

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.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Safeguarding is a term used to denote measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow vulnerable people to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. A vulnerable person in this context is an adult at risk, as defined in the Key Definitions in Appendix 1.

Within the context of the u3a movement, safeguarding issues are most likely to involve one or more of the following:

- a) *Psychological abuse*, which includes bullying and verbal abuse, humiliation, blaming, intimidation, coercion, harassment, threat of physical abuse.
- b) *Discriminatory abuse*, including forms of harassment because of race, gender and gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

While Safeguarding in the wider context also includes Physical Harm or Violence and Neglect, these are less likely to occur in a u3a setting.

This Policy is written to enable the Committee to act appropriately where instances or allegations of abuse come to their attention. **The scope of this policy and the following procedure is limited to instances which are connected with activities taking place under the auspices of Fordingbridge & District u3a.**

If there is any suspicion that abuse, harm or neglect of a Fordingbridge & District u3a member is taking place outside a u3a setting, then this must be reported to an appropriate statutory body (e.g., Police or Social Services). The Committee of Fordingbridge & District u3a has no authority or experience to handle such safeguarding issues.

Fordingbridge & District u3a recognises that vulnerable people are potentially at risk of abuse that may occur at a General Members' Meeting, during a Group Meeting, on a u3aaranged Trip, or during other Fordingbridge & District u3a activities.

Fordingbridge & District u3a will neither condone nor tolerate any form of abuse of or by its members, and believes that all people should be able and, where necessary enabled, to participate in u3a activities in an environment which is safe and supportive.

In all situations, Fordingbridge & District u3a believes that everyone is entitled to:

- privacy
- be treated with dignity and respect
- the protection of the law
- have their human and civil rights upheld regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, religious or cultural background.

## PROCEDURE

This procedure is limited to instances of abuse which occur within the context of activities undertaken under the auspices and with the authority of Fordingbridge & District u3a.

1. The Fordingbridge & District u3a Committee will appoint one of its members to be responsible for Safeguarding issues as Safeguarding Officer. This may be the chairman or another member, preferably with experience in this field.
2. Fordingbridge & District u3a recognises that it has a responsibility to ensure that its Committee, Group Leaders and Trip Organisers understand this Safeguarding policy.
3. Fordingbridge & District u3a will support the alleged victims of any abuse occurring in a Fordingbridge & District u3a setting, as well as any other person who becomes aware of and reports or witnesses the abuse.
4. While Fordingbridge & District u3a will make every effort to respect the confidentiality of any information that is disclosed under this Policy and Procedure, this cannot be guaranteed in serious cases of abuse or harm. Information will be recorded and stored in a secure place and with limited access in accordance with GDPR 2018 by the Safeguarding Officer. However, 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 health
  - other u3a members
  - the community at largeor to prevent or to facilitate the investigation of a serious crime.
5. Fordingbridge & District u3a will monitor the implementation of this policy and procedure through its Committee. This Policy, Procedure and Reporting forms will be reviewed every 2 years from their date of adoption.

## Reporting of Safeguarding Issues by Fordingbridge & District u3a Members

1. If any member of the Fordingbridge & District u3a is subject to abuse from another u3a member, or becomes aware of possible or actual abuse occurring in a u3a setting, they should report this to a Committee member as soon as possible. The member will record this on the Safeguarding Adult Disclosure/Suspicion Report (SSR1) form at the end of this procedure. This should be submitted to the Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible, together with any written record or email from the person making the original report.

2. While some cases of possible abuse might be best handled by a Group Organiser, Trips Organiser or member of the Committee (if present), provided of course that one of these people is not directly involved, it is important that any allegation is treated seriously and reported to the Committee.
3. In the extreme but unlikely case of the safety of a vulnerable person being of concern, their safety should be secured as a first priority. However, this may require involving the Police, since no u3a member should put themselves in a dangerous or violent situation.

4. **If anyone reports abuse to you, or you witness abuse:**

**Do:**

- Stay calm and try not to show shock or disbelief
- Listen carefully to what they are saying
- Be sympathetic (“I’m sorry that this has happened to you”)
- Always separate factual information from your own and others’ opinions
- 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 support them
- Report the disclosure to the Committee with as much detail as possible, including if possible:
  - What people actually said, using their own words and phrases
  - The circumstances in which the disclosure came about
  - The setting and anyone else who was there at the time of the abuse or the disclosure

**Do Not:**

- Press the person for more details; this will be done at a later date
- Stop someone who is freely recalling significant events (Don’t say ‘hold on, we’ll come back to that later’; they may not tell you or anybody else again)
- Do not promise to keep secrets; you cannot keep this kind of information to yourself
- 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

## Course of Action for the Committee

- Once a member of the Committee has created the SSR1 form this shall be passed to the Committee member responsible for Safeguarding as soon as possible.
- In the case of abuse unlikely to be referred to a statutory body (e.g., bullying, verbal intimidation), the Committee may decide to review the case itself, and will request the abused person, the alleged abuser, the person reporting the abuse and any witnesses, to appear separately and confidentially before two members of the Committee.  
  
If the alleged abuser refuses to appear before members of the committee, action will be taken using the Fordingbridge & District u3a Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- If, to the satisfaction of the Committee, a Fordingbridge & District u3a member is shown to have perpetrated abuse in a u3a setting, then the Committee reserves the right to ban the perpetrator from all Fordingbridge & District u3a activities, in line with the Fordingbridge & District u3a Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. However, for cases of minor abuse, counselling and other forms of interpersonal management will be offered if at all possible.
- In the case of abuse likely to be referred to a statutory body the SSR1 form will be referred to the Advice and Volunteer Manager at the Third Age Trust National Office for guidance before reaching the Committee decision which shall be recorded on the SSR1 form.
- 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 on form SSR1
- 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.
- Completed SSR1s will be held by the designated Committee member in a secure place and with limited access for a minimum of 2 years from the date of the last completed SSR1 on the adult-at-risk.
- Confidentiality is adhered to at all times; therefore, the contents of the form will not be provided to any external third parties, other than an appropriate statutory body (e.g., Police or Social Services), if they have been informed.

## CONFIDENTIAL

### SAFEGUARDING ADULT DISCLOSURE/SUSPICION RECORDING REPORT (SSR1)

Name of Adult-at-risk:			
Home address with Post Code:			
Disclosure/Suspicion Date and Time:		Location of Disclosure/Suspicion:	
Who Received? Disclosure/Had Suspicion:			
Type of Alleged Abuse:		Location of Alleged Abuse:	
Description of Alleged Abuse			
Name of Person Reporting:		Member/Group Organiser <i>(delete as appropriate)</i>	
Signature:		Date & Time:	
Name of Committee Member informed:			
Position:		Date & Time:	
<b>For Committee Use</b>			
Committee decision:			
No further action/ Referral on <i>(delete as appropriate)</i> Date			
Reason for Decision:			
Date Record to be Destroyed:			
Chairman's Signature:		Date	

*Information contained in this document should only be used for the purposes of implementing and monitoring Fordingbridge & District u3a's Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures and service monitoring. The information must not be copied, transmitted or in any way divulged without the permission of Fordingbridge & District u3a*

## Appendix 1. KEY DEFINITIONS

### 1. *Adult-at-risk:*

is any person, who is over 18 years of age and, is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or neglect, *while engaged in activities connected with Fordingbridge & District u3a* and is unable to protect him or herself against the abuse or neglect or risk of it.

### 2. *Abuse:*

is 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”

### 3. *Types of abuse:*

- a) *Physical abuse* – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- b) *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.
- c) *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.
- d) *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, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- e) *Discriminatory abuse* – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

## Appendix 2. RECOMMENDED AGENCIES

Local Authority Social Services, Police, Medical Services, etc.

**Action on Elder Abuse (AEA)** is a charity that provides confidential support and advice for older people who have been abused or people who know an older person who may be suffering abuse. Helpline available weekdays 9am - 5pm on freephone 0808 808 8141 or email [enquiries@elderabuse.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@elderabuse.org.uk)