

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Penrith and North Lakes U3A is committed to promoting the wellbeing of all its members and seeks to create a safe and welcoming environment where members can learn, have fun and develop their skills and confidence, whilst being protected from harm, discrimination and abuse.

This aim of this policy is to specifically address the safeguarding of vulnerable adults who are members of our U3A.

Definition of a Vulnerable Adult

“A vulnerable adult is any person aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.”

[DOH 2000 “No Secrets” Guidance]

A vulnerable adult therefore may be someone who

- Is elderly and physically disabled due to ill health or cognitive impairment
- Has a learning disability
- Has a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment
- Has mental health needs including Dementia or a personality disorder
- Has a long-term illness/condition
- Misuses substances or alcohol
- Is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision relating to their safety and is in need of care & support
- Is an unpaid carer
- Is homeless

This does not mean however that just because a person is elderly or has a disability they are inevitably vulnerable or at risk, especially if they have capacity to make decisions & make informed choices to protect themselves from harm.

What is abuse?

Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that deliberately or unknowingly causes him or her harm. Examples of abuse are: Physical - slapping, hitting, shaking. Psychological/emotional - controlling people by use of threats/bullying etc. Financial – exploitation of a person’s money or goods. Sexual –

unwanted touching, kissing, sexual intercourse, sexual teasing/innuendo. Neglect – not being cared for properly.

Policy Statement

Penrith and North U3A is committed to safeguarding vulnerable adults, who are members and take part in its activities, from physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial harm or neglect. We recognise that everyone, irrespective of age, educational background, disability, race, religion or belief, social status, sex including gender reassignment, sexual orientation or marital/civil partnership/parental status, has a right to protection from discrimination and abuse.

Penrith and north Lakes U3A will take all reasonable steps to ensure that, by providing members with appropriate policies, procedures and training as appropriate, it offers a safe environment to all participants.

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.
- Recognise equality amongst people and relationships.
- Do all we can to help members who may be vulnerable, to be and remain active contributors within our U3A and if they are or become unable to participate independently, encourage them to bring a companion/carer 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.

Concerns and reporting Procedure

The safeguarding of vulnerable adults is the responsibility of everyone. Any allegations or suspicions of abuse, misconduct, neglect, harm and poor practice within our U3A will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately. Any such allegations or suspicions should be reported immediately to the group convenor or the Chair or any Committee member/ Trustee for formal investigation, or, if considered necessary and/or appropriate, directly to Social Services, and/or the Police [whose focus is the investigation of criminal offences].

Responsibility for co-ordinating a safeguarding response normally lies with Adult Social Care, so that allegations or suspicions of abuse, neglect or harm, including those occurring outside our U3A, should, if appropriate, be reported directly to Social Services.

Review

This Policy and these procedures will be regularly monitored & reviewed:

- in accordance with relevant changes in legislation & guidance.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of vulnerable adults within our U3A
- In all other circumstances at least annually.

January 2018