

# The Cranleigh and District U3A Safeguarding Policy

## 1. Purpose

This policy and procedure is written to enable the Management Committee (the Committee) of The Cranleigh And District U3A (Cranleigh u3a) to address issues where there are safeguarding concerns. 'Safeguarding' refers to measures designed to protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of individuals. Safeguarding includes incidents between members, concerns regarding abuse or neglect that a u3a member may be experiencing outside of Cranleigh u3a, health related issues, or previous or pending criminal convictions.

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

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Cranleigh u3a to safeguarding its members and to ensure that everyone involved in Cranleigh 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 Cranleigh u3a.

## 2. Scope

This safeguarding policy and procedure applies to all individuals involved in Cranleigh u3a, including the Committee, group leaders and members, and to all concerns about the safety and wellbeing of members taking part in u3a activities.

## 3. Safeguarding commitments

In order to implement this policy, Cranleigh u3a will ensure that all members will be aware of the safeguarding procedures and know whom to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of a u3a member.

The Committee has a duty of care to its members and is committed to upholding this safeguarding policy in order to protect its members.

Cranleigh u3a recognises that some people are potentially at risk of abuse and neglect. Where abuse or neglect is suspected, Cranleigh u3a will aim to respond in a prompt and efficient manner to any situation where there is a risk, or a perceived risk, of harm.

Cranleigh 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 the local authority, the local multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), or the police in an emergency.

Where there are concerns for a member's wellbeing or safety, the principal officers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) of the Committee will complete a safeguarding risk assessment, seeking advice and support from the Third Age Trust (the Trust) where necessary, and will contact the relevant statutory authorities, as needed. It is **NOT** appropriate for Cranleigh u3a to take the lead role in any Safeguarding Enquiry (under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014).

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

Cranleigh u3a will put the wellbeing 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 against. 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.

When following the safeguarding procedure, Cranleigh u3a will strive to uphold the principles that those involved in incidents are entitled:

- to privacy;
- to be treated with dignity and respect;
- to lead an independent life and to be enabled to do so;
- to choose how they live their lives;
- to the protection of the law; and
- to have their human and civil rights upheld, regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religious or cultural background.

Cranleigh u3a will also follow the principles enshrined within the England and Wales Care Act 2014, which are:

**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 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 reporting of incidents; reporting incidents, as required, to the Trust and to relevant regulatory authorities.

## 4. Procedure

### 4.1 Introduction

Cranleigh u3a has a responsibility to ensure that Committee Members and Group Leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Depending on the nature of the allegation and the identified risk, Cranleigh u3a will seek to support all involved in any alleged abuse, in so far as this does not compromise any safeguarding enquiry, or investigation into the allegation, or place other adults at risk.

Cranleigh u3a will make every effort to respect the confidentiality of any information that is disclosed under this policy and procedure but, depending upon the seriousness of the allegation, 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

or to facilitate the investigation of a serious crime.

### 4.2 Courses of action

Cranleigh u3a's approach to safeguarding will include members who exhibit health concerns that could put themselves or others at risk, have convictions (previous or pending) that include offences of a sexual or violent nature, or inappropriate behaviour exhibited by a member, including sexual advances, bullying, aggression or violent behaviour, harassment and/or discrimination. This may include behaviour exhibited face to face, as well as by electronic communications, or via social media platforms.

Where the Committee becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, steps will be taken, as needed, to ensure that 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 principal officers of the Committee in the first instance. No Committee member will act in isolation when dealing with a safeguarding concern. The steps taken will be documented and stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Where the 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. It may be necessary, however, to override their wishes in the best interests of other adults at risk.

In developing the risk assessment, the principal officers will consider the level of risk and the action that needs to be taken accordingly. Assessment of the risk will include:

- risk to the individual member
- risk to other members within Cranleigh u3a
- reputational risk for Cranleigh u3a and the u3a movement as a whole.

Where the risk is not deemed to be high, but support is needed, Cranleigh 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 assessment.

Once the risk assessment is completed, the Committee will decide the most appropriate course of action. This could include excluding members from certain groups (e.g. 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 Cranleigh u3a's complaints procedure. Where it is decided 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.

### 4.3 Safeguarding Flowchart

