

Southwell u3a Welfare Policy

Southwell u3a is committed to ensuring that all its members are appropriately cared for when engaged in u3a activities. This care includes endeavouring to ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing and safety of all members.

It is a legal requirement of all the Charity Commissions that all u3as must have a safeguarding policy in place to protect their members. More detail on this, in particular, is given in the separate *"Safeguarding Guidance and Policy"*.

A team of Welcomers ensures that all members, new and long standing, find the atmosphere at the monthly meetings welcoming and friendly. Group activities engender a feeling of warmth and belonging. Group leaders strive to ensure that no-one feels left out or alone.

Given the age profile of members, instances of illness and death are possible. Southwell u3a will show concern and care for members who are ill and for their families in the case of death. Members are asked to let committee members know if they become aware of the illness or death of a member. The committee can make relevant group leader(s) aware of the situation and ask them to take appropriate action on behalf of the group and Southwell u3a. They should also notify the membership secretary.

1. Vulnerable adults

Everybody has different levels of vulnerability and each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time. All members who may be vulnerable have a right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.

In all our activities we will

- Value, listen and respect members who may be vulnerable.
- Ensure that all members feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse.
- Value diversity and promote equality amongst people and relationships.
- Do all we can to help members who may be vulnerable to be and remain active contributors within u3a. If they are, or become unable to participate independently, encourage them to bring a companion/carers with them in order that they can continue to enjoy the benefits of u3a membership.

- Ensure all members are aware of their responsibilities to protect vulnerable adults. More detail on this is given in the “*Safeguarding Guidance and Policy*”.

2. Incidents

Southwell u3a is not required to have qualified first aiders. Some group leaders are issued with first aid kits but they must make clear to members that they are not qualified to treat injuries and the injured party should accept responsibility for any treatment given. If, for instance, anyone has an allergy to plasters, it is their responsibility to tell the group leader and refuse to have one applied.

However, in the event of an incident during a u3a activity it is important that the emergency services or any on-site first aiders are contacted first for advice, to protect members from liability should they assist a casualty. Even if there is no question of any liability an incident form should be filled in by the group leader/deputy group leader or event leader and a witness to the incident to ensure that it is correctly recorded at the time.

Details about the completion and submission of any incident form, along with any, subsequent, follow-up, are given the separate “*Incident Reporting*” policy.

3. Welfare Secretary

A member of the u3a is appointed as Welfare Secretary (WS) and will engage, as appropriate and necessary, with the management committee. The WS has responsibility for trying to ensure that appropriate action is taken in the following instances.

a. Members with physical difficulties

The WS will be watchful for those members who have some difficulty taking part in u3a activities, such as accessing a venue, getting to meetings, hearing or seeing the speaker. The WS will alert the committee if special arrangements are required and try to ensure that all practicable help is provided. If a member requires more than nominal assistance, they may bring their own carer to u3a activities, who will be covered by the liability insurance while they are with the disabled member. The only exception to this is a ‘professional’ carer who would have to be covered by their own individual liability policy.

b. Members with additional needs

U3as are self-help, co-operative organisations run entirely by the members for the members and it is important that individuals are able to take full responsibility for their own participation in u3a interest groups and events. Should the situation arise when a member no longer feels confident that they can participate fully without needing help, it will be necessary for that person to be accompanied by a companion/carer who will be covered by the liability insurance whilst in attendance. Even though other u3a members may be willing to help, each member remains responsible for their own participation in groups and events; members cannot take responsibility for another member's care as this could be deemed to be outside insurance cover if any injury or damage resulted. A carer accompanying a vulnerable adult to meetings does not have to be a u3a member and will not be charged for attending u3a meetings.

c. Illness of a member

On learning of an illness which affects participation in u3a activities, the WS will be responsible for appropriate action on behalf of the committee. Given the size of the membership, the WS may not hear of all such illnesses. In the interests of consistency and parity, group leaders are encouraged to take appropriate action on behalf of the group and u3a. If the WS learns of a member's illness and can easily ascertain the group(s) to which that member belongs, then the WS will, ensuring complete confidentiality and with the permission of the member, inform the relevant group leader(s) as they might not already be aware of the illness.

d. Death of a member

Group leaders are encouraged to take appropriate action on behalf of the group and u3a. If the WS learns of a member's death and can easily ascertain the group(s) to which that member belongs, then the WS will, if possible, inform the relevant group leader(s) as they might not already be aware of the death.

e. Other circumstances

The WS will send a card or take other appropriate action, such as email, phone call or collecting a donation, for any other situation which the committee deems warrants it. If, for any reason, the WS is unable to carry out the above responsibilities, then they should inform the Chair so that the duty can be fulfilled by another nominated committee member.

f. Incident follow-up

Further to any incident, the WS may be asked by the Incident Review Group to follow-up, as necessary and as appropriate, with the person involved in the particular incident.

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