New Milton u3a

SAFEGUARDING GUIDANCE FOR GROUP LEADERS AND MEMBERS

1. INTRODUCTION

U3as have a duty of care to their members. New Milton u3a recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of members involved in our activities.

This document provides advice to Group Leaders in particular, but also specifies good practice guidelines to be followed by all members, because safeguarding is everybody's business.

We believe that all people should be able to live and learn in safe environments, therefore New Milton u3a will neither condone nor tolerate any form of abuse or neglect.

2. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- Abuse or neglect may be physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, financial or discriminatory and can include behaviour exhibited face to face or in writing, as well as electronic communications or via social media platforms.
- Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.
- Abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

3. DEFINITION OF SAFEGUARDING

- Safeguarding means protecting our members' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live their lives free from harm, abuse, neglect or discrimination.
- Safeguarding includes incidents between members, concerns regarding abuse or neglect that a u3a member may be experiencing outside of the u3a, health-related issues or previous or pending criminal convictions.

4. DISCLOSURE

Disclosure may come either directly from a recipient of abuse or from a third party who has either observed, or suspects, that abuse has occurred. All cases should be treated seriously and **confidentially** from the outset.

Any suspicion of abuse should be reported promptly and in confidence to the Committee (see item 7 below).

If there is an **IMMEDIATE** risk to safety or medical welfare then the emergency services should be called.

If a Group Leader becomes aware that a member exhibits health concerns that could put themselves or others at risk, they should inform the Committee - see item 7 below.

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5. RECORDING OF ANY DISCLOSURE

You should aim to:

- State clearly if the correspondent is a person-at-risk or a third party
- 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 abuse or 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.

6. FURTHER GUIDANCE

(a). Things to Do:

- Stay calm and try not to show shock or disbelief
- Listen carefully to what they are saying
- Be sympathetic (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: it was not their fault
  - You will pass on the information to an appropriate person
  - You will take steps to protect and support them
- Record the disclosure and report it to the Committee (see item 7 below).

(b). Things NOT to do:

- **Do not promise to keep secrets; you cannot keep this kind of information to yourself**
- Do not press the person for more details; this will be done later
- Do not 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.)
- Do not make promises that you cannot keep (such as 'this will never happen to you again')
- Do not spend excessive time alone with the abused, for instance at home or on a car journey
- Do not contact the alleged abuser
- Don't be judgemental and don't initiate any over-familiar physical contact
- Do not pass on the information other than to those with a legitimate 'need-to-know': ie a committee member or a Group Leader.

7. CONTACTS

Please contact the Chair or Groups Coordinator either directly or via the Contact page of this website: newmilton.u3asite.uk

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