

Safeguarding Committee 2022 Annual Report

Prepared by the Director of Safeguarding

1. Overview

This report provides a summary of actions and initiatives undertaken by members of the Safeguarding Committee in the last year. It reports on progress for the priorities that were identified in the 2021 Annual Report with the planned areas of focus for 2023.

2. The Safeguarding Committee

The formation of the Safeguarding Committee in 2018, as an advisory committee to the Director of Safeguarding, reflects the wide scope of activities involving children across College including public engagement, outreach and commercial events, work experience and enrolled students under the age of 18. The Committee also includes membership from roles dealing with vulnerable adults at risk and safeguarding in research considerations. There are now more than 50 members of staff who attend the Committee representing the wide spread of activity across College.

The Committee's terms of reference are to:

1. Agree protocols and procedures that reflect a best practice approach to safeguarding
2. Ensure clear accountability and training for those with responsibility for safeguarding
3. Share learning and casework developments to improve awareness and compliance

The Safeguarding Committee's focus is on the College's statutory responsibilities for those under age 18 and adults at risk. However, the Safeguarding Policy, Code of Practice and safeguarding webpages also include information on the wider support available for staff and students' health, safety, and wellbeing.

3. Safeguarding Committee – subgroups

In 2021, regular sub-committee meetings were established between the Director of Safeguarding and small groups to focus on areas of interest or concern. Shared learning outcomes are then reported back to the Safeguarding Committee. The sub-committee groups are Outreach, Public Engagement, External Partnerships, Education, Early Years, Imperial College Union and Research.

These subgroups have become a useful forum to consider effective ways of risk management and case learning through the specific work focus of the group. For example, in the public engagement group we liaised with the local authority to develop referral routes for vulnerable adults who may participate in White City programmes. In the research group we are partnering with the Target Malaria programme to review and develop additional materials to support safeguarding considerations from an overseas researcher's perspective. In the external partnerships group, we have developed stronger links with Safety and Security to improve pre-event preparation when large numbers of young people are on campus, and we are discussing the practical implications of the revised first aid policy for public engagement, conference and outreach events. The Director of Safeguarding is also now a formalised escalation point for safeguarding advice where cases of concern arise.

4. Policies, Procedures, Information

[The College safeguarding webpages](#) are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure clear signposting to information and support. New content identified as actions in last year's annual report has been implemented and includes guidance on dealing with safeguarding records from schools; for Heads of

Departments in the application of their discretion in the policy for students' bringing children onto campus/into lectures; providing supplementary guidance for Safeguarding Internationally; good practice guidance on boundaries for personal relationships with users of services and improvements to the content on reporting and responding to allegations of abuse/harm. Following statutory updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022, we have also added new guidance on the importance of raising low level safeguarding concerns.

The Committee have undertaken their annual review of the [safeguarding policy](#) and [code of practice](#) and other than an update of the references to Provost's Board, no substantive changes are proposed for this year. The agreed action from last year to amend terms and conditions to require disclosure of police investigations relevant to safeguarding has been incorporated, agreed with the College Trades' Unions and communicated to staff.

5. Disclosure and Barring Checks

The Staff Compliance team has continued to handle a high volume of DBS applications and follow up checks (840 in total, 522 new/renewal applications and 318 update service checks).

Following the retirement of the part time DBS Manager in August 2022, a full time DBS Adviser was appointed however the additional Assistant resource requested as part of the HR Planning round was not approved.

Due to the ongoing demands on the team it has therefore been necessary to revert to three yearly repeat checks rather than annual checks where staff do not sign up to the Update Service, except for the Early Years Education Centre (EYEC), Global Summer School, Student Recruitment and Outreach, and Warden/Halls of Residence appointments, where repeat checks continue to be carried out annually.

During the past 12 months, streamlined emails and an MS booking system for DBS ID check appointments have been implemented to improve the customer experience. Processes for managing DBS disclosures and responsibilities for carrying out DBS checks and completing research passport requests for student, staff, and atypical workers have been clarified and guidance will be available shortly. More recently, a new email account has been set up specifically to manage staff DBS matters and quarterly account management meetings with Mayflower (a third party supplier for online DBS checks) initiated to enable regular information sharing, discussion of issues and areas for improvement.

Priorities for the next 12 months include reducing manual processing by utilising Mayflower's editable system-generated email templates and implementing digital DBS ID checks wherever possible alongside considering ways to increase DBS Update Service uptake.

We also plan to review the risk assessment process we require to be in place when DBS checks are requested for regulated activity undertaken by casual, volunteer or other atypical working.

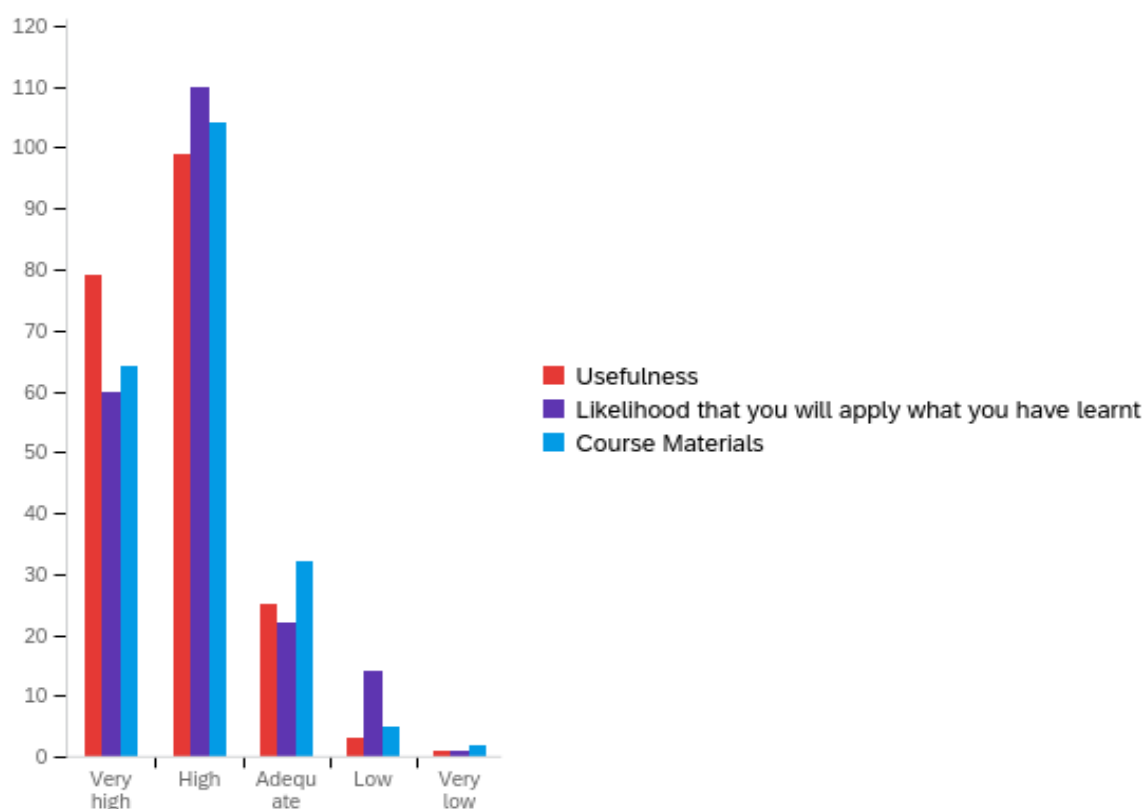
Following several changes of personnel within the relevant HR teams and Student Services, a review of the Wardens process will take place prior to the next annual exercise. However it is expected that the main focus will be on completing the College wide review for Faculty of Medicine departments.

6. Training

The Safeguarding e-learning course is part of the Essentials suite of mandatory courses. 82% (7189) staff have completed the course. Feedback on the course has been positive – of the 207 respondents who provided detailed feedback after completing the course during 2022, most rated the course highly or very highly.

SAFEGUARDING e-Learning Course feedback

Number of responses – 1st January to 31st December 2022



Suggested improvements focussed on the length of the course and reducing the number of external links. The course script and test has therefore been revised and is in the process of being updated. The revised modular version should reduce the completion time to at half of the current 90-minute version for those who are completely new to the topic and significantly shorter for those who just need a refresher. This review has been undertaken in collaboration with the Regulatory Compliance Manager who has been updating the Prevent Duty Module.

An annual Safeguarding training event was also held in November 2022. This in-person event was open to members of the Safeguarding Committee and to members of their departments. The topic was 'Regulations, boundaries, referrals and support for young and vulnerable adults in a university context'. Presentations were given by representatives from the Safeguarding Unit at Farrer & Co, the College departments of Security, Student Counselling and Mental Health and Student Services, Occupational Health and the College's Director of Safeguarding. There were c90 attendees with an average satisfaction rating of 4.4/5 from those who provided feedback.

Topics are being considered for the 2023 training event with a possible focus on raising low level concerns and the importance of professional curiosity.

7. Risk Assessments

The KPMG audit in 2020 highlighted that risk assessments are required to be in place where activity is being undertaken with children and vulnerable adults to record the actions that are required to manage the associated risks. The audit noted that whilst those departments regularly having contact with children incorporated safeguarding considerations within their assessments, this may not be considered by other departments that do this activity less frequently. The audit recommended that guidance should be developed on when a safeguarding risk assessment is required. There should also be monitoring undertaken on a spot check basis to confirm whether appropriate risk assessments are in place.

The Safeguarding Committee reviewed this recommendation at its meeting in September 2020. Members agreed that risk assessments were a fundamental requirement and should be mandated for all activities for children and adults at risk.

Subgroup meetings focus on the use of the risk assessments and ensuring that they fit for purpose and regularly reviewed and updated. The Director of Safeguarding and the Director of Safety as well as the Outreach team have provided advice to College departments in the development of their risk reviews. The Imperial College Union are reviewing their approach to risk assessments to include periodic reviews of the effectiveness of procedural steps in real-time situations.

In the research subgroup we have observed there is more work to do in raising awareness of this area of risk and the work with the Target Malaria programme will be helpful in developing materials that support improved compliance. The Committee have discussed the potential gaps in informed safeguarding risk assessments for department organised U18 activities and local hires of space. This remains an ongoing area of potential risk to the College. These two issues are noted as priorities for the 2023 safeguarding action plan.

8. Case management

The Imperial College Union have a case management system for their advice centre. The central College areas rely on locally held records.

The Director of Safeguarding retains a record of escalated referrals from major concerns (including police contacts) and low-level observations and requests for advice. The respective Directors of Services are responsible for retaining their own records in the absence of a central repository.

The KPMG audit of 2020 noted that the College should have a process in place for the monitoring of referrals or concerns raised relating to safeguarding. This process is required to verify that issues have been appropriately reviewed, closed and any required lessons learned. Case management systems continue to be explored with ICT and it is in the Student Lifecycle roadmap. Once in place it will ensure there is an integrated and secure repository for this highly sensitive information and the ability to track and coordinate low level concerns being dealt with across College. There is still significant work before a solution is up and running – indicative timings are two years' ahead.

Conclusion:

The purpose of this annual report has been to provide the Risk, Compliance and Ethics Committee with a summary of the range of safeguarding issues under consideration by the Safeguarding Committee and the priorities for the coming year:

- Development of research materials to improve awareness of safeguarding risk and mitigations;
- Working with Faculty and Department contacts to raise awareness of the need for safeguarding specific risk assessments for U18 activities;
- Progress the development of a case management system;
- Implement the improved safeguarding essential training and test;
- Improve awareness of the importance of low-level concerns and a culture of professional curiosity;
- Continue the roll out of improvements to DBS processes and practice and associated risk assessments.

The Committee is requested to note the information provided in this annual report and invited to comment on the reflections and proposed priorities for 2023.

Louise Lindsay

Director of Safeguarding

19 April 2023 submitted to Risk and Audit Committee