

POLICY – SAFEGUARDING

Owned by: CEO

Date passed: June 2023

Body passing: Trustees

Review required: June 2026

Rationale: to set out how Winchester Student Union adheres to the duty of care and legal obligations for children and vulnerable adults at risk of harm. A summary of the key legislation and guidance for charities is available from the charity commission website.

Student Union/University Relationship

Winchester Student Union recognises that its responsibility for safeguarding is shared with the University of Winchester because;

- they are the University at which the Student Union student members are registered at;
- they are the landlord of all buildings occupied by the Student Union.

Winchester Student Union recognises that this relationship could cause confusion. Therefore the Union will ensure in setting out the following policy, and any relating procedures, that these are in line with the University of Winchester's own where reasonably appropriate.

Definitions

Within this policy, and the relating procedures, the following definitions apply:

- A **Child** is defined as anyone under the age of 16.
- A **Young Person** is defined as anyone between the ages of 16 and 18.
- A **Vulnerable Adult** is defined as a person aged 18 or over, who may be in need of care by reason on disability, age or illness; and who is unable to care for themselves, or unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

Safeguarding children and young people means to:

- Protect children and young people from abuse and maltreatment.
- Prevent harm to children's and young people's health or development.
- Take action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding vulnerable adults means protecting their right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

Key Areas of Activity

A small minority of Winchester Student Union members may be defined as young people or vulnerable adults and at risk for some, or all, of their time as students. In addition, members of the general public who participate in Winchester Student Union activities or use Winchester Student Union services may at times include children, young people and vulnerable adults. For this reason, Winchester Student Union staff, officers and volunteers may come into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults in a variety of contexts. This policy applies to any and all of these contexts.

There are key areas of activity where we expect Winchester Student Union staff, officers or volunteers may work with children, young people, or vulnerable adults at risk in unsupervised settings. These include:

- Advice case work with any student who is a young person or vulnerable adult.
- Activities and events taking place, pre-enrolment, with young people.
- Activities and events taking place with enrolled student members under the age of 18 years old.
- Volunteer projects operating within the community.
- Work experience with Winchester Student Union.

The Role of Employees, Officers and Volunteers

When working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults, all staff, officers and volunteers must:

- **Plan activities with care** to minimise risks of harm, ensuring risk assessments are conducted and submitted to Winchester Student Union before the activity takes place, and are followed.
- **Raise awareness of dangers** to which children, young people, and vulnerable adults may be susceptible, including abuse and maltreatment.
- **Follow procedures** for responding to accidents, incidents, and alleged or suspected harm.
- **Promote the general welfare** of those working with, recognising their rights as individuals and treating them with dignity and respect (as laid out within Winchester Student Union policy).
- **Report concerns** where there are concerns or allegations regarding the safety or maltreatment of children, young adults, or vulnerable adults, staff and volunteers must notify a Winchester Student Union Designated Safeguarding Officer or their line manager immediately.

The Role of Winchester Student Union as an Organisation

Code of Conduct

Winchester Student Union's *Bye-Law 2: Code of Conduct* sets out the expected behaviour of all members and affiliated groups when participating in any activity under the name of Winchester Student Union, both in-person and online.

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

In accordance with government guidelines, Winchester Student Union will arrange Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks for anyone working frequently with children, young people, or vulnerable adults in an unsupervised setting.

Training

Staff and volunteers whose roles and responsibilities includes regular contact with children, young people, and vulnerable adults, will receive training and guidance appropriate to their role.

Responding to reports and concerns

Winchester Student Union will follow up safeguarding concerns and reports according to this policy, alongside the Union's *Bye-Law 2: Code of Conduct - Disciplinarys, Complaints & Appeals*, Staff Disciplinary Procedure, and legal and statutory obligations.

Where an allegation concerns a member of staff or volunteer, they will be withdrawn from any duties that bring them into contact with children, young adults, and vulnerable adults, but no

presumptions will be made until investigated by the relevant authorities. Once any investigation had concluded, Winchester Student Union will decide what further action is appropriate, in line with *Bye-Law 2: Code of Conduct* and the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management will be shared on a need-to-know basis only and will be kept secure at all times.

Whistle Blowing

Winchester Student Union has the responsibility to promote the reporting of safeguarding concerns and supporting a culture of 'whistleblowing', in line with its Whistleblowing Policy.

Safeguarding Lead and Designated Safeguarding Officers

The CEO will be the Safeguarding Lead. They will have responsibility to:

- Ensure the organisation's Safeguarding Policy is being followed, and is reviewed and updated as appropriate.
- Liaise with local safeguarding board as appropriate.

The following Winchester Student Union staff are designated Safeguarding Officers:

- Head of Membership (Deputy Chief Exec) (excluding any concerns involving licenced activity).
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (only for concerns involving licenced activity).

They have a responsibility to:

- Be a point of contact for staff who have safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure that concerns are logged and stored securely.
- Manage concerns, complaints and allegations relating to child, or young person protection, or vulnerable adults effectively, following relevant legislation and guidance.
- Make referrals to the relevant agencies and authorities where appropriate.

Procedures for Dealing with the Disclosure of Abuse and Reporting Concerns

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult tells a member of staff about possible abuse, the staff member should:

Receive

Listen to what is said and stay calm, without showing shock or disbelief. You should accept what is being said without judgment and take it seriously. Do not ask leading questions; let the person tell you their story and do not press them for information. You should give the person your full attention; make a written note of the information received after you have finished with the person.

Reassure

Reassure the person that they are right to tell their story and explain that you will have to pass their information to the relevant Safeguarding Officer, who will make sure the matter is appropriately dealt with.

Recognise

Throughout, be alert to any signs or symptoms of abuse (types and indicators of abuse can be found on the '*Abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults*' pages of the NHS website). Do not investigate or interrogate to decide if the person is telling the truth.

Respond

Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in sharing this information and that they are not to blame. You must be honest and never make promises. You should never promise to keep what you are told confidential; if abuse is involved, you will need to tell someone. Throughout, use open questions such as "tell me" or "explain to me", and avoid closed questions. Tell them what you will do with the information they have shared and that they will be kept informed.

Refer

Pass the information to the relevant Safeguarding Officer as soon as practicable. If there is serious concern for the individual's welfare, immediately contact the emergency services by calling 999.

Staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves but should report them immediately to the relevant Safeguarding Officer.

These procedures apply to all members of staff, elected officers, and trustees, as well as any volunteers working within Winchester Student Union.

Initial assessment

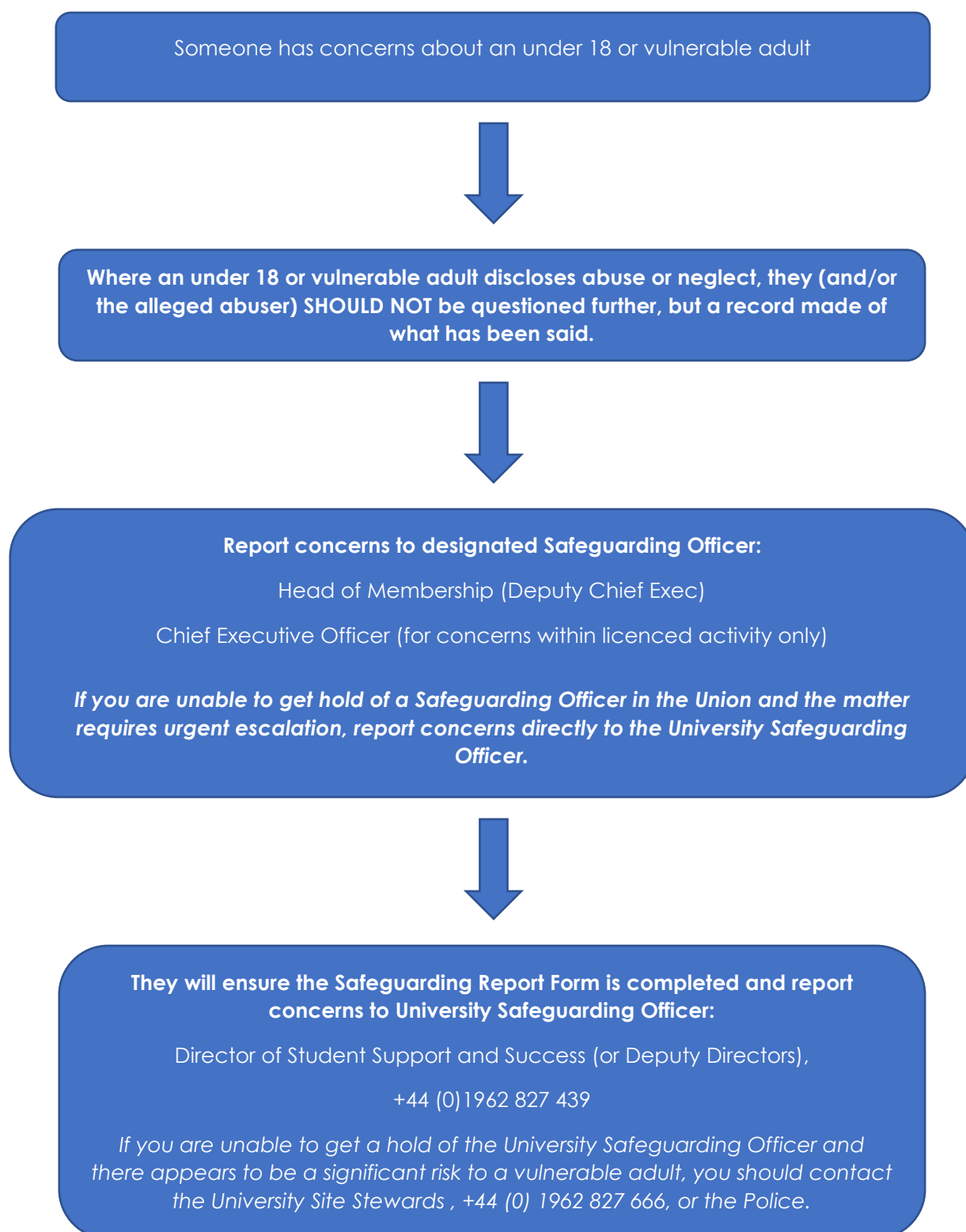
The Safeguarding Officer will make an initial assessment of the allegation, consulting with colleagues as appropriate. Where the allegation is considered, after assessment, to be either a potential criminal act or indicates that the child, young person, or vulnerable adult has suffered, is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm; the matter should be reported immediately to the police.

It is important the Safeguarding Officer does not investigate the allegation. The initial assessment should be on the basis of the information received and is a decision about whether or not the allegation warrants further investigation.

Where the matter does not require reporting to the local police, other potential outcomes are:

- The allegation can be referred to the Safeguarding Officer within the University of Winchester.
- The allegation is not deemed a safeguarding concern, but be addressed elsewhere, for example in accordance with Winchester Student Union's disciplinary procedures.

Appendix 1: Process Flow Chart



Appendix 2 Safeguarding Report Form

To be completed with the Safeguarding Officer as part of the preliminary assessment.

Name of child, young person or vulnerable adult:	Telephone Number (if known): Address (if known): Email Address (if known):
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Who reported the incident regarding the person listed above: Dates(s) and time(s) of incident: Location of the incident: Details of the Incident: (use separate sheet if required)

Has the person listed in this form been spoken to? If so, please record by whom and exactly what was said (using the individual's own language) and what was said to the individual (use separate sheet if required):

Action agreed with person listed in form:

Observations (for instances are there any physical/behavioural signs or indirect signs):
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Have the University of Winchester (e.g. University Safeguarding Officer) been contacted, and/or to your knowledge are they already aware of this incident: Yes (detail below) / no

Have external agencies (for instance the police, social services) been contacted, and/or to your knowledge are they already aware of this incident: Yes (detail below) / no
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I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information provided is correct and I will be available to answer any further questions on this matter: Signature: Print Name: Date: Signed by Safeguarding Officer: Print Name: Date:

To be completed by Safeguarding Officer	
Does the incident need to be reported to:	
University Safeguarding Officer	No Yes – Date and time completed
Other internal/external (define and specify)	No Yes – Date and time completed
Police	No Yes – Date and time completed

