

Richmond, Kingston & West London



ME Group

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Safeguarding in the R&K ME Group

We have no attending members under 18 (though from time to time children are represented on the group by a parent). However our members are vulnerable and vigilance is required

Empowerment

We provide signposting to reliable sources of advice on benefits and health. In approaching members with suggestions for activities, detailed information is made available so they can make informed judgements about the possible impact of such activities (so for example, advising members on access). In addition, we advise members of ways to engage with minimal health impacts

Prevention and Protection

Members interact with each other within Richmond, Kingston & West London ME Group in face to face meetings, online meeting and via our 2 WhatsApp groups and closed email group We have measures in place to ensure privacy of personal data and codes of conduct to prevent abuse.

The database of members personal information is password-protected.

All meetings (FTF and virtual) are hosted by a Committee Member or Committee Associate whose role is to facilitate the meeting and ensure everyone's safety.

Face to face meetings are held in public places (most usually cafes and occasionally outside e.g. in summer on Richmond Green).

A code of conduct for the two WhatsApp groups and the closed email group has been written/ updated respectively in September 2024 and both published and distributed to clarify acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. All three groups are moderated by a Committee Member or Committee Associate to ensure that any upsetting behaviour can be addressed by them (within 48 hours).

Consequences for breaches of the code of conduct are now explicit. The codes of conduct are sent to new participating members, and updates are sent to all participating members; they are also available on the website

<https://www.richmondandkingstonmegroup.org.uk/policies>

Proportionality

If any concerns are noticed or raised, at least two members of the Committee will discuss the issue prior to any contact. In the extremely rare case of more serious upset, the Committee will discuss the most effective and least intrusive way to resolve this.

Partnership

Our main focus is to nurture a culture where we look after each other. People with ME may find the world hostile and dismissive, so this imperative is readily understood by members even if it can be hard to practice at times.

Accountability

The designated safeguarding person is the Chair of the Committee. The Chair has access to all mail addressed to the Group and is responsible for responding to any member concerns. Any behavioural issues the WhatsApp group and closed email group moderators are unable to resolve becomes the responsibility of the Chair who will address this in conjunction with the Committee, and with reference also to our group's Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy. In addition, any member who feels they have been treated unacceptably by any other member of the group is invited to refer their complaint to the Chair for resolution.

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