

Division of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work

Framework for the Admission and Support of Students under the age of 18 Years

1. Background

The Division acknowledges that on occasion, entrants to the programmes offered by the Division may be under the age of 18 years upon registration.

The Division has a duty of care towards all its students and staff. In the case of students joining the University before their 18th birthday, this duty is enhanced as such students are regarded as minors under English law.

The legal and practical consequences for the Division of admitting students under the age of 18 are:

- a) The Division will have special duties of care towards a child and cannot assume that a student under the age of 18 can be treated as an adult or make her/his own decisions although students are expected to behave like adults and to assume adult levels of responsibility.
- b) A person under the age of 18 does not have full legal capacity to enter into contracts.
- c) Before the student engages in some activities, consent of the responsible person should be sought where appropriate. This should be the parents or guardians of the student.
- d) Staff in a position of responsibility, or a relationship of trust with the student will need to be made aware of relevant legal issues and will need to have undergone an enhanced DBS check.
- e) Appropriate residential arrangements will need to be made.

2. Arrangements for Registration

The Division will send information explaining the special measures that will be taken in order to carry out its duty of care to all entrants who will be under 18 at the time of their registration with the University.

Parents will be informed that the Division will not act in *loco parentis* in respect of the student and will be sent a form seeking their consent for the student to participate in student activities, and to be given emergency medical treatment if necessary.

Whilst the University recognises its special duty of care to students who are under 18, it will expect such students to act responsibly and appropriately and to abide by the law.

The Admissions Tutor will identify all students under the age of 18 to all relevant staff to ensure that they are provided with the support available.

3. Accommodation Arrangements

The parents / guardians of students under the age of 18 will have to sign any contracts for accommodation, act as guarantor and in addition be asked to accept liability for the student's debts.

The Division would recommend that all accommodation wardens undergo DBS checks and will be informed of any students under the age of 18, to ensure that they receive appropriate support and care.

The Division would recommend that all students under the age of 18 be accommodated in one hall of residence on the campus.

4. Support Arrangements

The Division's Student Support Officer shall be made aware of any students under the age of 18 and would arrange to meet with them at the earliest convenience to ensure that they were aware of all the support mechanisms available to them.

Programme Directors would also arrange to introduce these students to the Academic Advisors who would be responsible for the special duty of care towards these students, at least until their 18th birthday.

All relevant academic staff in the Division and other staff who are likely to come into contact with students under the age of 18 will have undergone enhanced DBS checks and annual self-declaration. All such staff will be made aware of The Children Act 2004 which requires the safety or welfare of the child or young person to be of paramount importance.

Programme Directors should carry out risk assessments for all activities undertaken on campus as part of the programme. This entails a thorough assessment of all work related activities, and locations, together with suitable and sufficient control measures in place to reduce the risks to the lowest acceptable level. Risk assessments should include all aspects

relating to health and safety, in particular those special aspects relating to the protection of children.

5. Practice Learning Environments

Should students enter a practice learning environment before their 18th birthday, then all the procedures mentioned in section 4 above will be followed. All relevant staff will be informed of the identity of such students to ensure that they provide a special duty of care to those students.

Provider organisations are legally required to undertake risk assessments on all areas where the student is likely to be placed. Students should be informed what the risks are prior to commencing the placement.

Provider organisations may have their own policies relating to the care / support of students under the age of 18, these will be implemented in addition to this policy.

Course Unit Leaders, in consultation with practice supervisors/assessors, will review the appropriateness of learning outcomes for that learning environment period and may defer some outcomes until the student has reached the age of 18.

6. Student Responsibility

All students, regardless of age will abide by the University's regulations upon registering with the University.

As far as possible, all care arrangements and needs will be discussed with students who are under the age of 18, but an element of responsibility lies with those students, and/or their parents / guardians, to make known any other special needs.

When a student reaches their 18th birthday, all such special arrangements for their care will revert to normal support mechanisms available to all students, unless there is good reason to continue.

N.B: In this document *provider organisations* refers to both NHS organisations, and private independent and voluntary sector organisations where students' engage in practice learning.

28/08/2020