Faculty of Health Protocol for Raising and Escalating Concerns in relation to Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, Children and Young People

1.0 Introduction

Practice based/placement areas provide excellent learning environments for our students/apprentices and always endeavour to deliver very high standards of care to patients, clients, service users/people with lived experiences. However, from time to time, there could be a problem in a placement area where you may witness an incident or poor practice that is of concern to you.

This policy will set out the procedures to follow should this occur.

Section 3.2: 'Safeguarding of yourself' provides guidance on the procedure to follow if you are subject to any form of abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

2.0 Scope

Any student who is studying on a professionally regulated programme (including apprenticeship programmes) which contain a practice-based learning/placement element:

Nursing (all fields)
Nursing Associate
Midwifery
Diagnostic Radiography
Ultrasound
Paramedic programmes
Physiotherapy
Occupational Therapy
Social Work
Psychology
Counselling
Children, families, and youth work
Sport

3.0 Purpose

3.1 Safeguarding of patients, clients, people who use services and their carers:

Witnessing and reporting concerns regarding potential poor care, inappropriate behaviour or abuse involving patients, clients and those who use services and their carers within practice learning and placement areas (whilst uncommon), can be distressing and feel challenging. Professional Codes of Conduct include an expectation to act by reporting any concerns, and as a student on a professionally regulated programme, you are expected to uphold the values and expectations of your professional code and therefore have a professional, ethical, and statutory responsibility to report any incidents of poor practice, concern, abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

3.2 Safeguarding of yourself:

The university has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of inappropriate behaviour or abuse towards our students regardless of whether it has occurred within a practice learning/placement area or at any other time whilst studying with us. Being subject to any form of abuse, harassment, sexual misconduct, bullying, hate crime, discrimination, domestic abuse or inappropriate behaviour in any form is unacceptable. If you or someone you know has experienced or witnessed something concerning, there are several ways to report it to the University. You will always be supported throughout the process. You can access more information including how to access support via the University's Healthy Relationships Hub.
If you're at immediate risk of harm, please call **999** to speak with the **Emergency Services**. Alternatively, you can report your concern to the University through our dedicated reporting tool, You Report, We Support. This is a confidential platform for reporting concerns or incidents that occur within the university community. This includes but is not limited to Sexual Misconduct, Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, and other forms of inappropriate or harmful behaviour. You have the option to submit your report anonymously. Once submitted, your report will be reviewed and managed by trained Student Support staff, who will provide appropriate guidance and support.

4.0 Safeguarding Information - Induction to Practice learning/placement area: Roles and Responsibilities

Practice Learning/placement area staff within first week of placement (supervisor/educator

On commencement of each placement, you should receive an induction which includes information regarding the setting's emergency and safeguarding procedures along with the local policy for raising concerns (including the placement area's processes for raising concerns related to your own safeguarding and safety. Details should also include information on the placement's Freedom to Speak up Guardian or 'Safeguarding Officer'. (Please see https://nationalguardian.org.uk/ for details on Freedom to Speak Up Guardians).

Your responsibility as a student:

If these policies are not shared with you within your first week of each placement, report this without delay to your practice assessor/supervisor and/or Practice Education Facilitator (PEF). You will also need to report to your university Personal tutor (and/or Academic Assessor for nursing students) and (for midwifery students/apprentices) the Lead Midwife for Education (LME).

Social work students: report to your Link Lecturer and the University Social Work Placement Lead

5.0 Safeguarding of patients, clients, people who use services and their carers

5.1 Introduction

It is crucial that you report any incident/concern immediately and appropriately. You should follow the practice learning/placement area's raising and escalation concerns process which will include reporting to the appropriate staff in the placement area, who will support you with the process.

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In addition, you ***must always*** notify the University via the **Student Enquiry Point** when prompted to indicate the nature of your enquiry or referral, highlight 'safeguarding'. The safeguarding team will then also alert the appropriate staff within the Institute of Health.

The following is a list of examples that may constitute neglect or abuse, should give rise to concern and be reported:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence
- Sexual abuse (sexual misconduct, sexual violence)
- Child exploitation (physical, sexual, criminal, including county lines)
- Psychological abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- County lines
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Institutional abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission.
- Self-neglect
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage and/or honor-based violence.
- Bullying and harassment
- Hate crime.

(Adapted from: Chapter 14, Care and Support Statutory Guidance: Updated 2nd Sept, 2022, issued by the Department of Health under the Care Act 2014) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance#safeguarding-1

5.2 Roles and Responsibilities: Reporting a Concern, your responsibilities as a student:

The following pages contain details to guide you in the process of reporting a concern and a detailed explanation of the process that takes place after reporting it**.**

Detailed Guidance: how to raise a concern.
REMEMBER:

- Take immediate and prompt action.
- Report as per the guidance below and make sure you also record your concerns in writing (you may be asked to produce a statement at a later date).
- Report & record: What happened; where it happened; who was involved/witnessed and what actions were taken at the time?
- Remain objective and state the facts.

Remember: If in doubt – check it out

5.2.1 In the event of immediate risk of harm/emergency situation

If you (as a student) have a concern about the safety or wellbeing of adult/child/young person in the placement and/or about the quality of care provision or the placement setting: and there an immediate risk of harm/emergency situation:

- Follow the local policy for raising concerns - but be prepared to call 999 for the appropriate emergency service required.
- Report your concerns immediately without delay to the appropriate person of authority in the placement – for example the placement/ward/department manager; the shift leader and/or the person who is in charge at the time of the incident.
- Once the immediate risk of harm/emergency has been dealt with, report to the University via the **Student Enquiry Point** When prompted to indicate the nature of your enquiry or referral, highlight 'safeguarding'. The student services team will offer support and will also alert the appropriate staff within the Institute of Health -

5.2.2 If you are the person who is at immediate risk of harm:

- Make yourself safe by removing yourself from the setting and take appropriate action immediately (for example contacting emergency services)
- Report to the appropriate person of authority in the placement - for example the placement/ward/department manager; the shift leader and/or the person who is in charge at the time of the incident.
- Once the immediate risk of harm/emergency has been dealt with, follow the placement area's local policy for raising concerns, and be prepared to call 999 for the emergency service required. Once the immediate risk of harm to you has been dealt with/removed: report to the University via the Student Enquiry Point. The student services team will offer support and will then also alert the appropriate staff within the Institute of Health.

5.2.3 Raising a concern when there is not immediate risk of harm/emergency situation

If you (as a student) have a concern about: the safety or wellbeing of adult/child/young person in the placement; are concerned about the quality of care provision; or are concerned about inappropriate behaviour towards a patient, client, person who uses the service or their carers (and there is not an immediate risk of harm/emergency situation):

- Follow the practice learning/placement area's raising and escalating concerns protocol and inform senior placement staff - for example: the placement/ward/department manager; the shift leader and/or the person who is in charge at the time of the incident. (Please see guidance below if your concern involves any of the above individuals)

- Inform the University via the **Student Enquiry Point**. When prompted to indicate the nature of your enquiry or referral, highlight 'safeguarding'. The student services team will offer support and will also alert the appropriate staff within the Institute of Health

5.2.4 If you feel unable to raise a concern in the placement or it is the manager/the shift leader/person in charge of the setting that you are concerned about:

- Follow the practice learning/placement area's local policy for raising concerns.
- Be prepared to call 999 for the appropriate emergency service required (In the event of immediate risk of harm/emergency situation)
- Report to the Freedom to Speak Guardian/Safeguarding Lead for the placement's organisation and the Practice Education Facilitator
- Report to the University via the **Student Enquiry Point**. When prompted to indicate the nature of your enquiry or referral, highlight 'safeguarding'. The student services team will offer support and will also alert the appropriate staff within the Institute of Health

5.2.5 Referral to external agencies:

As a healthcare student, but also as a member of the public, anyone can make a direct referral to one of the statutory safeguarding agencies such as: CQC; multi-agency safeguarding hub –but you must still ensure you also inform the University by reporting via the **Student Enquiry Point**. When prompted to indicate the nature of your enquiry or referral, highlight 'safeguarding'. The student services team will offer support and will also alert the appropriate staff within the Institute of Health.

6.0 What Happens If you are the subject of any complaint about your behaviour/conduct either in a placement setting or outside of programme activity?

As a healthcare student you need to:

- Immediately inform your Personal Tutor/Academic Assessor and Programme Leader – and LME (for midwifery students), Social work students report to your Link Lecturer and University Placement Lead, who will provide the required support and guidance.
- Refer to UoC Student code of Conduct: Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure | MyCumbria

If at any time throughout any of the processes you do not receive a prompt response to your reporting, or you have any concerns, contact your Programme Leader or Principal Lecturer, and LME (for midwifery students). Social work students contact the University Social Work Placement Lead, who will then escalate appropriately

7.0 Key Points:

- Take immediate and prompt action.
- Ensure your own safety
- Follow the practice learning/placement area's local raising and escalating concerns and safeguarding protocols
- Report to the University via Student Enquiry Point (if safeguarding concern relates to patients, clients, people who use services or their carers)
- Report to the University's You Report We Support page if safeguarding concern relates to yourself and your own safeguarding
- Seek advice and support as soon as possible from the placement team/PEF, your Personal Tutor/Academic Assessor and: LME (for student midwives), and for social work students your Link Lecturer and University Placement Lead
- Protect patient/client confidentiality.
- Keep an accurate record of concerns, events, and dates/times as you may have to provide a factual statement.

For additional sources of support and further resources, please refer to appendix 1

8.0 Safeguarding concerns: What happens next when you have raised a concern?

8.1 Writing a statement

You may be asked to write a statement.

This is sometimes a difficult thing to do but you will receive support and guidance from your Personal Tutor/Academic Assessor and the student support services team to help you. You can also get support and guidance from the Student Union. Student Midwives should also seek support from the LME. Social work students should also seek support from your Link Lecturer and University Placement Lead.

A statement may be requested by University staff for example: your Personal tutor/Academic Assessor, Safeguarding Lead, or by the placement area to support any investigation of the concern raised.

8.1.1 Good practice in statement writing:

- Include dates, times and places.
- Name all those involved including any witnesses, and if possible, include their titles (remember to anonymise patient/client names at this point)
- Keep it factual and don't include emotive language/or opinions. You can receive help from your Personal Tutor/Academic Assessor in making sure your statement is written in the correct format.
- Describe what happened and any impact you observed, including any impact on you.
- Describe any actions that were taken at the time including by whom and any outcome.

8.1.2 What happens to my statement?

Copies may go to the following (please note this list is not exhaustive):

- Within the University: The Principal Lecturer/Lead Midwife for Education, Head of Practice Learning & Partnership Engagement. Copies may also go to the Head of Student Support as Operational Safeguarding Lead, the NMC Official Correspondent (if nursing or midwifery related) and others as appropriate (in accordance with GDPR requirements)
- Within the practice learning/placement area: The Practice Education Facilitator as appropriate
- The placement area itself may also require a copy of the statement in order for them to be able to take appropriate action to address the concerns (for example the Manager and/or professional lead)
- External agencies: Other statutory and regulatory compliance bodies may also require the information (examples including, but not limited to: NMC; HCPC; Police; Social Work England; CQC; Social Services, Local Authority representatives)

8.1.3 What happens next?

- Your concern will be acknowledged, and you will be informed of the next steps.
- Your concern and statement will be escalated to the appropriate staff members within the University, this may include: your Programme Leader and Principal Lecturer and (if not already done) will be escalated to the University's Head of Practice Learning and Partnership Engagement (HPLPE) and Head of Student Support in their role as Operational Lead for Safeguarding You will be offered support from your Personal Tutor/Programme lead, and for social work students, your Link Lecturer and University Placement Lead. You can also seek support from the Student Union, Principal Lecturer, Lead Midwife for Education. The Head of Practice Learning & Partnership Engagement and the Head of Student Support will also provide support if required. If you are a student member of a union, you can also seek guidance/support from them.
- Student support services also provide assistance and guidance- this can be accessed directly via Safeguarding | MyCumbria
- The University may need to seek advice from the local external agency as to whether there is a requirement for them to take over any investigation; alternatively, the external agency may ask the University to do this and report back to them as required.
- If the external agency decides there is no statutory requirement for them to investigate, then this becomes an internal University matter, and any required further investigation will take place.
- Senior University Institute of Health staff, for example The Head of Practice Learning & Partnership Engagement, the Head of Student Support, senior placement leads and the NMC Official Correspondent/LME (for nursing and midwifery concerns) will lead any required investigation often in partnership with the placement area concerned.
- A joint action plan will be produced if necessary to ensure that concerns raised are dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

8.1.4 What happens if the external agency wishes to proceed with an investigation?

- University processes will be put on hold until there is an outcome from the external investigation.
- The external agency investigation team may want to speak with you. We will arrange for this to happen at University (or via virtual 'Teams' meeting if face to face is not possible) in the presence of University of Cumbria staff, for example this could include: your Personal Tutor, LME, NMC Official Correspondent, the Head of Practice Learning & Partnership Engagement, Head of Student Support/Operational Safeguarding Lead, Student Union representative support and anyone else you wish to accompany you. This is a supportive discussion where the external agency investigation team's role and aim is to gather facts and information.
- The investigation team may then visit the placement area and conduct a thorough investigation.
- An investigation may take weeks or months to conclude; once concluded, the University should receive a letter or report; findings will be fed back to you where possible.

8.1.5 What happens if there is an internal investigation within the placement area/placement area's organisation?

- Once your statement is received at the placement area, their internal investigation procedures may be invoked.
- If this happens, the placement area will request a copy of your written statement and they may request a meeting with you (and any other students who may have also reported concerns at the same time) to investigate.
- You should notify your personal tutor (personal tutor and/or academic assessor for nursing students) and LME (for student midwives) and for social work students your Link Lecturer and University Placement Lead, so that you can be accompanied by your Personal tutor (or Academic Assessor)/Programme Leader/LME and any other representation you wish to be present throughout e.g. professional union or students' union. You will also receive support through the whole process from a Professional Midwifery Advocate, Head of Practice Learning & Partnership Engagement, Head of Student Services/Operational Safeguarding Lead, Lead Midwife for Education, NMC Official correspondent
- If you are asked to attend any meetings, staff from the University (as noted above) will continue to support you throughout the process.
- You will be given time to attend any meetings and paid travel expenses where necessary.
- Findings will be fed back to you where possible.

Appendices

Faculty of Health (FOH) Placement Safeguarding Concern Escalation Flowchart: **guidance for students.** Read in conjunction with: FOH Raising and Escalating Concerns in relation to Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, Children and Young People protocol



Student Safeguarding and Wellbeing: Information for placement staff
In a safeguarding or health emergency

In an emergency where any person is at risk of immediate harm call 999. Then report to the university safeguarding officer using the Student Enquiry Point Student Enquiry Point | Student Enquiry Point (symplicity.com) . Please select the 'Safeguarding' option and then 'Placement Concern'.

If a student is admitted to A&E it is the responsibility of the emergency services to make contact with the emergency contact/next of kin. If the placement setting has access to emergency contact/next of kin information via PARE or the student has been able to provide it to you, you may be asked to share this with the emergency services.

For any non-urgent wellbeing or mental health concerns, referrals can be made via the Student Enquiry Point Student Enquiry Point | Student Enquiry Point (symplicity.com). The Mental Health and Wellbeing team operate a duty rota during office hours and will respond to the referral. They may need to contact you for further information so please ensure you provide contact details and are available to speak with the team following your referral.
For out of hours concerns that are not an emergency/999 but require support from the university, the university security team can be contacted on 07809 190566 or 07809 190530

The University Safeguarding and Prevent Policy is available online and details of Roles and Responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and Prevent can be found on the Safeguarding MyCumbria page

Further information

University Mental Health and Wellbeing support can be accessed via Mental Health and Wellbeing | MyCumbria

Crisis and Out of Hours Support for students

Residents of Lancaster, Morecambe and South Cumbria can call the NHS 24 hour helpline 0800 013 0710

Residents of North Cumbria can call the NHS 24 hour helpline 0800 652 2865

UK residents can call the Samaritans on 116 123 to talk to someone at any time, day or night.

You Report, We Support
You Report We Support is a way to receive advice and guidance about sexual misconduct, bullying, harassment or discrimination. If a student reports any of the above, please encourage them to submit a You Report We Support form and a Student Services Advisor will discuss their report and support options with them. You can report an incident using You Report We Support.

Trusted Contacts Policy
As part of our approach to support students' safety and wellbeing we require all students to provide details of at least one Trusted Contact, on an annual basis, when registering for their programme. Students are asked to provide this information so that it is available to the university in the unlikely event that a situation arises where we consider a student's health, wellbeing or safety to be at significant risk. The policy can be viewed here Trusted-Contacts-Policyupdated025

Further reading and guidance can be found at the links below:

University of Cumbria: Safeguarding & Prevent Advice & Guidance for Staff Students and External Bodies (including link to the University of Cumbria'a Safeguarding and Prevent Policy: https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Health-and-Wellbeing/Safeguarding/

NMC: Read Raising Concerns online - The Nursing and Midwifery Council (nmc.org.uk)
HCPC: Report concerns about safety | (hcpc-uk.org)

Social Work England: Raise a Concern: Raise a concern - Social Work England
NHS Freedom to Speak Up guidance and advice: NHS England » Freedom to speak up

Department of Health & Social Care: Care and Support Statutory Guidance; Chapter 14, (Updated July 2025) issued by the Department of Health under the Care Act 2014:
Care and support statutory guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) - CQC, the independent regulator of health and social care in England: Care Quality Commission

Health Education England: Raising and responding to concerns.
Instilling the importance of speaking up about patient safety and responding effectively.
https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/raising-responding-concerns

Local County Councils' Safeguarding websites offer information and guidance about safeguarding of adults and children and how to raise a concern:
In order to access this: search for:
How do I make a safeguarding referral about a vulnerable adult/adult at risk? How do I make a safeguarding referral about a vulnerable child/child at risk?

Lancashire:
Safeguarding - Lancashire County Council

Cumbria:
Safeguarding Adults Board: https://www.cumbriasab.org.uk/

Cumbria:
Safeguarding children and young people:
New Safeguarding Children Partnerships websites | Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership