

# Safeguarding Policy & Procedure

Approved by:	Finance Committee	Date:	17 January 2025
Implementation date:	January 2025		
Review date:	January 2026		
Manager responsible:	Chief Executive		

## Scope

The Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union's safeguarding policy and procedure apply to all aspects of our activity. It will apply to all those involved in The Students' Union, including members, visitors, clients, contractors, consultants, partners, customers and employees.

## Introduction

The Students' Union values and encourages the involvement of students in all its services and activities. Occasionally these students, or the work of these students, may include children, young people or adults at risk, whose involvement and input to The Students' Union is also encouraged and appreciated. Through its safeguarding policy The Students' Union is committed to promoting the wellbeing and enjoyment of everyone involved, and protecting the health, safety and general welfare of all whilst in the company of The Students' Union staff, elected officers or representatives and volunteers.

The Students' Union aims to treat all students fairly and with equality of opportunity, and as a student's age or vulnerable status will not always be evident The Students' Union extends the best practices for dealing with children, young people or adults at risk to all students whilst at the same time acknowledging their independence and autonomy.

## Statement of Intent

Children, young people and adults at risk may be involved with The Students' Union staff, elected officers or representatives and/or volunteers through a variety of services or activities. In promoting this policy The Students' Union is keen to take reasonable steps to:

1. Provide a friendly, secure and comfortable environment for the benefit and enjoyment of all students and visitors taking into consideration the needs of all concerned and our additional duty of care towards children, young people and adults at risk.
2. Promote the safety of children, young people and adults at risk and any students in contact with The Students' Union.
3. Promote the safety and support of staff, elected officers or representatives and volunteers who have contact with the above.

## Definitions

The definitions of 'child', 'young person' and 'adult at risk' used in this policy are as follows:

1. A child: is anyone under 18 (or under 16 if in employment) (Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000)
2. A young person: is anyone between 14 and 18 (Child & Young Persons Act 1933)

3. An adult at risk: is anyone over 18 who i) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs); ii) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and iii) as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it (Care Act 2014)

We do not make assumptions about the level of need or support required for all children, young people or adults at risk, instead we work with facts, information and relevant stakeholders to ensure the spaces we occupy are safe, open and accessible.

## General Principles

The general principles behind this policy are:

1. The fundamental principle, both in law and good practice, is that whenever the interests of a child, young person or adult at risk are involved, their welfare must always be paramount.
2. The Students' Union aims to foster an environment whereby anyone is able to raise any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of any individuals participating in or benefiting from its services and activities and that there will be adequate procedures in place to address these concerns.

## Responsibilities

1. Overall responsibility for implementation of this policy lies with the Chief Executive Officer.
2. It is the responsibility of every Line Manager to implement the policy and ensure staff and volunteers in their area are aware of, and comply with this policy.
3. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for providing adequate provisions for recruitment, selection and ongoing supervision of staff and volunteers that comply with employment law, equality and diversity and selection guidance. Safeguarding and child protection training should be delivered as appropriate, and DBS checks will be required for those who have substantial contact with children, young people and adults at risk. DBS checks will not automatically be required for staff, elected officers or representatives or union volunteers coming into contact with young students or those at risk in the course of normal Union activity.
4. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for all health and safety considerations, including that enhanced duty of care as required for children, young people and adults at risk is acknowledged and incorporated into policies and risk assessments for activities and departments.
5. If you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Chief Executive Officer to request training or further information.

## Safeguarding procedure and code of conduct

### 1. Procedure for raising a safeguarding concern

In line with The Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union's Safeguarding Policy, all union representatives have a duty to raise any safeguarding concerns with an appropriate contact.

This applies in all instances where you have any concern, suspicion or allegation that either a child, young person or adult at risk has been, is being, or is likely to be subjected to harm, abuse or neglect, or is at risk of harming themselves or others.

If you are concerned about the safety or wellbeing of someone (even if you are not sure whether or not there is actually a safeguarding concern), and where there is no imminent risk of danger or harm, then you should contact one of The Students' Union's Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) as soon as possible. They will talk through the situation with you and decide whether or not it is a safeguarding concern and what action, if any, should be taken.

The Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) in the Union are:

- Angela Novell, Lead DSO
- Hayley Rowley, Head of Community
- Kayleigh Hardy, Head of Engagement
- Saranna Chipper-Keating, Head of Advocacy

If a safeguarding concern arises outside of normal working hours, please see the contact details page at the end of this procedure. Where you are concerned that there is an imminent risk of danger or harm you should use the appropriate emergency contacts at the end of this procedure.

## **2. Procedure for handling reports**

Upon receiving a report, a Designated Safeguarding Officer should seek to gather enough information regarding the matter in order to make a judgement as to whether there is a safeguarding concern, and if so, whether there may be a duty to report the matter to external services.

In all instances (including those which do not constitute a direct safeguarding concern), the Designated Safeguarding Officer should seek to ascertain whether there may be assistance which could be offered to anyone associated with the situation, in accordance with the Union's general duty of care to students and other users of Union services (for example, signposting to campus or external support services).

Designated Safeguarding Officers should ensure that a written record of all reports (including a brief summary of the issue and any advice given or action taken) is made using the appropriate reporting tool. Care should be taken to ensure that records are confidential and secure, in accordance with the agreed recording protocols and GDPR requirements. Designated Safeguarding Officers should ensure their regular attendance at safeguarding meetings in order to discuss cases and ensure that a consistent approach to safeguarding issues is maintained across the Union.

## **3. Confidentiality**

Definition and scope:

The Students' Union understands confidentiality to mean that sensitive personal information disclosed to a representative of The Students' Union by any student engaging in activities, societies and events and/or using The Students' Union services shall not be given directly or indirectly to any organisation or individual external to The Students' Union, without that students' expressed consent to disclose such information.

We recognise that occasions may arise where representatives of The Students' Union feel they need to breach confidentiality. An example of such an occasion would be if we felt there was a serious risk of harm, either to the student or to others, such as outlined in the safeguarding policy.

Procedure for breaches of confidentiality:

Where a representative of The Students' Union feels that confidentiality should be breached the following steps must be taken:

1. If there is imminent risk:

Where a representative of The Students' Union feels that there is an immediate danger of harm to an individual or to others, they should use the appropriate emergency contact and then immediately contact a Designated Safeguarding Officer. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will follow the procedure in 2-4 below but will do so retrospectively.

If there is no imminent risk

2. The representative should raise the matter immediately with a Designated Safeguarding Officer and discuss with them why they feel confidentiality should be breached. The Designated Safeguarding Officer should take written notes of this discussion.
3. The Designated Safeguarding Officer is responsible for making a decision on whether confidentiality should be breached in the circumstances and should take a written note of this decision.
4. If the Designated Safeguarding Officer decides that confidentiality is to be breached, then they should take the following steps:
  1. The Designated Safeguarding Officer should contact the Chief Executive of the Students' Union and brief them on the full facts of the case and their decision to breach confidentiality. The Chief Executive can override this decision if they do not feel that the circumstances of the case warrant breaching a student's confidentiality. Both the Designated Safeguarding Officer and the Chief Executive should take written notes of the discussion and decision.
  2. The Designated Safeguarding Officer should take detailed notes accurately recording all conversations, decisions and actions taken in relation to the case. These notes should be stored securely and confidentially.

A student is fully entitled to complain about a decision to breach their confidentiality using The Students' Union Bye-Law 9: Complaints procedure.

## Code of Conduct for union representatives

Some actions, no matter how well intentioned, may be misinterpreted and leave all parties at risk. The following is a quick reference guide to appropriate behaviour when working with children, young people and adults at risk.

Students' Union representatives should:

- Be alert to any potential harm or inappropriate behaviour.
- Always speak to a Designated Safeguarding Officer if they have concerns about an individual's safety - If there is any imminent risk of harm, either to a person or to others, report the risk to the

emergency services (999) first before informing a Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

- Allow time and space for individuals to raise any concerns, letting the person talk and listening carefully without questioning the truth of what the person is saying.
- Try to obtain all the facts and information needed to understand the situation without making any assumptions or judgements about what has happened before starting a formal investigation.
- Respect individuals' rights to privacy but never promise to keep something secret - there will be times when confidentiality must be breached in line with this procedure.
- Undertake a risk assessment prior to any project, activity or event involving children, young people or adults at risk.
- Avoid being alone for substantial periods of time with children, young people and adults at risk. Where one-to-one work is necessary, they should inform another staff member where they are going, with whom and for how long.
- Be aware that physical contact with a child, young person or adult at risk, however well-intentioned, may be misinterpreted. If the touching is in a sporting situation, it should be in accordance with the guidelines provided by the appropriate National Governing Body.
- Carefully plan and consider sleeping arrangements before any residential activities. Whilst it is recommended that separate accommodation be provided for different genders, consideration must also be given to ensuring that an inclusive environment is provided for all and that the needs and preferences of any transgender and non-binary participants are met.
- Be aware that 'abuse of a position of trust' is a serious issue and ensure that they do not take advantage of any power imbalance arising from their position as a member of staff, elected officer, trustee, representative or union volunteer.
- Never show favouritism to or become too closely associated with any individuals participating in or benefiting from The Students' Union's services and activities.
- Never permit abusive behaviour by others or engage in it themselves (e.g. ridiculing, bullying and harassing) or allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching of a kind that could be misunderstood.
- Ensure that all contact with any individuals participating in or benefiting from The Students' Union's services and activities is conducted in an appropriate setting and only use official Union or individual work email or social media channels - never use personal accounts.
- Adhere to the safeguarding policies and procedures of any external organisations they are working with.

## Contact Details

Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer (LDSO)

Name: Angela Novell, Chief Executive Officer

Email: [angela.novell@thesu.org.uk](mailto:angela.novell@thesu.org.uk)

Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

Name: Hayley Rowley, Head of Community

Email: [hayley.rowley@thesu.org.uk](mailto:hayley.rowley@thesu.org.uk)

Name: Kayleigh Hardy, Head of Engagement

Email: [k.hardy@thesu.org.uk](mailto:k.hardy@thesu.org.uk)

Name: Saranna Chipper-Keating, Head of Advocacy

Email: [Saranna.chipperkeating@thesu.org.uk](mailto:Saranna.chipperkeating@thesu.org.uk)

## Out of Hours Support

If you require urgent out of hours support, please read the following information:

Situation	Contact
You or anyone else around you is at immediate risk of harm	999
You need immediate medical attention	999
You need medical advice and do not require paramedics	111
You wish to report a crime	101 (remember 999 if the crime is occurring there and then or if it is an emergency)
You have an urgent/ immediate concern and need immediate advice from Campus staff	Safety & Support Team 24/7 - 01326 255874  or  Student Services – 01326 370460
You would like to speak to a Mental Health professional urgently as a result of your own mental health or that of someone else, anytime of day or night.	NHS Mental Health Professional  0800 038 5300
Crisis Support Contracts	<p>Samaritans Call 116 123 or email <a href="mailto:jo@samaritans.org">jo@samaritans.org</a> if you need someone to talk to, who won't judge or tell you what to do.</p> <p>Papyrus Hopeline247 Call 0800 068 4141, text 07860039967, email <a href="mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org">pat@papyrus-uk.org</a> if you are not coping with life and would like confidential suicide prevention advice.</p> <p>Shout Text 85258 for free and confidential text support when you are dealing with suicidal thoughts and need support getting to a calmer place.</p>