

Safeguarding Policy & Procedure

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| Policy Owner: | Head of Student Services |
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Policy Statement

The Royal Agricultural University believes that it is unacceptable for a child, a young person or an adult to experience any form of harm or abuse. Their welfare is paramount and they have the right to protection and support.

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to protect people's health, wellbeing and human rights and enable them to live free from harm, maltreatment, abuse or neglect.

The Royal Agricultural University is predominantly an adult environment; however, it recognises its responsibility to promote and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. Whilst acknowledging that it cannot act "in loco parentis" and that ultimate responsibility will continue to rest with parents and guardians, the University will work in partnership with the individuals themselves, their parents, carers, employers and other agencies as appropriate to promote and safeguard the welfare of individuals and to minimise the risks of harm.

The University has a [whistleblowing procedure](#), which should be followed if anyone has suspicion of wrong-doing by any of the Safeguarding Officers.

Scope

The University's employees, workers, volunteers, apprentices and students are subject to and in scope of this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, a child is defined as any person under the age of 18.

An adult at risk is a person aged 18 years or over, 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 unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Safeguarding concerns may arise as a result of activities associated with the university, or a member of staff, student or volunteer acting on behalf of the university may become aware of safeguarding concerns about an individual, which are not related to the university's activities, nor within the university's control.

As stated above, the Royal Agricultural University is predominantly an adult environment; there are, however, circumstances when children, young people and adults at risk may interact with staff and students of the university in the course of its activities.

These include, but are not limited to:

- teaching, supervision and support of students including use of libraries
- summer schools, school visits, and other activities
- outreach or widening participation activities taking place on or off campus
- student accommodation
- research activities
- public events and conferences
- placements and other professional activities
- field trips, excursions and other volunteering activities

Safeguarding – safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights and enabling them to live free from harm, maltreatment, abuse or neglect.

There are two clear statutory dimensions to safeguarding:

- Safeguarding children (under 18s) and
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults (18 and over)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Child protection is defined as being part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It is the work done to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Safeguarding as it refers to adults is defined as those with care and support needs, who as a result of those needs may not be able to protect themselves from the risk or experience of abuse, harm and/or neglect. It encompasses the need to protect people who may be in vulnerable circumstances, e.g., they may be in hospital or care.

Safeguarding adults means:

- Protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
- People and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect
- People and organisations making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any actions

- Recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or wellbeing
- Safeguarding children and adults could also include protection from involvement with crime and/or terrorism.

The following groups are considered as part of this Safeguarding Procedure:

- Children (people under the age of 16)
- Young people (people aged 16 or 17)
- Adults at risk (adults as defined by section 59 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and/or those persons aged over 18 who by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness are (or may be) unable to take care of themselves or are (or may be) unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation, e.g. adults who have to rely on others for tasks of daily living or may be unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation)
- Those at risk of radicalisation. People who are vulnerable in some way are most at risk of radicalisation into an extremist ideology which may lead an individual to commit or support terrorist acts.

“**DBS**” – the Disclosure and Barring Service. This statutory body has been created out of the merger of the Criminal Records Bureau and the independent Safeguarding Authority.

Student – any student registered on a programme of study with the University, whatever mode of delivery and location.

Adults with care and support needs

Adults with care and support needs who are at risk of or are experiencing abuse or neglect should always be involved in their safeguarding activity unless there are exceptional circumstances that would increase the risk of abuse. This includes knowing a concern is being raised, being central to all decisions including how they view the risk, and their opinions and desired outcomes from the enquiry must be sought. They must be included throughout the process, invited to meetings wherever appropriate, and at the conclusion a check must be made to establish whether their desired outcomes from the enquiry have been met.

If any adult has substantial difficulty in being involved, and where there is no appropriate person to support them, then the local authority must arrange for an independent advocate to represent them for the purpose of facilitating their involvement.

The adult safeguarding duties under the Care Act 2014 apply to an adult, aged 18 or over, who:

- Has needs for care and supporting (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- Is experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Vulnerable people who may be abused can be older adults who need help from others, adults with a learning disability, adults with physical disabilities, and adults with mental health needs, adults who misuse alcohol or drugs.

Relevant legislation / guidance

The following legislation is relevant to this policy, either because it has influenced its introduction and/or its content:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975
- Children Act 1989
- The Police Act 1997
- Protection of Children Act 1999
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- UK General Data Protection Regulation 2018/Data Protection Act 2018

When safeguarding children, the university's approach will be informed by [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) 2023, which is the statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In particular, it will act to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

The university will follow the six key principles that underpin adult safeguarding, as set out in the [Care Act 2014](#):

Empowerment: People are supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent. “I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.”

Prevention: It is better to take action before harm occurs. “I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.”

Proportionality: The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. “I am sure that the professionals will work in my best interest, as I see them, and they will only get involved as much as needed.”

Protection: To support and protect those in greatest need. “I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want.”

Partnership: Working collaboratively with other agencies. 4 “I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me.”

Accountability: To be transparent about, and responsible for, our safeguarding practices. “I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.”

Procedure

Safeguarding Team Responsibilities

Executive Lead

The Director of Academic Services has specific responsibility for Safeguarding and will be accountable for the institution's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. The Director of Academic Services has specific powers to oversee suspension of students if necessary pending investigations and where a significant risk of harm to a vulnerable individual is considered to exist.

The Executive Lead will:

- Be a member of the senior management of the University. It is not essential that the role holder is a Designated Safeguarding Officer (see below)
- Be accountable for developing, promoting and implementing the institution's Safeguarding Policy and related Procedures and practice
- Ensure there is an appropriate number of staff in place to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities, including at the most senior level
- Ensure procedures are in place for managing: allegations against students and staff; information hearing and safe recruitment practices (staff and students)
- Liaise with Marketing in respect of any press enquiries about safeguarding
- Oversee the organisation requirements for the training of Safeguarding Offices;
- Oversee the monitoring and review systems, including preparation of the first draft of the annual report. All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of GDPR
- Approve recommendations from the Lead Safeguarding Officer on referral to Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) or the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (GSAB), or other appropriate boards (not limited

geographically as it is the local authority where a child is resident that investigates).

Lead Safeguarding Officer (LSO)

- Ensure appropriate risk assessments are undertaken for relevant activities within their department
- Ensure staff understand the implications of recruiting under 18 staff and students;
- Monitor the welfare of students in the department who are under the age of 18
- Ensure any safeguarding concerns are reported promptly to a Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Provide support, advice and guidance to staff and students about this policy
- In conjunction with at least two other Designated Safeguarding Officers recommend referral of cases of suspected abuse to the Executive Lead for Safeguarding
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise and to make referrals of cases of suspected abuse to the relevant agencies
- Ensure detailed and accurate written records are kept of concerns/referrals and that they are secure, confidential, yet accessible to those with designated authority
- Liaise with the Executive Lead for Safeguarding regarding on-going investigations.
- Ensure that where allegations or incidents involve a member of university staff that a senior member of the HR Team is notified. HR may instigate an investigation.
- Undertake training to identify signs of abuse and when it is appropriate to make a referral or use internal processes and procedures

- Create links with local Social Services Departments, Children's Service Teams, Safeguarding Children Boards, Safeguarding Adults Board and local Police
- Have a working knowledge of Channel and how it operates
- Have a working knowledge of local Area Children Protection Committees and local Safeguarding Children Boards or Safeguarding Adults Board
- Participate in local Safeguarding Boards/Police investigation as required
- Review existing policies and procedures in conjunction with the Safeguarding Group and update to reflect the requirements of Safeguarding
- Develop university-wide policy, procedures, practice and guidance for Safeguarding that are compliant with the most recent legislation, government and/or professional body guidelines and local Safeguarding Children Board or Safeguarding Adults Board.
- Attend Safeguarding Working Group meetings every quarter.

Designated Safeguarding Officers

- Provide support, advice and guidance to staff and students about this policy
- Ensure detailed and accurate written records are kept securely
- Make decisions in conjunction with the LSO about whether to refer concerns to Executive Lead and ultimately to the GSCB / GASB / Police / for investigation
- Undertake training to identify signs of abuse and when it is appropriate to make a referral or use internal processes and procedures
- Have a working knowledge of local Area Children Protection committees and local Safeguarding Children Boards or Safeguarding Adults Board
- Have a working knowledge of Channel and how it operates
- Attend Safeguarding Working Group meetings every quarter.

Director of Human Resources

- Advise on the employment and welfare of staff who are aged under 18, including those on work experience.
- Ensure managers identify the need for DBS checks as part of recruitment processes.
- Where DBS checks are required, ensure all staff DBS checks are undertaken at the appropriate level
- Ensure all staff DBS checks are returned, issues addressed with and staff records are updated as appropriate.

Safeguarding Group

The Safeguarding Officers will meet as a group once per term. This may be for specific training, sharing of good practice or issues and to consider the annual monitoring report. Other staff with relevant expertise or specific interest in safeguarding may be invited to join the Safeguarding Group from time to time.

Where recommendations are made for changes to the Policy and/or Procedures that impact on staff or students' appropriate consultation will take place with VCAG, Academic and Professional Services Staff, and the Student Union.

Annual Monitoring

In recognising the legal responsibilities upon the University with respect to the safe recruitment of staff and students, VCAG wish to be aware of, approve and monitor the University's approach to safeguarding to this end, a monitoring report on the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures will be presented annually to VCAG for information and approval and for presentation to Governing Council. The annual report will include the number of staff who have undergone the Safeguarding training

and identify key learning points for improvement and recommendations to mitigate safeguarding risks in the future.

Responsibilities

Reporting Concerns

It is important that any university staff member report a safeguarding concern promptly and not assume that someone else will have reported it. The staff member does not need to make a judgement on how serious a concern is, or even whether they believe a concern to be true. The staff member is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred or assessing the level of risk.

Safeguarding issues are likely to come to light through one of four main methods: direct observation, disclosure from a child or adult at risk, observation by a third party or referral from an external Public, Statutory or Regulatory Body.

Anyone wishing to report a suspicion or concern should complete the Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form Appendix D, keeping as accurate a record as possible of events or reports. Care must be taken, particularly in the case of disclosures, not to lead or interrogate the individual in a way that could prejudice further action by the relevant authorities. The initial formal reporting of any incident or disclosure should be through a Designated Safeguarding Officer.

In all such instances once a report has been provided to a Designated Safeguarding Officer, that person will work with the Lead Safeguarding Officer and other Designated Safeguarding Officers as appropriate, to determine the most appropriate course of action.

Safeguarding Officers have the opportunity to seek professional advice from appropriate external bodies (e.g., Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) (Telephone: 01452 426565) or Gloucestershire Adult Safeguarding Board (GASB) see below for details on the basis that the identity of those concerned is kept confidential until such time as a decision to formally refer is made.

In an emergency always dial 999

To report a Safeguarding concern about a child or a young person contact one of the University's Designated Safeguarding Officers who will then make any appropriate referrals to:

Children and Families Help Desk: 01452 426565 (Monday to Friday 09:00 to 17:00)

Out of hours call the Emergency Duty Team on: 01452 614194

Email: childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk

To report a Safeguarding concern about a vulnerable adult contact:

One of the University's Designated Safeguarding Officers who will then make appropriate referrals to:

Adult Help Desk on: 01452 426868 (Monday to Friday 08:00 to 17:00)

Out of hours call the Emergency Duty Team on: 01452 614194

Email: edt@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Other contacts:

Police: 0300 333 3000 or 101

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Child Line: 0800 1111

Reporting a Concern Out of Hours

If a safeguarding issue occurs out of hours (i.e., when the Designated Safeguarding Officers may not be in work) then we need to consider whether anyone is currently at immediate risk of harm. If the staff member believes anyone to be at immediate risk of harm they should call 999 for the Police or ambulance as appropriate and report it immediately.

If the staff member does not believe anyone is at serious risk of harm then the report should be made to the Designated Safeguarding Officer the next working day. However, it is advisable to keep notes at the time so that these are up to date and available if needed.

Investigating Allegations

It is a statutory requirement that allegations or suspicions of abuse against children are investigated by Social Services and/or the Police. The Local Authority where the child is normally resident is the responsible authority in these cases.

The University's Designated Safeguarding Officers have a responsibility to ensure that as accurate an account of alleged incidents as possible is established, as quickly as possible, in order to determine the level of risk posed to an individual (or individuals) and to determine whether or not any form of action or referral is required. The sharing of information protocols in line with GDPR May 2018 will then be applied.

In respect of adults at risk, each incident will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Designated Safeguarding Officers or nominated authority.

In any and all allegations against staff, at least one of the Designated Safeguarding Officers involved in the initial assessment will be the Human Resources for Student Support.

Allegations against members of the public or using university facilities will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Where a referral is required, the university would normally refer the case to the relevant Police Authority, Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Board, or others Gloucestershire Adults Safeguarding Board as appropriate, for investigation.

Allegations made during a school visit, the university will keep records of concerns and actions taken and ensure the matter is referred to the school Safeguarding Officer. If concerns are expressed whilst working in schools' staff will notify a Designated Safeguarding Officer of the concern, who will record it and ensure it is referred to the school's own Safeguarding Officers; safeguarding overrides GDPR.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Royal Agricultural University is committed to promoting equality and are constantly working to remove the barriers of institutional discrimination and oppression in safeguarding adults practice across the university.

The university understand that safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is everybody's responsibility and that everybody is different. The university celebrates and respects diversity and treats people fairly enabling them to stay safe and maintain control of their lives.

Other related policies / procedures

[Bullying and harassment policy](#)

[Data protection policy](#)

[Data sharing agreement](#)

[Equality, diversity and inclusion policy](#)

[Prevent policy](#)

[Staff disciplinary policy and procedure](#)

[Staff recruitment, selection and appointment policy and procedure](#)

[Student complaints procedure](#)

[Student disciplinary policy and procedure](#)

[Student fitness to study policy](#)

[Whistleblowing procedure](#)

Consequences

A Safeguarding procedure & policy guides the university in protecting vulnerable people; without them the university would fail to fulfil our legal and moral obligations.

Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed after no longer than three years.

Version control

| Version number | Change | Name and job title | Date |
|----------------|---|--|---------------|
| 1.0 | | Head of Student Services | November 2021 |
| 2.0 | Major changes to ensure compliance with current legislation, confirm role(s) of designated officers and set data protection controls. | Karen Hocking, Head of Student Services | January 2024 |

Appendix A – Safeguarding Team

Executive Lead – Director of Academic Services

Lead Safeguarding Officer – Head of Student Services

Designated Safeguarding Officers:

Commercial Services Director

Security Operations & Project Manager

Student Recruitment & Widening Participation Manager

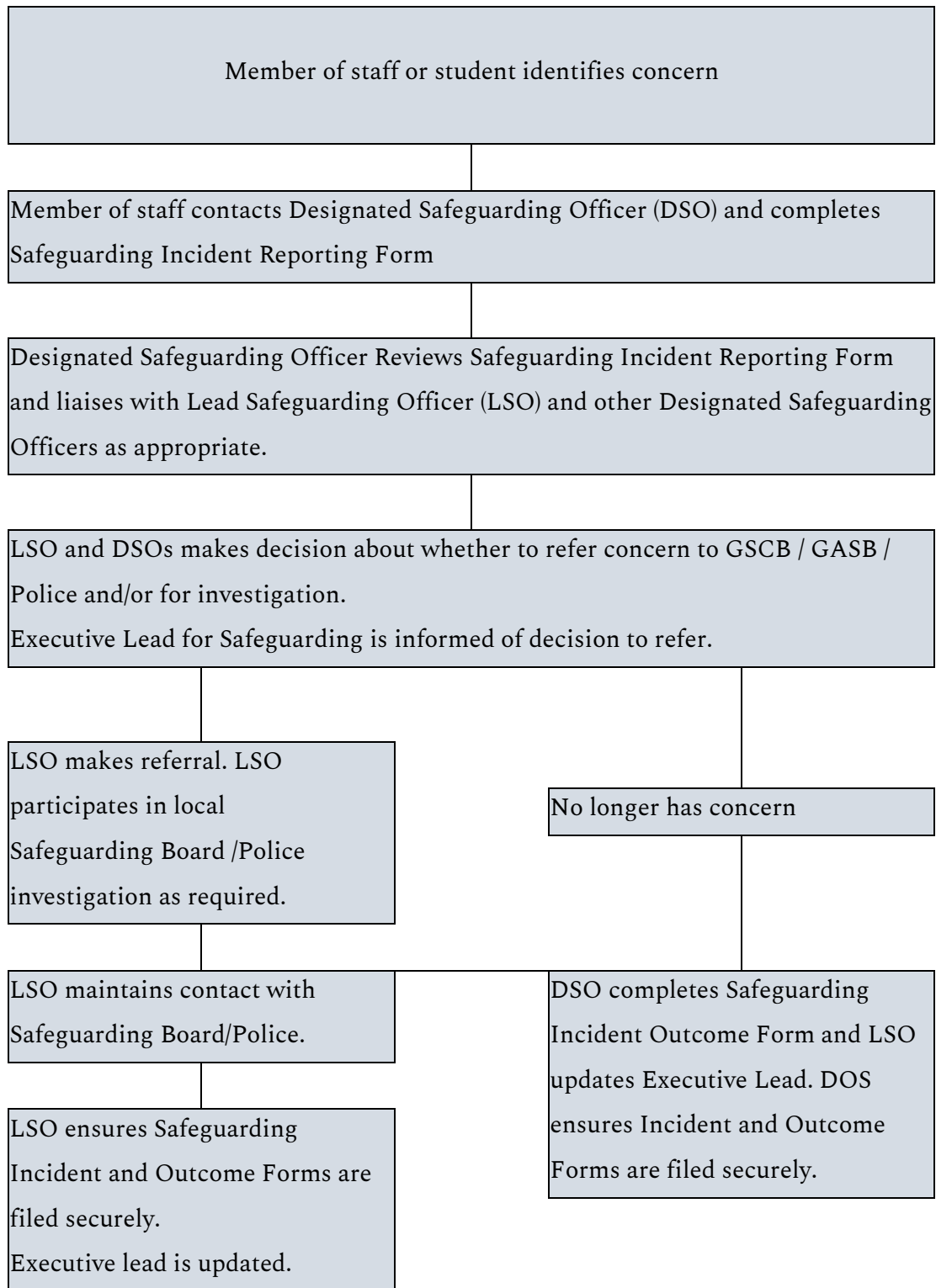
Designated Academic member of Safeguarding Committee

Director of Human Resources

In the absence of the Executive Lead, the Lead Safeguarding Officer will have delegated authority to undertake such prescribed duties for the prompt delivery of safeguarding needs.

In the absence of the Lead Safeguarding Officer any of the Designated Safeguarding Offices will undertake the role of the Lead Safeguarding Officer.

Appendix B – Flowchart of Procedure for Reporting Safeguarding Concerns



Is there any other information which you think is relevant?

Tick to confirm the Child/Vulnerable Adult knows that you may need to make an internal/external referral?

*Tick to confirm the Child/Vulnerable Adult given their consent to an external referral? **

ABOUT YOU: Details of person reporting concern/allegation

Appendix D – Safeguarding Incident Outcome Form

To be completed by designated safeguarding officers

| ABOUT THE CHILD/VULNERABLE ADULT | |
|--|--|
| Name of Child/vulnerable adult | |
| Date to which the referral is about | |
| Has the referral been passed to the GSCB; Police; Prevent Representative; Other)? Y/N? | |
| If yes please state who and provide contact details | |
| If no, state why not and what alternative actions(s) have been undertaken | |
| ABOUT THE CONCERN: Tell us about the follow up action/advice required | |
| <i>Please specify what is required or why it is no required:</i> | |
| | |
| <i>Tick to confirm the Child/Vulnerable Adult knows that this referral has been made</i> | |
| ABOUT YOU: Details of person reporting concern/allegation | |
| | |

Appendix E – List of staff who need to be DBS checked and at what level

It is the responsibility of managers to establish whether there is a need for a member of staff to be DBS checked in consultation with HR. This should be considered at the point of recruitment and reviewed periodically (at least every three years).

The following roles are expected to require DBS checks

- Safeguarding Officers
- Head of Student Services
- Director of Academic Services
- Relevant staff in Student Services roles
- Relevant staff in Student Recruitment roles
- Relevant staff in Outreach roles
- Director of Human Resources