



SAFEGUARDING

Introduction:

This document contains:

1. the Safeguarding Policy
 2. the Safeguarding Procedure
- both of which should be read in tandem with
3. the Appendix (The u3a Trust safeguarding overview and guidance)

1.SAXON SHORE SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is:

- a) to guide the Saxon Shore u3a Committee when addressing safeguarding concerns.
- b) to demonstrate the commitment of Saxon Shore u3a to safeguarding their members
- c) and to ensure that everyone involved in the u3a is aware of:
 - The relevant legislation, policy and procedure for safeguarding.
 - Their role and responsibility for safeguarding members.
 - What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of members within the u3a.

Scope:

This safeguarding policy and the procedure that follows it apply to:

- all individuals involved in the Saxon Shore u3a, including the Committee, Group Facilitators and members.
- all concerns about the safety and wellbeing of members taking part in u3a activities and in the wider community.



Safeguarding Commitments:

1. The Committee will ensure that all members are made aware of this safeguarding policy and procedure and know who to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of a member.
2. The Committee has a duty of care to its members and is committed to upholding this safeguarding policy in order to protect its members.
3. Where abuse or neglect is suspected, the Committee will aim to respond in a prompt and efficient manner to any situation where there is a risk of or perceived risk of harm.
4. Saxon Shore u3a does not hold any statutory authority. It is not appropriate for the Committee to take the lead role in any investigations or Safeguarding Enquiry (under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 (England and Wales)).
5. Where there are concerns for a member's wellbeing or safety, the Committee will provide a safeguarding risk assessment, seek advice and support from the Trust where necessary, and will contact Kent County Council Social Services as needed.

6. The Committee recognises that there are various forms of abuse which can be perpetrated by volunteers, members, relatives, friends, and neighbours.

Saxon Shore 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.

A list of types of abuse can be found in the Appendix (Trust safeguarding overview and guidance) of this document (see 'Types of abuse'). The [England and Wales Charity Commission guidance website](#) also list types of risks and harm and provides further guidance.

7. The Committee will put the well-being of those at risk of harm first, and the member 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.

8. The Committee will not 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.
9. Depending on the nature of the allegation and the identified risk, Saxon Shore u3a will support the alleged victims, the alleged perpetrators and any volunteer who becomes aware of an allegation. However, such support must not compromise any safeguarding enquiry or investigation into the allegation or place other members at risk.
10. The Committee will monitor the implementation of this policy and procedure annually.
11. Members of the Committee will familiarise themselves with safeguarding responsibilities and stay up to date with changes to safeguarding recommendations and procedures and with government legislation.
12. Members of the Committee will work together to promote a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting welfare to be addressed.
13. Saxon Shore 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 communityOr to facilitate the investigation of a serious crime

Principles:

When following the safeguarding procedure, the Committee 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 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.

The Committee will also uphold 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

2. SAXON SHORE SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

Introduction

These are the steps that should generally be followed when a safeguarding concern has been identified. However, it is recognised that variations may be required to adapt to different circumstances.

When following this procedure, the commitments and principles in Section 1 (Saxon Shore Safeguarding Policy) of this document and the guidance in the Appendix (Trust safeguarding overview and guidance) should be followed.

General points:

Throughout this procedure:

- All actions taken must be recorded.
- The views of the person at risk must be taken into account. However, it may be necessary to override their wishes in the best interests of other members at risk.
- The steps taken should be documented and stored securely by the Business Secretary in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. Any records will remain confidential to the Committee unless a prior decision has been taken to share the record with the relevant statutory bodies.

At any point in the procedure:

- depending on the nature of the allegation, it may be necessary to pursue the incident following Saxon Shore u3a's Grievances and Complaints Procedure. Where it is decided that this is the best course of action the matter must not be investigated by any party that was privy to the initial reporting of the incident.
- seek advice and support from the Trust, if needed.

Procedure steps:

STEP 1

- a) Where a person becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, the safety of the member/s at risk is a priority. Assess the urgency of the situation.
- b) If they are in immediate danger or in need of immediate medical attention, contact the emergency services on 999 before continuing to step 2.

STEP 2

Provide support to the person. Gather and record as much information as possible

STEP 3

Raise the concern with the Group Facilitator or a member of the Committee.

STEP 4

- a) The Group Facilitator or Committee member should discuss the safeguarding concern with the Executive Officers of the Committee as soon as possible. No Committee member will act in isolation when dealing with a safeguarding concern.
- b) The Committee should provide a safeguarding risk assessment as soon as possible.

In developing the risk assessment, the Committee will consider the level of risk and the action that needs to be taken accordingly. Assessment of risk will include:

- Risk to the individual member
- Risk to other members within the u3a
- Reputational risk for the individual u3a and the u3a movement as a whole

STEP 5

Where it is deemed that the risk is high and immediate action needs to be taken, the Committee will contact Kent County Council Social Services as a Safeguarding Enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 (see <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care/adult-safeguarding/how-to-raise-an-adult-safeguarding-concern-about-yourself-or-someone-else>) for details. The Trust will also be consulted for advice and support.

As far as possible, the member at risk's wishes will be respected as to whether or not to refer any concerns to the Kent County Council.

Where the risk is not deemed to be high, but support is needed, the Committee will contact the Trust to discuss to seek assistance in developing the risk assessment and any further action.



STEP 6

The Committee will decide the most appropriate course of action within the u3a branch. 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 Facilitator.
- excluding a member from the Saxon Shore u3a (assistance from the Trust should be sought before taking this action on the basis of a safeguarding risk assessment).

STEP 7

The Committee will implement the decision, communicate accordingly and update records as appropriate.

Please also refer to the procedure flow diagram on the next page.

Adoption and Review

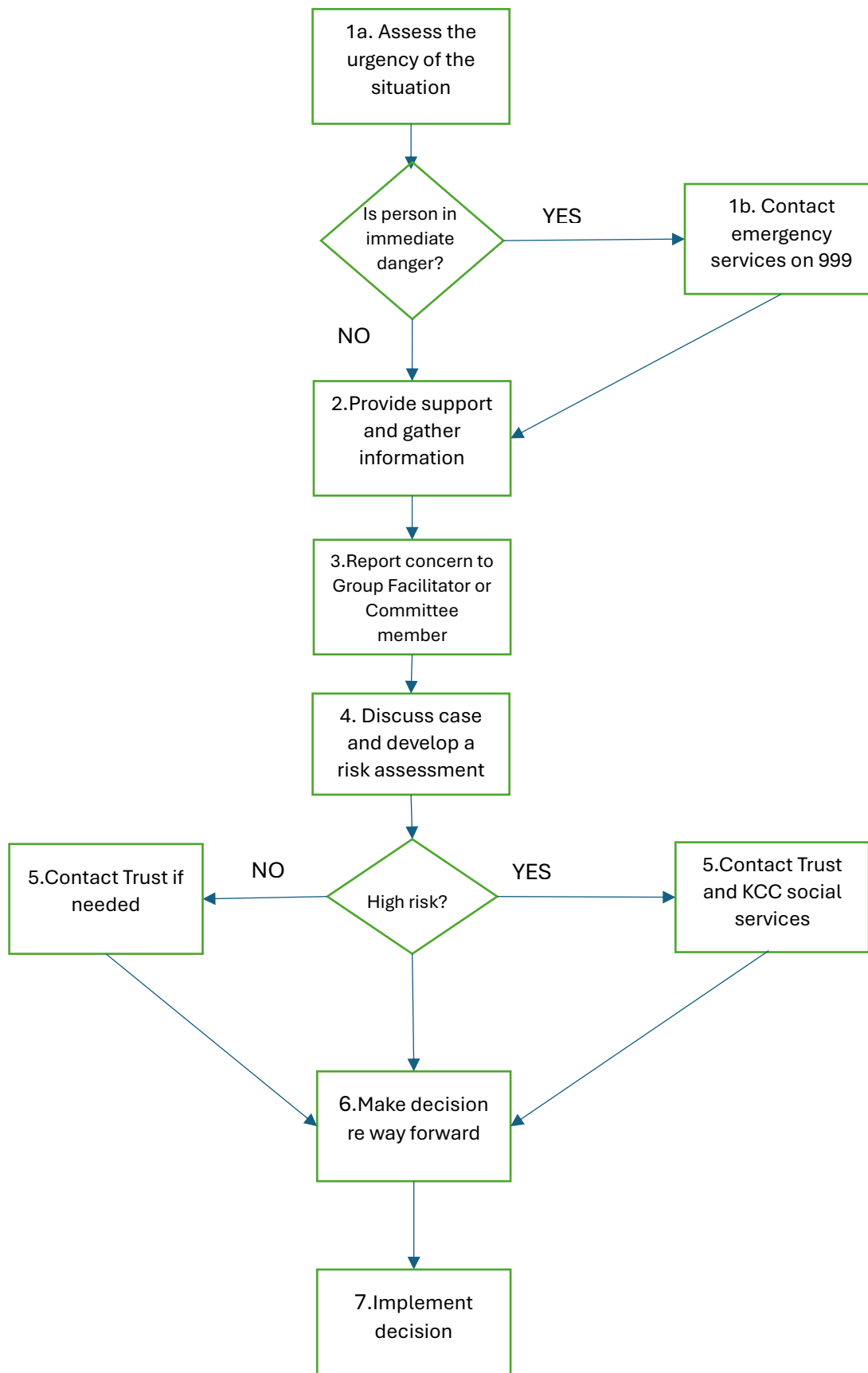
This Policy and Procedure was based upon u3a template dated 15.5.2023

It was adopted on: 1st Feb 2025.

The original signed copy is held on file by the Business Secretary.

Last review: March 2026

Next annual review: Feb 2027.



APPENDIX: TRUST SAFEGUARDING OVERVIEW AND GUIDANCE

1. 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 their committee.
- All u3a committee members have an obligation to follow their safeguarding policy and procedure if they suspect that a member is at risk of abuse.

2. What are some examples of where safeguarding procedures may be activated?

- A member controlling the finances of a visually impaired member.
- A member arriving at an outdoor-based group without appropriate clothing and seemingly confused.
- A member making advances towards another member with dementia.

3. What is the responsibility of members in safeguarding?

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, and members must bring any safeguarding concerns they have to their committee (this can be via their Group Facilitator). Members should follow their code of conduct and not keep any concerns they have to themselves.

4. What is the responsibility of the committee in safeguarding?

All trustees must take reasonable steps to protect anyone who comes in contact with u3a from harm. Every trustee should have clear oversight of how safeguarding and protecting people from harm are managed within the u3a. Trustees must report all safeguarding concerns to the relevant safeguarding authorities promptly. Trustees should support those involved in safeguarding incidents but should not lead safeguarding investigations- this must be left to the authority it is referred to (e.g., social services).

Once a safeguarding concern has been raised, it should be referred onto the appropriate authority. Usually, this would be the local authority social services. In cases where the individuals involved are in immediate danger you should call 999. Additionally, **Hourglass (previously Action on Elder Abuse)**

<https://www.wearehourglass.org> Error! Hyperlink reference not valid. 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.

5. 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 Facilitators 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.

6. 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:
 - 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.
 - You/ will take steps to protect and support them.
- Record and report the disclosure in line with your safeguarding policy and procedure.

Do not:

- Press the person for more details if they are not comfortable sharing.
- 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.

7. How should you record a safeguarding concern?

- 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 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.

8. 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 or 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.