

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS POLICY

REASONS FOR HAVING THIS POLICY

All staff, Sabbs and volunteers, may come in to contact with students who are defined as vulnerable or at risk. Often the work involving these students will require prolonged contact. It is essential that the union reassures these students that when they use the University of Cambridge Students' Union (Cambridge SU) service they will be safe, that any details they reveal will be kept confidential, and that they can trust the union.

Equally it is essential that proper guidelines are in place to ensure that staff deal appropriately with situations in which vulnerable adults may be at risk. While student confidentiality is paramount, it is not absolute and there are circumstances under which it is appropriate Cambridge SU to breach confidentiality. The decision to breach confidentiality must be made by The CEO or a Senior Manager.

DEFINITIONS

There are two terms in common use to describe adults that may fall under the scope of this policy. These are 'adult at risk' and 'vulnerable adult'.

The term 'adult at risk' has been used to replace 'vulnerable adult' in newer guidance because it focuses on the situation causing the risk rather than the characteristics of the adult concerned.

Department of Health No Secrets Guidance (2000) defined a Vulnerable Adult as:

- An adult who is or who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is, or may be unable to take care of themselves or to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

The Law Commission Report into Adult Social Care (2011) defined an Adult at Risk as a person who:

- Must appear to have health or social care needs, including carers (irrespective of whether or not those needs are being met by services).
- Must appear to be at risk of harm, rather than significant harm set out in the existing statutory guidance.
- Must appear to be unable to safeguard themselves from harm as a direct result of their health or social care needs.

In practice, it is likely that the distinction between the two definitions will be irrelevant and therefore our policy is intended to cover any adult who may come

under either definition, or both. The definitions are far-reaching and may encompass many of our students.

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND SCREENING OF STAFF

Anyone with a conviction for a sexual offence against a child or vulnerable adult, whenever it was committed, is not considered suitable to work within the union and must not be taken on by Cambridge SU.

Any other convictions must be considered on an individual basis.

Cambridge SU must have sound recruitment practices in place to ensure that anyone considered to be a risk to adults at risk does not enter the union service. The following precautions will reduce this risk:

- Anyone applying to work or volunteer for Cambridge SU will be interviewed and asked to provide two references from former employers.
- If an applicant is unable to provide employer references, they will be asked to provide references from alternative sources, such as volunteer managers, community leaders or other appropriate people.
- Anyone who is selected for interview or to begin training with Cambridge SU will be asked to disclose details of any unspent convictions.
- Cambridge SU must get an enhanced DBS check for all eligible roles.

Staff members whose work is specifically targeted at legally defined vulnerable adults will have an enhanced DBS and barred list check.

In addition, the following roles will be DBS checked:

- SUAS Advisers
- Those with direct line management responsibilities for the above.
- Any staff member whose role changes to incorporate any of the above conditions.

Re-screening will take place every three years.

PROCEDURE WHERE AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE IS MADE AGAINST A THIRD PARTY

The person responsible for dealing with allegations of abuse against an adult at risk is the CEO, if they are not available, the deputy is the Welfare and Advice Manager

If an allegation of abuse is made by an adult at risk or a third party:

- The staff member must make a note of the time and date that the allegation was made, who made the allegation, and the nature of the allegation.

- The staff member must record only the facts, preferably in the language / words used by the person making the allegation, and must not ask any questions which may seem to be 'leading'.
- The staff member must report the allegation to their line manager immediately and the person making the allegation must be made aware that this will happen. The person making the allegation must also be made aware that whilst the manager will not automatically report the allegation to the authorities, this is a possibility.
- Cambridge SU must not participate in any form of 'investigation', i.e. must not start a process of 'fact finding'.
- In the majority of cases Cambridge SU should offer to support the person making the allegation and make them aware of the options that are available to them, i.e. contacting the local social services or police. In some cases, a SUAS adviser may be able to help them make initial contact with these agencies.
- If there is a clear and immediate danger to an individual, then priority must be given to the safety of that individual, which may include reporting the allegation without their consent, thus breaching confidentiality.
- If a client or third party makes an allegation of abuse, and it becomes clear to Cambridge SU that no further action has been taken since the allegation, then the union may decide to take steps to report the allegation without consent, thus breaching client confidentiality.

PROCEDURE WHERE ABUSE IS SUSPECTED

- Ensure that all the information that the staff member receives is collected and recorded. This information may help a student identify whether they are being abused.
- Ensure that staff members discuss their concerns with the Welfare and Advice Manager or equivalent.
- Be clear why you think the student may be an adult at risk or vulnerable adult.
- Be clear who the student is if they are accompanied by a third party.
- Find out whether the student is supported by other agencies e.g. Social Worker.
- If there is a clear and immediate danger to an individual, then priority must be given to the safety of that individual, which may include reporting the allegation without their consent, thus breaching client confidentiality.

SAFEGUARDING BEHAVIOURS

There will be times when staff are required to have prolonged contact with an adult at risk or vulnerable adult. Cambridge SU will ensure that all students are protected from any form of harm or abuse and to minimise the risk of staff having allegations made against them. The steps taken to do this will apply to working with all students, but for clarity, examples specific to adults at risk or vulnerable adults are listed here:

No member of the Cambridge SU staff will:

- visit an adult at risk or vulnerable adult in their home unless on an official pre-arranged visit
- transport an adult at risk or vulnerable adult alone in their car unless prior arrangements have been made with a senior manager or in case of a medical emergency
- make any comments with sexual overtones, even in humour, or partake in any 'horse play' with any adult
- allow an adult at risk or vulnerable adult into their home
- engage in rough physical games - apart from structured sports activities which may be part of a community event etc.
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allow an adult at risk or vulnerable adult to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments about or to an adult at risk or vulnerable adult, even in fun
- let allegations made by an adult at risk or vulnerable adult to go un-investigated
- do things of a personal nature for an adult at risk or vulnerable adult that they can do for themselves
- lend money to or borrow money or possessions from an adult at risk or vulnerable adult
- agree to make any purchases, or undertake any financial transactions, on behalf of the adult at risk or vulnerable adult

In addition:

- If a staff member has any concerns about visiting an adult at risk on their own, then steps should be taken to ensure another staff member attends.
- Anyone undertaking home visits must have been DBS screened.

TRAINING

Cambridge SU will ensure that appropriate safeguarding training is available to all staff and volunteers. This may be in the form of:

- policy awareness sessions delivered internally
- briefing sessions by Local Authority or other relevant authority

- attendance at training arranged through partner agencies
- additional training.

SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Any new services in development will take account of the need to safeguard vulnerable adults. This may be achieved by:

- Risk assessing proposed activities.
- Agreeing safeguarding measures with partner organisations including information sharing protocols.
- Seeking specialist advice, for example from the local safeguarding vulnerable adults board.

Date of review: June 2021