



Approved date	3 rd April 2023	Author	Richard Bedford	Issue
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1. Policy Statement

This policy and procedure is written to enable Stroud u3a to address issues where Safeguarding concerns may have been raised or identified.

Safeguarding includes adverse harmful incidents between members, members and the public, concerns regarding abuse or neglect that a u3a member could be experiencing either inside or outside of Stroud u3a, health related issues or about which there are previous or pending criminal convictions.

Stroud u3a Committee has a duty of care to its members but does not hold any statutory authority nor responsibilities. Where our risk assessment (see Procedure below) of any concern of which we, as a Committee become aware, guides us to do so, matters of concern will be reported to the relevant Safeguarding authorities and charity regulatory authorities, as appropriate.

Except in a situation where the Committee considers risk of significant harm to be ongoing or imminent, the committee will contact the Third Age Trust for advice before acting.

Neither individual members nor officers, nor group leaders of Stroud u3a have any specific responsibilities for Safeguarding and nor must any individual member act alone within Stroud u3a to address Safeguarding concerns.

However, as individual members of society, we all have a duty and responsibility towards our fellow citizens as regards the safety and well-being of others. Therefore, as members of Stroud u3a, we may find we have a concern, for example about a neighbour or a relative, which we have a duty to act upon (e.g., by reporting to Social Services or the Police). These individual and personal duties and responsibilities are not to be channelled through Stroud

u3a. Therefore, for a concern to be brought to the attention of, and acted upon by, the Stroud u3a Committee, it must have some linkage or relation to Stroud u3a activity.

OVER-RIDING PRINCIPLE

If you have a concern (or even just think you might have) please contact our Safeguarding Lead with whom you can discuss it in complete confidence. It will only be taken forward within Stroud u3a if both you and our Safeguarding Lead consider that to be the right way forward.

Our Safeguarding Lead (who will always be a member of our Executive Committee but not the Chair) will take the matter forward on your behalf with the Committee. This will not be something you will need to worry about although the Committee may contact you to ask for clarification and/or further information.

Our Safeguarding Lead is:	Richard Bedford (Vice-Chair)
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and they can be contacted on:	safeguarding@stroudu3a.org
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Incidents will not normally be progressed by the Committee unless they have come via the Safeguarding Lead. **If you have any concerns about the Safeguarding Lead then please contact the Stroud u3a Chair directly.**

If Safeguarding concerns are raised with other Committee members (including the Chair unless the concern is about the Safeguarding Lead) that Committee member should refer the person raising the concern to the Safeguarding Lead.

Further Information

Stroud u3a recognises that some people are potentially at risk of abuse and neglect. Where abuse or neglect is suspected in Stroud 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 and where it falls within the sphere of their activities.

Stroud u3a recognises that there are various forms of abuse which can be perpetrated or experienced by volunteers, members and others. Stroud 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 Stroud 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 Stroud u3a Committee will seek advice and support from the Third Age Trust, where possible, and will contact the relevant statutory authorities, as needed.

Stroud u3a Committee will review this policy and monitor the implementation of this policy and procedure annually, e.g., by being provided (anonymised) information by the Safeguarding Lead.

In following this Safeguarding procedure Stroud 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.

Stroud 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
- Principle 4 – Protection** – seeking to keep the membership safe and protection of those identified as being at risk.
- Principle 5 – Partnership** – reporting appropriate incidents to the relevant statutory bodies and liaising with the Third Age Trust
- Principle 6 – Accountability** – accurate recording of incidents. Reporting incidents, as required, to the Third Age Trust and relevant regulatory authorities.

2. Procedure

Stroud u3a has a responsibility to ensure that its committee members and group leaders understand what are, and just as importantly, what are not their safeguarding responsibilities.

Depending on the nature of the allegation and the identified risk, Stroud u3a will support the alleged victims and the alleged perpetrators of any abuse as well as any volunteer or member 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.

Stroud 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, but 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. Courses of Action

- **If you have a concern (or even just think you might have) please contact our Safeguarding Lead with whom you can discuss it in complete confidence. It will only be taken forward within Stroud u3a if both you and our Safeguarding Lead consider that to be the right way forward. An anonymised summary record of the conversation will be held by the Safeguarding Lead if it is not taken forward. A fuller record will be required to go to the Committee if the concern is taken forward.**
- Stroud 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 first 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.
- Where Stroud 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 Third Age Trust for advice and support.
- As far as possible, the adult (or adults) at risk's wishes will be respected. However, it may be necessary to override individual wishes in the best interests of others 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
 - Risk to any other persons
 - Reputational risk for Stroud u3a and for the u3a movement as a whole
- 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 chaperone or excluding a member from a group run by a particular group leader.
- Where it is deemed that the risk is high and immediate action needs to be taken, the Committee will refer the case to the Local Authority or Police - taking advice from the Third Age Trust only if time permits or in parallel with doing so.

- Where the risk is not deemed to be high but action is needed, Stroud u3a will contact the Third Age Trust to discuss the concerns and seek additional assistance in developing the risk assessment. Assistance of the Third Age Trust will normally be sought before referring a case to the Local Authority or Police and always before moving to exclude any member from the u3a on the basis of a Safeguarding risk assessment.
- Where the Committee deems that, having given due careful consideration, no action is appropriate or necessary. This decision will be fed back to the original contact (unless that would be inappropriate) via the Safeguarding Lead (or via the Chair if the concern was raised directly with and handled by them).
- Depending on the nature of the allegation it may be necessary to address the incident following Stroud u3a's complaints, disciplinary and/or grievance procedure. Where it is decided that this is the best course of action, under those procedures, 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 or they are subject to disclosure through legal due process.