

SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

u3a Policies and Procedures

1 Introduction

This policy is intended to be read in conjunction with other Policy documents from Witney u3a, including those relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Data Protection.

2. Policy Statement

This policy and subsequent procedure are written to enable the Committee to address issues where there are safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding includes incidents and concerns between members.

Witney u3a Committee has a duty of care to its members, but does not hold any statutory authority. Matters of concern will be reported to the relevant safeguarding authorities and charity regulatory authorities, as appropriate.

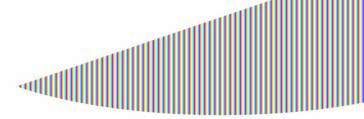
Witney u3a recognises that some people are potentially at risk of abuse and neglect. Where abuse or neglect is suspected, Witney u3a will aim to respond in a prompt and efficient manner to any situation where there is a risk of or perceived risk of harm.

Witney u3a recognises that there are various forms of abuse which can be perpetrated by volunteers and members. Witney 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 and free from harm.

It is not appropriate for Witney u3a to take the lead role in any Safeguarding Enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014. Where there are serious concerns regarding abuse or neglect, Witney u3a Committee will seek advice and support from the Trust, where possible, and will contact the relevant statutory authorities, as needed.

In following the safeguarding procedure Witney u3a will strive to uphold the principles that those involved in incidents are entitled to:

- privacy
- to be treated with dignity and respect
- to lead an independent life and to be enabled to do so



- choose how they live their lives
- the protection of the law
- have their human and civil rights upheld regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religious or cultural background.

Witney u3a will also follow the principles enshrined within the Care Act 2014:

- **Principle 1 – Empowerment** – whereby the approach is focused on the individual making their own decision and gaining informed consent, where possible.
- **Principle 2 – Prevention** – seeking to take steps to prevent issues from arising or escalating.
- **Principle 3 – Proportionality** – responding in a proportionate way to the issue/s being presented.
- **Principle 4 – Protection** – seeking to keep the membership safe and protection for those deemed to be at risk.
- **Principle 5 – Partnership** – reporting incidents to the relevant statutory bodies and liaising with the Trust.
- **Principle 6 – Accountability** – accurate recording of incidents. Reporting incidents, as required, to the Trust and relevant regulatory authorities.

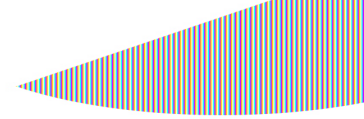
3. Procedure

Witney u3a has a responsibility to ensure that its Committee members and group leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Depending on the nature of the allegation and the identified risk, Witney u3a will support the alleged victims and the alleged perpetrators of any abuse, as well as any volunteer who becomes aware of an allegation in so far as this does not compromise any safeguarding enquiry or investigation into the allegation or place other adults at risk.

Witney u3a will make every effort to respect the confidentiality of any information that is disclosed under this policy and procedure, however due to the seriousness of allegations confidentiality is not absolute. Information will be recorded and stored securely in accordance with Data Protection Act 2018 but information may have to be shared, on a 'need-to-know' basis only, to prevent:

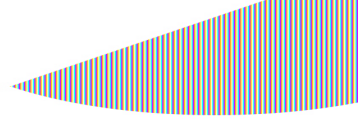
- Danger to a person's life
- Danger to a person's health
- Danger to others



- Danger to the community
- or to prevent or to facilitate the investigation of a serious crime

3.1 Courses of action

- Witney u3a through its Committee, Group Leaders and Volunteers will remain alert to all activities and behaviours which could act to the detriment of, or lead to the placement of a member (or members) at an unreasonable risk. This would include, but not be restricted to, aggression, sexual advances, harrasment and discrimination, which may occur in both face to face and all electronic media settings.
- Where the committee becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, steps will be taken, as needed, to ensure the safety of the at risk adult/s, as a first priority. The steps to take to address this will be discussed and agreed between the Committee in the first instance. No Committee member will act in isolation when dealing with a safeguarding concern.
- Where Witney u3a Committee becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, the first step will be to gather as much information as possible to assist with the decision as to the next steps. A risk assessment will be developed and recorded as soon as possible after the concern comes to the attention of the committee. Where it is deemed that the risk is high and immediate action needs to be taken, the committee will contact the relevant local authorities and – where possible – the Trust for advice and support.
- 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
- Where the risk is not deemed to be high but support is needed, Witney u3a will contact the Trust to discuss the concerns and seek additional assistance in developing the risk assessment. Assistance will always be sought before moving to exclude any member from the u3a on the basis of a safeguarding risk assessment.
- 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 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.



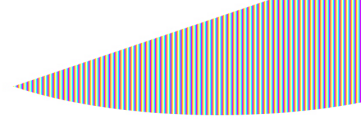
- Depending on the nature of the allegation it may be necessary to pursue the incident following Witney u3a's established procedures. Where it is decided that this is the best course of action, the matter will not be investigated by any party that was privy to the initial reporting of the incident.
- All actions taken will be recorded. Any records will remain confidential to the Committee unless a prior decision has been taken to share the record with the relevant statutory bodies.

This policy was adopted on:

Signed: _____ Committee role _____

Print name:

Policy review date:



u3a	The Third Age Trust Knowledge Management System
Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Sample – u3a-KMS-POL-005	18/11/2021