

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH ADULTS AT RISK FOR VOLUNTEERS ON STUDENT-LED PROJECTS

Purpose

Students' Union UCL Volunteering Service is committed to the safeguarding of adults at risk who participate in activities that we support.

This handout gives important information on how to safeguard adults at risk. If you are a volunteer on a Student-Led Projects, please make sure you read it thoroughly. If you have any questions, please speak to your project leader or get in touch with any member of the Student-Led Projects team directly (<http://studentsunionucl.org/volunteering/about/the-team>)

Our full policy is available on our [webpages](#).

Definitions

An Adult at risk is someone over the age of 18 who receives or may need community care services because of disability, age or illness and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or exploitation. This can relate to physical, mental or psychological wellbeing or the potential to be drawn into sexual or criminal exploitation and activity.

Before you start volunteering

You must get a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check if your project requires you to do so. The Volunteering Service will process this application for you. You can find information on how to apply for a DBS check at <http://studentsunionucl.org/volunteering/get-started/what-happens-next/DBS-checks>

You will be unable to volunteer on the project until the Volunteering Service have seen your DBS Certificate.

You must attend the training on safeguarding adults at risk organised by your Project Leaders.

Your behaviour

You must:

- Respect the rights, sensitivities, culture and worth of all people participating in the project.
- Treat all participants fairly without prejudice or discrimination
- Place the well-being and safety of the participants you work with above any other objective.

- Ensure that all participants can take part in the activities/objectives of the programme
- Be publicly open when working with adults at risk. Avoid situations where you and an adult at risk are completely unobserved.
- If physical contact is necessary, do so openly and with consent. Avoid situations where actions may be misinterpreted.

You must not:

- Allow or engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative activity, including horseplay.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Make sexually suggestive comments.
- Allow allegations to go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature for an adult at risk that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow adults at risk to visit or stay at your home.
- Exchange personal contact details, e.g. Home address, telephone number, email address with any of the adults at risk that you are working with. This includes social media contact.
- Indulge in over-enthusiastic physical contact, e.g. Face-to-face hugging or kisses.
- Show favouritism.
- Ignore abuse or bullying or other cruel or humiliating behaviour.
- Accept or give gifts to activity participants unless it is an agreed part of a project.
- Accept responsibility for looking after an adult at risk's valuables or money.
- Borrow or lend money to an adult at risk.
- Have a personal relationship with an adult at risk who is participating in a project or who has been involved in a project within the last 12 months.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 makes it an offence for those engaged in providing care, assistance or services to someone with a learning disability or mental disorder to engage in sexual activity with that person whether or not that person has the capacity to consent.

Confidentiality

- In general, you should not share information (such as names of participants or information they may have imparted) with anyone who does not need to know – and certainly with no one outside the project.
- Project leaders who have written information about project participants – such as registration forms or data consent slips – must take these documents to the Volunteering Service or the Community Partner as soon as possible where they will be securely stored. Such information – including names and contact details – must not be passed onto any third party.
- Any digital information should be stored securely on password protected files on secure servers.
- Although information shared between volunteers and adults at risk on the project is confidential, volunteers should not promise to keep secrets.
- If an adult at risk discloses a safeguarding concern to a volunteer, we may have to breach their confidentiality in order to protect them from harm.
- Do not take photos of participants unless written permission has been given. The Volunteering Service can provide guidance, and employs photographers who you can book to take photographs of your activities.

Recognising Abuse

You may not be sufficiently familiar with working with adults at risk to be 100% confident in recognising abuse, but you may come across something which concerns you or just 'does not seem quite right'. Abuse can take different forms and includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse as well as neglect and bullying.

There are other types of abuse that can affect adults at risk including organisational abuse, discriminatory abuse, exploitation, financial, self-neglect, domestic abuse and modern slavery.

Abuse can have serious and long term effects in terms of development, health and wellbeing including to self-esteem and self-image.

Some common signs that there may be something concerning happening include:

- Unexplained or sudden changes in behaviour or personality
- Becoming withdrawn
- Seeming anxious
- Becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- Not wanting to be left alone or be left with particular people
- Being unkempt or having inadequate or inappropriate clothing

- Physical injuries or recurring physical injuries, untreated physical injuries
- Change in finances

Abuse of adults at risk can occur in organisations. Signs of organisational abuse include:

- Unsafe environment
- Inflexible routines
- Lack of privacy, dignity or respect
- Being withdrawn from contact from family, friends or community activities
- Lack of choice of food, drink, clothing or activities
- Lack of respect for or failing to take account of someone's religion, belief or culture

Handling Allegations

- be supportive, but DO NOT promise confidentiality - explain to the person there are some things you would have to tell someone else about in order to help;
- remain calm and take the person seriously;
- reassure the person that they have done the right thing by telling someone;
- use language the vulnerable person understands;
- do not ask leading questions or express any opinions about what you are told;
- explain to the person what will happen next (i.e. you will need to contact someone else about what they have told you);
- Write down immediately afterwards what was said, including the time, place and any other observations. Sign and date the record;
- Pass on your concerns and the written details immediately to the appropriate person;
- Do not attempt to investigate the allegation yourself;
- Do not discuss what you have been told with anyone other than the appropriate officer.

Remember that you may need to seek advice and support for yourself to cope with what you have heard or seen. Please speak to the Volunteering Service so we can help arrange support for you.

Other things to report

You should also let the safeguarding lead at the partner organisation – or the Volunteering Service – know if any of the following things happen:

- There is a concern that a relationship is developing which may be an abuse of trust.
- You are worried that an adult at risk is becoming attracted to you.
- You are worried that an adult at risk is becoming attracted to a colleague who supervises or works with them.
- You think an adult at risk has misunderstood or misinterpreted something you have done.
- You have been required to physically restrain an adult at risk to prevent them from harming themselves or another or from causing significant damage to property.

- You have concerns about safeguarding practice or about more general health and safety.

If an adult at risk is accidentally hurt whilst they are under your supervision or care, you should report the incident as quickly as possible to the Project Leader, Partner Organisation or the Volunteering Service.

Recording allegations or suspicions of abuse

In any case where an allegation is made, or a volunteer has a safeguarding concern, a record should be made. You should do this as soon as possible.

Here is a check list of examples of details to note and questions you could ask yourself in making such a record. *Please note that you DO NOT HAVE TO ask these questions, they are examples only!*

- Name of person
- Age
- Any special factors
- Home address and phone numbers if available
- Are you expressing your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else?
- What has prompted the concerns? Include dates, times, etc. of any specific incidents.
- Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details.
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.

Keep your notes clear and concise

Use straight-forward language, and use the person's own words where you can.

Report facts only, not your opinions or allegations. You should sign and date your record.

Reporting your concerns

It is not up to you to make a judgment about whether abuse has occurred; this is the remit of Social Services. However, you have a duty to report any concerns. You should not assume that someone else will report the concern.

In most instances, you should report your concerns to the Safeguarding Lead at the community partner organisation (for example the school) where your project takes place. If you're unsure who this is, please contact the Volunteering Service.

The Safeguarding lead will then respond to your concern in line with their own safeguarding policy.

If you're unhappy with their response, or you do not wish to raise the concern with the Safeguarding Lead directly, please do contact us at the Volunteering Service.

Whatever you do, you should contact the Volunteering Service to let us know you have raised a concern. We will not necessarily need to know the particular details of the issue you've raised. We will be able to offer you support.

Useful Numbers

Students' Union UCL Volunteering Service 020 3549 5341 or volunteering@ucl.ac.uk

Your Project Leader or the Volunteering Service can tell you who the Safeguarding Lead on your project is.

Camden Adult Social Care 020 7974 4000 and select option 1 or email adultsocialcare@camden.gov.uk

There is a useful list of organisations working with adults at risk at www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/organisations-useful-contacts/