SAFEGUARDING GUIDANCE FOR RESEARCHERS

See Annex 1 for definitions used in this Guidance.

Introduction

“Safeguarding” in research is defined as “preventing and addressing any sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment of research participants, communities and research staff, plus any broader forms of violence, exploitation and abuse ... such as bullying, psychological abuse and physical violence”.  (UKCDR, February 2020).

This guidance is intended to apply to all research activities at the University and should be read in-conjunction with the University’s Safeguarding Policy and the other relevant policies and procedures as set out therein. You should also refer to the information on the University’s website relating to research: <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/research/>.

Whilst this guidance applies to all research, it will be particularly relevant in the context of international development research, which is any research undertaken for the social or economic benefit of low- and middle-income countries, given the nature of that research and the greater risk of abuses of power occurring.

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to assist **all staff and students involved in research activities, including international development research, to:**

* **understand their safeguarding responsibilities; and**
* **prevent harm coming to anyone they engage with as part of that research activity.**

Key Areas

The key areas this guidance will cover are:

* **Your responsibilities**
* **Key contacts**
* **Identifying and mitigating safeguarding risks**
* **Communicating with research participants**
* **Data Protection**
* **Reporting and managing Safeguarding Concerns**
* **Support**
* **Further information**

# **Your responsibilities**

It is your responsibility to:

* **familiarise yourself with and follow the Safeguarding Policy and all other relevant policies and procedures that apply to you and your research;**
* **obtain ethics approval for your research project;**
* **undertake health and safety risk assessments for the work or ensure that these are undertaken by appropriate third parties;**
* **look after yourself when carrying out your research and not put yourself at unnecessary risk of harm;**
* **look out for others;**
* **meet the standards expected of you; and**
* **report any Safeguarding Concerns.**

A number of policies that are set out in the ‘Policy roadmap’ must be read and understood before undertaking a research project. Further details of these can be found on the Research pages of the University’s website or by following this link: <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/research/governance-policy/policyroadmap/#!faq-8>

# **Key contacts**

If you have any questions about safeguarding or you are not sure whether something is a Safeguarding Concern, you should contact one of the key safeguarding contacts. The best way to get in touch is to use the designated safeguarding email address, which is [safeguarding@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@dundee.ac.uk).

Key safeguarding contacts:

* Jaclyn Suttie – Chair of the Safeguarding Advisory Group
* Keith Mackle – Deputy Director of Student Services
* Beth Hannah – Convener of the University Research Ethics Committee

Designated safeguarding lead on UEG/UMG: Neale Laker – Director of Academic and Corporate Governance.

# For advice on non-clinical/non-clinically related research projects, please contact the Convenor of the University's Research Ethics Committee, [Dr Beth Hannah](mailto:e.hannah@dundee.ac.uk).

# For clinical/clinically related projects, contact the Senior Research Governance Manager, Tayside Medical Science Centre (TASC) [Tricia Burns](mailto:pburns@dundee.ac.uk).

# **Identifying and mitigating safeguarding risks**

When planning your research, it is important that you consider what any safeguarding risks may be, with particular emphasis on the welfare of vulnerable groups. This will allow you to properly plan your research, put measures in place to prevent any Concerns from arising and be prepared to deal with any Concerns that do arise.

The following points, where applicable to your research, are set out to help you to identify and mitigate safeguarding risks.

1. Carry out proper due diligence and complete all relevant risk assessments
2. Make sure you identify and complete all necessary risk assessments when planning your research. These may include risk assessments to be completed as part of the ethics approval application procedures and/or those relating to travelling on University work within the UK or overseas as set out on the [Safety Services](https://www.dundee.ac.uk/safety/atoz/) part of the website.
3. You should also identify any relevant local legislation and external policies that may apply to your research, such as those relating to funders, national governments, local authorities or NGOs. This may includes data protection legislation and you should refer to [Data Protection and Research – Guidance](https://sway.office.com/fHhqKBruLbDkq1HK) for further information on your legal obligations in that area.
4. It is important that the risk assessments focus on protecting you as a researcher as well as considering any risks to the people that you may interact with as part of your research. You should consider whether any particular characteristics make people more vulnerable such as their race, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation, age and social background.
5. You should carry out proper due diligence in respect of any partner organisations or other third parties that you will be working with as part of your research. The University has developed a Due Diligence Policy which you should refer to. It is important that you check that the University and any partner organisation have a shared understanding of safeguarding and how researchers should conduct themselves whilst carrying out research. One way to do this would be to obtain a copy of a partner’s safeguarding policy and code of practice for researchers.
6. If after completing the necessary risk assessments and due diligence, the potential harm to you, other researchers, participants and/or communities is deemed to be significant then you must consider how your research can be modified to mitigate the risk of harm. If you cannot put measures in place to prevent yourself or others from being harmed, and there is a high risk of harm occurring, then you should not proceed with your research.
7. Consider what the safeguarding risks are in the place where you are planning to carry out your research and what the local community perceives as harm
8. If you are planning research in a location that you are unfamiliar with then you should consider what safeguarding risks are prevalent there. It may be worth consulting with colleagues and/or the partner organisation to determine whether they have any experience in that location and can assist you to understand what the risks may be.
9. You should seek to understand what the people participating in your research, and their wider community, perceive as being a risk or harm and how they keep themselves safe. It may be useful to find out and consider how a particular community has responded to any previous Safeguarding Concerns.
10. How victims/ survivors/whistle-blowers are treated by their community may be relevant as it may determine how you deal with a Safeguarding Concern. For example, if a Concern is reported to the wrong people in the local area, will more harm come to the victim as a result?
11. You should also consider whether carrying out your research in a particular location or within a particular community will exacerbate potential harms not just to you or fellow researchers but to participants and the wider community.
12. Understand how you would deal with a Safeguarding Concern should one arise during your research
    1. You should find out, as best you can, what the locally applicable systems for justice or support are in relation to Safeguarding Concerns. If your research is UK based then this may be straightforward, for example, if an incident relates to a child being abused the most appropriate action may be to report the matter to the police or the local authority’s social services. However, it may be the case that there is no such support service for children depending on where your research is being carried out and reporting a particular Concern to the local police may do more harm than good.
    2. You should consider the following scenarios and how you would deal with them during the planning stage of your research so that you are fully prepared should a Concern arise:

* **what to do if you witness a safeguarding incident involving a University student or staff member;**
* **what to do if you have a ‘bystander concern’ i.e. a concern about an incident affecting someone not directly involved in your research?**
* **what to do if an interviewee reports a case about someone else and asks you for help in dealing with it?**
* **What to do if a Concern relates to someone from a partner organisation?**

**For each scenario you should consider who you would report the Concern to and what reporting route is most appropriate. This may involve appointing a named individual to act as ‘safeguarding contact’ and be a liaison between the participants, the research team and the University’s safeguarding contacts; or working with participants and their wider community to ascertain how they would prefer to report Concerns.**

1. Recruiting researchers
   1. If you are involved in the recruitment of staff or students to a research project then you should ensure that all relevant HR policies and procedures relating to recruitment are followed. In particular, pre-employment checks should be carried out and references obtained.
   2. If the research involves working with children or vulnerable adults then extra steps may be required to assess a candidate’s suitability, such as being a member of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme.
2. Working with others

a. It is important that everyone you will be working with as part of your research, including external agencies and organisations, are aware of and understand the University’s approach to safeguarding and are familiar with its relevant policies and procedures. Everyone in your research team should understand how to report a Safeguarding Concern.

1. Training
   1. You should attend any training that the University has in place relating to standards, safeguarding, health and safety, codes of conduct, whistleblowing and reporting incidents.
2. Create a risk register

a. Each research project should have its own risk register to record any identified risks and set out how those risks can be resolved or mitigated. The risk register should be reviewed and updated regularly.

# **Communicating with Research Participants**

The University considers participants in University research activities to be members of our Community. It is therefore imperative that we do as much as we can to keep them safe and to ensure that participating in our research does not cause them harm. It is also essential that participants know their rights in relation to the research and know who to contact if they have a Safeguarding Concern.

The following points set out the types of information that should be communicated to research participants.

1. How to raise a Safeguarding Concern

1. You should ensure that all participants know how to raise a Safeguarding Concern about any researcher who is a University student or member of staff. The ways for Concerns to be raised should be built into the research design and discussed with and explained to participants. At least one way to report a Concern should be independent of the research team.
2. You should also be aware of and be able to explain to participants that if they believe that a Concern they have raised has not been dealt with or listened to then they can make a complaint under the University’s Complaint Handling Procedure.

2. Consenting process

1. It is important that you carefully explain all aspects of consent throughout contact with participants and check that they understand. You should also consider power dynamics and whether this has an impact on a participant giving their consent.

3. Rights of participants

1. You should make sure you give information to participants to enable them to understand fully what their rights are when taking part in research, e.g. consent, withdrawal, not answering some questions, photographs, access to their home, not being out of pocket etc.

4. Expected standards of researcher conduct

* 1. You should provide information to participants so that they know what to expect in terms of researcher conduct.

5. Use of participants’ data

a. Information should be provided to research participants so that they understand how their personal data will be collected, used and protected.

6. Managing expectations

* 1. It is important that you do not make promises to research participants that you cannot keep. Depending on the circumstances of the case, if a participant does raise a Safeguarding Concern there may be a limit to what the University can do about it. For example, it will be difficult for the University to act when a Concern is historic and unrelated to the carrying out of the research.
  2. You should let research participants know whether or not they will see the results of the research, so they know what to expect. Some participants may not want to know the results and this is something you should discuss with them.

# **Data protection**

When planning your research you should make sure you are familiar with the University’s policies and procedures relating to data protection, which can be found on the website – <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/information-governance/data-protection>.

In particular you should refer to ‘Data Protection and Research – Guidance’ which can be found here: <https://sway.office.com/fHhqKBruLbDkq1HK>

Before, during and after your research you should ensure that you use robust processes and procedures to ensure the confidentiality of participants’ data, including data relating to Safeguarding Concerns.

Reporting and Managing Safeguarding Concerns

Concerns relating to University of Dundee staff or students

If you witness a Safeguarding Concern relating to a student or member of staff, or if you become aware of a Concern as a result of someone else bringing it to your attention, you should report it to the University as soon as possible so that action can be taken to address the Concern and any necessary support can be put in place for those involved.

The way to report a Concern is set out in Part 2 of the Safeguarding Policy. That section also describes how Concerns will be dealt with.

Concerns relating to others

If the person who has caused harm is not a University student or member of staff then it is unlikely that the University will be able to take any action. You should consider carefully who the Concern should be reported to.

If a Concern relates to someone from a partner organisation, then that organisation’s safeguarding policy and reporting process may apply.

Depending on the circumstances and who is involved, the University may be able to offer welfare and/or advocacy support to someone who has been affected by a Safeguarding Concern. If you are not sure what to do about a Concern or have any questions, please contact [safeguarding@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@dundee.ac.uk) for advice.

Reporting Concerns to research funders

If your research is funded by a third party it is likely that there will be an expectation from them that details of any proven Safeguarding Concerns are brought to their attention. For example, UKRI state in their guidance:

“If, following investigation, the allegation of exploitation, abuse or harm against an individual directly involved in UKRI-funded activity is upheld, the organisation must notify UKRI of the investigation and the decision in a timely manner.”

# **Support**

Support is available for those who have been affected by a Safeguarding Concern if they want to access it.

Student Services have a team in the Enquiry Centre who are there to provide support and advice, and direct students to other services. Further details of the range of support services that are in place to help students can be found on the Student Services web pages <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/student-services/>. These include the University Health Service, the Counselling Service, Disability Services and support for student related Gender Based Violence issues.  Additional online resources are available on the Live Smart website here: <https://libguides.dundee.ac.uk/livesmart>

Human Resources and Organisational Development have a Resilience Package which highlights sources of help that are available to members of staff. It can be found by using this link: [Resilience Package](https://www.dundee.ac.uk/media/dundeewebsite/hr/documents/a-z/Resilience%20Package%20-%20Dec%202020.docx).

In addition, support is available from the following:

* Occupational Health  <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/safety/occhealth/>
* Your School Office <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/corporate-information/academic-schools>
* Human Resources <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/hr/>
* Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Office <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/equality-diversity/>
* DUSA <https://www.dusa.co.uk/advice>
* Chaplaincy <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/chaplaincy/>

# **Further information**

Links to further information about safeguarding in research can be found here:

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| Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research (UKCDR, April 2020) | <https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/resource/guidance-on-safeguarding-in-international-development-research>/ |
| NIHR Safeguarding Guidance  (September 2020) | <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/nihr-safeguarding-guidance/25744> |
| Preventing harm in research (UKRI) | <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/good-research-resource-hub/preventing-harm-in-research/> |

Annex 1

**Definitions**

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| **Community** | **means the University Community** |
| **Concern** | **means a Safeguarding Concern** |
| **NIHR** | **National Institute for Health Research** |
| **University Community** | **means staff, students, associate staff, associate students, visitors, contractors, research participants and other members of the public who come into contact with the University and its work.** |
| **UKCDR** | **UK Collaborative on Development Research** |
| **Safeguarding Concern** | **means a concern arising as a consequence of:**   * **an individual being subject to or being at risk of abuse, neglect or harm;** * **an individual being or at risk of being radicalised;** * **an individual having abused, neglected or caused harm to someone else; or** * **an individual’s behaviour being considered to be a Serious Issue.**   **This includes, but is not limited to, sexual exploitation, violence, bullying and harassment.** |