

Safeguarding of Young and Vulnerable People Policy
Level Up Gosport

‘Level Up Gosport’ (LUPG) exists to provide volunteering opportunities and enjoyment for its young people in a safe environment. Due to the minimum age of our members (17.5 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 and trustees 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 YP 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 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 YP through volunteering within a supportive environment or 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?

The YP 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?

YP 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 YP 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, or a trustee, this should be reported immediately to the Project Manager. If this is not appropriate, the matter should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The necessary action will be taken to investigate the matter, including temporarily preventing the staff member, volunteer or trustee in question from working with young people until the complaint or allegation is resolved.

3. Staff/Volunteer behaviour regarding this policy

All staff, volunteers and trustees that lone work with a vulnerable YP will need to have a verified DBS check before any work can commence.

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 Manager and staff 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 Manager, concerns may be reported to the Designated 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- h. LUPG will hold next of kin contact details for every YP. 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 YP reporting abuse by following the same procedure as outlined in section 2e, above.

b. Staff Responsibilities

b1. Knowing what ‘abuse’ is?

The Care Act 2014 lists ten specific categories of abuse and neglect. These are; neglect, self-neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, financial and material abuse, organisational abuse, discriminatory abuse, modern slavery and domestic 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 YP 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 Designated 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 Manager 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 Manager.

b5. Whistle blowing – allegations of abuse against team members

It can be very difficult to report concerns about a staff member, trustee 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 Manager immediately. They will investigate and decide on the appropriate response which, depending on the nature of the allegations and following discussion with the Designated 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 Manager. 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 Manager's line manager is the Board of Trustees.
- The Project Manager 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 Manager 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.

Our current Designated Safeguarding Officer for Adults is Mrs Susan Wright; mobile number: 07983882744; email: ken.wright30@ntlworld.com

Appendix A: Categories of Abuse

NEGLECT:

An ongoing failure to meet someone's basic physical or psychological needs.

Neglect and acts of omission include ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Possible signs and indicators of neglect may include:

- Physical condition of person is poor e.g. bed sores, unwashed, ulcers, personal hygiene
- Clothing in poor condition e.g. unclean, wet, ragged
- Inadequate physical environment, inadequate protection from sun, inadequate heating
- Malnutrition, dehydration, inadequate diet
- Untreated injuries or medical problems
- Inconsistent or reluctant contact with health or social care agencies
- Failure to engage in social interaction / give prescribed medication

SELF-NEGLECT:

A person living in a way that puts their health, safety, or wellbeing at risk.

Self-neglect differs from other forms of abuse because it does not involve a perpetrator. However, it is identified as a specific category of abuse and neglect in the Care Act 2014.

It is when a person is unable, or unwilling, to care for their own essential needs and covers a wide range of behaviour including neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings, refusing care and support, and severe hoarding behaviour.

Possible signs and indicators of self-neglect may include:

- Living in a very unclean environment e.g. rodent infested or blocked toilet
- Neglecting household maintenance
- Having eccentric behaviour or lifestyles such as obsessive hoarding
- Poor diet and nutrition, little or no fresh food in fridge, mouldy or out of date food
- Refusing necessary help from health or social care staff in relation to personal hygiene and care
- Having poor personal hygiene, poor health, sores or long toe nails

PHYSICAL ABUSE:

The act of causing physical injury to someone else.

Physical abuse includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Possible signs and indicators of physical abuse may include:

- Any injury not fully explained by the history given
- Injuries inconsistent with the lifestyle of the adult
- Bruises and/or welts on face, lips, mouth, torso, arms, back, buttocks, thighs
- Clusters of injuries forming regular patterns
- Burns, especially on soles, palms or back: friction burns, rope or electrical appliance burns

- Multiple fractures, bleeding, slap marks, finger marks
- Lacerations or abrasions to mouth, lips, gums, eyes, genitalia
- Injuries at different stages of healing
- Medication misuse
- Fear or emotional distress.

SEXUAL ABUSE:

When an adult is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities when they do not or cannot consent to this.

Sexual abuse includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Possible signs and indicators of sexual abuse may include:

- Significant change in sexual behaviour or attitude
- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- Wetting or soiling
- Poor concentration, withdrawn, depressed or stressed
- Unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Bruises, bleeding, pain or itching in genital area
- Sexually transmitted diseases, urinary tract or vaginal infection, love bites
- Bruising to thighs, upper arm,
- Self-harming behaviour, fear or emotional distress

PSYCHOLOGICAL OR EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT:

Types of psychological or emotional abuse can include:

- Enforced social isolation – preventing someone accessing services, educational and social opportunities and seeing friends
- Removing mobility or communication aids or intentionally leaving someone unattended when they need assistance
- Preventing someone from meeting their religious and cultural needs
- Preventing the expression of choice and opinion. Controlling behaviour
- Failure to respect privacy
- Preventing stimulation, meaningful occupation or activities
- Intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing or verbal abuse
- Addressing a person in a patronising or infantilising way
- Threats of harm or abandonment
- Cyber bullying
- Blaming
- Verbal abuse

Possible signs and indicators of psychological or emotional abuse may include:

- An air of silence when a particular person is present
- Withdrawal or change in the psychological state of the person
- Insomnia
- Low self-esteem
- Uncooperative and aggressive behaviour
- A change of appetite, weight loss/gain
- Signs of distress: tearfulness, anger

- Apparent false claims, by someone involved with the person, to attract unnecessary treatment.

FINANCIAL OR MATERIAL:

The unauthorised and improper use of funds, property, or any resources. This includes the use of theft, coercion, or fraud to obtain or try to obtain a person's money, possessions, or property.

Financial or material abuse includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Possible signs and indicators of financial or material abuse may include:

- Change in living conditions
- lack of heating, clothing or food
- Inability to pay bills or unexplained shortage of money
- Unexplained withdrawals from an account
- Unexplained loss or misplacement of financial documents
- The recent addition of authorised signatories on a client's signature card
- Sudden or unexpected changes in a will or other financial documents.

ORGANISATIONAL:

Neglect or poor professional practice or incidents due to the structure, policies, processes, or practices within an organisation, resulting in ongoing neglect or poor care.

Organisational abuse is neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment.

Possible signs and indicators of organisational abuse may include:

- Misuse of medication / inappropriate restraint methods
- Sensory deprivation e.g. denial of use of spectacles, hearing aids / denial of visitors or phone calls
- Restricted access to toilet or bathing facilities, medical or social care, lack of clothing or possessions
- Controlling relationships between staff and service users
- Poor professional practice, poor communication and recording of essential care information
- Lack of respect shown to person
- Failure to ensure privacy, personal dignity
- Lack of flexibility and choice
- Insufficient account taken of views of adult, relatives or carers
- Significant numbers of low-level concerns.

DISCRIMINATORY:

Ill-treatment experienced by people based on age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage /civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

This is any form of abuse which is carried out because of a person's differences and includes forms of harassment, ill-treatment, threats or insults because of a person's race, age,

culture, gender, gender identity, religion, sexuality, physical or learning disability, or mental-health needs.

Possible signs and indicators of discriminatory abuse may include:

- The person appearing withdrawn and isolated
- Expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety
- Lack of respect shown to an individual
- Signs of a sub-standard service being offered to a person
- Repeated exclusion from rights afforded to citizens such as health, education, employment

Discriminatory abuse can also be called 'hate crime'. Hate crime is the targeting of individuals, groups and communities because of who they are. It is any incident which is a criminal offence and which is thought, by you or someone else, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, disability, age, sexual orientation or any other actual or seeming difference.

This can include:

- Threats, bullying or intimidation
- Threatening or offensive mail, texts or emails
- Verbal abuse
- Damage to property
- Physical assaults

It is important to report all hate incidents, even if you think nothing can be done as it helps the police and other agencies identify areas of concern, patterns of behaviour and what is happening in our communities. Hate crimes are not only crimes against the targeted victim, but also against a particular group as a whole.

MODERN SLAVERY:

Holding a person(s) in position of slavery, forced servitude, compulsory labour, or facilitating their travel with intention of exploiting them.

Modern slavery exists in the UK and destroys lives. Men, women and children – UK nationals and those from abroad – are exploited in the sex industry, through forced labour, domestic servitude in the home and forced criminal activity. These types of crime are often called human trafficking. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. The true extent and nature of modern slavery in Sussex is not known as this crime remains largely invisible to the general public unless they know what they are looking for.

Possible signs and indicators of modern slavery may include:

- Victims may show signs of physical or psychological abuse, look malnourished, unkempt, withdrawn
- May seem under control of others, not travel alone, rarely interact or appear unfamiliar with the neighbourhood
- May be living in dirty cramped conditions
- May have no identification documents, few personal possessions, wear the same clothes everyday
- May have to be dropped off or picked up for work on a regular basis either very early or late at night
- May appear frightened or hesitant to talk, avoid eye contact

[Government guidance on Victims of Modern](#)

[Slavery](#) is designed to help staff identify and help potential victims of modern slavery (including human trafficking) in England and Wales. It reflects relevant provisions of the

Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015. If staff suspect a person is a potential victim of modern slavery due to human trafficking in any part of the UK (or slavery, servitude, or forced or compulsory labour in cases identified in England or Wales) they must consider a referral into the [national referral mechanism](#) (NRM). Under the NRM, a trained specialist in a designated competent authority will investigate the matter further.

DOMESTIC:

Any incident of domestic abuse by people aged 16 or over who are personally connected. This can include physical or sexual abuse; violent or threatening behaviour; controlling or coercive behaviour; economic, psychological, or emotional abuse.

Domestic abuse is often characterised as physical violence but can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse, by someone who is a family member or is, or has been, in a close relationship with the person being abused. This may be a one-off incident or a pattern of incidents or threats, violence, controlling or coercive behaviour. It also includes so called 'honour' based violence, being forced to marry, or undergo genital mutilation.

Coercive or controlling behaviour is a core part of domestic violence. Coercive behaviour can include:

- Acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation
- Harming, punishing, or frightening the person
- Isolating the person from sources of support
- Exploitation of resources or money
- Preventing the person from escaping abuse
- Regulating everyday behaviour

Possible signs and indicators of domestic abuse may include:

- Low self-esteem
- Feeling that the abuse is their fault when it is not
- Physical evidence of violence such as bruising, cuts, broken bones
- Verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others
- Fear of outside intervention
- Damage to home or property
- Isolation – not seeing friends and family
- Limited access to money

Signed by: Chair of Trustees

M. IVE

Signed by: Nicola Ure, Project Manager

Date: 06/11/2024