

Safeguarding of Young and Vulnerable People Policy
Level Up Gosport

‘Level Up Gosport’ (LUPG) exists to provide volunteering opportunities and enjoyment for its members, in a safe environment. Due to the minimum age of our members (18 years), they are classified as vulnerable young people (hereafter YPs) and that is why we have a safeguarding policy in place.

All staff including volunteers will be made aware of and fully understand LUPG’s Safeguarding Policy during the staff induction process and through training.

Duty of Care

LUPG’s staff and volunteer support workers (hereafter ‘staff’ can be taken to include both) owe the group’s members a duty of care. By this, we mean that, by being effective supervisors, our staff and volunteers must act with a level of watchfulness, attention, caution and prudence expected of a reasonable person, to ensure that young people do not suffer any unreasonable harm or loss. These avoidable issues could cover different degrees of seriousness from something minor (e.g., a blow to self-esteem) to very major (physical or sexual assault). It is part of our role to ensure that during activities, we are vigilant about any way that harm or loss could happen, whether this is inflicted by staff, volunteers, other group members, members of the public or health and safety hazards.

If we observe, or are made aware of, any such sign, we should assess the risk and act on it fully. Staff members should also watch and listen for signs of lack of proper care of a member YP outside of the group i.e., at home, college. Part of our duty of care is to report onwards anything which we discover that poses a significant risk (in the opinion of a reasonable person) to the safety of a YP or others around them.

Members of LUPG share a duty of care to each other, and if they see or hear anything which they feel risks the safety of another member, they should act on this immediately, and report concerns in confidence to the staff on the project.

We also share a duty of care with members of the public who we encounter during our voluntary activity, as they do with us.

The remainder of this policy is written to outline the procedures we will follow to ensure we take our duty of care, and responsibilities for safeguarding, seriously at all times.

1. Procedures to avoid potential abuse situations

a. Supervision and safe working

- Official LUPG activities will always be supervised by project staff where we will maintain a ratio of no more than 6 YPs to one adult.
- Sometimes we may signpost members to other activities. In such instances, reasonable steps will be taken to check the background of the provider and it will be made clear to members that they are not under LUPG supervision if they participate.
- Members will not be left alone one-to-one with anyone other than our support staff or DBS checked volunteers.

- YPs will not be exposed to working in small or confined spaces with one other person.
- Unless in exceptional circumstances, there will not be physical contact between adults and young people. Appropriate physical contact would involve, for example, provision of first aid or supporting a physically impaired person to climb stairs.

b. Insurance and Risk Assessment

- LUPG's activities work within its own public liability insurance.
- When work is undertaken outside, LUPG staff will check with the venue whether we are covered under their own public liability insurance.
- If additional insurance is needed (e.g., an extreme sporting activity) and the risk is thought to be worthwhile, LUPG will buy insurance for that particular activity.
- A full risk assessment is carried out for each activity undertaken. If the risks are thought to be too high or potentially too serious, we will not carry out the activity.
- Parental/Carer permission will be sought for each member prior to undertaking any activity deemed to have risks beyond day-to-day norms, but assessed as acceptable.
- We will endeavour at all times to be inclusive to all in our activities. However, if an individual member has a physical or mental issue which creates an overly high risk with a particular activity, we reserve the right to prevent them participating for their own safety.

c. Precautions

- LUPG staff will take the following precautions when undertaking activities
 - Staff know where YPs are at all times.

- Staff are briefed and aware of who is where, doing what.
- A file is carried with next of kin/contact details of all members

2. Procedure for YPs talking to an independent person

LUPG exists to boost the confidence and life skills of its members through volunteering within a supportive group. We are not a counselling operation, nor are our staff trained in counselling. However, we recognise that there may be occasions where staff, in our capacity as 'Independent Persons' to members, receive disclosures about matters in a YP's life which we may need to act upon. This part of the policy sets out how we will handle such instances.

a. How do members know about disclosure?

Members of LUPG are made aware upon joining that they may ask to speak to staff in confidence about issues they are experiencing, particularly but not limited to within the group. Whilst it is not within the remit of LUPG to solve the matter, we can support the YP by signposting them to help, if necessary. If staff encounter such a situation, we should tell the YP that they may be about to make a disclosure and re-iterate our confidentiality policy (see below).

b. How can members request to speak to an independent person in confidence?

Members may at any time request to speak to staff as Independent Persons but are encouraged that this happens outside of the normal group activities held, as best practice for both the individual concerned and for group harmony.

c. What is our confidentiality policy?

We operate a confidentiality policy whereby all staff and members will always treat any disclosures with total confidence. (unless 'confidentiality stops' as in 'd' below)

d. When does confidentiality stop?

Confidentiality stops if the staff member receiving the disclosure considers that the YP, or someone else, is at significant risk of harm or loss. In these cases, we will tell the YP that we need to report the matter onward and the reason for this. In such cases we may choose to speak to another independent person, including but not limited to parents, carers, police, youth services or doctors. At no time will we report onwards to anyone who may pose a risk to the YP. We will always consider the risk of reporting a matter onwards versus the risk of not doing so, and make an informed decision based on this.

e. How do staff/volunteers handle receipt of a disclosure?

If staff receive a disclosure, we will:

- Offer the YP a private environment to speak in and offer the option of a second staff member also being present.
- Re-iterate before receiving a disclosure, how our confidentiality policy works
- Listen patiently, without judgement or trying to decide the truth or otherwise of the disclosure at the time.
- Respect the YP – allow them to feel believed.
- Reassure the YP as much as possible and thank them for having the courage to tell us the information.
- Ask enough questions to be fully informed and get the facts.
- Respond to what they say, whilst avoiding 'leading questions' which try to influence what the person tells us or prejudice the conversation.

- Clarify so that both parties have full understanding.
- Be honest about what we will or may need to do next. Do not make false promises.
- Try to get consent to any onward referrals that are needed, but if this is not possible, remain honest about what we will do and why.
- Agree steps to be taken. Steps are to be timely and prompt.
- Put the matter into writing at the time, including documenting what steps will be taken and both parties signing the document, if possible, this will then be kept securely in LUPG's office filing cabinet and a copy sent to the Trustee Safeguarding Lead.
- Follow up regularly on the steps taken afterwards.

b. How do staff/volunteers handle a complaint or allegation against another member of staff or volunteer?

If we receive a complaint or allegation concerning the actions or behaviour of another member of staff, this should be reported immediately to the Project Leader. If this is not appropriate, the matter should be reported to the Trustee Safeguarding Lead. The necessary action will be taken to investigate the matter, including temporarily preventing the staff member / volunteer in question from working with young people until the complaint or allegation is resolved.

3, Staff/Volunteer behaviour regarding this policy

All staff and YPs are briefed on this policy upon joining the project and should follow this code of practice regarding behaviour in relation to safeguarding procedures:

- a. The Project Leader, Group Co-ordinator and Support Workers in this order are the correct people to report any safeguarding concerns to. If the matter needs to go

above the level of the Project Leader, concerns may be reported to the Trustee Safeguarding Lead.

- b. Staff will work together in an open way where views are respected. We maintain the right to challenge each other on the workings of these practices at any time.
- c. Staff will receive a full induction including this policy and receive a written copy.
- d. Staff will sign to confirm understanding of these procedures.
- e. The procedures will be reviewed annually, each January.
- f. Staff will take care to ensure full understanding of risk before activities, including visiting venues and/or speaking to venue managers beforehand.
- g. A full written risk assessment will be completed on all activities beforehand, generally by one of the group coordinators. Part of this process is to decide whether the activity is worthwhile once all risks are considered, and what procedures need to be carried out, by whom, to minimise risks. The document should then be kept in office file and a copy forwarded to the Trustee Safeguarding Lead.
- h. LUPG will hold next of kin contact details for every member. These will be taken upon the member joining and will be easily accessible (in a file) during activities.

4. Reporting procedure – dealing with actual or reported abuse

This section of the policy exists specifically to show how we will deal with reports or suspicions of abuse of the YP outside of LUPG activities. This could be any situation in life – often, but not necessarily, where the person concerned has some responsibility for the YP’s care.

a. Reporting procedure

a1. We will ensure that if we identify that a YP is about to make a disclosure, they understand what they are about to do,

and that the consequences of this are that we will try to support them, but also that we must take action if we feel a risk is posed to their own, or others' safety.

a2. Before allowing a YP to make a disclosure we will inform them that anything they say is completely confidential, unless we perceive that by failing to inform another person, a direct risk is posed to the YP's or others' safety, in which case we may have to inform appropriate people.

a3. We will support a young person reporting abuse by following the same procedure as outlined in section 2e, above.

b. Staff Responsibilities

b1. Knowing what 'abuse' is?

Six categories of potential abuse of a YP have been identified under Appendix A 'Categories of Abuse', outward signs of which staff should be vigilant. In each case, this is either where a parent, carer or person otherwise in charge of the welfare of the young person, inflicts the abuse on the person in their care; or the YP comes into contact with someone from outside their immediate care arrangements who abuses them, It is worth noting that a young person may normally display some of the behaviours detailed; what we are really seeking is a sudden or notable change in behaviour, or prolonged behaviour which concerns us.

b2. How to report?

The staff of LUPG are free to take guidance from both the Trustee Safeguarding Lead or the Chair of Trustees; they in turn may consider the following steps, based on the severity of the abuse: reporting to local police and the following groups should the YP have a previous association with HCC Adult Services, carers, Hampshire Youth Services, user services such as Motiv8 and the Moving on Project (who counsel vulnerable young

people in the area). We will not report to anyone where there is a danger of worsening the situation. At all times we will try to first agree the reporting onward with the young person. A document called 'How to Deal with Vulnerable Young People' is available to consult and is held by the Project Leader in the LUPG office.

b3. What happens when abuse is reported?

At all times, staff who make reports will follow these up regularly and at agreed times with both the external agency involved, and the YP.

b4. How is the reporting staff member supported?

The reporting staff member may require emotional support if a disclosure is reported and can get this from the Project Leader or via GVA.

b5. Whistle blowing – allegations of abuse against team members

It can be very difficult to report concerns about a staff member or volunteer but all staff and volunteers have a duty to do this. It is important that any concerns for the welfare of a YP arising from suspected abuse or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately.

If staff or volunteers have any suspicions about any adult participating in LUPG activities involving children or young people, the concerns must be conveyed to the Project Leader immediately. They will investigate and decide on the appropriate response which, depending on the nature of the allegations and following discussion with the Trustee Safeguarding Lead, may include suspending that person from their role or a referral to an outside agency as appropriate. Staff should remember their duty of confidentiality.

b6. Staff understanding of our responsibilities

Staff and volunteers working on the project will be briefed on their responsibilities regarding supporting young people and abuse, prior to working on the project.

Our responsibility is to ensure that the young person is safe and not exposed to any of the forms of abuse. This takes the form of listening to disclosures and reporting them onwards, if necessary, to ensure appropriate support is in place – and not as directly being a support worker or counsellor to the young person.

5. Training

Upon joining LUPG, all staff and volunteers will read all policies and sign to indicate they understand their responsibilities as described; and are given the opportunity to discuss them with the Project Leader. They will also take advantage as soon as possible of approved Safeguarding Training

The policy will be reviewed and staff updated and refreshed at least once a year on the policy and the contents, or at any time where the application or interpretation of the policy comes into question.

6. Abuse of Trust

An abuse of trust occurs broadly where an adult uses a trust position (such as that of a support worker) to build a relationship with a vulnerable person (e.g. a young person) and then abuses them in any of the ways detailed earlier under categories of abuse.

To reduce the risk of abuse of trust occurring within LUPG, various precautions are taken, namely:

- Staff and volunteers work within the code of conduct outlined in section 3 above.

- Sexual relations are strictly prohibited, irrespective of the age of those concerned.
- Staff will take any allegation of abuse of trust seriously and complete an unbiased investigation into them.
- Staff and volunteers are briefed on and understand their duty to report any suspicions.
- We operate a culture of openness between everyone involved.
- Any allegation of abuse of trust found to be genuine will result in sanction of the staff member involved, including disciplinary action up to and including dismissal (handled under LUPG guidance and disciplinary policy).

Prevention of Abuse of Trust

The most effective measure for prevention of abuse of trust is that each staff member or volunteer has a very clear idea of their role. This will be given in a role description at or before starting a role, which should include who they are accountable to, exactly where their responsibility starts and finishes (limits), their duty to prevent abuse, and action to be taken if abuse is discovered.

7. Prevention and Supervision

a. Role descriptions

A means of ensuring that the policy is followed, and there is no abuse of trust, is that each person has a clear job role and supervision when working for LUPG.

Each LUPG member will receive a role specification before starting work or volunteering. This will outline, at least:

- Who they report to.
- Examples of the sort of duties and responsibilities they will have on the

Project.

- The Limits to their authority
- Their duty to prevent abuse, and to take action if abuse is discovered

b. Supervision

It is important that staff on the project receive proper supervision.

- The Project Leader's line manager is the Board of Trustees.
- The Project Leader will meet with support workers fortnightly as a minimum to discuss any issues they are experiencing, or be open to discuss these as they occur.
- Regular opportunities are sought for staff to get together and discuss practices and issues.
- If there is any report of abuse made, the Project Leader will meet with the member of staff who received the disclosure, as early as feasible; a meeting of all staff and volunteers will then be arranged to keep everyone in the loop unless the nature of the abuse makes it necessary to share the information with only Social Services and/or the Police.

8. Staff training in prevention of child abuse prevention

Staff training in safeguarding of young people is essential for anyone working on LUPG. This is provided by a suitably qualified training provider. Ideally new staff will receive this training within three months or a maximum of six months of starting their role. Until this training is received, they will receive and read this policy in full, sign for understanding and be given a fortnightly supervision meeting without fail.

Appendix A: Categories of Abuse

Six Categories of Neglect

Type of Abuse	Examples	Signs
Physical	<p><i>Abusing the young person in any physical manner, for example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting • Shaking • Throwing • Poisoning • Burning • Scalding • Drowning • Deliberately causing ill health to the YP • YP Feigning the symptoms of ill health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained injuries or burns • Unlikely excuses for, or refusal to give reasons for, such injuries. • The above happening recurrently. • Wearing clothes unsuited to weather to cover injuries • Refusing to remove clothing for physical/sports activity • Running away • Fear of medical examination • Destructive attitude to self or others • Fear of physical contact • Admitting being punished, but saying the punishment is excessive.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of contact between us and a carer.
Emotional	<p><i>Persistent emotional ill treatment such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development/state</i></p> <p>Verbal abuse – e.g., telling the young person they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or loved only insofar as to meet another person’s needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age or developmentally unfair expectations placed on the young person. • Making a young person feel frightened or in danger • Corruption or exploitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical, emotional or mental development behind peers of their age • Sudden speech disorders • Continual self-deprecation (‘I’m stupid, I’m ugly) • Overreaction to mistakes. • Extreme fear of any new situation. • Inappropriate response to pain. (‘I deserve this’) • Neurotic behaviour (e.g., rocking) • Extremes of passivity
Sexual	<p><i>Forcing or enticing the young person to take part in sexual activity against their will or even their knowledge. It includes abuse of trust – it is unlawful</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate affection towards us • Medical signs e.g. itching genital areas, diseases, pain • Extreme reactions e.g., depression, self-mutilation, suicide

	<p><i>to have any sexual intercourse or other sexual activity between a person in a position of trust and any young person subject to their authority.</i></p> <p>Physical sexual contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment by repeating touching or verbal sexual comments • Exposing young person to pornographic materials • Encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour • ‘Grooming’ including via online methods e.g., social networking 	<p>attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality changes – e.g., insecurity, running away, clinging • Regression to younger aged behaviours • Loss of appetite or compulsive eating • Isolating or withdrawing self • Inability to concentrate • Fear of someone they know well • Nightmares or ‘day mares’ • Worrying about taking off clothing • Drawing sexually explicit pictures • Trying to be ‘over-good.’ • Reacting overly badly to criticism
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<p>Neglect</p>	<p><i>A persistent failure to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in an impairment to health and development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing • Failure to protect a young person from harm or danger • Failure to access adequate medical care or treatment • Neglect of or lack of response to basic emotional needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant hunger • Poor personal hygiene • Constant tiredness • Poor state of clothing • Emaciation • Untreated medical problems • No social relationships
<p>Bullying and Cyberbullying</p>	<p><i>Bullying, racism and other types of discrimination are forms of abuse. Like other kinds of abuse, they can harm a young person physically and emotionally.</i></p> <p>Bullying can take many forms:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belongings getting "lost" or damaged • Physical injuries such as unexplained bruises • Being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school • Not doing as well at school

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can include name-calling, teasing or saying untrue things about the person. • It can also be physical, for example pushing, hitting or kicking, and can include serious physical violence. • Bullying can involve taking money or other things from the victim, either by force or using pressure to persuade them. • Bullying using mobile phones includes sending unkind texts, filming or taking photos of the victim without permission. • Cyber-bullying is bullying on the internet, using email, instant messaging or social networking sites to intimidate, expose or spread 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking for, or stealing, money (to give to a bully) • Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn • Problems with eating or sleeping • Bullying others.
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	rumours about others.	
Radicalisation	<p><i>The process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist activity. When a young person is being radicalised an adult or adults persuade them to develop extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity</i></p> <p><i>Violent extremism can be attributed to Islamic or other religious extremism, a Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and that</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being in contact with known extremists or extremist recruiters • Articulating support for violent extremist causes or leaders; • Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element; • Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature • Using inappropriate language, extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage • Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues • Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations • Seeking to recruit others into extremist ideology • Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour

	<p><i>linked to Animal Rights movements</i></p> <p>Examples may include the demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views, which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs • Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts • Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts • Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK. • There are a number of offences that can be considered when dealing with violent extremism. They include 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in friends and mode of dress.
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	offences arising through spoken words, creation of tapes and videos of speeches, internet entries, chanting, banners and written notes and publications.	
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Signed by: Chair of Trustees

M. IVE

Signed by: Nicola Ure, Project Manager

Nicola Ure

Date: 09/09/2024