**Crediton u3a Safeguarding Policy**

Firstly, the committee, as far as is reasonable and with advice from the Safeguarding Lead should try to ensure the activities of Crediton u3a do not give rise to safeguarding issues. This will include:

* Appointing a Safeguarding Lead who will take the lead should a problem arise.
* Considering the risk *of* any safeguarding risk before permission is given for activities to happen.
* Making sure group leaders are aware of potential safeguarding issues, and if appropriate, have carried out a risk assessment.
* Informing all members of their own role in not putting themselves and others in situations of concern or of inappropriate behaviour (sexual advances, bullying, aggression, harassment, verbal abuse or discrimination). This can include electronic communications and social media platforms as well as face to face.
* If a group leader is unhappy about a certain member being part of their group, the group leader, in consultation with the committee, will have the final decision on whether they can take part.
* Taking corrective action if the committee becomes aware that an issue has arisen.

Secondly, a complaint may be made to the committee about a safeguarding issue. This may be issues about bullying harassment, physical or even sexual abuse. The procedure below should be followed for resolving the complaint.

* Safeguarding concerns should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead or another committee member if the Safeguarding Lead is involved in the incident.
* The general nature of the complaint should be determined by at least two committee members talking with the complainant/potential victim although specific details should not be elucidated in case the complaint becomes the subject of a criminal investigation.
* However, the identity and privacy of the complainant/potential victim should be protected as far as possible and all steps should be recorded in writing, using actual words and phrases used and detailing circumstances and those present and counter signed.
* If the two committee members decide that the case is possibly of a criminal nature involving physical or sexual abuse, the police and social services should immediately be informed and the u3a activity in which the incident happened should be temporarily suspended and the member concerned should be temporarily suspended from group activities.
* If the complaint is not of a criminal nature, then it may be possible to resolve the issue internally by discussion or by making changes to the group / activity where the issue arose.

Thirdly, although u3a does not take responsibility for the welfare of members outside of u3a, the committee may become aware that a member has an external safeguarding problem. The most obvious example of this is if a member, suffering from dementia, becomes vulnerable and is not receiving appropriate support. In this case:

* A suitable member of the committee should, gently, discuss the issue with the member involved and perhaps suggest that it is time to seek appropriate help.
* If the member is resistant to advice and the problem is demonstrably serious, the committee could inform social services or the GP directly, but the member’s wishes, if they have capacity, should be respected.

Detailed advice on how to handle safeguarding issues can be found on this website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/abuse-and-neglect-vulnerable-adults/>