



# The Bridging Project

## Safeguarding and protection of young adults policy 2023–2024

### Key details

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## Safeguarding Young Adults Policy 2023

### Outline of safeguarding of young adults at risk

#### What is the safeguarding?

**Child:** References to “child” or “children” in this policy means anyone under the age of 18 years.

**Adult at Risk:** The Bridging Project bases its definition of an “Adult at Risk” on that used within the Data Protection Act 2018 and defines an Adult at Risk as someone over 18 years of age who (i) has **needs for care and support**; and (ii) is experiencing, or is at **risk of, neglect, or physical, mental or emotional harm**; and (iii) as a result of those needs is **unable to protect themselves** against neglect or harm, or the risk of it.

#### What is safeguarding and how does it apply when working with young adults?

**Safeguarding Adults at Risk:** While universities and The Bridging Project are not subject to the provisions of the Care Act 2014, we draw broadly on this act to inform its policy on safeguarding Adults at Risk. We will play our part to:

- Ensure that the rights of Adults at Risk are protected to enable them to **live in safety, free from abuse and neglect**.
- Ensure that the **wellbeing of the Adult at Risk is promoted** and that in deciding on any action to be taken we will **take into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs**, for example when considering whether to refer concerns to statutory bodies or when seeking support from charitable organisations.

However we recognise that in certain cases it may **not always be possible** to fully defer to their wishes when seeking the best way forward.



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## When working with young adults we recognise:

- Young people **don't stop needing safeguards** when they reach their 18th birthday – their legal status might change but **independence is a gradual process** that starts at birth and goes on well into adulthood
- New challenges arise when a young person enters the adult world. This is an exciting time for anyone, but creates the potential for new risks and new areas of vulnerability. Many young people are moving away from home for the first time. Most are starting to take full control of their finances.
- Service providers continue to have a **duty of care** to the young people that use their services, even after those young people are 18. However, young adults who may have previously received health or local authority services (e.g. those who have been 'in care' or 'looked after' by a local authority) may find that on **attaining 18 years, these services are withdrawn** and they are in danger of 'falling through the net' and of being denied services they require on an ongoing basis.

The Bridging Project is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all participants and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

### **Coach vetting and Training**

All staff and volunteers will be subject to assessment including an enhanced DBS check, and are trained in their safeguarding responsibilities.

DBS checks and reference checks on all volunteer coaches take place when they join the programme, and the DBS checks are repeated every three years.



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## **Young people**

All students are provided with training and clear guidelines on what to do if they have any concerns. Students can report any concern directly to the safeguarding lead Phoebe Prall at [phoebe@thebridgingproject.co.uk](mailto:phoebe@thebridgingproject.co.uk) or [safeguarding@thebridgingproject.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@thebridgingproject.co.uk)

Alternatively students can report a concern to our designated trustee Suasanna Eriksson Lee.

## **Communication guidelines**

These guidelines relate to electronic communication between coaches and students on The Bridging Project. These guidelines explain how to keep safe boundaries and follow the same safeguarding practice as in the physical, offline world.

## **Lone working policy**

- 1-1 coaching meetings should take place in open public spaces on university campus e.g. cafe, or office with others present.
- Virtual meetings that take place over the phone or via google hangouts/zoom/microsoft teams should take place within the hours of 9am-7pm.

## **Social Media**

Coaches must not use their personal social networking or instant messaging account to contact young people involved in The Bridging project.

For the purpose of this policy social media is defined as websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. This includes but is not limited to facebook, twitter, facetime, instagram and whatsapp.

As an individual in a position of trust, you should not have any young people on The Bridging Project as friends on social networking sites. Instead encourage them to follow or like The Bridging Projects official Twitter/LinkedIn pages.



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## **Language and content of emails/Text messages**

Outside of sessions coaches and students may only contact each other via email (preferred method of communication), a phone call or text messages.

It is not appropriate to have private non-work or coaching related contact with the young people you work with. This includes electronic communication.

When communicating with young people, it is important to take great care over the language used. Over familiarity or language that could be misinterpreted or misconstrued should be avoided.

When sending emails, both parties should not use informal languages as this can be misunderstood and lead to further complications. Texts and emails should remain brief and unambiguous. Email should not be used as a relationship building tool but used only to communicate specific information - for example, times, dates and location of coaching sessions.

Coaches should not use language that is directly or could be misinterpreted as being racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone in communication with a student.

## **Hours of communication**

When communicating with students outside of coaching sessions (within the guidelines above) this should take place in the daytime or early evening between 09.00-19.00. Coaches must not text, email or call students late in the evening as this has the potential to be viewed as inappropriate.



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## Reporting Concerns

### **What to do if you suspect a concern**

All coaches at The Bridging Project have a duty of care towards the young adults they work with. Any concerns about a student should be passed on to The Designated Safeguarding Officer (Phoebe prail) at [safeguarding@thebridgingproject.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@thebridgingproject.co.uk) and complete the concerns form [here](#).

As students we work with are over the age of 18 we want to build students abilities to approach services of support themselves. When concerns arise and where appropriate coaches should work to discuss with students how they can navigate difficulties that they are facing as well as reporting any concerns.

If as a coach you are ever unsure about whether or not to report a concern it is always best to report it.

In emergencies or where the young adults life is at risk coaches should call 999 and report the incident to the required services.

### **What to do and what not to do**

#### **Dos**

- Listen and acknowledge
- Make space for student to discuss what is going on
- Take some brief notes if required
- Don't promise confidentiality - explain who you will pass on the information to
- Ask open questions - discuss options of how students can approach the challenge going forward
- Discuss what supports systems or services are available if relevant e.g. 'Who can you speak to at university about this?' 'Who is your main contact at university?' 'What is the first step you can take to tackling this?' 'What support do you need to help you overcome this?'
- Prioritise the students best interests - ask the student what they would like to happen



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- Pass on the information to Phoebe unless it is an allegation against them at which point you should inform the board member who is our safeguarding lead, Mark Wormald at

### Don't

- Ignore student claims or skip past them in conversations
- Promise confidentiality
- Ask leading questions
- Investigate issues yourself

### Information Sharing

It is important that we do not promise complete confidentiality with coachees. The student contract will clearly layout in what circumstances information will need to be shared.

To ensure trust is maintained in the relationship it is always important that you let coachees know what, when and to whom who will be sharing any information.

### Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the ability to voice a concern without fear of repercussion. This can include concerns of fraud, malpractice, health and safety, criminal offenses, miscarriages of justice, unethical conduct or failure to comply with legal obligations.

Reporting these concerns should be encouraged. The Bridging Project aims to be as transparent with any reported situations as possible whilst maintaining confidentiality obligations.

Staff should report any concern to the safeguarding lead, or if the concern is regarding the safeguarding lead to the Chairman of The Bridging Project Board Susanna Erikson Lee at [susanna.eriksson.lee@gmail.com](mailto:susanna.eriksson.lee@gmail.com).



## The Bridging Project

Position / Title	Responsible Party
Designated Safeguarding Officer	Phoebe Praill
DSO Email	phoebe@thebridgingproject.co.uk
DSO Phone	07962239420
Designated Safeguarding Trustee	Susanna Eriksson Lee
Email	susanna.eriksson.lee@gmail.com

### Supporting students in accessing services

Universities have lots of services available to students

Different universities will have different services and ports of call, university websites will have clear details of where students can turn to for help. We encourage students to turn the following for help:

- **Personal tutors** - depending on the university some tutors may have more of an academic role and others a pastoral. Students should know who their tutors are and what their role is as early as possible. Students can at times feel apprehensive about seeking support from tutors that they don't have a relationship with at the start, this is ok and a key area for coaches to develop students' confidence in.
- **Student support services** - there may be different terminology for this at different universities but this generally describes a range of support services including mental health support and counseling services
- **Financial assistance** - students should be provided with the financial support they are entitled to through student finance. Sometimes students have not filled in the correct paperwork or have been unable to prove that they are entitled to further financial support available. It is important that all students are set up with student finance before they begin university. More information about how to do this can be found here. Beyond this universities and colleges may have separate funds available to students on our programme, students should be encouraged to discuss these with their contacts at the university.





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- **Accommodation services** – Students may require accommodation support during their time at university. This may be for a variety of reasons including the fact that students who were previously living at home are unable to or because students need accommodation during their holidays. Universities will have different systems of accommodating this which can also be found on universities websites and by students talking to members of staff at university. For some universities and colleges they may have schemes or financial support to help students who require accommodation in the holidays. These may not be advertised and students should be encouraged to discuss this with their contact at the university.
- **Study skills support / peer support and tutoring services / career services** – universities will have varying programmes of support to help students with challenges, whilst these may not apply directly to safeguarding they can help students in the transition and we encourage students to engage in them as is useful.

### Use of questioning to support students

Open powerful questions can help students when they are working to overcome one of the challenges listed above. We are not able to solve students problems or replicate the support services universities have available but instead to increase the resourcefulness of our coaches. Some great questions to ask students (once you have given them space to discuss the issue) may include:

- Who can support you with this?
- What help do you need to work through this challenge?
- Where can you turn to?
- What is standing in the way of you doing x....
- Ask permission to offer advice: Can I offer a suggestion that you take a look at... reach out to...