

## Winchcombe Area u3a

### Safeguarding Policy

Winchcombe u3a wishes all our members to enjoy our u3a activities in a safe, tolerant, and caring environment. We have therefore adopted this Policy so that members, group leaders and the Committee can ensure the safety and wellbeing of all our members whilst they are engaged in any of our u3a activities.

We recognise that abuse or neglect of any member may take place during any of our group activities. However, members and group leaders should not assume they have any personal responsibility for such concerns. Instead, they should promptly bring any such concerns to the attention of the Safeguarding Officer and the Committee.

Whenever we receive information about an issue concerning abuse or neglect of a member, we will quickly assess the nature, quality, and extent of the complaint.

If the complaint arises from activities which are outside the scope or authority of the u3a, involving for example a person, agency, institution, or organisation unconnected with the u3a, we cannot however investigate the matter further, but will seek to advise the member of agencies that may assist, such as charities, local agencies, medical and social services, or the police.

If the complaint involves a disciplinary or administrative matter only, the Safeguarding Policy will not be applied, but alternative rules of the u3a may be applied in its place.

Within the scope of the u3a however, we will not allow or permit abuse, neglect or behaviour which disrespects the civil and human rights of our members, or exposes them to an unsafe situation.

We acknowledge that:

**Abuse** towards members may arise in all manner of situations, and may include many forms. Examples may include, but is not limited to, physical and bullying behaviour, mental or psychological abuse or coercive power, domestic violence, financial coercion, all manner of discriminatory abuse, and other forms of abusive power.

**Neglect** may also take place during u3a activities and may involve a failure to meet the basic needs of a member. So, for example, amongst many types of neglect there may be issues concerning: medical or health care, nutrition, personal hygiene, clothing and shelter, or necessary and appropriate supervision, or other similar issues.

In our approach to all such situations, Winchcombe Area u3a recognises that members are entitled to personal privacy and to be treated with dignity and respect. We acknowledge that members are entitled to lead an independent life and to have a free choice about how they live their lives under the protection of the law, and with their human and civil rights upheld, regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment, or disability, religious or cultural background.

Winchcombe u3a however, will not undertake any detailed investigation or enquiry about any safeguarding issue which goes beyond the scope of u3a activity, or wherever we feel that we have an imperfect understanding of the scope or origins of the complaint made to us. In such a case we may wish to refer the matter to a more appropriate authority.

Safeguarding issues, such as outlined above, will primarily be the responsibility of the **Safeguarding Officer**, who should be approached by members or group leaders with any concerns.

The Safeguarding Officer will be assisted by the Committee (and exceptionally in serious cases, by the National u3a Office). The Safeguarding Officer and Committee will assess the risks posed to any member, or to the wider interests of Winchcombe Area u3a, or to the u3a movement as a whole, from any of the matters disclosed to them.

So far as we can properly do so, within the rules of the u3a and the law, the Safeguarding Officer and the Committee will always maintain confidentiality. We will seek to resolve issues promptly, and wherever possible with the consent of the members concerned.

The Safeguarding Officer, in accordance with national guidelines, will be required to keep a confidential record of any safeguarding complaint, together with any action that may have been taken in response to it. That record will not be disclosed to any third parties.

Actions that may be taken by the committee on safeguarding issues, could include for example: excluding members from certain groups, i.e., groups held in people's homes; requesting that a member attends the u3a with a carer; or excluding a member from a group run by a particular group leader.

In extreme cases, and with the advice and approval of the National u3a Office, a member could be excluded entirely from Winchcombe Area u3a on a safeguarding issue, or alternatively, Winchcombe Area u3a could invoke its disciplinary procedures.

In pursuance of this Policy, the committee will approve and adopt standing rules for the duties and responsibilities of the Safeguarding Officer, and for any other necessary procedures, to give full effect to the aims set out above in this Policy.

This Policy was adopted by the Committee on .....

Signed by the Chairman.....

The Policy will be reviewed on .....