



Wells u3a. Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Policy statement

This Policy and Procedure is written to enable Wells u3a committee to address issues where there are safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding against abuse or neglect includes both incidents between members and anything that a member may be experiencing outside the u3a, eg in the home of a carer, family member or friend.

Wells u3a has a duty of care to its members but does not hold any statutory authority.

Where abuse or neglect is suspected Wells u3a will aim to respond to the situation in a way that is caring, effective and enabling.

Wells u3a recognises that there are various forms of abuse and neglect which can be perpetrated by volunteers, members, relatives, friends and neighbours. Wells 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.

Wells 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 Wells 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 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 Wells u3a to take the lead role in any Safeguarding Enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014, but should refer this to Advice and Volunteer Manager in National Office who will contact the appropriate local authority.

Procedure

1. Wells u3a recognises that it has a responsibility to ensure that its committee members and group leaders understand this policy.

2. Wells 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 others at risk.
3. While Wells 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 2019 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

Course of Action

- If the Committee becomes aware of possible or actual abuse or neglect concerning a Wells u3a member, it should ensure that the safety of the person 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 details of the abuse and advise the rest of the Committee. If thought necessary either the Chair or an Officer should seek further guidance from the Advice and Volunteer Manager at National Office who will provide further assistance.
- 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 risk 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 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.
- A risk assessment should be developed as soon as possible.

- In developing the risk assessment, the committee will consider the level of risk and the action that needs to be taken accordingly.
Assessment of risk will include:
 - Risk to the individual member
 - Risk to other members within the u3a
 - Reputational risk for the individual u3a and the u3a movement as a whole
- Once the risk assessment is completed, the committee will decide as to the most appropriate course of action. This could include excluding members from certain groups, eg. groups held in peoples homes or excluding a member from a group run by a particular group leader.
- Depending on the nature of the allegation it may be necessary to pursue the incident following the u3a's complaints, disciplinary or grievance procedure.
- All actions taken will be recorded. Any records will remain confidential unless a prior decision has been taken to share the record with the relevant statutory bodies.

This policy was adopted on:

Signed:_____ Committee role_____

Policy review date: December 2021

This policy was adopted on 23/11/2020 and revised on 13/03/2023. It will be reviewed in March 2025.

Reference Document: Legitimate Interest Assessment: Membership

Dealing with Disclosure

If someone discloses a safeguarding concern to you:

Do

- Stay calm and try not to show shock or disbelief.
- Listen carefully to what they are saying.
- Be sympathetic.
- 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 after seeking consent from the member.

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).
- 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).
- Make contact with the alleged abuser unless they are also a u3a member and it is necessary to do so to safeguard other members and/or the alleged abuser.
- Be judgemental.
- Pass on the information other than to those with a legitimate need-to-know under this policy and procedure.

Record of the Disclosure

- 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 disclosure.
- Separate factual information from your own and others' opinions.
- Use pen or biro with black ink so that the report can be photocopied if needed.
- And be aware that your report may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure.

Key Definitions

Adult at risk

is any person, who is over 18 yrs of age, who has need of care and support, and is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, abuse or neglect, and is, as a result, unable to protect themselves.

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, as an act of neglect or failure to act"

Types of abuse

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

Domestic violence – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse

Sexual abuse – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking, 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, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of 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 abuse, 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 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 health, care 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 such as neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Recommended agencies:

Adult Safeguarding Team

Social Services.

GP Surgery.

Police.

Victim Support

Women's Aid

Action on Elder Abuse (AEA), now known as Hourglass, is a confidential support and advice for older people who have been abused or people who know an older person who may be suffering abuse.

Available weekdays 9 - 5 on freephone 0808 808 8141.

Email: www.wearehourglass.org