



SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Policy Statement

This policy and procedure are written to enable the Bicester U3A committee to address issues where there are safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding includes incidents between members, concerns regarding abuse or neglect that a U3A member may be experiencing outside of the U3A, health-related issues or previous or pending criminal convictions.

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Bicester U3A to safeguarding their members and to ensure that everyone involved in Bicester U3A is aware of:

- The legislation, policy and procedures for safeguarding adults.
- Bicester U3A's role and responsibility for safeguarding adults.
- What to do or who to speak to if members of Bicester U3A have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult within Bicester U3A.

2. Scope

This safeguarding policy and procedure apply to all individuals involved in Bicester U3A, including the committee, group leaders and members, and to all concerns about the safety and wellbeing of members taking part in U3A activities and in the wider community.

3. Safeguarding Commitments

In order to implement this policy, Bicester U3A will ensure that all members will be aware of the safeguarding procedures and know who to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare or well-being of an adult.

Bicester U3A committee has a duty of care to its members but does not hold any statutory authority. Matters of concern will be reported as appropriate to the relevant safeguarding authorities and charity regulatory authorities.

Bicester U3A recognises that some people are potentially at risk of abuse or neglect. Where abuse or neglect is suspected Bicester U3A will aim to respond in a prompt and efficient manner to any situation where there is a risk of or perceived risk of harm.

Bicester U3A recognises that there are various forms of abuse which can be perpetrated by volunteers, members, relatives, friends and neighbours. Bicester U3A will neither condone nor tolerate any form of abuse or neglect and believes that all people should be able and, where necessary, enabled to live in an environment which is safe and free from harm.



It is not appropriate for Bicester U3A to take the lead role in any Safeguarding Enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014. Where there are serious concerns regarding abuse or neglect Bicester U3A committee will seek advice and support from the Trust, where possible, and will contact the relevant statutory authorities, as needed. Bicester U3A will monitor the implementation of this policy and procedure annually through its committee.

In following the safeguarding procedure Bicester U3A will strive to uphold the principles that those involved in incidents are entitled to:

- privacy;
- be treated with dignity and respect;
- lead an independent life and be enabled to do so;
- choose how they live their lives;
- the protection of the law;
- have their human and civil rights upheld regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religious or cultural background.

Bicester U3A will also follow the principles enshrined within the Care Act 2014:

- **Principle 1 – Empowerment** – whereby the approach is focused on the individual making their own decision and gaining informed consent, where possible.
- **Principle 2 – Prevention** – seeking to take steps to prevent issues from arising or escalating.
- **Principle 3 – Proportionality** – responding in a proportionate way to the issue/s being presented.
- **Principle 4 – Protection** – seeking to keep the member safe and protection for those deemed to be at risk.
- **Principle 5 – Partnership** – reporting incidents to the relevant statutory bodies and liaising with the Trust.
- **Principle 6 – Accountability** – accurate recording of incidents. Reporting incidents, as required, to the Trust and relevant regulatory authorities.

4. Procedure

Bicester U3A has a responsibility to ensure that its committee members and group leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Depending on the nature of the allegation and the identified risk, Bicester U3A will help support the alleged victim/s and the alleged perpetrator/s of any further abuse as well as any volunteer who becomes aware of an allegation in so far as this does not compromise any safeguarding enquiry or investigation into the allegation or place other adults at risk.

Bicester U3A will make every effort to respect the confidentiality of any information that is disclosed under this policy and procedure. However, dependent upon the seriousness of the allegations, confidentiality is not absolute. Information will be recorded and stored

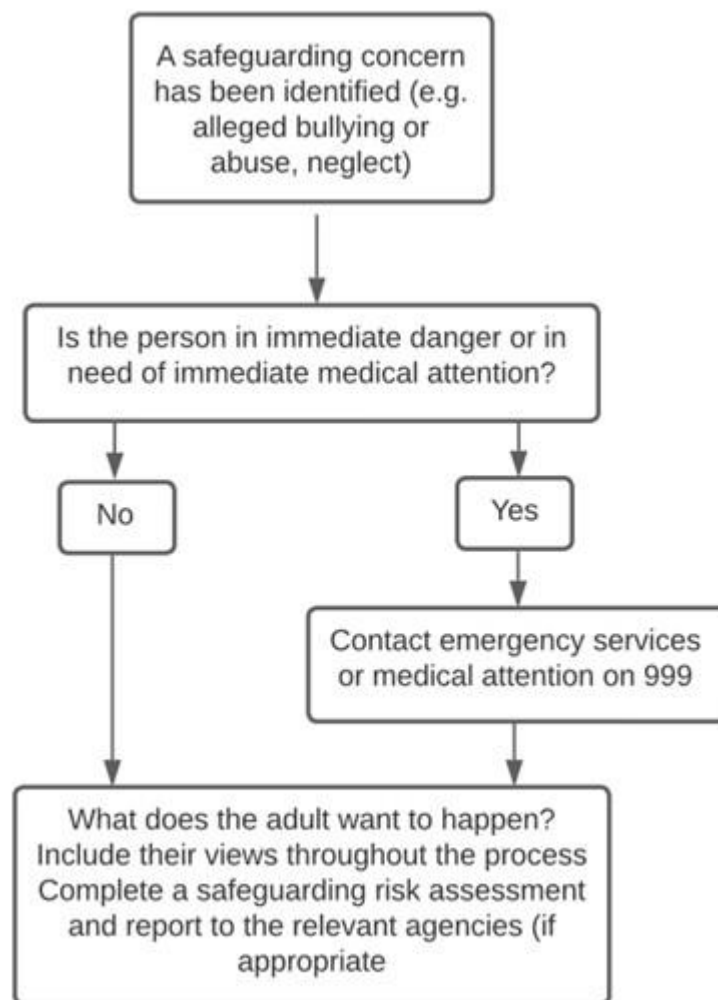
securely under the Data Protection Act 2018 but information may have to be shared, on a 'need-to-know' basis only, to:

- prevent danger to a person's life;
- prevent danger to a person's health;
- prevent danger to others;
- prevent danger to the community;
- facilitate the investigation of a serious crime.

4.1 Courses of Action

- Bicester U3A's approach to safeguarding will include members who exhibit health concerns that could put themselves or others at risk, convictions (previous or pending) that include offences of a sexual or violent nature, inappropriate behaviour exhibited by a member including sexual advances, bullying, aggression or violent behaviour, harassment and/or discrimination. This can include behaviour exhibited face to face as well as electronic communications or via social media platforms.
- Where the committee becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, steps will be taken, as needed, to ensure the safety of adult/s at risk is secured as a first priority. The steps to take to address this will be discussed and agreed between the committee Officers in the first instance. No committee member will act in isolation when dealing with a safeguarding concern. The steps taken should be documented and stored securely under the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Where Bicester U3A committee becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, the first step will be to gather as much information as possible to assist with the decision as to the next steps. A risk assessment will be developed and recorded as soon as possible after the concern comes to the attention of the committee.
- Where it is deemed that the risk is high and immediate action needs to be taken, the committee will contact the relevant local authorities and the Trust for advice and support.
- As far as possible, the adult at risk's wishes will be respected as to whether or not to refer any concerns to the local authority as a Safeguarding Enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014. However, it may be necessary to override their wishes in the best interests of other adults at risk.
- In developing the risk assessment, the committee will consider the level of risk and the action that needs to be taken accordingly. Risk assessment will include:
 - Risk to the individual member;
 - Risk to other members within the U3A;
 - Reputational risk for the Bicester U3A and the U3A movement as a whole.
- Where the risk is not deemed to be high but support is needed, Bicester U3A committee will contact the 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 based on a safeguarding risk assessment.

- Once the risk assessment is completed, the committee will decide the most appropriate course of action. This could include excluding members from certain groups i.e. groups held in people's homes, requesting that a member attends the U3A with a carer or excluding a member from a group run by a particular group leader.
- Depending on the nature of the allegation, it may be necessary to pursue the incident following Bicester U3A's complaints, disciplinary or grievance procedure. Where it is decided that this is the best course of action, the matter will not be investigated by any party that was privy to the initial reporting of the incident.
- All actions taken will be recorded. Any records will remain confidential to the committee unless a prior decision is taken to share the record with the relevant statutory bodies.



Safeguarding Matrix



u3a	Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Bicester	Bicester U3A
Version	Description of changes	Date
1.0	New document	7-Mar-25
1.1	Added the Safeguarding Matrix	17-Apr-25
2	Reviewed	18-May-26

Signed..... *Gareth Perkins*

Committee Role..... *CHAIR*

Date..... *18th April 2025*

Review Date..... *MARCH 2026*