

## **Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**

The AVu3a have a duty of care towards all their members, and hence the need for a straightforward policy that everyone can follow. It should be noted that the AVu3a does not hold any statutory authority. The AVu3a may not take a leading role in any safeguarding enquiry under section 42 of the Care Act 2014. The AVu3a will however, follow the six principles of this care act. They are as follows:

1. **Empowerment:** This is based on the individual being allowed to make their own decisions
2. **Prevention:** Taking steps to prevent any reoccurrence
3. **Proportionality:** Responses to be in a proportionate way
4. **Protection:** Seeking to keep members safe and protecting those at risk
5. **Partnership:** Reporting issues to the relevant statutory bodies and with the Third Age Trust where appropriate
6. **Accountability:** Accurate recording of incidents and reporting incidents to the relevant authorities

Members may be unfortunate enough to be involved through no fault of their own in the following. Or they may be witness to such situations.

1. A serious crime
2. Physical and/or sexual abuse
3. Verbal Abuse
4. Theft
5. Psychological abuse
6. Unacceptable behaviour that may cause distress to a member
7. Fraud
8. Health related Issues
9. Previous or pending criminal convictions

Offenders in these cases may not always be members of the U3A. They may be family members, friends, or neighbours or someone unknown.

This policy will explain how the AVu3a may help and support their members.

It is fully appreciated that reporting such matters may be both difficult and distressing for a member. Every effort will be made by your committee to make this process as easy as is possible. The committee will also ensure that strict confidentiality about the matter will be adhered to wherever possible. Details will however be passed onto the police where a crime has been committed. They may also be passed onto the Third Age Trust so the Avu3a can be advised accordingly.

Where the offender is a member, the disciplinary procedure will be evoked and may lead to the member having their membership removed.

No single committee member will be allowed to make any decision regarding safeguarding or disciplinary matter. The whole committee must discuss and decide the best way forward before any action may be taken. The majority of the committee must agree. Should a case be reported, the committee must meet to discuss as soon as is possible, and not delay more than seven days from when the incident is reported, unless the issue is deemed a serious crime. In such a case the police will be informed. An extraordinary general committee meeting will be arranged by the Chairperson or Vice chairperson.

It is important that strict and accurate notes of the offence are taken and held on file securely according to the Data Protection Act 2018. Information will be shared on a need to know basis only to prevent:

1. Danger to a person's life
2. Danger to a person's health
3. Danger to others
4. Danger to the community
5. To facilitate an investigation into a serious crime
6. To prevent any recurrence of a similar nature

Following a report of any incident the committee must address these issues.

1. Does this incident warrant excluding the member from any group meeting or general meeting until further actions are taken
2. What is the level of risk to the member reporting the issue
3. What is the level of risk to other members
4. Contact with The Third Age Trust for advice
5. Action to be taken in order to support any victim(s) of that case

These actions must be documented carefully and accurately. This policy should be reviewed on an annual basis.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Avu3a Committee

Held on 6/04/23

Date to be reviewed 2024

Signed on behalf of the committee Chris Lowe

Name & role of signatory Chris Lowe Chairman