

# **UCEN Manchester: Safeguarding Policy** (Adults)

Document Control	
Document Type	Policy and Procedure
Date Approved	June 2025
Approved by	Academic Board
Version Number	2
Published Date	25/07/2025
Frequency of Review	Annual
Review Date	June 2026
Department	Student Engagement and Experience
Policy Owner	Director of Student Engagement and Experience
Principalship Lead	Vice Dean
Accessible to Students	Yes
Training Required – if so, identify who will deliver	Yes – annual mandatory training via iThrive
Method of Dissemination	Website; Team Meetings
Guide for students required e.g. flowchart?	Yes



	Summary Article	Website Policy	Interactive Training	Video & Summary	Student Guide	CPD Day Training	Other	Date Completed
Website		Х						
Intranet								
Thrive			Х					
Staff Comms						Х		
Student					х			
Comms								

## Revision History

Version	Date	New/Replacement	Summary of Changes	
2	August 2024  May 2025	New	Replaced joint policy with The Manchester College to focus on adult learners studying in higher education.  • Formatting changed to align with policy protocols agreed • Inclusion of Multi-agency Policy and Procedure (Adults) - Manchester Safeguarding Partnership • Extended Scope to reference relationship with TMC • Inclusion of Safeguarding Context with HE. • Inclusion of Safeguarding staffing structure • Ensuring students on placement know to contact 999 if immediate risk • Explicit reference to Think Family and Making Safeguarding Personal • Changes to process for reporting and recording safeguarding incidents. • Changes to Appendices – removal of Trusted Contact protocol and replaced with	
			guidance on taking Disclosures to include further guidance on understanding capacity	



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#### **UCEN Manchester: Safeguarding Policy**

## 1. Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to outline UCEN Manchester's commitment to safeguarding adult learners. The policy is designed to ensure a safe and supportive environment for everyone, promoting well-being and addressing any concerns related to safety or welfare.

## 2. Policy Aims and Objectives

As a higher education provider, in most cases, UCEN Manchester students are adults with the mental and legal capacity to make their own decisions and our policies and practice reflect this.

The aims of UCEN Manchester's Safeguarding Policy are to:

- protect students from harm to include abuse, neglect and self-neglect, domestic abuse, exploitation, and radicalisation (please see Appendix A)
- promote a safe and inclusive environment where all students feel valued, supported, and able to succeed academically and personally.
- ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are clearly understood and embedded across all levels of UCEN Manchester staff, students, and partners.
- comply with legal and statutory safeguarding duties as outlined by UK legislation and government guidance to include Keeping Children Safe in Education; Prevent Duty and Care Act.
- draw on the expertise of <u>Multi-agency Policy and Procedure (Adults) Manchester</u>
   Safeguarding Partnership
- create a culture of openness and trust where concerns can be raised and addressed promptly and appropriately.

The objectives of the Safeguarding Policy are to:

- Raise awareness among staff and students of what safeguarding means and the signs of potential abuse, neglect, or harm.
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities for safeguarding across UCEN Manchester
- Provide accessible reporting mechanisms for students and staff to raise concerns confidentially and without fear of reprisal.
- Ensure all staff receive appropriate training on safeguarding policies and procedures, including Prevent and mental health awareness.
- Establish procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns including how to report, record, and escalate issues in line with legal and ethical standards.
- Regularly monitor and review safeguarding policies and practices to ensure they remain effective, compliant, and fit for purpose.

#### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff, and stakeholders of UCEN Manchester. It is important to acknowledge that UCEN Manchester operates within a broader Further Education (FE) college environment, sharing campuses and facilities with The Manchester College. As such, the policy must be understood and implemented in the context of a multi-institutional setting, where students under the age of 18 may also be present. This context informs our safeguarding responsibilities, behavioural expectations, and the application of procedures across shared spaces.



- **3.1** At UCEN Manchester, the Safeguarding Policy encompasses all adult students and staff. This includes individuals enrolled in part time courses, guest speakers/lecturers, administrative, facilities, and support staff.
- 3.2 For students studying on placement or work-based learning environment (such as a professional or clinical setting) a member of staff or student should normally report any safeguarding concern to the providers Safeguarding Officer. If the student or staff member feels it is inappropriate to make a referral, or they do not feel they have received a satisfactory response, they should contact UCEN Manchester's Responsible Manager for Safeguarding, Head of Student Advice, Support and Wellbeing. If there is an immediate risk of harm, the student should contact 999.
- **3.3** For those working with individuals under the age of 18 or operating in contexts aligned to Keeping children safe in education GOV.UK, specific guidelines and procedures are outlined in The Manchester College's Safeguarding Policy and should be read and understood. The policy can be accessed here: Student Policies At The Manchester College.
- 3.4 In alignment with the LTE Group's Safeguarding Strategic Framework, UCEN Manchester implements rigorous safer recruitment practices, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults. The institution has clear procedures for managing allegations against staff, including referrals to the DBS and consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) when appropriate. These measures ensure compliance with statutory guidance, such as 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, thereby ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment for all students

#### 4. Definitions

#### Safeguarding

4.1 Safeguarding is the term used for protecting people from maltreatment and keeping individuals safe and protected from harm, abuse, and neglect. (Appendix 1 provides categories of abuse)

Important principles:

- Young people and vulnerable adults have a right to be safe and should be protected from all forms of abuse
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- It is better to offer help as early as possible, before issues escalate and risk causing more harm
- Working together with other agencies and colleagues provides the best support

#### 4.2 Adult Safeguarding

4.2.1 We recognise that as adults, students are primarily responsible for taking care of their own welfare. However, we also recognise that there will be occasions when UCEN Manchester will need to work with other agencies in support of the safety and wellbeing of our students. This responsibility is defined in Section 14.7 of the Care and support statutory guidance - GOV.UK:



"Protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances."

As UCEN Manchester is an adult learning environment, our approach to Safeguarding is to follow the Six principles of Adult Safeguarding; Make Safeguarding Personal and Think Family.

#### Six Principles of Adult Safeguarding

Principle	Description
Empowerment	people, including young people, being supported, and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent
Prevention	having procedures that recognise that it is better to act before harm occurs. This is supported by providing training to relevant staff so that staff involved in activities with children and adults in vulnerable situations receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what they can do to help
Risk assessment	UCEN Manchester requires proactive risk assessment of ongoing activities to identify those activities where participants are or are likely to be vulnerable and therefore safeguarding requirements need to be anticipated and considered.
Proportionality	To ensure that responses to concerns/alerts are proportional to the assessed risk and the nature of the allegation/concern. Proportional decisions need to consider the principles of empowerment and protection. Where a person lacks the mental capacity, any decisions made on their behalf must be made in the person's "best interests" and be least restrictive to their rights and freedoms.
Protection	support and representation for those in greatest need. For adults in vulnerable situations this may mean supporting the adult to report abuse or neglect and enabling them to make decisions about whether and how to participate in the safeguarding process to the extent that they choose
Partnership	by working with the Safeguarding Boards for adults and children in Manchester and with our placement partners, to do what is within our control to prevent, detect and report neglect and abuse. Information sharing with partners to be in accordance with legislation, agreed protocols and where possible consent so that staff, students, and children are assured UCEN Manchester will treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary.



Accountability	ensuring accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding, so that everyone understands the roles including the children and adults that the policy is aiming to protect.

#### 4.3.4 Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)

Making Safeguarding Personal is a national approach to safeguarding that prioritises the individual's wishes, feelings, and desired outcomes. It involves working with adults at risk, rather than simply doing things to or for them, and ensures that safeguarding responses are person-led and outcome-focused.

This approach recognises that adults may have complex lives and personal circumstances and may be ambivalent or uncertain about what action they want to take. As such, Making Safeguarding Personal supports individuals to be actively involved in decisions that affect them, in a way that enhances their autonomy, dignity, and wellbeing.

#### 4.3.5 Student Voice and Making Safeguarding Personal

In the context of UCEN Manchester, Making Safeguarding Personal aligns closely with our commitment to promoting and listening to student voice. We recognise that effective safeguarding is built on trust, collaboration, and respect for each student's lived experience.

We are committed to:

- Involving students in safeguarding decisions that affect them
- Respecting and responding to students' views, wishes, and concerns
- Creating a culture where students feel safe, heard, and empowered to speak up
- Ensuring safeguarding actions are tailored to the needs and outcomes identified by the student wherever possible.

#### 4.4 Think Family Approach

- 4.4.1 The Think Family approach to safeguarding is a holistic and multi-agency framework that recognises the interconnection between the needs of children and their families. It promotes early intervention by encouraging practitioners to consider the wider family context when assessing the risks and needs of a child. Rather than treating issues in isolation, this approach ensures that support is coordinated across services, acknowledging that challenges faced by one family member can significantly impact others, particularly children.
- 4.4.2 In safeguarding practice, Think Family encourages professionals to work collaboratively, sharing relevant information and developing joint plans that address both individual and family-wide concerns. This means engaging with



- adult services such as mental health, substance misuse, and domestic abuse support, as these factors often contribute to environments that may place children at risk.
- 4.4.3 Staff at UCEN Manchester, therefore, are encouraged to adopt a curious and non-judgemental attitude, actively listening to adult students to ensure we can identify hidden risks and unmet needs of the family and children that might not be immediately apparent.

#### 4.5 Vulnerable Adults and Adults At Risk

- **4.5.1** The Care Act 2014 defines a *vulnerable adult*, more commonly referred to in the legislation as an "adult at risk" as: "An adult who has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it." (Care Act 2014, Section 42)
- **4.5.2** This definition highlights three key criteria:
  - The adult has care and support needs (which can be physical, mental, emotional, or related to disability).
  - They are experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect.
  - Because of their care and support needs, they are unable to protect themselves.

Appendix 3 provides additional context for UCEN Manchester students.

## 5. Safeguarding: Context within HE

- 5.1 In the context of Higher Education (HE) in England, safeguarding refers to the policies and practices designed to protect students and staff from harm, including abuse, neglect, exploitation, radicalisation, and other forms of physical or emotional risk. While safeguarding is often associated with children and vulnerable adults, in HE it encompasses a broader responsibility for student welfare and wellbeing.
- 5.2 Unlike schools and colleges which must comply with the Children Act 2004 and Keeping Children Safe in Education, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) do not have a single statutory safeguarding duty. However, we still have responsibilities under a range of laws. These include Health and Safety at Work Act 1974; Equality Act 2010 and the Care Act 2014.
- 5.3 The Office for Students (OfS), the regulator for HE in England monitors safeguarding indirectly through student wellbeing and harassment policies. Universities UK (UUK) also provides guidance on this agenda and QAA can assess safeguarding in quality reviews indirectly.
- 5.4 Current Safeguarding Themes in HE include:



- Sexual misconduct and harassment: the OfS has introduced new regulation which HEIs must adhere to <u>Condition E6: Harassment and sexual misconduct -</u> <u>Office for Students</u>. Please see <u>sexual harassment and misconduct policy.pdf</u>
- Mental health: increasing demand for support services
- Preventing radicalisation: balancing security concerns with academic freedom.
- Digital safeguarding: keeping students safe from online abuse, harassment, and misinformation.
- Transition from FE to HE supporting younger or more vulnerable students.

#### 5.5 In summary, at UCEN Manchester, we will be Safeguarding:

- All students through a broader duty of care covering mental health, harassment, bullying, sexual violence, online safety
- Adults at risk students with reduced capacity to keep themselves safe (Appendix 2)
- Under-18 students (e.g. TMC students participating in taster events; outreach activities)
- Under 18s as part of 'Think Family' Approach where a staff member becomes concerned about a child's welfare based on an adult's disclosure

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

UCEN Manchester has designated the following roles for coordinating the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and procedures including ensuring that staff and relevant students understand their role and limitations:

Role	Responsibility	Position Responsible
Safeguarding Governor	Oversight of safeguarding at governance level.	LTE Board Member
Executive Lead for Safeguarding	Provides executive leadership and accountability for safeguarding across the organisation.	Principal of The Manchester College and UCEN Manchester
Strategic Lead for Safeguarding	Responsible for the strategy on safeguarding and policy oversight; accountable for safeguarding practice at UCEN Manchester	Vice Dean, UCEN Manchester
Senior Manager for Safeguarding	Oversees safeguarding implementation and ensures operational consistency across UCEN Manchester.	Director of Student Experience and Engagement
Responsible Manager for Safeguarding (Advice and Consultation)	Provides safeguarding advice, guidance, and consultation. Ensures compliance with safeguarding legislation and good practice.	Designated Safeguarding Lead, The Manchester College (external to UCEN Manchester)



Responsible Manager for Safeguarding (Operational)	Leads day-to-day safeguarding operations and case management within UCEN Manchester.	Head of Student Advice, Support and Wellbeing, UCEN Manchester
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## 7. Reporting and Recording Safeguarding Incidents

- 7.1 All safeguarding concerns need to be reported to the Future U Student Support Team:
  - face to face on campus
  - by email using wellbeing@ucenmanchester.ac.uk
  - or by completing the online form from the website <u>Reporting Incidents</u>.
- 7.2 Incidents reported will be recorded by the Future U Team in compliance with GDPR.
- 7.3 As far as possible, staff should adhere to the following guidance when a disclosure is made:
  - Take what you are being told seriously
  - Listen and do not interrupt
  - Reassure students they have done the right thing
  - Tell them you will have to pass the information on, who to and why
- 7.4 All staff should aim to avoid the following practices when taking a disclosure directly from students:
  - · Investigating further or probing
  - · Looking shocked, distasteful, judgmental
  - Do not speculate/pass an opinion about the disclosure
  - Do not make negative comments
  - Do not promise to keep it a secret/confidential

Further support for staff is referenced in the What to Do When Guide which is updated regularly and can be accessed from Staffroom: What-to-do-when-guide 24.25 and in Appendix 2.

7.5 Once staff have shared a disclosure, the Wellbeing Officer will record on ProMonitor that this has been actioned. The details of the intervention will be recorded but staff should be aware they will not have access. This is shared on a need-to-know basis.

## 8. How this policy contributes to our Access and Participation Plan

8.1 Many students do not experience equality of opportunity in higher education. This is true across the three main stages of a student's higher education journey: access, participation and progression. The Office for Students, as part of the Access and Participation Plan through the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) identifies 12 sector-wide risks that may affect a student's opportunity to access and succeed in higher education.



8.2 The EORR asks providers to consider which, if any, of their prospective or current students are likely to be affected by the risks, and how these might be mitigated. In relation to Safeguarding, these are:

- Risk 7 Insufficient personal support: "Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome" (Office for Students, 2024).
- Risk 8 Mental Health: "Students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.
- Risk 9 Ongoing Impacts of Coronavirus: Students may be affected by the ongoing consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.
- Risk 10 Cost Pressures: Cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete
  or obtain a good grade. They may also result in an increasing number of students
  undertaking part-time or full-time employment alongside their studies, reduced
  attendance on-course, and less time to study.

This policy aims to address these risks through; early intervention, personalised support, coordinated support services and timely decision-making which are all monitored through the work of the Future U Student Support Team and reported to the LTE Safeguarding, Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee.

### 9. How UCEN Manchester measures the impact of this policy

UCEN Manchester is committed to the effective evaluation and measurement of the impact of this policy. The policy has several strands, and the impact will necessarily be assessed in a number of different ways, including monitoring and reporting as follows:

- a. Staff compliance with mandatory training
- b. Monitor and analysis of reported incidents
- c. Half term reviews of Future U caseloads and referrals
- d. Student retention data
- e. Termly reporting to LTE Safeguarding, Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee



#### **APPENDICES**

#### **Appendix 1: Categories of Abuse**

#### Indicative but not extensive:

#### 1. Physical abuse

The intentional use of force that results in bodily injury, pain, or impairment. This includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, and misuse of medication or restraint.

#### 2. Domestic violence or abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between intimate partners or family members. It can include physical, emotional, sexual, financial abuse, or neglect.

#### 3. Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a person to take part in sexual activities without their consent. It includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, or inappropriate touching.

#### 4. Psychological or emotional abuse

Involves actions that harm a person's self-worth or emotional well-being. This includes threats, humiliation, intimidation, isolation, and verbal abuse.

#### 5. Financial or material abuse

The unauthorised or improper use of a person's funds, property, or resources. Examples include theft, fraud, exploitation, or coercion in relation to financial affairs.

#### 6. Modern slavery

Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, and domestic servitude. Victims are controlled by threats, punishment, or coercion and may be exploited for personal or commercial gain.

#### 7. Discriminatory abuse

Involves unequal treatment based on race, gender, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or other protected characteristics. This includes harassment, slurs, or unfair treatment.

#### 8. Organisational or institutional abuse

Poor care practices within an institution or specific care setting, such as a hospital or care home. This can include neglect, lack of respect for dignity, or inappropriate restraint.

#### 9. Neglect or acts of omission

The failure to provide necessary care, assistance, or attention, resulting in harm or risk of harm. This includes not providing food, medication, personal care, or access to medical services.

#### 10. Self-neglect

When a person fails to take care of their own basic needs, including hygiene, nutrition, health, or safety, often due to mental or physical impairments



#### **Appendix 2: Taking Disclosures**

Disclosure from a child (18 years and under)

If a child tells a member of staff or volunteer about possible abuse:

- Listen carefully and stay calm.
- Do not interview the child but question normally and without pressure to be sure that you understand what the person is telling you. It is important not to ask leading questions.
- Do not put words into the child's mouth.
- Reassure the child that by telling you, they have done the right thing and try to ensure immediate safety.
- Inform the child that you must pass the information on, but that only those that need
  to know about it will be told. Inform them of to whom you will report the matter. Do not
  offer confidentiality.
- Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the child said, did and your
  questions etc. Note the main points carefully for your detailed record.
- Staff and volunteers should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves and should instead report them immediately to the Future U Student Support Team.

#### Disclosure from an adult (18 years old or over)

If an adult discloses possible abuse to a member of staff:

- Listen carefully and stay calm.
- Do not interview the person but question normally and without pressure to be sure that you understand what the person is telling you. It is important not to ask leading questions.
- Do not put words into the person's mouth.
- Reassure the person that by telling you, they have done the right thing and try to ensure immediate safety.
- Identify the person's wishes with regards to sharing information or making a referral. The consent of the person making the disclosure should always be obtained before any action is taken, except in circumstances where the adult lacks capacity to give consent, others are deemed to be at risk of significant harm, or a criminal offence has occurred.

#### Think Family Approach – disclosure from an adult where children are involved

If a staff member becomes concerned about a child's welfare based on an adult's disclosure. For example, information about domestic abuse, mental health struggles, or substance misuse it is important to respond appropriately while maintaining professional boundaries. The Think Family approach is especially relevant here, as it recognises that issues affecting adults can directly or indirectly impact children in the home.

Steps a staff member should take if they think a child is at risk based on an adult's disclosure:

- Listen carefully and sensitively to the adult student, without making assumptions or promises you cannot keep.
- Remain professional and non-judgemental, showing empathy while keeping your safeguarding responsibilities in mind.



- Recognise potential implications for any children in the household, even if they are not mentioned directly.
- Record the disclosure clearly, factually, and confidentially, including any concerns about the child's wellbeing.
- Report to the Future U Team
- Do not delay action if the situation suggests immediate risk to a child. If you
  cannot contact the Head of Student Advice, Support and Wellbeing or Future U
  Team, contact the DSL at The Manchester College or Local Authority
  Safeguarding Services straight away.

We understand taking a Disclosure can be upsetting, therefore, please reach out to our Employee Assistance Programme for emotional and wellbeing support. You may also wish to speak to your line manager.



#### Appendix 3: Judging an Adult at Risk

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 requires an assumption that an adult has full legal capacity to make decisions unless it can be shown they lack capacity to make a decision for themselves at the time the decision needs to be made. An updated Mental Health Bill is being reviewed by the Government and any recommendations will be referenced in this Policy once approved.

As of May 2025, individuals must be given all appropriate help and support to enable them to make their own decisions or to maximise their participation in any decision-making process. Unwise decisions do not necessarily indicate lack of capacity.

Any decision made, or action taken, on behalf of someone who lacks the capacity to make the decision or act for themselves must be made in their best interests.

It is important that an individual's mental capacity is considered at each stage of the adult safeguarding process.

It is always essential in adult safeguarding to consider whether the adult is capable of giving informed consent in all aspects of their life. If they are able, their consent should be sought. This may be in relation to whether they give consent to:

- An activity that may be abusive if consent to abuse or neglect was given under duress (e.g. as a result of exploitation, pressure, fear or intimidation), this apparent consent should be disregarded)
- An adult safeguarding enquiry going ahead in response to a concern that has been raised. The person must be given information and have the opportunity to consider all the risks and fully understand the likely consequences of that decision over the short and long term.
- If, after discussion with the adult who has mental capacity, they refuse any intervention, their wishes will be respected unless:
  - There is an aspect of public interest (e.g. not acting will put other adults or children at risk).
  - There is a duty of care on a particular agency to intervene (e.g. the police if a crime has been or may be committed).

#### When to refer a safeguarding concern without an adult's consent

Personal information held by professionals and agencies is subject to a legal duty of confidentiality and should normally only be disclosed to third parties, including other organisations, with the consent of the subject of the information. However, there may be times when it will be necessary to disclose information without the subject's consent.

Where an adult with capacity to make an informed decision about their own safety does not want any action taken, this does not override a professional's responsibility to raise a safeguarding concern and to share key information with relevant professionals e.g., where others are at risk, or a criminal offence has been committed.

If there appears to be significant risk to the adult, and no one else, consideration should be given to whether their wishes should be overridden. The adult's wishes should not stop professionals from fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to duty of care, to continue to provide a service and regarding appropriate sharing of information. In these situations, the adult must always be:

Advised about what information will be shared, with whom and the reasons for this.



- Advised that their views and wishes will be respected as far as possible by the local authority or other agencies in relation to any response they may have a duty to make.
- Provided with information regarding what happens when a local authority is advised of a safeguarding concern.
- Assured by the professional passing this information to the local authority, that their lack of consent to the information being shared, and their views and wishes regarding actions they do or do not want taken in relation to the situation as far as it affects them directly, will also be explained to the local authority.

#### When a student at UCEN Manchester may be considered an 'adult at risk'

- **Financial Exploitation**: A student with a learning disability is being pressured by peers to hand over money or possessions. Due to their disability, the student may not fully understand the situation or know how to seek help, placing them at increased risk of harm.
- Self-Neglect Related to Mental Health: A student experiencing a severe mental health crisis is unable to manage daily living tasks, such as eating, personal hygiene, or taking prescribed medication. This self-neglect may pose significant risks to their wellbeing and safety.
- **Emotional or Psychological Abuse**: A neurodivergent student (e.g., with autism spectrum condition) is being persistently ridiculed, isolated, or manipulated by flatmates in accommodation. The student may not recognise these behaviours as abusive or may feel unable to disclose their experiences.
- **Abuse by a Caregiver**: A student who relies on a partner or family member for personal care and daily support is subject to controlling or abusive behaviour from that individual. The power imbalance and dependency may prevent the student from leaving the situation or reporting the abuse.