

Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Charnwood u3a, in accordance with the advice of the Charity Commission and the Third Age Trust, has adopted a policy which seeks:

- To welcome all potential members in their third age and:
- To safeguard all members from abuse while attending u3a meetings and events.

Key Principles

Charnwood u3a welcomes all members and potential members regardless of social standing, educational background, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. All reasonable efforts will be made to facilitate the membership and participation of the frail, vulnerable or disabled, including enabling them to be accompanied by a non-member carer, if appropriate.

Charnwood u3a will seek to prevent any prejudice, bullying or harassment of members at group meetings or other u3a events. Any difficulties in this area should be reported to a member of the Committee.

If an instance or an allegation of actual abuse or neglect of a vulnerable member is brought to the attention of another member, even if the abuse occurs outside the aegis of Charnwood u3a, it should be brought to the attention of the Committee, who will seek guidance as to whether and how the matter should be taken forward.

Charnwood u3a acknowledges its responsibility to review and monitor the implementation of the policy annually and to ensure that its Committee, its Group Leaders and other members understand and are reminded of the policy from time to time.

Policy Statement

This policy and procedure is written to enable the Charnwood u3a committee to address issues where there are safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding includes incidents between members, concerns about abuse or neglect that a u3a member may be experiencing outside of the u3a, health related issues or previous or pending criminal convictions.

Charnwood 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.

Charnwood u3a recognises that some people are potentially at risk of abuse and neglect. Where abuse or neglect is suspected Charnwood u3a will aim to respond in a prompt and

efficient manner to any situation where there is a risk or perceived risk of harm. Charnwood u3a recognises that there are various forms of abuse which can be perpetrated by volunteers, members, relatives, friends and neighbours. Charnwood u3a will neither condone nor tolerate any form of abuse or neglect and believes that all people should be able to and, where necessary, enabled to live in an environment which is safe and free from harm.

It is not appropriate for Charnwood 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 Charnwood u3a committee will seek advice and support from the Trust, where possible, and will contact the relevant statutory authorities, as needed. Charnwood u3a will monitor the implementation of this policy and procedure annually through its committee.

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

- privacy
- be treated with dignity and respect
- 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.

Charnwood 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.

Procedure

Charnwood 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, Charnwood 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.

Charnwood 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, on a 'need-to-know' basis only, to prevent:

- danger to a person's life
- danger to a person's health
- danger to other
- danger to the community
- or to prevent or to facilitate the investigation of a serious crime

Courses of action

Charnwood 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 exhibiting 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.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and members **must bring any safeguarding concerns they have to the Chair of the committee**. Members should follow their code of conduct and not keep any concerns they have to themselves.

Where the Chair becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, steps will be taken, as needed, to ensure the safety of the adult/s at risk is secured as a priority. The steps to take to address this will be discussed and agreed between the Chair and/or the Executive Officers of the committee in the first instance. No committee member will act in isolation when dealing with a safeguarding concern.

Where the Chair and/or Executive Officers of the committee become aware of a safeguarding concern, the first step is to gather as much information as possible to assist with the decision as to the next steps. The Chair will complete a risk assessment as soon as possible after the concern comes to their attention. Where it is deemed that the risk is high and immediate action needs to be taken, the Chair and/or Executive Officers of the committee will contact the relevant authorities and, where possible, 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. However, it may become necessary to override their wishes in the best interests of other adults at risk.

In completing the risk assessment, The Chair will consider the level of the 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.

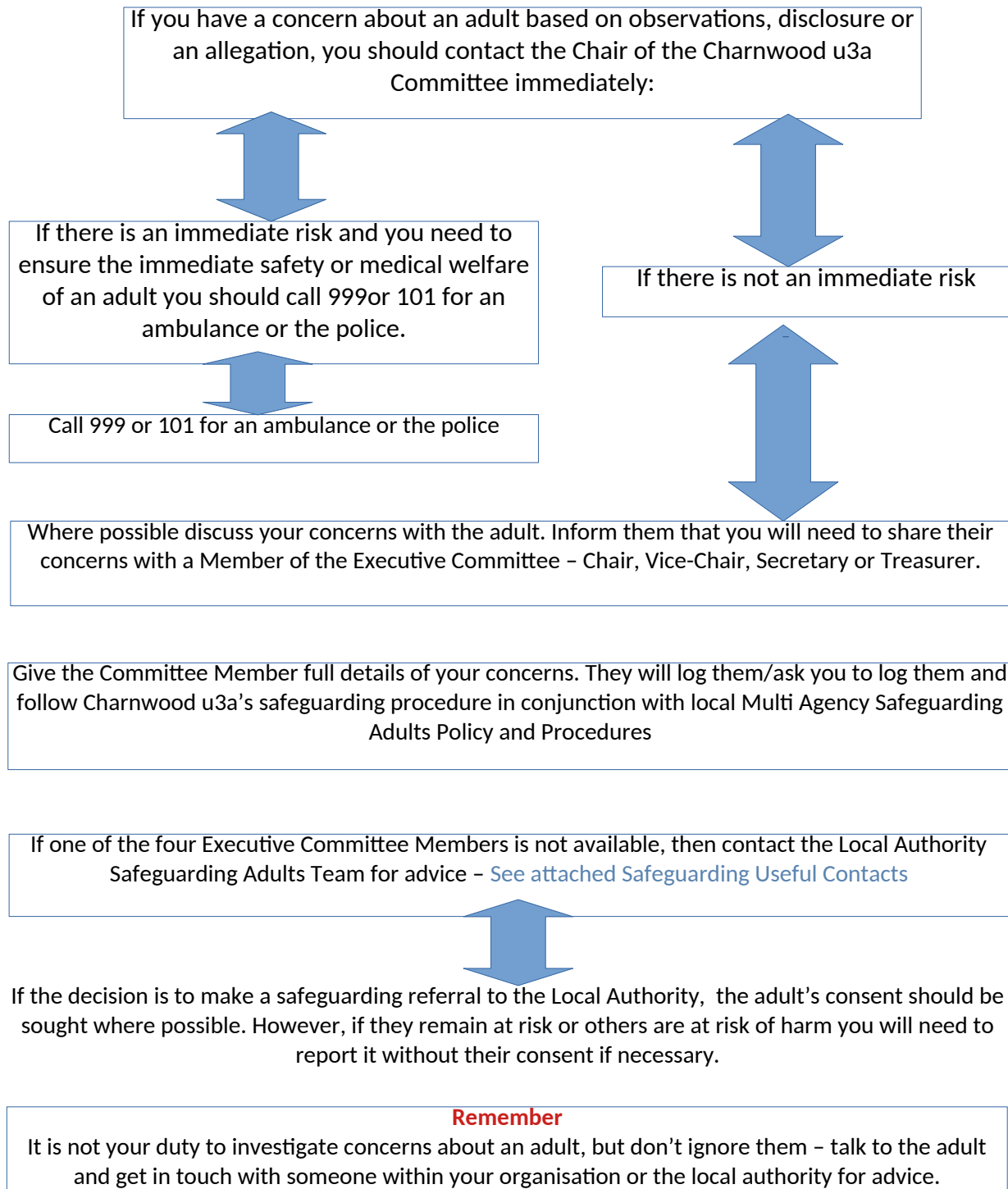
Where the risk is not deemed to be high but support is needed, Charnwood u3a will contact the Trust to discuss the concerns and seek additional assistance in completing the risk assessment. Assistance will always be sought before moving to exclude any member from the u3a on the basis of a safeguarding risk assessment.

Once the risk assessment is completed, the Chair and/or Executive Officers of 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 Charnwood u3a's complaints, disciplinary or grievance 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.

ADULT SAFEGUARDING - what to do if you have a concern about an adult.



Dealing with Disclosure

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.
- Be aware of the possibility that medical evidence might be needed.
- Tell the person that:
 - They did the right thing in telling you.
 - You are treating the information seriously.
 - You are going to inform the appropriate person/s.
 - You will take steps to protect and support them.
- Record and report the disclosure in line with the procedure.

Do not

- Press the person for more details; this will be done at a later date.
- Stop someone who is freely recalling significant events.
- Promise to keep secrets; you cannot keep this type of information to yourself.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Make contact with the alleged abuser unless they are 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.

Record of disclosure

In your record of disclosure you should aim to:

- 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.

Safeguarding Guidance

What are the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect?

Abuse may be inflicted by anyone that a 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 a 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 i.e. a disclosure.

Key Definitions

Adult at risk

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

Abuse

Physical abuse e.g. assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Domestic abuse e.g. psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional, so called 'honour' based violence.

Sexual abuse e.g. rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological abuse e.g. 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 e.g. 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 e.g. 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 e.g. forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse e.g. neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one-off incidents to ongoing 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 e.g. 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 e.g. neglecting to care for one's self, personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Recommended Agencies

This includes the Local Authority, Social Services, GP Surgery, Police etc.

The information below gives contact details for several agencies and organisations who will be able to provide information and support.

ADULT SAFEGUARDING – USEFUL CONTACTS

Please find below details of who to contact in an emergency.

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

Organisation	Contact Details
Police/Emergency Services	999/101
Third Age Trust	020 8466 6139 Mon-Fri 9.30am to 4.30pm

LOCAL CONTACT DETAILS

Organisation	Contact Details
Charnwood Borough Council	Adult Social Care 0116 305 0004 Adult Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) 0116 255 1606



CONTACT DETAILS

The following organisations offer specialist support and advice for specific areas of abuse.

Organisation	Contact Details
<i>Charity helping to prevent bullying</i>	
Bullying	
Bullying UK	0808 8002222
<i>A guide to internet safety</i>	
Internet Safety	
Think you know	0870 000 3344
<i>Advice on talking therapies including contact details of counsellors</i>	
Support	
<i>National Organisations</i>	
British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy	01455 883300 www.bacp.co.uk
Samaritans	0845 790 9090
Citizens Advice Bureau	0345 404 0506
Age UK	0800 678 1602
Action on Elder Abuse (AEA)	0808 808 8141 weekdays 9am-5pm

Charnwood u3a Safeguarding Policy and Procedure			
Version	Description of changes	Date of change	Review date
1.0	Original document	May 2020	December 2022
2.0	Updated and additional guidance added; added safeguarding flowchart; added emergency contact organisations and their contact numbers	27/03/2024	
3.0	Added Introduction and Key Principles	25/04/2024	