

PURPOSE

Safeguarding is a term used to denote measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow vulnerable people to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. Safeguarding for Harlow u3a 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.

Harlow u3a will neither condone nor tolerate any form of abuse of or by its members. The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Harlow u3a to safeguarding its members and to ensure that everyone involved in Harlow u3a is aware of:

- The legislation, policy and procedures for safeguarding adults.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding adults.
- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult within Harlow u3a.

SCOPE

This safeguarding policy and procedure applies to all individuals involved in Harlow 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.

This safeguarding policy and procedure is in respect of Harlow u3a activities, events and meetings including those held in public venues or in members' houses. It has limited jurisdiction in dealing with safeguarding outside of the u3a, other than broad advice given in the Responsibilities section.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENTS

Harlow u3a Committee has a duty of care to its members and is committed to upholding this safeguarding policy in order to protect them. In order to implement this policy, Harlow u3a will ensure that all members are made aware of the safeguarding policy and procedures and know who to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult. **The named person for safeguarding for Harlow u3a is the Chair.**

Harlow u3a recognises that some people are potentially at risk of abuse and neglect. Where abuse or neglect is suspected Harlow u3a will aim to respond promptly and efficiently and undertake a Safeguarding Risk Assessment, (*SRA see Appendix 5*) seek advice and support from TAT (Third Age Trust**), where necessary, and contact the statutory authorities where needed.

Harlow u3a does not hold any statutory authority, nor does it have the experience or appropriate skills. to handle such safeguarding issues. **It is not appropriate for Harlow u3a to take the lead role in any Safeguarding Enquiry** (under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 (England and Wales). Matters of concern will be reported to the relevant safeguarding authorities and charity regulatory authorities, as appropriate. This may include the local authority, the local multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), or the police in an emergency.

Harlow u3a recognises that there are various forms of abuse which can be perpetrated by volunteers, members, relatives, friends, and neighbours. (*See Appendix 1: Signs and Indicators of Abuse*) Harlow u3a will put the well-being of those at risk of harm first, and they will be actively supported to communicate their views and the outcomes they want to achieve. Those views and wishes will be respected and supported unless there are overriding reasons not to. Any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm.

When following the safeguarding procedure, Harlow u3a will strive to uphold the principles to which those involved in incidents are entitled. (*See Appendix 4: Principles of Harlow u3a Safeguarding Policy & Procedures*) This policy will be reviewed annually.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The named person for Safeguarding in Harlow u3a is the Chair, however safeguarding concerns can be reported to any member of the Executive Committee: Vice-Chair, Secretary or Treasurer.

Harlow u3a recognises that the first conversations related to any abuse will in most cases take place between individual members or between members and group facilitators. In order to manage "safeguarding" properly, it is acknowledged that all members at every level of Harlow u3a need to be aware of what constitutes mental or physical abuse and to know the correct steps to take to report any suspected occurrence. (*See Appendices 1: Signs and Indicators of Abuse & 2: How to respond to a disclosed safeguarding concern*)

Depending on the nature of the allegation and the identified risk, Harlow u3a will support the confidentiality of the alleged victims and the alleged perpetrators of any 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.

Harlow u3a will make every effort to respect the confidentiality of any information that is disclosed under this policy and procedure, however due to the seriousness of allegations, confidentiality is not absolute. Information will be recorded and stored securely in accordance with Data Protection Act 2018 but information may have to be shared with relevant authorities 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
- To facilitate the investigation of a serious crime

Awareness of a safeguarding issue occurring outside a Harlow u3a setting may occur when a member talks to/confides in another Harlow u3a member. If the alleged abuse has taken place outside a Harlow u3a setting any actions taken, in this instance, will be in friendship rather than through a u3a link. If the member is in a position of danger then appropriate action should be taken swiftly to secure their safety but any action taken should be, in the first instance, taken by the member themselves or only on their explicit instructions. (*Further guidance can be found in Appendix 5 page 3.*)

COURSE OF ACTION

1. Where a member becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, it should be reported to the Chair or member of the Executive Committee. As soon as possible afterwards, complete a Safeguarding Adult Disclosure/Suspicion Report form. (*SDSR See Appendix 3*) and give to the Chair or Executive Committee member.

2. If a safeguarding disclosure is made to any member of Harlow u3a they need to be aware of the best response to take in this situation. Listen to the person and allow them to tell what's happened but **do not** interview them, ask leading questions, promise confidentiality or ask them to write a statement. *Clear guidance is given in Appendix 2*
3. As soon as possible after the disclosure, or after becoming concerned about possible or actual abuse occurring in a u3a setting, the member should complete a Safeguarding Adult Disclosure/Suspicion Report (*SDSR see Appendix 3*)
4. Where the Executive Committee becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, steps will be taken, as needed, to ensure the safety of the adult/s at risk is secured as a priority. **Any action will be discussed and agreed between the Executive Committee 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 in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.
5. At all steps, by all involved, the rights of the victim and, where relevant, the alleged abuser to privacy must be protected and any information sharing must be on a purely need-to-know basis.
6. The first step will be to gather as much information as possible to determine how to proceed, **without conducting an investigation as this might hinder any further action taken by the relevant authorities if deemed necessary.**
7. A risk assessment (*SRA Appendix 5*) will be undertaken and recorded as soon as possible after the concern comes to the attention of the Executive Committee.
8. Following the risk assessment, the Executive Committee will decide the best course of action to take to ensure the safety of any Harlow u3a member/s. (*SRA See Appendix 5*)
9. 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.
10. All action taken by the Executive Committee will be recorded; any records remain confidential to the committee unless a decision has been taken to share information with relevant statutory bodies. All records should be retained for two years then destroyed.
11. Harlow u3a will respect the confidentiality of any information that is disclosed and information will be stored securely, however confidentiality cannot be guaranteed should any serious case of abuse or harm occur. Information may need to be shared with relevant authorities to prevent danger to a person's health/other u3a members/the community at large or to prevent or to facilitate the investigation of a serious crime.

This policy was adopted:

Signed: _____ (Committee Role) CHAIR

Print name: JANE WINTERBOTHAM

Date: 9 June 2025

Review date: 9 June 2026

**** Contact for TAT:** 0208 466 6139 Mon-Fri 9.30am-4.30pm info@u3a.org.uk
Essex Adult Social Care: 0345 603 7630

Summary of Appendices:

Appendix 1	Signs and indicators of abuse
Appendix 2	How to respond to a disclosed safeguarding concern
Appendix 3	Safeguarding Adult Disclosure/Suspicion Report
Appendix 4	Principles of Harlow u3a Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
Appendix 5	Safeguarding Risk Assessment Form

APPENDIX 1 SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Harlow 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.

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 leaders 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.

KEY DEFINITIONS

ADULT AT RISK

Any person aged 18+ 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.

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”.

TYPES OF ABUSE

- Physical abuse e.g. assault, hitting, slapping, pushing.
- Domestic violence e.g. psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional.
- Sexual abuse – including inappropriate looking or touching, indecent exposure and sexual harassment.
- Psychological abuse e.g., threats of harm, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation.
- Financial or material abuse e.g. theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in an adult’s financial affairs/arrangements, including with wills, property, inheritance or finances or the misuse/misappropriation of property, possessions, benefits.
- Modern slavery encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.
- Discriminatory abuse including harassment, slurs, or similar treatment because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- 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.
- 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, withholding of medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- 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.

APPENDIX 2 HOW TO RESPOND TO A DISCLOSED SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

How do you deal with a disclosed safeguarding concern? If someone discloses a safeguarding concern 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:
 - o They did the right thing to tell you.
 - o You are treating the information seriously. It was not their fault.
 - o You are going to inform the appropriate person.
 - o You will take steps to protect and support them.
- Record and report the disclosure in line with our safeguarding policy and procedure: inform Chair and complete SDSR form Appendix 3.

DO NOT:

- Press the person for more details if they are not comfortable sharing. **Do not** interview/ask leading questions. **Do not** ask them to write an account of what happened.
- 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).
- Promise to keep secrets; you have a duty of care to raise safeguarding concerns.
- Make promises you cannot keep such as “this will never happen to you again”.
- Contact the alleged abuser unless they are also a u3a member and it is necessary to do so to safeguard other members.
- Be judgemental.
- Pass on the information other than to those with a legitimate ‘need-to-know’ under your safeguarding policy and procedure.

How should you record a safeguarding concern? Complete a Safeguarding Adult Disclosure/Suspicion Report (*SDSR see Appendix 3*)

- Note what people actually said, using their own words and phrases. Do not ask them to write a statement.
- Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.
- Note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time of 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.
- Be aware that your report may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure.

On completion, give your report to a member of Harlow u3a Executive Committee.

HARLOW u3a SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

APPENDIX 3 SAFEGUARDING ADULT DISCLOSURE/SUSPICION REPORT (SDSR)

Please complete this form in black ink and in CAPITAL LETTERS

Name of member for whom there is a concern:	Membership No: (if known)
DISCLOSURE/SUSPICION	
Who received this disclosure/has the suspicion:	Membership No:
Name(s) of anyone else present when disclosure made/suspicion aroused:	
Date of disclosure/suspicion:	Time:
Location of disclosure/suspicion:	
Type of alleged abuse/ suspicion:	
Please give details of what was disclosed/your suspicion. <i>If reporting a disclosure it is important your report uses the words of the person who made it; do not paraphrase it to "tidy it up" or sanitise their account. Give factual information and not your own, or others', opinions.</i>	

Is the victim aware you are reporting this disclosure/suspicion?	Y / N
Signed:	Date:
Executive Committee Action: Date for this document to be destroyed	Date:

- Once completed, please give this form to the Chair of Harlow u3a or any member of the Executive Committee.
- Please do not discuss this matter with anyone else.

APPENDIX 4 PRINCIPLES OF HARLOW U3A SAFEGUARDING POLICY

When following the safeguarding procedure Harlow u3a will strive to uphold the principles to which those involved in incidents are entitled:

- 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.

Harlow u3a will also follow the principles enshrined within the England and Wales 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 membership 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 to relevant regulatory authorities.

HARLOW u3a SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

APPENDIX 5 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

(see also, notes attached)

Name of member for whom there is a concern:	Membership No:
Address:	
Tel No:	Email:
Date concern brought to the Exec Comm (EC):	
By whom:	Membership No:
Names of EC members undertaking this risk assessment:	
Has a Safeguarding Disclosure/Suspicion Report Form been submitted? Y / N	
What is the nature of the concern and how was it brought to the attention of the EC ?	
What is the level of risk? Tick as appropriate:	Tick below
Risk to the individual member.	
Risk to other members within Harlow u3a.	
Reputational risk for the individual u3a and the u3a movement as a whole	

What does the individual member want to happen?		
Has guidance been sought from TAT? If yes, what is the advice given		Y / N
Has advice been sought from any other external organisation? If yes, detail below which organisation and outcome.		Y / N
What action does the EC decide to take in order to proceed? Reasons for decision?		
(continue on additional sheet if required but secure to this form)		
Signed:	Name:	
	Role:	Date:
Date for this document to be destroyed:		

APPENDIX 5 SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

(AS PROVIDED BY THE U3A)

- Where it is deemed that the risk is high and immediate action needs to be taken, the committee will contact the relevant authorities and the Trust for advice and support. (usually this would be the local authority or social services; if the individual is in immediate danger call 999) **Contact for TAT: 0208 466 6139 Mon-Fri 9.30am-4.30pm** info@u3a.org.uk
Essex Adult Social Care: 0345 603 7630
- 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.
- Where the risk is not deemed to be high but support is needed, Harlow u3a 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 on the basis of a safeguarding risk assessment.
- Additionally, **HOURGLASS** (previously Action on Elder Abuse) offers a confidential support and advice service for older people who have been abused or people who know an older person who may be suffering abuse. Available weekdays 9am-5pm. Telephone: 0808 808 8141 <https://www.wearehourglass.org>
- Also, **VOICE UK** is a national charity supporting people with learning disabilities and other vulnerable people who have experienced crime or abuse. Helpline for carers, parents and professionals available weekdays 9am - 5pm on freephone 0808 802 8686, or e-mail helpline@voiceuk.org.uk or text message 07797 800 642.
- Once the risk assessment is completed, the committee will decide as to the most appropriate course of action. See earlier points of guidance. This could, however, also 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.
- All actions taken will be recorded. Any records will remain confidential to the committee unless a prior decision has been taken to share the record with the relevant statutory bodies. All records will be destroyed after two years.

ALLEGED ABUSE TAKEN OUTSIDE OF HARLOW u3a JURISDICTION

Awareness of a safeguarding issue occurring outside a Harlow u3a setting may occur when a member talks to/confides in another Harlow u3a member. If the alleged abuse has taken place outside a Harlow u3a setting any actions taken, in this instance, will be in friendship rather than through a u3a link. Whilst Harlow u3a may offer support to the member there is little more it can do. If the member is in a position of danger then appropriate action must be taken swiftly to secure their safety but any action taken should be, in the first instance, taken by the member themselves or only

on their explicit instructions. This action is limited to reporting the matter to an authority with the power and ability to secure that person's safety.

The reasons for this limited response are:

- Personal relationship issues are more complex.
- They may involve multiple parties, some of whom are known to u3a members and some of whom are not.
- There may be a history of police involvement.
- There may be past history in the relationship that is unknown to Harlow u3a members.
- It is quite possible that either coercion or physical abuse may be involved
- u3a members have limitations in the appropriate skill and experience required to deal with a complex situation and therefore it should be left to experts.
- **These issues are outside of Harlow u3a jurisdiction.**

