



## Student Sex Work Policy

For use in:	All Colleges/Schools/Departments of the University
For use by:	All staff and students
Owner:	The University of Leicester
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Contact:	Dr Angie Pears, Interim Associate Director of EDI and Organisational Development
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## 1. PURPOSE OF POLICY

1.1. The purpose of the Student Sex Work Policy at Leicester ('the Policy') is to:

- Ensure that any students who are sex workers are positively supported, with their personal wellbeing and safety being considered as a priority.
- Fulfil our legal obligation to safeguard vulnerable adults and children, and our duty of care over the student body and those with whom they may interact.
- Set out the University's responsibilities, duty of care and its commitment to an inclusive, respectful, positive and safe environment.
- Ensure that University staff are aware of their responsibilities to support students through a non-judgemental approach.
- Positively contribute to maintaining the University community's health, safety and wellbeing.

1.2. This policy has been informed by the relevant legislative framework, policing guidance, research and established best practice. However, the University has no control over external professional regulatory bodies, and so some content below may not be fully applicable to students and staff from the Schools of Allied Health Professions, Medicine, Education and Law.

## 2. STUDENT SEX WORK POLICY STATEMENT

2.1. The University is firmly committed to sustaining an inclusive learning, working and research environment for all students, this includes students earning money or other commodities through sex work. We recognise the social stigma associated with sex work and support students who earn a living through sex work. Students may increasingly turn to sex work to fund their studies. 'Outing' individuals about their status without their consent puts students at risk of harm.

2.2. All members of the University community are expected to behave with respect and courtesy at all times, and operate with a non-judgemental and supportive attitude. [The Dignity and Respect at Leicester Policy](#) identifies some behaviours that are unacceptable which have a clear legal definition and have the ability to be dealt with under the relevant legal framework. The University will manage reported behaviours perceived by an individual to be unacceptable will be under the relevant Regulations and procedures, and it will provide support accordingly (see [Student Sex Work Toolkit](#) for more information on reporting and support options). Possible reported behaviours are those that do not demonstrate due regard for the feelings and rights of others, and do not create an environment where dignity can be preserved and enhanced, as detailed in the [Dignity and Respect at Leicester Policy and Definitions Document](#).

2.3. It is expected that each member of the University community will contribute to ensuring that the University of Leicester is a safe, welcoming and productive environment, where there is equality of opportunity and valuing of diversity, fostered in an environment of mutual respect and dignity. Where there is considerable social stigma directed at sex workers, this group of

students are recognised for their potentially vulnerable characteristics and this policy works to protect them.

### 3. SCOPE OF POLICY

- 3.1. The Policy applies to all registered students of the University, from initial registration through to completion of their programme of study, and applies to all University of Leicester staff who interact with students.
- 3.2. The Policy also applies to staff and student conduct on and off the University's premises, whether these are local, national or international and during all University-related activities. For students this includes periods of off-campus study and work experience. For all, this also includes University holidays, and closure days.
- 3.3. All staff have a duty of care to support student sex workers who are being targeted or harassed in the University for their status as sex workers. For members of staff with specific student support responsibilities, a holistic approach to options and support for the student will be provided (see Student Sex Work Toolkit for more information about reporting and support options).
- 3.4. The University has no control over external professional bodies but this policy states the commitment of the University to its students. Staff have a duty to support students undergoing disciplinary action by a professional body based solely or in part by their status as a sex worker.

### 4. DEFINITIONS AND BEHAVIOURS

- 4.1. 'Sex work' refers to providing sexual services directly or indirectly in exchange for money or other consumables and may include escorting, webcamming, stripping, adult entertainment, phone sex or other markets. It is legal to sell and buy sex between two consenting adults in the UK. If the sexual act is not consensual, it is not only illegal, but would also not be classed as sex work. Non-consensual sexual interactions are sexual violence – one example being sex exploitation. There are laws which make it illegal to solicit and loiter on the street, own a brothel (i.e. two or more people working together) and assisting in the organisation of brothels.
- 4.2. Sex workers are often a victim of hate crime. It is documented in the literature that a range of perpetrators may target sex workers as they believe sex workers will not report to the police. As such, sex workers as a specific group are more at risk of vulnerability because of their stigmatised status. As a result of fearing being judged and treated differently and unfairly, sex workers are often least likely to report crimes or express any need for support.
- 4.3. 'Outing' is disclosing personal information about someone without their consent. Sex workers fear being outed extensively as the repercussion may be substantial for both themselves, their families and loved ones.



- 4.4. 'Hate crime' refers to when a perpetrator (or group) specifically targets an individual because of their characteristics and 'perceived vulnerability', believing they will not report the crime because of their identity.

## 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. We all have a contribution to make in building and maintaining a culture of dignity and respect at the University.

5.2. All members of staff are responsible for:

- Providing a safe, non-judgmental response and environment to any student who discloses their status as a sex worker if necessary and if they choose to do so.
- Considering the specific implications of the disclosure in relation to the students personally (for example, with reference to professional regulations), and sensitively seeking guidance to support these students (See Toolkit).
- Contacting the Standing Together Team if a disclosure around student sex work arises. Staff may also be responsible for contacting their relevant Safeguarding Lead, or reporting to local and/ or external regulatory bodies, in cases with safeguarding considerations.
- Contributing towards an environment in which incidents of unacceptable interpersonal behaviours towards student sex workers are not tolerated or unchallenged, and working within their role to tackle these behaviours.
- Ensuring that students and staff are aware of the Policy and are signposted where necessary to help and advice available.
- Taking timely and constructive action, in line with the Policy and relevant procedure, that is appropriate to the situation.

## 6. LINKED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, GUIDELINES AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

6.1. The policy should be read in conjunction with other University of Leicester policies, procedures and guidelines, including the [Regulations on Student Conduct and Discipline](#). The purpose of these is to ensure that all students, including student sex workers, are supported to experience a University community that is free from unacceptable behaviour and characterised by respect and dignity and that where unacceptable behaviour occurs, it is managed, investigated and sanctioned as appropriate.

6.2 The linked documents are available [here](#), if you have any queries please contact [equalities@le.ac.uk](mailto:equalities@le.ac.uk).

## 7. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

This policy has been subject to equality analysis and will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.