



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

# **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK POLICY**

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Lead Responsibility	Director of People and Culture
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## **Overview**

This Policy and accompanying online guidance have been drafted to provide information and advice on the University's Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Arrangements

Developed by the Legal Services and Employee Relations Unit, June 2021

## Contents

## Page Number

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1. Policy Statement	2
2. Scope	2
3. Objectives	3
4. Responsibility	3
4.1 Heads of School / Directors	3
4.2 Line Management / Principal Investigators	3
4.3 Employees / Extended Workforce / Students	3
4.4 Legal Services & Employee Relations	4
4.5 Countersignatories	4
4.6 Designated Officer	4
5. Guidance	5
6. Training	6
7. Communication, Co-operation and Co-ordination	6
8. Record Keeping	6
9. Approval and Review	6
10. Consultation	6
11. Relevant Legislation / Guidance / Reference	7
12. Implementation and Monitoring Plans	7
13. Communication and Further Advice	7
14. Document Control	7
15. Document Change Log	8
16. Historical Policies	8

## 1. Policy Statement

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The University interacts and works with children and adults at risk in a wide range of ways. This includes:

- engaging with prospective students;
- inviting young people to summer schools;
- the Queen's Sport summer programmes;
- research;
- Regulated professions i.e. Nursing, Medicine, Social Work, Dentistry etc;
- Clubs and Societies;
- Social Media platforms;
- Widening Participation Pre-entry Programmes;
- provision of childcare services;
- Pathway Programmes.

The University aims to provide a welcoming, stimulating, informative, educational, fun and safe environment which is underpinned by the University's core values. In all interactions with children, and adults at risk, the University recognises that the welfare of those we engage with is paramount.

This Policy and accompanying online guidance sets out the measures the University takes to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk and prevent and protect them from harm.

The University will endeavour to safeguard children and adults at risk by:

- implementing safer recruitment practices which include criminal history checking those in regulated activity;
- managing our work, events and activities with children by ensuring informed parental consent, risk assessment, codes of behaviour are in place;
- providing specific training to those implementing the policy and guidance, to the University's countersignatories and to those working with children and adults at risk;
- adopting a Code of Behaviour and eSafety guidance;
- providing advice for raising concerns and effectively managing these concerns;
- complying with the University's Data Protection Policy.

## 2. Scope

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The University's safeguarding arrangements cover all work/activities/events with children and/or adults at risk (whether the activity is regulated, or not).

A **'child'** is defined by the Children's Act as meaning a person under the age of 18.

An **adult at risk** is defined as a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm, through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- a) Personal characteristics (including, but not limited to, age, disability, special education needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment, or disturbance in the functioning of the mind/brain.)
- b) Life circumstances (including, but not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

The definitions of regulated activity for work with children and vulnerable adults, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act (2012), are available on the Department of Justice website.

These safeguarding arrangements apply to the following groups within the University:

- Line Mangers/Responsible People;
- those registered with AccessNI to countersign applications for enhanced (with barred lists) checks;
- employees and members of the extended workforce (e.g. workers, student workers, freelancers, contractors and volunteers who work with children and/or adults at risk);
- students, including those undertaking professional courses (e.g. Nursing and Midwifery, Social Work, Dentistry, Medical) and/or students undertaking research with children and/or adults at risk.

### 3. Policy Objectives

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The objectives of this policy and guidance are to:

- provide Schools and Directorates with safeguarding arrangements which will promote welfare, prevent harm and protect children and adults at risk from harm;
- ensure compliance with legislative requirements and relevant statutory codes;
- ensure information and training is provided to relevant people;
- ensure all concerns are raised, investigated and referred to the correct statutory agencies.

### 4. Responsibilities

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4.1 **Heads of School / Directors** are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are implemented within areas under their control.

4.2 **Line Management / Responsible People** are responsible for ensuring that:

- relevant safeguarding arrangements are put in for all work/events and activities with children and adults at risk within the area they are responsible for;
- Countersignatories are registered with AccessNI to conduct the required enhanced (with barred lists) criminal history checks;
- the appropriate criminal history checks are completed and disclosures are considered against the relevant policy/procedure;
- those who work with children and adults at risk complete the University's training and are aware of the requirements of the Code of Behaviour (Children and Adults at Risk), the Policy on Photographing, Filming and Audio Recording Children and Adults at Risk, and the eSafety Guidance;
- personal and/or sensitive information is handled in line with the University's Data Protection Policy;
- any concerns raised with them are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer and assistance, as required, is provided to any investigation.

4.3 **Employees, members of the extended workforce and students** who work with children and adults at risk are required to:

- complete any criminal history checks that may be required prior to commencing in regulated activity;

- comply with the University's Code of Behaviour (Children and Adults at Risk), eSafety Guidance, and the Policy on Photographing, Filming and Audio Recording Children and Adults at risk;
- report any concerns they may have, or that have been raised with them, about the welfare of a child or adult at risk;
- undertake safeguarding training prior to starting work with children or adults at risk;
- comply with any safeguarding arrangements that have been put in place;
- comply with the safeguarding arrangements and reporting requirements of any third party organisations that you are working with.

4.4 The **Legal Services and Employee Relations Unit** is responsible for:

- reviewing, updating and communicating the University's safeguarding arrangements;
- ensuring the safeguarding arrangements reflect legislative practice;
- developing appropriate training;
- assisting Schools and Directorates to implement the University's safeguarding arrangements;
- assisting Schools and Directorate to identify regulated activity;
- registering countersignatories with AccessNI;
- auditing compliance with the University's safeguarding arrangements;
- representing the University at AccessNI's Stakeholder Forum.

4.5 **Countersignatories** are required to:

- register with AccessNI;
- provide vetting information to all applicants for a criminal history check;
- ensure the appropriate ID checks are completed prior to the application being submitted;
- advise the line manager/responsible person if disclosures appear on a criminal history check;
- update the register of checks;
- maintain records in line with the University's Data Protection Policy.

4.6 The **Designated Officer/Deputy Designated Officer** is required to:

- develop and update the University's safeguarding arrangements as and when required;
- ensure the arrangements and safeguarding updates are communicated to all relevant people;
- ensure relevant training is available to all those with a responsibility for safeguarding;
- represent the University at AccessNI's Stakeholder Forum;
- inform the relevant statutory authorities if there are any concerns about a child or adult at risk;
- draft referral forms for matters that are raised to the Disclosure and Barring Service for a barring decision;
- ensure appropriate information is available to accompany the referral;
- liaise with Gateway teams and other agencies as appropriate;
- keep relevant people within the organisation informed about any action taken/required;
- maintain case records of all referrals;
- provide advice and guidance in relation to the safeguarding arrangements.

## 5. Guidance

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The accompanying online guidance has been tailored for each user group so they can easily find the information and documents that apply to their circumstances.

### **Line Managers and Responsible People**

Engaging employees and members of the extended workforce

This guidance includes safer recruitment practices, criminal history checks, the requirement for ongoing disclosure of criminal convictions, overseas checks, reviewing disclosures, record keeping and payment.

Recruiting students

This section includes safer recruitment practices, criminal history checks, the requirement for ongoing disclosure of criminal convictions, overseas checks, reviewing disclosures, record keeping and payment.

Managing Work / Activities and Events

This section includes the Code of Behaviour, eSafety Guidance, risk assessment templates, Policy on Photographing, Filming and Audio Recording Children and Adults at Risk, licencing performers, Parental Information and Consent.

Managing External Organisations

The guidance includes a risk assessment template and the Code of Behaviour which all users must comply with.

Training

This sets out the training requirements for line managers, responsible people, countersignatories and those working with children and adults at risk.

### **Countersignatories**

The guidance covers their application to become a countersignatory and how they provide information and request checks on those who will be working in regulated activity.

### **Those working with children and/or adults at risk**

The guidance provides information on criminal history checks and how to apply for a check, the Code of Behaviour, eSafety guidance and raising concerns.

### **Safeguarding Concerns**

The guidance clarifies what constitutes abuse and harm, how to listen to a concern, how to report the concerns, the procedure for handling concerns and referrals to the relevant statutory authorities, including the Disclosure and Barring Service.

### **Governance & Communication**

This section contains the Policy statement and Privacy Notice. It includes details of Responsible People and Countersignatories, provides updated advice and guidance and includes minutes of the Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Group meetings.

## 6. Training

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### Briefing Sessions - Policy and Guidance

Briefing sessions will be arranged for line Managers and responsible people when any changes to the safeguarding policy is approved and circulated.

Faculties/Schools/Directorates can arrange individual training sessions by contacting the Legal Services and Employee Relations Unit.

Copies of the presentation delivered during the briefing sessions is available on the SharePoint site.

### Countersignatory Training

All signatories must attend training with AccessNI. An AccessNI training session for University staff will be facilitated where possible following major changes to this Safeguarding Policy.

### Training for those working with CAR.

All those who work with CAR must complete:

- The University's online safeguarding training which is available here;
- The University's Diversity and Inclusion training (available on QOL) including:
  - Think Difference. Act Differently;
  - Unconscious Bias;
- Training on the Bullying and Harassment Complaints Procedure.

## 7. Communication, Co-operation and Co-ordination

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The Policy and accompanying online guidance must be communicated to Line Managers and Responsible People, Countersignatories and anyone working with children and/or adults at risk for, or on behalf of, the University.

## 8. Record Keeping

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All records associated with the policy will be managed, stored and handled in line with the University's Data Protection Policy.

## 9. Approval and Review

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This Policy and supporting online guidance were approved by the Children and Adult at Risk (CAR) Safeguarding Group and will be reviewed on a three-yearly basis, or as required due to changes in legislation or University requirements.

## 10. Consultation

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The following stakeholders were consulted in the development of this Policy and Guidance:

- The University's Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Group;
- NIACRO;
- UCU;

- Unite;
- NIPSA.

## 11. Relevant Legislation / Guidance / Reference

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The following were referenced during the development of this Policy and Guidance:

- The Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order;
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012;
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978;
- Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (NI) 1979;
- AccessNI's Code of Practice (October 2020);
- The Charity Commission's guidance on reporting requirements (2021);
- NSPCC on line safeguarding advice and guidance (2021);
- VolunteerNow: Keeping Children Safe, Our Duty to Care (2011 & July 2017) and Keeping Adults Safe - Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults a Shared Responsibility (October 2010 & August 2013);
- Department for Innovation Universities & Skills – Safeguarding Children: Guidance for English Higher Education Institutions (2007);
- Volunteer Development Agency: Getting it Right, Standards of Good Practice for Child Protection;
- Aimhigher...Aimsafer: A Framework for Safeguarding Children & Young People in Higher Education Institutions (2005);
- Department of Health: Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI (March 2016 & August 2017), Adult Safeguarding - Prevention and Protection in Partnership (July 2015), Safeguarding Procedure for Nurses (February 2011);
- Ineqe Safeguarding Group: Oxfam GB – Independent Safeguarding Review (2018);
- Department of Education: Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (September 2016, September 2020 and January 2021).

## 12. Implementation, Monitoring & Audit

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The implementation and effectiveness of this Policy and Guidance will be monitored by the Legal Services and Employee Relations Unit. This will be completed by undertaking internal audits, analysis of incident reports, legal cases and claims data.

## 13. Communication and Further Advice

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This Policy and guidance is available on the Safeguarding section of the of the People and Culture SharePoint site.

## 14. Document Control

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This document is maintained, controlled and formally reviewed by the Legal Services and Employee Relations Unit. This document is maintained electronically, and the latest issue will be displayed on the People and Culture SharePoint Site. Printed copies shall be treated as uncontrolled documents.

Comments or queries relating to the contents of this document should be referred to: Legal Service and Employee Relations, e-mail: [legalservices@qub.ac.uk](mailto:legalservices@qub.ac.uk)



## 15. Document Change Log

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The following changes have been made as part of the review of this Policy.

Date	Change	Page or Section
6 May 21	Policy and Guidance revised	All

## 16. Historical Policies

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Date	Version
June 2008	1
May 2010	2
23 September 2015	3
10 November 2015	3.1
6 May 2021	4