

SOCIETIES WELFARE TRAINING 2025/26

22nd October 2025

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THE SOCIETIES TEAM

**Head of Membership
Communities**
Emma Sainty

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Societies Coordinator
Laura Toncel Parrado

**Societies Assistants
(Student Staff)**

Toby Warren
Fernanda Castro
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VP Welfare
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To contact us, please email susocs@essex.ac.uk
or come down to the **new Reception on Square 4**

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TRAINING AIMS

- The purpose of this session is to provide you with essential guidance to ensure the physical and mental well-being of your members.
- We aim to make you aware of the support services available to students should they require them.
- We do not expect you to be therapists.
- There will be opportunities to ask questions at the end of the session.
- This presentation will be available for you to view afterwards on the Societies Toolkit.

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If you have been affected by anything discussed during this event, the following support is available:

The Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service (SWIS)

Wellbeing@essex.ac.uk | 01206 873133

SU Advice

SUAdvice@essex.ac.uk | 01206 863211

If out of hours service is required:

Student Wellbeing Support Line: A 24/7 phone line for students, provided by Health Assured. The number is 0800 028 3766.

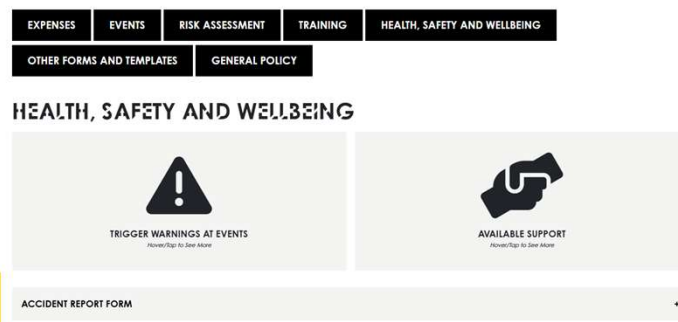
SHOUT: A free, confidential text service available 24/7. Text "SHOUT" to 85258.

Student Space/Student Minds: Online support resources offering advice and information on a range of topics.
www.studentspace.org.uk

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SOCIETIES TOOLKIT

- Find available support and the trigger warning slide under “Health, Safety and Wellbeing”
- We will add these slides under the “training” tab



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WHAT IS A WELFARE OFFICER?

The Welfare Officer is responsible for the safety and welfare of the society. They provide guidance, support and signposting to their society members, responding to welfare queries and conflicts, within agreed boundaries.

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Attending welfare training
- Signposting members to the correct services
- Ensuring that the society's activities are welcoming, accessible and inclusive for members
- Acting as the point of contact for any conflicts within the society

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ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

The Students' Union has a zero-tolerance policy including sexual harassment meaning that the Students' Union will take action. Please familiarise yourself with the [Zero Tolerance Policy](#).

Staff and students are expected to be treated and to treat each other with dignity and respect regardless of:

- Gender expression, identity, affirmation or reassignment
- Race, ethnic origin or national origin
- Age
- Socio-economic background
- Disability
- Religious beliefs or affiliations, or absence of religious beliefs or affiliations
- Political beliefs or affiliations
- Family circumstances, including maternity and paternity
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Sex

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RISK ASSESSMENTS


- Essential to ensuring the safety of your members.
- **No risk assessment = no activity.**
- Take a copy of your risk assessment to your sessions, as well as sending it to all members to ensure they have read it.
- If you are hosting an activity away from your usual location (e.g. on Squares) you must complete an additional risk assessment for this activity. Be sure to consider additional risk such as members of the public, buildings etc.
- Additional events will also require a risk assessment submitted to staff with sufficient notice, which for large events should be a minimum of 4 weeks before.

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RISK ASSESSMENTS – support

- We offer risk assessment training, and the blank risk assessment template can be found on the Societies Toolkit.
- If you ever need help, email susocs@essex.ac.uk

RISK ASSESSMENT



BLANK RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE



HOW TO COMPLETE A RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK ASSESSMENT PRIORITIES

	1 - No harm	2 - Discomfort	3 - First Aid	4 - Minor Injury (Harm)	5 - Hospital Admission	6 - Permanent Harm	7 - Fatality
1 - Effectively impossible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2 - Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10	12	14
3 - Possible	3	6	9	12	15	18	21
4 - Possible	4	8	12	16	20	24	28
5 - Probable	5	10	15	20	25	30	35
6 - Very Likely	6	12	18	24	30	36	42
7 - Almost Certain	7	14	21	28	35	42	49

Key

Priority	Action
1 - Effectively impossible	Identify and eliminate the potential for harm or consider if it is a necessary condition for the activity to take place
2 - Unlikely	Identify and eliminate the potential for harm or consider if it is a necessary condition for the activity to take place
3 - Possible	Identify and eliminate the potential for harm or consider if it is a necessary condition for the activity to take place
4 - Possible	Identify and eliminate the potential for harm or consider if it is a necessary condition for the activity to take place
5 - Probable	Identify and eliminate the potential for harm or consider if it is a necessary condition for the activity to take place
6 - Very Likely	Identify and eliminate the potential for harm or consider if it is a necessary condition for the activity to take place
7 - Almost Certain	Identify and eliminate the potential for harm or consider if it is a necessary condition for the activity to take place

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KNOWING YOUR MEMBERS

- Due to GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) regulations, we are not permitted to collect certain personal information from members after they have purchased a membership (such as allergies, medications, emergency contacts, etc.).
- We strongly encourage Welfare Officers and Presidents to request that members **voluntarily disclose any relevant medical conditions, allergies, or medications**—especially those that may be impacted by physical activities or events.

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GENERAL FIRST AID

- Make sure there is no immediate danger to yourself before you help
- Ensure the casualty is comfortable and safe, but do not attempt to move them.
- You can access first aid advice from St John Ambulance (www.sja.org.uk/get-advice)



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ON-CAMPUS EMERGENCIES

- If you feel you are in immediate danger and are **on-campus**, you should contact **Campus Security**
- **Do not call '999' directly** – Security will coordinate with emergency services
- Contact **Campus Security 01206 872222** from a mobile, or **at '2222'** (from a University landline)

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OFF-CAMPUS EMERGENCIES

- In life-threatening emergencies **off-campus**, you should contact **999**
- If you're not sure whether you need to call 999, you can get help from **NHS 111** first
- 999 won't always mean an ambulance is sent – they may suggest that you make your own way to A&E, or be seen elsewhere
- You can read more about [when to call 999](#) on the NHS website

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IF THE CASUALTY NEEDS TO GO TO HOSPITAL

- Ensure a **minimum of 1 student stay with the injured person and accompany them to Hospital.**
- If a member of the society has a driving license and a car, it is recommended that they attend the hospital if they are able.
- The committee member should inform the injured student's emergency contact of the current situation where possible.
- The rest of the society should return back to the University at the end of the event, but maintain contact by phone.

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MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

If you are worried about someone's mental health, you can apply MHFA England's 5 step action plan – **ALGEE**

Mental Health Awareness training opportunities may become available – you will be notified when we are running these sessions if you want to book on.



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MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT – EMERGENCY CONTACTS

If you someone is at urgent risk of harm to themselves or others the following services can be contacted

- **2222/01206 872222** – Campus Patrol staff (always ring this if you are on campus as they will be able to organise Emergency service support)
- **999** – Ask for Mental Health crisis support (Police or Ambulance)
- **111** – then select **option 2** – NHS Urgent Mental Health Helpline

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MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT – OUT OF HOURS SUPPORT

You can refer students to the following support services outside of usual business hours

- 24 Hour Student Support Wellbeing Support line – **0800 028 3766**
- [Samaritans](#) – call **116 123**
- [Papyrus](#) (Prevention of Young Suicide) HOPELINE – call **0800 068 4141**
- [SHOUT](#) text support – text **SHOUT** to **85258**
- [Togetherall](#) – digital peer support platform
- [Wisdom App](#) – includes live chat and video call options

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SU ADVICE

- SU Advice is a free, confidential, and impartial service available to all students.
- They offer guidance and support on a wide range of issues that may impact a student's welfare, such as academic stress, housing concerns, health and well-being, and cases of bullying or harassment.
- While they are not trained counselors, they provide a supportive listening ear and can refer students to the appropriate campus or local services.



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CONTACT SU ADVICE

- Contact suadvice@essex.ac.uk with the email subject "Concerns from a Society Welfare Exec" and we will be in contact as soon as possible to arrange for an adviser to speak with you
- You can now book an appointment by visiting the [SU Advice](#) page on the Essex Student website



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SWIS (STUDENT WELLBEING AND INCLUSITIVITY SERVICE)

- SWIS provide free confidential support and advice with personal and emotional difficulties and can support with referrals to counselling.
- Students can [book an appointment](#) with a Wellbeing Accessor
- [Report a concern about a student form](#) can be used if you are worried about another students' behaviour – the SWIS team will take appropriate (non-urgent) action

Phone: 01206 873133

Website: [Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service | University of Essex](#)

Email: wellbeing@essex.ac.uk

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MIND

- Mind is a mental health charity in England and Wales that offers information and advice to people with mental health problems and lobbies government and local authorities on their behalf.
- They have an **Infoline**, which offers callers confidential help for the price of a local call
- They also have a **Legal Line**, which provides information on mental health related law to the public, service users, family members/carers, mental health professionals and mental health advocates
- **Website:** [Mind Mid and North East Essex](#)
- **Local Infoline:** 01206 764600
- **Legal Line:** 0300 466 6463



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SAMARITANS

- Samaritans is a registered charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland, often through their telephone helpline.
- Volunteers give up their time 24/7 to listen, be open minded and be non-judgmental to people going through a tough time.
- They are not required to give advice to anyone, so this can be valuable for anyone struggling who simply just wants to talk to someone impartial.
- **Website:** [Samaritans](#)
- **Email:** jo@samaritans.org
- **Phone:** 116 123



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CARA (Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse)

- **CARA** (Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse) works with victims and survivors of sexual violence and child sexual abuse.
- CARA provide independent, specialist support and promotes and represents the rights and needs of victims and survivors.
- They work with adult women and men, young people (aged 13-19) and children aged 12 and under from across the UK and north Essex, they have a head office in Colchester.

Website: [Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse in Essex - CARA \(caraessex.org.uk\)](http://Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse in Essex - CARA (caraessex.org.uk))

Phone: 01206 367881

Email: info@caraessex.org.uk

Online Self-Referral Form: [VisiaCloud](#)



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OPEN ROAD

The University and SU work in partnership with Open Road a specialist support services for Drugs and Alcohol issues.

Ellie Bland is a dedicated support worker who offers 1 to 1 appointments in person or online to students at the Colchester Campus.

Ellie offers:

- a confidential service
- personalised support
- ways to look after yourself
- referrals to other support if needed



To book an appointment, email Ellie Bland: ellie.bland@openroad.org.uk

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CONFLICTS WITHIN THE SOCIETY

- If any conflicts or disagreements arise between society members and/or exec members, we encourage internal mediation as a first resort
- **Advice for mediation:**
 - Lead with compassion – check in to see how people are doing, signpost to additional support if needed
 - Be respectful and open-minded to people's situations when discussing concerns
 - Avoid accusatory language or placing blame – focus on active listening and problem-solving
 - If there are concerns about how someone is performing in their exec role, discuss expectations and mutually work out a plan to improve
- If internal mediation is ineffective, those with the conflict can go to the VP Welfare, VP Student Experience and/or the Societies team to try and resolve the issue or escalate if needed

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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

If you have been made aware of any internal issues or complaints within your society that you feel cannot be addressed by the committee, please email susocs@essex.ac.uk and we will deal with the issue in confidence

Please ensure that your members know they can also contact us/ the VP welfare (Vpwelfare@essex.ac.uk) or the VP experience (Vpexperience@essex.ac.uk) directly if they would like to make a complaint or report an issue

If you wish to complain about the behaviour of another student that may be in breach of the University's Code of Student Conduct you can either:

- Report a concern through [Report & Support](#)
- Complete a [Student Conduct Incident Report](#)

SU Advice (suadvice@essex.ac.uk) can help with either of these options

Complaints about the SU can also be raised through [the SU Complaints Procedure](#)

See something, say something!

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LOOK OUT FOR YOUR MEMBERS

- **Ensure everyone feels welcome** and included in your club. Make a big effort at the start of the year to integrate new members and include them in training/activities and events.
- **Identify changes in the behaviour** of your members. If you notice your members are acting differently or becoming withdrawn, check-in with them. Ask them if they are ok and offer them support.
- Encourage your members to use **free, confidential support services**.
- **Share your knowledge of the University and local area!** Particularly helpful to new students. Show them SU Advice, Student Support, good study spaces, where the launderette is and how to use it, nice places to eat/drink, things to see.
- You can **report concerns about a student's change in behaviour** to the University via their ['Report a concern about a student'](#) form

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LOOK OUT FOR YOUR MEMBERS (continued)

- **International students** – They may still be learning the language or feeling homesick. Society activity can be a huge comfort for them.
- **Under 18's** – Some students at the University under 18 years old. Be considerate that they are very young and away from home. Remember legally they may not be able to do things everyone else can! University safeguarding practice applies to under 18's.
- All departments at the University have **Designated Safeguarding Officers** (DSO's) as part of [University Safeguarding measures](#). This includes the Students' Union. If you are ever concerned about one of your members, you can also contact the DSO'S: **Keith Rowland, Sian Lovesy, Chris Moore, Sarah-Louise Dudley**

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SOCIAL MEDIA/GROUP CHATS

- **Respect for All** - We treat each other with respect at all times
- **Confidentiality** – Do not share personal information (including phone numbers) outside of the group
- **Unacceptable behaviour** - The following actions are not tolerated and may result in removal from the group:
 - Making fun or embarrassing each other
 - Using offensive, insulting, or abusive language
 - Disrespecting other members (including the execs)
 - Engaging in bullying, either individually or as a group, including:
 - **Verbal:** name calling, spreading rumours, teasing, or sarcasm
 - **Emotional:** ridiculing, humiliating, or excluding others.
 - **Sexual:** unwanted physical contact or verbal sexual abuse
 - **Digital:** sending unwelcome texts, calls, or online messages.
- **No advertising or spamming** - The group chat is a space for community and support, not for promotion. Advertising external events, businesses, or services, as well as excessive promotion, is strictly prohibited.

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SOCIALS

- Socials are one of the best parts of being part of a Society, so make sure everyone feels welcome and enjoys themselves.
- Ensure socials are conducted in a positive, safe and equal environment.
- Avoid any controversial and/or possibly offensive games, language and activities.
- Ensure that nobody feels forced or pressured into an activity, and that everybody should have the ability to say no to anything, without any consequence.

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SOCIALS (continued)

- There have been cases of students who have been subjected to initiations or hazing leaving University, being arrested/given a criminal record, and in some tragic cases, losing their lives.
- The majority of students that arrive at Essex will be 18 years old (or some even younger), just out of full-time education and living away from home for the first time. They may be impressionable and want to show off to senior members of a Society. It is therefore vital that you as senior and committee members are respectful, responsible and welcoming to all.
- Please don't feel the need to conform to 'tradition' and hold initiations for new members. It doesn't matter if you think an initiation has always happened in your society and you think it's normal, it isn't.

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THE LAW (SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT)

- It is important that you understand the Sexual Offences Act to ensure that all society activities fall within safe settings to prevent any risk to members
- **Coercive and Controlling Behaviour:**
 - **Coercive Behavior:** A persistent pattern of actions or threats aimed at assaulting, intimidating, humiliating, or otherwise abusing someone. These behaviors are designed to harm, punish, or instill fear in the victim.
 - **Controlling Behavior:** A series of actions intended to make someone dependent or submissive. It often involves isolating the person from support systems, exploiting them for personal gain, stripping them of independence, and regulating their daily activities to maintain control.

If you witness any of these behaviors, please report them immediately. If you are experiencing them, support services are available to help you.

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ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

'Ask for Angela' - Anyone who is feeling unsafe, vulnerable or threatened can discreetly seek help by approaching staff in venues and asking them for 'Angela'. This code-phrase will indicate to staff that they require help. This might be through reuniting them with a friend, seeing them to a taxi, or calling campus security.

Security and Safety Centre - Located on Square 3 under the sheltered area - map for reference. The security team provide 24-hour face to face and phone support. You can contact them regarding a range of things.

University anonymous reporting system - You can report things to the University using the anonymous reporting system. All information is treated in the strictest confidence. <https://reportandsupport.essex.ac.uk/>



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ANY QUESTIONS?

- We now have an opportunity for any questions should you have any.

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SCENARIO

You are at a society event, and you notice a member is acting differently. They are usually friendly and confident and make an effort to socialise. During the event, they appear quiet, withdrawn and not like their usual self.

What would you do?

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SUGGESTED APPROACH

- Initiate a conversation – think about a quiet location without interruptions if possible
- Ask how they are – you can say you have noticed they don't seem to be quite themselves and state any specific behaviours you have observed
- Listen with empathy and without judgement
- Respect that they may not want to talk or disclose – don't push but reassure you are there if they want to chat
- Make some suggestions for other support services and maybe give some info for them to take away – SWIS, SU Advice, 24 Hour Support line etc
- If you are still concerned, consider 'Report a concern about a student' form

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SCENARIO

A member of your society comes to almost every event you hold but regularly gets very drunk to the point where they need additional support on the night to make sure they are safe.

What would you do?

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SUGGESTED APPROACH

- During the event ensure safety for society member – do they need first aid support (call campus security)? How are they getting home? Do they have a friend who can look after them? etc
- Consider a conversation with them (not whilst they are under the influence), think about a quiet location without interruptions if possible
- Ask how they are – you can say you have noticed they seem to be drinking to excess at the events and you are concerned about their welfare
- Listen with empathy and without judgement
- Respect that they may not want to talk or disclose – don't push but reassure you are there if they want to chat
- Make some suggestions for other support services and maybe give some info for them to take away – Open Road, SWIS, SU Advice, 24 Hour Support line etc
- If you are still concerned, consider 'Report a concern about a student' form

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SCENARIO

A society member reports to you as Welfare Exec that they have concerns about another members behaviour – they say they have a friend who's told them they have been harassed/victimised by the other society member. The society member asks you to ban them from the society.

What would you do?

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SUGGESTED APPROACH

- Make them aware that banning a member may not be possible without going through the appropriate process
- Encourage the student (and their friend) to speak to someone about what they have experienced (SWIS, SU Advice etc)
- Encourage the student (and their friend) to report behaviour that might be a breach of student conduct (Report & Support or Student Conduct Incident form). The Exec member could also lodge an anonymous report and support if they have enough information to do so but this is unlikely to result in any investigatory action being taken
- Speak to SU Socs team/VP Welfare – might not be able to ban but can any adjustments be put in place to minimise potentially difficult situations
- Try to avoid rumours or gossip about the situation and warn the society member who is speaking to you that they should try to avoid this too

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