

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

It is the right of everyone to be able to live their lives free from abuse, harm, neglect, and to have assured their health, well-being, and human rights. Everybody has different levels of vulnerability, and each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time. Safeguarding is the process by which communities and organisations seek to exercise their Duty of Care to protect all individuals in this context.

West Wolds U3A (WWu3a) recognises that, following the principles of the U3A UK movement, it has a duty of care to its members and stands fully committed to Safeguarding the wellbeing of those members. This policy will enable the membership to understand their valuable role in the Safeguarding process, and to assist the Committee to take appropriate action quickly and effectively, should the need arise.

1. What are the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect?

Abuse may be inflicted by anyone that the member comes into contact with. There are many signs and indicators that may suggest abuse or neglect including:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention for an injury
- Non-attendance at interest groups without reason and no response to reminders from group leaders or other members.
- Significant loss or gain of weight and/or an unkempt appearance.
- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a member, where they become quiet and withdrawn, or lash out in anger.
- A member showing fear of a particular group or individual.
- A member who sends unwanted sexually explicit text messages to a vulnerable member
- Threats of physical harm and bullying, or intentional striking of another member.

Additionally, a member may report they are being abused.

WWu3a 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 with relevant authorities 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
- To facilitate the investigation of a serious crime

2. Courses of action

- Where the committee becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, steps will be taken, as needed, to ensure the safety of adult/s at risk is secured as a priority. The steps to take to address this will be discussed and agreed between the Senior Officers of the committee in the first instance. No

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

committee member will act in isolation when dealing with a safeguarding concern. The steps taken should be documented and stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

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”).
- 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 your safeguarding policy and procedure.

Do not:

- Press the person for more details if they are not comfortable sharing.
- 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 have a duty of care to raise safeguarding concerns.
- Make promises you cannot keep such as “this will never happen to you again”.
- Contact the alleged abuser unless they are also a u3a member and it is necessary to do so to safeguard other members.
- Be judgemental.
- Pass on the information other than to those with a legitimate ‘need-to-know’ under your safeguarding policy and procedure.

3. Record a safeguarding concern

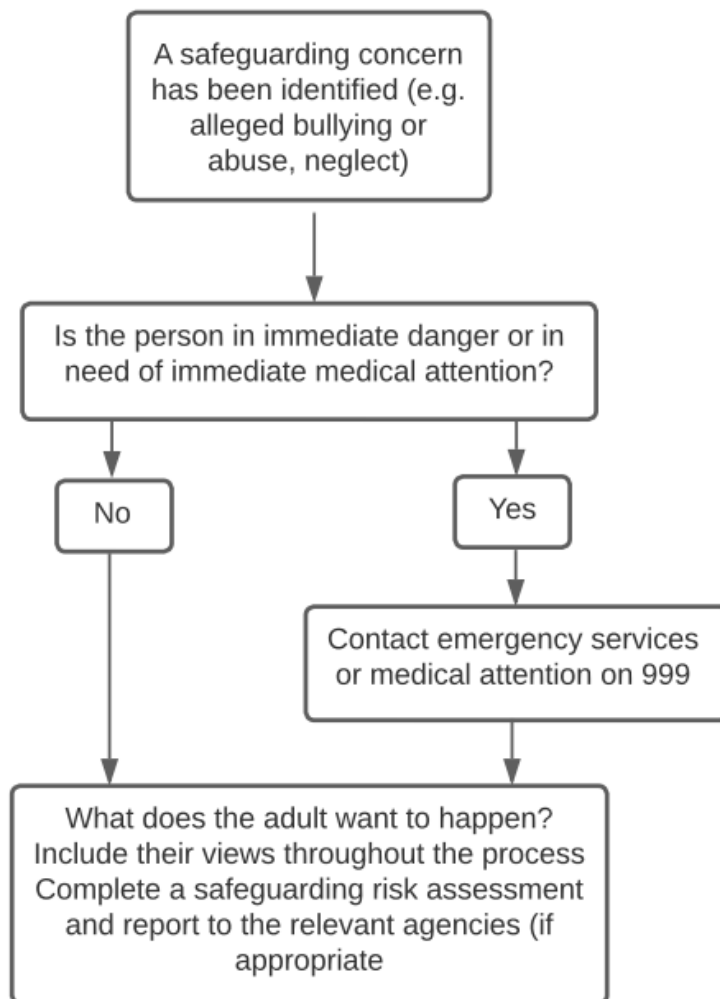
- Note what people actually said, using their own words and phrases.
- Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.
- Note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time of the disclosure.
- Separate factual information from your own and others’ opinions.
- Use pen or biro with black ink so that the report can be photocopied if needed.
- Be aware that your report may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure.
- 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.
- 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.
- Where the risk is not deemed to be high but support is needed, WWu3a will contact the Trust to discuss the concerns and seek additional assistance in

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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 WWu3a's complaints procedure. 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

SAFEGUARDING POLICY



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Agencies that may be useful

Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board - Isab@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Age UK 0800 678 1602 www.ageuk.org.uk Age Uk Lincolnshire 0345 556 4144

Support Line – confidential emotional telephone support – 01708 765200 info@supportline.org.uk

Mind – Mental Health Support – 0300 123 3393

Samaritans – 24-hour helpline 116 123

Police non-emergency 24-hour helpline 101

Hourglass 0808 808 8141 24 Hours

Victim Support – 0808 168 9111 victimsupport.org.uk

Support for Survivors – 0115 962 2722 hello@supportforsurvivors.org

National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247 www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Lincolnshire County Council Safeguarding Team 01522 782155 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) or 01522 782333 (outside office hours)

Version	Description of Changes	Date
5	Contact Numbers amended	March 2026