OUSSA Policy Statement

SAFEGUARDING

Ensuring the safety of children and adults at risk/protected adults

Agreed by OUSA Trustees October 2012
Contact details updated December 2012
Contents

Context ........................................................................................................................................... 3
Scope ........................................................................................................................................... 3
Statement of commitment .............................................................................................................. 4
Implementation ............................................................................................................................ 4
OUSA Designated Safeguarding Lead .......................................................................................... 5
OUSA Safeguarding Process .......................................................................................................... 5
Context

In line with current safeguarding/child protection policy, legislation and guidance in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the Open University Students Association (OUSA) recognises that it has a duty of care in creating a safe environment for both children and young people, and adults at risk/protected adults. By working with The Open University (OU) and appropriate external agencies, OUSA will seek to ensure that children and adults at risk/protected adults are safeguarded and protected from harm.

This Policy takes account of the differences in legislation affecting children at risk and adults at risk/protected adults\(^1\) across the four nations of the U.K:

Basic Information About the Relevant Legislation

Scope

This Policy applies to all OUSA activities and therefore includes all staff and volunteers and anyone working on behalf of OUSA. The term ‘OUSA representative’ is used throughout this Policy to refer to any such person.

Normally students appointed or elected to a position of authority in OUSA are currently registered students of the OU and therefore automatically come within the scope of the ‘OU Policy for ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable/protected adults at The Open University’.


This (OUSA) policy statement serves as a framework within which OUSA will co-operate with the University to achieve the safeguarding of vulnerable/protected groups. It supplements the OU Policy referenced above. OUSA confirms that any OUSA representative, not being a currently registered OU student, will also be in scope of this OU Policy.

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\(^1\) Referred throughout this document as ‘vulnerable/protected groups’.
Statement of commitment

This Policy demonstrates OUSA’s commitment to keeping safe vulnerable/protected groups. OUSA acknowledges its duty to respond appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

When OUSA conducts events independent of both the OU and any OU online environment OUSA will:

- Promote good practice and work to prevent harm, abuse and coercion occurring
- Ensure that any allegation of abuse or suspicion is dealt with thoroughly and promptly

Implementation

The Open University, as the lead agency for all safeguarding and child protection matters, will:

- Ensure that any matters referred by OUSA representatives are responded to as outlined in The Open University Policy for ensuring the safety of children and adults at risk/protected adults at The Open University
- Expect that a named person in OUSA will take lead responsibility for any child protection or adults at risk/protected adults matter to be known as the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Ensure that OUSA representatives know to whom they should report any safeguarding concerns
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring appropriate records are kept of decisions and actions taken and the rationale for these in respect of matters referred by OUSA
- Provide support and guidance to all OUSA representatives regarding safeguarding and child protection matters as appropriate
- Establish systems for the drawing up and review of safeguarding policy and procedures and ensure communication of these to the Designated Safeguarding Lead from OUSA
The Open University Students Association, as an independently registered charity, will:

- Designate the General Manager as the Safeguarding Lead for OUSA

- Ensure all OUSA representatives are aware of, and abide by The Open University’s Safeguarding Policy

- Follow The Open University’s referral procedures in cases of concern, collaborating and co-operating with any inquiries or investigations where allegations of abuse have been made against an OUSA representative

- Be represented on The Open University’s Safeguarding Group

**OUSA Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take overarching responsibility in the organisation for ensuring that:

- OUSA have safeguarding policies in place, which are implemented and followed

- OUSA stakeholders know about these policies, are kept up to date with any legislative changes which may affect them and are aware of their responsibilities

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead can be consulted about any safeguarding matters as and when needed and will seek any necessary support using the agreed channels

- OUSA has effective representation on the OU Safeguarding Group

**OUSA Safeguarding Process**

**What to do if a concern arises – under normal circumstances:**

- Any OUSA representative who has a concern or suspicion that a member of a protected/vulnerable group is at risk of significant harm, or have already been harmed, and may need to be protected should
report the concern to The Open University’s Safeguarding Team either by ringing 01342 327821 or by sending an email to safeguarding-referrals@open.ac.uk

- This should be done **within 24 hours** of the event(s) giving rise to the concern

- The OUSA representative is not required to make a judgement about whether abuse has occurred which is in the remit of others but has a responsibility to report his or her concerns

- Please inform the OU Safeguarding team that this is a reference under the OUSA Policy

**What to do if a concern arises – in an emergency:**

- Any member of staff or volunteer who is unable to make contact with the OU Safeguarding Team **and** believes that a member of a protected/vulnerable group is in immediate danger should take immediate action to ensure their safety

- If in any doubt, report the matter to the Police.

Adopted by the OUSA Board of Trustees
Date: 1 October 2012