

SAFEGUARDING ADULT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Bracknell Forest u3a (BFu3a)	Charity number: 1153789
Policy date: draft September 2025	Review date: September 2027

Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

What is Safeguarding?

“Safeguarding” refers to measures designed to protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of individuals.

- All u3a members have a responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns to the Bracknell Forest u3a (BFu3a) Designated Safeguarding Officer (email: safeguardingofficer@bracknellu3a.org.uk) or if unavailable, the Deputy Safeguarding Officer (BFu3a Committee Chair). The Designated Safeguarding Officer will be identified from amongst the membership. This is a volunteer role but not necessarily a committee member role.
- All u3a Committee members have an obligation to follow their Safeguarding policy and procedure and if approached by a concerned member, they must direct them to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

What is the responsibility of members in safeguarding?

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, and members must bring any Safeguarding concerns they have to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Members should follow their Code of Conduct and not keep any concerns they have to themselves. However, the concern should not be discussed with other unauthorised parties as it is a sensitive and confidential matter.

Policy Statement

This Policy and Procedure is written to enable the Committee to act appropriately whenever possible or where instances, or allegations of, actual abuse or neglect are raised.

Bracknell Forest u3a (BFu3a) recognises that some people are potentially at risk of abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect can take place in a person’s own home, in the home of a carer, family member or friend, and within any form of institution e.g. hospitals, residential care or nursing home.

Where abuse or neglect is suspected BFu3a will aim to respond to the situation in a way which is caring, effective and enabling. BFu3a also recognises that abuse and neglect can be perpetrated by volunteers, other users of services, relatives, friends and neighbours. BFu3a acknowledges that the reasons for abuse and neglect occurring may not be fully understood and vary with each incident, often dependent on risk factors

SAFEGUARDING ADULT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Bracknell Forest u3a (BFu3a)	Charity number: 1153789
Policy date: draft September 2025	Review date: September 2027

BFu3a 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.

In all situations, BFu3a believes that everyone is entitled to:

- privacy
- be treated with dignity and respect
- lead an independent life and to 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.

It is not appropriate for BFu3a Committee to take the lead role in any Safeguarding Enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014, but should refer this to BFu3a Designated Safeguarding Officer (or Deputy in their absence) who will contact the appropriate local authority.

Procedure

1. BFu3a recognises that it has a responsibility to ensure that its Committee and Group co-ordinators understand this policy.
2. BFu3a will support the alleged victims and the alleged perpetrators of any abuse as well as any volunteer who becomes aware of the abuse in so far as this does not compromise any Safeguarding Enquiry or investigation into the allegation or place other adults at risk.
3. While BFu3a will make every effort to respect the confidentiality of any information that is disclosed under this Policy and Procedure, this cannot be guaranteed. Information will be recorded and stored securely in accordance with GDPR 2018 but confidentiality is not absolute and information may have to be shared, on a 'need-to-know' basis only, to prevent:
 - Danger to a person's life
 - Danger to a person's health
 - Danger to others
 - Danger to the community

or to prevent or to facilitate the investigation of a serious crime.

See Appendix 1 for Disclosure information.

SAFEGUARDING ADULT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Bracknell Forest u3a (BFu3a)	Charity number: 1153789
Policy date: draft September 2025	Review date: September 2027

Courses of Action

- If the Designated Safeguarding Officer (or Deputy) becomes aware of possible or actual abuse or neglect, they should ensure that the safety of the adult at risk is secured as a first priority.
- Where there are concerns for a member's wellbeing or safety, a Safeguarding Adult Risk Assessment will be completed and as far as possible, the views of the affected adult should be taken into account. The concern may be reported to the appropriate local authority, but if the member does not want the issue to be referred to the local authority, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will refer the matter to the Advice and Volunteer Manager at National Office. However, where the person is in immediate danger or in need of immediate medical attention, the emergency services, local authority or in the case of a crime, the Police, will be contacted immediately.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer/Deputy, having been advised of the possible or actual abuse, should satisfy themselves that the adult at risk is safe, and that the alleged perpetrator, if known, does not pose a threat to any other adult at risk.
- Completed Risk Assessments will be held securely for a minimum of 4 years.
- Confidentiality will be adhered at all times, therefore the contents of the form will not be provided to any unauthorised third parties. The Committee may need to be informed in summary, however.

SAFEGUARDING ADULT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Bracknell Forest u3a (BFu3a)	Charity number: 1153789
Policy date: draft September 2025	Review date: September 2027

Appendix 1

What are the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect?

Abuse may be inflicted by anyone that the member comes into contact with. There are many signs and indicators that may suggest abuse or neglect including:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention for an injury
- Non-attendance at interest groups without reason and no response to reminders from Group co-ordinators or other members
- Significant loss or gain of weight and/or an unkempt appearance
- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a member, where they become quiet and withdrawn, or lash out in anger
- A member showing fear of a particular group or individual;
- A member who sends unwanted sexually explicit text messages to a vulnerable member
- Threats of physical harm and bullying, or intentional striking of another member.

Additionally, a member may report they are being abused – i.e. a disclosure.

If someone discloses abuse to you:

Do:

- Stay calm and try not to show shock or disbelief
- Listen carefully to what they are saying
- Be sympathetic (I'm sorry that this has happened to you')
- Be aware of the possibility that medical evidence might be needed
- Tell the person that:
They did the right thing to tell you
You are treating the information seriously. It was not their fault
You are going to inform the appropriate person i.e. the BFu3a Designated Safeguarding Officer who will take steps to protect and support them.
- Record and report the disclosure in line with the Procedure as soon as possible.

Do Not:

- Press the person for more details; this will be done at a later date by the appropriate party.
- Stop someone who is freely recalling significant events (Don't say 'hold on, we'll come back to that later'; they may not tell you or anybody else again)
- Do not promise to keep secrets; you cannot keep this kind of information to yourself, you have a duty of care to raise safeguarding concerns.

SAFEGUARDING ADULT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Bracknell Forest u3a (BFu3a)	Charity number: 1153789
Policy date: draft September 2025	Review date: September 2027

- Make promises you cannot keep (Such as ‘This will never happen to you again’)
- Make contact with the alleged abuser
- Be judgemental
- Pass on the information other than to those with a legitimate ‘need-to-know’ under this Policy and Procedure

In your record of the disclosure:

You should aim to:

- As soon as possible, note what people actually said, using their own words and phrases
- Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about
- Note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time of the abuse or the disclosure
- Separate factual information from your own and others opinions
- Use pen or biro with black ink so that the report can be photocopied if needed
- And be aware that your report may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure.

SAFEGUARDING ADULT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Bracknell Forest u3a (BFu3a)	Charity number: 1153789
Policy date: draft September 2025	Review date: September 2027

Appendix 2 Key Definitions:

1. ***BFu3a Adult member at risk:***

is any person, who is over 18 years of age and who has need for care and support, is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or risk of it.

2. ***Abuse:***

is the “violation of a person’s human and civil rights by any other person(s). It may be a single or repeated act(s), physical, verbal, psychological, sexual, institutional, discriminatory or financial, an act of neglect or failure to act”

3. ***Types of abuse:***

- a) *Physical abuse* – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing.
- b) *Domestic violence* – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional.
- c) *Sexual abuse* – including inappropriate looking or touching, indecent exposure and sexual harassment.
- d) *Psychological abuse* – including threats of harm, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation.
- e) *Financial or material abuse* – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- f) *Modern slavery* – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.
- g) *Discriminatory abuse* – including harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- h) *Organisational abuse* – including neglect in relation to care provided at home. This may be a one-off incident or on-going ill-treatment, through neglect or poor professional practice.
- i) *Neglect and acts of omission* – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of medication, adequate nutrition and heating
- j) *Self-neglect* – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Recommended agencies:

- a) The Bracknell Forest Adult Social Care services on 01344 351500. If emergency help is required when the office is closed, the Out of Hours Team can be contacted on 01344 351999. If you think someone is in immediate danger, phone emergency services on 999. Do not put yourself or anyone else at risk.

SAFEGUARDING ADULT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Bracknell Forest u3a (BFu3a)	Charity number: 1153789
Policy date: draft September 2025	Review date: September 2027

- b) Alternatively complete the Bracknell Forest Adult Social Care safeguarding concern form.
<https://bracknellforestsafeguarding.org.uk>
- c) National Office u3a Advice and Volunteer Manager: 0208 466 6139 Monday to Friday 9.30am – 4.30pm. Email kate.cowan@u3a.org.uk or u3a.office@u3a.org.uk addressed for the attention of the Advice and Volunteer Manager for Safeguarding.
- d) **Hourglass** (*previously Action on Elder Abuse*) is a confidential support and advice for older people who have been abused or people who know an older person who may be suffering abuse. Available weekdays 9am - 5pm on Freephone 0808 808 8141.
- e) **Voice UK** is a national charity supporting people with learning disabilities and other vulnerable people who have experienced crime or abuse. They also support their families, carers and professional workers.
Voice runs a helpline 0808 802 8686.