

Safety of Adult Companions assisting in University Work

University Policy on arrangements to ensure the safety of adult companions assisting in University work

This policy is concerned with informal arrangements in which a member of the University has been assisted in their work by an adult companion, e.g. spouse or partner, for example in relation to laboratory research. This Policy provides guidance for Departments to enable such persons to be safeguarded.

The University has a responsibility towards the health and safety of anyone who could be affected by its activities. This duty would extend to an adult who is not a member of the University assisting in University work under circumstances which were foreseeable. This would include those circumstances where such work was actually or implicitly authorised, tolerated or known.

It is not intended to apply to situations involving visitors from other professional institutions or formal collaborative programmes of work. Existing arrangements should enable safety implications of these formal activities to be addressed.

The University would not expect adult companions to assist members of the University in undertaking their duties. However, should circumstances arise that such assistance may be appropriate, then the presence of the adult companion will be at the sole discretion of the Head of School/Department (or their nominee). Permission may be refused where it is believed that the appropriate health and safety measures are not in place.

Schools/Departments may prohibit the type of situation addressed by this policy. Should it be wished to adopt a more flexible approach the considerations contained within the policy will need to be applied.

Any member of the University intending that a companion assists them in their work should notify their Head of School/Department. A form which may be used for this is attached. The information will assist in evaluating the level of safety provision which will be needed. Particular considerations include the companion's competence, qualifications and experience in the type of work envisaged and any additional measures such as information, instruction, training or personal protective equipment which will be needed for the individual. The level of safety provision for the companion should be to the same standard that would be applied to a member of the University doing the same work.

It is the responsibility of the member of the University to supervise their companion whilst on the premises in any environment which could be classified as high risk, e.g. workshops and scientific laboratories. The ability of the member of the University to adequately supervise their companion will be a further aspect which the Head of School/Department or their nominee will wish to consider when determining whether to grant permission.

Schools/Departments should include a statement on this subject, and local arrangements where appropriate, in their local safety literature.