all of these responsibilities to the Governance Sub Committee.

Trustees are responsible for:

- approving all safeguarding policies and supporting procedures
- ensuring adequate resources are available for effective safeguarding practices and training
- ensuring effective reporting and auditing processes are in place and that the same are regularly reviewed
- receiving regular safeguarding reports from the CEO/Senior Management Team
- developing a culture within the organisation that promotes effective safeguarding practices

Governance Sub Committee

The role of the committee includes but is not limited to:

- Receiving and reviewing safeguarding data (the incident log) and agree improvement plans in response to any patterns or trends identified, reporting risk findings to the Board
- Ensuring that key learning and safeguarding good practice from within the Students' Union is rolled out consistently across the organisation
- Reviewing and making recommendations to the Board on the changes to safeguarding policies and procedures on an annual basis.
- Regularly reviewing and make recommendations to the Executive Team and Board on the safeguarding training strategy
- Monitoring and setting safeguarding communication plans to promote a safer culture of vigilance
- The identification and management of safeguarding risks ensuring that these are reflected on the safeguarding risk register
- Monitoring of any variations in response to safeguarding concerns across the organisation
- Ensuring learning is cascaded throughout the organisation in relation to serious and untoward incidents at the highest levels in the organisation to prevent reputational damage and ensure robustness of systems.
- Ensuring that best safeguarding practice from across the sector and wider is adopted at by the Students' Union where applicable.
- Acting as in internal regulatory board for safeguarding practices across the organisation
- Preparing and submitting quarterly reports to the board together with an overarching annual report

Lead Trustee for Safeguarding

The Board of Trustees Vice-Chair will hold lead responsibility for safeguarding however, this does not remove the collective responsibility of the whole Board.

The Lead Trustee for Safeguarding is responsible for:

- Championing safeguarding issues within LUSU
- Encouraging all Trustees to develop their understanding of the Board's collective safeguarding responsibilities, assisting the Board to perform their statutory functions and responsibilities
- Meet regularly with the DSL (and/or Deputy DSL's) in order to discuss and have strategic oversight of the effectiveness of the organisation's safeguarding policies and practices
- Oversee all safeguarding allegations against staff in conjunction with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), HR Manager and CEO.
- Provide an escalation point of contact for staff or volunteers in the event of a complaint about the DSL lack of action in respect of safeguarding concerns

- Provide the Board with regular reports on the effectiveness of the organisation's safeguarding policies and practices including a strategic overview of safeguarding concerns

The Students' Union CEO and Senior Team Responsibilities

The Students' Union CEO and Senior Team will ensure a commitment to safeguarding is integral in the delivery of all its services, activities, events, and contracts. They will assist in the safer recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers. The CEO and Management Team will ensure that:

- Safeguarding and a culture of vigilance is promoted and embedded in all areas of the organisation including with the Students' Union partners and contractors
- Clear and effective communication pathways for safeguarding are shared with all staff and volunteers
- Proposed changes to safeguarding policies and supporting procedures are presented to the Board in accordance with the agreed cycle of policy review
- There is an approved safeguarding training strategy for all Trustees, staff and volunteers
- The Named Designated Safeguarding Lead and any Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads have sufficient resources in order that they may discharge their functions detailed below
- They coordinate the investigation of concerns and allegations against staff members or volunteers
- Safe recruitment and selection practices of staff and volunteers are implemented in accordance with the safer recruitment policy and procedures
- There is a safeguarding annual report to the Board of Trustees

The Students' Union Named Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies

The Named Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies will be provided with the appropriate level of training to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in supporting and guiding staff and volunteers on safeguarding matters. They are responsible for responding to initial concerns or disclosures. The Named Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies are responsible for:

- Providing ready and accessible support and guidance to all staff on safeguarding matters.
- Managing all safeguarding reports / logs
- Reporting safeguarding concerns to the relevant statutory services
- Ensuring accurate records for all safeguard concerns
- Undertaking case management and reviews of serious incidents
- Supporting the quality and review function for all safeguarding concerns
- Supporting the implementation and auditing of policy and strategy in relation to safeguarding

- Ensuring that serious incidents relating to safeguarding are reported immediately and managed effectively
- Ensuring all safeguarding reports are kept securely and in line with all data protection requirements
- Communicating safeguarding updates across the organisation
- Supporting the delivery of safeguarding refresher training

The named DSL will also have lead responsibility for managing safeguarding allegations against employees and act as a liaison for statutory services during any criminal or safeguarding investigations.

They will work with all appropriate governance bodies to inform of serious or untoward safeguarding incidents as appropriate.

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Christopher Cottam c.cottam1@lancaster.ac.uk Tel: 07376427552
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Vicki Greenwood su.safeguarding@lancaster.ac.uk Tel: 01524 593125
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Misbah Ashraf (CEO) misbah.ashraf@lancaster.ac.uk Tel: 07930447699

Employees, Officers, and volunteers

All have a shared responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults and children. Through the provision of regular training, they will know how to recognise, respond to, report, and record any safeguarding concerns. In an emergency employees and volunteers will be expected to report urgent concerns direct to the relevant statutory agency.

7. Preventing and Minimising Risk

The Students' Union will strive to minimise risks by:

- Using fair and rigorous recruitment, selection, and induction processes
- Ensuring staffing levels that meet the needs of students and volunteers
- Having effective means of communication that are open and understood by trustees, employees, secondees, officers, volunteers, suppliers or contractors and students
- Operating a safer culture of vigilance

- Making sure that trustees, employees, secondees, officers, volunteers, suppliers or contractors and students understand what constitutes abuse and what to do if they suspect it
- Encouraging trustees, employees, secondees, officers, volunteers, suppliers or contractors and students to raise concerns and question service delivery
- Listening and responding to trustees, employees, secondees, officers, volunteers, suppliers or contractors and students who raise questions about service delivery
- Discussing incidents or support issues routinely and openly with trustees, employees, secondees, officers, volunteers, suppliers or contractors and students
- Having efficient safeguarding recording and reporting systems in place, that are used and useful
- Recording complaints and concerns and responding to them constructively
- Routinely reviewing apparently isolated incidents to see if they reflect wider problems in service delivery
- Having clear policies and procedures that trustees, employees, secondees, officers, volunteers, suppliers or contractors and students understand and use
- Ensuring that all trustees, employees, secondees, officers, volunteers, suppliers, or contractors receive training and, through supervision and monitoring of their work, develop their practice
- Addressing poor practice and setting realistic practice standards.
- Implementing robust monitoring and review systems
- Working constructively and collaboratively with the University, statutory bodies, other agencies, and the law
- Supporting the prosecution of criminal acts as a deterrent to potential abusers
- Referring people to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Employees, Officers, volunteers, suppliers, or contractors will strive to minimise risks by:

- Working with each other and students in an empowering way that respects their autonomy and civil rights to self-determination.
- Understanding what constitutes vulnerability and abuse and what to do if they suspect abuse.
- Taking immediate action when recognising or suspecting signs of abuse.
- Taking their responsibilities under the duty of care seriously.
- Discussing any support issues and concerns promptly with line managers and/or with an appropriate person.
- Questioning practices that may be harmful or abusive and taking further action e.g., reporting concerns, whistleblowing etc.
- Taking part in training and skills development.
- Giving and receiving feedback from colleagues in developing a learning and preventative culture.

8. Information Sharing

The Data Protection Act 2018 together with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR) place greater significance on organisations being transparent and accountable in relation to their use of data. All organisations handling personal data need to have comprehensive and proportionate arrangements in place for collecting, storing, and sharing information.

Trustees, employees, officers, volunteers, suppliers or contractors and students must have due regard to the relevant data protection principles which allow them to share personal information.

Information which is relevant to safeguarding will often be data which is considered 'special category personal data', meaning it is sensitive and personal.

Where trustees, employees, officers, volunteers, suppliers or contractors and students need to share 'special category personal data', they should be aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 includes, 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk', as a condition that allows you to share information without consent.

Information can be shared legally without consent, if you are unable to, or cannot be reasonably expected to gain consent from the individual or if gaining consent could place a child or individual at risk of harm.

Relevant personal information can be shared lawfully if it is to keep a child or individual safe from neglect, physical, emotional, or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental, or emotional wellbeing.

The Students' Union will also refer to the Pan-Lancashire local [CSAP/LSAB](#) multi-agency information sharing agreements and protocols for further guidance.

9. Reporting a Safeguarding Concern or Disclosure

Trustees, employees, officers, volunteers, suppliers or contractors and students have a duty to raise concerns about a person who is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, without prejudicing their positions.

All have a duty under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 to report any suspicion or allegation of abuse, or if they have reason to believe someone is at risk of abuse.

Referrals of suspected abuse or allegations of abuse regarding a child or adult should be made in accordance with the [Students' Union Safeguarding Procedures](#) document.

10. Whistleblowing

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 introduced protection for workers from reprisals for disclosing information in the public interest. It emphasises the importance that the role 'whistleblowing' can play in deterring and detecting malpractice and abuse of children and adults at risk.

The Students' Union will promote practical arrangements for whistleblowing to enable its trustees, employees, and volunteers to voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Any person who uses the 'whistleblowing' policy and procedure will be made aware that their employment rights are protected.

Trustees, employees, secondees, officers, volunteers, suppliers or contractors and students will be supported in this individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children, and vulnerable adults may be at risk.

The Students' Union will:

- ☐ Ensure it has appropriate whistleblowing procedures in place.
- ☐ Ensure that it has clear procedures for dealing with allegations against trustees, employees, officers, or volunteers.
- ☐ Encourage and support trustees, employees, secondees, officers, volunteers, suppliers or contractors and students to report any behaviour by colleagues or professionals that raises concern regardless of source.

11. Safer Recruitment and Selection

The Students' Union is aware of its responsibility for ensuring that it carries out appropriate safer recruitment practices for all positions within the organisation. The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 requires the Students' Union to carry out specific vetting checks.

The recruitment and selection of all trustees, employees, Officers and volunteers will comply with current legislation and safeguarding guidance. This means that all new positions will clearly state in the vacancy advertisement and candidate information pack the need to undergo all necessary and relevant vetting checks relevant to the role.

For further information refer to the Students' Union [Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures](#) document.

12. Safeguarding Training

The Students' Union believes that training and raising awareness of safeguarding issues, policies and procedures is fundamental to the development and maintenance of a safer environment, safer organisation, and safer staff. We will ensure that appropriate safeguarding training is provided to all trustees, employees, officers, and volunteers to assist them in:

- ☐ preventing abuse
- ☐ recognising abuse
- ☐ recording concerns
- ☐ responding appropriately to allegations of abuse
- ☐ knowing who to tell, and
- ☐ when information can be shared.

Safeguarding training at the appropriate level to the role and responsibilities held will be a mandatory element of all inductions for trustees, employees, officers, and volunteers. Furthermore, safeguarding training will not be regarded as a 'once only' activity, but as an ongoing development of skills and knowledge of safeguarding.

Monitoring the working practice of trustees, employees, officers, and volunteers will be undertaken not less than once per year through the appropriate supervision mechanisms such as appraisals to ensure the requirements of this policy and supporting procedures are being met.

13. Complaints

All complaints that are received about the conduct or behaviour of the Students' Union trustees, employees, officers, or volunteers will be dealt with according to the Students' Union [Complaints Policy and Procedure](#).

If a complaint is identified as a potential safeguarding concern, then the Safeguarding Procedures will be followed.

14. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The Students' Union is committed to striving for excellence in the provision of all its services. We do this by actively monitoring and reviewing the safeguarding systems in place. We use an electronic recording system to capture all relevant

data that supports the evidencing and monitoring of compliance in safeguarding.

This mechanism is a crucial and integral part of the governance of safeguarding. In addition, the Governance Sub Committee will review the safeguarding policy and supporting procedures annually to ensure they continue to reflect legislation and guidance.

15. Linked Students' Union Policies and Procedures

This safeguarding policy and associated safeguarding procedures are linked to the following policies, procedures and documents and therefore should be read in conjunction:

- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Managing Safeguarding Allegations Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures
- Serious Incident Reporting Policy and Procedures
- Training and Development Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

16. Underpinning Legislation and Guidance

The following legislation and guidance underpin the safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices at the Students' Union:

- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Children Act 2004](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Care Act 2014](#)
- [Care and Support - Statutory Guidance on Implementation of the Care Act 2014](#)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners 2018](#)
- [Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees 2018](#)
- [Voyeurism \(Offences\) Act 2019](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022](#)