

HISA Safeguarding Policy



Highlands and Islands Students' Association

This Safeguarding policy provides all members and employees of the Highlands and Islands Students' Association (HISA) community with clear guidance on their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and should be read in conjunction with the HISA and UHI procedures for reporting [hyperlink to HISA procedure and Support to keep you safe - Safeguarding](#). HISA uses the UHI definitions of safeguarding, children, and children and adults at risk.

HISA works in partnership with UHI to safeguard the wider University community, and the framework clarifies HISA's ethical and legal responsibilities in this partnership. By practising our duty of care to protect our members and third parties from harm, HISA aims to create a safe and supportive environment for all.

Purpose

- 1.1 HISA, a registered charity, is committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all members, volunteers, employees, Trustees, and visitors to the Association. The work of the Association may include young people or adults whose involvement and input to the Association are welcomed, encouraged, and appreciated.
- 1.2 HISA recognises and complies with our legal and statutory obligations that arise from legislation, including the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003, the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and other relevant guidance and regulations.
- 1.3 HISA recognises that to provide a safe and supportive environment, we must place well-being and safeguarding at the heart of all our actions and ideas. We aim to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of different parties involved in safeguarding, including student union employees, volunteers, and members. We are committed to working with the University of the Highlands and Islands, statutory services, and wider partners to ensure safeguarding remains a priority in delivering our services.
- 1.4 HISA is committed to ensuring that measures will be taken to ensure that if we become aware of adults or children at risk, we pass on information to enable statutory services to aid in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities. In addition, the framework will outline the training and support that will be provided to employees and volunteers to ensure that they are equipped to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns.
- 1.5 Confidentiality is essential to the environment of trust with students and clients. However, this will be balanced against the organisation's common law duty to protect children and adults, including the HISA's Trustees, employees, officers, and non-student volunteers.
- 1.6 This framework outlines our strategy to identify and respond to concerns regarding safeguarding. We will promote clear procedures for identifying and managing potential safeguarding risks, including clear communication lines and escalation procedures.
- 1.7 The framework will include an ongoing monitoring and review process to ensure that it remains up-to-date, effective and in line with UHI policies ([Safeguarding Policy](#)). Therefore, this document should be read in conjunction with the relevant policies and

direct legislation that feed into and inform the safeguarding framework. A comprehensive list can be found in Appendix 1.

- 1.8 This policy covers all forms of safeguarding and abuse including but not limited to physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, financial abuse and/or neglect, and domestic or gender-based violence.

Scope

- 2.1 All HISA employees noted below should know their duty to comply with the policy, hold themselves accountable, and actively ensure a safe environment for all.
- 3.1.1 All HISA employees, members, including those with full-time, part-time, and sessional contracts. This includes full-time regional student officers.
- 3.1.2 All UHI student members, including distance, international and postgraduate students, will follow the UHI Safeguarding Policy and report any concerns to the Safeguarding Leads in their UHI Academic Partner or if taking part in HISA-related activities, report concerns to the Deputy Safeguarding Lead.
- 3.1.3 Visitors of HISA, including individuals using the University's or Association's premises.
- 3.1.4 Contractors and third-party associates working at HISA.
- 2.2 This policy applies in all environments, including physical and virtual (e.g., social media and online social platforms).
- 2.3 UHI and its partners have their own Safeguarding Policy [Support to keep you safe - Safeguarding](#) and associated procedures, but there is an expectation on behalf of both organisations to work collaboratively to safeguard our community.

Criminal Convictions

- 3.1 UHI and all partners have a Student Criminal Offence Data Policy which should be referred to alongside this policy.
- 3.2 HISA and UHI recognise the transformative power of education and do not consider criminal convictions and offences or related security measures to be insurmountable barriers to learning. Where possible, we are committed to supporting those with spent and unspent criminal convictions in our communities as part of their rehabilitation.
- 3.3 We encourage all applicants and students to disclose information about any criminal convictions or police proceedings which may affect their ability to complete key aspects of their programme or placement. This includes personal restrictions or other conditions arising from court orders or parole conditions e.g. travel, contact with others and use of equipment.
- 3.4 We will offer support and guidance to applicants/students disclosing with criminal convictions about course selection and career planning and advise on the scope for any potential course or placement adjustments.

- 3.5 We undertake to ensure that, by this policy and related procedures, we operate in consideration of all relevant statutory legislation and professional body requirements.

Equalities

- 4.1 We will prioritise keeping all children and young people safe regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 4.2 We also recognise that some children and adults may be additionally vulnerable because of the impact of discrimination, oppression, previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

Safeguarding Officers

- 5.1 The Lead Safeguarding Officer for HISA will be the named person who will deal with all issues about safeguarding, and because of the nature of the role, this person will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.
- 5.2 This person will be responsible for the following:
- 5.2.1 Ensuring that the framework is implemented across all aspects of Association activity.
 - 5.2.2 Ensuring that employees and student groups know best practices in their activities and where to go if they have a concern.
 - 5.2.3 Ensure that concerns about a child or vulnerable adult are appropriately addressed and referred to the relevant statutory agency or support service.
 - 5.2.4 Liaising with the University and its Safeguarding Representative in addition to relevant statutory agencies.
 - 5.2.5 Coordinate training for employees and third-party associates in safeguarding policies and procedures so they know how to report any concerns or incidents.
- 5.3 The Deputy Safeguarding Officer will be a named employee within HISA who will ensure that the framework is being implemented and will be the first point of call for dealing with concerns from other employees or student groups.
- 5.4 The Deputy Safeguarding officer will be the first point of contact for anyone concerned about a child or vulnerable adult.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- 6.1 Information reported is securely stored and accessible to Lead Safeguarding Officers and Deputy Safeguarding Officers within HISA. Consent will be sought before sharing information, making referrals, or contacting anyone on a person's behalf. However, where there is a risk of significant harm, a risk to life, severe safety and well-being concerns, or concerns about the professional conduct of employees raised by a report, we may need to take urgent action without asking for consent first. This may include contacting emergency contacts or external agencies for assistance.
- 6.2 HISA will not assume to inform family members or others without the young person's consent if the young person is competent to make informed decisions. However, data protection exceptions apply and HISA's policy for the Advice Service on breaching confidentiality allows information to be shared when necessary to prevent harm.

- 6.3 When we process personal data about identifiable individuals, we must comply with [data protection legislation](#). Under the legislation, individuals have several rights to erasure and how their data is handled.

Record keeping

- 7.1 Information relating to a report, which may include sensitive information about individuals, is kept electronically and stored safely within HISA sensitive records for six years.
- 7.2 Anonymised data collected from safeguarding reports can be collated to enable consolidated reports. This allows HISA to monitor activity, look for patterns to learn from case management evaluation and improve our approach to safeguarding. This allows for evaluation and provides data for the Senior Management Team and Trustee Board to support decision-making and allocation of resources.

Appendix 1 - Directly Related Legislation

- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
- Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005
- Children (Scotland) Act 2020
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019
- Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015
- Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011
- Equality Act 2010
- Equally Safe 2018
- Forced Marriage etc. (Protection and Jurisdiction) (Scotland) Act 2011
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), Updated 2017
- Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015
- Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021
- Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
- Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

Appendix 2 – Related HISA Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

- Complaints Handling Policy
- HISA Code of Conduct