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Safeguarding Policy

Who is covered by this policy?

All staff, trustees, volunteers, members, beneficiaries and other stakeholders at the University Mental Health Advisers Network (UMHAN).

What is covered in this policy?

This policy outlines UMHAN's commitment to safeguarding and explains what to do if you have a safeguarding concern at work, or involving one of our members or Trustees.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that through its work and behaviours UMHAN demonstrates its commitment to protecting the rights of people to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances are. Through safeguarding, UMHAN will promote the well-being and welfare of all those whom it comes into contact with, which includes members, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders.

The policy

Safeguarding is defined as the range of measures in place to protect people within an organisation, or those it comes into contact with, from abuse and maltreatment of any kind.

This means:

- protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect;
- protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

UMHAN is committed to ensuring that all staff, volunteers, members, customers and other stakeholders are safeguarded from harm and from situations in which they feel vulnerable. All of UMHAN's policies and procedures support this commitment.

UMHAN will provide adequate resources to ensure that all staff and stakeholders are aware of this policy and committed to its effective implementation.

In the context of UMHAN and its work, safeguarding protection issues include (but are not limited to):

- sexual abuse and exploitation;



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- negligent treatment;
- physical or emotional abuse;
- commercial exploitation;
- extremism.

Our work

As a charity we do not directly work with vulnerable/at risk children and adults, and our members are expected to utilise their organisational safeguarding leads for advice. Sole traders are expected to have their own policy and maintain a higher level of personal training in this area, including an understanding of making an appropriate safeguarding referral.

UMHAN recognises that members will be bound by the safeguarding policies of their employers, and we encourage them to ensure they understand the procedures and responsibilities pertaining to their role, including, for example, duties and guidance around Prevent and Domestic Violence. We are committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with vulnerable children and adults and we will develop our resources to support our self-employed members in this area.

Safeguarding concerns about our members should be raised with their employer in the first instance, if involving direct work with students - this is to ensure swiftness of action.

However, you should raise a concern about any of our members using our [Concerns and Complaints process](#).

Ethical responsibilities

At UMHAN our ethical responsibilities are at the heart of our work as a charity. If we are made aware of a safeguarding concern regarding one of our members, or a volunteer, we would raise this with their employer, and if employed as a Specialist Mental Health Mentor, the Department of Education (who are responsible for quality assurance for DSA non-medical help provision).

The procedure

Raising a concern

A safeguarding concern may relate to you or to the way someone else is being treated. If you have a safeguarding concern, you should do the following:



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For and about staff

1. First, raise any concerns with your line manager.
2. If you believe that your immediate line manager is involved, or you feel for whatever reason unable to raise it with your line manager, raise the issue with the chair of the board of trustees.
3. If your concern involves a trustee, go to the Charity Manager in the first instance.
4. Put your name on the complaint. If requested, your identity will be kept confidential for as long as possible, provided that this does not prejudice the inquiry. Anonymous complaints may be investigated if the person receiving the complaint believes it to be appropriate, having taken into account the seriousness of the issue, the complaint's credibility, the ability to investigate an anonymous complaint and fairness to any individual mentioned in the complaint.

For and about members

1. First, raise any concerns with the member's employer.
2. Please use the process and form on our [Concerns and Complaints process](#) webpage to inform UMHAN.
 - a. We will normally follow this process, unless we have an immediate safeguarding concern which we need to report to an external agency.
 - b. It is likely that at this stage we will need to liaise with the member's employer to ascertain what action has already been taken, in order to fulfil our reporting duties.

About a Trustee

1. First, raise any concerns with the Charity Manager.
2. The Charity Manager will share this concern with the Chair of Trustees, or next senior member of the Trustee board if the concern is about the Chair.

Next steps

Any concerns raised will receive a response. Either a senior staff member or a nominated investigating officer will investigate the concern.

Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the senior member of staff or nominated investigating officer will write to you:

- acknowledging the concern has been received;



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- indicating how it is proposed to deal with the matter;
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to complete the investigations;
- telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made.

The amount of contact between you and the person considering the matter will depend on the nature of the matter raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided.

For UMHAN staff

The charity will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you might experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, it will make arrangements for you to receive advice about the procedure. UMHAN will ensure that there is no detriment at all to your career if you report a safeguarding concern in good faith.

If your concern is not substantiated, you should not take any subsequent action or make any disclosure to anyone other than those referred to in this policy. The exception is disclosure within the parameters of the UMHAN's Whistleblowing Policy if you feel that is required.

The matter will be recorded in accordance with UMHAN's Grievance Procedure and any wrongdoing will be dealt with according to UMHAN's Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure.

Risk assessment and management

Under usual circumstances, UMHAN will risk-assess any situation in which a potentially vulnerable employee, volunteer or associate may find themselves or that might cause someone to become vulnerable. It will then take appropriate measures.

UMHAN will ensure that trustees, staff and volunteers learn about protection issues and their responsibilities in line with statutory guidance.

Incident investigation

UMHAN will report and investigate allegations and concerns to improve its safeguarding processes. It will use any lessons learned from such events to take corrective action to prevent recurrences.

As a small charity, we will instruct an independent investigator in safeguarding cases involving either a member of staff or Trustee.

Where there are alleged incidents of abuse, the police are responsible for investigating whether a criminal offence may have been committed. UMHAN will report a suspected crime (e.g. assault or indecency) to the police.



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Trustees' responsibilities

Prevention is the primary responsibility of trustees. Trustees must take reasonable steps to protect staff, volunteers and those connected with the activities of UMHAN from harm.

The Charity Manager will inform trustees immediately when they become aware of a safeguarding issue and advise of the action being taken.

Trustees are responsible for making reports, where necessary, to the police, social services and other agencies, and, where the criteria are met, sending a serious incident report to the charity regulator.

See also Grievance Procedure, Complaints Procedure, Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure and Whistleblowing Policy.