

Exeter U3A Safeguarding Policy

Exeter U3A recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of Members when taking part in its activities. This Policy Document provides advice to all Members.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and Exeter U3A is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of its Members. All Members should show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of others and conduct themselves in a way which reflects the Principles of the U3A.

Exeter U3A follows the Third Age Trust governing body policy of providing opportunity to all its Members and potential Members, All reasonable efforts will be made to facilitate Membership for vulnerable adults who wish to become Members. If required, Membership of Exeter U3A will be extended to carers not meeting U3A criteria.

The key principles of the policy are:

- The welfare of a vulnerable adult is paramount to any other consideration.
- All participants, regardless of age, gender, disability, race, faith, culture, size, language, sexuality or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse or harm.
- All allegations or suspicions of abuse, neglect, harm and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly fairly and appropriately.
- U3A events and activities will follow and adhere to the National U3A's policy guidelines

Exeter U3A recognises that Members have a right to participate in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment whilst at the same time being protected from abuse, neglect, harm and poor practice. Exeter U3A also recognises that this is the responsibility of all Members.

An adult at risk of abuse or neglect is an adult who:

- has care and support needs e.g. is elderly and frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment,
- or someone with a learning disability
- or has a physical disability,
- or mental health needs including dementia,
- or a person who misuses substances or alcohol);

and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Exeter U3A has appointed a Safeguarding Lead (SL) to deal with any issues which are covered by this policy. This is currently **Harry Ellis tel: 01626 862858** This

named person is accountable for overseeing and ensuring that safeguarding incidents are responded to in a timely manner and escalated to the appropriate authorities, as required.

The Safeguarding Lead has responsibility for receiving allegations where there is a concern for the welfare of an adult at risk or where an allegation has been made against a representative of U3A Exeter. Accordingly, the SL is responsible for centrally recording information relating to concerns

If any Member witnesses or is aware of any incident where there is concern that the welfare of another Member has been put at risk, this should be reported immediately and in confidence to the Group Convenor or the SL. This will lead to a formal investigation.

The Procedure

If you receive a disclosure it is important to reassure the adult at risk that what s/he says will be taken seriously and everything possible will be done to help. Then **report to the SL without delay.**

The complainant, the person to whom the complaint was reported and the SL will meet as soon as possible to discuss how best to proceed:

If the complaint is about an issue arising within the group e.g. a personality clash or a failure in the working of the group, this may be dealt with informally within the group. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, the matter will be taken to the Committee.

If the complaint is deemed to be more serious i.e. if an adult is considered to be at risk of abuse or neglect it should be for the SL and the complainant to decide jointly to consult with the National Office how to proceed. The SL will further notify the designated committee Safeguarding member. This is currently Anne Staley.

If the complaint is against the Chair, then the Vice Chair will take over the role of the Chair.

If there is a clear breach of the law e.g, financial abuse, racial abuse, physical abuse etc it will be for the SL to consult with the Police or other external agencies.

At the conclusion of the matter, the complainant will be informed of the outcome.

Exeter U3A will ensure that all its Members comply with all the guidelines and best practice issued by the U3A.

There is further advice on the U3A National website.

