West Kent Federation of Women’s Institutes



Safeguarding FAQs

Abbreviations used in the body of this document

FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

FSO – Federation Safeguarding Officer

NFWI – National Federation of Women’s Institutes

NSO – National Safeguarding Officer

WI – Women’s Institute

WKFWI – West Kent Federation of Women’s Institutes

FSO contact details: safeguardingofficer@wkfwi.org.uk

*Q. Does my WI need to create a Safeguarding Policy or Safeguarding Procedures or appoint an Institute Safeguarding Officer?*

A. No. NFWI have provided a Safeguarding Policy that they want all federations and WIs to follow. WKFWI is creating a Safeguarding Procedure for use within the federation. NFWI do NOT advise Institutes to appoint Safeguarding Officers, but to report safeguarding concerns involving WI members to their FSO, using the Reporting Form provided by NFWI.

*Q. What does my WI need to do with regard to Safeguarding?*

A. Every member should be aware of (and if possible read) the NFWI Safeguarding Policy and be prepared to report concerns if needed.

*Q. Where can I find the NFWI Safeguarding Policy and the Reporting Form?*

A. These are both on the NFWI and WKFWI web-sites.

*Q. When will the WKFWI Safeguarding Procedure be available?*

A. The aim is to publish this on the WKFWI web-site by the end of 2023, earlier if possible.

*Q. I haven’t read the NFWI Policy yet, so in a nutshell what is Safeguarding?*

A. Safeguarding is making sure someone is safe and can live their life in the way they want to, without causing harm to others. No person should worry about something of harm happening to them, others taking advantage of them, or others putting them in a position that they are unhappy with or causes them distress. Young people and vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm.

Harm includes things like:

* Abuse
* Commercial exploitation
* Neglect
* Sexual harassment
* Self-neglect
* Modern slavery

*Q. So, if I have a safeguarding concern about a fellow member (perhaps I witness harmful behaviour to them or they tell me about it) can you briefly explain what I should do about it?*

A. This does depend on the circumstances. If she is in immediate danger or a crime is being committed contact the appropriate emergency service using the national emergency call number 999.

But if it is safe to do so (ie neither of you are in immediate danger from the alleged abuser)

* Talk with her – ask her if she’s ok.
* Let her tell you what she wants to without pushing for details or trying to describe your own experiences.
* Reassure her but don’t make promises (eg to always be there for her or that you will keep the information confidential) that you may not be able to keep.
* Do not attempt to investigate or confront the alleged abuser.
* Tell her that you intend to report the incident to the FSO and complete the Reporting Form with as much detail from the conversation as you can. Return the form to the FSO.

The FSO in consultation with the NSO will refer the concern as appropriate.

*Q. Not everyone I know is a member of the WI. If I have a similar concern about a relative or friend who is not a member what should I do then?*

A. In an emergency situation (for example where someone is being assaulted or attacked now or a crime is taking place) the emergency services should be contacted via the national emergency call number 999.

If there is no immediate emergency and it is safe to talk with the person then do so. Advise them that their local Council/London Borough may be able to help. If a child is in danger then the appropriate local authority MUST be contacted.

There are other organisations which might be able to give advice or support to your relative or friend.

Please see the separate lists on the Safeguarding tab with current (September 2023) contact details:

* Safeguarding contact details of Councils/London Boroughs covering areas where West Kent WIs meet. It is always advisable to check the contact details if it is necessary to contact a local authority.
* Other organisations which may be able to help people in distress or at risk from abuse or other harm.

Do NOT confront the alleged abuser.

In this instance as the person is NOT a WI member, the NFWI Reporting Form should NOT be used and there is no need to inform the FSO.

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