

Winchester u3a Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

This policy and procedure is written to enable the committee to address issues where there are safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding concerns may relate to incidents between members as well as to instances of abuse or neglect that a u3a member may be experiencing outside of the u3a.

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Winchester u3a to safeguard their members and to try to ensure that everyone involved in Winchester u3a is aware of:

- The legislation, policy and procedures for safeguarding adults.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding adults.
- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult within Winchester u3a.

Safeguarding Commitment

Winchester u3a Committee will endeavour to ensure that all members are aware of our safeguarding responsibility and know who to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult. If any u3a member has such concerns, they should contact the Chairman by phone or email chairman@winchesteru3a.co.uk.

Winchester u3a committee has a duty of care to its members and is committed to upholding this policy in order to protect its members. We recognise that some people are potentially at risk of abuse and neglect and aim to respond in a prompt and efficient manner to any situation where there is a risk of or perceived risk of harm.

Winchester u3a does not hold any statutory authority. Matters of concern will be reported to the relevant safeguarding authorities and charity regulatory authorities, as appropriate. This may include the local authority, the local multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), or the police in an emergency.

Where there are concerns for a member's wellbeing or safety, a Winchester u3a Committee member will complete a safeguarding risk assessment, seek advice and support from the Trust where necessary, and contact the relevant statutory authorities as needed. It is not appropriate for Winchester u3a to take the lead role in any Safeguarding Enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 (England and Wales).

Winchester u3a recognises that there are various forms of abuse and does not condone or tolerate any form of abuse or neglect and believes that all people should be able and, where necessary, enabled to live in an environment which is safe and free from harm.

Winchester u3a will put the well-being of those at risk of harm first. These individuals will be actively supported to communicate their views and the outcomes they want to achieve. Their views and wishes will be respected and supported unless there are overriding reasons not to. Any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm.

A list of the types of safeguarding risks and harm is provided in the document entitled Safeguarding Information and Guidance. Winchester u3a strives to uphold the principle that every human being is entitled to:

- privacy
- be treated with dignity and respect

- lead an independent life and to be enabled to do so
- choose how they live their lives
- the protection of the law
- have their human and civil rights upheld regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religious or cultural background.

Winchester u3a will also follow the principles enshrined within the England and Wales Care Act 2014.

- **Principle 1 – Empowerment** – whereby the approach is focused on the individual making their own decision and gaining informed consent, where possible.
- **Principle 2 – Prevention** – seeking to take steps to prevent issues from arising or escalating.
- **Principle 3 – Proportionality** – responding in a proportionate way to the issue/s being presented.
- **Principle 4 – Protection** – seeking to keep the membership safe and protection for those deemed to be at risk.
- **Principle 5 – Partnership** – reporting incidents to the relevant statutory bodies and liaising with the Trust.
- **Principle 6 – Accountability** – accurate recording of incidents. Reporting incidents, as required, to the Trust and to relevant regulatory authorities.

Procedure

Winchester u3a accepts its responsibility to try to ensure that all committee members and group leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Depending on the nature of the allegation and the identified risk, Winchester u3a will support the alleged victims and the alleged perpetrators of any abuse as long as this does not compromise any safeguarding enquiry or investigation into the allegation or place other adults at risk.

Winchester u3a will make every effort to respect the confidentiality of any information that is disclosed under this policy and procedure. However, if the allegations are serious, confidentiality is not absolute. Information will be recorded and stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, but information may have to be shared with relevant authorities on a 'need-to-know' basis only, to prevent:

danger to a person's life or health, or danger to another person or the wider community or to facilitate the investigation of a serious crime

Course of action

- Where the committee becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, steps will be taken, as needed, to ensure that the safety of adult/s at risk is secured as a priority. The steps to take to address this will be discussed and agreed between the Executive Officers of the committee in the first instance. No committee member will act in isolation when dealing with a safeguarding concern. The steps taken should be documented and stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.
- If the Winchester u3a committee becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, the first step will be to gather as much information as possible to assist with the decision as to the next

steps. A risk assessment will be developed and recorded as soon as possible after the concern comes to the attention of the committee.

- Where it is deemed that the risk is high and immediate action needs to be taken, the committee will contact the relevant authorities as well as the Trust for advice and support.
- As far as possible, the adult at risk's wishes will be respected as to whether or not to refer any concerns to the local authority as a Safeguarding Enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014. However, it may be necessary to override their wishes in the best interests of other adults who are at risk.
- In developing the risk assessment, the committee will consider the level of risk and the action that needs to be taken accordingly. Assessment of risk will include:
 - Risk to the individual member
 - Risk to other members within the u3a
 - Reputational risk for the individual u3a and the u3a movement as a whole
- Where the risk is not deemed to be high but support is needed, Winchester u3a will contact the Trust to discuss the concerns and seek additional assistance. Assistance will always be sought before moving to exclude any member from the u3a on the basis of a safeguarding risk assessment.
- Once the risk assessment is completed, the committee will decide the most appropriate course of action. This could include excluding a member from certain groups e.g. groups held in people's homes, or requesting that a member attends the u3a with a carer, or excluding a member from a group run by a particular group leader.
- Depending on the nature of the allegation it may be necessary to pursue the incident following Winchester u3a's complaints or disciplinary procedure. If it is decided that this is the best course of action the matter will not be investigated by any party that was privy to the initial reporting of the incident.
- All actions taken will be recorded. Any records will remain confidential to the committee unless a prior decision has been taken to share the record with the relevant statutory bodies.

This policy was adopted on the 15th October 2024

Policy review date: October 2026

