

## **PEMBURY U3A SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### *Introduction*

One of the terms and conditions of membership of our U3A is that “each member ....must treat fellow members with respect and courtesy at all times”. This is especially so in the case of any vulnerable members. By “vulnerable members” we mean those who ,by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness are or may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or abuse .“

Accordingly this Policy has been adopted by our Management Committee and is being publicised to all members so that they are aware of their responsibilities to keep vulnerable members safe from harm, abuse and neglect in the context of their participation in any of the meetings or activities of our U3A. If there is any suspicion that harm, abuse or neglect of any of our members is taking place outside the scope of our U3A then this should be reported promptly to an appropriate statutory body (e.g. Police or Social Services). The Management Committee of our U3A has no authority or experience to deal with such situations.

### *Policy*

Our U3A does not condone or tolerate any form of harm, abuse or neglect being caused by, or to, any of our members. We believe that all people should be able and, where necessary enabled, to participate in our U3A in an environment which is safe and supportive and where everyone is entitled to:

- privacy
- be treated with dignity and respect
- the protection of the law
- have their human and civil rights upheld regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, religious or cultural background.

Where harm, abuse or neglect is suspected and reported to our Management Committee our U3A will aim to respond promptly and appropriately according to the nature of the reported incident. Where the incident gives rise to serious concerns our Management Committee will seek advice and support from the Third Age Trust as and when appropriate and may contact the relevant statutory authorities if necessary. Our U3A will monitor the implementation of this policy and procedure annually through its Management Committee.

### *Procedure*

Our U3A has a responsibility to ensure that its Management Committee members and interest group leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Our U3A will make every effort to respect the confidentiality of any information that is disclosed under this policy and procedure, however due to the potential seriousness of allegations confidentiality is not absolute. Information will be recorded and stored securely in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 information may have to be shared, on a ‘need-to-know’ basis only:

- (a) to prevent dangers to a person’s life or health, to others, to the community; or
- (b) to facilitate the investigation of a serious crime

### *Courses of action*

- If any member becomes aware of any other member who appears to be suffering from harm, neglect or abuse, or appears to be inflicting it upon others, they should bring this to the attention of any member of the Management Committee either directly or via the Secretary
- Email:
- Telephone: see our membership cards for phone numbers of current Committee members
  
- If any Committee member becomes aware of any reported incident of possible or actual harm, abuse or neglect to a member of our U3A that Committee member should (a) as soon as possible make a written record of the details reported and (b) promptly inform the other Committee members. No Committee member should act in isolation in dealing with a safeguarding concern.
  
- After receipt of the initial report of a safeguarding concern the Committee should initially seek to gather as much information as possible to assist with the decision as to the next steps. A risk assessment will need to be developed and recorded as soon as possible after the concern comes to the attention of the Committee.
  
- The Committee, having been advised of a relevant incident, should as a first priority act to try (a) to ensure the safety of the member at risk where appropriate and (b) to ensure that the alleged perpetrator, if known, does not pose a threat to any other person.
  
- The Committee shall, if appropriate, consult with the Advice and Volunteer Manager at the Third Age Trust before deciding whether or not to refer the reported incident to the local authority and/or the Police. When a crime may have been committed, the Police must be contacted as soon as possible. If the decision is to not refer, the Committee will record in writing the reasons for this.
  
- In developing their risk assessment, the Committee will consider the level of risk and the action that needs to be taken accordingly. Assessment of risk will include:
  - (i) Risk to the individual member
  - (ii) Risk to other members within our U3A.
  
- Where the risk is not deemed to be high but support is needed, our U3A will contact the Third Age Trust to discuss the concerns and seek additional assistance in developing the risk assessment. Assistance will always be sought before moving to exclude any member from the U3A following a safeguarding risk assessment.
  
- Once the risk assessment is completed, the Committee will decide as to the most appropriate course of action. This could include (a) the exclusion of a member from certain groups, (b) requesting that a member attends any U3A meeting or activity with a companion/carer or (c) excluding a member from an interest group run by a particular group leader.

- Depending on the nature of the allegation it may be necessary to deal with the matter in accordance with our U3A's Grievance and Complaint Procedures, and especially if the incident is the subject of a complaint by a vulnerable member or their companion/carer . Where it is decided that this is the best course of action no party that was privy to the initial reporting of the incident is to be involved in the subsequent investigation or decision making process.

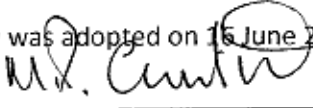
### *Records*

All actions and decisions taken will be recorded in writing. Any records will remain confidential to the Committee unless a prior decision has been taken to share the records with the relevant statutory bodies or disclosure is required under the General Data Protection Regulation 2016.

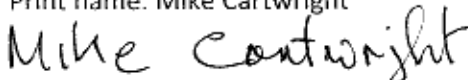
### *Status of Companions/Carers*

- We should take all reasonably practicable steps to help vulnerable members to be and remain active participants within our U3A. This includes, in all appropriate cases, encouraging such members to bring a companion /carer with them for such participation.

This policy was adopted on 16 June 2020

Signed:  Committee role: Chair

Print name: Mike Cartwright



Policy review date: June 2022