Safeguarding Policy & Procedure for W&WU3A

1. Policy Statement

W&WU3A is committed to ensuring that all members are protected from abuse and neglect. This policy enables the Committee to act appropriately whenever possible or where instances or allegations of actual abuse or neglect come to their attention.

Abuse can occur in any setting, including a person's home, a carer's home, family or friends' homes, hospitals, residential care, or nursing homes. It may be perpetrated by volunteers, service users, relatives, friends, or neighbours.

W&WU3A will respond to suspected abuse in a caring, effective, and enabling manner and will neither condone nor tolerate any form of abuse or neglect.

2. Principles

W&WU3A believes that every individual is entitled to:

- Privacy, dignity, and respect
- Independence and support to lead an autonomous life
- Choice in how they live
- Protection under the law
- Upholding of human and civil rights regardless of background or identity

3. Role of W&WU3A in Safeguarding

W&WU3A **must not** take the lead role in any Safeguarding Enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014. All concerns must be referred to the National Office's Advice & Volunteer Manager, who will contact the appropriate local authority.

The Committee will monitor implementation annually and review this policy every three years.

4. Responsibilities

W&WU3A must ensure that Committee members and group leaders understand and follow this policy.

Support will be provided to alleged victims, alleged perpetrators, and volunteers, provided this does not compromise any safeguarding enquiry or place other adults at risk.

5. Confidentiality & Information Sharing

Confidentiality will be respected but **cannot be guaranteed**. Information may be shared on a strict need-to-know basis to prevent:

- Danger to life
- Danger to health
- Danger to others
- Danger to the community
- Obstruction of serious crime investigations

Information will be recorded and stored securely in accordance with GDPR 2018.

6. Procedure When Abuse Is Suspected

6.1 Immediate Actions

1. Ensure the adult at risk is safe as a first priority.
2. Record details using Safeguarding Adult Policy 1 (SAP1) as soon as possible.
3. Inform the Committee and the Advice & Volunteer Manager for guidance.

6.2 Committee Responsibilities

- Confirm the adult at risk is safe and assess any ongoing threat from the alleged perpetrator.
- Decide jointly with National Office whether to refer to the local authority and/or Police.
- Contact the Police immediately if a crime may have been committed.
- If not referred, record reasons on SAP1 and consider the adult's wishes, which may be overridden to protect others.
- Complete SAP1 with guidance from National Office.
- Store completed SAP1 forms for at least two years.

7. Handling Disclosures (Appendix Guidance)

7.1 What to Do

- Stay calm and avoid showing shock or disbelief.
- Listen carefully and be sympathetic.
- Reassure the person they did the right thing, it was not their fault, and you will inform the appropriate person and support them.
- Record and report the disclosure according to procedure.

7.2 What Not to Do

- Do not press for more details.
- Do not interrupt or stop someone recalling events.
- Do not promise secrecy or make promises you cannot keep.

- Do not contact the alleged abuser.
- Do not share information beyond legitimate need-to-know.

7.3 Recording Requirements

Records must:

- Use the person's own words
- Describe circumstances and who was present
- Separate fact from opinion
- Use black ink
- Be suitable for potential legal or disciplinary use

7.4 Appendix 1

Click here

7.5 Appendix 2

Click here

8. Key Definitions (Appendix 3)

Adult at Risk

A person over 18 who needs care/support, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and cannot protect themselves as a result of those needs.

Abuse

A violation of human and civil rights; may be a single or repeated act including physical, verbal, psychological, sexual, institutional, discriminatory, financial, or neglectful behaviour.

Types of Abuse

Includes physical, domestic violence, sexual, psychological, financial, modern slavery, discriminatory, organisational, neglect, and self-neglect.

Recommended Agencies

Local authority, GP, Police, Action on Elder Abuse, Voice UK.

Contact details:

- Action on Elder Abuse 0808 808 8141 Weekdays 9am-5pm
- Voice UK Helpline 0808 802 8686 charity supporting people with learning disabilities and other vulnerable people who have experienced crime or abuse

9. Governance & Review

- This policy will be reviewed every three years from the date of adoption.
- Committee member details must be updated whenever trustees change.

10. Approval

Adopted on: _____ Signed: _____ Committee Role: _____ Print Name: _____

Next Review Due: __September 2029_____