PRESS RELEASE — For immediate release

***ProtectED* seeks Founder Member universities to lead on addressing key student welfare issues**

A new university organisation is aiming to drive up standards in student wellbeing as the sector struggles with [record suicide rates](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/sep/02/suicide-record-level-students-uk-universities-study) and [‘epidemic’ levels of sexual harassment](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/mar/05/students-staff-uk-universities-sexual-harassment-epidemic) on campus.

Student safety is also a significant issue, with concerns being raised by university [staff](https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2018/jan/05/we-all-need-to-be-less-scared-of-asking-for-help-campus-security-on-mental-health), and by [home](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/students-say-theyre-scared-walk-13738102) and [international](https://thepienews.com/news/safety-now-priority-prospective-international-students/) students.

[*ProtectED*](http://www.protect-ed.org), a not-for-profit university membership organisation and national accreditation scheme to improve student safety, security and wellbeing, will hold an event at the House of Lords next month, hosted by *ProtectED* patron, [Baroness Ruth Henig](https://thepienews.com/news/uk-protected-announces-new-patron/).

The event on **March 19** will welcome *ProtectED* Founder Members and bring together senior university representatives and organisations from across the higher education sector with an interest in addressing safety, security and wellbeing issues that negatively impact students’ lives.

As well as Baroness Henig, speaking at the event will be: Helen Clews from the [British Council](https://www.britishcouncil.org/); Dave Humphries from the [Security Industry Authority](https://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/Pages/home.aspx); Hannah Price, founder of the [Revolt Sexual Assault](https://revoltsexualassault.com/) campaign; and Andrew Wootton, *ProtectED* Director. Representatives of new *ProtectED* Founder Member institutions will also be invited to speak at the event.

*“The ProtectED Code of Practice offers, for the first time, a student safety, security and wellbeing standard for universities to aspire to, and a practical, robust method of assessing and raising standards across the sector.*”

* Baroness Ruth Henig, *ProtectED* patron and Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords

"*For many international students coming to the UK, this will be their first time living away from home in an unfamiliar country and they may feel especially vulnerable. The British Council produces student safety guides to assist international students to settle into life in the UK.*

*As a member of the ProtectED Advisory Board, I have informed the development of important measures to help prevent international students from becoming victims of crime. Universities take their duty of care to students seriously, therefore I would encourage UK universities to get involved with the ProtectED initiative.*”

* Helen Clews, External Relations Adviser, British Council

*ProtectED* is seeking to recruit twelve universities to become ***ProtectED Founder Member*** institutions, positioning themselves at the forefront of efforts to raise standards in student safety, security and wellbeing across the higher education sector.

Supported by key stakeholders across the sector, *ProtectED* believes universities have a duty of care towards students that does not end at the campus boundary, but encompasses the whole 'student experience'.

The *ProtectED* [Code of Practice](http://www.protect-ed.org/resources) adopts a modular structure, addressing standards in student safety, security and wellbeing across a number of domains:

* Core Institutional Safety & Security
* Student Wellbeing & Mental Health
* International Students
* Student Harassment & Sexual Assault
* The Student Night Out.

*ProtectED* Membership is the starting point for universities — a demonstration of their commitment to effectively tackling safety, security and wellbeing issues that prevent students from reaching their potential. In partnership with an evolving network of member universities, member institutions are supported to work towards achieving *ProtectED* Accreditation.

Universities must meet the minimum requirements for all measures outlined in the *ProtectED* Code of Practice, to be awarded accreditation. The confidential accreditation process involves initial assessment by a Peer Review Panel of sector experts, followed by a Verification Visit by independent assessors.

Successful universities are awarded *ProtectED* *Accredited Institution* status — a clear indicator to prospective and current students, their parents and loved ones that the institution takes student welfare seriously.

Find out more about *ProtectED* here: [www.protect-ed.org](http://www.protect-ed.org)

Download the *ProtectED* Code of Practice here: [www.protect-ed.org/resources](http://www.protect-ed.org/resources)

**Press coverage of *ProtectED*:**

* ‘Cultural change is needed to tackle sexual harassment on campus’ - [The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2017/jul/20/cultural-change-is-needed-to-tackle-sexual-harassment-on-campus)
* ‘More students are dropping out of university because of mental health problems’- [The Independent](http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/more-students-are-dropping-out-of-university-because-of-mental-health-problems-a7788901.html)

**Ends**

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**Notes to editors:**

1. Launched in 2017, some fifty UK universities have expressed an interest in *ProtectED* to date.
2. Also attending will be representatives from the *ProtectED* Advisory Board, including: British Council; the SIA; the University Mental Health Advisors Network (UMHAN); the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (AMOSSHE); the Association of University Chief Security Officers (AUCSO); the association of College and Universities Business Officers (CUBO); Endsleigh insurance; the Police Association of Higher Educations Liaison Officers (PAHELO), the National Union of Students (NUS); the International Professional Security Association (IPSA), the Security Institute; the British Security Industry Association (BSIA); the National Landlords Association and Universities UK. Guests will include senior academics and institutional leads for student services, wellbeing and security from a number of UK universities interested in working towards *ProtectED* accreditation.
3. *ProtectED* requirements are based on existing recommendations and good practice guidance, such as: University UK’s [*Changing the Culture*](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/changing-the-culture-final-report.aspx) Taskforce report examining violence against women, harassment and hate crime affecting university students; Student Minds’ [*Look After Your Mate*](http://www.studentminds.org.uk/lookafteryourmate.html) guidance to strengthen peer support networks for students experiencing mental ill health; and British Council [guidance](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/safety-first.pdf) for keeping international students safe in the UK. *ProtectED* indicators are supported by case studies of good practice from across the sector.