



Safeguarding Policy

POL-NWH-001

Lead Officer (Post):	Compliance and Information Governance Manager
Responsible Office/ Department:	Performance and Planning / Student Experience
Responsible Committee:	Learning, Teaching and Research Committee
Review Officer (Post):	Student Services Manager
Date policy approved:	02/09/2022
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	30/05/2024
Date policy due for review:	30/08/2026
UHI Single Policy / UHI NWH Policy:	UHI Single Policy
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	07.10.24
Date of Privacy Impact Assessment:	Click or tap to enter a date.

Policy Summary

Overview	<p>Why is the policy required?</p> <p>This policy is required to fulfil the safeguarding obligations of UHI and all partners.</p>
Purpose	<p>What will the policy achieve?</p> <p>The policy will provide a unified approach to safeguarding across the university partnership and ensure parity of student experience.</p>
Scope	<p>Who does the policy apply to?</p> <p>The policy applies to UHI and all partners.</p>
Consultation	<p>Who has been consulted on the policy, and who will be notified?</p> <p>The policy has been developed by a group of practitioners from the university partnership to ensure that best practice is reflected in the policy and accompanying procedures.</p>
Implementation and Monitoring	<p>Who will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy, and what resources/ costs will be incurred?</p> <p>Partners are responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed in their own organisation.</p>
Risk Implications	<p>What are the risk implications of this policy?</p> <p>This policy will reduce risk for the University Partnership by ensuring that best practice from across the partnership is being shared and followed.</p>
Link with Strategy	<p>How is this policy linked to University strategy?</p> <p>This policy supports UHI North West and Hebrides commitment to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all. It also aims to ensure that all partners meet legislative requirements on safeguarding and discharge their duty of care.</p>
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: Updated October 2024. No action required.
	Privacy Impact Assessment: n/a

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The policy outlines our commitment to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all. In addition, the policy sets out strategies to manage known risk (and any potential risk) to ensure we do all we can to protect individuals from harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- 1.2 UHI North West and Hebrides recognise and comply with our legal and statutory obligations that arise from legislation including the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003, the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021, Prevent and CONTEST, and other relevant guidance and regulations.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **UHI and partners:** UHI is an integrated university, made up of a distinctive partnership of independent colleges and research institutions. The partners are: UHI Argyll, UHI Inverness, UHI Moray, UHI North West Hebrides, UHI Shetland, Highland Theological College UH (HTC)I, Orkney College UHI, Perth College UHI, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, and Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS).
- 2.2 **Safeguarding:** Safeguarding is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults to protect them from harm. This includes making sure we meet our legislative requirements and ensuring the appropriate policies and procedures are put in place. Safeguarding includes child protection but goes further and extends to all vulnerable groups.
- 2.3 **Duty of Care:** Our responsibility to use professional expertise and judgement to protect and promote the best interests of students and staff, and to ensure that we exercise an appropriate level of care towards them, as is reasonable within the parameters of our relationship.
- 2.4 **Vulnerable Adults:** Vulnerable adults or adults at risk are adults who meet all 3 of the below criteria as detailed in the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007:
 - That they are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests.
 - That they are at risk of harm; and
 - That because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity they are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.
- 2.5 **Child / Children:** As per the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, UHI North West and Hebrides define a 'child' as someone who has not yet attained the age of 18. However, UHI North West and Hebrides acknowledges the complexities in some legislation and the need to assess under 18s on an individual basis as per their unique circumstances and needs. UHI North West and Hebrides also acknowledges that some children are more vulnerable than others and aim to provide support and take actions based on individual circumstances and needs.
- 2.6 **Corporate parenting:** UHI North West and Hebrides has responsibilities as a corporate parent under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- 2.7 **Confidentiality** – Confidentiality relates to a set of controls on the use and disclosure of information. These controls are not absolute. Information that is 'confidential' should

always be handled with care and attention, noting the limits of the confidentiality and any conditions on the use or sharing of that information. To keep information 'confidential' means an institution will not share any data or information provided by students unless in exceptional circumstances. There are some cases where UHI North West and Hebrides cannot guarantee confidentiality (see Safeguarding Procedure, Section 4). However, UHI North West and Hebrides will always try to treat any information provided discretely and with sensitivity and respect.

Please read and consider Appendix 1 for further important information and definitions that help partners fulfil their safeguarding duties.

3. Purpose

- 3.1. Safeguarding, and the emerging agendas connected to safeguarding and duty of care are posing ever increasing challenges and demands in tertiary education. It is a key part of our remit and responsibilities to manage any real (or potential) risk we face, including in online environments, as a learning community and in our student halls of residences.
- 3.2. Our duty is to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all users within a framework set out by Scottish and UK government legislation. The increasing demands and complexity of these responsibilities make it imperative that UHI and all partners utilise and develop shared expertise, models, systems and processes to meet these challenges.
- 3.3. The following underpinning principles are shared by UHI and all partners:
 - 3.3.1. We will utilise a system of named staff (Safeguarding Leads) in UHI and each partner with key responsibilities and duties linked to this role. Some partners also have Safeguarding Deputies to support Safeguarding Leads.
 - 3.3.2. Safeguarding Leads and Deputies are invited to join the UHI Safeguarding Group and there is an expectation that each academic partner will have representation at each committee meeting (3 times a year).
 - 3.3.3. Some partners have local safeguarding groups or practitioner networks.
 - 3.3.4. We are committed to continuing professional development and ongoing training for safeguarders.
- 3.4. **Criminal Convictions**
 - 3.4.1 UHI and all partners have a Student Criminal Offence Data Policy which should be referred to alongside this policy.
 - 3.4.2 UHI North West and Hebrides recognise the transformative power of education and do not consider criminal convictions and offences or related security measures to be insurmountable barriers to learning. Where possible, we are committed to supporting those with spent and unspent criminal convictions in our communities as part of their rehabilitation.
 - 3.4.3 We encourage all applicants and students to disclose information about any criminal convictions or police proceedings which may affect their ability to complete key aspects of their programme or placement. This includes personal restrictions or other conditions arising from court orders or parole conditions e.g. travel, contact with others and use of equipment.
 - 3.4.4 We will offer support and guidance to applicants/students disclosing with criminal convictions about course selection and career planning and advise on the scope for any

potential course or placement adjustments.

- 3.4.5 We undertake to ensure that, by this policy and related procedures, we operate in consideration of all relevant statutory legislation and professional body requirements.

4. Scope

4.1 This policy applies to UHI and all partners.

4.2 This policy applies throughout UHI and partner premises and campuses, including:

- Student accommodation managed by UHI and partners directly
- Sports facilities operated by UHI North West and Hebrides
- Nurseries operated by UHI North West and Hebrides
- Any other areas or facilities where UHI or partner activities are carried out

4.3 This policy applies to activities undertaken by all students as part of their studies, including but not limited to:

- Work placements and work experience
- Summer schools, field trips and outreach activities

4.4 This policy applies in all environments, including physical and virtual (e.g. social media and online learning platforms).

4.5 HISA has their own Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures however, all 3rd party organisations, including HISA, must follow this policy in relation to safeguarding concerns at any campus operated by UHI North West and Hebrides or at any event run under the auspices of UHI North West and Hebrides or involving any student or staff member of UHI North West and Hebrides. Any concerns must be referred to the UHI North West and Hebrides Safeguarding Lead in line with UHI North West and Hebrides Safeguarding Procedure.

5. Exceptions

5.1 This policy does not apply to accommodation advertised by or signposted to by UHI and partners (e.g. privately managed student accommodation or listings of private tenancies).

5.2 Students attending activities organised and hosted by another academic institute or body e.g. conferences, symposiums, sports tournaments and society gatherings.

5.3 Safeguarding considerations related to work placements should refer to the relevant policy (see Section 9).

6. Notification

6.1 All staff are responsible for safeguarding students through their student journey and will be made aware of any changes to the policy.

6.2 Safeguarding Leads and Deputies will be briefed and trained on the policy and procedures.

6.3 The policy will be publicly available on our website.

6.4 We will make information available about our Safeguarding Lead and Deputies and how to contact them. This information will be available on the UHI website.

6.5 The regional Student Support Group (SSG) will include any updates to the policy or procedure as an agenda item to ensure that staff group have a forum to discuss changes and best practice.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1 The Human Resources Committee is responsible for approving the policy, ensuring the legal compliance of the policy and ensuring that it is followed. The Human Resources Committee is also responsible for ensuring the strategic effectiveness of the policy.
- 7.2 Principals and Senior Management Teams are responsible for operational compliance with the policy set by the Human Resources Committee making recommendations to the Board about updates to the policy. Principals and Senior Management Teams are also responsible for ensuring the operational effectiveness of the policy and making provision for training for all staff.
- 7.3 Safeguarding Leads are accountable for responsibilities as detailed in the Safeguarding Procedures.
- 7.4 Line managers are responsible for ensuring staff participate in training and follow the policy in their day-to-day role.
- 7.5 All staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with the policy and procedures.

8. Legislative Framework

- [Adults with Incapacity \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#)
- [Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)
- [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#)
- [Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Disclosure Scotland Act 2020](#)
- [Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#)
- [Equalities Act 2010](#)
- [EU Directive of 5th April 2011 on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting its Victims](#)
- [Forced Marriage etc. \(Protection and Jurisdiction\) \(Scotland\) Act 2011](#)
- [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) 2018](#)
- [Getting it right for every child \(GIFREC\)](#)
- [Human Trafficking & Exploitation \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#)
- [Mental Health \(Care and Treatment\) \(Scotland\) Act \(2003\)](#)
- [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#)
- [Police Act 1997](#)
- [Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2012](#)
- [Protection of Children \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#)
- [Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#)
- [Protection of Vulnerable Groups \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)
- [Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)
- [Sexual Offences \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1992](#)

9. Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

8 Complaints Handling Procedures

- 9 [IT Acceptable Use Policy](#)
- 10 [Placement and Externally Supported Learning Policy](#)
- 11 [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- 12 [Student Conduct Policy](#)
- 13 [Student Criminal Offence Data Disclosure Policy](#)
- 14 [Support to Study Procedure](#)

10. Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
0	March 2019	AP Board of Management	New single policy	UHI Safeguarding Group
1	May 2022	AP Board of Management	Minor spelling, grammar, formatting changes, in addition to changes related to the UHI rebranding. 1.1: Changed second sentence to include 'we do all we can to protect individuals'; 1.2: added 'National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021' and 'Prevent and CONTEST'; 2.1: New definition to reflect rebranding; 2.2, 2.4 and 2.5: revised definitions; 3.2 and 3.3: revised and combined into single 3.2; 3.3: new 3.3.2 and 3.3.3, previous 3.3.2 has become 3.3.4; 3.5: Section on criminal convictions revised and has become 3.4 due to removal of previous 3.3, new information related to Student Criminal Offence Data Disclosure Policy; 4.2: 'UHI or partner name' added to sports facilities and nurseries; 4.5: new section regarding HISA; 5.2: 'It is expected the third party will have their own Safeguarding Policy but UHI and partners cannot be held responsible for the content of any external policies' added to the end; 8: added National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021; 9: updated policy list to reflect current policy names and framework.	UHI Safeguarding Group
1b	Dec 2022	AP Board of Management	Changes in response to Education Scotland advice: changing 4.5 from ' <i>HISA has their own Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures, but there is an expectation on behalf of both organisations to work collaboratively to safeguard our community</i> ' to the above;	UHI Safeguarding Group

			deleting historic 5.2 <i>'Third parties using UHI or partner facilities (e.g. Highlands and Islands Student Association (HISA), other academic institutes, external sports clubs and societies). It is expected the third party will have their own Safeguarding Policy but UHI and partners cannot be held responsible for the content of any external policies'</i> .	
1C	Oct 2024	Human Resources Committee	<p>Addition of 2.7 to include definition of Confidentiality.</p> <p>Addition of 3.3.2 to include Safeguarding Deputies to join the UHI Safeguarding Group</p>	UHI Safeguarding Group
1d	June 2025	UHI Human Resources Committee	<p>Addition of Disclosure Scotland Act 2020 in Section 8</p> <p>Now approved to August 2026</p>	UHI Safeguarding Group