

Wellbeing for student groups



**Committee Training
2022/23 Handbook**

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Introduction

As a Committee Member, you are in a position of trust and responsibility. At times, this can lead to members reaching out to you for support. As you are **not** a counsellor, you should act only as a signposter to Students' Union, University led and external services alongside being confident in escalating situations as necessary.

It is also important to remember and prioritise your own wellbeing and ensure you feel supported by your fellow Committee Members and the Activities and Volunteering Team.

After completing this module, if you have any questions the Activities & Volunteering Department is here to assist you 10am-4pm Monday to Friday. You can get in touch with the whole team at unionactivities@le.ac.uk.

Content Warning

This module contains themes of mental ill health.

Who is responsible?

It is the responsibility of **the whole committee** to know how to signpost and escalate effectively. However, your **Wellbeing and Inclusion Ambassador** may choose to take the lead on projects for example, Wellbeing Wednesdays.

Handbook Overview

This handbook will help you navigate the following:

- Confidentiality
- Possible Signs of Concern
- How to Signpost
- How to Escalate

Your role as a Committee Member

As a Committee Member, you are in a position of trust and responsibility. At times, this can lead to members reaching out to you for support. As you are **not** a counsellor, you should act only as a signposter to Students' Union and University led services alongside being confident in escalating situations as necessary.

We also know that as a committee member it can feel like the wrong thing to escalate and speak up but this is not the case. We've put together some examples below:

Action	What it can feel like	What it really is
Speaking to a committee member about an issue you've faced within the club	Causing trouble over nothing	Highlighting an issue to the student group leadership
Speaking to the SU or Team Leicester about an issue you or someone in your team or club has faced	Snitching on your team or club and potentially getting people in trouble	Highlighting an issue to staff members whose job it is to ensure that all clubs and teams are following SU and TL guidance as agreed to in their constitutions
Putting in a complaint against someone/multiple people in your team or club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfairly targeting someone • Overreacting • Getting someone in trouble • Ruining their time at university • Snitching • Breaking "unspoken club rules" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for yourself or someone else • Making the safety and wellbeing of club members a priority • Looking out for the future of your club



Confidentiality

An important part of keeping the trust of your members is maintaining confidentiality during your time on committee and once you have left. Confidentiality is keeping certain pieces of information secret or private unless there is a **valid exception**.

Confidentiality can (and must) be broken when:

- You believe there is a risk of serious harm to the reporting student or any other person, based on something that they have said.
- Both parties agree you can speak to someone else about an issue or a problem.

Possible Signs of Concern

As a Committee Member, you may notice signs of something not being quite right with one of your members and may wish to signpost them accordingly. A non-exhaustive list of signs can be found below:

- Being secretive
- Suddenly being aggressive
- Low self-esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress or anxiety
- Compulsive eating or sudden loss of appetite
- Difficulty staying awake
- Sudden poor coordination of physical self and organisation
- Suddenly stopping attending events
- Poor social relationships
- Suddenly constantly happy and bubbly
- Changes in personal appearance – e.g poor hygiene
- Change in activity



Escalation Procedure

If the disclosure falls into the below categories, please follow the steps outlined in the 'Disclosure Procedure' table on the next page to encourage the student to seek assistance through [Report and Support](#) or the [Students' Union Complaints Policy](#).

- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Assault
- Verbal Harassment
- Bullying
- Mental Health
- Hate Crime/Hate Incident
- Physical Harassment
- Physical Assault
- Domestic Violence & Coercion
- Rape

University - Report and Support

The Report and Support platform is the main method of notifying the University of Leicester of an incident. You are able to report the incident(s) either anonymously or by leaving your contact details. You will be asked for your choice at the end of the process. There are 10 short, multiple-choice questions on this system. The system can be accessed at [Report and Support](#).

Additionally to Report & Support, you can signpost students to a range of services as outlined in our Possible Grievances and where to Signpost section.

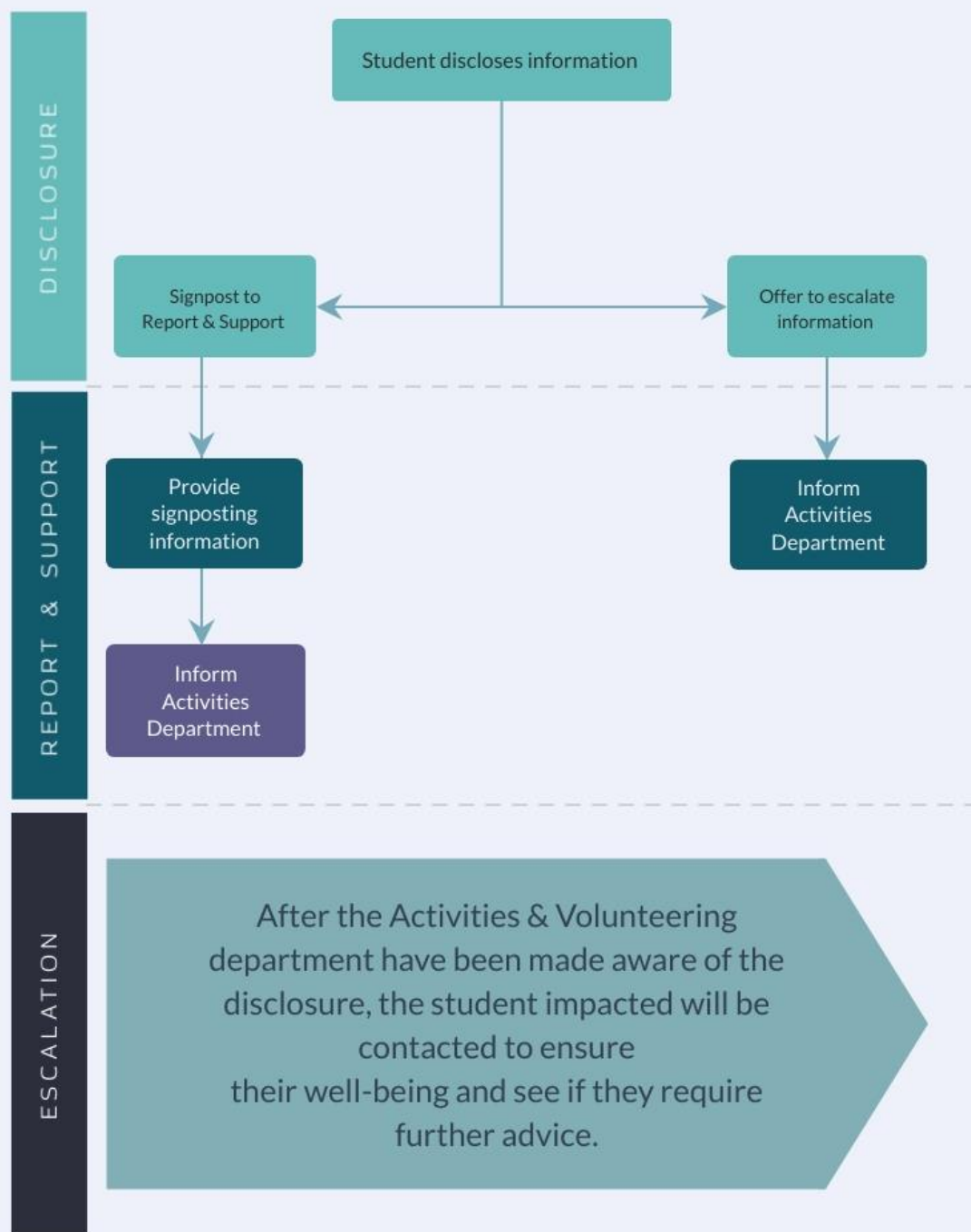
Students' Union – Complaints Policy

This code and matrix can be applied to Student Leaders and Student Group Members when behaviour occurs within the capacity of students' union or affiliated student group setting either in the capacity as a leader or member.

All formal complaints/disclosures must be submitted in writing via su-complaints@le.ac.uk

More information can be found at the [Students' Union Complaints Policy](#).

DISCLOSURE PROCEDURE





Student in Distress/Crisis Situations

A crisis situation arises if a student is at risk to themselves or others. If you find yourself in this situation during a Student Group activity, you should act calmly and quickly to seek help for the individual by doing the following:

1. **Call the Emergency Services at 111 or 999:** The operator will ask questions to assess the situation and can advise on what to do next, including sending you an ambulance or directing yourself and the student to other services.
2. **Set your Boundaries** (see below)
3. **Inform the Students' Union:** At the earliest appropriate opportunity, inform the Activities & Volunteering Department so we can support you and your Student Group further by emailing unionactivities@le.ac.uk.

Setting Boundaries

When signposting a student in distress or in a crisis situation, be clear about the type of support you are able to offer and explain the remits of your role.

For example, you could say:

“I understand that you are looking for [support service] but because you expressed that [repeat the situation that they have told you] I’m obliged to get you connected to someone more equipped and specialised to help you.”



Possible Grievances and where to Signpost

Students can face a number of difficulties whilst studying at University – look below for some of common issues that can arise.

Please Note: The services below are not exhaustive, visit the [Support Services A-Z](#) for a more extensive list.

Academic Advice

During a students' time at University, it is likely that they might experience something that interferes with their studies. This could be a personal issue, health issue, financial issue or something else.

There is a range of services to signpost to including the below but also access the [Academic and Learning Support](#) page for more information.

Advice Service

The Students' Union Advice service is open 10am-4pm Monday to Friday. The service offers free confidential academic, housing and signposting advice.

- **Email:** advice@le.ac.uk
- **Phone:** 0116 223 1132
- **Book an face to face or Teams/Skype appointment:** [Online Form](#)

Student & Library Information Services

Student & Library Information Services is located on the second floor of the Percy Gee building. This is the central point for information and advice for all students. This can include accommodation payments, ID cards etc.

- **Email:** studentservices@le.ac.uk
- **Phone:** 0116 252 2248



Bullying

Everyone deserves the right to feel safe and comfortable at University. Remember, if you are in immediate danger or know someone that is, call 999 or 111 to speak to an emergency service.

There is a range of services to signpost to including the below but also access the [Bullying, Harassment and Abuse](#) page for more information.

Mental Health

University can be stressful and difficult and it's important to know where to turn if your mental health becomes affected. There is no need to suffer in silence. Mental health difficulties are a common problem but there are lots of resources and services that can help.

There is a range of services to signpost to including the below but also access the [Emotional, Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) page for more information.

VitaMinds

VitaMinds provides psychological assessment and treatment for what are known as mild to moderate common mental health problems. It provides community support and access to resource programmes. For more information or to make an appointment, go to :

<https://www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk/nhs-services/nhs-mental-health/leicester-leicestershire-rutland/>

Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service

The Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service offers appointments for emotional and mental wellbeing. They offer booked sessions with trained practitioners, ideal for short-term support. They are located in the Student Services Centre, Monday to Friday, 9-5pm or can be contacted at either 0116 223 1780 or wellbeing@le.ac.uk.

Sexual Harassment

In the 2020/2021 academic year, your Wellbeing Officer, Karli, launched the 'Here to Hear: Sexual Violence Survivor Guidance' (as seen below). To download your own copy of this poster, please see [the webpage](#).

There is a range of services to signpost to including the below but also access the [Sexual Abuse and Misconduct](#) page for more information.





Verbal Harassment

There is a range of services to signpost to on the [Academic and Learning Support](#) page for more information.

Zero Tolerance Approach

The Students' Union has a zero tolerance approach to any form of harassment.

Other

Students can encounter a range of different issues throughout their time studying at the University of Leicester. For more areas of support, head to the [Advice Service webpage](#) which covers:

- Academic Advice (e.g. guidance on University processes, such as mitigating circumstances, appeals, complaints, plagiarism/collusion allegations, and more).
- Housing Advice
- Budgeting Advice
- Signposting for further support
- How to contact them

Remember: If you ever need some more support on running your Student Group, reach out to the Activities & Volunteering department.



Opportunities to expand your knowledge

The Students' Union and University of Leicester offer a wide range of workshops and courses that you can choose to go on to expand your knowledge

Students' Union

The Students' Union's Activities & Volunteering department offer a range of courses throughout the academic year:

- **In Person Workshops:** We offer a range of in person workshops throughout the academic year which will be advertised in the weekly 'Your Committee Update' newsletter.

University of Leicester

Working with the University of Leicester's Standing Together team, the Centre for Hate Studies have developed a suite of free training modules on various aspects of Hate Crime. These can be accessed by anyone through [registering for an account on their website](#).

Standing Together are also developing other training modules including:

- Standing Together for Community
- Sexual Violence Myths and Misconceptions
- Having Sensitive Conversations
- Standing Together Awareness



Self-Care on Committee

As a Committee Member, it is important to be mindful of looking after your own wellbeing. Here are some tips to help you

Communication

Whether you have deadlines approaching or you need to take some time away from your committee, make sure to reach out to the rest of your committee to explain if you feel comfortable. It's ok to take a step away from your role at some points to take time for yourself. If you need extra support, talk to the Activities & Volunteering Department at unionactivities@le.ac.uk

Do what you love!

In the end, everyone has their own form of self-care. Whether it's listening to a podcast, watching some Netflix or going on a walk, everyone is unique in what makes them happy. Make sure to take time to do what you enjoy, even if it means taking some time away from your committee.

Manage Expectations

As a Committee Member, the members of your Student Group may view you as being 'on call' at all times. For your own wellbeing, it's important to outline your 'office hours' to manage expectations. This could be a specific time of day that you are available or maybe outlining how a student can contact you. For example, not at your personal phone number or Facebook, but instead by email.

Talk to Someone

There are plenty of support services that you can reach out to across the Students' Union and in the University of Leicester but also consider your support networks at home or in your friendship group.



Plan Ahead

Utilising the summer, winter and Easter break can help bring down the workload of a Committee Member. We recommend exercising a balance between your studies, paid or voluntary work, and social life by planning ahead and deciding your events for a term. This way, less time has to be given to your Student Group.

Other Resources

The Advice Service has a range of self-help resources for you to access. Check them out [here](#).

Practicing Wellbeing in Committee

There are a number of ways to practice Wellbeing in your Student Group Activity. See below for some ideas but also get creative!

Getting Involved with Campaigns

The Students' Union and University host a range of campaigns throughout the academic year, which aim to represent and combat difficulties that students face. Opportunities to get involved with these campaigns are advertised through the Committee Update every Monday alongside social media.

You can also find out more by checking our [Wellbeing Officer's Instagram](#) and our [Students' Union's Campaigns page](#).

Providing Resources

The Students' Union has a range of leaflets and posters available for your Student Group to utilise. When the Percy Gee building is open, you can pick them up from the Students' Union Office (Open 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday) alongside outside the Students' Union Advice Service.



Wellbeing Wednesdays

Some Student Groups choose to run 'Wellbeing Wednesdays' on social media or in person.

Wellbeing Wednesdays could include running events that promote campaigns, services or just some top tips on mindfulness amongst other things.



Making your Experience Transferable

Throughout your time on committee, you will gain skills that may be useful when writing applications. Have a look below for some ideas on skills that directly relate to Student Group Financial Management.

- **Knowledge**
 - Knowledge is key to effective signposting. Talk about how you ensured that you could signpost your members effectively.
- **Relationship Management**
 - A big part of ensuring the Wellbeing of your members is managing boundaries and expectations. Check out the 'Self Care' section for more information.
- **Creativity/Resourcefulness**
 - Creating campaigns and activities relating to Wellbeing can take a lot of creativity and resourcefulness. Talk about how you ensured that your members wanted to take part in an activity e.g Wellbeing Wednesdays.

When applying these skills in your applications, remember to use strong examples that you can back up verbally along with how the group acted as a whole along with your individual role. We recommend utilising the STAR method (Situation, Task, Activity, Result).

Of course, this list is not exhaustive and for further support, the Activities and Volunteering team would strongly encourage you to visit the [Careers Development Service](#) website and look through their resources or book an appointment.



Changelog

29/05/2019 – Published online

05/08/2019 – Links Updated

25/10/2019 – Grant Funding Guidelines updated

05/03/2020 – Updated for the 2020/2021 academic year

22/03/2021 – Updated for the 2021/2022 academic year

20/04/2022 – Updated for the 2022/2023 academic year