

## Grass Roots Conservation Group

### ADULT SAFEGUARDING POLICY

#### **Aims of this Policy**

The safeguarding of all adults is a priority for Grass Roots Conservation Group. This document sets out Grass Roots policy concerning safeguarding adults at risk of harm, and its expectations of all volunteers.

Grass Roots Conservation Group believes that it is of great benefit to many people to be able to work on conservation projects alongside other adults. Benefits can relate to their physical health and fitness, their mental and emotional well-being, and the development of social and mechanical skills. Grass Roots is therefore keen to offer volunteering opportunities to a wide spectrum of people, always having regard to the safeguarding of each individual.

However, some adults are more at risk of harm than others. Grass Roots Conservation Group recognises its responsibilities with regards to the safeguarding of adults. This policy has been drawn up following guidance in the document 'Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership' published by the DHSSPS Northern Ireland in July 2015, and in 'Keeping Adults Safe: A Shared Responsibility' pub. Volunteer Now, July 2017.

The abuse of adults, physically, emotionally, sexually and through neglect is a sad fact of life. People may be abused regardless of their age, gender, religious belief, racial origin, culture, disability, sexual orientation or identity. They are usually (but not always) abused by people they know and trust. Grass Roots has a zero tolerance of abuse wherever it occurs or whoever is responsible.

#### **Equality of Opportunity**

Grass Roots Conservation Group will ensure that, wherever possible, it actively promotes equality of opportunity for everybody regardless of gender, race, religion, culture, sexual orientation or ability. Opportunities should always have regard to human rights, health, safety and well-being.

#### **Values**

- The volunteer must be at the centre of the safeguarding process.
- Every person is an individual and has the right to be respected as such; each person should feel confident that individuality and diversity are valued by the other people who work with them.
- Every person has the right to make informed choices and to give or withhold consent.
- A considerate and caring attitude to all people is essential and should be displayed at all times.

## **Working with Grass Roots: Registration and Consent**

To ensure the safeguarding of adults at risk of harm whilst volunteering with Grass Roots Conservation Group, it is essential that:

1. A Consent Form is completed by all adult volunteers before their first volunteering activity with Grass Roots Conservation Group. A copy of the Grass Roots Adult Consent Form is attached to this Policy.
2. The Consent Form seeks consent from the adult for Grass Roots to hold and process data about the volunteer, consistent with the provision of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. Grass Roots needs the data on this form to be able to communicate effectively with volunteers, and for safety reasons on Tasks.
3. Data on the Consent Form will be held securely so long as the person continues to volunteer with Grass Roots. If a person has not volunteered for two years, the data will be disposed of securely. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.
4. The Consent Form seeks consent for photographs or recorded images to be taken of the person while engaged in activities relating to Grass Roots events. Photographs or recorded images may be used on social media, on the Grass Roots website, on presentations and on publicity materials.

## **Reporting and recording**

Grass Roots Conservation Group will record and refer all concerns, suspicions or allegations of abuse or neglect to the lead agencies responsible for carrying out safeguarding assessments and enquiries, specifically the Local Authority or the police. Procedures for Reporting are detailed in the Code of Conduct below.

## **Confidentiality**

Information provided in relation to any person will be treated in strictest confidence. Information will not be passed on without consent. The only exception is where abuse is suspected or disclosed. In this case information will be passed onto the appropriate authorities.

Grass Roots will ensure that data is handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. This allows for the sharing of information without consent where there is concern that a person is suffering abuse, or is at risk of abuse, or where obtaining consent to share information would place the person at further risk.

## **Review**

This version of the Adult Safeguarding Policy is for implementation in April 2023. The Adult Safeguarding Policy is due for review in 2026.

## Code of Conduct

These guidelines set standards that Grass Roots Conservation Group expects from its volunteers when working alongside adults at risk of harm.

1. Volunteers should, at all times, show respect and understanding for the rights of all people and their safety and welfare.
2. Any physical, mental or sexual abuse of any person will result in the termination of that volunteer's voluntary work with Grass Roots Conservation Group. The abuse may also be punishable by law.
3. Any volunteer with Grass Roots Conservation Group who suspects that a person has suffered abuse, or is at risk of abuse, during or related to any Grass Roots activity must report those concerns as soon as possible to the Leader of the task. This also applies to any instances of 'disclosure', when a person tells of abuse happening elsewhere.

Alternatively, the volunteer should contact the Chair of Grass Roots, or another Trustee of Grass Roots, as soon as possible. The list of current Trustees is available on the NI Charity Commissioners' web-site. The Charity Number for Grass Roots is NIC 102932.

The Task Leader will take immediate action to ensure that the abuse does not continue. S/he will record the concerns, and make a report to the relevant authorities, usually the police or the Local Authority, as soon as possible. The Task leader will inform the Chair of Grass Roots of the concerns and any action taken.

4. Volunteers must ensure that they are not working with adults at risk of harm without at least one other adult present.
5. The physical safety of volunteers on Grass Roots sites must take precedence above any other consideration. Task Leaders must ensure that any risk inherent in a task has been considered and reduced to an acceptable level before the task is commenced. This is in addition to the standard requirements of Grass Roots Risk Assessments for Activities and Sites.
6. The use and misuse of illegal or mood altering substances and alcohol is not permitted while volunteering with Grass Roots Conservation Group.
7. The use of offensive language and behaviour is considered inappropriate for people volunteering with Grass Roots.
8. Attire - It is advisable that, in the interests of safety and community relations, everyone involved in Grass Roots Conservation Group refrain from wearing clothing and symbols identifiable with any one section of the community.
9. Dangerous behaviour of any volunteer must not be permitted.
10. An incident book must be maintained to record any accidents or problems which may arise.

## **Supervision Ratios**

1. There should be a minimum of 2 adults (over 18 years) supervising each activity.
2. Volunteers taking responsibility must be aged 18 years and over. Under 18's cannot be charged with responsibility for adults at risk of harm, and so they cannot be counted in the ratio.
3. Adults at risk of harm must never be left unattended under any circumstances. The standard requirement that no Grass Roots volunteer ever works out of sight of other volunteers applies also in this case.
4. One to one contact between volunteers and adults at risk of harm should be minimised and a single volunteer must never supervise a group of adults at risk of harm.
5. Transport by private car to and from sites: Adults at risk of harm being transported by a car driven by another volunteer should have the explicit consent of their responsible carer if relevant. Whenever possible another adult should also be present.



**Consent Form**

All volunteers with Grass Roots Conservation Group must complete a Consent Form before taking part in their first Task, to comply with Grass Roots Adult Safeguarding Policy, and with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. A copy of the current Grass Roots Adult Safeguarding Policy can be viewed on the Grass Roots web-site.

Grass Roots needs the data on this form to be able to communicate effectively with volunteers, and for safety reasons on Tasks. Data on the form will be held securely so long as the person continues to volunteer with Grass Roots. If a person has not volunteered for two years, the data will be disposed of securely. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Any special medical condition (allergies, medications, phobias etc)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any other comments or information you feel may be useful for the Task Leader to know:

\_\_\_\_\_

Tick the following boxes to give consent for each item below.

I give permission for

- the Task Leader to seek professional medical help for me in cases of emergency
  
- photographs or recorded images to be taken of me while engaged in activities relating to Grass Roots events. Photographs or recorded images may be used on social media, on the Grass Roots website, on presentations and on publicity materials

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_