

University of Aberdeen: Online Events Safeguarding Document

Purpose of this Document:

The University of Aberdeen is committed to prioritising the well-being and safeguarding of all involved in its online events. This guidance aims to minimise risk, support the delivery of a positive online event experience and help event coordinators manage and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

All staff are reminded of the requirement to complete the [Information Security Awareness](#) training which covers areas such as common threats and how to deal with them, data protection and handling research data. All staff should also have completed the University's [Equality and Diversity training](#).

Definitions for the purpose of this document:

- **Child:** A person under the age of eighteen years.
- **Adult:** A person aged eighteen years or over.
- **At risk adult:** A person aged eighteen years or over who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and is, or may be, unable to take care of, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.
- **Online event:** Events delivered with no in-person interaction via a variety of digital online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Zoom, MS Teams, YouTube, Instagram and Blackboard Collaborate. The events can be live or pre-recorded.

Embedding safeguarding into online event planning and delivery:

1. For all events

- Contact the Events team at events@abdn.ac.uk to make them aware of the proposed event and the anticipated audience in order to allow for safeguarding considerations and wider support needs to be assessed
- The event organiser will be responsible for the safeguarding of all participants and attendees during the event
- All event organisers should have read and understood the [University's Safeguarding Code of Practice](#) document (Click on the link and search under the letter S in the list)
- The personal/contact information for speakers/performers/participants/attendees should not be shared with other parties, please read the [University's Data Protection Policy](#) for further information on GDPR (see document attached in appendix)
- If appropriate a risk assessment for the event must be completed by the main event organiser. You will find a risk assessment template attached to the [University's Safeguarding Code of Practice](#) document. (Click on the link and search under the letter S in the list)
- The main event organiser must plan and communicate clearly what your event will involve and how you will ensure the safety of participants, ensuring a message of 'zero tolerance to abusive or inappropriate behaviour' is conveyed. This can be discussed in detail with the events team and the main event organiser.
- If the event is to be recorded, this must be highlighted to attendees at the point of promotion or booking, with a reminder issued at the start of the event
- If the event is to be recorded the speakers/performers/participants should be informed in advance and permissions sought
- Consent must be sought from attendees or participants if any online images/videos are to be used post event for reporting or future marketing and distribution across platforms such as Facebook and You Tube.
- You should choose the safest and most appropriate online platform for your event and target audience, please contact the [Media Services](#) team to discuss this further if you are unsure of the most appropriate to use, and to discuss the various safety aspects of each

2. For events where children may be present with their parents or via their School

- Ensure you have read and understood the University's [Protection of Vulnerable Groups Policy](#). Please note those who participate/perform at an event for children or a school visit should be a PVG scheme member. Please contact the Human Resources at HR@abdn.ac.uk should you have further questions about the PVG scheme
- Ensure that all events organisers/hosts are aware of the increased vulnerability of children with disabilities and additional support needs
- A minimum of two adult event organisers/hosts must be present at the event
- It is mandatory that the School or Parents of children present, provide relevant permissions if the event is to be recorded. The School will have its own safeguarding measure and will seek relevant permissions from parents. It is up to the main event organiser to inform them of the intended recording in advance
- Live links to events where children will be present should not be circulated in a public forum, and should only be issued to registered attendees

3. For events with at risk adults present

- Ensure you have read and understood the University's [Protection of Vulnerable Groups Policy](#).
- Ensure that all events organisers/hosts are aware of the increased vulnerability of adults with disabilities and additional support needs
- Attendees should be asked at the point of booking whether they require any extra assistance for the event, to allow adequate measures to be put in place in advance
- Where possible, subtitles, a BSL interpreter or a transcript of the event should be available to those in attendance who may require it
- Event organisers and hosts should be vigilant and aware of messages in the Chat and Q&A functions of the online platform, as well as verbal communication, in case of abuse or inappropriate use during the event
- Events organisers and hosts should be prepared to act should it be required, such as deleting inappropriate messages or dismissing audience members who may be causing offence or harm
- If the event is hacked, then event hosts and organisers should be prepared to end the recording and event immediately to avoid potential harm to the attendees/participants. An immediate apology would need to be issued to all attendees/participants should this occur

Things to consider if an incident occurs or someone makes a complaint during your event:

Do:

- Take it seriously - be accessible and receptive
- Seek advice from an appropriate person and report the incident
- Listen carefully and make a detailed record of what was said and by whom

Don't:

- React strongly
- Jump to conclusions
- Speculate or accuse anybody

Reporting an Incident:

If an incident occurs during an online event, this should be reported to the main event organiser (if not present at the event) and subsequently the event organiser should report it to their line manager.

The person reporting should provide as much information as possible regarding the incident including:

- Their name and contact details
- Names of individuals involved
- Date, time, location and description of incident and the circumstance and if any witnesses were present.

For further help or information with regards to Online Event Safeguarding, please contact the Central Festival & Events team at events@abdn.ac.uk