

RESPONSE TO STUDENT CONSULTATION ON THE DOMESTIC ABUSE/GBV POLICY

SUMMARY

This is a response to the consultation on the Domestic Abuse/Gender Based Violence Policy which took place between 22 April – 3 May 2021 on the Student Consultative Forum. The summary of student feedback is available [here](#).

Participants of the Student Consultative Forum were invited to read through the draft Domestic Abuse/Gender Based Violence Policy and provide feedback on suggested areas.

The feedback received was greatly appreciated as it was useful to clarify and develop a range of points. The feedback confirmed that, as an education provider, the OU is in an important position to make information available to students on sources of support to address Domestic Abuse/Gender Based Violence disclosures.

The revised draft policy is to be presented at relevant governance committees for final approval.

FULL RESPONSE

Comments have been considered with regard to developing the policy and responses are listed below.

1. Clarity and ease of use

a) To what extent is this policy clear and easy to follow? Please give examples of anything that is not clear within the policy

	Student feedback	OU response
1	Something could be added to an assignment as a cry for help is really important and should be further emphasised.	The policy provides general guidance. This is mentioned point 3.3 regarding different forms of disclosures.
2	Perhaps include a brief summary box for each section.	A summary version of the policy will be available, however, for the main policy we have a set template to follow with does not include summary sections.
3	It could be clearer that the policy also applies to men suffering domestic abuse and violence.	We have reviewed the policy to make the policy clearer that it is aimed at ALL OU students regardless of gender.
4	Fluctuating between acronyms, abbreviations and writing out in full can confuse people.	These disparities have been reviewed for final edit.
5	Reference to transphobia and gender identity policy could be more upfront so more students were aware the policy could be relevant to them.	Mentioned within related documents and covered within point 2.5
6	Not so relevant for international students, for example one student commented suggested a name change to 'Domestic Abuse and Gender-Based Violence Policy for UK-based students (without children)'	Thank you for this suggestion, we will consider this as the policy develops.
7	Concern that it appears that students are expected to explain their situation to multiple parties – a single point of contact would be useful.	Single point of contact is not always possible depending on how the referral is made/who it comes to etc. The guidance/flow chart hopes to reduce students needing to tell multiple members of staff their circumstances.
8	The table of contents may not be displaying properly – if the related documentation is important it should be upfront.	This should have been reviewed ready for final edit.
9	3.2 could be clearer by fronting that it is likely to be only when children and vulnerable adults are involved that disclosure may be shared.	All disclosures of DA/GBV will be taken seriously, regardless of the requirement for a safeguarding referral.
10	At a distance it is hard for the OU to guarantee support – more could be done to raise awareness of coercive controlling behaviour.	We have added more information to the glossary of what Coercive control is.

1. Clarity and ease of use – cont'd

a) To what extent is this policy clear and easy to follow? Please give examples of anything that is not clear within the policy

11	<p>1.1.1 Add in that one of the objectives of the policy is that there is something in place to help victims - perhaps add it to 1.1.2.</p> <p>1.1.3 disclosures also need to be handled with speed because of the dangerous situation many victims may be in</p>	The Purpose of this policy has been reviewed and clarified, so hopefully this is now clearer.
12	Under procedure and 3.1 the phrase "it is impacting on your studies" - how could it not be impacting on someone's studies? It appears to be a badly worded phrase.	DA/GBV and its impact on studies can vary from case to case and is an individual experience. Each case will be supported appropriately.
13	Section 9.1 is unclear as to whether it only refers to malicious or vexatious allegations. It needs rephrasing or rearranging, rather than starting out with a punishment.	This section has been reviewed, and rephrased.
14	The Scottish legislation should be correctly referred to as 'Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018'.	This has now been corrected. Thank you for highlighting this.
15	Include the external agencies links for students. For example: Woman's Aid, Victim Support Scotland, Rape Crisis, Action Against Stalking etc	<p>We have not added links to support within the policy, as it is easier to keep current and up to date information on a webpage.</p> <p>All this information is on the student help centre, which can be found using the link on page 5 at the bottom of page and page 7 section 3.1.</p>
16	Some presentation formatting could help delivering a stronger message, for example bold headings with short summaries.	This has been reviewed for the final edit
17	Add detail of sponsor/champion/owner.	The Safeguarding team own the policy and will be responsible for updating it.
18	Enable links to jump between sections.	This is not possible as the document is for printed format as well as on screen.
19	Describe what the University's obligations are in given situations, for example response times can be slow.	Duty of care to safeguarding those at risk. Safeguarding Service Level Agreement (SLA) is one working day, however we are not able to commit to SLA due to workloads of departments
20	Signpost charities that can help – the document should include information of how a non-named advocate from a charity can communicate with the OU to advise of a student's situation.	<p>We have not added links to support within the policy, as it is easier to keep current and up to date information on a webpage.</p> <p>All this information is on the student help centre, which can be found using the link on page 5 at the bottom of page and page 7 section 3.1.</p> <p>Due to confidentiality we need to be careful who we are sharing information with, however our Advocacy policy support one off contact on behalf of a student if in difficult circumstances. This is also covered within section 6 of this policy under Advocacy support.</p>
21	Needs some information about what the courses of action are for any accusation to be accepted as proven and what this then means in terms of help offered.	Support is provided on a case-by-case basis, in relation to the issues presented at that time.
22	Some layout and typographical issues are addressed in one student's post	This version is only a draft, formatting and typos have been resolved for the final version
23	As and when a student enrolls/registers for a module, they could be emailed AND posted, a specific student handbook that clearly identifies such services.	Students are signposted to Student Help Centre during enrolment. The OU is an online organisation and as such they do not post out documents unless requested.
24	Clarity on what constitutes 'impacting on your studies' is left as an open interpretation and possibly in time and use of the policy may determine whether this requires amendment.	DA/GBV and its impact on studies can vary from case to case and is an individual experience. Each case will be supported appropriately.
25	The OU may want to consider an e-solution that will allow a distressed individual to discreetly click to flag their distress through the email that provides the policy documents on registration to the OU and the same e-solution can be made available on the OU app as well. With simple options that allow a 'yes' or 'no' response to indicate whether an individual is experiencing abuse or violence, the same for	Whilst this is a great suggestion, it is not something we are able to consider at the moment – we are not an emergency service with 24 hour 7 days a week availability to follow up.

	indicating whether in immediate danger. The OU will already have the contact details so these can appear, and a quick click can confirm them or an option to provide another number.	
26	112 should also be included as a number to contact the police as it is additionally applicable in the EU and has been adopted by many other countries as a recognised emergency number, making the policy more relevant to international students.	Agree and we have now included that into the policy at points which refer to calling 999.

Clarity and ease of use – questions

	Student questions	OU response
1	When the person is asking for help or report could it be made anonymous?	Not currently through the available means of contact with the OU. All disclosures are taken seriously and handled on a case-by-case basis.
2	Will there be training for tutors and other frontline staff on this policy?	Support will be provided in due course for staff once policy is live.
3	What exactly does the OU safeguarding team do? How can they help other than refer to social services or appropriate agencies?	They provide specialist support around the topic of safeguarding, and advocate on student's behalf to a number of organisations.
4	In reference to section 5.5.1, what does internal support look like? (comment that it appears that there will just be signposting to national agencies or study support, which could be sorted by direct contact with your tutor). If those are the limits, that should be clear in the policy.	We have made this section clearer and have included this into the flow chart.
5	Information sharing and referrals to Police and other agencies needs to be more detailed. How do the OU determine the risk and at what stage will action become mandatory to ensure the victim is provided with the best safeguarding support?	Majority of case external referrals are done in conjunction with students. This is on a case-by-case basis. If there is cause for significant risk to children then under Section 47, The Children Act 1989, we will contact the relevant local services.
6	Is there a separate policy for staff?	Yes, this is identified in the section "what this document does not cover"
7	What training is provided for 'DV champions'?	This was not mentioned within the policy. Currently no DV champions at this time, this is something we may consider in the future.
8	Is there help and advice available 24/7? Is there a dedicated telephone number or section on all module websites to help someone?	24/7 support is not provided by the OU, and we are not an emergency response service. The external agencies referred to on the student home page do have support available outside of the OU Business hours, the emergency services are available 24/7
9	Where is this going to be sighted? It must be easy to find.	This Policy will be placed on StudentHome pages, within the student Help Centre, and an announcement will be released on student home when the policy is finalised.
10	Is there going to be some suggested way of flagging a contact request or message as needing special attention?	<p>Unsure what is meant by this. All staff will be provided support and training to handle disclosures and to triage contact appropriately.</p> <p>All Safeguarding Referrals are handled impartially and with a 1 working day SLA.</p>
11	How is anonymity of students protected throughout the processes?	All information is stored confidentially and the student privacy notice in related documents explains this further.
12	In section 4.3, does signpost if appropriate mean you'd point someone in the right direction to get help, such as pass on details of charities for the country where the student is based?	Yes, and we have altered this section of the policy - this now comes under section 4.5.1
13	Are these services highlighted and made accessible to students with ease early on, or does one have to become familiar with StudentHome and come across the policy by chance?	<p>Students are signposted to Student Help Centre during enrolment. The OU is an online organisation and as such they do not post out documents unless requested.</p> <p>Due to editorial constraints this information and signposting can be found on the student home page.</p>

1. Clarity and ease of use

b) To what extent are the pathways of support and referrals shown in the flow chart clear?

	Student feedback	OU response
1	The font may be too small	Flow chart font and colour has been reviewed and altered.
2	The mention of 'legal duty of care' is pretty cold – perhaps removing 'legal' would help	Noted - However, 'legal' needs to remain to ensure the document is factually accurate (point 4.5.1).
3	The flow chart switches perspectives which can be confusing	Flow chart font and colour has been reviewed and altered.
4	Delete the first box and make the question part the chart title, so the flow chart itself is the answer. Then split the text in the red box into two parts: 'Is there a threat that requires an urgent response?' goes in the first box and the 999 part can stay where it is.	Flow chart font and colour has been reviewed altered.
5	Add a step which involves consulting the student on what they want to happen (if possible).	Students are consulted in all cases, unless there is significant risk of harm which needs intervention straight away from a 999 call – this is a very rare occurrence.
6	The document should be clear about what the word threat in the flow chart means: life or death situations, physical harm, material harm?	The word threat has been replaced by risk.
7	The third box only mentions children or vulnerable adults, but not pets, vulnerable or cherished belongings such as the family home or important relationships. From a legal point of view this may be sufficient, but for the person in the complicated abusive relationship it's not always that simple. the chart would not be clear for someone in such a situation.	From a safeguarding perspective we have to focus on children and vulnerable adults - during conversations with students we do discuss any plans they have to leave the home and how they will manage this; such as moving pets and items from the house.
8	A person who decides to share this aspect of their lives is very emotionally vulnerable and fragile. This section needs to state the immediate pathway: 'If you are in this situation, take this action...'	We have mentioned through the policy if a student is in immediate danger/risk to call relevant emergency service.
9	It is not enough to have a bullet point that says 'your tutor' because there may be too much of a delay before they read the message; it is also not enough to says student support services; it needs to say student support services on this number, this email... and you need to make it clear that there is a support policy at the helpdesk which means when a person phones and says my husband beats me.. they will be helped by a person with appropriate first contact training not a person who is not confident in what their immediate response should be.	Each student will have a different SST (Student Support Team) (or sometimes multiple SSTs) which is also based on study level and faculty, location and the nation that they reside within. Students personalised SST contact numbers can be found on Student home which will take students directly to the correct SST. Training and support will be provided for staff follow the launch of this policy.
10	At the very top of the document should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are in immediate danger call 999. The OU is not in a position to provide an emergency response. • If you contact the OU about domestic abuse which involves children and/or vulnerable adults, by law the OU must take appropriate safeguarding action. If you are concerned and want to speak in confidence you can call Refuge's confidential helpline on 0808 2000 247. • All members of staff at the OU have been trained in dealing with domestic abuse sensitively OR If you report domestic abuse to any member of OU staff you will be directed to an appropriately trained member of staff [whichever is true] 	Page 2 states this. The OU is not in a position to provide an emergency response. This has also been stressed in a number of other places in the policy and on the Help Centre page.
11	There should be a bit more detail about what will actually happen if abuse is reported in circumstances where children/vulnerable adults are not involved.	Section 4 explains what will happen in a range of situations.

12	Would like some sort of service level agreement that gives the end user an idea of response times.	Once the Safeguarding team has the referral, they have a 1 working day SLA – unfortunately we have no control over how long it takes for the referral to get to the Safeguarding team.
13	Maybe over-complicated – “When I came across the flow chart, I imagined how flustered a victim would be, when faced with what seems like a map of clues that might lead them to the treasure, if they follow the correct path.” – might be better to concentrate on delivering relevant support with a direct path without possible divergence of multiple choice.	The flow chart has been reviewed and simplified.

2. Glossary

Does the glossary include everything you would expect it to?

	Student feedback	OU response
1	Definition of student could be included – for example, ‘has the status of those individuals studying micro credentials been resolved?’	All disclosures of Domestic Abuse/GBV will be handled appropriately regardless of the point in the student journey the individual is at.
2	Format to give focus to headings and subheadings so that readers can find what they need easily.	This policy version for review was a draft, formatting and heading have now been completed ready for final edit.
3	‘Tricked’ may not be the right word, under child and childhood sexual abuse – grooming comes to mind more.	This term was taken from the NSPCC website; however, we have adapted the wording in light of this comment.
4	For physical abuse, add spitting and non-fatal strangulation – MPs and campaigners have successfully pushed for non-fatal strangulation to be added to the new, Domestic Abuse bill and it should also be added to the document.	This has been reviewed and strangulation / Non-fatal strangulation has been added to the definition.
5	In the entry on ‘Gas Lighting’, there is variation between ‘gaslighting’ (one word) and ‘Gas Lighting’/ ‘gas lighter’ (two words). For clarity and consistency, it should all be the one-word format.	This has been reviewed and edited.
6	Hyperlink the keywords in the document to their definitions (but enable a return to section).	Details of where key words can be found is on page 3 signposting to glossary.
7	‘Age’ is missing but should be included as a protected characteristic.	We have defined what we class as a child within this policy. We have not used the term protected characteristics within this policy, as this policy is for all students and in line with the Equality Act 2010 on page 15 – relevant legislation.
8	It may be beneficial to refer to professionals internally or externally who have expert knowledge in this area.	Links to external organisations who specialise in this area of support are available on student home.
9	The definition of Intimate Partners could specify polyamorous or polygamous relationships.	The definition of relationships defined within the DA Bill 2021, covers both polyamorous and polygamous relations.
10	Anger management could be considered	In relation to perpetrator support, slinks around this have been added to the student help centre page.
11	Under the heading HBV/HBA mention is made of breast ironing – should this not have its own entry as it is not defined or referred to elsewhere?	This has been added within the HBV/HBA definition
12	The glossary may be more helpful near the start of the document.	The format for policies is that the glossary is to be at the end of the document. Footnote on page 3 of the policy highlights where the key terms can be found

3. Supportiveness and tone

To what extent is the tone of this policy supportive in a way that is appropriate to the subject matter? Is there any part of the policy that does not appear to be supportive and if so any suggestions about how this might be changed?

For example, if you wanted to disclose an issue around this nature to the OU, to what extent would this policy encourage you to do so?

	Student feedback	OU response
1	A short video may assist with signposting.	This may be something that can be developed in the future in line with staff training and resources. However, no current plans for this.

2	Some students questioned the necessity of the policy, as it could be found rather intrusive, with the OU going beyond its remit to provide teaching and learning and 'be supportive' – it may only be relevant in relation to deferrals, extensions, discretionary postponements and the like.	The policy is in response to a range of drivers including legislation, and requirements from Higher Education regulatory bodies to support those who make disclosures of this nature. [https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/covid19/Documents/uuk-briefing-domestic-abuse-covid.pdf]
3	Section 4.1 is badly written and suggests students outside the UK are an international institution – it does not appear to be very supportive of international students – perhaps scrap the whole sentence and maybe add the international part as a clause to one of the other sections, if they're needed at all, since the advisers would need a good understanding of support available locally across the world if it is to be helpful.	This section has been reviewed and consolidated with a different section. This can now be found under section 3.5, advising where possible signposting to local organisations will be offered to students outside of the UK.
4	It might be better as an awareness document with signposted help and advice mentioning services and shelters, perhaps suggesting a Buddy scheme	The Policy signposts to help and advice in the UK, this can also be found on StudentHome. General peer support/buddying can be found within OUSA Peer support services.
5	A summary or easy access document that doesn't necessarily include the definitions of abuse or OU policy but rather has a focus on where to get help and support and makes clear what the OU can offer would be helpful.	Suggestion of a shorted executive summary of this policy is being considered
6	A one-page summary of policies as the first page works well – immediately accessible, so the reader can straight away assess relevance and key points, perhaps including links to relevant organisations.	Suggestion of a shorted executive summary of this policy is being considered.
7	The student has to know that if they ask for things not to be taken further, that will be respected.	Cannot be guaranteed if there is cause for concern for children, we have to follow the guidance from The Children Act 1989 – this includes the guidance provided in section 17 and section 47. Students are consulted in all cases, unless there is significant risk of harm which needs intervention straight away from a 999 call – this is a very rare occurrence.
8	There should be a distinction between students directly reaching out for advice and support and disclosure within a tutorial or assignment that should not necessarily be acted on.	The OU has a legal obligation and duty of care to act upon any disclosure that is made and provide a proportionate response as appropriate, as well as following the OU's privacy guidance.
9	The document should acknowledge that students may be unable to study if they have an abusive partner because of the control exerted by that partner.	Coercive control is identified as a form of domestic abuse/GBV in the policy. Students can be signposted to support in the Student Help Centre- Domestic Abuse support page.
10	The policy is unlikely to be the first point of call for anyone who needs it – what to do in an emergency and important contact details should be more easily accessible.	As stated at the top of page 2 in the policy, in an emergency call 999/112. - This message is repeated throughout the policy.
11	With any type of violence, harassment or bullying, it is always the shift in culture that is key and the people who have experienced and survived should always lead on policy and procedure.	The working party for this policy included a wide cross section of staff, student representation and subject specialists on this topic. Advice has been taken from organisations such as UNISON, Barnardo's and Women's Aid.
12	All the important information needed by the policy users should be available to them in a quick and easy way, before having to look at the policy in depth.	Suggestion of a shorted executive summary of this policy is being considered.
13	It is good that it is inclusive and acknowledges that domestic abuse can occur in any relationship and the many forms which this can take	Thank you.
14	It is good to acknowledge there may be instances where the OU is one of the few places a person can communicate with.	Thank you.
15	Would it be possible to merge the safeguarding section perhaps at the top because it's a case of blink and you will miss that part	Safeguarding policy is hyperlinked in section 2.7 and immediate danger guidance is included in the introduction section. This policy structure has been amended from the usual OU policy template in order to provide clear signposting to support. A summary version of this policy will also be made available in due course to carry safeguarding information.

16	Encouraging students to come forward should be highlighted.	The policy is designed to facilitate students making disclosures about circumstances they are experiencing which may impact on their studies. It will be reviewed periodically.
17	A question about who the audience is for the policy.	This is a student policy, for all OU Students. Staff have their own version of the policy
18	The policy states that the OU is there for students if domestic abuse/GBV is impacting on their studies but should an individual feel that the place they are safest sharing their experiences is the OU, even if they don't feel it's impacting their studies, then they should still be able to.	Of course, If students wish to share that with us, and it is not impacting studies, support will still be offered.
19	Their needs to be processes to ensure that disclosures to multiple people are dealt with clearly – for example with several tutors on a forum, one should be responsible not several or zero.	Support and training is underway for staff in regard to responses to handling disclosures. Forum moderators also receive training on how to handle disclosures of a personal nature.
20	There should be a process for students to feedback on whether they felt their situation was appropriately managed.	The annual review of the policy will take into account feedback received from students, on a case-by-case basis. Students also have the opportunity to feedback via other mechanisms relating to contact with the SST. If a student is unhappy with support offered, they can follow the complaints process.
21	The OU should ask 'what does successful implementation of this policy look like', which is not necessarily clear in this case.	The policy is designed to provide a proportionate response to disclosures of domestic abuse/GBV and signpost students to support. It will be reviewed and monitored via the annual review process.
22	The policy [should?] be considered in terms of the diversity of OU students, including international students where cultural understandings and the law may be very different and the policy should be accessible to all students. Some of the ideas and concepts are fairly abstract and may not translate clearly or with the same meaning as they have in English	This policy adopts a UK 4 nation approach and will respond to disclosures appropriately and signpost to support. With regard to students located outside the UK jurisdiction, the OU will signpost students as appropriate and if possible, in line with the country's laws.
23	It would be better for the OU to adopt a different definition in the introduction, so that it is not then in contradiction to the OU summary statement. You cannot state that you recognize all forms of GBV but use the Scottish government's underlining definition of 'an abuse of MALE power and privilege'. The UNHRC define GBV without bias: Gender-Based violence refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms.	This section has been reviewed and updated.
24	Right at the outset and in simple terms the policy should state that any person making a report of Domestic Abuse or GBV will be listened to and taken seriously. That the OU will then work WITH the complainant to establish what help they need. This puts the individual at the heart of any support offered. The OU support representative can then help signpost as agreed and supported by the individual concerned. The diagram within the policy could reflect this as a first step before legalities, study issues etc.	The introduction to the policy has been reviewed and we have highlighted in section 3 how staff will handle disclosures. Students are consulted in all cases, unless there is significant risk of harm which needs intervention straight away from a 999 call.
25	Some sort of acknowledgement around data retention may be necessary. If this eventually goes to a court situation the initial report could form part of any evidence disclosure package.	Privacy notice is referenced in section 2.7 of policy. Privacy Notice
26	'As a survivor of violent abuse, I would just like to point out that calling 999 for someone if they don't ask for it is a really dangerous idea...please do not do this to someone, let them be the judge of their own situation, they personally know the abuser more than you. You will be throwing petrol on a naked flame.	We follow a process when making the decision to make this call and ensure that we provide a proportional response to each case. Students are consulted in all cases, unless there is significant risk of harm which needs intervention straight away from a 999 call – this is a very rare occurrence.
27	The tone is quite technical.	The policy has been reviewed, hopefully this has now been addressed
28	It may be better just to signpost anyone to existing public and third sector services.	Links to third party support are available at individual's student home pages.

29	The most useful part was the visual map; a map like that in an accessible place on the website would be helpful.	This can be explored on completion of the policy.
30	The word support is mentioned so many times, but clear examples are given in only few places under point 5. For example, point 3.4 says 'If you wish to share concerns about another student, you can contact your Student Support Team who will be able to take the details of your concern and provide the relevant support or signposting.' This could usefully include more detail.	Support provided is on a case-by-case basis. This support usually consists of sign posting to internal support (for example contact with other departments on the student's behalf) and third-party external resources, We follow a process ensure that we provide a proportional response to each case disclosed.
31	Maybe the document could be split up as part of an online format with drop down content under headings to be less intimidating	Noted, but general policy template is required for all OU policies. We do have the Help Centre page which is possibly less intimidating containing support and information.
32	Explain the difference between domestic violence and gender-based violence.	Page 2 does give definitions of this – We have used the English and Scottish governments definitions
33	It would be good to know there was real support available from the OU, not just a policy.	Support provided is on a case-by-case basis. This support usually consists of sign posting to internal support (for example contact with other departments on the student's behalf) and third-party external resources, We follow a process ensure that we provide a proportional response to each case disclosed.
34	Within the OU there should be a way to 'report abuse' when someone feels their personal safety is being threatened or a way to block other individuals (students) when not interested in reading what they have to say, as happens with some other forums.	Noted. The OU's Student Charter, Code of Conduct and Social Media policies are mechanisms to facilitate the reporting of abusive and inappropriate behaviour. Forum moderators are also assigned to ensure forums are monitored appropriately.
35	There should be further student feedback sought in the future to see if any gaps are identified.	This policy will be reviewed and as moved forward will take onboard feedback from those who access the policy, as part of its annual review
36	Section nine to be rearranged as noted above	If this comment refers to the Glossary, this will also be covered within the annual review and updated accordingly.
37	There needs to be more specifics about the OU's responsibilities and what it will actually do.	As each scenario can differ depend on a student's circumstances, not sure we can specifically say what we will do, each case is supported on a case-by-case basis. We follow a process ensure that we provide a proportional response to each case disclosed.
38	The opening paragraphs in the introduction are confusing regarding definitions and nations.	This has been reviewed, and hopefully is now clearer.
39	There should be some emphasis on a proactive approach as well as being reactive.	The policy is part of the OU's proactive approach to supporting students who disclose domestic abuse/GBV.
40	Is it possible to put an easily visible button on each page that would return the screen instantly to the Student Home Page or similar, and any way the document cannot be found in browser history?	This is not possible due to our IT system. However, guidance is provided on the Student Help Centre page, on safe browsing.

Other comments:

	Student feedback	OU response
1	The definition for Emotional, Mental and Psychological abuse uses the phrases 'the aim', 'they use tactics' and 'exert control', which infers that the abuse is premeditated and conscious, which may not be the reality, as there are	The Glossary has been informed by sources including Women's Aid, Refuge and NSPCC. We have reviewed the wording of some of the definitions.

	many circumstances that lead to all forms of abuse. The definition may be better described by focusing on the outcomes, rather than definitive causes.	
2	It is essential for advisors to be, sympathetic, considerate and at least aware of the victim's plight, in all aspects of domestic abuse and violence. It is imperative to have at least an acquaintance with what is obviously a sensitive subject. Without conflict of interest or confirmatory bias, the advisors need to recognise the sensitivity of the victim's experience.	Support and training for staff will be available, and staff will be supported in handling the sensitive nature of DA/GBV Disclosures.
3	Mental wellbeing is prominent on the 'Help Centre', but domestic abuse does not have a standalone subheading, which might be clearer than trying to navigate pages, especially if those looking are in an agitated state.	This has been reviewed and the information should now be clearer to find under the Mental health, Wellbeing and Welfare pages. This support page is also now linked with pages such as Mental health and Safeguarding. Domestic abuse/GBV can also be directly typed into the Help Centre search bar and the pages will come up.

Date: 17 August 2021