



Safeguarding of Vulnerable Persons Policy

Introduction

The Graduate Union (GU) fully recognises its responsibility to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults.

This policy applies to all office holders and employees of the Graduate Union, and was developed in collaboration with the University of Cambridge's Childcare Office. It was adopted by the Board of Trustees on 11 July 2017, will be amended as appropriate to meet the demands of future legislation, and in any event, will be reviewed every two years.

The GU acknowledges that, in particular, through their contact with children and direct work with families, all staff and volunteers at the GU have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and in referring them to the Designated Person for Child Protection. Similarly, as a charity that provides welfare related services to members, the GU acknowledges it is likely to encounter vulnerable adults during the course of its work and has a key role in the safeguarding of those people.

This policy sets out how the GU complies with statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding, and how it promotes the welfare of the vulnerable persons with whom it interacts.

The policy has three primary elements:

- 1. Prevention** by creating a supportive environment and maintaining a protective ethos.
- 2. Procedures** for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- 3. Promoting a protective ethos** by ensuring this framework for safeguarding is delivered and enhanced by the actions of those working on behalf of the organisation

1. Prevention

The GU recognises that high self-esteem, confidence and good lines of communication help to protect children and vulnerable adults. The GU will therefore establish and maintain an ethos where all feel safe, are encouraged to talk, and are actively listened to.

The GU will follow 'safer recruitment' procedures to ensure that high standards of protection are maintained, by, among other measures, carrying out background checks where appropriate and assessing any risk identified during the recruitment process.

The GU will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with service users, and will be particularly diligent in acting on these responsibilities in relation to work with vulnerable persons

The GU recognises that, statistically, people with disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. The GU acknowledges that it must safeguard these individuals by being particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

2. Procedures

The GU will implement and maintain procedures for identifying and reporting suspected cases of abuse.

Child Protection Framework

In relation to its work with children, the GU will follow the procedures set by the Local Authority and the Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)* which can be accessed online at www.cambslscb.org.uk.

The designated person for Child Protection within the organization is Rob Richardson, the GU Manager. Sue Davis, Manager of Childcare Services at the University of Cambridge, is also able to act as a designated person on behalf of the GU. In order to provide a safe environment in which suspected cases of abuse against children can be effectively identified and reported, the GU will:

- Ensure it has a Designated Person for Child Protection available while the parent and toddler group is in operation, who has undertaken, as a minimum, safeguarding children designated officer level 3 training.
- Ensure this training is updated every three years.

* LSCBs bring together representatives of each of the main agencies and professionals responsible for helping to protect children from abuse and neglect in a given area. The LSCB is a multi-agency forum set up to agree how the different services and professional groups should cooperate to safeguard children in that area, and for making sure that arrangements work effectively to bring about good outcomes for children.

- Recognise the importance of the role of the Designated Person and ensure they have the time and training to undertake their duties.
- Ensure there are contingency arrangements should the Designated Person not be available (another Designated Person will be).
- Ensure that the Designated Person has access to Social Care at the Local Authority for 'what if' conversations. The Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) is also available.
- Maintain a close working relationship with the University's Childcare Office in order to ensure expertise is shared and sources of support are readily available if required.
- Ensure the Group Worker leading the parent and toddler sessions knows:
 - The name of the Designated Person and their role.
 - How to pass on and record concerns about a child.
 - That they have an individual responsibility for referring child protection concerns to relevant agencies and within the timescales set out in LSCB procedures.

Identifying abuse

In their work with vulnerable persons, any GU employee or volunteer must take responsibility for preventing and identifying abuse.

Safeguarding training will be provided for the Group Worker or any other individual who will be working with children or vulnerable adults from the point of their induction, and the GU will ensure that it is updated every three years at a minimum. Training made available must enable the individual to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity and to respond to these in a timely and appropriate way. These may include:

- Significant changes in behaviour.
- Deterioration in general well-being.
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of abuse or neglect.
- Comments which give cause for concern.
- Any other reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the GU, for example, in a child's home.
- Information from a third party regarding suspicions of abuse Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff or volunteers working with a child or vulnerable adult

Whistleblowing

The organisation has a separate whistle-blowing policy which aims to help and protect both staff and service users by preventing problems from developing and reducing the risks they pose.

All staff and officers have responsibility for expressing concerns about unacceptable practice or behavior.

Allegations of abuse against staff or volunteers

If an allegation is made against a staff member or officer, the following action will be taken:

- The GU will ensure the immediate safety of the individuals with which it is working.
- The GU will follow its own whistleblowing policy if the allegation falls within the areas covered by the policy.
- Staff or volunteers who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not mandatory but may be required in a situation where concerns over safeguarding exist.
- If the matter is a safeguarding case, the GU will seek advice and support from external bodies, such as the LSCB, where appropriate.
- If it is agreed that the matter is not a safeguarding case, the GU will investigate the matter and feed back the outcome of the investigation to relevant authorities.
- The GU will ensure that any disciplinary proceedings against staff relating to safeguarding matters are concluded in full even when the member of staff is no longer working for the GU and that notification of any concerns is made to the relevant authorities and professional bodies and included in references where applicable.

Record keeping

The GU will keep clear, detailed written records of any serious concern raised about a vulnerable person's welfare, noting the date, event and action taken. The GU will ensure all records are kept secure and in locked locations.

If the vulnerable person in question is a child, unless it would place the child at risk of acute harm, parents will be informed that this information has been recorded, where it will be stored and what will happen to it.

Confidentiality and information sharing

The GU will ensure confidentiality and that relevant and proportionate information is shared appropriately and on a 'need to know' basis only. The Designated Person may disclose any information about a vulnerable person to other members of staff on a 'need to know' basis only. The designated person must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share relevant and proportionate information with other agencies in order to safeguard vulnerable people.

If a vulnerable person discloses information that indicates they are or maybe at risk of abuse or neglect to an individual working on behalf of the GU, the staff member or volunteer must be clear that they may have to disclose the information to a third party. The GU will follow the guidance within the LSCB Guidance on the Sharing of Information on Children in Need and in Need of Protection, which can be accessed via the LSCB website (www.cambslscb.org.uk).

3. Promoting a protective ethos

The GU is committed to safeguarding vulnerable persons, and in upholding its responsibilities will create an ethos in which vulnerable persons feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, they are encouraged to talk and are listened to. This will be achieved by:

- Staff, including the Group Worker and the Designated Person/s, being trained regularly to ensure skills and knowledge are up-to-date.
- Staff including the Group Worker and Designated Person/s knowing how to respond to safeguarding concerns.
- Contributing to an inter-agency approach to safeguarding by working effectively and supportively with other agencies, as appropriate.
- Raising the awareness of vulnerable persons and actively promoting self-esteem building, so that individuals have a range of strategies and contacts to ensure their safety.
- Ensuring other relevant policies, such as whistleblowing, are in place.
- Being vigilant regarding any inappropriate behaviour involving staff and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults and ensuring that individuals know the allegations procedure and relevant contacts.
- Staff and volunteers acting as positive role models to vulnerable persons
- In collaboration with the University Childcare Office, monitoring the organisation's safeguarding policy and practice and championing good practice in relation to child protection and safeguarding.
- Ensuring that this policy is annually reviewed.
- Seek training and other opportunities to supplement staff knowledge and capability in relation to safeguarding issues