

Safeguarding Advisory Group

Apprenticeship Reference Guide to Safeguarding at UEL

2024-25

# Who is this document for?

Apprentices, employers and any UEL staff involved in the delivery and support of apprenticeship courses.

# What is safeguarding?

As described in the Office of the Public Guardian [Safeguarding Policy 2015](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-policy-protecting-vulnerable-adults):

“Safeguarding is a term we use to describe how we protect adults and children from abuse or neglect. It is an important shared priority of many public services and a key responsibility of local authorities. Safeguarding is about protecting certain people who may be in vulnerable circumstances. These people may be at risk of abuse or neglect due to the actions (or lack of action) of another person. In these cases, it is vital that public services work together to identify people at risk and put steps in place to help prevent abuse or neglect.”

There are six principles that underpin safeguarding, as set out in the Department for Health and Social Care [statutory guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance) for the Care Act 2014:

1. **Empowerment**

“People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.”

1. **Prevention**

“It is better to take action before harm occurs.”

1. **Proportionality**

“The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.”

1. **Protection**

“Support and representation for those in greatest need.”

1. **Partnership**

“Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.”

1. **Accountability**

“Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.”

# Reporting safeguarding concerns

## What should I do if I identify a safeguarding concern?

If UEL staff become aware that there is or may be a safeguarding issue, then their role is to discuss this with their Local Safeguarding Officer (LSO). The following flowchart is used to help staff follow the correct process. More detailed information is within the [UEL Safeguarding Policy](https://uel.ac.uk/sites/default/files/approved-safeguarding-policy-march-2023.pdf).



Any staff or learners may also report safeguarding concerns to an external body such as Social Services or the police. In such a case, the responsibilities set out in the safeguarding policy still apply.

## What should I do if I identify a safeguarding concern caused by UEL staff or learners?

Any concerns about abusive behaviour by a member of staff or learner against a person under 18 or an adult with safeguarding needs should be reported promptly:

* Learners on a course (subject to the Suitability Policy) à Dean of School
* In other situations à University Safeguarding Officer (USO)

## What should I do if it is an emergency?

If the immediate safety of a person is at risk, contact security (020 8223 7771) or the emergency services (999) and inform the Deputy University Safeguarding Officer (DUSO).

In an emergency or out-of-hours and the DUSO cannot be contacted, contact the Police (999) or relevant child/adult social services. Additionally, contact UEL security will be able to escalate and contact a DUSO while out-of-hours if necessary.

## Am I allowed to share confidential information?

Safeguarding takes priority over data protection/privacy. You do not need consent to share information about a safeguarding matter.

## Can I address a safeguarding concern by myself?

It is not the responsibility of individuals to investigate, make judgements or provide a response to safeguarding matters; individuals simply have to follow the reporting procedure if they have concerns.

## What happens after I report a safeguarding concern?

The DUSO will take appropriate steps. These may include one or more of the following:

* Make a referral to the local social services.
* Contact the police.
* Take steps to initiate the appropriate staff or learner disciplinary procedure.
* Consult with relevant colleagues.
* Arrange for the learner to be given appropriate support.

# Additional useful information

## What additional safeguarding resources are available?

At UEL we are committed to promoting and providing a safe and respectful environment for every member of our community, by challenging harassment and abuse. This is underpinned by our Dignity at Work and Study Policy and the Student Code of Conduct, available on our Report+Support website [policies page](https://reportandsupport.uel.ac.uk/support/university-policies-and-procedures).

Staff colleagues are encouraged to raise any concerns with their line manager in the first instance, but should they feel unable to do so, they may contact their HR Business Partner or report concerns through the [Report+Support website](https://reportandsupport.uel.ac.uk/). The link to the site can also be found on the [HR Services intranet page](https://uelac.sharepoint.com/sites/hr). There is also an intranet page for staff on [how to report unacceptable behaviour](https://uelac.sharepoint.com/sites/home/SitePages/How-to-report-unacceptable-behaviour.aspx).

Student Services have additionally launched an [intranet page](https://uelac.sharepoint.com/sites/studentsupport/SitePages/Safeguarding.aspx) for students (including apprentices) on safeguarding at UEL.

The Report+Support site provides information and resources around various forms of harassment and abuse. A reporting function is also available for both anonymous reports and advisor requests. Please note that action cannot be taken on anonymous reports; these will be used for monitoring purposes and to inform proactive and preventative work.

## How has UEL enhanced its safeguarding operations?

As specified in the Safeguarding Annual Report for 2021/22, key highlights included:

* Clear leadership and lines of accountability to ensure the full implementation of the Safeguarding Policy across the university (see the diagram of responsibilities below).
* Regular safeguarding reports provided by the USO and DUSO to the University Executive Board (and Board of Governors where appropriate).
* Regulatory reporting to the Office for Students (OfS) by the USO and DUSO.
* Updates to the Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy in line with best sector practice.
* Recruitment of an Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisor (ISDVA) to provide specialist advice and support for learners to navigate internal and external reporting processes in response to SU feedback.

## Who is responsible for safeguarding at UEL?

**1** The University Safeguarding Officer (USO) is UEL’s Director of People and Culture.

**2** The University Prevent Coordinator is UEL’s University Secretary / Chief Compliance Officer.

**3**The Deputy University Safeguarding Officer (DUSO) is UEL’s Director of Student Services.

**4** Safeguarding Trained Roles include the Outreach Team (for under-18s), Residential Life Welfare Officers, the Wellbeing Team, Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisors (ISDVAs), and Security.

**5** The LADO for UEL is a [member of Newham Council](https://www.newham.gov.uk/children-families/safeguarding-children/2).

**6** The MASH for UEL is [Newham’s Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub](https://www.newham.gov.uk/health-adult-social-care/safeguarding-prevention/7).

## What are some useful UEL safeguarding contacts?

* If the issue is related to **disability support**, contact: ddac@uel.ac.uk
* If the issue is related to **funding or money**, contact: studentfunding@uel.ac.uk
* If the issue is related to **gender-based violence**, contact: isdva@uel.ac.uk
* If the issue is related to **safeguarding**, contact: safeguarding@uel.ac.uk
* If the issue is related to **well-being support**, contact: wellbeing@uel.ac.uk
* For general queries or concerns, learners can also contact the Student Hub at thehub@uel.ac.uk / 020 8223 4444.

## What are some useful third-party safeguarding contacts?

* For **medical issues**, learners can contact GPs in Newham at 020 7540 9949.
* For **urgent medical attention**, learners can contact the NHS on 111 or 999 in emergencies.
* For **emotional distress**, learners can contact the Samaritans at jo@samaritans.org / 116 123.
* For learners under 35 experiencing **thoughts of suicide**, learners can contact Hopeline at 0800 067 4141.
* For access to anonymous **mental health support**, learners can use [Health Assured,](https://uelac.sharepoint.com/sites/studentsupport/SitePages/Health-Assured.aspx) a free confidential 24-hour helpline by calling 0800 028 3766.

## What is the importance of safeguarding on an apprenticeship?

All apprenticeships in England are funded through public funds and are overseen by the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted). Clause 4 of the [Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills) (Ofsted, September 2022) states that:

“Further education and skills providers should be safe environments where children, learners and vulnerable adults can learn and develop. Inspectors should consider how well they have created a culture of vigilance, where […] learners’ welfare is promoted and where timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken for […] learners who need early help or who may be suffering, or likely to suffer, harm.”

Additionally, there is an expectation that safeguarding is built into the curriculum of all apprenticeship courses at UEL. As per Clause 25 of the document above, a high-quality apprenticeship provider should demonstrate evidence that:

“The setting takes effective action to prevent and tackle discriminatory and derogatory language, including language that is derogatory about disabled people and homophobic, transphobic, sexist and racist language. As part of an age-appropriate curriculum, children and learners are supported to understand what constitutes a healthy relationship both online and offline and to recognise risks, for example, risks associated with criminal and sexual exploitation, sexual violence and harassment, domestic abuse, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, substance misuse, gang activity, radicalisation and extremism. They are aware of the support available to them.”

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