



Stress, Health and Wellbeing Policy

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<i>Lead</i>	Jonathan Andrew Greenwood
<i>Author/Lead:</i>	Denise Read



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Stress, Health and Wellbeing Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Group Hug, as a Social Enterprise has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its volunteers as far as reasonably practicable. It is also required to have in place measures to mitigate as far as practicable, factors that could harm volunteers' physical and mental well-being, which includes work-related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are volunteer-related and within Group Hug's control.

This policy accepts the Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related stress as "the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". There is an important distinction between 'reasonable pressures' which stimulate and motivate and 'stress' where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

This policy recognises there are many sources of volunteer work-related stress and that stress can result from the actions or behaviours of managers, volunteers or customers.

The Health and Safety Executive have produced several **Management Standards** which cover the primary sources of stress at work that, if not effectively managed, are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. These are:

- **Demands** – i.e., workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- **Control** – i.e., how much input the person has in the way they do their volunteer work.
- **Support** – i.e., the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by Group Hug, line management and other volunteers.
- **Relationships** – i.e., promoting positive volunteer working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role** – such as whether people understand their role within Group Hug and whether Group Hug ensures they do not have conflicting roles.
- **Change** – such as how Group Hug change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the Social Enterprise.

Group Hug's performance on well-being and stress management will be assessed in the context of the HSE Management Standards.



2. STATEMENT OF INTENT

Group Hug's System Level Managers acknowledge the potential impact voluntary work has on an individual's physical and mental health, and that there is a persuasive business case as well as a moral and legal duty for taking steps to promote volunteer well-being as far as reasonably practicable.

Group Hug's System Level Managers are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

Group Hug's System Level Managers recognise voluntary work-related stress can have a negative impact on volunteers' well-being, and it can take many forms, so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at all Social Enterprise levels.

The Stress, Health and Wellbeing Policy expands upon Group Hug's Health and Safety policy, setting out how Group Hug will promote the well-being of volunteers by:

- Creating a working environment where potential work-related stressors as far as practicable are avoided, minimised or mitigated through good management practices, effective Human Resources policies and staff development.
- Increasing System and Group Level managers' and volunteers' awareness of the causes and effects of stress.
- Developing a culture which is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health.
- Engaging with volunteers to create constructive and effective working partnerships both within teams and across Group Hug.
- Establishing working arrangements whereby volunteers feel they can maintain an appropriate work life balance.
- Encouraging volunteers to take responsibility for their own health and well-being through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives.
- Encouraging volunteers to take responsibility for their own volunteering work and effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their fellow volunteers.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE STRESS, HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

3.1 Group Hug's System Level Managers will:

- 3.1.1 Support steps taken to develop a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect within Group Hug.



- 3.1.2 Champion good management practices and the establishment of a work ethos within Group Hug which discourages assumptions about long term commitment to working hours of a kind likely to cause stress and which enables volunteers to maintain a reasonable “work life balance”.
- 3.1.3 Promote effective communication and ensure there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting volunteers on changes in Group Hug, to management structures and working arrangements on all levels.

3.2 Group Hug’s System and Group Level Managers and Volunteers will:

- 3.2.1 Treat individuals reporting to them with consideration and dignity and will promote a culture of mutual respect in the teams they manage. They will not permit unacceptable behaviour and will take decisive action when issues are brought to their attention.
- 3.2.2 Ensure there is good communication within their team and there are opportunities for individuals to raise concerns about their work, seeking advice from Human Resources and System Level Managers at an early stage where concerns are raised.
- 3.2.3 Adhere to the sound management principles set out in Group Hug’s Human Resources policies and procedures.
- 3.2.4 Co-operate with Human Resources and System and Group Level Managers team to ensure risk assessments are undertaken for roles or working practices that may give rise to work-related stress.
- 3.2.5 Encourage their staff to participate in events and initiatives undertaken by Group Hug to promote well-being and more effective working.
- 3.2.6 Act in the interests of all their colleagues where performance by a member of staff may cause stress to their colleagues.

3.3 Volunteers will:

- 3.3.1 Treat fellow volunteers and all other persons with whom they interact during the course of their voluntary work with consideration, respect and dignity.
- 3.3.2 Co-operate with Group Hug’s efforts to implement the Stress, Health and Well-Being Policy, attending briefings and raise their own awareness of the causes and effects of stress on health.
- 3.3.3 Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are voluntary work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being.
- 3.3.4 Take responsibility for their own health and well-being by adopting healthy lifestyles.
- 3.3.5 Take responsibility for their own development skills as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in their team and so reduce of the risk of stress.



- 3.3.6 Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, thus helping to avoid causing stress to their colleagues.

3.4 The Human Resources Advisor will:

- 3.4.1 Provide advice to System, Group Level Managers and volunteers on best practice in relation to human resource management, developing policies and procedures as required.
- 3.4.2 Ensure there are arrangements in place for communicating the content of Group Hug's human resource management policies, procedures and toolkits to System and Group Level Managers and volunteers.
- 3.4.3 Develop arrangements to enable System, Group Level Managers and volunteers to achieve the necessary competencies in relation to the good management practices.
- 3.4.4 Ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals experiencing stress, referring them to Group Hug's external support where appropriate.
- 3.4.5 Ensure there are arrangements in place to support managers experiencing problems with volunteers' performance.
- 3.4.6 Collate management information which will enable Group Hug to measure its performance in relation to stress management and employee well-being, such as:
- Sickness absence data
 - Volunteer turnover, exit interviews
 - Numbers of grievance and harassment cases.
- 3.4.7 Seek the views of volunteers on the effectiveness of Group Hug's Stress, Health and Well-Being Policy and stress management arrangements using staff surveys and other appropriate questionnaires.

3.5 Group Hug's System Level Managers will:

- 3.5.1 Ensure the Stress, Health and Well-Being Policy is kept under review and updated as appropriate, under the remit of Health and Safety.
- 3.5.2 Assist and support volunteer managers to undertake local stress risk assessment where required.
- 3.5.3 Determine the Well-Being Policy and recommend its adoption by Group Hug
- 3.5.4 Monitor the implementation of the Policy and the operation of associated arrangements.
- 3.5.5 Review the policy every three years following feedback from staff surveys, management information provided by Human Resources.

4. ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE WELL-BEING POLICY

4.1 Arrangements for well-being and stress prevention through good management practices.

These include the following:

- Volunteer selection procedures.
- Clear volunteer role descriptions and person specifications to ensure that the 'right' person is recruited for the job.
- Agreed knowledge, skills and behaviours for managers, to be cascaded through to all levels of management and supervision.
- Training and Development procedures to ensure individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the tasks/duties required of them.
- Harassment and anti-bullying procedures.
- Procedures for communicating with volunteers on the work of Group Hug and issues affecting their work.

5. COMMUNICATING THE HEALTH, STRESS AND WELL-BEING POLICY AND MEASURES TAKEN BY GROUP HUG TO MANAGE VOLUNTEER WORK RELATED STRESS.

- 5.1 The Well-being policy will be published on the Group Hug App.
- 5.2 The contents of the policy will be covered during general induction training sessions for volunteers and specific training on stress awareness.

6. MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE WELL-BEING POLICY.

- 6.1 The Well-being policy will be reviewed every three years by the Group Hug's System Level Managers in conjunction with the Human Resources Advisor.

7. 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.