

## D129 Protection - Additional Information July 2025

### Important note:

**All IW Protection Officers are covered by IW insurance in everything we do.**

All members, Clubs and District are covered by the Association's Public Liability Insurance.

But to ensure that we are well protected, **we must do Risk Assessments** for all events.

and note any extra precautions to be taken in respect of potentially vulnerable individuals.

Example Risk Assessments for Public Venues and a Member's home are available from District as well as a Risk Assessment Template.

### Case Study – An IW member with dementia

District is aware that many Clubs are concerned about how they may best support any members who are showing signs of possible dementia. The Protection Officer (and/or others) may think that there is a risk that one of their members might go to a washroom in a public venue and then forget how to find their way back to the function room.

### Typical questions arising would be:

How can a member be best supported in this situation?

To what extent are other members of the Club responsible for ensuring the well-being of the member concerned?

How much responsibility are individual Club members willing to take/should willing members of the Club take for the member in this or any other situation?

What if it is all too much – for the individual member and/or Club as a whole?

What if there is a serious incident?

### Thoughts, Suggestions and Risk Assessments

Dementia is utterly unpredictable, so any response would have to be gauged on how the individual is at that time. It is very easy to recognise that someone is agitated, unsure or functioning at a lower level. If the individual goes to the washroom and another member is concerned, then going along with them, or following a minute later would be advisable.

As soon as a member is recognised as being particularly vulnerable, the individual's need for support must be included in any Risk Assessment. There is no requirement to identify the individual by name. The action to be taken will include exactly how the individual will be supported. It should be noted whether a particular member or members are willing to support the individual concerned e.g., by accompanying her to the washroom or checking that she has returned. The individual concerned does not necessarily need to be made aware of the actions being taken. Some might like to know that people are looking out for them, others would rebuff any attempts at help or may become upset.

The key for stepping up the response would be as soon as there is any indication that the individual may be at risk of harming themselves or others, or if other Club members are no longer willing and/or able to support the individual. The IW is a friendship group, so a disclaimer is not appropriate in this case, even if a family would be willing to sign one.

**If the immediate family have made club members aware of the diagnosis**, this does make things easier. If there has been a conversation between next of kin and a Club member, then it would be appropriate to ask if a contact number could be kept in case of any concern / incident or difficulties.

**If there has been no contact from next of kin to inform a club member of the diagnosis,** then it can be more problematic. The family may not have thought about how to deal with their parent /relative who is still out and about socially. Indeed, they may not be aware of the extent of the difficulties which their family member is facing.

**Depending on the individual and the issues arising, there are various options.**

Much depends on whether the individual has next of kin or a friend who is willing and able to be involved with supporting them.

If she does have friends and/or family and the individual is aware that she is having difficulties, you could have a chat with her about what support she thinks she needs e.g., maybe she would like someone in the family or a friend to come along with her to meetings/events.

Any Club member who knows the next of kin might be able to make contact with the family/friend; and make a gentle, caring enquiry to gain information about what to do should a problem arise.

The Protection Officer, or someone else if more appropriate, might write a note to the family member in which they outline in a compassionate way the issues arising and ask what the family feels the best way forward might be, suggest a meeting. It is vital that the family understand that the IW Club and members are a friendship group and cannot do any more than a friend would be able to do.

If there is a serious risk of harm to the individual or others, it may well be that the member experiencing these issues should no longer be coming to Club meetings and events. This is obviously a delicate situation and hopefully will not arise very often, if ever.

The case study above is for an individual showing possible signs of dementia, but of course, much of this would also apply for other conditions including medical ones where there is a risk of assistance being needed.

**Please remember that wherever possible confidentiality should be maintained, so try and restrict discussions to those closely involved with the individual concerned.**

District will try and help if at all possible, so do contact us if you wish.

The Protection Officer is Alison with assistance from Angie and Val as necessary.

We can all be contacted by email at: [innerwheel129@gmail.com](mailto:innerwheel129@gmail.com)

Alison is on 07979 755 703 if it is urgent.