

UCCF: The Christian Unions

Safeguarding policy and procedures

Policy approved: April 2026

Review due: April 2027

Contents:

1. *Safeguarding policy*
2. *Safeguarding procedures*
3. *Appendices*

Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF) is a Christian ministry organisation working alongside Christian students in Great Britain. UCCF is a founder member of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students ([IFES](#)) and a member of the Evangelical Alliance. Registered Charity number [306137](#) (England & Wales) and [SC038499](#) (Scotland), and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales No. [387932](#).

UCCF: The Christian Unions, Blue Boar House, 5 Blue Boar Street, Oxford OX1 4EE 01865 253678 info@uccf.org.uk

Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

UCCF is a fellowship of Christian people seeking to share the good news of Jesus Christ with the student population in Universities throughout Great Britain. UCCF is committed to the core truths of the gospel, as outlined in its Doctrinal Basis (DB), which govern the direction and working principles of the organisation.

This policy sets out UCCF's commitments and expectations towards safeguarding. It should be read alongside the UCCF Safeguarding Procedures, which describe reporting routes and guidance for the Safeguarding Team, and other relevant employees and representatives.

This policy applies to:

- all UCCF employees
- Relay Workers and volunteers
- trustees
- contractors and anyone acting on behalf of UCCF
- all UCCF activities, events and environments, including Blue Boar House

2. Our Safeguarding commitment

At UCCF, we take safeguarding seriously because it is both a legal and statutory responsibility, and a core expression of what we believe about God and people. The Bible teaches that every person is made in God's image (Gen 1:26-27). This means every person has value, dignity and should be treated with respect. Scripture also shows God's special care for those who are vulnerable and His concern for justice. Because of this, safeguarding is part of how we follow Jesus and love one another.

We know that harm can happen in any organisation, including Christian ministry. So we work hard to make sure our culture, our people and our structures keep people safe. We want everyone who interacts with UCCF, students, employees, volunteers and partners, to feel safe, listened to and supported.

We are committed to:

- Seeing and treating every person as valuable.
- Creating safe environments, with good processes, safer recruitment, clear expectations and regular training.
- Responding well to concerns, taking disclosures seriously, seeking the right advice and working with statutory agencies when needed.
- Building a culture where people can speak up, knowing they will be heard, supported and treated with care.

- Leading with integrity, recognising the responsibility that comes with any position of trust.
- Reviewing our practice, keeping in step with statutory requirements and good safeguarding practice.

We safeguard because we belong to a God who “defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow” and calls His people to do the same (Deuteronomy 10:18; Isaiah 1:17). Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and all within UCCF have a duty to report safeguarding concerns promptly to the Safeguarding team. Together, we want to reflect God’s care for people in all we do.

3. Scope of this Policy

3.1 Policy intent

This policy sets out how UCCF fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities lawfully, proportionately, and in context. UCCF’s work is primarily with adults in university settings.

UCCF does not provide regulated adult social care or regulated activity with children. Safeguarding thresholds are therefore applied proportionately, in line with national legislation and relevant statutory guidance.

3.2 Who UCCF safeguards

UCCF safeguards the following groups within the context of our ministry:

3.2.1 Adults – including students, UCCF employees, Relay Workers, trustees, volunteers, partners and visitors. This includes adults who may experience vulnerability within relational ministry contexts, even where they do not meet statutory definitions of adults with care and support needs.

In Scotland, legal adulthood begins at age 16. This includes Scottish university students under 18, who UCCF engages with as adults.

UCCF applies statutory safeguarding definitions of an adult at risk as set out in relevant legislation (see section 5).

3.2.2 Children – under 18s encountered in England and Wales, for example in shared Further Education settings. In these contexts, UCCF’s workforce follow the safeguarding arrangements of the relevant institution, including any DBS requirements.

3.3 Activities covered

This policy covers safeguarding within:

- in person events, conferences and training
- online gatherings, pastoral conversations and communications

- one to one and small group ministry meetings
- travel arranged or facilitated by UCCF, including teams overseas
- UCCF's arrangements for third party use of Blue Boar House

University Christian Unions (CUs) and their members are independent of UCCF. Members of UCCF's workforce often work in relational and pastoral settings where students may disclose personal difficulties that are not related to UCCF activities or people. These situations require care and appropriate response, but they do not always meet the threshold for a safeguarding concern under this policy. To help UCCF's workforce navigate this, UCCF distinguishes between safeguarding concerns and student welfare concerns, which shapes how disclosures are recorded, managed and escalated within our safeguarding structures.

A safeguarding concern arises when:

- the harm, abuse or risk of harm involves a child (as defined in section 3.2), or;
- an adult where abuse, neglect, or significant harm is related to UCCF people, activities or environments.

A student welfare concern arises when a disclosure from a student:

- does not relate to UCCF activity, personnel or events and
- does not meet statutory safeguarding thresholds (see section 5).

Examples of student welfare concerns may include mental health concerns (e.g. suicidal ideation, self harm), family or relationship difficulties, financial hardship, general wellbeing issues or issues already being supported by university or NHS services. Students in higher education fall under their university's safeguarding and welfare framework, not UCCF's. These concerns must still be taken seriously and logged according to UCCF's Safeguarding Procedures.

3.4 Interaction with other UCCF policies

UCCF fulfils its responsibilities to keep people safe in a range of ways, including through safeguarding, health and safety, employment practices and other organisational policies.

Safeguarding sometimes overlaps with other organisational processes. UCCF has several policies that deal with raising concerns, and these may run alongside safeguarding. When a concern is raised, UCCF will handle it under the relevant policy or policies. Where there is any indication of safeguarding risk or abuse, safeguarding procedures must be followed and take priority, with concerns directed to the Safeguarding team.

- Internal employment concerns, including issues about treatment at work or relationships within teams are normally raised through the Grievance Policy. Where a concern relates to employee conduct, the Dignity at Work and/or Disciplinary Policy may apply. These processes address employment matters.

- Internal concerns related to volunteer conduct are handled under the relevant volunteer agreement in place at the time.
- External complaints, including concerns raised by students, partners or the public about UCCF's work, are managed under the Complaints Policy.
- The Whistleblowing Policy provides a protected route for anyone to raise concerns that are in the public interest.

4. Key concepts

4.1 Positions of Trust

UCCF recognises that relational ministry creates inherent power imbalances, even when both parties are adults. Employees, Relay Workers, volunteers and trustees therefore hold positions of trust, not only in the legal sense but in a spiritual, pastoral and relational sense. This includes consideration of appropriate boundaries, avoiding dependency and avoiding situations that could exploit emotional, spiritual or developmental vulnerability.

Because of the power imbalance inherent in these roles, UCCF sets clear expectations around boundaries and relationships within ministry contexts. Forming romantic or sexual relationships with students is addressed in specific organisational policies and guidance, including our Relationships Policy and Discipleship Best Practice Guidelines, which apply a higher standard than minimum legal requirements.

4.2 Abuse

Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, domestic, discriminatory or neglect. For standard definitions of abuse, UCCF refers to the [NSPCC's guidance](#) and the [Care and Support Statutory guidance](#).

UCCF does not expect employees or volunteers to diagnose abuse, only to notice concerns and report them.

4.2.1 Spiritual abuse

There is no specific statutory definition of spiritual abuse¹. UCCF includes this concept here to reflect the relational and pastoral contexts in which we work.

UCCF recognises spiritual abuse as a form of psychological or emotional abuse that involves the misuse of spiritual authority, Scripture, belief or pastoral influence in ways that are controlling, coercive, manipulative or harmful.

UCCF recognises that Christian discipleship involves conviction and challenge through Scripture, which may feel uncomfortable or counter cultural. This is a normal and healthy part of Christian growth and must not be confused with spiritual abuse. Further information

¹ [Reviewing the Discourse of 'Spiritual Abuse' - Evangelical Alliance](#)

on healthy pastoral practice and discipleship relationships is available in UCCF's Discipleship Best Practice guidance.

5. Legal and statutory framework

5.1 National and regulatory frameworks

UCCF aligns its safeguarding responsibilities with the relevant national frameworks:

- England: *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2023); DBS; LADO processes; DfE *Information sharing advice* (2024); Charity Commission serious incident reporting.
- Wales: Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard People*; local safeguarding boards.
- Scotland: *National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (updated 2023)*; Disclosure Scotland PVG scheme and “regulated roles”; positions of trust/sexual offences framework.

5.2 Definitions

For statutory safeguarding purposes, UCCF recognises the following definitions of an adult at risk. These definitions inform how safeguarding concerns are identified, assessed and escalated under this policy and the accompanying Safeguarding Procedures.

England and Wales - An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support (whether or not those needs are being met), is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and is unable to protect themselves because of those care and support needs.

Scotland - An adult at risk is a person aged 16 or over who is unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests, is at risk of harm, and is more vulnerable due to disability, mental disorder, illness, or physical or mental infirmity.

6. Roles and responsibilities

While safeguarding is something the whole fellowship shares in, UCCF appoints a Safeguarding Team with specific responsibilities for leading and coordinating our safeguarding work and training internally. Depending on the situation, others in the organisation may also be involved, for example in reviewing cases under the direction of the Safeguarding Team.

Contact the Safeguarding Team on safeguarding@uccf.org.uk. Phone numbers for the team are available via the internal Staff Directory.

6.1 Trustees

Trustees hold ultimate accountability for safeguarding within UCCF. A designated Safeguarding Trustee provides more focused oversight and a way of escalating concerns to the UCCF Trust Board.

The Safeguarding Trustee is: James Mackenzie, safeguardingtrustees@uccf.org.uk

6.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL holds operational responsibility for safeguarding across UCCF, including oversight of concerns, liaison with statutory agencies and maintaining safeguarding standards.

The DSL is: Mary Comont (Director of People)

6.3 Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) (DSO)

The DSOs respond to safeguarding concerns and take responsibility for day to day handling of safeguarding matters in UCCF.

The DSOs are:

Esther Dickson (Scotland Field Team Leader)

JP Sivertsen-Wright (Central Field Team Leader)

6.4 Designated Safeguarding Administrator (DSA)

The DSA manages safeguarding records and provides support to the safeguarding team in preparing reports and meeting standard reporting deadlines.

The DSA is: Alison Bush (People Advisor)

7. Creating safer culture and practice

7.1 Safer Recruitment

UCCF uses safer recruitment practices, including clear role descriptions, advertising roles widely, application and interview process, taking a range of references, using DBS checks in England and Wales where appropriate and PVG membership in Scotland where a role is regulated.

7.2 Training

The safeguarding policy is made available to all UCCF employees via the Handbook, to Relay Workers via the Relay Handbook and to other volunteers directly. All employees and volunteers are required to read the safeguarding policy annually. Role appropriate safeguarding training is completed at induction, with refresher training required at least every two years.

Members of the Safeguarding Team receive advanced training from external safeguarding services. Trustees receive safeguarding training at least every three years.

7.3 Discipleship Best Practice

As a relational ministry, UCCF is committed to best practice in the area of discipleship and has a supplementary policy for employees, Relay workers and volunteers working in direct ministry settings which lays out expectations for healthy relationships, boundaries and standards in this area.

8. Working with others

8.1 Partnerships with CUs, churches and external organisations

Where activities are jointly delivered, UCCF will agree which safeguarding policy applies, request clarity regarding reporting lines, share information proportionately and lawfully and apply the UCCF policy for any concern involving a UCCF employee, Relay worker or volunteer.

8.2 Use of Blue Boar House

Blue Boar House is UCCF's central office building in Oxford, which provides room hire to external groups. External groups hiring rooms must provide their own safeguarding policy, name a safeguarding contact and supervise their own users of the building at all times.

UCCF does not supervise external groups but may act where necessary if a concern arises onsite that relates to a member of UCCFs workforce.

9. Confidentiality and records

Safeguarding sometimes requires sharing information, even when it is sensitive or personal. UCCF treats all information with care but cannot promise confidentiality where someone may be at risk. Employees and volunteers must be open about this from the start. UCCF will only share information that is necessary, proportionate and relevant to protecting a child or adult, and in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act (2018).

9.1 Sharing information without consent

There are situations where consent is not required: for example, when someone may be at risk of significant harm, where abuse is suspected, or where a crime may have been committed. In these cases, the DSL/DSO may share information with statutory bodies such as children's services, adult social care, the Police, LADO, or a university safeguarding team. UCCF may also seek advice from thirtyone:eight before sharing if the situation is unclear.

9.2 Sharing information with consent

Where it is appropriate and safe to do so, UCCF will seek consent before sharing information. This may include speaking with a church contact or other pastoral support. Consent may not be sought if doing so would increase risk, impede an investigation or cause unnecessary delay. Employees and volunteers must not contact a church or CU about a safeguarding concern without direction from the Safeguarding Team.

9.3 Records

Safeguarding records are written promptly, kept factual and dated. They are stored securely in a restricted central system accessible only to the Safeguarding Team. Records are retained in line with UCCF's Record of Processing Activities and destroyed securely at the end of that period. Safeguarding information must never be stored on personal devices or informal messaging platforms.

10. Governance and review

Safeguarding at UCCF is overseen by the Trust Board, which holds ultimate accountability for ensuring that the charity has effective safeguarding arrangements in place. This Policy is reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Team and the Safeguarding Trustee and is formally approved each year by the Trust Board, which also ensures that safeguarding serious incidents are reported to the Charity Commission in line with regulatory requirements.

UCCF is committed to continuous learning and improvement. The Safeguarding Team carries out periodic learning reviews, reflecting on internal cases as well as relevant case reviews from the wider charity and Christian ministry sectors. Insights from these reviews are used to strengthen practice, update procedures and support the ongoing development of a safe and healthy safeguarding culture.

Safeguarding Procedures

1. Purpose of these procedures

These procedures explain how safeguarding concerns should be recognised, responded to and managed within UCCF. They provide practical guidance for the UCCF workforce (as defined below). They should be used whenever a safeguarding concern is disclosed, observed or suspected, whether during UCCF work and ministry, at a UCCF event, online or during third party use of UCCF premises. These procedures apply to all those covered by the Policy.

In these procedures, “UCCF workforce” includes employees, Relay Workers, Associate Staff Workers (ASWs) and volunteers acting on behalf of UCCF (including volunteer event speakers).

2. Recognising safeguarding concerns

UCCF’s workforce is not expected to diagnose abuse. Their responsibility is to notice concerns, take disclosures seriously, respond appropriately and report promptly. For definitions of abuse categories (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, domestic abuse etc.), follow the links provided in the Safeguarding Policy (4.2). UCCF’s work is primarily with adults, and concerns may arise through a disclosure, something overheard or witnessed, a pastoral conversation, behaviour at a UCCF event, information shared by a student or church worker, or through other UCCF processes such as grievances, whistleblowing or complaints where appropriate.

In a UCCF context, members of the UCCF workforce may become aware of a range of situations or behaviours that cause concern. These may indicate a safeguarding concern under this policy, or a student welfare concern, depending on the people involved and the connection to UCCF activities.

Such concerns may include, but are not limited to:

- behaviour that feels unsafe, involves boundary crossing or is inappropriate
- signs of coercive control or undue influence
- spiritual influence being used manipulatively or abusively
- disclosures of harm or distress at home, at university, in a CU, in relationships or in a church including mental health crisis, suicidal ideation or self-neglect
- dependency forming within a mentoring, discipleship or pastoral relationship
- concerning online communication or use of digital platforms
- concerning behaviour by a UCCF employee, Relay Worker, volunteer or external speaker
- a significant or unexpected change in behaviour, fearfulness or emotional distress

Where something does not feel right, it should be raised and logged in line with UCCF's Safeguarding Procedures. Concerns will then be assessed and triaged to determine the most appropriate response, which may include management under safeguarding procedures, student welfare processes, complaints or whistleblowing procedures, or employment policies, depending on the nature of the concern and its connection to UCCF.

3. Responding to safeguarding disclosures

If a safeguarding concern is shared or something worrying is observed, the following steps should be followed. If urgent advice is needed at any stage, members of the UCCF workforce should contact a member of the Safeguarding Team directly, rather than waiting to complete a report.

3.1. Ensure immediate safety

If someone appears at immediate risk of harm, emergency services should be contacted. Where it is safe to do so, stay with the individual until support arrives and notify a member of the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible. Those responding should not put themselves in danger and should prioritise their own safety. Where concerns relate to a mental health crisis, responses should align with Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) guidance where applicable.

3.2 Listen and record

If someone chooses to disclose a concern, stay calm and listen attentively, without asking leading questions or seeking more detail than is freely offered. Avoid expressing personal opinions or assumptions, and do not promise confidentiality; explain instead that safeguarding concerns must be shared with those who can help. Do not investigate, probe for details or speak to the person the concern relates to. Reassure the individual that speaking up was the right thing to do.

Create a written record as soon as possible (ideally immediately, always within 24 hours).

3.3 Responding to student concerns

Where a student discloses harm relating to someone unconnected to UCCF, encourage the student to report the matter through their university's safeguarding or student support services, among other appropriate external services who may be able to provide support (such as a GP, church, or the police where appropriate). Support may be offered to help the student to make this report. Any disclosure should still be recorded using UCCF's safeguarding reporting route, as universities may request this information when handling their own investigations.

4. Reporting safeguarding disclosures

Use the UCCF Safeguarding Reporting Form, and record factual, neutral information and direct quotes where possible. Once reported, responsibility for further action rests with the Safeguarding Team.

UCCF recognises that individuals may not always feel comfortable reporting concerns directly particularly where a concern involves a UCCF employee or trustee. In addition to reporting internally, concerns can be raised through Safecall, UCCF's independent reporting line.

5. Safe ministry practice

5.1 Under 18 students (primarily Scotland)

Some students engaged with UCCF may be under 18 (primarily in Scotland where students attend university from age 17). This does not constitute regulated activity. Practice should align with the safeguarding arrangements of the relevant university, and any DBS requirement made by the university should be complied with.

Where a student who is legally a child is engaging with UCCF ministry, a proportionate safeguarding plan should be considered and recorded covering:

- meeting locations
- online communication
- overnight or residential contexts
- travel arrangements

Students must be aged 18 to attend National Forum. No additional safeguarding arrangements are therefore required beyond those in place for all student attendees.

6. Allegations about UCCF's workforce

Where a member of UCCF's workforce (whether an employee or volunteer) is suspected of posing a safeguarding risk (including alleged abuse, breach of safeguarding policy, unsafe or inappropriate conduct or where a disclosure or concern is raised), a preliminary investigation will be undertaken by the Safeguarding team to establish whether there is a case to answer before further action is taken.

If a disclosure is made to a member of UCCF's workforce, or if concerning behaviour is directly observed, this must be reported immediately to the individual's Line Manager and to the Safeguarding Team, who will manage UCCF's response.

If the concern relates to the individual's own Line Manager, the report should be made to that person's manager. If the concern relates to a member of the Safeguarding Team, it

should be reported to the designated trustee for safeguarding or another member of the UCCF Trust Board.

Where the preliminary investigation indicates that there is a case to answer, the individual will be removed from frontline student work where relevant and may be temporarily suspended while the matter is considered under UCCF's disciplinary procedure. Serious safeguarding concerns may constitute gross misconduct and could result in dismissal from employment or removal from a volunteering role. Where allegations are substantiated in relation to a volunteer, trustee, or person working on behalf of UCCF, they will be removed from their role with immediate effect.

6.1 Concerns involving children or adults at risk

Where an allegation or concern involves a child or an adult at risk, UCCF will make the appropriate statutory safeguarding referral. For adults at risk, this will typically mean contacting Adult Social Care. For concerns involving children, UCCF will review the circumstances against local guidance and seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate, making a referral when advised or required.

Once a referral has been made, UCCF will follow the direction of statutory agencies. External processes may run in parallel with UCCF's internal procedures, including any disciplinary investigation.

While external enquiries are ongoing, UCCF will take proportionate steps to manage any potential risk, such as adjusting duties, restricting contact or temporary suspension, without prejudging the outcome of statutory investigations.

In cases of serious safeguarding risk or abuse, regulatory reporting obligations may also apply (see section 8).

7. UCCF Events

UCCF runs national and local events, including Forum, training conferences and regional gatherings which bring together mixed groups of students, staff, volunteers and external contributors. These settings can introduce unique safeguarding considerations due to group sizes, ministry dynamics and the occasional presence of under 18 students or young children accompanying parents. Clear planning, communication and defined responsibilities help ensure safeguarding is managed well before, during and after UCCF events.

CUs are independent student led societies that affiliate with UCCF for support and training. They organise and run their own events under the safeguarding and conduct regulations of their Students' Union. UCCF cannot oversee or monitor relationships formed at CU events, nor does it supervise the safeguarding arrangements of those events, although will where appropriate encourage and signpost CUs to take safeguarding matters seriously. UCCF's

safeguarding responsibilities apply only to events arranged and delivered by UCCF, not by CUs.

7.1 Responsibilities overview for UCCF events

UCCF events must have a clearly identified safeguarding contact, with details shared at the start. Delegates will be told how to report a concern and who to approach. Event leaders ensure employees and volunteers understand how to recognise, respond and report safeguarding concerns and the escalation route. Volunteers supporting an event are provided with the UCCF safeguarding policy in advance and briefed on safeguarding expectations and reporting routes.

For residentials, key expectations, such as room allocation, lone working and late night arrangements, should be communicated in advance. Any issues that arise should be reported.

7.2 Children at events

UCCF events are not designed for children to attend independently and UCCF does not provide activities or supervision for children. Where children attend UCCF events solely as accompanying dependants of a parent or carer (including breastfeeding infants), responsibility for their supervision and care remains with the parent or carer, and UCCF does not provide childcare.

8. Serious incidents

Where a safeguarding concern may meet the Charity Commission's criteria for a serious incident, this is assessed by the Safeguarding Team in consultation with the Safeguarding Trustee and the Chair of the Trust Board.

Serious incident reporting is a separate governance requirement and may apply alongside statutory safeguarding referrals made under Section 6 of these procedures, including notifications to the police, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), or Adult Social Care.

Where a report is required, the Safeguarding Team will prepare a draft serious incident report for the CEO and the Safeguarding Trustee. The designated trustee for Safeguarding is responsible for submitting the serious incident report to the Charity Commission.

Appendix 1: Safeguarding contacts

Anyone wishing to disclose an allegation in relation to UCCF, or to get advice or support for themselves or someone else, is encouraged to contact one of the organisations below:

Thirtyone:eight

www.thirtyoneeight.org

Safecall

Phone: 0800 915 1571

www.safecall.co.uk/file-a-report

Association of Christian Counsellors (ACC)

<https://www.acc-uk.org>

British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

<https://www.bacp.co.uk>

National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC)

<https://napac.org.uk>

Samaritans

<https://www.samaritans.org>

Phone: 116 123

The Survivors Trust

<https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org>

Minister & Clergy Sexual Abuse Service (MACSAS)

<http://www.macsas.org.uk>

Talking Therapies

<https://www.nhs.uk/tests-and-treatments/talking-therapies/>

Local authority and police contact details will vary by area and will be accessed by the Safeguarding Team as required.

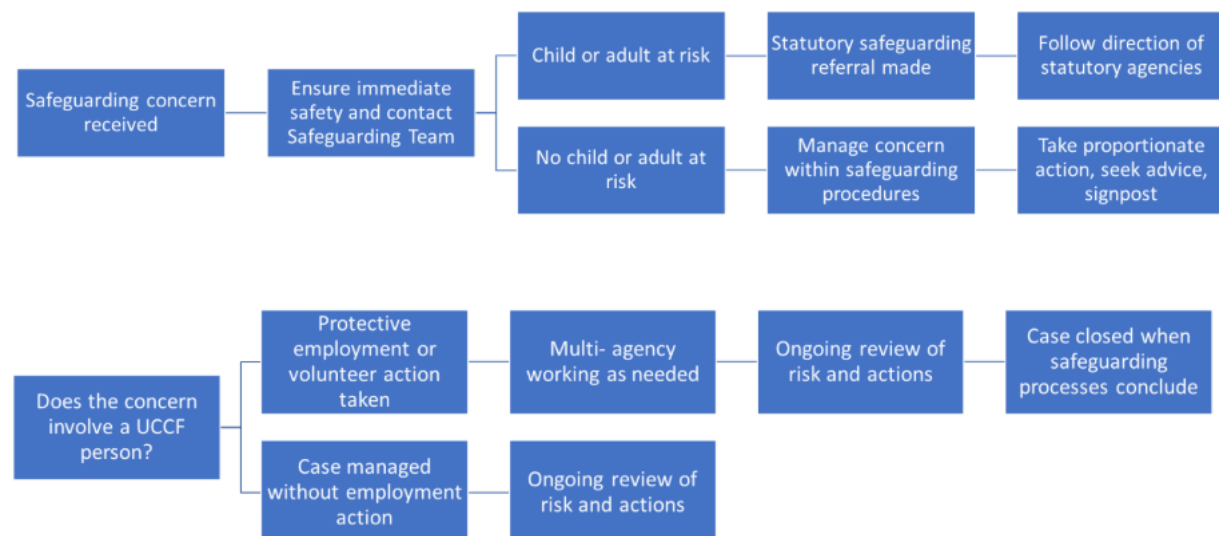
Appendix 2: Safeguarding procedure flowcharts

This appendix sets out the internal workflow followed by the Safeguarding Team once a safeguarding concern is received. It is intended to support consistent, timely and proportionate decision making, in line with statutory guidance and UCCF's safeguarding procedures.

This workflow is for use by the Safeguarding Team and relevant senior staff. It does not replace professional judgement, statutory duties or the need to seek external advice where appropriate. Safeguarding responses may involve multiple stages or run concurrently depending on the nature and level of risk. Clear records of decisions, actions taken and advice received are maintained throughout the safeguarding process. Risk management measures are reviewed regularly until all safeguarding processes are concluded.

This appendix may be reviewed and updated in response to changes in safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance or organisational practice, without requiring formal reapproval of the Safeguarding Policy.

The flowchart below provides an overview of the key stages considered by the Safeguarding Team when responding to a safeguarding concern, including triage, statutory referrals, protective actions and multi-agency working. Not all stages will apply in every case.



Appendix 3: Safeguarding Records Retention and Storage Guidelines

UCCF has clear guidelines for the storage, retention and destruction of safeguarding records. These are records which relate to concerns about a child's/adult's welfare and safety, and/or concerns about possible risks posed by a member of UCCF's workforce working or volunteering with them.

1. Safeguarding records concerning a member of UCCF's workforce

Where an allegation of abuse concerns a member of UCCF's workforce, clear and comprehensive records will be kept, including:

- What the allegation/s was/were
- How the allegation/s was/were followed up
- How things were resolved
- Any action taken
- Decisions reached about the person's suitability to continue work with children/adults.

Keeping these records ensures UCCF can provide accurate information if requested. For example:

- In response to future requests for a reference
- If required to provide clarification about information disclosed as part of a future vetting and barring check
- If allegations resurface after a period, preventing unnecessary re-investigation.

1.1 Storage and access

Records are stored electronically in the relevant person's personnel file. Day to day access to personnel files is restricted to the People Team.

1.2 Retention periods

Records will be kept in the individual's personnel file until they reach the age of 68, or for 10 years, whichever is longer, and then securely destroyed. For example:

- If a member of UCCF's workforce is 60 when the investigation into the allegation is concluded, the records will be kept until they are aged 70.
- If a member of UCCF's workforce is 30 when the investigation into the allegation is concluded, the records will be kept until they are aged 68.

The records will be retained for the same amount of time regardless of whether the allegations were unfounded. (However, where allegations are found to have been made maliciously, records will be destroyed immediately). Information will be retained for this

length of time even if the person stops working for, working on behalf of, or volunteering with UCCF.

In some cases, records will be kept for longer periods of time. For example:

- If the information in the records is relevant to legal action that has been started but not finished.
- If the records have been archived for historical purposes (e.g. if the records are relevant to legal proceedings involving UCCF).

Where there are legal proceedings, UCCF would seek legal advice about how long to retain the records.

Where records are kept for longer than the recommended period, files will be clearly marked with the reasons for the extension period.

2. Safeguarding records which do not concern a member of UCCF's workforce

Where an allegation of abuse does not concern a member of UCCF's workforce, clear and comprehensible records will be kept, including:

- Information recorded in the Safeguarding Report Form as documented by the relevant member of UCCF's workforce e.g. details of the disclosure/allegation, any witnesses, people of concern; what was said by the member of UCCF's workforce in response to the disclosure etc.
- How the matter was resolved.
- Any action taken e.g. referrals made to University services, Social Services, or the police.

2.1 Storage

Records will be stored electronically in a central 'Safeguarding Records' folder. Day to day access to the records is restricted to the Safeguarding Team.

2.2 Retention periods

Where UCCF refers a matter to the relevant University Services, local Social Services, or the Police, the record will be retained for six years, unless a legal case has been brought within that time frame.

Where UCCF does not refer a matter to an external body, the record will be retained for one year. Where there are legal proceedings, UCCF would seek legal advice about how long to retain the records. Where records are kept for longer than the recommended period, files will be clearly marked with the reasons for the extension period.

3. Destruction of safeguarding records

Where a member of UCCF's workforce is in possession of relevant records e.g. Safeguarding Report Form, email correspondence etc., they will be required to delete the files once they have been securely transferred to the Safeguarding Team for storage. This removes the risk of having multiple sensitive files in multiple locations.

When the relevant retention period has finished, confidential electronic records will be securely destroyed.