



TRINITY COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY of OXFORD

Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy

1. Introduction

Trinity College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the health, safety and welfare of its Members and visitors. The College recognises that there are a number of circumstances in which adults at risk may be on College premises or interact with College Members. This Policy aims to ensure the welfare of adults at risk and to safeguard their wellbeing, in particular by protecting them from abuse of any kind. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the University of Oxford's [Code of Practice on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults](#). Trinity College has a separate safeguarding policy pertaining to children, and copies of both policies are available on the College website.

2. Scope

- 2.1. For the purposes of this Policy, an 'adult' refers to a person aged 18 or above, and an 'adult at risk', as defined by the Department of Health, refers to "those who are or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation."
- 2.2. For the purposes of this Policy, a College Member is anyone at Trinity College working with adults at risk, whether as a fellow, employee, student or volunteer.
- 2.3. This Policy applies to all activities involving adults at risk and to all College Members.
- 2.4. The College recognises that it has a legal duty to safeguard the welfare of adults at risk who are Members or come onto its premises or come into contact with its Members under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, and the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- 2.5. The College also has certain powers, under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, to enquire as to the criminal records history of Members to assess any risk to adults at risk.

3. Preventative Measures

- 3.1. The College's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the Head of Wellbeing. The College's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) will depend on the specific event but in most cases will be the Head of Access. Contact details can be found in Section 13 of this Policy. The DSL and DSO have both completed a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The University has two Safeguarding Officers, and their contact details are listed in Section 14.
- 3.2. The College Safeguarding Officers are responsible for:
 - Implementing and promoting this Policy;
 - Ensuring that the Policy is monitored and reviewed in accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of adults at risk;
 - Acting as the main contacts within the College for the protection of adults at risk;

- Ensuring that appropriate College Members are provided with information, advice and training on the protection of adults at risk;
 - Establishing and maintaining contact with the University Safeguarding Officer;
 - Maintaining confidential records of reported adult at risk abuse cases and action taken.
- 3.3. Where a role may require College Members to have unsupervised contact with, regularly care for, train, supervise, or be in sole charge of adults at risk, the College will require satisfactory completion of a DBS Disclosure at the appropriate level.
- 3.4. New College Members will receive a copy of this Policy as part of the induction process. All College Members are expected to comply fully with the guidance and procedures set out in this Policy. The College will ensure that Members are fully briefed and/or trained (as appropriate) on the implications of this Policy.
- 3.5. This Policy is reviewed on an annual basis.
- 3.6. A Safeguarding Trustee will be appointed to support the activities of the Safeguarding Officers and adherence to the terms of the Safeguarding Policy.

4. Forms of Abuse

- 4.1. The NHS outlines seven categories of abuse of adults at risk. Abuse may comprise a single act or repeated acts:
- 4.2. Physical: the physical hurting or injuring of an adult at risk, including denying them food, water, or assistance going to the bathroom if needed, and the misuse of their medicines.
- 4.3. Psychological: the persistent emotional maltreatment of an adult at risk which results in severe or persistent adverse effects. This includes unreasonable and unjustifiable withdrawal of services or support networks.
- 4.4. Sexual: the forcing or pressuring of an adult at risk to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities such as involving looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material.
- 4.5. Domestic: a pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, typically by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member.
- 4.6. Discriminatory: harassment, slurs or unfair treatment relating to an adult at risk's race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, or religion.
- 4.7. Financial abuse: stealing money or valuables. This can include the inappropriate use of an adult at risk's money by a person appointed to look after it, or coercing an adult at risk to spend their money in a way they are not happy with.
- 4.8. Neglect: the persistent failure to meet an adult at risk's basic needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the adult's health or development. Neglect can include failure to provide the following: adequate food, clothing and shelter; protection from physical and emotional harm or danger; adequate supervision; access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

5. Dealing with suspicion of abuse/allegations of abuse

- 5.1. It is the responsibility of all College Members to act on concerns in order to safeguard the welfare of the adult at risk.
- 5.2. College Members should address any concerns to the DSL or DSO. If those concerns relate to the DSO, College Members are expected to discuss the matter with the DSL or to contact the University Safeguarding Officer directly. If an individual feels that the DSO or DSL has not responded appropriately, they are encouraged to contact the University Safeguarding Officer without

delay. Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality. Suspicions or allegations of abuse must not be discussed with anyone else other than those named in 3.1.

- 5.3. It is the Officer's responsibility to act on behalf of the College in dealing with allegations or suspicion of abuse. It is the task of Social Services, not the College, to investigate the matter, under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014. Under no circumstances should a College Member conduct their own investigation into suspicions or allegations of abuse, neither should they question adults at risk closely, as to do so may distort any investigation that may be carried out subsequently by the Police or Social Services.
- 5.4. If an adult at risk says something or acts in such a way that abuse is suspected, the person receiving the information should:
 - React in a calm but concerned way;
 - Tell the individual that s/he is right to share what has happened, and that s/he is not responsible for what has happened;
 - Find an early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared;
 - Take what the individual says seriously and allow them to continue at their own pace;
 - Keep questions to an absolute minimum (only clarify what the individual is saying) and not ask a question that suggests a particular answer;
 - Not interrupt the individual when they are recalling significant events;
 - Reassure the individual that the problem can be dealt with;
 - Tell the individual what will happen next and with whom the information will be shared;
 - Not promise to keep anything secret and explain that you may need to pass key information to other professionals to ensure the individual can be appropriately protected;
 - Make a full record of what is said and done, though this should not result in a delay in reporting the problem.
- 5.5. The record should include:
 - The individual's account of what has occurred;
 - Any dates, times or places and any other potentially useful information
 - The nature of the allegation or concern;
 - A description of any visible physical injury (clothing should not be removed to inspect the individual).
- 5.6. The record may be used later in a criminal trial and it is vital that what the individual discloses is recorded as accurately as possible. The record must be drafted in the individual's words and should not include the assumption or opinions of others.
- 5.7. The problem should be reported immediately to the College DSL or DSO who will take the appropriate action. If the concern arises out of normal office hours (evenings and weekends) contact should be made with the Social Services Emergency Duty Team on 0800 833408. In an emergency, i.e. an immediate threat to life or limb, dial 999.
- 5.8. It is recognised that College Members may need support after an adult at risk discloses abuse to them and appropriate support will be offered by the College. It is also recognised that it is important not to presume accused persons are guilty and to offer them appropriate support.
- 5.9. All College Members (including those with obligations to particular codes of conduct/professional ethics that may be thought to constrain their actions) are required to report or act on any disclosures or allegations of abuse that involve a College Member and that have taken place at the College or on College business. College Members do not investigate serious allegations of abuse themselves as serious allegations will be reported to Oxfordshire Social Services and, if necessary, the police.

6. Procedure for dealing with allegations or suspicions about a College Member

- 6.1. It can be difficult to accept that a colleague may deliberately harm an adult at risk.

When a concern arises, there are three processes that may need to take place: an adult at risk protection investigation; a criminal investigation; potential College disciplinary action following an external investigation.

- 6.2. Any suspicions or allegations should be addressed to the DSL or DSO, as outlined in the above, who will inform the University Safeguarding Officer. Should it be necessary, the core group process contained within the Safeguarding Children Policy can be convened in allegations of abuse against adults at risk.

7. Students

- 7.1. The College may admit students who are classed as adults at risk. The College recognises that it has special duties of care towards an adult at risk.
- 7.2. The Senior Tutor is responsible for ensuring that the DSL, DSO, relevant tutors and other key members of staff are informed of the admission of any students who are classed as adults at risk.

8. Employees

- 8.1. The College may employ individuals, either in academic posts or as staff, who are classed as adults at risk. The College recognises that it has special duties of care towards an adult at risk.
- 8.2. The Domestic Bursar is responsible for ensuring that the DSL and DSO are informed of the employment of any individual who is classed as an adult at risk.

9. Confidentiality

- 9.1. The College has an obligation to respect the privacy and confidentiality of all individuals, in line with the University confidentiality guidance and Policy on Data Protection. Nevertheless, it is not always appropriate or sensible to promise complete confidentiality to informants in circumstances of alleged abuse. In some circumstances the College owes a duty of care to its students or visitors that cannot be fulfilled unless the College takes action on the basis of information that might have been provided in confidence. Anyone making an allegation of abuse should be assured that: i) The individual informed will only pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken. ii) The individual informed will never tell anyone who does not have a clear 'need to know.' iii) The individual informed will take whatever steps they can to protect the informing adult at risk from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure of alleged abuse has been made.
- 9.2. There will be circumstances in which it is necessary for a Safeguarding Officer or other College Member to share information with third parties such as the local authority or the police.

10. Conduct around adults at risk

- 10.1. College Members should remember that inappropriate behaviour can occur via the telephone, internet and e-mail, as well as during direct interaction.
- 10.2. College Members should:
- Treat everyone with fairness, equality and respect;
 - Be sensitive to appearance, race, culture, religious belief, sexuality, gender or disability;
 - Report all allegations or suspicions of abuse of adults at risk using the Procedures outlined in this Policy;
 - Be aware that physical contact with an adult at risk may be misinterpreted;
 - Retain a professional approach to adults at risk, including avoiding unnecessary physical contact with an adult at risk;

- Respect an adult's right to privacy and, in residential accommodation, not enter an adult's bedroom without prior authorisation except in the case of an emergency.

11. Risk Assessment

- 11.1. A risk assessment must be completed by the organisers of any activity specifically intended for adults at risk and which brings adults at risk onto College premises or into contact with College Members. Once completed, the risk assessment must be approved by a Safeguarding Officer before the activity is undertaken.
- 11.2. An annual safeguarding risk assessment undertaken by the DSL will note any staff and/or students classed as adults at risk.

12. People with specific responsibility for safeguarding adults at risk and their roles

12.1. The DSL is responsible for:

- Procedure
- Holding and being conversant with current University, local and national Safeguarding Adults procedures
- Keeping up to date through recognised training. It is a requirement that this takes place at least every two years
- Reviewing and updating the College's Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and University policies and procedures. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in the policies and procedures must be remedied without delay
- Liaison over safeguarding matters with the University Safeguarding Officer
- Briefing and guiding those in regular contact with adults at risk in College on Safeguarding matters. This includes the briefing of new staff as part of their induction
- Ensuring that, through the usual processes of induction, each College Staff has access to the Safeguarding Procedures and has read them within 3 months of being appointed;
- Receiving reports of alleged or suspected abuse of adults at risk within the College, or reported by an adult at risk relating to incidents at home or outside the College, contacting the University Safeguarding Officer and taking any other action in response, as set out below:
 - Keeping records
 - Liaising with the staff
 - Coordination of regular training to College Members in Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding Adults at Risk as appropriate.

12.2. The Safeguarding Trustee will support the activities of the DSL and DSO.

12.3. The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Undertaking an annual review of the College's Safeguarding Policy and procedures;
- Receiving the College's annual safeguarding risk assessment and action plan.

13. Contact Information

Trinity College Designated Safeguarding Lead, Lizzie Shine; lizzie.shine@trinity.ox.ac.uk 01865 279895.

Trinity College Designated Safeguarding Officer: Head of Access, Hannah Rolley; hannah.rolley@trinity.ox.ac.uk 01865 279860

University Safeguarding Officers:

- Director of HR: 01865 270152
- Director of Student Welfare and Support Services: 01865 280444

14. Relevant Policies

[Safeguarding Children Policy](#)

[Harassment Policy](#)

Approved by GB 26th November 2025