



Ross & District u3a Safeguarding Policy & Procedures

Prepared by	The Beacon Administrator & Business Secretary
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By	William Lyons Chair
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OVERVIEW : SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

It is a legal requirement of all the Charity Commissions that **all u3as (and other charities) must have a safeguarding policy in place to protect their members.**

1. What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means acting in a way to protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of adults and children to live in safety, free of abuse and neglect. Neglect includes self-neglect.

- All u3a members have a responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns to their committee.
- All u3a committee members have an obligation to follow their safeguarding policy and procedure if they suspect that a member is at risk of abuse.

Abuse can happen face to face as well as electronically and via social media. It can take place in peoples' homes and within families and institutions, including care homes, care agencies, statutory and voluntary organisations and hospitals.

Types of abuse include:- (from Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board website)

- **Physical abuse** - including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions
- **Domestic violence** - including psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse
- **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
- **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** - including human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude
- **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
- **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 neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

It is abuse whether or not it is intentional.

The signs and indicators of abuse and neglect might include:-

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention for an injury.
- Unexpected absence from their normal 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 and/or actual physical harm and bullying, or intentional striking of another member.
- A member may report they are being abused – i.e., a disclosure.
- A member expressing concern that they no longer have control over their finances.

2. What is the responsibility of members in safeguarding?

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and members must bring any safeguarding concerns they have to their committee (this can be via their group leader). Members should follow the u3a Code of Conduct (available on our website <https://ross.u3asite.uk> and not keep any concerns they have to themselves.

3. What is the responsibility of the committee in safeguarding?

All trustees must take reasonable steps to protect anyone who comes in contact with u3a from harm. Every trustee should have clear oversight of how safeguarding and protecting people from harm are managed within the u3a. Trustees must report all safeguarding concerns to the relevant safeguarding authorities promptly. Trustees should support those involved in safeguarding incidents but should not lead safeguarding investigations- this must be left to the authority to which it is referred (eg, social services).

Once a safeguarding concern has been raised, it should be referred on to the appropriate authority. Usually, this would be the local authority or social services in England, Scotland and Wales. In cases where the individuals involved are in immediate danger you should call 999. Additionally, **Hourglass (previously Action on Elder Abuse)** <https://>





www.wearehourglass.org offers 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 9am - 5pm on freephone 0808 808 8141.



The Policy

The following policy and procedures enable Ross & District u3a to respond to safeguarding concerns affecting their members either within or outside of u3a. They are in line with those issued by the Third Age Trust (TAT) 23rd May 2023.

Section 1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Ross & District u3a to safeguarding their members and to ensure that everyone involved in Ross & District u3a is aware of:

- The legislation, policy and procedures for safeguarding adults.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding adults.
- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult within Ross & District u3a.

This safeguarding policy and procedure apply to all individuals involved in Ross & District u3a, including the committee, group leaders and members taking part in u3a activities and in the wider community.

Section 2 Scope

Ross and District u3a's approach to safeguarding will include:

- Health concerns physical or mental that place members or others at risk
- Sexual advances
- Bullying, aggression or violent behaviour
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Financial and institutional abuse

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone either within, or acting on behalf of, Ross & District u3a - **doing nothing is not an option!**

Section 3 Safeguarding Commitments

In order to implement this policy, Ross & District u3a will ensure that all members will be aware of the safeguarding procedures and know who to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult.

Ross & District u3a committee has a duty of care to its members and is committed to upholding this safeguarding policy in order to protect its members.

Ross & District u3a recognises that some people are potentially at risk of abuse and neglect. Where abuse or neglect is suspected Ross & District 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.

Ross & District u3a does not hold any statutory authority. Matters of concern will be reported to the relevant safeguarding authorities and charity regulatory authorities, as appropriate. This may include Herefordshire Council's Safeguarding Adults Board, or the police in an emergency.

Where there are concerns for a member's wellbeing or safety, Ross & District u3a committee will complete a Safeguarding Risk Assessment form, seek advice and support from the Trust where necessary, and will contact the relevant statutory authorities as needed. It is not appropriate for Ross & District u3a to take the lead role in any Safeguarding Enquiry (under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 (England and Wales)).

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

Ross & District u3a will not 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.

Ross & District u3a will put the well-being of those at risk of harm first, and they will be actively supported to communicate their views and the outcomes they want to achieve. Those views and wishes will be respected and supported unless there are overriding reasons not to. Any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm.

A list of the types of safeguarding risks and harm can be found on the [England and Wales Charity Commission website, which is applicable generally.](#)

Ross & District u3a will monitor the implementation of this policy and procedure annually through its committee.

Ross & District u3a has a responsibility to ensure its committee members and group leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

The Ross & District u3a committee has a duty of care to its members but does not hold any statutory authority. It is not appropriate for Ross & District 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, Ross & District u3a's Safeguarding Team will seek advice and support from Third Age Trust (TAT), and will contact the relevant statutory authorities as needed. As far as possible, the wishes of the adult at risk will be respected as to whether to refer any concerns to Herefordshire

Council's Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) as a Safeguarding Enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014.

- 01432 260715 (weekdays 9am to 5pm)
- 0330 123 9309 (after 6pm, weekends and public holidays)

However, it may be necessary to override their wishes. It will be the responsibility of HSAB to notify any other statutory bodies.

The Ross & District u3a Safeguarding team comprises of

- The Chair
- The Business Secretary
- And one other member of the committee

Section 4 Principles

In following the Reporting Procedures (see section 5), Ross & District u3a will strive to uphold the general principles to which those involved in incidents are entitled:

- Privacy
- 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

In carrying out its duties Ross & District u3a will also follow the specific 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 to relevant regulatory authorities.

Section 5 Reporting Procedures – for Members

Members are advised to read: “Guidelines for Members Responding to and Reporting a Disclosure of Abuse”. These guidelines apply if any member is subject to abuse from another u3a member, or non-member, irrespective of where the abuse takes place.

Members should not keep any safeguarding concerns to themselves. In the first instance they should contact the Chair via the Safeguarding page on the website. The “Safeguarding Disclosure Reporting Form” should be completed at the same time, or as soon as possible thereafter. It should be passed to a Member of the Safeguarding Team or failing this to any Committee member.

It is not the responsibility of any one member of Ross & District u3a to decide whether abuse has taken place, consequently all cases of suspected or alleged abuse must be discussed with the Chair of Ross & District u3a promptly.

In a situation where the safety of a vulnerable person is of immediate concern, their safety should be secured as the first priority. This may need to involve the police, ambulance services and/or Herefordshire Council’s Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) on 01432 260715.

NO u3a member should put themselves in a dangerous or frightening situation.

Having received a report, the Chair will advise the other nominated Safeguarding Team members, and contact TAT to discuss the concerns, seek additional assistance in developing the risk assessment, and agree a plan of action. The plan of action will depend on the nature of the allegation and the identified risk, and will include any immediate action to keep people safe.

The following documents/forms relating to Safeguarding can be found on our website under Safeguarding. <https://ross.u3asite.uk>

- 8/24 Guidelines for Members Responding to and Reporting a Disclosure of Abuse
- 8/24 SG Disclosure Reporting Form

SG = Safeguarding



Section 6 Procedure – for Committee

Introduction

Depending on the nature of the allegation and the identified risk, Ross & District 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.

Ross & District 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 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

Courses of action

- Ross & District u3a's approach to safeguarding will include members who exhibit health concerns that could put themselves or others at risk, convictions (previous or pending) that include offences of a sexual or violent nature, inappropriate behaviour exhibited by a member including sexual advances, bullying, aggression or violent behaviour, harassment and/or discrimination. This can include behaviour exhibited face to face as well as electronic communications or via social media platforms.
- 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 Executive Officers of the committee in the first instance. No 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.
- Where Ross & District 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 authorities and the Trust for advice and support.
- 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, section 4 of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007), and according to the Northern Ireland Charity Commission guidelines. However, it may be necessary to override their wishes in the best interests of other adults at risk.
- 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, Ross & District 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.
- The Safeguarding Team Action Plan and Decision Making Prior to Closure form will be completed at this point. The decision will be based on the outcome of the actions identified in the action plan and will be an agreement about what else needs to be done before Ross & District u3a can consider the matter closed.
- Depending on the nature of the allegation it may be necessary to pursue the incident following Ross & District u3a's complaints or disciplinary 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.

The following documents/forms relating to Safeguarding can be found on our website under Safeguarding. <https://ross.u3asite.uk>

- 8.24 Good Practice Guidelines for the SG Team (SG = Safeguarding)
- 8.24 SG Disclosure Reporting Form
- 8.24 SG RA Form (RA = risk assessment)
- 8.24 Safeguarding team Action Plan + Decision Making Prior to Closure Form