

Sheffield u3a

Introduction to the Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding in its broadest sense means protecting a citizen's health, wellbeing and human rights and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. (Care Quality Commission def.) However, there is specific legislation relating to the safeguarding of **children under 18 years old** and to **vulnerable adults**. Sheffield u3a has a duty of care to all its members and our Safeguarding policy covers both the general definition of safeguarding and the legal provisions relating to vulnerable adults. It is important that coordinators can identify issues which may fall under the legal provisions for Safeguarding.

Outlined below are the two specific categories to which Safeguarding legislation applies.

Children

As children are not allowed at u3a meetings or activities the safeguarding of minors should not be an issue. However, some groups e.g. music groups, take part in activities outside their usual u3a group, where children may be present. This should not be a problem provided that the children are accompanied by or being supervised by a responsible adult outside the u3a group e.g. parent, teacher or chaperone appointed by the event organiser. Su3a groups should not be organising events where any responsibility for children falls upon the group. If in doubt consult the General Coordinator.

Vulnerable Adults

The Department of Health defines a vulnerable adult as "a person over the age of 18 who is or who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation".

Adult safeguarding is a complex issue to deal with as adults have the right to self-determination as well as the "right to a private and family life" (Human Rights Act). An individual's mental capacity to make "informed choices" must also be taken into consideration. Does the person adequately understand the situation they are in and are they aware of the potential consequences to their own wellbeing?

Action

Where group members or a group coordinator are concerned about the treatment of another group member either inside or outside of the group the following points should be considered before deciding upon which policy to follow.

1. Could this person be classed as a vulnerable adult? Check the definition above and if in any doubt consult with the General Coordinator.

2. If the person could not be classed as vulnerable - Consult the “Code of Conduct for Meetings” document and the “Sorting out Problems/Grievances” document both of which are on the website. If appropriate use the practical advice within the Safeguarding Policy to ensure the problem is dealt with sympathetically and confidentially. Seek advice from the General Coordinator.
3. If the person could be classed as vulnerable - Inform the General Coordinator straightaway to discuss options. Consult the Safeguarding Policy. The issue may well be complex and better dealt with by reporting to the relevant authority e.g. Social Services. The General Coordinator will alert the Executive Committee.

As a private individual anyone can report an issue of concern about a vulnerable adult or child to the relevant authority.

This link gives more information on safeguarding vulnerable adults:

<https://www.sheffieldsasp.org.uk/sasp/p/worried-about-an-adult>