North Midlands LGBT+ Older Peoples Group
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Safeguarding Policy Updated Aug 2026

1. Purpose

North Midlands LGBT+ Older Peoples Group (OLGBT+) is a volunteer-run charity based around friendship, peer support and social activities for LGBT+ adults. We do not provide professional care, counselling or crisis intervention services.

The safety and wellbeing of everyone who takes part in our activities is important to us. This policy explains how we seek to protect people from harm, what we expect from those involved with the Group, and how safeguarding concerns should be raised and responded to.

The Group is a registered charity managed by a Board of Trustees (the Board) who are volunteers elected from our members. The Board has overall responsibility for the management of safeguarding issues that may arise.

2. Policy Statement

OLGBT+ believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin, has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. OLGBT+ will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by its members, volunteers or others involved in our Group.

This policy seeks to address adult safeguarding, child safeguarding and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

This policy is not intended to prevent our members from forming friendships or engaging in intimate or sexual relationships. We are only concerned with safeguarding where the basis of a relationship may be considered as therapeutic or where there is an imbalance of power in the relationship or the relationship is abusive in some other way.

3. What is Safeguarding?

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

Most safeguarding concerns encountered in our day-to-day operations are likely to relate to adults, particularly older or vulnerable adults. However, concerns relating to children or young people must always be treated seriously and reported.

OLGBT+ has a legal and moral duty to protect people from harm that could arise in relation to the meetings, events and other activities that we undertake. This includes:

- Responding to concerns about the health and welfare of our members and prospective members.
- Ensuring that our members and prospective members do not cause harm to themselves or others when engaging with our activities.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect visitors, volunteers and members of the public who engage with our activities.
- Reporting safeguarding concerns whenever they are raised. These concerns may relate to any adult or child and may be raised for any reason.

If you suspect that an adult or child is at risk of harm, abuse or neglect then you must raise a safeguarding concern.

4. What We Do to Help Keep People Safe

To help keep everyone safe we will:

- Publish a code of conduct setting out standards of acceptable behaviour.
- Implement policies that protect and promote the health and wellbeing of our members and prospective members.
- Deal with safeguarding concerns and other reports of distress, harm or potential harm relating to members, prospective members and others linked to our activities.
- Signpost people to sources of help and support to meet their needs, for example - Samaritans, Mind or Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Raise awareness of the types of abuse and encourage everyone to report safeguarding concerns.

5. Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Members and prospective members of OLGBT+ are asked to:

- Behave in ways that support their own care and wellbeing and that of other community members.
- Respond appropriately when someone is struggling with their mental or physical health and wellbeing.
- Inform the OLGBT+ Board if they have a safeguarding concern.

When OLGBT+ is unable to meet someone's support needs we will signpost them to other sources of help.

6. Prevention

To help prevent harm we will:

- Ensure that trustees, volunteers and members are aware of this policy and understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Organise our meetings, events and activities in a way that promotes the safety and wellbeing of everyone taking part.
- Maintain appropriate standards of behaviour through our Code of Conduct and related policies.
- Encourage members, volunteers and trustees to recognise and report safeguarding concerns promptly.
- Work cooperatively with partner organisations to ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are understood whenever activities are organised jointly.
- Follow up reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and take appropriate action.

7. Our Responsibilities

Child Safeguarding

Membership of North Midlands LGBT+ Older Peoples Group is restricted to adults and we do not organise activities specifically for children or young people.

However, children and young people may occasionally be present at public events or activities that we support. If any member, volunteer or trustee becomes concerned that a child may be at risk of harm, abuse or neglect, they must raise a safeguarding concern immediately.

OLGBT+ members, volunteers and trustees must never:

- sexually abuse or exploit a child;
- subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse or neglect;
- ignore or fail to report safeguarding concerns relating to a child.

Adult Safeguarding

Many of our members are older people and some may be vulnerable because of age, disability, ill health, dementia, mental ill health or other circumstances.

Members, volunteers and trustees must never:

- sexually abuse or exploit an adult at risk;
- subject an adult at risk to physical, emotional, psychological or financial abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- ignore or fail to report safeguarding concerns relating to an adult at risk.

8. Protection From Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

As an organisation based on peer support we recognise that friendships and personal relationships may naturally develop between members.

This policy is not intended to prevent those relationships. However, no one should use their involvement with our group to abuse, exploit, coerce or take improper advantage of another person.

Members, volunteers and trustees must never:

- use their position within the Group to obtain sexual favours or enter into exploitative relationships;
- use intimidation, coercion or manipulation to establish or maintain a sexual relationship;
- exchange money, gifts, services or other benefits for sexual activity connected with the Group;
- ignore or fail to report concerns about sexual exploitation or abuse.

Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to a culture where safeguarding concerns are recognised, taken seriously and reported promptly to the Board.

9. Enabling Reports

OLGBT+ will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to members and the communities we work with.

OLGBT+ will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

10. How to Report a Safeguarding Concern

Members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to any trustee. If the member does not feel comfortable reporting to a particular trustee (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report directly to the Chair or to any other trustee.

11. Response

If there is an immediate threat to life do not delay, call the emergency services 999.

If someone expresses suicidal thoughts, signpost them to the Samaritans and/or other sources of support that may help meet their needs. Inform the Board of your concerns (but bear in mind that we are not an emergency service).

We will follow up all safeguarding reports and concerns according to best practice and our statutory obligations.

When trustees are informed of a safeguarding concern, we will carefully consider the best way to respond. The response may include:

- Supporting the person who has raised the concern to take further action.

- Signposting the person to additional support that may help.
- Offering to refer someone to their local safeguarding team (this might require them to provide more information such as a full address and date of birth if we do not have the information already). In some circumstances we may need to refer matters to a local safeguarding team regardless of whether we have consent or with only the limited information available.

We cannot by ourselves provide an emergency service or a crisis intervention. We will signpost to others who can help.

We all need to take care not to take on individual responsibility for supporting a person in crisis. The demands of such dependency could become harmful to the person that is providing the support and then ultimately harm the person being supported.

We will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to members found in breach of the Safeguarding Policy.

12. Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding concerns will be handled in accordance with the Group's Confidentiality Policy. Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis except where disclosure is necessary to protect someone from harm or comply with legal responsibilities.

Please be vigilant and report anything that concerns you. Do not attempt to investigate matters by yourself.

Appendix – Links to Safeguarding Information

Concerns About Adults

- General Information about Abuse and Neglect (NHS England)
- Reporting concerns about adults in Stoke-on-Trent
- Reporting concerns about adults in Staffordshire

Concerns About Children

- Reporting concerns about children in Stoke-on-Trent
- Reporting concerns about children in Staffordshire
- NSPCC Helpline
- Childline
- Explanation of the Child Protection System in the UK

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Version History

15/04/2021	Created by Maurice Greenham
25/10/2023	Amended version approved by OLGBT+ Board
04/08/2026	Reviewed and updated to improve concise language and appropriateness for our Group.