



# Safeguarding Policy



## HOPE for Epilepsy

### Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

#### Designated Safeguarding Lead/Trustee details:

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**Name:** Dr Nadine Gurr

**Contact number:** 07516 926703

**Other contact numbers:**

- NSPCC: 0808 800 500
- Childline: 0800 1111
- London Children's Safeguarding Partnership, Barnet: 0208 359 4049
- London Adults Safeguarding Board, Barnet: 0208 359 5000

#### Who are we?

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HOPE for Epilepsy (also referred to as 'us', 'we' and 'the charity' in this document) is a charity providing family support and social activities in various forms.

Parents and carers always have full responsibility of their family members, including any personal or intimate needs. No trustee or volunteer will be expected to undertake lone working with any vulnerable child, young person or adult as part of the services we offer.

#### Our Commitment

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We recognise that members of our group may be more vulnerable to abuse and that not everyone who attends our group's activities may understand what constitutes abuse or report it appropriately.

We will always take a considered and sensitive approach in order that we may support users of our group. HOPE for Epilepsy is committed to ensuring that all children and vulnerable adults are kept safe by contributing to:

- Providing a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults, during events and activities that are run by the group.
- Reporting of suspected concerns of possible abuse.

#### Who does the policy apply to?

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This policy applies to all trustees, board members and volunteers. HOPE for Epilepsy recognises the importance of its support services to families, children, young people and

adults and its responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of those who are vulnerable or who are at risk.

The welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religion or sexual identity and they have the right to be protected from abuse.

The charity recognises that some children, young people and vulnerable adults are additionally vulnerable to abuse due to their disability, level of dependence, communication needs or other issues and HOPE for Epilepsy trustees, board members and volunteers will be vigilant if any suspicions arise.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to immediately and the appropriate action taken following the guidance within this policy.

### **The purpose of this policy**

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The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who access support groups or events run by HOPE for Epilepsy.
- Provide trustees, board members and volunteers with information on safeguarding in line with current legislation.
- Set out the charity's responsibilities towards the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

### **Legal framework**

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This policy has been drawn up using laws and guidance from the following:

#### **Laws and guidance relating to children:**

- The Children Act 1989 / The Children Act 2004
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- United convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Protection of Freedom Act 2012
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

#### **Laws and guidance relating to vulnerable adults:**

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Care Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010

- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- No secrets January 2015

## Definitions

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A 'Child or young person' for the purpose of this statement refers to a person under the age of 18 years. This statement applies to all children and young people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, social orientation or religion.

A 'Vulnerable Adult' is defined as someone over the age of 18 years who may need community care services because of a disability (mental or other), are, or illness. A person is also considered vulnerable if they are unable to look after themselves, protect themselves from harm or exploitation or are unable to report abuse.

\*Please note that in the case of someone who is 18 years or older we do not have the right to report disclosures without their express permission unless that person is recognised as a vulnerable adult over 18 or there is a risk to someone under 18 years.

## Good practice

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HOPE for Epilepsy has a 'duty of care' towards the people we work with to protect them from harm. As part of its screening process, we will ensure that Enhanced DBS Disclosures are obtained for all trustees and volunteers who actively run projects for the charity. Where there has been a delay in receipt of a cleared disclosure; the charity, where satisfied that the trustee or volunteer is safe to practice and suitable references have been followed up, will allow the trustee or volunteer to have contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults under supervision.

No trustee or volunteer will be put into a position of lone working with a child, young person or vulnerable adult. All parents or carers are responsible for their own families or service users and are expected to attend and stay at events to provide and oversee any personal care.

Any trustee, board member or volunteer who is actively running a project for HOPE for Epilepsy will be required to complete training in 'safeguarding children' and also 'safeguarding vulnerable adults' so that they should feel confident in recognising and reporting abuse.

Online sessions will be organised with the knowledge of other trustees/board members and moderated by more than one member of the board/volunteers in attendance. The charity's telephone advice and support line will be manned by someone who has had relevant safeguarding training should any issues come to light through that medium. Similarly, anyone handling email contact or contacts over social media channels should receive relevant training.

Any pictures taken by a board member/trustee or volunteer are purely for the purpose of promotion of the group's activities and with express permission from the families involved. If they are to be used on or in social media, the group's website, promotional

literature or a report permission is requested for these explicit purposes and any images will only be used for the specific purpose that the permission was gained for.

HOPE for Epilepsy has a duty to report any trustee or volunteer to the Independent Safeguarding Authority who has been removed from duty for allegedly causing harm or posing a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

## What measures the charity puts in place to support and safeguard individuals

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HOPE for Epilepsy will ensure the following measures are in place:

- All trustees and volunteers will have read the safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy, have open access to it and will understand what the procedures are for reporting any suspicions or allegations of abuse.
- This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis and discussed at committee level.
- We will listen to, value, encourage and support those we work with and take seriously any suspicions or allegations of abuse.
- We will make trustees and volunteers aware of our code of conduct and all trustees and volunteers will have open access to the policy.
- The charity will ensure that any trustee or volunteer running projects have enhanced disclosure and barring service checks.
- The charity will ensure that any trustee or volunteer running projects will have undertaken safeguarding children and vulnerable adults training.
- We will work collaboratively where appropriate with local authorities and professional bodies to ensure best practice in the interest of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

## Understanding and recognising abuse:

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Abuse may include but is not exclusive to the following:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect / Self neglect
- Verbal abuse
- Psychological / Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse (including sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation)
- Extremism and Radicalisation
- Domestic abuse
- Modern Day Slavery
- Mate crime and Hate crime
- Financial abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse

## Definitions of harm and abuse

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**Harm:** Harm is defined all harmful conduct and/or behaviour that causes physical/psychological harm (for example causing alarm or distress); unlawful conduct which adversely affects the individual's property/rights/interests (for example theft); and behaviour that causes self-harm and self-neglect.

**Development:** means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

**Abuse and Neglect:** are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a vulnerable person by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. A vulnerable person may be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting; by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or by a child or children.

**Physical abuse:** May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocation or otherwise causing physical harm to a vulnerable person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a vulnerable person.

**Sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a vulnerable person to participate in sexual acts, against their will and understanding, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities such as involving a vulnerable person in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging vulnerable persons to act in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a vulnerable person for abuse (including by the internet or mobile phones). Sexual abuse can be initiated by other children or vulnerable adults, and is not solely perpetrated by adults.

**Emotional abuse:** Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a vulnerable person which can cause severe and persistent negative effects on their emotional wellbeing. It may involve telling the vulnerable person that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued, only to meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the vulnerable person opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of them or what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age, developmentally or intellectually inappropriate expectations being imposed on vulnerable persons. These may include interactions which are beyond the person's intellectual or developmental capacity, as well as the overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the vulnerable person participating in normal social activities. It may involve seeing or hearing the maltreatment of another person. It may involve bullying (including cyber bullying via the internet or mobile phones) which causes the vulnerable person to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of vulnerable people. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment although it may occur alone.

**Neglect:** is the persistent failure to meet a vulnerable person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in a serious impairment of the vulnerable person's health or development. This may be an adult's failure to provide food, clothing and/or shelter for a vulnerable person in their care, failure to protect a vulnerable person from abuse, failure to ensure adequate supervision of a vulnerable person or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a vulnerable person's basic emotional needs.

## Responding to an allegation or suspected abuse

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Taking action if abuse is suspected or disclosed: If a vulnerable person reports a safeguarding issue, to a trustee, volunteer or group member, it is vital that they follow this procedure:

- Try to find a quiet area to speak where you will not be interrupted. Do not put them off talking, by asking them to meet later. NB if this is not possible, report what has been disclosed as soon as possible.
- Listen carefully to what they are saying and only ask open questions e.g. 'can you tell me what happened?'
- The vulnerable person should be informed of who we might talk to, both within the group and outside of the group, their right to be listened to and the steps that you can be taken to protect them harm.
- Immediately after the disclosure, write down exactly what they said. Make notes of times, locations and any other relevant facts.
- Report the incident to the designated safeguarding lead, or the safeguarding trustee. It is their responsibility to deal with the matter further.
- Do not discuss the matter with anyone else. Doing so could result in the vulnerable person being put at further risk of harm.

Anyone receiving information that a vulnerable person may be being abused or at risk of harm should:

- Take the disclosure of information seriously.
- Try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise.
- Not express any feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the vulnerable person.
- Tell the vulnerable person that they are glad s/he has told them what has happened and that it was right to tell.
- Explain sensitively to the vulnerable person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to someone that can help them but that those who need to know will be told.
- Reassure and support the person as much as possible.
- Explain what will happen next and who will be involved.

Concerns that trustees, volunteers and group members must immediately report:

- Any suspicion that a vulnerable person is injured, marked, or bruised in any way which would not be caused by normal knocks or scrapes.

- Any behaviour which would lead to suspicions that a vulnerable person may have been harmed (e.g. worrying drawings, play, words or behaviour. An excessive preoccupation with sexual matters or an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour).
- Any concerns that a vulnerable person may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment.
- Any concerns that a vulnerable person is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect.
- Any hint or disclosure of abuse from any person.

We will take all concerns seriously and will act in a way that is deemed appropriate on a case-by-case basis. If the situation is urgent, the vulnerable person is too frightened to go home or we have serious doubts about the vulnerable person's welfare, then we will discuss this with the safeguarding trustee, designated safeguarding lead or, if they are not available another trustee, who will then make a referral to the relevant safeguarding board noted below.

It is important that all trustees, volunteers and group members communicate concerns immediately, accurately and maintain confidentiality.

If there is immediate danger or risk of imminent harm, contact the police. If a telephone referral must be made then as soon as possible the following contact details should be used

**Children's (Barnet: 0208 359 4049) or Adults (Barnet: 0208 359 5000) Customer Service Centres**, followed by a written report within 24 hours. Please use the appendix 1 and if appropriate appendix 2 to record accurate details. If they are not available use writing material that is at hand.

The safeguarding team who receives the safeguarding referral has a responsibility to ensure the details are taken and the referral is processed in accordance with London Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures and London Safeguarding Adults Board Policies and Procedures.

### **Procedure to be followed if an allegation is made against a trustee or volunteer**

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A person who receives an allegation from a child or vulnerable adult about another a trustee or volunteer, should follow the guidelines in the previous section entitled Responding to an allegation or suspected abuse if abuse is suspected or disclosed. The same applies if another trustee or volunteer behaviour that they consider to be abusive by another trustee or volunteer. They must immediately inform the designated safeguarding lead or the safeguarding trustee.

The designated safeguarding lead will contact the safeguarding trustee immediately, unless the safeguarding trustee is the person against whom the allegation is about, in which case the report will be made to the group's chairperson. The designated safeguarding lead will provide the safeguarding trustee with written details of the



allegation that include information about times, dates, location, and names of potential witnesses.

The written details will be signed and dated by the person who received the allegation and countersigned by the designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead will make an initial assessment of the allegation, consulting with the safeguarding trustee to establish whether the alleged behaviour:

- harmed a child or vulnerable adult,
- is a possible criminal offence,
- indicates that an adult is unsuitable to work with children and/or vulnerable adults.

If the designated safeguarding lead or the safeguarding trustee believe a referral is appropriate this will be made by the designated safeguarding lead to the relevant authority, within one working day of the incident being reported.

It is important that the designated safeguarding lead or the safeguarding trustee does not investigate the allegation. The initial assessment should be on the basis of the information received and is a decision whether or not the allegation warrants further investigation.

The group will hold in abeyance its internal enquiries while the formal police or social services investigations proceed; to do otherwise may prejudice the investigation. Other potential outcomes are:

- The allegation represents inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by the trustee or volunteer and is neither potentially a crime nor a cause of significant harm to the child/vulnerable adult. In this case, the matter should be addressed in accordance with the group's disciplinary procedures.
- The allegation can be shown to be false because the facts alleged could not possibly be true. Obviously false allegations may be indicative of problems of abuse elsewhere. A record will be kept and information passed to the relevant authorities, in order that other agencies may act upon the information. The designated safeguarding lead or the safeguarding trustee are responsible for ensuring that the group gives every assistance to the agency's enquiries. S/he will ensure that appropriate confidentiality is maintained in connection with the enquiries, in the interests of the person about whom the allegation is made, and of the child or vulnerable adult making the allegation.

Subject to agreement of the investigating agency, the safeguarding trustee and the group's designated safeguarding lead shall:

- inform the child/vulnerable adult and parent/carer (where appropriate) making the allegation, that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.
- ensure that the parents/carers of the child/vulnerable adult making the allegation have been informed that the allegation has been made and what the likely process will involve (where appropriate, and in most cases with the agreement of the child/vulnerable adult).

- inform the person against whom the allegation was made of the fact that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.
- inform the Chair of Group of the allegation and the investigation, without giving confidential details.
- keep a written record of the action taken in connection with the allegation.

During any investigation, regarding safeguarding issues, the trustee or volunteer will be suspended from undertaking all duties on behalf of HOPE for Epilepsy. Should the allegations made be found to be true, the trustee or volunteer will be prohibited from taking part in any role within HOPE for Epilepsy for the lifetime of the group.

Upon the conclusion of the investigations, the designated safeguarding lead or the safeguarding trustee shall:

- inform the child/vulnerable adult making the allegation and/or their parents/carers of the outcome of the investigation and proceedings.
- inform the person against whom the allegation is made of the outcome of the investigation and proceedings.
- where the allegation was made by a child/vulnerable adult other than the alleged victim, consider whether to inform their parents/carers.
- prepare a report, that will be kept with safeguarding records, outlining the allegation and giving reasons for the conclusion and that the action that has been taken.

Records will be retained in a secure place, by the designated safeguarding lead. Where an allegation has been made against a trustee or volunteer the designated safeguarding lead, safeguarding trustee and the chairperson of the group will, at the conclusion of the investigation, consider whether there are any matters arising from it that could lead to the improvement of the group's safeguarding procedures and policies. Consideration will also be given to the training needs of trustees and volunteers.

## Confidentiality

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The legal principle that the "welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount" means that considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations in the organisation should not override the right of the individual to be protected from harm.

Any concern for the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult must be reported immediately to the safeguarding lead and further action taken as required.

The charity will make sure that all records will be limited to the safeguarding lead. Records will be stored securely and destroyed within a reasonable time frame, unless there is a statutory need to keep them.



<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom</b>
October 2022	Reviewed and updated	Louise Miller (Trustee)
October 2023	Reviewed	Dr Nadine Gurr (Chair of Trustees)
November 2023	Reviewed	Louise Miller (Trustee)
November 2024	Name changed from 'HOPE for Paediatric Epilepsy: London' to 'HOPE for Epilepsy'	Louise Miller (Trustee)
<i>October 2024</i>	<i>Date of next review</i>	