

## **SUMMARY OF UCL'S WORKING WITH VULNERABLE GROUPS POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERING SERVICE STUDENT-LED PROJECTS**

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### **Scope**

UCL is committed to safeguarding the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable groups involved in UCL activities such as student-led volunteering projects. UCL's 'Working with Vulnerable Groups' policy is designed to give guidance to all UCL staff and students on the expected standards of behaviour when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, and their responsibilities and processes in reporting any concerns.

### **Definitions**

A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18.

If adults require 'regulated activity' they are defined as being vulnerable.

Regulated activity is:

- Health care – any health care professional providing health care to an adult or anyone who provides health care to an adult under the supervision of a health care professional.
- Personal care – providing assistance, supervision or advice in relation to activities including eating and washing.
- Social care lives in residential accommodation including sheltered housing and a care home
- Assistance with cash, bills or shopping
- Assistance in the conduct of a persons own affairs
- Transporting an adult because of their age, disability or illness to or from their home and a place where they will receive health care, personal care or social care.

### **Safeguarding**

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 all UCL students volunteering with on the Volunteering Service Student-Led Volunteering Programme. You will be unable to volunteer on the project until the Volunteering Service have seen your DBS Certificate.

If you are working with children or young people you must attend the Volunteering Service's 'Volunteering with Children' training.

If you are working with vulnerable adults, your project leaders will arrange suitable training, which you must attend.

### **Your Behaviour**

In your position of trust it is important that you demonstrate exemplary behaviour. Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned. You should always give due consideration what is

appropriate conduct in relation to the activities you are undertaking. Furthermore, you should:

- treat all people including students, staff and visitors with respect and with due regard to cultural differences;
- act as an appropriate role model and provide an example you wish others to follow;
- challenge unacceptable behaviour by others - do not permit abusive youth/peer activities (e.g. bullying, ridiculing, including 'cyber bullying');
- ensure feedback given in activities is constructive rather than negative;
- be careful in your use of language/terminology/behaviour and do not make unnecessary comments or actions which could be interpreted as having a sexual connotation;
- take special care when discussing sensitive issues with children or young people;
- report any concerns, suspicions or allegations regarding the welfare of a young person immediately to the appropriate officer.

### **You Should Never**

- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;
- allow vulnerable groups to use inappropriate language without challenging it;
- enter into a physical 'adult' relationship with a vulnerable person to whom you are in a position of trust, even if they give their consent. This would be a criminal offence if the relationship was with a child;
- give a vulnerable person your personal phone number, personal e-mail or home address;
- do personal things for a child which they can do for themselves. If a child has a disability any tasks should only be performed with the full understanding and consent of the parents/carers;
- allow allegations made by a vulnerable person or about a vulnerable person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;

### **Recognising Abuse**

You may not be sufficiently familiar with working with vulnerable groups 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. Abuse can have serious and long term effects in terms of development, health and wellbeing including to self-esteem and self-image.

It is not the place of Volunteering Service volunteers 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 contact person identified on the Volunteering Service Partnership Agreement as the safeguarding contact, and also notify the Volunteering Service that you have reported a concern.

Other things to report:

- there is a concern that a relationship is developing which may be an abuse of trust;

- you are worried that a vulnerable person is becoming attracted to you;
- you are worried that a vulnerable person is becoming attracted to a colleague who supervises or works with them;
- you think a vulnerable person has misunderstood or misinterpreted something you have done;
- you have been required to physically restrain a vulnerable person to prevent them from harming themselves or another or from causing significant damage to property;
- a vulnerable person tells you they are being abused or describes experiences you believe may constitute abuse;
- you see suspicious marks on a vulnerable person.

If a vulnerable person is accidentally hurt whilst they are under your supervision or care, you should report the incident as quickly as possible to the Activity Leader.

### **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. Use the referral form if possible. Sign and date the record;
- Pass on your concerns and the written details immediately to the appropriate officer;
- 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.

**If you need any advice or support, please get in contact with the Volunteering Services Unit.**