



## **SAFEGUARDING GUIDANCE**

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## **1 What is Safeguarding?**

“Safeguarding” refers to measures designed to protect the health, wellbeing, and human rights of individuals.

- All u3a members have a responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns to the Executive<sup>1</sup>.
- All u3a Executive members have an obligation to follow their safeguarding policy and procedure if they suspect that a member is at risk of abuse.

## **2 What are some examples of where safeguarding procedures may be activated?**

- A member controlling the finances of a visually impaired member.
- A member arriving at an outdoor-based group without appropriate clothing and seemingly confused.
- A member making advances towards another member with dementia.

## **3 What is the responsibility of members in safeguarding?**

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, and members must bring any safeguarding concerns they have to their Executive (this can be via their group leader). Members should follow their code of conduct and not keep any concerns they have to themselves.

## **4 What is the responsibility of the committee in safeguarding?**

All Trustees must take reasonable steps to protect anyone who comes in contact with York u3a from harm. Every trustee should have clear oversight of how safeguarding and protecting people from harm are managed within York 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 it is referred to (e.g., social services).

Once a safeguarding concern has been raised, it should be referred to the appropriate authority. Usually, this would be the local authority or social services. In cases where the individuals involved are in immediate danger you should call 999. Additionally, Hourglass (previous Action on Elder Abuse) <https://www.wearehourglass.org> 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 9am – 5pm on freephone 0808 808 8141.

## **5 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 of 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 unkempt appearance.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this policy, the Executive refers to the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a member, where they become quiet and withdrawn, or las 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 – i.e., a disclosure.

## **6 How do you deal with a disclosed safeguarding concern?**

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 (e.g., “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 and 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 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 casetfo raise safeguarding concerns
- Make promises you cannot keep (such as ‘This will never happen to you again’);
- Make contact with the alleged abuser before consulting a member of the Executive Committee unless he or she is 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.

## **7 How should you 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;
- And be aware that your report may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure.

## 8 What are the seven golden rules for information sharing?

1. **Remember that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is not a barrier to sharing information** but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
2. **Be open and honest** with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be, shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. **Seek advice** if you are in doubt, where possible without disclosing the identity of the person.
4. **Share with consent where appropriate** and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
5. **Consider safety and wellbeing:** base your information-sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. **Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure:** ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it; is shared only with those people who need to have it; is accurate and up to date; is shared in a timely fashion; and is shared securely.
7. **Keep a record** of your decision and the reasons for it – whether the decision is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose. Refer to the Risk Assessment and Threshold Tool for details on what / how to record an allegation / concern.

## 9 Key Definitions

### 9.1 Adult at risk

is any person, who is over 18 years of age and who has need for care and support, is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or risk of it.

### 9.2 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, exploitative, institutional, discriminatory or financial, or an act of neglect or failure to act.”

### 9.3 Types of abuse

- **Physical abuse** – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **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.
- **Exploitation** – either opportunistically or premediated, unfairly manipulating someone for profit or personal gain.
- **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.
- **Domestic abuse** – including forced marriage, other ‘honour-based violence’ and controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship.
- **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 through 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** – whilst not a form of it, is a sign of abuse; this covers a wide range of behaviour involving neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or