



GRASSROOTS Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

- (A) GRASSROOTS acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, and is committed to ensuring that its safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities and complies with models of best practice. This policy applies to trustees, employees, volunteers and anyone else working for or in partnership with GRASSROOTS (e.g. work placements, trainers and consultants etc), and all shall be made aware of it upon their appointment.
- (B) We take the matter of safeguarding all with whom we work and especially children, young people and vulnerable adults seriously. The nature of our work is such that we use community development methods and engage in dialogue which is more likely to be empowering than abusive. However we realise the need to protect our methodology from misuse by those who may be less scrupulous.
- (C) This policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children and adults are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that children and adults regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, political or religious belief, race, ethnic or national origin, offending background, socio-economic background, marital status or family circumstances:
1. Have a positive and enjoyable experience at GRASSROOTS projects, events or other activities; and
 2. Are protected from abuse whilst participating in GRASSROOTS projects, events or activities and also outside of these activities.
- (D) As much of this policy provides advice and guidance on action regarding a safeguarding concern, some parts of this are written in first-person terminology (e.g. where detailing instructions directed to “you”).

2. Aims

- (A) We therefore aim to ensure that all with whom we are involved can:
1. Be healthy – that our premises and those we use will meet Health and Safety requirements, that they and activities will be assessed for risk and actions undertaken to minimise any risk of harm to health;
 2. Stay safe – that we will do all within our power to prevent abuse and protect people from actual physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect, will challenge any abuse of power by anyone in a position of trust;
 3. Enjoy and achieve – that our activities will help people to enjoy being part of the community and to achieve growth in their personal and faith development;

4. Make a contribution – believing in the value of everyone we shall work in ways that allow everyone who so wishes to make their contribution to the life of their community;

3. Safeguarding Principles

(A) To assist in achieving this we will:

1. Have Policy and Procedures in place and to maintain, monitor and regularly review Health and Safety;
2. Use premises that are similarly regulated for GRASSROOTS activities;
3. Carry out risk assessments prior to carrying out new projects or operating in premises which are new to GRASSROOTS;
4. Ensure that anyone appointed to the organisation is DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked (or other if the legal requirements have changed) and appropriate references obtained;
5. Ensure employees and volunteers are trained in working with children, young people and vulnerable adults (by attending the Methodist Church's 'Creating Safer Space' Module A for staff and nominated trustees and Module B for staff or similar training from one of the other supporting denominations or the Luton Children's Safeguarding Board) to:
 - a. Recognise signs of abuse;
 - b. Identify different forms of abuse (see Appendix A);
 - c. Deal with disclosure;
 - d. Monitor each other's working practices;
 - e. Take appropriate action, should they encounter any such issues during the course of their work (by following the flow chart in Appendix B).
6. Ensure employees and volunteers working with children ensure that the 'Help Children Achieve More' framework (previously the 'Every Child Matters' framework) is achieved and covers the 5 main outcomes, where possible:
 - a. Be Healthy;
 - b. Stay Safe;
 - c. Enjoy and Achieve;
 - d. Make a positive contribution;
 - e. Achieve economic well-being.
7. Ensure anti-discriminatory practice is embedded in all our programmes and activities;

8. Ensure activities are designed at the right level for participants so no-one is left to feel excluded;
9. Ensure all who participate in our programmes and activities are allowed to have a say;
10. Have an easy Complaints Procedure for anyone who feels that an offence or difficulty has been caused by the actions, words or behaviour of employees, volunteers and trustees and act fully on any allegations made.

(B) There are responsibilities on the GRASSROOTS trustees for upholding and monitoring this policy which will be reviewed at least annually or if any changes (for example in work programmes) necessitate (see Appendix A).

4. Immediate Action to Ensure Safety

(A) Immediate action may be necessary at any stage in involvement with children and vulnerable adults. In all cases it is vital to take whatever action is needed to safeguard the individual:

1. If emergency medical attention is required this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999) or taking them to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department;
2. If a child or adult is in immediate danger the police should be contacted (dial 999) (note, they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary, via a Police Protection Order).

5. Recognition of Abuse or Neglect

(A) Abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult is caused by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Types of neglect include physical, sexual, psychological, financial or material, neglect and acts of omission and discriminatory abuse. Please see Appendix A for full definitions of these.

(B) Individuals within GRASSROOTS need to be alert to the potential abuse of children and vulnerable adults both within their families, other caregivers (such as teachers, health care professionals, trusted community members etc) and also from other sources including abuse by members of GRASSROOTS itself.

(C) Trustees, employees and volunteers should know how to recognise and act upon indicators of abuse or potential abuse involving children and vulnerable adults. There is an expected responsibility for all members of the organisation to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child or vulnerable adult in accordance with these procedures.

(D) It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns. However, concerns must not be discussed with parents/carers in the following circumstances where:

1. Sexual abuse is suspected;
2. Organised or multiple abuse is suspected;
3. Fictitious illness by proxy (also known as Munchausen Syndrome by proxy) is suspected;

4. Contacting parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk.

6. What to do if children or vulnerable adults talk to you about abuse or neglect

- (A) It is recognised that a child or vulnerable adult may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when you are present. In these situations you must:
1. Listen carefully to the them - DO NOT directly question them;
 2. Give them time and attention;
 3. Allow them to give a spontaneous account - do not someone who is freely recalling significant events;
 4. Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the person's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence;
 5. Use their own words where possible;
 6. Explain that promises cannot be made not to speak to others about the information they have shared;
 7. Reassure them and tell them that:
 - a. You are glad they have told you;
 - b. They have not done anything wrong;
 - c. What you are going to do next;
 - d. You will need to get help to keep them safe.
 8. Do NOT ask them to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

7. Consulting about your concern

- (A) The purpose of consultation is to discuss your concerns in relation to a child or vulnerable adult and decide what action is necessary.
- (B) You may become concerned about a child or vulnerable adult who has not spoken to you, because of your observations of, or information about them.
- (C) It is good practice to ask a child or vulnerable adult why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to them wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.
- (D) If you are concerned about a child you must share your concerns. Initially you should talk to the GRASSROOTS Director, or if they are implicated in the concerns you should discuss your concerns directly with the Chair.

- (E) You should consult externally with your local Social Services Department in the following circumstances:
1. When you remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether protection concerns exist;
 2. When there is disagreement as to whether protection concerns exist;
 3. When you are unable to consult promptly or at all with your designated internal contact for protection.
- (F) Consultation is not the same as making a referral but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Social Services or the Police should progress.

8. Making a referral

- (A) A referral involves giving Social Services or the Police information about concerns relating to a child or vulnerable adult in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency followed by any necessary action.
- (B) In certain cases the level of concern will lead straight to a referral without external consultation being necessary.
- (C) Parents and/or carers should be informed if a referral is being made except in the circumstances outlined in point 5.D.
- (D) However, inability to inform parents for any reason should not prevent a referral being made. It would then become a joint decision with Social Services about how and when the parents should be approached and by whom.
- (E) If your concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from a family member or someone known to the child or vulnerable adult, you should make a telephone referral to your local Social Services Department.

9. Information required

- (A) Be prepared to give as much of the following information as possible (in emergency situations all of this information may not be available). Unavailability of some information should not stop you making a referral.
1. Your name, telephone number, position and request the same of the person to whom you are speaking;
 2. Full name and address, telephone number of family, date of birth of child/adult and siblings;
 3. Gender, ethnicity, first language, any special needs;
 4. Names, dates of birth and relationship of household members and any significant others;

5. The names of professionals' known to be involved with the child/adult/family (e.g. GP, Health Visitor, School etc);
 6. The nature of the concern and foundation for them;
 7. An opinion on whether the child or vulnerable adult may need urgent action to make them safe;
 8. Your view of what appears to be the needs of the child or vulnerable adult;
 9. Whether the consent of a parent (or carer) with parental (or carer) responsibility has been given to the referral being made;
- (B) Action to be taken following the referral:
1. Ensure that you keep an accurate record of your concern(s) made at the time;
 2. Put your concerns in writing to Social Services following the referral (within 48 hours);
 3. Accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for this decision.

10. Confidentiality

- (A) GRASSROOTS should ensure that any records made in relation to a referral should be kept confidentially and in a secure place.
- (B) Information in relation to child or vulnerable adult protection concerns should be shared on a "need to know" basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child and vulnerable adult protection and, therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to the need for protection.

Appendix A - Definitions

Safeguarding

The term 'safeguarding' refers to inward facing procedures such as awareness raising, reporting concerns, responding appropriately to issues of abuse and exploitation and preventing harm through sound recruitment and safe programming.

Vulnerable Adult

For the purpose of this policy a vulnerable adult is defined as "anyone over the age of 18 who: is or may be in need of Community Care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself or is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation" No Secrets, DOH (2000).

People who may be included in a definition of a Vulnerable Person (this is not an exhaustive list):

- People with learning disability
- People with physical disabilities
- People with sensory impairment
- People with mental health needs including dementia
- People who misuse substances of alcohol
- People who are physically ill or mentally frail

Others may also be vulnerable due to low self-esteem, social exclusion, offending history, homelessness, domestic abuse, ethnicity, immigration status etc.

Trustee Responsibilities

Trustees of charities which work with children and vulnerable adults have a duty of care to their charity which will include taking the necessary steps to safeguard and take responsibility for those children and vulnerable adults. They must always act in their best interests and ensure they take all reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them. Trustees also have duties to manage risk and to protect the reputation and assets of the charity.

Definitions of Abuse

- Physical Abuse - including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- Sexual Abuse - including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting. This includes the taking of inappropriate pictures, viewing and posting pictures online;
- Psychological Abuse - including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks;
- Financial or Material Abuse - including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits;
- Neglect and Acts of Omission - including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating;
- Discriminatory Abuse - including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Appendix B – GRASSROOTS Safeguarding Flowchart

The term 'individual' below refers to GRASSROOTS trustees, employees and volunteers, and anyone else working for or in partnership with GRASSROOTS (e.g. work placements, trainers and consultants etc).

