SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS GUIDANCE

See Annex 1 for definitions used in this Guidance.

Introduction

**The University has a duty of care to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are subject to sufficient safeguarding to protect them from harm when it conducts its activities.**

**All members of our Community have a role to play to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse or harm.**

**This guidance should be read in conjunction with the University’s Safeguarding Policy and the other relevant policies and procedures as set out therein.**

Purpose

**The purpose of this guidance is to assist all staff and students who may directly or indirectly come into contact with children or vulnerable adults to:**

* **understand their safeguarding responsibilities;**
* **recognise when a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk; and**
* **effectively deal with a Safeguarding Concern relating to a child or vulnerable adult.**

What are your responsibilities?

**Everyone in our Community has a part to play when it comes to safeguarding. We therefore consider that as a Community we have a responsibility to:**

* **look out for each other;**
* **follow any applicable guidance, policies and procedures; and**
* **report any Concerns we may have about another member of the University Community, including children and vulnerable adults.**

**University staff have the following additional responsibilities:**

* **to be familiar with applicable policies and procedures, including this guidance;**
* **to follow the procedures set out within this guidance if any Safeguarding Concerns arise; and**
* **to complete Safeguarding training as required.**

What is a vulnerable adult?

**The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007**[[1]](#footnote-1) **(“the Act”) is there to protect adults who are vulnerable to abuse and/or harm. The Act defines adults at risk as those**

**aged 16 years and over who:**

* **are unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests;**
* **are at risk of harm; and**
* **because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.**

**The Act goes on to say that an adult is at risk of harm if:**

* **another person’s conduct is causing (or is likely to cause) the adult to be harmed, or**
* **the adult is engaging (or is likely to engage) in conduct which causes (or is likely to cause) self-harm.**

What is a child?

**For the purposes of the University’s Safeguarding Policy and this guidance, a child is defined as someone under the age of 18.**

**The**[**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx)**defines a child as everyone under 18 unless, "under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier".**

**In Scotland, the definition of a child can vary depending on the legal context. In terms of Part 1 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995**[[2]](#footnote-2)**, a child is generally defined as someone under the age of 18. Statutory guidance which supports the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 also includes children and young people up to the age of 18.**

**Differing legal definitions can be confusing. However, the priority is always to ensure that a vulnerable child or young person who is or may be at risk of harm is offered support and protection.**

What is abuse or harm and what are the signs that someone is being abused or harmed?

Harm or abuse can take many forms and can include:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * domestic abuse | * sexual abuse | * neglect |
| * online abuse | * physical abuse | * emotional abuse |
| * child sexual exploitation | * female genital mutilation | * child trafficking |
| * grooming | * psychological abuse | * financial abuse |
| * modern-day slavery | * organisational abuse | * discriminatory abuse |

**Some common signs that someone is experiencing harm or abuse are:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * **becoming quiet and withdrawn** | * **being aggressive for no obvious reason** |
|  |  |
| * **unexplained changes in character** | * **unexplained changes in behaviour** |
|  |  |
| * **looking unkempt, dirty or thinner than usual** | * **seeming anxious** |
|  |  |
| * **physical signs such as bruises or other untreated injuries** | * **lacking social skills or not socialising with friends/others** |

**More detailed information about different forms of harm and abuse and how to spot the signs can be found on the following websites:**

* NSPCC - [Child abuse and neglect | NSPCC Learning](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect)
* NSPCC - [Spotting the signs of child abuse | NSPCC](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/spotting-signs-child-abuse/)
* NHS - [Abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults (safeguarding) - NHS (www.nhs.uk)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/abuse-and-neglect-vulnerable-adults/)
* Social Care Institute for Excellence - [Types of abuse: Safeguarding adults | SCIE](https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse)

What to do if you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult

**If you have a concern about a child or an adult who may be vulnerable then you should act upon it without delay. The recommended way to do this is by completing the Raising a Concern Form which can be found here:** [Raising a Concern Form](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=OTEyrjoJKk2Bpl0zS82QGV57-S9OIClDhYOCU3yvUVxUQVZSMDJBQ0swQjhINFlHSzdJQktJUzNNRS4u)

**This will alert the University’s Safeguarding Advisory Group who will consider any concerns you have raised and refer the matter on to the relevant authorities.**

**If you think someone is in immediate danger you should phone the police on 999.**

**If you have a Concern but are not sure what to do, or have questions about reporting a Concern, please email:** [safeguarding@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@dundee.ac.uk)**.**

What to do if someone else discloses harm or abuse to you

If a child or vulnerable adult chooses to disclose to you that they are or have been abused or have witnessed someone else being abused then you should follow the process below.

1. **Listen** carefully to what they have to say and try to stay calm. Let them use their own words.
2. **Be patient** and let them take their time when telling you what has happened. Don’t press them for more information, it is not your role to investigate the situation.
3. **Reassure** them that they have done the right thing in telling you and that what has happened is not their fault. Let them know that you are taking them seriously.
4. **Record** any important information such as when and what they have disclosed to you.
5. **Explain** that you will need to report the abuse to the University’s Safeguarding Advisory Group or the Police if you consider they are in immediate danger or at risk of serious harm. Do not promise to keep the matter confidential.
6. **Report** the abuse without delay so that action can be taken quickly. This can be done by completing the online [Raising a Concern Form](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=OTEyrjoJKk2Bpl0zS82QGV57-S9OIClDhYOCU3yvUVxUQVZSMDJBQ0swQjhINFlHSzdJQktJUzNNRS4u) or by emailing [safeguarding@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@dundee.ac.uk). If you think someone is in immediate danger call the Police on 999.

What the Safeguarding Advisory Group will do when a concern is reported to them

**When a Concern is received by the Safeguarding Advisory Group (the “SAG”) it will be considered in terms of the University’s Safeguarding Protocol.**

**The SAG will review the information that has been reported to them and decide whether or not to refer the concerns that have been raised to a relevant Local Authority.**

**Links to contact details for the Local Authorities that cover our campuses in Dundee and Kirkcaldy are noted below.**

**Dundee**

**Concerns relating to children or vulnerable adults in Dundee fall under the jurisdiction of Dundee Protects -** <https://www.dundeeprotects.co.uk/>.

Details of who to contact can be found here - [Protecting People information sheet (dundeeprotects.co.uk)](https://www.dundeeprotects.co.uk/covid/infosheet.pdf)

**Fife**

Concerns relating to children or vulnerable adults in Fife are covered by Fife Adult and Child Protection.

Details of who to contact can be found here - [Adult Support and Protection | Fife Council](https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/health-and-social-care2/help-for-adults-and-older-people/adult-support-and-protection)

Annex 1

**Definitions used in this Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Guidance**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Community** | **means the University Community** |
| **Concern** | **means a Safeguarding Concern** |
| **Safeguarding Concern** | **means a concern arising as a consequence of:**   * **an individual being subject to or being at risk of abuse, neglect or harm;** * **an individual being or at risk of being radicalised;** * **an individual having abused, neglected or caused harm to someone else; or** * **an individual’s behaviour being considered to be a Serious Issue.**   **This includes, but is not limited to, sexual exploitation, violence, bullying and harassment.** |
| **University Community** | **means staff, students, associate staff, associate students, visitors, contractors, research participants and other members of the public who come into contact with the University and its work.** |

1. [Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 (legislation.gov.uk)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2007/10/section/3) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (legislation.gov.uk)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/36/part/I) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)