

# Assessing Safeguarding Risks to Students and Taking Action to Prevent Them



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Designated Safeguarding Lead

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

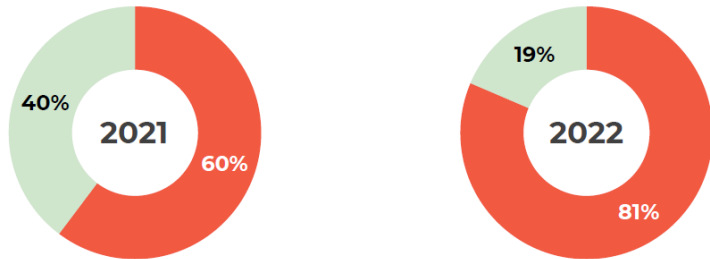
# HE context – post pandemic

Increase in mental ill health and loneliness

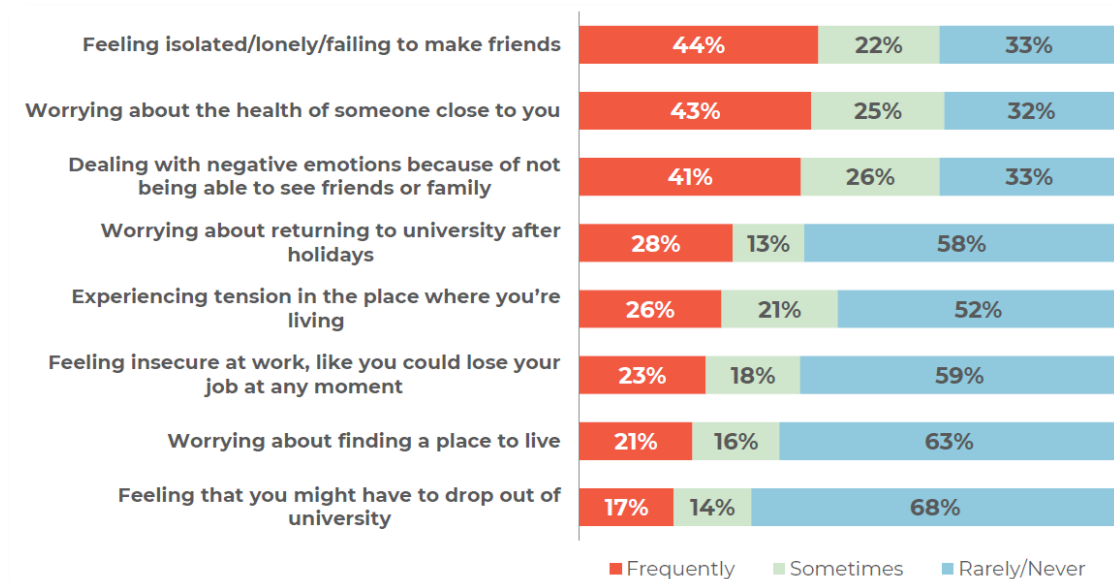
Increase in Autistic Spectrum Disorder – and suicide risk in females

Increase in online grooming (+80% in past 4 years) and online radicalisation

**4 in 5** students have experienced mental health difficulties  
(up from 3 in 5 in 2021)

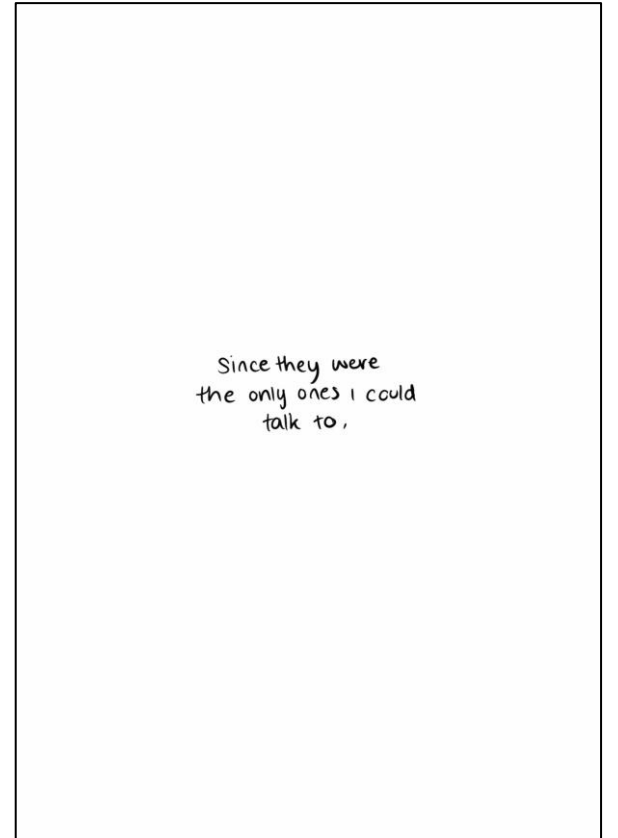


(Cibyl Mental Health Survey 2022)



# Adopting a risk assessment approach to safeguarding

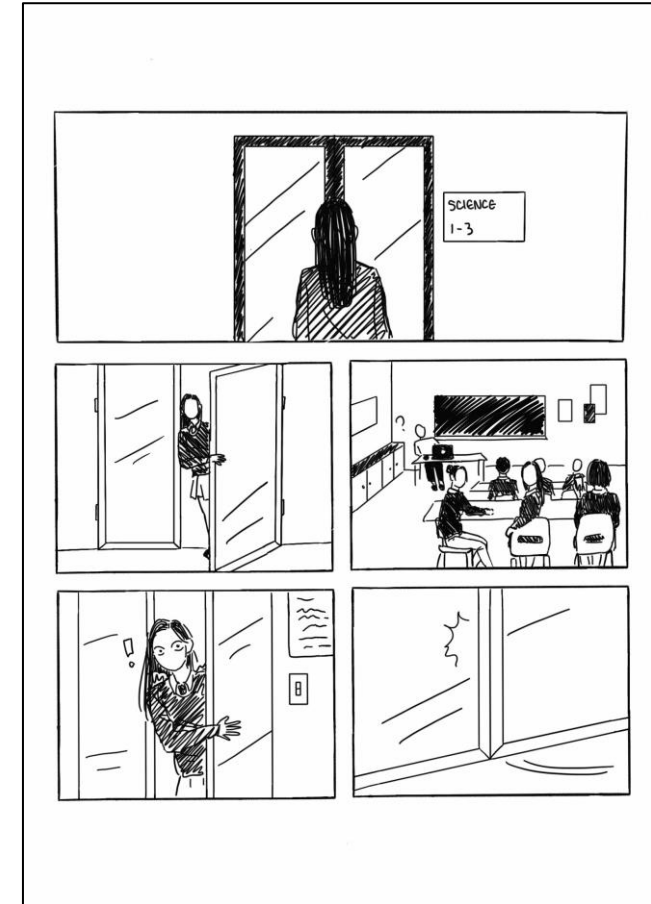
- Safeguarding legislation relates explicitly to under 18s and to vulnerable adults who require support to stay safe
- Universities are required to manage additional risk to students who may not be covered under safeguarding laws
- Increased focus on feeling “safe”
- Universities are required to ensure that all students are supported equally
- A risk assessment approach to all casework enables a consistent approach and effective record keeping



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# Assessing risk to self

- Potential self harm or suicide planning
- Self-neglect or risk-taking behaviour
- Assessing likelihood and immediacy of risk
- Protective factors and skills
- Capacity
- Safety planning to mitigate risk
- Review and monitoring



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# Assessing risk to others

- Identifying who is at risk:

Another student / group of students / staff / public

- Clarifying exactly what the risk is:

Abuse / sexual misconduct / violence, etc

- Considering what activities are affected:

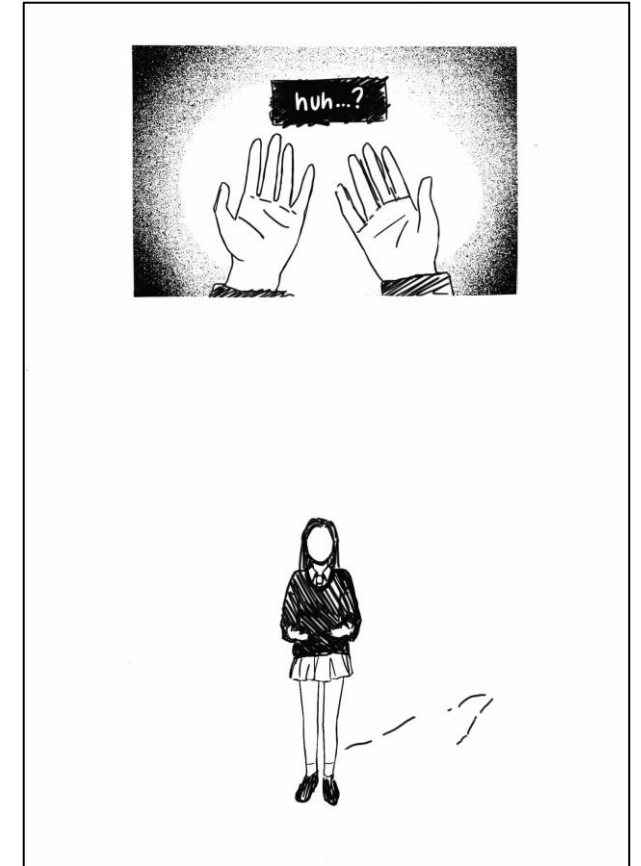
Course activities / living arrangements / social activities, etc

- Assessing transferability of risk:

Is misconduct likely to transfer to other settings / activities?

- Identifying mitigating actions and precautionary measures:

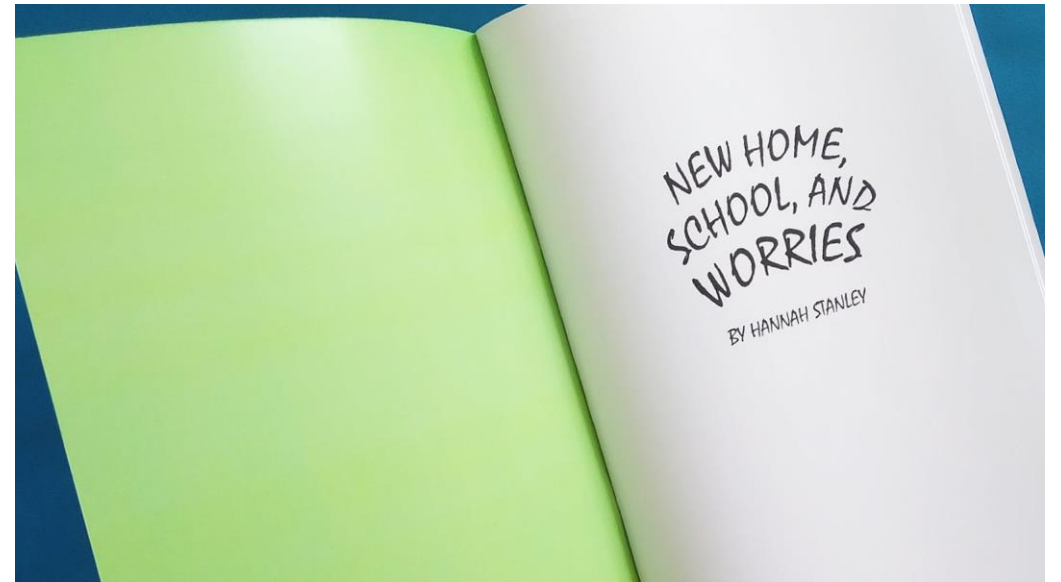
Taking least invasive action needed to safeguard all parties



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# Other risks to consider

- Risk to others outside of the University community
- Reputational risk to the University
- Risk of publicity / social media campaigns
- Risk that data protection prevents appropriate action
- Legal challenge
- Parents and carers – protective or not?



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# Multi-agency working

- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies
- Seek advice from police, mental health services, safeguarding authorities
- Liaise with local safeguarding boards
- Dedicated HE safeguarding group – raise awareness of safeguarding in HE
- Identify barriers to effective working and build bridges outside of casework
- Benchmark with other HEIs to identify best practice
- Utilise access to academic expertise



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# Reducing risks

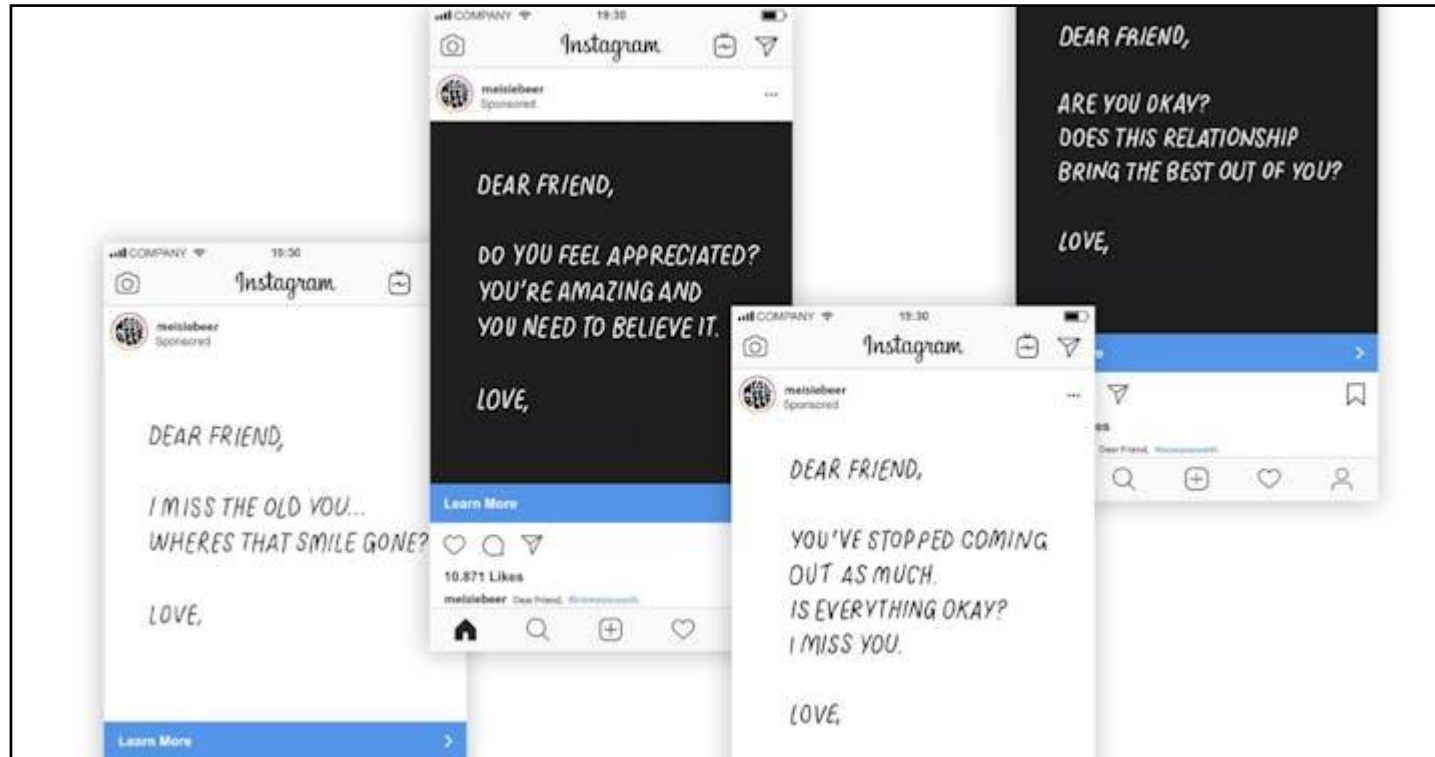
- Build strong awareness of your safeguarding team and how to raise concerns
- Make reporting easy (Report + Support / dedicated email / form) but put a face to the safeguarding team
- Encourage informal discussion (anonymously at first) – last piece of jigsaw
- Safeguarding team – ensure representation from a range of different teams, including Students' Union
- Build relationships with local safeguarding boards and LADOs
- Regular staff / student training
- Integrating into the curriculum
- Learn from case reviews
- Look after ourselves and each other



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# Any questions?



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