



Safeguarding Policy

Initially agreed by the Trustees: -
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1. Policy Statement

This charity is committed to protecting the welfare, rights, and dignity of the people we deal with and where they are teenagers (13–17) and older adults (65+). We recognise that both groups may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and exploitation. We operate with a zero-tolerance approach to any form of abuse and strive to create a safe, vigilant, and supportive environment across all charitable activities.

2. Purpose of the Policy

- To ensure all staff, volunteers, trustees, and partners understand their safeguarding duties.
- To establish clear procedures for preventing, identifying, and responding to abuse or concerns.
- To create safe environments where teenagers and older adults feel respected, heard, and protected.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees
- Volunteers
- Trustees and board members
- Contractors and partner organisations
- Any individuals representing the charity

It covers all charity services, fundraising activities, outreach work, events, and digital interactions.

4. Definitions of Abuse

Types of abuse that may affect teenagers or older adults include:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse or exploitation
- Neglect or caregiver failure
- Financial or material exploitation (particularly relevant to older adults)
- Online abuse (including grooming, cyberbullying, radicalization and scams)
- Discriminatory abuse based on age, disability, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation

5. Safeguarding Responsibilities

5.1 Charity Responsibilities

- Implement safe recruitment practices, including background checks where appropriate.

- Provide regular safeguarding awareness to all staff and volunteers.
- Maintain accessible procedures for raising concerns. This is done by our publicly available policy on the H&G Canal Web site.
- Promote a culture of safety, respect, vigilance, and accountability.

5.2 Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

- Treat all service users with dignity and respect.
- Understand indicators of abuse and report concerns immediately.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Never promise confidentiality when someone discloses a safeguarding concern.

5.3 Safeguarding Lead Responsibilities

- Act as the primary contact for safeguarding issues. This is addressed in the publicly available policy on the H&G Web site. (Complaints Policy)
- Receive, document, report, and manage concerns or allegations.
- Liaise with external agencies (e.g., social services, police).
- Ensure secure and confidential record-keeping.
- Support and guide staff and volunteers.

6. Prevention Measures

- Safe recruitment and vetting processes.
- Codes of conduct for staff, volunteers, and trustees.
- Regular risk assessments for charity events and services.
- Online safety and secure digital communication practices.
- Clear information for beneficiaries on how to raise concerns.

7. Responding to Concerns or Disclosures

If a teenager or older adult discloses abuse:

- Listen carefully and without judgment.
- Reassure them they are being taken seriously.
- Report the concern immediately to the Safeguarding Lead. As defined in the publicly available policy on the H&G web site
- Record information factually and accurately and as timely as possible.

Do not:

- Confront the alleged abuser.
- Promise secrecy.
- Ask leading or investigative questions.

8. Reporting Procedures

1. Report concerns to the Safeguarding Lead immediately as found on the inside front page of the Wharfinger.
2. Complete an incident or concern form.
3. Safeguarding Lead assesses risk and decides next steps by informing the board of Trustees there is a safeguarding incident.
4. Where necessary, the charity notifies:
 - Child Protection Services for teenagers
 - Adult Safeguarding Services for older adults
 - Police if there is immediate danger or criminal activity
5. Follow-up support and actions are documented.
6. Safeguarding will be a board of Trustees agenda item at each meeting.

9. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Information is only shared with the appropriate authorities.
- Confidentiality must not prevent the reporting of safeguarding concerns.
- Records are stored securely in compliance with data protection legislation.

10. Safeguarding Awareness

- All staff and volunteers receive safeguarding awareness during induction.
- Updates are provided when legislation or best practice changes.

11. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the charity's Board of Trustees or sooner if required by legislative or operational changes.