

Southwell u3a Welfare and Safeguarding Policy

Southwell u3a is committed to ensuring that all its members are appropriately cared for when engaged in u3a activities. This care includes endeavouring to ensure physical and emotional well-being and safety of all members including those with disabilities.

A team of Welcomers ensures that all members, new and long standing, find the atmosphere at the monthly meetings welcoming and friendly. Group activities engender a feeling of warmth and belonging. Group leaders strive to ensure that no-one feels left out or alone.

Given the age profile of members instances of illness and death are possible. Southwell u3a will show concern and care for members who are ill and for their families in the case of death. Members are asked to let committee members know if they become aware of the illness or death of a member. The committee can make the relevant group leader(s) aware of the situation and be encouraged to take appropriate action on behalf of the group and u3a.

1. Vulnerable adults

Everybody has different levels of vulnerability and each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time. All members who may be vulnerable have a right to protection from all types of harm or abuse. In all our activities we will

- value, listen and respect members who may be vulnerable,
- ensure that all members feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse,
- value diversity and promote equality amongst people and relationships,
- do all we can to help members who may be vulnerable to be and remain active contributors within u3a and if they are or become unable to participate independently, encourage them to bring a companion/carer with them in order that they can continue to enjoy the benefits of u3a membership, and
- ensure all members are aware of their responsibilities to protect vulnerable adults.

2. Accidents

Southwell u3a is not required to have qualified first aiders. However, in the event of an accident during a u3a activity it is important that the emergency services are contacted first for advice, to protect members from liability should they assist a casualty.

Even if there is no question of any liability an accident form should be filled in by the group leader/committee member and a witness to the accident to ensure that the incident is correctly recorded at the time.

All group leaders are issued with blank accident forms which are also available on the website. After completion these should be returned to the u3a secretary who keeps an accident file.

The walking group leaders are issued with first aid kits but must make clear to members that they are not qualified to treat injuries and the injured party should accept responsibility for any treatment given. If, for instance, anyone has an allergy to plasters it is their responsibility to tell the group leader and refuse to have one applied.

3. Health and Safety

A named member of the committee has responsibility for being alert to issues of H&S. He/she will inform the committee of any issues of safety in relation to the monthly meeting venue and the matter will be taken up with the venue operator. Venues that are used for groups should also have their own insurance, but group leaders should also be vigilant to H&S issues.

4. Risk Assessments

See attached 'Risk Assessment Checklist' forms from the Third Age Trust.

5. Welfare Secretary

A member of the committee is appointed as welfare secretary (WS) and has responsibility for trying to ensure that appropriate action is taken in the following instances.

Members with physical difficulties

The WS will be watchful for those members who have some difficulty in accessing the venue, getting to meetings, hearing or seeing the speaker etc. The WS will alert the committee if special arrangements are required and try to ensure that all that can be done to help is done, including alerting a roving welcomer where attention is needed. If a member requires more than nominal assistance they may bring their own carer who will be covered by the P & P liability insurance while they are with the disabled member. The only exception to this is a 'professional' carer who would have to be covered by their own individual liability policy.

Members with additional needs

U3As are self-help, co-operative organisations run entirely by the members for the members and it is important that individuals are able to take full responsibility for their own participation in U3A interest groups and events.

Should the situation arise when a member no longer feels confident that he/she can participate fully without needing help, it will be necessary for that person to be accompanied by a companion/carer who will be covered by the liability insurance provided by TAT whilst in attendance. Even though other U3A members may be willing to help, each member remains responsible for their own participation in groups and events; members cannot take responsibility for another member's care as this could be deemed to be outside TAT insurance cover if any injury or damage resulted. A carer accompanying a vulnerable adult to meetings does not have to be a U3A member and will not be charged for attending U3A meetings.

Illness of a committee member, group leader, member of welcoming team

On learning of such illness, the welfare secretary will be responsible for appropriate action on behalf of the committee.

Illness of a member who is not a group leader and is not a committee member

Given the size of the membership and the likelihood of the WS not hearing of all illnesses etc and in the interests of consistency and parity it is more appropriate that group leaders are encouraged to take appropriate action on behalf of the group and U3A. If the WS learns of a member's illness, and can easily ascertain the group(s) to which that member belongs, then the WS will, ensuring complete confidentiality and with the permission of said member, inform the relevant group leader(s) as they might not already be aware of the illness.

Death of a member

Given the size of the membership and the likelihood of the WS not hearing of the death of a member, and in the interests of consistency and parity, it is more appropriate that group leaders are encouraged to take appropriate action on behalf of the group and U3A. If the WS learns of a member's death, and can easily ascertain the group(s) to which that member belongs, then the WS will, if possible, inform the relevant group leader(s) as they might not already be aware of the sad news.

Other circumstances

The WS will send a card or take other appropriate action for any other situation which the committee deems warrants it.

Examples of appropriate action could be any one or more of the following

- email message,
- phone call contact, or
- collecting a very small donation from the group for a suitable card.

If, for any reason, the welfare secretary is unable to carry out the above responsibilities, then he/she should inform the Chair so that the duty can be fulfilled by him/her or other nominated committee member.

6. Insurance

Southwell U3A is covered by the Public and Products Liability Insurance arranged by TAT which indemnifies all U3A members against all sums they could become legally liable to pay as a result of

- accidental injury or death of any person, and
- accidental loss or damage of material property not belonging to a member, which arises or is caused in connection with the business of U3A.

This is not a personal accident insurance and would only apply in cases where negligence could be proved.

Revised May 2021