Safeguarding Risk Assessment Guidance

One of the responsibilities of Academic and Professional Service departments set out by the University of Warwick's Safeguarding policy is to ensure that an appropriate Safeguarding Risk Assessment has been carried out and any necessary mitigating actions completed prior to the commencement of any activity involving children or adults at risk. This guidance is intended to support those who are running activities to consider some of the key areas of risk relating to such activities when planning events. This list is not exhaustive and there may be risks specific to the event/activity that will need to be considered. The Safeguarding team can provide feedback and additional guidance on the completion of risk assessments if required via safeguarding@warwick.ac.uk.

1. **Nature of the event**

You need to have a good understanding of the type of event that you will be running with under-18s or adults at risk in order to inform your risk assessment, including the frequency, duration and nature of any contact between participants and the staff, volunteers or students running the event, and when the contact will occur.

You may want to ask yourself the following questions:

- Is your activity face to face, or online?
- Is your activity aimed at adults, but with a likely or possible presence of under 18s or adults at risk?
- What activity are you going to do with them? Are there health and safety risks that you need to consider?
- How will you ensure that topics discussed as part of activities are appropriate for the ages of the attendees?
- If the activity is face to face, is the physical space you are planning to use safe for participants? Is it secure or publicly accessible? Is there access to appropriate toilet facilities, are these publicly accessible, how will participants be supervised/assisted to use them?
- If the activity is face to face, how will you ensure that participants arrive and depart safely? You should consider what you will do if participants are not picked up on time, or if no one arrives to collect them, or someone arrives to collect them who is not the same person who dropped them off.
- Are you using multiple locations, or transporting under 18s to locations off campus? How will you ensure that participants move between locations safely, and what will you do if a participant goes missing?
- If the event is taking place on campus, how will you mitigate the risks associated with campus being primarily an adult environment, such as unrestricted WiFi access, adult material available in the library, alcohol, and cigarettes available for sale in bars and retail outlets?
- For residential visits, how will participants be supervised overnight? Are there additional risks that are posed by their accommodation? You will need to ensure that parents, guardians, or carers for participants are aware that the University does not act 'in loco parentis'.
- For both in person and online events, is there any possibility that staff, students, or volunteers will find themselves working one to one with a child or adult at risk?

For online events, the following questions may also be relevant:

- Which platform will be used for the activity, what options are available, and is it necessary to deliver this activity online? Is the platform used appropriate for the age, stage of development and ability of the people who will be engaging with the activity? What safety tools are in place on the platform?

- Has the platform been approved by the University? What safety and privacy settings are available as default, and which will need to be manually enabled? Guidance is available from IT Services on the use of Microsoft Teams and other platforms for live events (https://warwick.ac.uk/services/its/servicessupport/training/resources/). Online events should always be hosted using licensed platforms that have been approved by the Information and Digital Group, as stated in Regulation 31 on Information Management, Security and Records Management. Any platform must have the following features: the ability to restrict access so that only the intended participants may take part, the ability to restrict access to sensitive personal information for participants (such as contact information) and the ability for the host/a moderator to remove anyone who is behaving in an inappropriate manner.

- Are there risks of participants in the activity coming across inappropriate content? Are there adverts on the platform, or are there tools to facilitate the sharing of content (and who has access to use them)? What moderation tools are available, and what training is required to ensure that those responsible for delivering the activity are familiar and confident in their use?

- How do you want staff, students, contractors, volunteers or participants in the activity to conduct themselves on the platform? Consider putting into place an online Code of Conduct - an example of "Community Rules" can be found on the OurWarwick Offer Holders Community pages here: https://our.warwick.ac.uk/community-rules/.

- What are the risks around contact on the platform? Who will have access to the platform, and how will access be controlled so that only intended users can join the activity? What communication features are available, does the platform allow participants to contact each other or staff in a group or one to one basis? When does access to the platform end for participants, will it be possible for them to engage with the platform outside of working hours?

For online events, it is also good practice to ensure that participants understand who is taking part, who will be able to see and hear them, or view any messages that they send. Participants should also be made aware of the risks of sharing personal information (including contact information) with others participating in the event, and that they should not make audio or visual recordings of online events or take screenshots. Staff, volunteers, and students running events should consider whether any background environment that is visible during any video or streaming is appropriate, and use virtual backgrounds or blurring tools, if necessary. It is good practice to ensure that any chat or messaging functionality is monitored continuously – it may be necessary to have a second member of staff, volunteer, or student present to ensure that inappropriate content is not shared.

2. **Staff, volunteers or students running the event**

Staff, volunteers, and students who work with children and Adults at Risk should be selected or recruited in line with Safer Recruitment best practice and have received appropriate safeguarding training, which is updated at least annually. The Safeguarding Team can provide guidance on available and appropriate safeguarding training (safeguarding@warwick.ac.uk). For in person events, it is recommended that an appropriately trained first aider be identified and present/on-site for activities involving children or adults at risk, and that staff, volunteers or students running the event

are familiar with fire safety/evacuation procedures. A list of staff with first aid training is available from: https://warwick.ac.uk/services/healthsafetywellbeing/guidance/first_aid/openingpage/.

You should ensure that staff, volunteers, and students are appropriately briefed on the safeguarding arrangements in place for the activity, their role and responsibilities for keeping participants safe, expectations regarding how they will behave around participants and your escalation process for raising any concerns or reporting any incidents. You should ensure that they are familiar with the University's safeguarding policy. Staff, volunteers, and students will need to be aware to only communicate with participants via official channels (such as work e-mail addresses), to avoid sharing personal contact details, and to avoid engaging in contact with participants via social media. Staff, volunteers, and students should be advised to avoid being in a one-to-one situation with children or adults at risk, to be mindful of their use of language and terminology, to avoid any unnecessary physical contact, and be mindful that gestures that may be well intentioned, such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, or offers of personalised help or support, could be misinterpreted.

You should consider the following:

- Are you aware of the appropriate staffing ratios for your activity? It is recommended that at least two staff, volunteers or students are present for any activity involving under 18s or adults at risk, regardless of group size, and the NSPCC further advises the following ratios:
  0 - 2 years - one adult to three children
  2 - 3 years - one adult to four children
  4 - 8 years - one adult to six children
  9 - 12 years - one adult to eight children
  13 - 18 years - one adult to ten children
  Depending on the needs and abilities of the children, and the nature of the activity, you may need to have more adults than the minimum recommended. You should also consider what would happen if a member of staff, volunteer or student had to leave the activity for any reason (for example, to accompany a participant to hospital) and how appropriate ratios would be maintained.
- How will you determine whether those staff, volunteers or students running the event are safe to work with under 18s/adults at risk?
- Are staff, volunteers or students familiar with the University's Safeguarding policy, and the reporting/escalation framework? Do they know how to report concerns about a participant's behaviour or welfare, or the behaviour of another member of staff, student or volunteer running the event?
- How will you ensure that all staff, volunteers, or students involved in the event have been appropriately trained? The Safeguarding team can provide access to training courses run by the University's preferred provider, Educare.
- Are you having the same staff, volunteers or students running the event working regularly with children or adults at risk? Will they require a DBS check (https://warwick.ac.uk/services/wss/safeguarding/child-protection/dbs/), and have they been recruited in line with safer recruitment best practice (https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/safer-recruitment)? When selecting staff, volunteers, or students to support an event that involves working with children or adults at risk, particular attention should be paid to ensuring that candidates are able to demonstrate that they can establish and maintain professional boundaries and professional integrity, can establish and maintain relationships with children or adults at risk, and can take action to protect a child or adult at risk. During recruitment, any gaps in

employment history should be explored, and if references are being collected referees should be asked to comment specifically on the candidate's suitability to work with children or adults at risk.

- How are you going to ensure that participation in the event does not facilitate the formation of, or the perception of, inappropriate contact between staff, volunteers or students running the event and those participating in it? Are staff, volunteers or students aware of the need to maintain professional boundaries? This guidance from the Dean of Students' Office may help https://warwick.ac.uk/services/dean-of-students-office/personaltutors/roleofpersonaltutor/.

3. Participants in the event

You will need to have a good understanding of the people who will be participating in the event and what their needs are, and what consent you will require so that they can participate in the event. Participants should be aware of how they report any problems, concerns or difficulties that they may encounter during the course of the activity.

You may wish to consider the following areas:

- How many participants will be attending the event? How old are they? What are their needs?
- What will you do if a participant is lost or goes missing during the event? Consider having a designated meeting point for lost participants, and how you will make them aware of where this is, and how it will be monitored. You should also consider whether any of the children or adults at risk you are working with might need extra supervision to prevent them going missing, for example if they have a history of running away or if a learning disability means they get confused in unfamiliar places. Are there any actions that you can take to minimise the possibility of participants becoming lost?
- Do you need the consent of a parent, guardian, or carer for the participant to join the activity/event, or will the participants be accompanied by an adult or carer? If you are working with a school or other partner organisation to run an event, you should determine who is gaining consent for participation, and consider how this information will be shared.
- How will you collect emergency contact information for participants, or their medical information, in advance of the activity? What will you do if a participant requires first aid during the activity, or needs to go to hospital?
- Do you need to consider any allergies or dietary requirements of the participants, how will you be informed of these, who will be responsible for ensuring these requirements are met?
- How will you manage any behavioural issues that arise, and set any expectations about how participants will interact with one another (and with the staff, volunteers or students running the event)? It may be beneficial to consider a code of conduct for participants.
- What will you do if a participant makes a safeguarding disclosure during an event? Will staff, volunteers or students be aware of how to respond to a safeguarding disclosure, and of the appropriate escalation process?
- Are you going to take film or photos of the event? If so, you will require additional consent: https://warwick.ac.uk/services/engagementgroup/brand/consent.

4. Emergencies/escalation

You will need to consider in advance what steps you will take if things go wrong during the activity. Scenarios that you should consider include first aid/medical issues, participants getting

lost/going missing during the activity, the occurrence of a safeguarding incident or the disclosure by a participant of a safeguarding issue, although there may be other potential situations that are unique to your activity that you should consider and plan for. It may be worth referring to the Safeguarding Reporting Process which has further guidance on the steps to take in the event of a safeguarding incident or disclosure:
https://warwick.ac.uk/services/wss/safeguarding/safeguarding_reporting_process_-_updated_05.07.2023.pdf.

For on campus events, the Community Safety Team should be notified in advance that the event is taking place and are your first point of escalation if there are any incidents or concerns (https://warwick.ac.uk/services/community-safety/events/). If you are running an event that will be hosted by another organisation using their own facilities, the host organisation's Safeguarding policy and related procedures will normally take precedence, but you should review these in advance to ensure that they are fit for purpose and will allow staff, volunteers, or students from Warwick to be confident that steps have been taken to minimise any risk of harm and that they can take any appropriate measures to safeguard children and adults at risk if necessary.

Staff, volunteers, and students will need to know what steps to take in the event of an incident or concern, and you should consider who will be responsible for co-ordinating a response and be responsible for further escalation if required. All safeguarding incidents and actions taken must be reported to the Safeguarding team via:
https://warwick.ac.uk/services/wss/safeguarding/reportform/.

You should consider the following:

- Who will be responsible for co-ordinating a response in the event of a safeguarding incident or concern? If there is a need for further action, will there be sufficient staffing available for them to be able to respond appropriately without causing further disruption to the event?
- How will you ensure that staff, volunteers or students are aware of what to do in the event of an emergency, or a safeguarding disclosure being made?
- At what stage will you escalate the incident or concern to other teams, such as the Community Safety Team (for on-campus events) or the emergency services (for off campus events)? How will you ensure that you have all the required information to provide a complete briefing?
- At what stage will you inform a participant's parents, guardians or carers that there has been a safeguarding incident?

5. **Department/event specific risks**

There may be other risks that you need to mitigate that are specific to your event/activity, the participants that are involved, the location that you are running the event, or the department that is hosting the event. There may be mitigations that are already in place to manage existing risks for staff, volunteers, or students, which you should also consider in light of the potential presence of children or adults at risk.