



A social concept, powered by volunteers, here to free your mind

Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

<i>Reference:</i>	<i>Safeguarding Policy and Procedure</i>
<i>Date Approved:</i>	16 th May 2021
<i>Approving By:</i>	<i>Jonathan Andrew Greenwood</i>
<i>Implementation Date:</i>	16 th May 2021
<i>Version:</i>	V2
<i>Supersedes:</i>	V1
<i>Consultation Undertaken:</i>	<i>Internal</i>
<i>Target Audience:</i>	Staff and Volunteers
<i>Review Date:</i>	16 th May 2022
<i>Lead</i>	Jonathan Andrew Greenwood
<i>Author/Lead:</i>	Denise Read



A social concept, powered by volunteers, here to free your mind

Contents

1.	PURPOSE OF THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY	3
2.	OUR MISSION	3
3.	OUR VALUES	3
4.	WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING ?	4
5.	SCOPE	4
6.	POLICY STATEMENT	4
7.	PREVENTION - GROUP HUG RESPONSIBILITIES	4
8.	PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE	5
9.	ENABLING REPORTING	5
10.	HOW TO REPORT A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN	6
11.	RESPONSE	6
12.	CONFIDENTIALITY	6
13.	ASSOCIATED POLICIES	6
14.	GLOSSARY OF TERMS	7
15.	IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY	8

Page



A social concept, powered by volunteers, here to free your mind

Safeguarding Policy

1. PURPOSE OF THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with Group Hug. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of Volunteers or personnel associated with Group Hug
- The design and implementation of Group Hug's groups and activities

The policy lays out the commitments made by Group Hug and informs Volunteers and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

This policy does not cover:

- Sexual harassment in the workplace – this is dealt with under Group Hug's Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by Group Hug or associated personnel.

2. OUR MISSION

- We offer an alternative chat service for immediate access to anyone wishing to talk to someone who needs to free their mind.
- We aim to grow this social concept country wide, giving users of Group Hug the ability to chat to someone in private, confidential and safe surroundings.
- We aim to provide an eco system to those volunteering to make their roles easy to carry out.
- We aim to help 100000 people in the first 2 years.

3. OUR VALUES

- We offer a service which meets the users' demands whilst keeping privacy and confidentiality safe.
- We safeguard those who are in need on a case-by-case basis.
- We allow anyone to use our chat service whilst we listen and signpost to professional care.
- We encourage everyone's contribution and collaborate to make the roles easier.
- We achieve excellence through personal commitment and ongoing improvement.



A social concept, powered by volunteers, here to free your mind

- We respect and respond to people's diverse needs, backgrounds and views.
- We achieve our aims through building open and transparent relationships.

4. **WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING ?**

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our Volunteers or programmes.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary below.

5. **SCOPE**

All Volunteers enlisted by Group Hug. Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to Group Hug, including but not limited to the following: consultants; volunteers; contractors; programme visitors including journalists, celebrities and politicians.

6. **POLICY STATEMENT**

Group Hug believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Group Hug will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by Volunteers or associated personnel.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding [as appropriate]: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. These key areas of safeguarding may have different policies and procedures associated with them (see Associated Policies).

Group Hug commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

7. **PREVENTION - GROUP HUG RESPONSIBILITIES**

Group Hug will:

- Ensure all Volunteers have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy



A social concept, powered by volunteers, here to free your mind

- Design and undertake all its activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with Group Hug. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated.
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying Volunteers and associated personnel.
- Ensure Volunteers receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organisation.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

Volunteers Responsibilities

Child safeguarding

Group Hug Volunteers and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18.
- Sexually abuse or exploit children.
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking.

Adult safeguarding

Group Hug Volunteers and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at risk adults.
- Subject an at-risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.

8. PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

Group Hug Volunteers and associated personnel must not:

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance.
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.

Additionally, Group Hug Volunteers and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by a Group Hug Volunteers member or associated personnel to the appropriate Group Level Manager.

9. ENABLING REPORTING

Group Hug will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to Volunteers and the communities we work with.



A social concept, powered by volunteers, here to free your mind

Any Volunteers reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistleblowing channels (or if they request it) will be protected by Group Hug's Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblowing) Policy.

Group Hug will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

10. HOW TO REPORT A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

Volunteers who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to their Safeguarding Focal Point [as appropriate] or line manager.

If the Volunteers member does not feel comfortable reporting to their Safeguarding Focal Point or line manager (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to any other appropriate System Level or Group Level volunteer. For example, this could be a senior manager or a member of the HR Team.

11. RESPONSE

Group Hug will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations (see Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns in Associated Policies).

Group Hug will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to Volunteers found in breach of policy.

Group Hug will offer support to survivors of harm caused by Volunteers or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY

It is essential confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need-to-know basis only and should always be kept secure.

13. ASSOCIATED POLICIES

- Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment policy
- Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblowing) policy
- Complaints Policy
- Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns
- Procedures for safeguarding in Volunteers' recruitment

14. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Beneficiary of Assistance

- Someone who directly receives goods or services from Group Hug's App. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community which Group Hug serves, and can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

Child

- A person below the age of 18

Harm

- Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights
- Psychological harm
- Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation

Safeguarding

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our Volunteers or programmes. One donor definition is as follows:

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

This definition draws from our values and principles and shapes our culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our programmes, partners and Volunteers. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centred and also protect those accused until proven guilty.

Safeguarding puts volunteers and affected persons at the centre of all we do.



A social concept, powered by volunteers, here to free your mind

Sexual abuse

The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual exploitation

The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

Survivor

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

At-risk adult

Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is, or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

The Social Enterprise values our volunteers, who are our greatest asset in realising our mission.

15. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

This Policy shall be deemed effective as of 16th May 2021. No part of this Policy shall have retroactive effect and shall thus apply only to matters occurring on or after this date.