Policy Statement

This Policy and Procedure is written to enable the Committee to act appropriately whenever possible or where instances, or allegations of, actual abuse or neglect comes to their attention.

Belfast U3A recognises that some people are potentially at risk of abuse and neglect. Where abuse or neglect is suspected Belfast U3A will aim to respond to the situation in a way which is caring, effective and enabling. Belfast U3A also recognises that abuse and neglect can be perpetrated by volunteers, other users of services, relatives, friends and neighbours. Belfast U3A acknowledges that the reasons for abuse and neglect occurring, may not be fully understood and vary with each incident, often dependant on risk factors.

Belfast U3A will neither condone nor tolerate any form of abuse or neglect.

In all situations, Belfast U3A believes that everyone 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.

Belfast U3A will monitor the implementation of this policy and procedure as necessary through its Executive Committee.

Procedure

1. Belfast U3A recognises that it has a responsibility to ensure that its committee and interest-group leaders understand this policy.

2. Belfast U3A will support the alleged victims and the alleged perpetrators of any abuse as well as any member who becomes aware of the abuse in so far as this does not compromise any investigation into the allegation or place other adults at risk.

3. While Belfast U3A will make every effort to respect the confidentiality of any information that is disclosed under this Policy and Procedure, this cannot be guaranteed. Information will be recorded and stored securely in accordance with GDPR 2018 but confidentiality is not absolute and information may have to be shared, on a ‘need-to-know’ basis only, to prevent:

   - Danger to a person’s life
   - Danger to a person’s health
   - Danger to others
   - Danger to the community
   or to prevent or to facilitate the investigation of a serious crime

This Policy, Procedure and Appendices will be reviewed as necessary.
Courses of Action

• If the committee becomes aware of possible or actual abuse or neglect, it should ensure that the safety of the adult at risk is secured as a first priority.

• Any committee member who becomes aware of possible or actual abuse should record the details of the abuse, as soon as possible, using the Safeguarding Adult Disclosure/Suspicion Recording Proforma (SAP1), (see Appendix 1). They should advise the rest of the committee and the Advice and Volunteering Manager at National Office who will provide further guidance.

• The committee, having been advised of the possible or actual abuse, should satisfy themselves that the adult at risk is safe, and that the alleged perpetrator, if known, does not pose a threat to any other adult at risk.

• The committee, working with the Advice and Volunteering Manager at National Office will decide whether or not to refer the possible or actual abuse to the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) and/or the Police. When a crime may have been committed, the Police must be contacted as soon as possible. If the decision is made not to refer, the reasons for this must be recorded on SAP1 (Appendix 1).

• The committee then completes SAP1 (Appendix 1) with the guidance of the Advice and Volunteering Manager.

• Completed SAP1 (Appendix 1) forms will be held in a designated file for a minimum of 2 years from the date of the last completed SAP1 on the adult at risk.

• Confidentiality is adhered to at all times, therefore the contents of the SAP1 will not be provided to any third parties.

• The above Policy and Procedure were adopted by the Committee of the Belfast U3A on 15 April 2019

• Further information and related Appendices are available from the Committee