

SUMMARY

This booklet contains copies of the Policies and Procedures that Wimborne u3a is required by its constitution, and the requirements of the national u3a body, to have in place as guidance for the conduct of the charity's work.

Other handbooks and documentation, such as operational policies, risk assessment forms etc. can be found elsewhere on the Wimborne u3a website, and are all itemised in the Document database. In addition, all documents will be kept digitally by the Secretary.

The documents in this booklet are advisory and represent good practice. They have been produced from guidance documents provided by the u3a National Office. The booklet is for the primary use of the Trustees and Committee members. The Wimborne u3a Constitution is the governing document, which is also available on the website. Individual Policy and Procedure documents are available to Convenors and Members by contacting the Secretary, or on our website.

This booklet contains the following policies which are deemed to be mandatory:

- > Data Protection – page 2
- > Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – page 7
- > Finance – page 10
- > Health and Safety – page 15
- > Safeguarding – page 17
- > Trustee Responsibilities – page 21
- > Trustee Code of Conduct – page 24

Operational policies and procedures:

- > Accessibility – page 25
- Complaints – page 27
- Disciplinary – page 30

The policies have been reviewed and approved between November 2024 and January 2025. They are all subject to annual review.

WIMBORNE u3a DATA PROTECTION POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy is taken from the u3a document U3A-KMS-DOC-002

2. Policy

2.1 Scope of the policy

This policy applies to the work of Wimborne u3a. The policy sets out the requirements that Wimborne u3a has to collect and process information for membership purposes. The policy details how personal information will be collected, stored and managed in line with data protection principles and the General Data Protection Regulation. The policy is reviewed on an ongoing basis by Wimborne u3a committee members to ensure that Wimborne u3a remains compliant. This policy should be read in tandem with Wimborne u3a's Privacy Policy.

2.2 Why this policy exists

This data protection policy ensures Wimborne u3a:

- Complies with data protection law and follows good practice
- Protects the rights of members
- Is open about how it stores and processes members data
- Protects itself from the risks of a data breach

2.3 General guidelines for committee members and group convenors

- The only people able to access data covered by this policy should be those who need to communicate with or provide a service to Wimborne u3a members.
- Wimborne u3a will provide induction training to committee members and group convenors to help them understand their responsibilities when handling data.
- Committee Members and group convenors should keep all data secure, by taking sensible precautions and following the guidelines below.
- Strong passwords must be used and they should never be shared.
- Data should not be shared outside of the u3a unless with prior consent and/or for specific and agreed reasons. Examples would include Gift Aid information provided to HMRC or information provided to the distribution company for the Trust publications.
- Member information should be refreshed periodically to ensure accuracy, via the membership renewal process or when policy is changed.
- Additional support will be available from the Third Age Trust where uncertainties or incidents regarding data protection arise.

2.4 Data protection principles

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) identifies key data protection principles:

- Principle 1 – Personal data shall be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
- Principle 2 – Personal data must be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes; further processing for archiving purposes in the public

interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes shall not be considered to be incompatible with the initial purposes.

- Principle 3 – The collection of personal data must be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed;
- Principle 4 – Personal data held should be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date; every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that personal data that are inaccurate, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed, are erased or rectified without delay;
- Principle 5 – Personal data must be kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed; personal data may be stored for longer periods insofar as the personal data will be processed solely for archiving purposes
- Principle 6 – Personal data must be processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.

2.5 Lawful, fair and transparent data processing

Wimborne u3a requests personal information from potential members and members for membership applications and for sending communications regarding members' involvement with the u3a. Members will be informed as to why the information is being requested and what the information will be used for. The lawful basis for obtaining member information is due to the legitimate interest relationship that the u3a has with individual members. In addition, members will be asked to provide consent for specific processing purposes such as the taking of photographs. Wimborne u3a members will be informed as to who they need to contact should they wish for their data not to be used for specific purposes for which they have provided consent. Where these requests are received, they will be acted upon promptly and the member will be informed as to when the action has been taken.

2.6 Processed for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes

Members will be informed as to how their information will be used and the Committee of Wimborne u3a will seek to ensure that member information is not used inappropriately. Appropriate use of information provided by members will include:

- Communicating with members about Wimborne u3a events and activities
- Group convenors communicating with group members about specific group activities
- Member information will be provided to the distribution company that sends out the Trust publication – Third Age Matters. Members will be informed and have a choice as to whether or not they wish to receive the publication
- Sending members information about Third Age Trust events and activities
- Communicating with members about their membership and/or renewal of their membership

- Communicating with members about specific issues that may have arisen during the course of their membership

Wimborne u3a will ensure that group convenors are made aware of what would be considered appropriate and inappropriate communication. Inappropriate communication would include sending u3a members marketing and/or promotional materials from external service providers.

Wimborne u3a will ensure that members' information is managed in such a way as to not infringe an individual members rights which include:

- The right to be informed
- The right of access
- The right to rectification
- The right to erasure
- The right to restrict processing
- The right to data portability
- The right to object

2.7 Adequate, Relevant and Limited Data Processing

Members of Wimborne u3a will only be asked to provide information that is relevant for membership purposes. This will include:

- Name
- Postal address
- Email address
- Telephone number
- Gift Aid entitlement

Where additional information may be required such as health related information this will be obtained with the consent of the member who will be informed as to why this information is required and the purpose that it will be used for.

Where Wimborne u3a organises a trip or activity that requires next of kin information to be provided, a legitimate interest assessment will have been completed in order to request this information. Members will be made aware that the assessment has been completed.

2.8 Photographs

Photographs are classified as personal data. Where group photographs are being taken members will be asked to step out of shot if they don't wish to be in the photograph. Otherwise, consent will be obtained from members in order for photographs to be taken and members will be informed as to where photographs will be displayed. Should a member wish at any time to remove their consent and to have their photograph removed then they should contact Wimborne u3a to advise that they no longer wish their photograph to be displayed.

2.9 Accuracy of data and keeping data up-to-date

Wimborne u3a has a responsibility to ensure members' information is kept up to date. Members will be informed to let the membership secretary know if any of their personal information changes. In addition, on an annual basis, the membership renewal process will provide an opportunity for members to inform Wimborne u3a as to any changes in their personal information.

2.10 Accountability and governance

Wimborne u3a Committee is responsible for ensuring that the u3a remains compliant with data protection requirements and can evidence that it has. Where consent is required for specific purposes then evidence of this consent (either electronic or paper) will be obtained and retained securely. Wimborne u3a Committee will ensure that new members joining the Committee receive an induction into the requirements of GDPR and the implications for their role. Wimborne u3a will also ensure that group convenors are made aware of their responsibilities in relation to the data they hold and process. Committee Members will stay up-to-date with guidance and practice within the u3a movement and will seek advice from the Third Age Trust National Office should any uncertainties arise. Wimborne u3a Committee will review data protection requirements on an ongoing basis as well as reviewing who has access to data and how data is stored and deleted. When Committee Members and Group Convenors relinquish their roles, they will be asked to either pass on data to those who need it and/or delete data.

2.11 Secure Processing

Wimborne Committee Members have a responsibility to ensure that data is both securely held and processed. This will include:

- Committee members using strong passwords
- Committee members not sharing passwords
- Restricting access of sharing member information to those on the Committee who need to communicate with members on a regular basis
- Using password protection on laptops and PCs that contain personal information
- Using password protection, a membership database or secure cloud systems when sharing data between committee members and/or group convenors
- Paying for firewall security to be put onto Committee Members' laptops or other devices.

2.12 Subject Access Request

u3a members are entitled to request access to the information that is held by Wimborne u3a. The request needs to be received in the form of a written request to the Membership Secretary of Wimborne u3a. On receipt of the request, the request will be formally acknowledged and dealt with expediently (the legislation requires that information should generally be provided within one month) unless there are exceptional circumstances as to why the request cannot be granted. Wimborne u3a will provide a written response detailing all information held on the member. A record shall be kept of the date of the request and the date of the response.

2.13 Data Breach Notification

Were a data breach to occur action will be taken to minimise the harm. This will include ensuring that all Wimborne u3a Committee Members are made aware that a breach has taken place and how the breach occurred. The Committee shall then seek to rectify the cause of the breach as soon as possible to prevent any further breaches. The Chair of Wimborne u3a will contact National Office as soon

as possible after the breach has occurred to notify of the breach. A discussion will take place between the Chair and National Office as to the seriousness of the breach, action to be taken and, where necessary, the Information Commissioner's Office would be notified. The Committee shall also contact the relevant u3a members to inform them of the data breach and actions taken to resolve the breach.

Where a u3a member feels that there has been a breach by the u3a, a committee member will ask the member to provide an outline of the breach. If the initial contact is by telephone, the committee member will ask the u3a member to follow this up with an email or a letter detailing their concern. The alleged breach will then be investigated by members of the committee who are not in any way implicated in the breach. Where the committee needs support or if the breach is serious, they should notify National Office. The u3a member should also be informed that they can report their concerns to National Office if they don't feel satisfied with the response from the u3a. Breach matters will be subject to a full investigation, records will be kept & all those involved notified of the outcome.

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Date of Review: November 2025

WIMBORNE u3a EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

1. Statement

Wimborne u3a is a learning co-operative and membership charity which enables members in their third age to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members of each u3a draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to teach and learn from each other (peer to peer learning). Wimborne u3a recognise that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and are committed to making sure that the u3a is as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

2. Aims of this policy

This policy has been drawn up to comply with the Equality Act 2010. The Act stipulates that organisations cannot treat someone unfairly on the basis of what it calls 'protected characteristics', which are:

- ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race
- age
- disability
- religion or belief (including the absence of belief)
- marital or civil partnership status
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy
- gender reassignment
- sex

Wimborne u3a will strive to ensure that members do not experience discrimination on the basis of their protected characteristics. This will include ensuring equal access to groups and behaviour between members and by Wimborne u3a Committee Members and group leaders. The Equality Act highlights that organisations need to consider what 'reasonable adjustments' can be made in order to accommodate those who may have particular needs. Wimborne u3a Committee will review the reasonable adjustments needed for all members and individual members with particular needs on an ongoing basis. Where necessary, the Committee will seek guidance and additional support from the u3aPlus sub-committee and/or National Office.

3. Practical approaches to inclusion

Wimborne u3a will make sure all new members are aware of our policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and accessibility as well as the Member Code of Conduct. Wimborne u3a will make reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure a wide range of people can participate in our activities and meetings. This may include:

- Consideration given to the time of day of meetings and their location.
- Consideration of venues for meetings including:
 - Accessible to wheelchair users
 - Access to PA system and a hearing loop
 - Parking and disabled parking available
 - Disabled toilet facilities available

- Publicity:
 - Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of the u3a.
 - Make communications available to those who don't have access to the internet
 - Use a range of images that reflect the local community
- Recruiting new members:
 - Doing outreach sessions and contacting agencies working with community groups who may be harder to reach
 - Encouraging members who are representative of the groups who are under-represented within the u3a i.e. men or younger members to assist with the recruitment process
 - Managing growth so that we ensure that new members can be accommodated
- Monitoring:
 - Wimborne u3a will monitor member numbers i.e. the numbers of members who join, re-join and leave each year in order to identify any trends in membership.
 - Wimborne u3a committee will review the diversity of the membership on an ongoing basis and will seek to ensure that the u3a remains attractive and accessible to all.
- Tasks and Roles:
 - Ensure a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as leading groups.
 - The u3a will allocate Accessibility as a function within the job description of the Venues Secretary to ensure that both new and existing members can access the members meetings and groups that they would like to join and consider what reasonable adjustments may be needed to ensure this.
 - The Groups Coordinator will ensure that new Group Leaders are made aware of issues in relation to accessibility and what steps they may need to take in meeting access requirements. Each group will be reviewed on an individual basis as certain groups may require a certain level of fitness or mobility and members need to be made aware of this in advance.
 - Wimborne u3a will offer induction and training around equality, diversity and inclusion to Committee Members and Group Leaders on an ongoing basis.

4. Code of Conduct

Wimborne u3a has a Member code of conduct. The code of conduct outlines that members should abide by the u3a's policies and procedures as well as treating each other with dignity and respect. This would include not acting in a way that would be deemed discriminatory or offensive.

Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where Wimborne u3a Committee become aware of any discriminatory practice or

harassment, the committee will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal procedures.

If any member of Wimborne u3a feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to the Committee. Any matters of concern will be reviewed by the Committee and a decision will be made, in line with the u3as constitution and formal procedures, as to what steps will be taken to address the issue.

5. Definitions

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, when or whom they were born, or because of other characteristics. Promoting equality is about behaving in a way that tackles inequalities, aiming to ensure that all members are treated fairly, and do not experience discrimination.

Promoting diversity is about recognising that everyone is different and creating an environment that values members and ensuring that the u3a Movement is as accessible as possible to different groups within the community.

Inclusion is about positively striving to meet the needs of different people and taking practical steps to ensure members feel respected.

Direct Discrimination is when a person is treated less favourably because of their ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race, age, disability, religion or belief (including the absence of belief), marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, gender reassignment, political belief.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is applied equally to all groups of people but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one particular group.

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to 'protected characteristics' that has the purpose or effect of violating a members dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment is also unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has that same purpose or effect.

Victimisation occurs when a member is treated less favourably than others in the same circumstances because he or she has made a complaint or an allegation of discrimination, harassment or bullying or given information regarding such a complaint or allegation.

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WIMBORNE u3a FINANCE POLICY

1 Trustees' financial responsibilities

The trustees of Wimborne u3a are responsible for:

- Safeguarding the assets of the charity.
- Identifying and managing the risk of loss, waste, theft or fraud.
- Ensuring the financial reporting is robust and of sufficient quality.
- Keeping financial records in accordance with the governing document and relevant legislation (e.g. Charities Acts, Companies Acts etc).
- Preparing Annual Accounts in accordance with the governing document and relevant legislation.
- The accounts should show a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the u3a.

Trustees are jointly responsible for keeping full financial records. These include those of the u3a and all the interest groups, sub-groups etc, where appropriate.

To enable the trustees to carry out these responsibilities, the financial procedures detailed below will be followed.

A copy of this policy will be given to all trustees on their election/appointment to the committee and made available to members on the website.

The policy will be kept under review and revised as necessary.

2 Banking

2.1 Bank accounts

- All bank accounts are in the name of Wimborne u3a and operated by the trustees.
- New accounts may only be opened by a decision of the trustees, which must be minuted.
- Changes to the bank mandate may only be made by a decision of the trustees, which must be minuted.
- The authorised signatories are the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary Groups Secretary and Treasurer. This responsibility cannot be delegated.
- All cheques must be signed by two signatories.
- The signatories are responsible for examining the cheque for accuracy and completeness.
- The signatories are responsible for examining the payment documentation (purchase invoice etc.) prior to signing the cheque or authorising an internet transfer.
- All bank statements must be sent to the Treasurer directly.
- Blank cheques will never be issued.
- Blank cheques will never be signed by one signatory for a second to complete later.
- Whenever practical two people should be involved in counting cash receipts.

2.2 Online banking

Where online operation of the bank accounts is in place only trustees approved by the committee will have access to this facility. The security of the online

system is in line with the arrangements offered by Lloyds Bank and in accordance with the mandated approval limits.

2.3 Payment by bank cards

Operation of the online banking service is under the control of the Treasurer who has full access rights and is responsible for assigning the appropriate delegate rights, as agreed by the committee and in accordance with the bank mandate. All payments are authorised in accordance with the bank mandate. Access to the online accounts varies from bank to bank and may be via a card reader and personal access card or by logging on to the bank system with a personal password and access code. The issue of any bank debit or credit card in the name of Wimborne u3a will be approved by the committee. The use of these cards overrides the dual control aspect of the payment authorisation process, but is permitted, where agreed in advance in recognition that online purchases for certain goods and services represents the most effective, and in some cases, the only method of completing the purchase (eg theatre tickets). The committee will predetermine the spending limits for any card: the limit may be per transaction, per day or per month.

Wimborne u3a holds zero business debit/credit cards. All transactions made using these cards appear immediately on the appropriate bank account (subject to the timescales for electronic banking transactions) and are subject to review by the nominated officers through the online banking service. All such payments must be supported by an invoice or receipt made out to Wimborne u3a.

2.4 Personal debit or credit cards

The use of personal debit or credit cards for interest group activities needs to be closely managed. Permission must be sought from the committee where a group feels that there is no other viable way to make payments.

Prior approval must be given by the committee for equipment and other items to be purchased for the use of Wimborne u3a or specific interest groups. In these circumstances, it may be appropriate for a member to purchase the equipment themselves and then claim the cost as a personal expense claim.

All invoices must be issued in the name of Wimborne u3a.

3 Groups' finances

3.1 Interest groups are expected to be self-financing and can collect such sums of money as the group members and leadership deem to be necessary to undertake their activities. The funds of these groups belong to the u3a. Groups are permitted to make any expenditure deemed necessary by the group members and the group leadership and can withdraw money on request from the ringfenced funds held by the u3a on their behalf, as appropriate. The Treasurer, Groups Co-ordinator and Group Leader(s) need to agree what records they need to keep of the group's transactions in order to:

- Allow the Treasurer to keep accurate accounts for presentation to the AGM, for discussion with the trustees and to meet regulatory requirements.
- Allow the group members to understand how their monies are being managed.
- Maintain transparency and trust for all concerned.

- Minimise the risk of error and potential loss of funds.
- Allow group leaders to maintain cash floats.

3.2 Receipts

To manage the handover of cash and cheques to be paid into the Wimborne u3a bank account the committee has decided that:

- Bank paying in slips will not be given to group leaders for this purpose.
- Group leaders may pay sums due by issuing their own cheque or paying online through their own bank account.
- Where applicable receipts will need to be given to group leaders, or acknowledged by email.
- Where net sums are being paid over this needs to be fully demonstrated to the Treasurer.
- Cash held back for cash flow purposes will be within the u3a's approved limits (they will vary by activity).

3.3 Payments

The committee will inform relevant group leaders as to the approved process for payments relating to:

- When a trip is organised by and paid through the u3a or paid directly by the members to the trip organiser.
- When payments may be deducted from activity revenue:
 - Venues
 - Coaches
 - Tutors
 - Speakers
 - Other
- When payment for venues, coaches, tutors, speakers etc must be paid by the u3a.

Outside speakers should be asked to state their fees and any travel costs at the time of booking and will be required to submit an invoice for online payment after the event.

Where the committee has agreed the use of a paid tutor, they must provide evidence of their self-employed status and invoice the u3a as agreed.

The committee (via the Treasurer) will monitor the income and expenditure of the groups. Group leaders need to provide regular information, as agreed, to the Treasurer. Where groups do not comply then the committee will review as to whether the group is legitimately operating in line with the insurance and financial requirements.

3.4 Social activities

Events such as theatre trips, visits or educational days out must be charged at cost and all participants pay appropriately. The costs paid by members must cover out-of-pocket expenses.

The organiser of an event must not benefit from any discount (e.g. a free place) offered by the organisation providing the event. The value of free places must be shared out among all participants to the event.

Out-of-pocket expenses can be paid to an organiser out of the money collected for the event. As all u3a members offer their services free to the movement, the organiser(s) must not get any pecuniary reward for organising an event.

3.5 Payments to other charities

In line with charity law, a u3a cannot raise funds for another charity that does not have similar charitable objectives. Wimborne u3a will make payments to speakers who have indicated that they intend to donate their fee to a specific charity but not direct to their nominated charity.

4 Expenses policy

4.1 Out of pocket expenses incurred by the volunteers who are involved with running the u3a will be reimbursed. Expense claims must be submitted with receipts. Expense claims will be authorised by the executive committee and no committee member should authorise their own claim. Expenses will include – with committee approval – attendance at the Trust's AGM and Conference or national/regional workshops.

All claims need to be made on the appropriate form (copies available from the Treasurer) giving sufficient detail as to the nature of the expense.

Expense claims should reflect the cheapest travel option available. Travel by car will be reimbursed at the current HMRC approved rate for the actual mileage travelled. Car parking and congestion charges can be reclaimed (with receipts) but parking or other fines will not be allowed.

Overnight accommodation will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and will need the prior agreement of the executive committee.

5 Membership Fees and membership of more than one u3a

The membership fee is reviewed on an annual basis. Wimborne u3a is committed to keeping the membership subscription as low as possible to ensure that the u3a remains accessible to all members.

Wimborne u3a offers a system whereby the membership fee can be adjusted with a 25% reduction for those who can provide proof of benefits received, such as pension credit, on application to the Treasurer. Any application received will be considered on its own merit.

For u3a members who can evidence membership of another u3a, Wimborne u3a will reduce the cost of membership by the amount that is paid to the Trust for each member.

6 Asset register

An asset register is maintained by the Treasurer which records all assets held including their initial purchase price, date of purchase, estimated nominal value and location.

It should be noted that under a receipts and payments reporting system, all assets are fully written off against receipts in the year of purchase. The register is reviewed annually.

7 Reserves

Wimborne u3a aims to keep a level of reserves that will cover six months of regular operating activity. This is considered by the committee a reasonable level for this type of charity.

Social account activities are excluded from this figure as these activities are inflated by high-cost activities such as theatre visits and days out and are entirely self-financing.

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WIMBORNE u3a HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

1. Introduction

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 only applies to paid workers, although volunteers must still be protected from risks. The u3a should ensure that reasonable care has been taken to avoid harming others and that participants are aware of the risks.

Wimborne u3a aims to provide and maintain safe and healthy conditions and environments for all members including during the meeting of u3a groups, monthly meetings and at events.

Wimborne u3a will provide information and support to all Convenors to ensure that the Policy is understood and adhered to.

2. Insurance

Wimborne u3a is covered by the insurance provided by The Third Age Trust. If any activities are being considered that Wimborne u3a is unsure if they are covered, they will contact the u3a Office for further advice. The Third Age Trust provides third party liability insurance although extreme sports and high hazard activities may not be covered. Wimborne u3a needs to check insurance and undertake a risk assessment before running any activity.

3. Risk Assessments

Wimborne u3a will ensure the Committee, Group Leaders or those responsible for a meeting or event complete a risk assessment. These will be used to identify any risks and explore how they could be mitigated. Wimborne u3a is aware that some venues used for meetings/events may already have their own risk assessment, these should be reviewed and where mitigations identified, ensure they are actioned. e.g. a venue may state that no more than 5 chairs should be stacked together and or nothing placed in the way of fire escapes. Where relevant, clear instructions and guidance should be provided to anyone who requires it.

Wimborne u3a has separate Risk Assessment guidelines and proforma for all its activities. These can be accessed via the Wimborne u3a website.

4. Responding to accidents/incidents and dealing with emergencies

In the event of an incident/accident the Chair of Wimborne u3a should be informed as soon as appropriate. Where a u3a member is involved in an accident or incident whilst taking part in a u3a event Wimborne u3a will ensure those who witnessed the event and were involved complete an incident report. This must be completed and shared with those who need to have access to it, including the Committee Chair and kept on file by the Secretary. It will also need to be shared with the insurers in the event of an insurance claim.

5. Lone volunteering

There may be occasions where u3a members may be carrying out activities for Wimborne u3a on their own. For example, opening a venue for a meeting, setting up for

a meeting, etc. Where this occurs the u3a member should ensure someone else knows where they are and when they should be expected back. The u3a member should also know who to contact in the event of an incident or accident and ensure they have, for example, their mobile phone with them and avoid activities at height e.g. using a ladder.

6. Manual handling

All u3a members should think about manual handling in advance to avoid injury to themselves and others. Members should not carry out any manual handling tasks if they are not able to manage them and should ask for help from other u3a members.

7. Venues

Where Wimborne u3a uses external venues who have their own policies and procedures and risk assessments Wimborne u3a will ensure these are followed. This will include making sure all u3a members in attendance are aware of what to do in the event of a fire alarm/evacuation. If Wimborne u3a is hosting an open day this will also include ensuring those who are not u3a members are also informed.

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WIMBORNE u3a SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Purpose

This policy and procedure is written to enable the committee to address issues where there are safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding 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.

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Wimborne u3a to safeguarding their members and to ensure that everyone involved in Wimborne 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 Wimborne u3a.

2. Scope

This safeguarding policy and procedure apply to all individuals involved in Wimborne 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.

3. Safeguarding Commitments

In order to implement this policy, Wimborne u3a will ensure that all members will be aware of the safeguarding procedures and know who to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult.

Wimborne u3a committee has a duty of care to its members, is committed to upholding this safeguarding policy in order to protect its members.

Wimborne u3a recognises that some people are potentially at risk of abuse and neglect. Where abuse or neglect is suspected Wimborne u3a will aim to respond in a prompt and efficient manner to any situation where there is a risk of or perceived risk of harm.

Wimborne u3a does not hold any statutory authority. 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.

Where there are concerns for a member's wellbeing or safety, Wimborne u3a committee will complete a safeguarding risk assessment, seek advice and support from the Trust where necessary, and will contact the relevant statutory authorities as needed. It is not appropriate for Wimborne u3a to take the lead role in any Safeguarding Enquiry (under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 (England and Wales)).

Wimborne u3a recognises that there are various forms of abuse which can be perpetrated by volunteers, members, relatives, friends, and neighbours. Wimborne u3a 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.

Wimborne 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.

A list of the types of safeguarding risks and harm can be found on the England and Wales Charity Commission website, which is applicable generally.

Wimborne u3a will monitor the implementation of this policy and procedure annually through its committee.

When following the safeguarding procedure Wimborne u3a 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.

Wimborne 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.

4. Procedure

Wimborne u3a has a responsibility to ensure that its committee members and group leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Depending on the nature of the allegation and the identified risk, Wimborne u3a will support 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.

Wimborne 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:

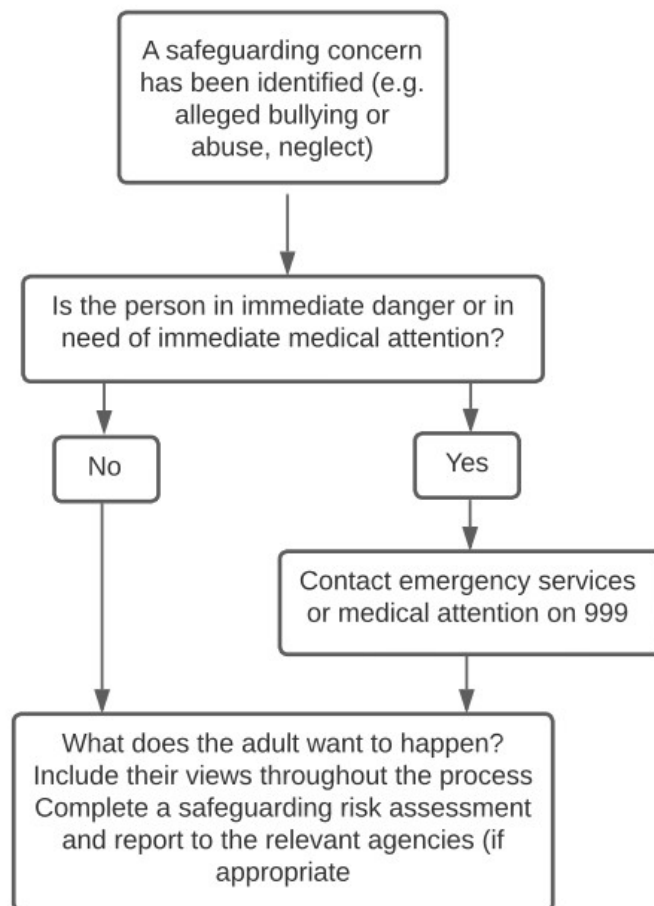
- Danger to a person's life
- Danger to a person's health
- Danger to others
- Danger to the community
- To facilitate the investigation of a serious crime

5. Courses of action

- Wimborne 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.
- Where the committee becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, steps will be taken, as needed, to ensure the safety of adult/s at risk is secured as a priority. The steps to take to address this will be discussed and agreed between the Executive Officers of the 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.
- Where Wimborne u3a committee becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, the first step will be to gather as much information as possible to assist with the decision as to the next steps. A risk assessment will be developed and recorded as soon as possible after the concern comes to the attention of the committee. See Fig 1 below.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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

- Where the risk is not deemed to be high but support is needed, Wimborne 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.
- Once the risk assessment is completed, the committee will decide as to the most appropriate course of action. 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 leader.
- Depending on the nature of the allegation it may be necessary to pursue the incident following Wimborne u3a’s complaints or disciplinary procedure. Where it is decided that this is the best course of action the matter will not be investigated by any party that was privy to the initial reporting of the incident.
- 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.

Fig 1



Date of Policy Approval:
November 26 2024
Date of Review:
November 2025

WIMBORNE u3a TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Document Control

Trustee Responsibilities Document Date 26/11/2024

Review November 2026

2. Introduction

2.1. Purpose

To outline the responsibilities of Trusteeship of a u3a.

2.2. Scope

Relevant to all u3a Trustees (committee members).

2.3. Related documentation

Trustee Code of Conduct*

New Trustee Induction*

Committee Handbook*

Finance Policy *

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy*

Data Protection Policy*

Safeguarding Policy*

Health and Safety Policy*

Privacy Policy*

* available on our website

From the U3A national database

U3A-KMS-DOC-026 Terms of Membership of the Trust

U3A-KMS-DOC-037 Complaints Procedure

U3A-KMS-DOC-038 Disciplinary Procedure

U3A-KMS-DOC-039 Grievance Procedure

U3A-KMS-POL-007 Accessibility Policy

Also: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/running-your-u3a/526-trustee-responsibilities>

3. Trustees' responsibilities and duties

- A u3a's committee members take on the role of Trustees of the charity. Committee members are responsible for the governance of the U3A including directing how it is managed and run.
- The Trustees must make sure that the U3A is carrying out the purpose for which it is set up, and that all resources and funds are used only in furthering its charitable objective.
- Trustees are collectively responsible for ensuring that a U3A fulfils its charitable objectives and does not stray beyond them. The central purpose of every U3A is educational.
- Trustees collectively are responsible for the safe custody of members' money.

4. Trustee Code of Conduct

A Trustee code of conduct is an agreement between the organisation and the individual committee member which clarifies the standard of behaviour expected in the performance of their role. It is recommended that u3a committees adopt the relevant Code of Conduct for their u3a and all new committee members are provided with a copy.

5. Trusteeship

All u3as are charities whether they are registered or not due to the charitable purpose that is contained within the constitution. This status means that all committee members are Trustees. The Charity Commission publishes guidance on the role of Trustees – ‘The Essential Trustee’ CC3 which committee members need to familiarise themselves with www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3.

‘The Essential Trustee’ highlights some key areas of Trusteeship which includes:

- Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Comply with your charity’s governing document and the law
- Act in your charity’s best interests
- Manage your charity’s resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill
- Ensure your charity is accountable

Trustees are also required to sign a Trustee eligibility form in order to declare their suitability for the Trustee role. The Chair should retain a copy of these forms and ensure new Trustee complete one of these as part of their induction to the role. It is also recommended that u3as refer to the Charity Code of Good Governance www.charitygovernancecode.org as a guide to governance requirements.

The code identifies five core principles:

An effective board will provide good governance and leadership by:

- understanding its role and responsibilities.
- working well both as individuals and as a team.
- ensuring delivery of organisational purpose.
- exercising appropriate control.
- behaving with integrity and by being open and accountable.

Ref: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/running-your-u3a/526-trustee-responsibilities>

6. Trustee Indemnity Insurance

u3a committees are covered by Trustee Indemnity Insurance provided through the Third Age Trust. The insurance protects u3a Trustees both individually and as a board, against a genuine mistake or error of judgement providing that they have acted responsibly and followed their u3as constitution. Where this is deemed not to be the case, Trustees risk being held personally responsible and not being covered by indemnity insurance. Trustees should also be aware that even if an allowable claim is

made, an excess will apply. The indemnity insurance will not protect against criminal law.

In the event of any irregularity at either main committee or group level, the Trustees are potentially liable if they have not taken all reasonable steps to minimise risks. Trustees must follow the requirements of the appropriate regulatory authority for their country in relation to any reporting requirements. It is not possible for an individual Trustee to opt out of collective responsibility.

Responsibility must never be given to a Group Leader/Convenor or Group Coordinator to operate a group that is in any way detached from the U3A. All money collected is the property of the u3a and it must all be accounted for to the membership at the AGM and to the appropriate regulatory authority, as required.

7. Committee Meetings – specific requirements

- Trustees are expected to study the agenda and all supporting papers prior to the meeting and to attend all meetings.
- Conflict of Interest – Trustees must declare a conflict or possible conflict of interest at the start of the committee meeting or at the earliest possible opportunity. The Chair will then decide whether to exclude the Trustee from a particular item or even from the whole meeting. In the event that the Chair has a conflict of interest, then the committee should request the Vice Chair to rule on the matter.
- Power to make decisions – this rests solely with the committee, as a body and decisions can only be taken as a result of a majority vote in favour by those members of the committee present at the time. No Trustee has the authority to act in isolation.
- Confidentiality – in order that all Trustees feel comfortable expressing their views and ideas it is essential that everybody maintains confidentiality outside the committee at all times. The decisions made by the committee must be minuted and, once approved, the minutes are available on request to members.
- Corporate responsibility – no matter what individual Trustees' opinions or voting choices are, once an item is approved by the committee, all Trustees must accept it as decisive and final and not comment further outside the committee environment.

The conduct of the Committee is determined by the Constitution. Further details of the Committee structure and functions, including corporate roles, can be found in the Committee Handbook. Both documents are available in the Wimborne u3a database, held by the Secretary.

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WIMBORNE u3a TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Introduction

The Trustee Code of Conduct is an agreement between Wimborne u3a and the individual committee members which clarifies the standard of behaviour expected in the performance of their role. The Code of Conduct applies to Trustees in particular, but other Committee members are expected to use this document as a guideline for their own conduct in their association with Wimborne u3a.

2. Trustee Code of Conduct

- u3a Trustees must work together as a team and are collectively responsible for controlling the management and administration of the u3a.
- Trustees must always act in the best interests of the u3a and the u3a movement, strive to uphold its reputation and never do anything which could bring the u3a or the u3a movement into disrepute or expose it to undue risk.
- Trustees must use their u3a's resources responsibly and only to further its stated charitable purpose.
- Trustees are expected to reflect the current organisational policy of their u3a, regardless of whether it conflicts with their personal views.
- Trustees are expected to abide by their u3a's governance procedures and practices.
- Trustees must comply with Charity Law and the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator.
- Trustees are expected to know, follow and promote the principles of the u3a Movement at every opportunity.
- Trustees must never derive any pecuniary benefit from being a Trustee and must notify the Chair of any gifts received.
- Trustees should inform the Chair before accepting an invitation to speak on behalf of the u3a.
- Trustees are expected to treat fellow committee members courteously at all times and maintain a respectful attitude towards the opinions of others.
- Organisational, committee and individual confidentiality must be respected at all times.
- Trustees must read the Charity Commission leaflet CC3 entitled 'The Essential Trustee – what you need to know, what you need to do' which can be downloaded from the Charity Commission website

List of Trustees as of 26/11/2024:

Ashley Rowlands	Chair
Vic Grayson	Vice Chair
Jayne Twomey	Treasurer
Chris Letchford	Secretary
Horace Letchford	Membership Secretary

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WIMBORNE u3a ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

1. Statement

Wimborne u3a is a learning co-operative and membership charity which enables members in their third age to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members of each u3a draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to teach and learn from each other (peer to peer learning). Wimborne u3a is committed ensuring that the u3a is as inclusive and accessible as possible for those in their third age who meet the criteria for membership. This policy document should be read alongside Wimborne u3a's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

2. Aims of the Policy

This policy has been drawn up to ensure that Wimborne u3a takes steps to review accessibility needs for individual members and makes reasonable adjustments, where possible, to accommodate the needs of members with disabilities and/or health related needs. The policy takes into account the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 and the need for Wimborne u3a to avoid discriminating directly or indirectly against members with disabilities and/or health related needs. The policy will act as a reference point for Committee Members, Group Convenors and individual members in terms of the steps Wimborne u3a will take. The policy will also identify the parameters of the adjustments that can be made. Wimborne u3a is a membership charity and not a service provider, therefore whilst reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that individuals can participate and can attend with carers to support their needs, there will be certain needs that the u3a will not be able to accommodate due to the level of care that an individual may need.

3. Practical Approaches to Increasing Access

In ensuring equality of access Wimborne u3a will take the following steps:

- An Accessibility Officer will be identified from amongst the membership. This will be a volunteer role/committee member role
- The Accessibility Officer will have responsibility for liaising with Group Convenors on an ongoing basis to ensure that groups are accessible and that Convenors are aware of what the expectations are and what adjustments may need to be made e.g. relocating a group held within someone's home to a wheelchair accessible venue
- The Accessibility Officer will contact new members who indicate that they have a disability or health related issue that may need additional support and/or adjustment and discuss with them what needs they have and how these could be met – as appropriate
- General meetings will, as far as possible, be held at a well lit, fully wheelchair accessible venue, spacious enough to cope with wheelchairs and mobility scooters, with wheelchair accessible toilet and hearing aid loop system, and with a sound system in use

- Speakers giving visual presentations will be asked to give a good description of the presentation if there is a possibility that people with visual impairment are present
- At the monthly talks the front row of seats will be reserved for members who have impaired hearing or vision
- Access will be reviewed by the committee on an ongoing basis with a view to considering any additional adjustments that may need to be made e.g. availability of a hearing loop or access to dementia friends training
- Committee members and Group Convenors will receive an induction and/or training designed to support them in having an awareness of and facilitating access
- Group Convenors running groups that require a certain level of fitness and/or mobility will be asked to provide this information to members in advance so that members can decide as to whether the group is suitable for them
- Group Convenors will liaise with the Accessibility Officer where there are concerns about an individual's ability to participate
- Wimborne u3a will try to ensure that there are a range of groups available that will provide access to members so that members do not feel excluded from too many interest/activity groups
- Wimborne u3a will encourage and may require members to bring carers with them to u3a activities, as needed, with no additional cost for the carer. The member must provide proof, with their application, that the attendance of their carer is necessary for their participation in the group. The carer will fall under u3a liability insurance unless they are a professional carer, in which case the individual will be covered by their employer's insurance cover
- Wimborne u3a will maintain a database of venues and the facilities offered by each venue to accommodate different needs
- Wimborne u3a has a duty of care to all members and this may mean that difficult decisions have to be taken in assessing an individual's ability to participate either in the u3a as a whole or within individual activities. These decisions will always be taken through discussion with the individual member and his or her carer in order to ensure that a fair and considered decision is taken. This may include developing a risk assessment with the individual regarding their ability to participate
- Wimborne u3a will seek additional advice and support from u3aPlus, the Regional Trustee, National Office, the national website and external specialist organisations as required

Date of Policy Approval: January 24 2025

Date of Review: January 2026

WIMBORNE u3a COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Preamble – The difference between a complaint and a disciplinary procedure

Complaints procedure: this may include complaints from members about an issue that has arisen or complaints from an external organisation or individual. Depending on the nature and source of the complaint, the committee will make a decision as to how best to approach reaching a resolution.

Disciplinary procedure: this sets out how the u3a will approach problems related to a breach or suspected breach of the agreed code of conduct by a member or trustee.

1. u3a Complaints – responsibilities of the committee

In any organisation, complaints will occur from time to time and it is important that members know where to turn for help, advice and support so that, whatever the issue, it can be dealt with quickly, objectively and appropriately. In the first instance, complaints should be directed towards the committee of the u3a. This may include complaints from members about an issue that has arisen or complaints from an external organisation or individual. Depending on the nature and source of the complaint, the committee will make a decision as to how best to approach reaching a resolution.

In dealing with complaints, the u3a committee will ensure:

- All actions will be documented.
- Complaints will be dealt with quickly and fairly.
- The u3a committee will try to de-escalate the situation and settle issues without having to resort to formal action, where possible.
- Confidentiality will be maintained. For more serious complaints, the committee may need to liaise with and share information with the Third Age Trust. This will not constitute a data breach due to the u3a's membership of and affiliation to the Trust.
- Decisions made will be based on the facts and evidence gathered.

2. Informal process

In most cases, it is hoped that complaints can be dealt with informally as below:

- Depending on what the issue is, a decision should be taken as to who the best person is to lead on attempting to resolve the situation informally. If an issue has arisen between two members in a group then the Convenor may be the best person supported by the Groups' Secretary if felt appropriate. For issues involving committee members it will be best for another committee member to attempt to mediate and try to find a solution. The initial stage requires checking with the party raising the concern as to whether they are willing to accept an informal outcome as opposed to going through a formal process.
- The person(s) identified to lead on the informal stage will hold an informal discussion with all relevant parties. The purpose of this would be to understand the problem and hear each party's views. The parties may decide to put their concerns or complaints in writing, and for the sake of clarity, this is often helpful.

- If there are several people involved with the complaint – it may be deemed appropriate to speak with others mentioned so that as full a picture as possible is obtained.
- The purpose of the informal meetings will be to seek to summarise the situation with both parties, attempting to reach a mutually satisfactory outcome, agree any changes required to ensure that the situation does not happen again and clear the air.
- If it is felt that there is a case to answer but that nevertheless it is a minor issue, and all parties are willing to accept the agreed outcome, then it should be made clear that there should be no repeat of the actions/behaviour and that no further action is necessary.
- If, however, it is felt by the person(s) leading on the informal stage, that the situation warrants a more formal approach or a specific course of action e.g. exclusion from an interest group; or if the person raising the complaint wishes to lodge a formal complaint, the matter should be referred, in writing, to the Chair of the u3a Committee stating that this is a formal complaint. This will include a summary of the complaint, any steps already taken to deal with the issue and any action that the parties involved consider necessary to resolve it.

3. Formal process

Where someone wishes to raise a formal complaint, they will be asked to put the complaint in writing providing as much information as is relevant and giving specific dates and times – where possible. The complainant should also be asked as to what outcome they are hoping to achieve by making the complaint, for example, whether they would be prepared to accept an apology. Explain to the complainant that whilst their desired outcome forms part of their complaint, they need to be aware that there are no guarantees as to what the likely outcome will be.

The committee will appoint a Trustee who acts as the designated Trustee for managing complaints. The committee may also contact the Third Age Trust and request support from the Regional Trustee, a Trust volunteer and/or u3a Office staff. The committee will inform the complainant that additional support has been requested and the reasons why.

A letter or email will be sent to the complainant confirming receipt of the complaint and

- if the complaint is deemed to be a disciplinary then the disciplinary procedure will be followed.
- if the complaint is deemed to not involve a disciplinary matter then the following process will be undertaken.

The Chair will appoint either one or two people to lead on the investigation. This will include gathering information and conducting interviews related to the complaint. The person(s) against whom the complaint has been made will be informed about the basis of the complaint. This will include the letter of complaint and any supporting documentation or other member

statements. The result of these investigations must not be disclosed to any other Trustees at this stage, in order to not bias any appeal.

The Chair will appoint a subcommittee of three committee members to hear the complaint.

The timetable for the date of the meeting to hear the complaint will be short, within 14 days. The subcommittee will then consider the matter, taking into account any mitigating circumstances and agree what action to take. This could include, for example, a change of procedures, a change of venue for monthly meetings or whatever outcome is deemed the most appropriate as a solution.

4. Decision

The subcommittee decision will be communicated in writing to both the member or Trustee who raised the complaint and the member or Trustee against whom the complaint has been made. Both parties will be informed as to the outcome of the investigation in respect of whether the complaint has been upheld or not upheld. If the complaint has been upheld, the letter will also specify what action will be taken as a result.

5. Right of appeal

A right of appeal should be offered providing it is lodged within a 7 day period from the date of the subcommittee decision being provided to the complainant and the member or Trustee against whom the complaint has been made. The appeal needs to be lodged in the form of a written representation for the committee to consider. An appeal can be lodged either by the person who made the complaint or by the person against whom the complaint has been made.

The appeal can include a request for a right of reply as well as written representations.

For the appeal, the Chair will convene a meeting of three Trustees (including themselves). This should not include those who were involved in the initial investigation.

The person raising the appeal will be offered a verbal right of reply, if they wish to take this up then they will be asked to attend a meeting with the appeal panel. Where the verbal right of reply involves the member or Trustee against whom the complaint has been made, they will be offered the option to attend with a companion who may also speak in a personal capacity.

The whole issue will be summarised and the person making the appeal will be given the opportunity to speak. The appeal panel will review the decision based only on the facts included in the original hearing, taking into account any mitigating circumstances, and then make a final decision, which must be communicated in writing to both parties.

All u3a advice and information documents can be accessed on the Support for u3as page of the u3a website: www.u3a.org.uk/advice

Date of Policy Approval: January 24 2025

Date of Review: January 2026

WIMBORNE u3a DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

Preamble – The difference between a complaints and a disciplinary procedure

Complaints procedure: this may include complaints from members about an issue that has arisen or complaints from an external organisation or individual. Depending on the nature and source of the complaint, the committee will make a decision as to how best to approach reaching a resolution.

Disciplinary procedure: this sets out how the u3a will approach problems related to a breach or suspected breach of the agreed code of conduct by a member or trustee.

1. Disciplinary – responsibilities of the committee

This procedure sets out how Wimborne u3a will approach problems related to a breach or suspected breach of the agreed Code of Conduct by a member or Trustee. This procedure is intended to ensure any issues are dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently. All parties are encouraged to take a problem-solving approach to achieve resolution.

In the event of a report of any member or Trustee allegedly breaching the Code of Conduct or if a breach becomes apparent, the Chair will be notified immediately.

In carrying out this procedure Wimborne u3a will ensure the following:

- Every action will be documented.
- Disciplinary matters (including the appeals procedure) will be dealt with quickly and fairly.
- Wimborne u3a will strive to de-escalate any situation and to settle the issue without having to resort to formal disciplinary action.
- Wimborne u3a will seek additional support from Trust staff, the Regional Trustee and Trust volunteers, as required. All requests for support will go via the National Office.
- Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. For more serious issues Wimborne u3a will liaise with the Third Age Trust to seek advice and guidance about procedural issues. Sharing of information with the Trust will not constitute a breach of confidentiality due to the affiliation with the Trust. Members involved in the disciplinary procedure will be informed of the Trust's involvement.
- Decisions will be based on facts and evidence.

The disciplinary procedure will be implemented once all steps that have been taken to resolve matters informally have been unsuccessful and/or where a matter is deemed by the u3a committee to be so serious that the only relevant course of action is to follow the disciplinary procedure.

1.1. Confidentiality

All procedures and documents relating to a disciplinary must be kept confidential at all times. Information will only be shared with those who have a genuine need to receive it and this will include Trust staff and volunteers, as required. All situations should be dealt with discreetly and by showing respect for the parties and views involved.

1.2. Informal procedure

It is very important to try and resolve disputes amicably and informally. This is more likely to lead to a better relationship between the parties in the longer term.

The Chair will use his/her best endeavours to resolve the problem amicably and quickly, through an informal discussion with the member or Trustee in question.

The Trustee or member will be informed that if any areas of activity that could potentially be of a disciplinary nature are found, they will be requested to attend a meeting with an initial Hearing Committee.

The informal discussion will be clear and all parties should understand their obligations at the end of the meeting.

A confidential written record of the outcome of the informal discussion should be kept by the Chair.

1.3. Formal procedure

However, if the initial process is not effective in reaching a solution or if it is felt that the alleged breach is serious enough to require formal disciplinary action, the Chair will appoint two investigating trustees (who are not involved or connected to any party in the alleged breach) to investigate it.

The Chair will appoint a subcommittee of a minimum 2/3 committee members (where possible) to hear the alleged breach.

The result of these investigations must not be disclosed to any other Trustees, at this stage, in order to not bias any appeal. The timetable for the date of the meeting to hear the breach of code of conduct will be short, preferably within 14 days from the date that the Chair is first advised.

A letter will be sent to the member/Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct for the purpose of:

- Advising they are subject to a formal disciplinary procedure.
- Advising them of what constitutes the alleged breach of Code of Conduct.
- Asking for their response to the breach in writing.
- Advising them of the date of the breach hearing.
- Advising that they can also attend the subcommittee meeting to state their response in addition to their written response.
- Advising them they may choose to bring a companion, if they wish, who will also be bound by confidentiality.

If the member/Trustee advises that there are witnesses to the incident(s) who are willing to give representations, they will ask those witnesses to contact the subcommittee to agree to giving a statement relating to the specific incident(s) that they have witnessed. It is important that any statements taken are a factual representation of what the witness says. The statement should not be an interpretation or opinion of what he/she says.

1.4. The Hearing Committee

The Hearing Committee will be the members of the committee appointed by the Chair.

The initial Hearing Committee will examine the matter, considering any written statements submitted, verbal statements and any mitigating circumstances. From this the Hearing Committee will agree whether any disciplinary action has taken place.

The full committee may be told that a disciplinary procedure has been initiated and is being dealt with, but not given any of the detail. This is necessary in order not to bias any appeal that they may be required to hear at a later date.

Note: If the Chair of the committee is suspected to have breached the Code of Conduct, then the Vice Chair will replace the Chair in the procedure. In this case, and in the event of an appeal, the Vice Chair may choose to ask committee members from a neighbouring u3a or seek advice or request attendance from Third Age Trust staff or Trustees.

The initial Hearing Committee may decide there is no breach of conduct in which case they will advise the member or Trustee of this outcome.

If they do feel that the code of conduct has been breached they can consider any of the following possible forms of disciplinary action. Levels 4 and 5 will only be invoked in the case of significant breaches of the code or a persistent repetition of behaviour about which the member or Trustee has previously been warned, such as not complying with the terms of the constitution.

1.5. Levels of action

1.5.1. Level 1

No case to answer. No further action necessary.

1.5.2. Level 2

A verbal warning which makes clear the nature of the unacceptable behaviour and includes a warning about future conduct and the consequences of non-compliance. The Chair should give the warning on behalf of the initial Hearing Committee. Details of the warning should be recorded, dated and kept on file.

1.5.3. Level 3

A written warning from the Chair, on behalf of and agreed by the sub-committee, itemising the unacceptable behaviour, stating the improvement required with immediate effect and the consequences of continued non-compliance.

1.5.4. Level 4

A final written warning as above, which states that if the behaviour is repeated the member or Trustee will be asked to leave the u3a or committee, with immediate effect.

1.5.5. Level 5

The Trustee or member is asked to leave either the committee or the u3a.

1.6. Gross misconduct

If there is a case to answer, for most problems the process will start at Level 1. However, in the case of an extremely serious proven misdemeanour, for example:

- Sexual/racial abuse, discrimination, harassment, bullying.
- Dangerous or violent behaviour.
- Falsification of expense claims.

- Theft.
- Malicious damage.
- Conduct which brings the u3a into disrepute or is prejudicial to the u3a or the running of the u3a.

The committee has the right to move immediately to Levels 4 or 5, including asking the Trustee or member to leave.

1.7. Decision

The decision should be communicated in writing to the member or Trustee advising him/her if the breach of the code of conduct has been upheld or not upheld.

If the breach has been upheld, they will be informed:

- Of the action that will be taken as a result;
- That they have the right of appeal;
- That the right of appeal can only relate to the original breach;
- That the appeal request must be lodged with the Chair within 14 days from the date the decision is communicated.

1.8. Right of appeal

The Trustee or member who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct must be informed of their right of appeal at the end of the initial hearing. The appeal must be lodged within a 7 day period, from the date of the appeal request and must take the form of written representation with the opportunity to attend an appeal meeting for a right of reply. The Trustee or member must be advised of their right to attend with a companion. The written appeal request must be sent to the person chairing the initial hearing.

The Chair should be informed of the intention to appeal by the person chairing the initial hearing. The Chair will then convene a further sub-panel of Trustees who did not hear the original disciplinary, to hear the appeal.

The appeal panel will then hold an appeal hearing to consider any written response and representations in order to make their decision on whether to uphold the appeal or not. This will be independent of the initial hearing and trustees should not discuss this outside of the appeal sub-panel.

If the member or Trustee concerned requests a right of reply to the appeal panel the member or Trustee can be accompanied by a companion who may also speak in a personal capacity, if they wish.

The Chair of the appeal panel will summarise the issues involved in the disciplinary hearing and the information provided and then the member or Trustee will be given the opportunity to speak, along with their companion if the companion wishes to speak.

The appeal panel will review its decision, considering any mitigating circumstances, and then make a final decision which must be communicated in writing within 7 days of the appeal meeting.

The committee's decision following any appeal is final and absolute confidentiality must be maintained.