UCEM Covid-19 Safeguarding Response

As an institution who predominantly operates online, many of UCEM's processes and procedures relating to Safeguarding are still applicable. However, UCEM has enhanced some of its processes to account for difficulties anticipated as a result of Covid-19 and more information can be found on this in this appendix.

The safety and welfare of UCEM's students are of highest priority, and the best interests of students (in particular children and vulnerable adults) continue to come first during the Covid-19 outbreak. The current situation places additional strain on many of our students; we encourage staff to be especially vigilant when they speak to students, reporting any concerns.

Referrals

Staff should continue to act immediately if they have any concerns for the safety or welfare of a student. The process for making referrals **has not** changed. Any concerns about a student should be reported to the Safeguarding team by calling 01184672400 followed by an email to safeguarding@ucem.ac.uk

If a staff member has concerns that another member of staff poses a risk to a student, they should refer the matter to the HR DSL (Jenna Roberts) by telephone, followed by an email to set out the concern to AskHR@ucem.ac.uk

Staffing

UCEM has a well-staffed and trained safeguarding team- all members of the team are trained to DSL level. UCEM will continue to ensure that a member of the safeguarding team is available to support students (through the monitoring of the safeguarding@ucem.ac.uk inbox and the safeguarding phone 01184672400). The DSL and SLT-DSL will continue to provide guidance and support to the team as required.

The Safeguarding team operates a 'deputy' system on the safeguarding inbox to ensure coverage during staff absence.

The Safeguarding team is operational from Monday-Friday between 9am-5pm. Staff and students may leave enquiries for the team by email in between these times- the team will pick up messages upon their return, and the enquirer will be directed to information and sources of support in the interim period by an automated email response.

DBS checks

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its [guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking](#) to minimise the need for face-to-face contact. UCEM adheres to this recruitment guidance.

UCEM will continue to follow its legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

Safeguarding team training

For the the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training. This shall be kept under review should the Covid-19 situation prevent DSL training taking place for an extended period of time, at which point UCEM will explore whether online DSL training is possible.

Additional Resources for Students

Additional resources for students to support them during the Covid-19 outbreak can be found in the Listening and Counselling area of the Student Hub on the VLE. Information can be found on:

- Mental health
- Physical wellbeing
- Supporting your family
- Working at home
- Abusive relationships
- Financial worries
- Online safety

Vulnerable Children

UCEM is not currently offering any face-to-face teaching, and so it is not possible to ensure that vulnerable children physically attend their education in the same way that other schools or colleges might do.

The majority of UCEM's students who are aged under 18 and may be vulnerable will be studying on an apprenticeship programme. In turn, a student's ability to attend work may have been impacted by Covid-19- a student may have been asked to work from home, or be placed on furlough.

UCEM will ensure that it will maintain close contact with all students under the age of 18 to ensure their welfare and will continue to report any concerns about students to the relevant local authority.

Online Safety

Covid-19 means that as a population we are spending more time online than before. This impacts the chances that students may encounter situations online which place them at risk.

UCEM issues an Online Safety Guidance for Students document, as well as an Anti-bullying and Harassment Procedure, which can be found on the UCEM website and on the VLE. We advise that all students and staff re-familiarise themselves with these policies, and to contact the Safeguarding team if they have any concerns or queries.

Mental Health

The impact of Covid-19 on mental health is significant, and UCEM is available to direct any student who requires support to where they are able to access this.

Students suffering with mental health problems can contact the Disability and Wellbeing team for advice and support.

Students with more severe mental health difficulties, who feel that their health, safety or welfare is at risk, can contact the Safeguarding team for support.

UCEM has put together additional resources to support students through the Covid-19 crisis.

Children Moving Schools or Colleges

If a child moves school or colleges during the Covid-19 outbreak period, UCEM will do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with any relevant welfare and child protection information. Any exchanges of information will happen at a DSL (or deputy) level. Where this is not possible, senior leaders will take responsibility.