

Bourton and District (BandD) U3A Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

This Policy and Procedure is written to enable the BandD Committee to act appropriately whenever possible or where instances, or allegations of, actual abuse or neglect comes to their attention. BandD U3A recognises that some people are potentially at risk of abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect can take place in a person's own home, in the home of a carer, family member or friend and within any form of institution e.g. residential care or nursing home.

Where abuse or neglect is suspected BandD U3A will aim to respond to the situation in a way which is caring, effective and enabling. BandD U3A also recognises that abuse and neglect can be perpetrated by volunteers, other users of services, relatives, friends and neighbours. BandD 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. BandD U3A will neither condone nor 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.

In all situations, BandD 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.

It is not appropriate for BandD U3A to take the lead role in any Safeguarding Enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 but should refer this to the Advice and Volunteer Manager in National Office who will contact the appropriate local authority.

BandD U3A will monitor the implementation of this policy and procedure annually through its Committee.

Procedure

BandD U3A recognises that it has a responsibility to ensure that its Committee and Group Organisers understand this policy.

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

While BandD 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 facilitate the investigation of a serious crime or to prevent:

- Danger to a person's life,
- Danger to a person's health,
- Danger to others,
- Danger to the community

This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed every 3 years from their date of adoption. The names and details of the Committee should be amended when any change of Trustee takes place.

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, as soon as possible, record the details of the abuse. They should advise the rest of the Committee and the Advice and Volunteer 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 Volunteer Manager at National Office will decide whether or not to refer the possible or actual abuse to the local authority and/or the Police. When a crime may have been committed, the Police must be contacted as soon as possible. If the decision is to not refer, the reasons for this must be recorded.

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 these in the best interests of other adults at risk.

The Committee then completes a Safeguarding Adult Disclosure/Suspicion form with the guidance of the Advice and Volunteer Manager.

Completed reports will be held in a designated file for a minimum of 2 years from the date of the last completed report on the adult at risk.

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

This policy was adopted at the Committee meeting of BandD U3A on 8th July 2019 and will be reviewed every 3 years.

Appendix 1

If someone discloses abuse to you:

Do:

- Stay calm and try not to show shock or disbelief.
- Listen carefully to what they are saying.
- Be sympathetic ('I'm sorry this has happened to you').
- Be aware of the possibility that medical evidence might be needed.

Tell the person that:

- They did the right thing to tell you.
- You are treating the information seriously. It was not their fault.
- You are going to inform the appropriate person.
- You will take steps to protect and support them.
- Record and report the disclosure in line with the Procedure.

Do not:

- Press the person for more details as this will be done at a later date.
- Stop someone who is freely recalling events (Don't say 'hold on, we'll come back to that later'; they may not tell you or anybody else again).]
- Promise to keep secrets; you cannot keep this kind of information to yourself.
- Make promises you cannot keep (such as 'this will never happen to you again').
- Contact the alleged abuser.
- Be judgemental.
- Pass on the information other than to those with a legitimate 'need to know' under this Policy and Procedure.

In your Record of the disclosure you should aim to:

- Note what people actually said, using their own words and phrases.
- Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.
- Note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time of the abuse or the disclosure.
- Separate factual information from your own and others opinions.
- Use black ink so the report can be photocopied if needed.
- Be aware that your report may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure.

Appendix 2 Key Definitions:

Adult at risk:

Any person, who is over 18 years of age and who has need for care and support, is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect and as a result of those needs is unable to protect him or herself against the abuse or neglect or risk of it.

Abuse:

The violation of a person's human and civil rights by any other person(s). It may be a single or repeated act(s), physical, verbal, psychological, sexual, institutional, discriminatory or financial, an act of neglect or failure to act. Types of abuse are:

Physical abuse – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Domestic violence – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour based' violence.

Sexual abuse – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological abuse – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Financial or material abuse – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion, in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, possessions or benefits.

Modern slavery – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of servitude and inhumane treatment.

Discriminatory abuse – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and acts of omission – including ignoring medical, emotional, or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate healthcare and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Self-neglect – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Recommended agencies:

Local Authority, Social Services, GP Surgery, Police, etc.

Action on Elder Abuse (AEA) is a confidential support and advice service for older people who have been abused or people who know an older person who may be suffering abuse. Available weekdays 9am – 5pm 0808 808 8141.

Voice UK is a national charity supporting people with learning disabilities and other vulnerable people who have experienced crime or abuse. They also support their families, carers and professional workers. 0808 802 8686.