



ORGANISATIONAL HANDBOOK



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1. About Uppertunity

1. Our Mission: What We Aim to Do

1. **Foster Empowerment and Belonging**
Support individuals with additional support needs and those who feel marginalised to feel empowered, valued, and connected to their community.
2. **Promote Growth and Resilience**
Encourage individuals to develop thriving mindsets, transferable life skills, confidence, and resilience through curiosity, playfulness, and exploration.
3. **Challenge Perceptions**
Shift negative perceptions of self and others, fostering open-mindedness and breaking down barriers of misunderstanding.
4. **Build Sustainable Communities**
Create social, economic, and environmental sustainability by engaging communities in partnership, education, and practical action.
5. **Encourage Connection and Collaboration**
Develop meaningful partnerships and connections to overcome isolation, learn from one another, and cultivate togetherness.

2. Our Values: How We Work

1. **Creativity**
Creativity engages the mind, enables broader thinking, and connects us to hidden parts of ourselves. We explore creativity through art, cooking, gardening, and playful activities that inspire new ideas and problem-solving.
2. **Empowerment**
We work with individuals, not for them. By fostering mutual respect and encouraging ownership, we help individuals build confidence and lead fulfilling lives.
3. **Mindset**
We advocate for progress, not perfection. It's about the journey. Through exploration, learning, and curiosity, we help individuals develop resilience and shift their focus to possibilities, not limitations.
4. **Togetherness**
True change happens collectively. We inspire community action, partnership, and collaboration to build stronger, more inclusive connections.
5. **Sustainability**
We aim to create a sustainable future through social, economic, and environmental practices, including creative waste reduction, awareness raising, and partnership working.

2. Our Culture

1. **How We Work With Each Other: The Culture of Uppertunity**

At Uppertunity, we strive to create a positive, inclusive, and empowering environment for all staff, clients, volunteers, board members, support staff, and visitors. Our culture is shaped by the following principles:

1. **Appreciation and Celebration**
 - Value everyone's contributions equally.
 - Acknowledge achievements and celebrate successes, big or small.
 - Verbally recognise and celebrate each person's efforts, regularly.
2. **Non-Judgmental Support**
 - Assume the best in each other and create a safe space to ask for help.
 - Avoid judgment and negativity; instead, foster kindness and encouragement.
 - See the best in everyone, respecting their journey and abilities.
3. **Respect and Fairness**
 - Respect and value diverse backgrounds, abilities, and identities.
 - Treat everyone with fairness. No favouritism, only equity.
4. **Playfulness and Creativity**
 - Encourage humour, curiosity, and experimentation.
 - Provide opportunities for creative expression and new ideas.
 - Foster a safe space where individuals can showcase their talents.
5. **Growth Mindset and Learning**
 - Embrace progress over perfection.
 - Use mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow.
 - Support safe risk-taking and encourage stepping outside comfort zones.
6. **Communication and Honesty**
 - Communicate openly. Share knowledge, ask for help, and clarify expectations.
 - Check in regularly and give constructive feedback.
 - Listen actively and with empathy, asking follow-up questions to show care.
7. **Collaboration and Teamwork**
 - Promote teamwork and inclusivity over competition.
 - Share ideas, support each other, and work together to achieve common goals.
 - Build a calm and fun environment where everyone feels they belong.
8. **Accountability and Trust**
 - Take ownership of actions and be honest about successes and mistakes.
 - Assume good intentions and practice authenticity in every interaction.
 - Follow through on commitments and encourage continuous learning.
9. **Empowerment**
 - Guide and support rather than doing things for others.
 - Believe in everyone's potential and create opportunities for independence.
10. **Adaptability and Flexibility**
 - Be open to new ideas and willing to adjust for the benefit of everyone.
 - Check in regularly to ensure processes are working effectively.

2. How We Behave as Individuals: Being a Great Facilitator

To effectively support adults with additional support needs and empower them, facilitators at Uppertunity embody the following behaviours:

1. Be a Role Model
 - Demonstrate positive behaviour in attitude, language, and actions.
 - Show respect, kindness, and healthy habits to inspire confidence and trust.
 - Is the behaviour you show or what you're talking about helpful to you, or helpful to the person? It should be helpful to the person.
2. Show Initiative
 - Be proactive, offer help and stay engaged during activities.
 - Check in with members and join in creatively when possible.
 - See where things can improve, and share ideas.
3. Build Confidence and Empower
 - Provide specific, meaningful compliments that highlight individual strengths.
 - Empower individuals to take ownership of their learning and experiences.
 - Focus on personal growth, not perfection.
4. Listen and Communicate with Care
 - Be empathetic, listen without judgment and offer support.
 - Match body language and tone to create equality, not hierarchy.
 - Explain things clearly and adapt communication to meet individual needs.
5. Foster Fun and Balance
 - Create a safe and engaging atmosphere with enthusiasm and positivity.
 - Balance fun with purpose. Focus on the journey, not just the destination.
6. Ensure Safety and Professionalism
 - Be aware of safeguarding responsibilities and report concerns.
 - Maintain professional boundaries, keeping physical contact to a minimum and no private communication outside of the workspace with clients.
 - Share updates with the team to keep everyone informed.
7. Be Prepared and On Time
 - Know your responsibilities for workshops, events, and activities.
 - Stay informed about Uppertunity's plans and ensure readiness.
8. Practice Kindness and Boundaries
 - Be nurturing yet professional. Balance kindness with clear boundaries.
 - Respect others' needs, and create space for learning and growth.
9. Share and Collaborate
 - Share knowledge, resources, and skills with others.
 - Teach and learn from team members and volunteers.
10. Create a Positive Team Environment
 - Support colleagues and volunteers by noticing and addressing struggles.
 - Practice gratitude and show appreciation for others' efforts.
 - Make space for individuals to be themselves and feel valued.

3. Code of Conduct

Creating a safe, respectful, and positive environment for everyone At Uppertunity, we believe in leading with kindness, professionalism, and curiosity. Our Code of Conduct helps us maintain a safe, supportive space where everyone — staff, volunteers, placements, and members — can thrive.

This policy applies to:

- All paid staff, volunteers, and trustees
- Contractors and placement students
- Any person acting as a representative of Uppertunity in any capacity

Key guidelines:

All conduct at Uppertunity should reflect our mission, values, and culture, as outlined in the Organisational Handbook. In particular, representatives are expected to:

- Treat everyone with dignity, respect, and kindness.
- Support inclusion and equity, valuing diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities.
- Foster empowerment, encouraging independence and personal growth.
- Maintain professionalism, honesty, and accountability at all times.
- Promote a safe, positive, and collaborative environment.

1. Respect and Inclusion

- Treat everyone with kindness, dignity, and respect.
- Celebrate differences, we all bring unique experiences, skills, and perspectives.
- Use inclusive language and behaviour at all times.
- Never use offensive, discriminatory, or intimidating language or actions.

2. Confidentiality and Boundaries

- Keep all personal information about members, staff, and volunteers private.
- Never share photos, stories, or information outside of work unless you have permission.
- Avoid discussing members or internal matters in public or on social media.
- Maintain professional boundaries. Friendships are encouraged, but roles and responsibilities come first.

3. Dress and Presentation

- Dress comfortably, appropriately, and in a way that reflects respect for the people you work with.
- For workshops and catering: wear practical clothing and closed shoes for safety.
- Avoid clothing with offensive images or slogans.
- No low-cut tops, short skirts or shorts, or midriffs showing.
- When representing Uppertunity externally, aim for smart-casual or as directed for the event.

4. Professionalism and Responsibility

- Be punctual, reliable, and communicate if you're running late or can't attend.
- Follow instructions, health and safety procedures, and safeguarding guidance.
- Be proactive, if something doesn't feel right or you're unsure, ask.
- Take care of equipment, materials, and shared spaces.
- Be mindful of confidentiality and data protection when handling paperwork or digital information.

5. Photography and Social Media

- All members must give consent before any photos or videos are taken.
- Only staff are permitted to take photos of members and share them within the staff group chat for internal use.
- Photos must never be shared on personal social media, messaging apps, or with anyone outside of the team.

Uppertunity

- You are welcome — and encouraged — to share Uppertunity's posts from our official social media pages to help promote our work.
- Always be professional, positive, and respectful when posting or talking about Uppertunity online.
- If you're ever unsure whether a photo or post is appropriate, check with a manager before sharing.
- Act as an ambassador for Uppertunity in the community and online.
- Avoid actions or statements that could bring the organisation into disrepute.

6. Safety and Common Sense

- Everyone has a role in keeping Uppertunity safe, for yourself, our members, and each other.
- Always follow health and safety guidance, listen to staff instructions, and use equipment safely.
- If something feels unsafe or you're unsure how to do something, stop and ask — never take risks or “just wing it.”
- Report accidents, hazards, or near misses straight away so we can prevent future issues.
- Respect personal space and be mindful of others' needs, physical and emotional safety both matter here.

7. Attitude and Mindset

- Approach every day with curiosity, compassion, and a willingness to learn.
- Be open to feedback and reflection, we all grow together.
- Support others and ask for help when you need it.
- Be part of building a positive and nurturing culture for everyone.

8. Safeguarding and Reporting

- If you experience or witness inappropriate behaviour, bullying, harassment, or safeguarding concerns, speak up.
- Report concerns to your line manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Danielle du Plooy).
- Everyone will be treated fairly, confidentially, and with respect during any follow-up.

9. Prohibited Behaviour

The following behaviours are not acceptable and may result in disciplinary action:

- Harassment, bullying, or discriminatory conduct.
- Verbal, physical, or emotional abuse.
- Breach of confidentiality or data protection.
- Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances while representing Uppertunity.
- Theft, fraud, or misuse of organisational property.
- Serious breach of safeguarding procedures.

Our Shared Commitment:

Together, we are developing skills, nurturing connections, and inspiring mindsets for thriving communities - safely, respectfully, and collaboratively.

4. Data Processing and Protection Policy

1. Policy Details

- 1.1. This document provides guidance for processing personal data in accordance with the principles and legal obligations outlined in the Data Protection Act (2018), General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and the common law duty of confidentiality. It explains how Uppertunity complies with best practices for information handling.
- 1.2. Uppertunity is committed to safeguarding personal information by ensuring transparency, accountability, and security in data collection, processing, and storage. All individuals involved in the organisation will be informed of their rights regarding their data.
- 1.3. All paid and unpaid staff must ensure Uppertunity meets its legal responsibilities regarding confidentiality, including Disclosure Scotland Checks, GDPR, and relevant human rights legislation that guarantees privacy.
- 1.4. Uppertunity abides by the six GDPR principles:
- **Lawfulness, fairness, and transparency:** Personal data is processed lawfully and in a transparent manner.
 - **Purpose limitation:** Data is collected for specified, explicit, and legitimate purposes.
 - **Data minimisation:** Only necessary and relevant data is processed.
 - **Accuracy:** Personal data is kept accurate and up to date.
 - **Storage limitation:** Data is retained only for as long as necessary.
 - **Integrity and confidentiality:** Data is processed securely to prevent unauthorised access, loss, or damage.
- 1.5. The Board of Directors will review this policy regularly to ensure continued compliance and awareness of responsibilities.

2. Collection of Personal Information

- 2.1. Uppertunity collects and processes the following personal information:
- Contact details for clients, carers, staff, students, volunteers, and trustees.
 - Emergency contact details for staff, students, volunteers, and clients.
 - Disabilities or medical needs relevant to roles or group activities.
 - Employment history of staff.
 - Driving licenses and history for staff and volunteers driving for business purposes.
 - References for staff and volunteers.
 - Criminal record information where relevant to roles (Disclosure Scotland checks).
- 2.2. Data is collected via email, secure online forms, or paper forms designed by Uppertunity. All forms state the purpose of data collection and inform individuals of their right to have their data removed.
- 2.3. A record of processing activities is maintained, detailing the data held and access permissions. The manager oversees updates to this register.

3. Consent Management

- 3.1. Uppertunity ensures compliance with the following consent principles:
- Consent is used as a lawful basis for processing where appropriate.
 - Consent is clearly separated from terms and conditions.
 - Individuals must positively opt in (no pre-ticked boxes).
 - Clear and plain language is used.
 - Individuals can provide granular consent for different types of processing.
 - Any third-party reliance on consent will be specified.
 - Individuals can refuse or withdraw consent without detriment.
- 3.2. If an individual lacks capacity to provide consent, the legal guardian's consent will be required.
- 3.3. Where written consent is impractical (e.g., verbal agreements for media use), individuals will be informed of how their data is used, and only minimal data (e.g., first name, photos, or videos) will be processed.

4. Storage and Access

- 4.1. Personal information in paper form is stored securely in lockable, non-portable cabinets in designated rooms. Access is controlled by management.
- 4.2. Digital data is stored on Google Drive and our HR/H&S system is protected through:
- Password-protected systems with access limited to relevant staff.
 - Secure storage of business devices (phones, tablets, laptops) with encryption where applicable.
- 4.3. The manager regularly reviews who has access to what data and ensures security protocols are followed.

5. Sharing of Information

- 5.1. Personal data is shared only on a need-to-know basis. Any disclosure requires the consent of the individual unless required by law or necessary for safety reasons.
- 5.2. Staff and volunteers must not discuss or disclose personal data outside necessary operational requirements. This is covered in induction training.
- 5.3. Information shared with supervisors or managers remains confidential unless the individual consents to further sharing.

6. Retention and Disposal

- 6.1. Personal data is retained only for as long as necessary:
- Employee and board member records are kept for **7 years** post-employment in line with HMRC requirements.
 - Client records are kept for **6 months** after service provision ends.
- 6.2. Data is securely disposed of:
- Paper documents are shredded by a certified company, "Let's Talk Shred," which provides GDPR-compliant destruction certificates.
 - Electronic records are permanently deleted, including emptying online recycle bins.

7. Data Breach Management

- 7.1. Any suspected or confirmed data breach must be reported to the Data Protection Officer (Manager) immediately.
- 7.2. Breach response includes:
- Containment and assessment of the breach.
 - Notification of affected individuals and relevant authorities within **72 hours**, if required.
 - Investigation and corrective measures to prevent recurrence.

8. Data Subject Rights

- 8.1. Individuals have rights under GDPR, including:
- **Access:** Request a copy of their personal data.
 - **Rectification:** Correct inaccurate or incomplete data.
 - **Erasure:** Request deletion of data ("right to be forgotten").
 - **Restriction:** Limit data processing in certain circumstances.
 - **Portability:** Obtain and reuse personal data across services.
 - **Objection:** Challenge data processing for legitimate interests.
- 8.2. Requests to exercise these rights should be submitted to Uppertunity's data protection contact.

9. Training and Compliance

- 9.1. All staff and volunteers (If required) receive training on data protection responsibilities during induction and through regular refresher sessions.

9.2. Staff with specific data handling duties (e.g., marketing, IT security) receive specialist training.

10. Compliance Monitoring

10.1. Uppertunity will:

- Regularly audit data processing activities.
- Ensure continuous improvement of security measures.
- Review and update this policy annually or when significant changes occur in data protection law.

10.2. Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

This policy ensures that Uppertunity complies with legal requirements, protects the rights of individuals, and maintains high standards of data security and privacy.

5. Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children Policy

1. Policy Overview

1.1 Statement

As a provider of regulated roles (Schedules 2 and 3, *Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007*), Uppertunity has a legal duty to safeguard children and protected adults and, where required, to refer individuals to Disclosure Scotland. The duty to refer is set out in PVG (Scotland) Act 2007. This policy also reflects changes introduced by the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020, including strengthened requirements around PVG membership and referrals.

1.2 Purpose

This policy sets out Uppertunity's commitment to preventing abuse and neglect, promoting rights and wellbeing, and responding effectively to concerns. It details the responsibilities of staff, volunteers, trustees and anyone acting on our behalf, and it explains how we comply with Scottish law and national guidance.

Uppertunity primarily works with individuals with additional support needs aged 16 and over. Under Scottish child protection law, a child is anyone under 18; therefore, this policy covers both children (under 18) and protected adults.

1.3 Scope (Who this applies to)

This policy applies to:

- All employees, volunteers, trustees, contractors, placements, sessional workers and anyone otherwise engaged by or representing Uppertunity.
- Partner and commissioned organisations working with us, while delivering services or activities on our behalf or on our premises.

Everyone covered by this policy must read, understand and follow it, and complete required training.

1.4 Legal and Guidance Framework (Scotland)

This policy is informed by and should be read alongside:

- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 and the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 (PVG membership, vetting, referrals).
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 and Code of Practice (2014).
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021, updated 2023).
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR (lawful, fair and secure handling of information).
- Relevant regulatory guidance (e.g., Care Inspectorate, Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), OSCR for charities, NHS Scotland and local authority procedures).

1.5 Our Commitments

Uppertunity will:

- Create and maintain a safe, inclusive environment where harm, abuse, neglect, discrimination and exploitation are never tolerated.
- Recognise that 16–17-year-olds are children in law and ensure child protection processes are applied accordingly.
- Use safer recruitment, including PVG membership checks appropriate to role, and maintain robust induction, supervision and training.
- Ensure clear boundaries, professional conduct and a culture that encourages speaking up and whistleblowing.
- Respond promptly to concerns using the Respond–Report–Record–Refer–Support approach, and make referrals to social work, Police Scotland and/or Disclosure Scotland where thresholds are met.

- Meet the duty to refer to Disclosure Scotland when legally required (e.g., dismissal, resignation in lieu of dismissal, or permanent removal from regulated work due to harmful conduct).
- Share information lawfully and proportionately in line with UK GDPR and the public protection legal basis.
- Assess and manage risk across activities, including staffing ratios and behaviour risk planning.
- Review and improve safeguarding practice through regular audits, learning reviews and annual policy review.

1.6 Expectations of Partners and Commissioned Organisations

Any organisation working with Uppertunity must have safeguarding policies and procedures that meet or exceed the standards in this policy and comply with Scottish law and guidance. Depending on the service, this may include compliance with requirements set by the Care Inspectorate, SSSC, Education Scotland, NHS Scotland, local authorities, and OSCR. Where work is delivered outside Scotland, the partner must also comply with relevant local frameworks in addition to this policy's standards.

1.7 Definitions (for clarity in this policy)

- Child: anyone under 18 years of age.
- Protected adult: as defined in the PVG legislation—an adult (18+) who, by reason of disability, illness, infirmity, ageing or circumstances, receives particular types of care, health or community services, or has reduced ability to protect themselves from harm.
- Regulated role/work: roles that meet the statutory criteria in the PVG Scheme for work with children and/or protected adults.

1.8 Named Safeguarding Person (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Danielle du Plooy (Manager)

Email: danielledp@uppertunity.co.uk

The DSL oversees safeguarding, PVG processes and referrals, staff guidance, and liaison with statutory agencies.

(Optional) Deputy DSL(s): [Insert name/role/email once confirmed]

1.9 Policy Location and Access

This policy is available on www.uppertunity.org.uk and on our online HR/Health & Safety system accessible to staff and volunteers. Printed copies and accessible formats are available on request.

1.10 Key Objectives

- Clarify roles, responsibilities and accountability for safeguarding across Uppertunity.
- Ensure PVG membership and safe recruitment are applied wherever required before regulated work begins.
- Provide clear procedures for responding to concerns, allegations and incidents, including referral pathways and PVG referral thresholds/timescales.
- Embed training, supervision and competence requirements for all roles, including enhanced training for the DSL.
- Promote multi-agency working, proportionate risk management, and lawful information sharing.
- Foster a speak-up culture where concerns are raised early and acted upon.

1.11 Core Principles

Uppertunity adopts the six widely recognised safeguarding principles:

1. **Empowerment** – support informed decision-making and respect the person's views and wishes.
2. **Prevention** – act early to reduce risk and prevent harm.
3. **Proportionality** – take the least intrusive, appropriate response to the risk.
4. **Protection** – provide support and action for those at risk of harm.
5. **Partnership** – work with people and agencies to achieve the best outcomes.
6. **Accountability** – be transparent, evidence-based and open to scrutiny.

2. Recognising Abuse and Harm

2.1 Introduction

Safeguarding begins with recognising the different forms of abuse and harm that children, young people, and protected adults may experience. Everyone involved with Uppertunity — staff, trustees, and volunteers — must be alert to the signs, symptoms, and patterns of harm, and take prompt action by following the reporting procedures in this policy.

Abuse can be a single incident or a pattern of repeated behaviour. It can be deliberate, reckless, or a result of negligence. It may occur in person, within organisations, online, or through wider systems and relationships.

Staff and volunteers must remember:

- It is not their role to investigate suspected abuse.
- Their duty is to recognise, record, and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

2.2 Categories of Abuse

The following categories are drawn from national guidance and apply to both children and protected adults:

1. Physical Abuse

- Deliberate physical harm such as hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, or suffocating.
- May also include fabricated or induced illness.

Indicators: Unexplained injuries, fear of going home, flinching at sudden movements, reluctance to be touched.

2. Emotional / Psychological Abuse

- Persistent emotional maltreatment causing severe and persistent adverse effects.
- Includes threats, humiliation, bullying, intimidation, coercive control, and undermining self-esteem.

Indicators: Withdrawal, low confidence, delayed development, frequent self-criticism, extreme behaviours (e.g., excessive compliance or aggression).

3. Sexual Abuse & Exploitation

- Forcing or enticing a person into sexual activity, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.
- Includes contact and non-contact activities, such as grooming, exposure to pornography, sexualised online communication, or coercion into exploitation (including trafficking).

Indicators: Inappropriate sexual knowledge, difficulty walking or sitting, sudden changes in behaviour, avoidance of specific individuals, reluctance to change clothing.

4. Neglect

- Persistent failure to meet basic physical, emotional, or psychological needs.
- Includes lack of food, shelter, clothing, supervision, medical care, or emotional support.

Indicators: Poor hygiene, hunger, untreated health conditions, frequent absence, delayed speech or development.

5. Financial or Material Abuse (Protected Adults)

- Theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure regarding wills, property, or inheritance.
- Misuse or withholding of money or benefits.

Indicators: Sudden inability to pay bills, unexplained loss of possessions, lack of access to money, carers expressing unusual interest in finances.

6. Discriminatory Abuse

- Harassment, bullying, or unfair treatment based on protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010), e.g., disability, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation.
- Includes hate crime or degrading “jokes”.

Indicators: Withdrawal, low self-esteem, reluctance to engage, reports of derogatory language.

7. Organisational / Institutional Abuse

- Poor professional practice within an organisation, including neglect, rigid routines, unsafe practices, or cultures where unsafe behaviour goes unchallenged.

Indicators: Lack of choice or autonomy, unsafe environments, overuse of restraint, repeated poor standards of care.

8. Domestic Abuse

- Coercive, controlling, threatening, degrading, or violent behaviour between partners or family members.
- Children and vulnerable adults are recognised as victims whether or not the abuse is directed at them.

Indicators: Fearful or anxious behaviour, reluctance to speak in front of a partner/family member, frequent absences, physical injuries with inconsistent explanations.

9. Self-Neglect (Protected Adults)

- Behaviour that threatens personal health, safety, or wellbeing (e.g., refusal of care, hoarding, unsafe living conditions).
- Does not always trigger statutory intervention unless significant risk is present.

Indicators: Unsafe living environment, malnutrition, poor hygiene, refusal of medical treatment.

10. Other Emerging Forms of Harm

- **Cyber/Online Abuse** (grooming, bullying, exploitation).
- **Modern Slavery / Trafficking.**
- **Radicalisation and Extremism** (in line with *Prevent Duty Guidance*).

2.3 Key Messages for Staff and Volunteers

- Abuse can happen to anyone regardless of age, background, or circumstance.
- Concerns should always be taken seriously — even if they seem minor.
- Do not delay: concerns must be passed to the DSL immediately.
- Recording observations accurately (dates, times, direct words) is essential.
- If someone is in immediate danger, call 999.

3. The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme

3.1 Overview

The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme is Scotland's membership scheme for people in regulated roles with children and protected adults. It is operated by Disclosure Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government.

The PVG Scheme:

- Helps ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with vulnerable groups.
- Provides organisations with a robust framework for safe recruitment.
- Continuously monitors members' criminal records and relevant information once they are in the scheme.
- Places legal duties on organisations to refer individuals in certain circumstances.

3.2 How the PVG Scheme Works

- When applying to join the scheme, Disclosure Scotland carries out checks against criminal records, police intelligence, and relevant regulatory information.
- The applicant receives a PVG disclosure certificate, which can be shared with employers or volunteering organisations.
- Once accepted, membership is ongoing: Disclosure Scotland continues to receive and assess vetting information.
- If a member commits an offence or information comes to light that calls into question their suitability, Disclosure Scotland may place them under consideration for listing (being barred).

Organisations must ensure that no one undertakes regulated work without appropriate PVG membership in place.

3.3 Applying to the PVG Scheme

- Employers/organisations must initiate the PVG application process.
- The individual completes the form and provides required identification.
- Once processed, both the applicant and the organisation receive confirmation.
- It is the organisation's responsibility to ensure the PVG check is complete and clearance received before the individual begins regulated work.

3.4 Roles Covered by the PVG Scheme

There are two categories of regulated roles:

- Roles with children
- Roles with protected adults

These typically include:

- Caring for children or protected adults.
- Teaching, training, instructing or supervising them.
- Providing personal services (e.g. healthcare, support with daily living).
- Having unsupervised or direct contact with them as part of one's role.

If there is uncertainty about whether a role is regulated, organisations should seek guidance from Disclosure Scotland and may use the online Regulated Role Tool.

3.5 Definitions

- Child: Anyone under the age of 18.
- Protected Adult: Defined under the PVG legislation as an individual aged 18 or over who, because of disability, illness, infirmity, ageing, homelessness, or experience of domestic abuse, requires health or community care services, or support with daily living.

3.6 Being Barred (Listed)

Disclosure Scotland maintains two lists of individuals who are barred from working in regulated roles:

1. Children's List (barred from roles with children)
2. Protected Adults List (barred from roles with protected adults)

An individual may be listed on one or both. Being listed makes them ineligible for PVG membership for that group.

- If they are already a member, their membership is terminated.
- It is a criminal offence to work, or attempt to work, in a regulated role with a group from which they are barred.

3.7 Uppertunity's PVG Practice

At Uppertunity:

- All staff and volunteers undertaking regulated roles must be PVG members before starting.
- Membership must be maintained and updated throughout the period of engagement.
- If a role changes and becomes regulated, a new PVG check must be obtained before new duties are undertaken.
- Records of PVG membership are securely maintained by management in compliance with Data Protection legislation.
- All memberships will be renewed every 5 years.

4. Safe Recruitment & Role Assessment

4.1 Commitment to Safer Recruitment

Uppertunity is committed to ensuring that all staff, trustees, and volunteers are recruited through robust and transparent procedures that protect children, young people, and protected adults from harm. Our recruitment practices comply with the *Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007*, the *Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020*, and recognised safer recruitment guidance.

We recognise that safeguarding begins at the recruitment stage and therefore:

- All candidates will be assessed not only for their skills and experience but also for their attitudes and values towards safeguarding.
- Recruitment procedures will be applied fairly and consistently, promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion.

4.2 Role Assessment

Before recruitment begins, each role (paid or voluntary) will be assessed to determine whether it is a **regulated role** under the PVG Scheme. This assessment will consider:

- The level and frequency of contact with children and/or protected adults.
- Whether responsibilities include caring, supervising, teaching, or providing personal services.

- Whether the role includes unsupervised or overnight contact.

Where a role is confirmed as regulated, PVG Scheme membership will be required.

4.3 Recruitment Procedures

All recruitment processes will include the following:

- **Clear Role Descriptions:** Outlining duties, safeguarding responsibilities, and whether the role is regulated.
- **Application Process:** Applicants must complete an application form or provide a CV with references.
- **Interviews:** Structured interviews will include safeguarding-related questions to assess values and understanding.
- **References:** At least two references will be sought, including the most recent employer where applicable. References will be verified.
- **Identity Verification:** Proof of identity, address, and right to work (where applicable) will be checked.

4.4 PVG Scheme Membership

- Where a role is identified as regulated, the applicant must be a member of the PVG Scheme before starting.
- Uppertunity will initiate PVG checks in line with Disclosure Scotland guidance.
- Applicants cannot begin regulated work until a satisfactory PVG membership is confirmed.
- Membership must be maintained and updated as required.

4.5 Probation and Induction

- All staff and volunteers will undergo an induction period, including training on safeguarding responsibilities and procedures.
- During probation, performance, conduct, and adherence to safeguarding standards will be monitored.
- Continued involvement is subject to successful completion of probation.

4.6 Ongoing Monitoring

- Staff and volunteers are required to disclose any new convictions, charges, or safeguarding concerns immediately.
- PVG membership will be monitored to ensure it remains valid and up to date.
- Regular supervision and appraisal will include discussion of safeguarding responsibilities

4.7 Record Keeping

- Recruitment records, including PVG confirmation, application forms, references, and interview notes, will be kept securely in line with GDPR and data protection requirements.
- Records will be accessible only to authorised staff.

5. Training & Development

5.1 Commitment to Training

Uppertunity is committed to ensuring that all staff, trustees, and volunteers have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. Training and professional development are mandatory and ongoing.

5.2 Safeguarding Training

- All staff and volunteers must complete safeguarding training during induction and sign a Safeguarding Declaration Form.
- Safeguarding training must be updated annually to ensure knowledge remains current and reflects changes in legislation or best practice.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is required to attend specialist PVG and Disclosure training delivered through Volunteer Scotland (or another recognised provider).

5.3 Additional Mandatory Training for Paid Staff

All paid staff must complete the following training:

- Health & Safety
- Mental Health Awareness
- Emergency First Aid

Training will primarily be completed through CareSkills Learning, supplemented with external training as appropriate.

5.4 Monitoring and Records

- Training completion will be recorded and monitored by management.
- Refresher training schedules will be maintained to ensure compliance.
- Staff or volunteers who fail to complete required training will not be permitted to undertake regulated roles until completion.

5.5 Continuous Development

- Training needs will be reviewed as part of supervision and appraisal.
- Additional training opportunities will be provided where relevant to roles and responsibilities, such as equality and inclusion, trauma awareness, or supporting people with learning disabilities.

6. Reporting Concerns and Referrals

6.1 Guiding Principles

All staff, trustees, and volunteers at Uppertunity share a duty to act promptly on safeguarding concerns. Concerns must always be taken seriously, recorded accurately, and referred through the appropriate channels. No one should attempt to investigate allegations themselves.

Uppertunity follows the **Respond, Report, Record, Refer, Support** approach.

6.2 Respond and Report

- Ensure the immediate safety of the child or protected adult.
- In an emergency, call 999. If not urgent but requiring social work, contact the First Contact Team (Dundee: 01382 434019).
- Seek consent from the adult to report concerns, unless they lack capacity or consent would place them or others at risk.
- Do not ask leading questions or attempt to investigate — record facts only.
- Notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.

6.3 Record

- Use the Safeguarding Incident Form or write a full factual account of the concern.
- Record the exact words used by the person, where possible.
- Date, time, and sign all records.
- Keep all safeguarding records confidential, stored securely in line with data protection requirements.

6.4 Refer

- The DSL will determine next steps, in consultation with management if required.
- Where appropriate, contact will be made with the individual's guardian, care manager, or key worker.
- Concerns of significant harm will be referred to:
 - Dundee Social Work First Contact Team (01382 434019)
 - Angus Council Access Line (03452 777778)
 - Police Scotland (999 in emergency, 101 otherwise).

6.5 Support

- Individuals involved will be offered emotional and practical support, including referral to external support agencies where appropriate.
- Staff and volunteers raising concerns will also be supported, and whistleblowing protections apply.

Key Contacts

Organisation	Contact Number
Police Emergency	999
Police non-emergency	101
NHS24	111
Dundee Council (First Contact Team)	01382 434019
Angus Council (Access Line)	03452 777778

6.6 Referrals to Disclosure Scotland**Legal Duty**

As a provider of regulated roles, Uppertunity has a legal duty to refer individuals to Disclosure Scotland under section 9 of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 and the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 (effective April 2025). This duty exists regardless of police or social work involvement.

When to Refer

A referral must be made where an individual in a regulated role has engaged in conduct which resulted in:

- Harm to a child or protected adult.
- Risk of harm, including incompetence or neglect.
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour towards a child or protected adult.
- Inappropriate involvement with pornography.
- Inappropriate medical treatment given to a child or protected adult.

Harm can include:

- Physical harm (e.g., assault, inappropriate restraint).
- Emotional/psychological harm (fear, distress, humiliation).
- Financial harm (fraud, theft, exploitation).
- Encouraging or attempting to cause harm, including self-harm.

Thresholds for Referral

Uppertunity must refer where the individual has been:

- Dismissed from regulated work due to harmful conduct.
- Would have been dismissed but resigned, left, or a contract was not renewed.
- Permanently transferred away from regulated work.

Referrals must be made within 3 months of the decision to dismiss or remove the person from regulated work, even if appeals are ongoing.

How to Refer

- Complete the Employer Referral Form available from Disclosure Scotland.
- Provide:
 - Proof of the individual's identity.
 - Details of their regulated role.
 - PVG Scheme membership number (if applicable).
 - Information on harmful conduct, with anonymised references (e.g., "Adult A, aged 35").
 - Outcome of the organisation's investigation and supporting documents.
- Submit via:
 - Email: pvgreferrals@assured.systems.gov.scot
 - Or by post to the address on the form.

6.7 Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

- Staff or volunteers who are the subject of a safeguarding allegation will be suspended on a neutral basis while an investigation takes place.
- They will be informed of the allegation, their rights, and the process being followed.
- The safety and welfare of children and protected adults will always take priority.

Getting Advice

For advice on whether a referral is required:

- Call Disclosure Scotland on 0300 020 0040.
- Email: response@disclosurescotland.gov.scot.

6.8 Allegations Against the Safeguarding Lead, Senior Manager, or Trustee

- If a safeguarding concern or allegation is made against the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the report should be made directly to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- If the concern involves a Trustee (including the Chair), the report should be made to another Trustee who will act in consultation with external safeguarding agencies.
- In both cases, the person receiving the concern must follow the Respond, Report, Record, Refer, Support process and ensure that the matter is referred to:
 - Police Scotland or Social Work (if there is an immediate safeguarding risk), and
 - Disclosure Scotland if the concern meets the threshold for PVG referral.
- Trustees have a duty to ensure allegations are managed independently of the person implicated. Neutral suspension from duties will apply where necessary, pending investigation.
- All actions taken must prioritise the safety and welfare of children and protected adults.

7. Confidentiality, Risk Management, and Managing Behaviour

7.1 Confidentiality & Information Sharing

- Staff and volunteers must keep all information about members and volunteers confidential unless there is a safeguarding risk.
- Information should only be shared with statutory authorities where there is a legal duty to protect someone from harm.
- If an adult is at immediate risk, information must be shared without their consent.
- All records must be kept securely, in line with Uppertunity's Data Protection Policy.

7.2 Risk Management and Ratios

- All activities involving vulnerable individuals must be risk assessed. Risk assessments are carried out by Citation or an appointed Health & Safety advisor.
- Staff-to-client ratios should reflect:
 - the risk level of the activity
 - the needs of participants
 - the complexity of the activity
 - the environment in which it is taking place
- Standard practice is 1 staff/volunteer to 3 individuals, unless a participant has their own support worker, in which case they are not included in this ratio.
- Clients must complete a referral form before joining, which notes any risks, allergies, and emergency contacts.
- Staff and volunteers must remain vigilant for signs of abuse or risk during all activities.

7.3 Managing Challenging Behaviour

At Uppertunity, we recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and often reflects unmet needs, frustration, or difficulties in communication. Our approach is always guided by the values of safety, dignity, and empowerment.

- **Definition:** Challenging behaviour is any behaviour that is difficult to manage and could pose a risk to the individual or others.
- **Zero tolerance:** No violent or abusive behaviour is tolerated at Uppertunity.
- **Referral considerations:**
 - If an individual is assessed at referral as having behaviours that Uppertunity cannot safely support, this will be discussed with the referee and/or the individual.

- If behaviour changes after joining and staff/management determine it is no longer safe or appropriate, this will be reviewed with the individual and their supporters. Continued attendance may not be possible.
- **Expectations of partner agencies:** Uppertunity does not offer one-to-one support. Where individuals receive support from external agencies, those agencies and support workers are expected to work collaboratively with Uppertunity staff.
- Volunteers are never left in sole charge of vulnerable individuals and must work under staff supervision.

Approach to De-escalation

When challenging behaviour occurs, staff and volunteers should:

- Remain calm and reassure the individual.
- Give the person space and dignity.
- Identify potential triggers (e.g. pain, frustration, environmental stressors).
- Use distraction, redirection, or a change of environment where helpful.
- Involve another staff member if appropriate.
- Ensure others nearby are safe and, where necessary, ask them to step away to allow privacy and safety.
- If there is an immediate risk of harm, call 999.

Post-Incident Actions

- Once the situation is safe, staff should talk with the individual to understand what may have triggered the behaviour.
- If the person has external professional support, they must be informed.
- Staff involved will be supported and have an opportunity to debrief.

Recording

- An Incident Report Form must be completed following all incidents of challenging behaviour.
- The Manager/DSL will review the report, ensure any corrective action is taken, and update risk assessments or support plans where necessary.
- A debrief with staff involved must take place, covering:
 - what happened and what went well
 - what could be improved
 - any lessons learned
 - how staff can be supported going forward.

8. Charity Trustee Safeguarding Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees of Uppertunity holds ultimate responsibility for ensuring that safeguarding is embedded across the organisation. Trustees will be supported with training and resources to carry out this duty, and safeguarding will be reflected in Terms of Reference, job descriptions, annual plans, reporting to the Board, and appraisal objectives.

The safeguarding policy will be reviewed and approved by the Board annually. Trustees will comply with OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) and the Charity Commission guidance on safeguarding and protecting people, including the 10 key actions for safeguarding governance:

1. **Policies & Procedures** – ensure the charity has robust safeguarding policies, a code of conduct, and clear procedures, reviewed regularly.
2. **Risk Identification** – actively identify safeguarding risks to beneficiaries, volunteers, staff, and others connected to the charity.
3. **Culture** – create a culture of respect where everyone feels safe, valued, and able to speak up.
4. **Clarity of Process** – ensure everyone knows how to recognise, respond to, record, and report concerns.
5. **Raising Concerns** – ensure there are safe and accessible ways for people to raise concerns.
6. **Training** – ensure safeguarding training is regularly updated and relevant to staff, trustees, and volunteers.

7. **Safer Recruitment** – ensure all relevant posts have PVG checks, and that recruitment processes include safeguarding considerations.
8. **Risk Assessment for Roles** – ensure a risk-assessment process for roles not covered by automatic PVG requirements but which involve contact with vulnerable groups.
9. **Learning & Review** – review safeguarding policy and practice regularly, learning from incidents and near-misses.
10. **External Partnerships** – where working with partners or external organisations, ensure safeguarding standards are upheld consistently.

A lead trustee will be designated with responsibility for oversight of safeguarding, whistleblowing, and health & safety. This includes:

- Conducting an annual safeguarding review with recommendations to the Board.
- Receiving regular reports on safeguarding practice and ensuring consistent application.
- Providing oversight of any lapses, investigations, or referrals, ensuring issues are dealt with quickly, fairly, and sensitively.
- Ensuring risk assessments are carried out and actions taken to mitigate safeguarding risks.
- Ensuring recruitment and induction processes include safeguarding requirements (PVG checks, training, responsibilities).
- Monitoring a central register of PVG clearances and training to ensure compliance.
- Listening to and engaging staff, volunteers, and members on safeguarding issues.
- Ensuring data protection standards are upheld when storing personal data or using images/video.

Everyone involved in Uppertunity (trustees, staff, volunteers, and members) is expected to be aware of safeguarding procedures, complete any necessary training, remain alert to risks, and report concerns immediately.

9. Policy Review

- This safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees and updated as required by legal, regulatory, or organisational changes.
- All staff and volunteers will be notified of updates, and safeguarding training will be refreshed where necessary.

Everyone at Uppertunity has a role to play in keeping people safe. By following this policy, we ensure that all individuals can grow, contribute

Uppertunity Safeguarding Incident Form

Your information			
Name			
Address			
Contact number(s)			
Email			
Name of organisation		Your role	

Personal information – vulnerable individual					
Name				Date of birth	
Gender ⁱ	Male ☐	Female ☐	Non-binary ☐	Another description (please state) ☐	
Is there any information about the individual that would be useful to consider?					

Contact information – parent / carer / social worker		
Name(s)		
Address		
Contact number(s)		
Email		
Have they been notified of this incident?	No ☐	Please explain why this decision has been taken
	Yes ☐	Please give details of what was said / actions agreed

Incident details*			
Date and time of incident			
Please tick one:	☐ I am reporting my own concerns.	☐ I am responding to concerns raised by someone else – please fill in their details:	
Name of person raising concern		Role within the organisation or relationship to the individual	
Contact number(s)			
Email			

Uppertunity

Details of the incident or concerns (include other relevant information, such as description of any injuries and whether you are recording this incident as fact, opinion or hearsay)

* Attach a separate sheet if more space is required (e.g. multiple witnesses)

Incident details (continued)			
Individual's account of the incident			
Please provide any witness accounts of the incident			
Name of witness (and date of birth, if a child)		Role within the organisation	
Address			
Contact number(s)			
Email			
Details of any person involved in this incident or alleged to have caused the incident / injury			
Name (and date of birth, if a child)		Role within the organisation	
Address			
Contact number(s)			
Email			

Uppertunity

Please provide details of action taken to date:

Please provide details of action taken to date:		
Has the incident been reported to any external agencies?	☐ No	☐ Yes – please provide further details:
Name of organisation / agency		
Contact person		
Contact number(s)		
Email		
Agreed action or advice given		

Declaration	
Your signature	✕
Print name	
Today's date	

Contact your organisation's Designated Safeguarding Officer in line with Uppertunity's reporting procedures	
Safeguarding Officer's name	
Date reported	

Uppertunity Safeguarding Declaration

The overall safety of our clients is of utmost importance to Uppertunity, and we take every step possible to ensure we maintain this. Uppertunity will not tolerate the abuse of adults in any of its forms and is committed to safeguarding adults with care and support needs from harm. Uppertunity takes reasonable steps to manage risks and keep all our clients safe.

It is a requirement that all volunteers and staff assist in safeguarding procedures. Completing this form does not remove the requirement on a staff members or volunteer to complete a PVG application. It is in addition. Copies of this form will be kept by the manager of Uppertunity for up to a year after the end of your engagement with Uppertunity. Thank you for supporting our work.

Declaration	
I have read Uppertunity's Safeguarding Policy	
I understand what safeguarding is, and what my roles and responsibilities are in regard to keeping our clients safe at Uppertunity	
I hereby agree to comply with Uppertunity's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, and attend any required training	
I am aware of who the Named Safeguarding Person is, and how to contact them	
I understand what to do if there is a safeguarding incident or emergency, or if I have any concerns	
I understand duty of care, and agree to comply to Uppertunity's code of conduct	

Signed by employee or volunteer	
Employee/volunteer	
Date of completion	
Signature	

Sign-off by manager	
Manager	
Date of completion	
Signature	

6. Reserves Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this Reserves Policy is to ensure that Uppertunity's trustees and directors take proactive steps to secure the organisation's long-term financial sustainability. It provides assurance to staff, clients, and stakeholders that all funds received are used for charitable purposes.
- 1.2. Reserves are defined as unrestricted funds available for use at the discretion of the organisation, excluding restricted funds and tangible fixed assets.
- 1.3. Uppertunity's reserves are referred to as Operating Reserves.

2. Purpose of Reserves

- 2.1. Operating Reserves provide financial stability to sustain Uppertunity's mission, employment, and operations.
- 2.2. Reserves may be used for:
 - Emergency funding gaps due to unexpected expenses or loss of income.
 - One-time strategic investments in staff development, research, or infrastructure.
- 2.3. Reserves are not intended to replace long-term funding or cover recurring deficits.
- 2.4. In alignment with Uppertunity's Articles of Association, all surplus income is used for community benefit.

3. Calculation of Reserves

- 3.1. The calculation of reserves includes essential, recurring costs such as salaries, rent, and core service provisions.
- 3.2. Reserves will be reviewed annually following the approval of Uppertunity's accounts by an external accountant.
- 3.3. Uppertunity, as a company limited by guarantee, sets reserves based on its annual income and expenditure.
- 3.4. The target reserve level is equivalent to six months' operating costs.
- 3.5. The Board may allocate certain one-time revenue sources, such as grants or donations, to reserves if deemed necessary.

4. Reporting and Monitoring

- 4.1. Reserves are managed transparently and included in monthly financial reports.
- 4.2. The Executive Manager is responsible for monitoring reserve levels and raising concerns with the Board when:
 - Reserves exceed necessary levels.
 - Reserve levels fall below the agreed target.
- 4.3. The reserves policy is reviewed annually alongside the organisation's budget and activities.
- 4.4. Reserve levels and their designated use will be outlined in Uppertunity's Annual Report.
- 4.5. Operating Reserves are held within the organisation's general accounts and monitored monthly.

5. Use of Reserves

- 5.1. Reserves are carried forward each month and are only used under specific circumstances.
- 5.2. The Board of Directors must approve any use of reserves through a majority vote in a Directors Meeting.
- 5.3. If reserves are required due to financial shortfall (e.g., rent or salaries), the Executive Manager must convene a meeting with the Board.
- 5.4. When reserves are used, an analysis of the financial situation will be conducted.
- 5.5. If Operating Reserves are used, the Board will develop a plan to replenish reserves within a reasonable timeframe.
- 5.6. All use of reserves must be recorded and reported by the Executive Manager.

6. Oversight and Governance

- 6.1. The reserves policy is a living document, monitored throughout the year as part of Uppertunity's financial strategy.
- 6.2. The Board will ensure that reserves are neither excessive nor insufficient.
- 6.3. Annual reporting will include:
- The reserves policy and target levels.
 - Actual reserve levels and any changes.
 - Any use of reserves and plans for replenishment.
- 6.4. The Board may consider investing reserves for financial returns while ensuring funds remain accessible when needed.

7. Regulatory Compliance

- 7.1. The policy aligns with Charity Commission guidance on financial management and reserves. 7.2. The reserves policy will be reviewed annually to ensure continued relevance and compliance with regulations.

Summary of Reserves Policy

- **Purpose:** Ensure financial stability and support long-term sustainability.
- **Target:** Maintain reserves equal to six months' operating costs.
- **Monitoring:** Reviewed monthly and reported in the Annual Report.
- **Use of Reserves:** Approved by the Board of Directors only for emergencies or strategic investments.
- **Review:** Annually assessed for financial health and compliance with regulatory guidance.

This policy ensures Uppertunity remains resilient while effectively managing its financial resources for maximum community impact.

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Policy Statement

Uppertunity promotes an inclusive and diverse workplace, ensuring equal opportunities for all regardless of race, gender, disability, age, religion, or sexual orientation. We strive to create a level playing field by addressing systemic barriers and discrimination while fostering a culture of equity and respect.

2. Key Commitments

- Ensuring fair recruitment practices.
- Providing reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities.
- Challenging discrimination, harassment, and inequality.
- Creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcomed, respected, and valued.
- Encouraging diversity to foster creativity, innovation, and better decision-making.

3. Our Approach

At Uppertunity, our members lead our activities, ensuring services are tailored to their needs and aspirations. We support wellbeing, connections, training, development, and employment within our community. Majority of our staff have faced barriers to employment, including mental health challenges, caregiving responsibilities, early school leaving, and learning disabilities. Our operational model is shaped around these experiences.

We aim to build a diverse team representing a range of backgrounds. To enhance inclusivity, we will conduct an internal audit at our next visioning event to identify representation gaps and develop strategies to address them. While equality is a core principle, we prioritise equity, recognising that individuals have unique circumstances requiring tailored support. We provide mentoring for all staff and volunteers to ensure their strengths are recognised and utilised effectively.

Uppertunity was founded to create opportunities for inclusion. We believe in continuous improvement and fostering dialogue through visioning days and community events.

4. Fair Work Practices

Our approach aligns with the Fair Work Convention's five dimensions: Security, Respect, Effective Voice, Opportunity, and Fulfilment.

4.1 Security

- Providing stable contractual arrangements with consistent hours.
- Paying at least the Living Wage (as per the Living Wage Foundation).
- Offering flexible work schedules to accommodate family and caregiving needs.
- Providing pension arrangements.

4.2 Respect

- Implementing robust health, safety, and wellbeing policies.
- Promoting dignity at work and embedding respect as a core value.
- Ensuring fair conflict resolution practices.
- Providing ongoing mentoring and professional development opportunities.

4.3 Effective Voice

- Encouraging dialogue and participation through trade union recognition and collective bargaining.
- Conducting regular team meetings and quarterly visioning days.
- Maintaining open channels for communication and consultation.

4.4 Opportunity

- Ensuring fair and unbiased recruitment processes.
- Providing accessible training and career development opportunities.

- Prioritising employment for individuals facing barriers to work.

4.5 Fulfilment

- Designing jobs that allow for skill utilisation and autonomy.
- Encouraging creative problem-solving and leadership development.
- Investing in continuous learning and career advancement.

5. Recruitment and Development

- Inclusive Hiring: We prioritise lived experience and first consider internal candidates before external recruitment.
- Bias-Free Recruitment: We aim to implement blind recruitment techniques where possible.
- Equal Pay: All contracted staff are paid equally at living wage standards.
- Flexible Work Arrangements: We encourage work-life balance, with full-time staff working four days a week.
- Employee Involvement: Monthly team meetings, mentoring, and participation in board meetings foster transparency and engagement.
- Workplace Wellbeing: Access to external counselling services and mental health resources.
- Training and Development: Staff receive ongoing training, including first aid, mental health awareness, and risk management.

6. Inclusive Management

Uppertunity fosters an open and empowering culture where all members, staff, and volunteers are integral to decision-making. We implement:

- Transparent communication on practices, aims, and finances.
- Leadership by example, with management involved in all aspects of operations.
- Collaborative work distribution, ensuring team input in planning and service delivery.
- Regular team bonding activities, such as creative workshops and social events.
- An open-door policy to support team members and address challenges proactively.

7. Addressing Discrimination

Uppertunity does not tolerate discrimination based on any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, including:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including nationality and ethnicity)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Our staff and volunteers receive training to recognise and challenge discriminatory behaviours, ensuring an inclusive and equitable workplace.

8. Monitoring and Review

- We will conduct annual reviews of workforce demographics and workplace practices.
- An action plan will be developed to address any identified gaps in diversity or inclusivity.
- Employee and volunteer feedback will inform policy updates and organisational improvements.

This policy aligns with Uppertunity's mission to empower individuals through self-determination, inclusion, and community-driven progress.

8. Workplace Mental Wellbeing Policy

1. Policy Statement

Uppertunity recognises that supporting the mental wellbeing of employees and volunteers is vital for individual and organisational success. Mental wellbeing affects health, safety, social inclusion, and productivity. By fostering a positive and supportive culture, we enhance the lives of individuals, their families, and society as a whole.

Our goal is to create an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing mental health, accessing support, and maintaining wellbeing. We treat mental health with the same seriousness as physical health and provide structured support for employees experiencing difficulties. This policy applies equally to all employees and volunteers and aligns with other health and safety policies, including sickness absence, substance abuse, and bullying and harassment.

2. Key Principles

2.1. Promoting Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace

We aim to foster a workplace environment that actively supports mental wellbeing by:

- Raising awareness about mental health through training and resources.
- Providing opportunities for stress-reducing activities, such as physical exercise, team bonding, and social events.
- Offering flexible working arrangements to support mental health.
- Ensuring clear job roles, objectives, and responsibilities with appropriate management support and training.
- Preventing workplace bullying, discrimination, or harassment.
- Maintaining open communication between staff and management, particularly during organisational changes.

2.2. Creating a Supportive Culture

We strive to build a culture based on trust, respect, and openness by:

- Encouraging employees to discuss mental health without fear of discrimination or reprisal.
- Providing non-judgmental and proactive support to those experiencing mental health challenges.
- Handling mental health concerns sensitively and maintaining confidentiality.
- Supporting employees dealing with external factors affecting their mental health.
- Offering a comprehensive induction programme to all new employees.

2.3. Supporting Employees with Mental Health Difficulties

We commit to:

- Ensuring fair treatment for employees facing mental health challenges.
- Encouraging staff to seek support from their GP or a professional counsellor.
- Investigating workplace factors contributing to stress and addressing them where possible.
- Facilitating a phased return to work for employees recovering from mental health issues.
- Exploring alternative roles if returning to the same job is not possible.
- Maintaining strict confidentiality and sharing information only on a need-to-know basis with the individual's consent.

2.4. Promoting Fair Employment Practices

We aim to reduce stigma and discrimination in recruitment and employment by:

- Displaying positive and inclusive messaging about mental health in job advertisements.
- Training all recruitment personnel on mental health awareness and disability rights.
- Making it clear that mental health disclosures will not negatively impact hiring decisions.
- Avoiding assumptions about an individual's ability to work based on mental health history.
- Providing line managers with training on managing mental health in the workplace.

2.5. Addressing Workplace Stress as a Health & Safety Issue

To manage and mitigate workplace stress, we will:

- Conduct regular risk assessments to identify and address stressors.
- Consult with employee representatives on stress management initiatives.

- Provide training on effective stress management and resilience.
- Offer access to confidential counselling services.
- Ensure managers are equipped to support staff in handling workplace stress.

3. Responsibilities

3.1. Responsibilities of Managers

Managers play a key role in maintaining a mentally healthy workplace. Their responsibilities include:

- Identifying and mitigating stressors in the workplace.
- Ensuring good communication between employees and leadership.
- Supporting employees experiencing personal or work-related stress.
- Providing the necessary resources and training for staff to carry out their jobs effectively.
- Monitoring workloads to prevent excessive stress and burnout.
- Encouraging employees to take their full holiday entitlement.
- Providing opportunities for professional development.
- Ensuring all managers receive training on mental health awareness and management.

3.2. Responsibilities of Employees

Employees also have a role to play in maintaining workplace wellbeing. They are responsible for:

- Raising concerns about stress or mental health issues with their manager or designated representative.
- Seeking support when needed and engaging with wellbeing initiatives.
- Supporting colleagues by fostering a respectful and inclusive environment.
- Engaging with counselling or support services if recommended.

4. Implementation & Monitoring

- The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed annually.
- Uppertunity will monitor and report on levels of mental health-related absences.
- Regular training and awareness sessions will be provided for all employees.
- Feedback mechanisms will be put in place to assess employee wellbeing and workplace culture.

By implementing this policy, Uppertunity commits to fostering a workplace that prioritises mental health, reduces stigma, and supports all employees in achieving positive wellbeing.

9. Conflict of Interest Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. All staff, volunteers, and Directors of Uppertunity will strive to avoid any conflict of interest between the interests of the Organisation and personal, professional, or business interests. This includes avoiding actual conflicts of interest as well as the perception of conflicts of interest.

1.2. The purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity of Uppertunity's decision-making process, maintain stakeholder confidence, and safeguard the reputation of volunteers, staff, and Directors.

1.3. This policy is intended to supplement good judgment, and staff, volunteers, and Directors should adhere to its spirit as well as its wording.

1.4. Examples of conflicts of interest include:

- A Director who is also a service user and must vote on user fees.
- A Director related to a staff member involved in decisions on staff pay and conditions.
- A Director who serves on another committee competing for the same funding.
- A Director with shares in a business seeking a contract with Uppertunity.
- Employees engaging in activities that financially benefit a competitor.
- Employees using company resources for external business interests.
- Employees accepting bribes or offering them to authorities.

2. Appointment of Directors and Hiring of Staff

2.1. Upon appointment, each Director and staff member must disclose any interests that could potentially result in a conflict of interest. This disclosure will be updated annually or as appropriate.

2.2. During meetings or activities, Directors must disclose any interests that could create a conflict and seek clarification if in doubt.

3. Articles of Association Statement

3.1. Directors must declare any personal interest likely to give rise to a conflict.

3.2. A Director is deemed to have a personal interest if they, their partner, close relative, or associated business have an interest in a matter.

3.3. If a question arises about whether a Director has a conflict of interest, it will be decided by a majority vote of the other Directors.

3.4. Where a Director has a conflict of interest:

- They may remain for part of the discussion but not for the decision-making process.
- They will not be counted in the quorum for that section of the meeting.
- They must abstain from voting on the matter.

3.5. The Chair and all other Directors each hold one vote.

4. Employment Contracts and Conflicts

4.1. Employees must not engage in any external business activity that conflicts with Uppertunity's interests without written consent.

4.2. Employees are prohibited from engaging with, financially supporting, or working for direct competitors.

4.3. Employees must not:

- Induce colleagues or contractors to leave Uppertunity for competitive employment.
- Interfere with Uppertunity's relationships with employees or contractors.
- Share employment opportunities with competitors.
- Solicit or hire Uppertunity's employees or contractors for competing businesses.

5. Managing Conflicts of Interest

5.1. If a conflict of interest arises for a Director due to loyalty owed to another organisation or person, the unconflicted Directors may authorise the situation if the following conditions are met:

- The Charity Commission's permission is sought before a benefit for a trustee is authorised (unless already permitted in the Articles of Association or by written approval from the Commission).
- The conflicted Director withdraws from discussions affecting that organisation or person.
- The conflicted Director abstains from voting and is not counted towards the quorum.
- The remaining Directors determine that authorising the conflict serves the charity's best interests.

5.2. All disclosures and actions taken to manage conflicts of interest must be recorded in meeting minutes.

5.3. For all other potential conflicts of interest, guidance will be sought from Social Enterprise Scotland, and the advice and subsequent actions will be recorded in the minutes.

Declaration of Interest Form

Person or organisation	Nature of relationship and/or nature of conflict of interest

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

NB: Complete one form for each member of the committee and file with the minutes.

10. Social Media and Photography Policy

1. Statement of Policy and Purpose

- 1.1. Uppertunity recognises that social interaction and photography are valuable tools for sharing our work, celebrating achievements, and engaging our community. Used appropriately, they enhance our reputation and mission; used inappropriately, they can cause harm or risk to individuals and the organisation.
- 1.2. This policy governs the use of social media and photography to protect the organisation's reputation, ensure the safety and privacy of those we work with, and provide clear guidance for staff, volunteers, and representatives.
- 1.3. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, trustees, contractors, and placement students, whether acting in a professional or personal capacity where their actions could impact Uppertunity.
- 1.4. This policy should be read alongside our Data Protection Policy, Safeguarding Policy, and Code of Conduct.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees, volunteers, trustees, and contractors.
- All forms of social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter/X, TikTok, YouTube, blogs, online forums).
- The taking, storage, and sharing of photographs or videos in any capacity connected to Uppertunity.

3. Photography Rules

3.1. Who Can Take Photos

- Only paid staff are permitted to take photographs or videos for Uppertunity purposes.
- Volunteers, members, and visitors are not permitted to take photographs or videos during Uppertunity activities or events.

3.2. Consent

- Even if an individual has previously signed a consent form, verbal consent must be sought each time before taking a photo or video.
- Consent must be informed, meaning the individual (or their guardian) understands what the image will be used for and has the right to decline without explanation.

3.3. Storage and Security

- Photos and videos must not be stored on personal mobile phones.

3.4. Use of Images

- Images and videos will only be used for purposes agreed at the time of consent (e.g., marketing materials, social media, reports).
- Any changes in use (e.g., using an image for a different campaign) require new consent.

4. Social Media Use

4.1 Official Use

- Only authorised staff may post content on Uppertunity's official social media accounts.
- Official posts must follow brand guidelines, respect confidentiality, and align with organisational values.

4.2 Personal Use

- Staff and volunteers must not post photographs or videos of Uppertunity members, events, or activities on their personal social media accounts, even if they have consent.
- Staff and volunteers may share official posts by using the direct link or share function from Uppertunity's social media pages.
- Opinions expressed on personal accounts must be clearly stated as personal and not representative of Uppertunity.

5. Prohibited Use

Social media and photography must not be used to:

- Breach confidentiality or data protection policies.
- Harass, bully, or discriminate.
- Share misleading, defamatory, or offensive content.
- Damage Uppertunity's reputation or relationships with stakeholders.

6. Monitoring and Compliance

6.1. Uppertunity may monitor social media activity related to its work, where legally permissible, to ensure policy compliance.

6.2. Any breach of the photography or social media rules may result in disciplinary action, removal from role, or legal action if necessary.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary. All staff, volunteers, and trustees will be informed of changes and are required to comply with the most recent version.

11. Whistleblowing Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. Uppertunity is committed to conducting its business fairly, honestly, and with transparency, in compliance with all legal and regulatory obligations. We expect all directors, employees, and anyone acting on our behalf to maintain the highest standards of ethical business behaviour.

1.2. However, all organisations face the risk of wrongdoing or misconduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in preventing such situations and addressing them appropriately when they arise.

1.3. This policy provides a robust whistleblowing framework that allows employees, volunteers, and other stakeholders to report concerns in confidence, ensuring that all issues raised are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

1.4. This policy aims to:

- Encourage and empower colleagues to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible.
- Provide guidance on how to raise concerns.
- Reassure individuals that they can raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if mistaken.
- Foster a culture of openness and accountability.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to all employees, directors, officers, contractors, agency workers, casual workers, consultants, and trainees at Uppertunity.

2.2. It also applies to concerns related to customers, suppliers, or any other third parties with whom Uppertunity interacts.

2.3. This policy should not be used to question business decisions or raise HR-related grievances such as harassment, bullying, or discrimination, which should be addressed through Uppertunity's grievance policy.

3. What Should Be Reported?

3.1. Uppertunity encourages the reporting of any unlawful, dishonest, or unethical behaviour, including but not limited to:

- Criminal activity (e.g., fraud, theft, embezzlement).
- Corruption, bribery, or blackmail.
- Financial malpractice or mismanagement.
- Facilitating tax evasion.
- Failure to comply with legal, regulatory, or professional obligations.
- Actions endangering health and safety.
- Environmental damage.
- Providing false information to public officers.
- Miscarriage of justice.
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.
- Deliberate concealment of wrongdoing.
- Retaliation against whistleblowers.

4. Reporting a Concern

4.1. Uppertunity provides multiple channels for reporting concerns to ensure accessibility and confidentiality.

Option 1: Report to Manager

- Employees and volunteers should raise concerns with their line manager in the first instance, either verbally or in writing.
- If the issue implicates the manager, employees should escalate the concern through another option.

Option 2: Report to Chair of the Board

- If an employee or volunteer does not feel comfortable reporting to their manager or is dissatisfied with the response, they can escalate the concern to the Chair of the Board.

Option 3: Report to OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator)

- If internal reporting is not possible or does not lead to appropriate action, individuals can report concerns to OSCR.

Option 4: External Advice

- Employees and volunteers can seek guidance from external bodies such as:
 - Advisory, Conciliation, and Arbitration Service (Acas)
 - The whistleblowing charity *Protect*
 - Their trade union

5. Protection for Whistleblowers

5.1. Employees and volunteers are protected by law when reporting concerns in the public interest, including reporting:

- A criminal offense (e.g., fraud).
- A danger to health and safety.
- Risk or actual damage to the environment.
- A miscarriage of justice.
- Legal non-compliance (e.g., lack of proper insurance).
- Cover-ups of wrongdoing.

5.2. Personal grievances (e.g., bullying, harassment, discrimination) are not covered under whistleblowing laws unless they are in the public interest. These should be reported through Uppertunity's grievance policy.

5.3. Uppertunity prohibits retaliation against whistleblowers. Any individual who attempts retaliation will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

6. Confidentiality

6.1. All reports will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

6.2. Anonymous reports will be accepted, but whistleblowers are encouraged to provide their contact details to facilitate an effective investigation.

6.3. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis to ensure proper handling of the concern.

7. Investigation and Follow-Up

7.1. Once a report is made:

- A designated officer will acknowledge receipt within five working days.
- A preliminary assessment will determine if further investigation is required.
- Investigations will be conducted promptly and fairly.
- Findings and necessary actions will be communicated to the whistleblower where appropriate.

8. Monitoring and Review

8.1. The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed annually by Uppertunity's Board.

8.2. Amendments will be made as necessary to align with best practices and legal requirements.

9. Conclusion

9.1. Uppertunity is committed to fostering a safe and transparent workplace where employees and volunteers feel confident to report wrongdoing.

9.2. This policy ensures that concerns are raised, addressed appropriately, and that whistleblowers are protected from any form of retaliation.

12. Complaints and Grievances policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Uppertunity is committed to fostering an inclusive, fair, and respectful environment for all clients, staff, volunteers, and individuals using our services.
- 1.2. We recognise that from time to time, concerns, conflicts, or complaints may arise. This policy outlines the procedures for raising and addressing grievances in a fair, confidential, and timely manner.
- 1.3. All grievances will be taken seriously and handled with respect, impartiality, and sensitivity.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to:
 - Clients using Uppertunity's services
 - Employees and contractors
 - Volunteers
 - Trustees
 - Any other individuals engaging with Uppertunity in any capacity
- 2.2. This policy covers grievances related to but not limited to:
 - Workplace or service-related concerns
 - Treatment by staff, volunteers, or clients
 - Discrimination, harassment, or bullying
 - Unfair treatment, misconduct, or breach of policies
 - Health and safety concerns
 - Service delivery concerns

3. Informal Resolution

- 3.1. Uppertunity encourages informal resolution where possible and appropriate.
- 3.2. Clients, staff, or volunteers who have concerns should initially raise them directly with the relevant individual involved or with their supervisor/manager.
- 3.3. If an informal resolution is not possible or does not resolve the issue satisfactorily, the formal grievance procedure should be followed.

4. Formal Grievance Procedure

- 4.1. **Stage One: Submission to Management**
 - A formal grievance should be submitted in writing to the Manager or an appropriate senior staff member.
 - The written grievance should include:
 - The nature of the complaint
 - Relevant facts and supporting evidence
 - Any steps already taken to resolve the matter
 - Desired resolution
 - The Manager will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days and conduct an investigation.
 - A meeting will be arranged to discuss the grievance, and an outcome will be provided in writing within 10 working days of the meeting.
- 4.2. **Stage Two: Escalation to Trustees**
 - If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage One, they may escalate the grievance to the Board of Trustees in writing.
 - The Trustees will acknowledge receipt within 7 working days and may appoint an impartial member to investigate.
 - A meeting will be held with the complainant to review the case.
 - A final decision will be issued within 14 working days of the meeting.

4.3. Stage Three: External Resolution

- If the complainant is still not satisfied, they may refer their grievance to external bodies such as:
 - The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas)
 - The Charity Commission (OSCR in Scotland) if it relates to governance issues
 - A legal professional or advocacy group for further support
 -

5. Confidentiality & Non-Retaliation

5.1. All grievances will be handled with confidentiality, and information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

5.2. No individual will be treated unfairly or face retaliation for raising a grievance in good faith.

5.3. If any grievance involves allegations of misconduct, discrimination, or safeguarding concerns, appropriate safeguarding policies will be followed.

6. Monitoring & Review

6.1. The Board of Trustees will monitor grievances to identify trends and improve policies.

6.2. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and fairness.

13. Digital and IT Security

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1. Uppertunity is committed to safeguarding its digital assets, IT infrastructure, and sensitive data by implementing robust digital and IT security measures. This policy outlines the security protocols for all employees, volunteers, trustees, and service users who interact with our digital systems.

1.2. This policy applies to all devices, networks, software, cloud services, and personal data handled within Uppertunity, including computers, mobile devices, emails, and cloud-based systems.

1.3. The objective of this policy is to:

- Protect sensitive and personal data from unauthorised access.
- Prevent cyber threats such as malware, phishing, hacking, and data breaches.
- Ensure compliance with GDPR, Data Protection Act (2018), and relevant regulations.
- Establish clear guidelines for staff, volunteers, and service users on IT security best practices.

2. Authentication and Access Control

2.1. Double Password Protection:

- All accounts, including email, cloud services, and internal systems, must be protected with two passwords or multi-factor authentication (MFA) where applicable.
- Passwords must be unique, complex, and changed regularly.
- Staff must not reuse passwords from personal accounts for Uppertunity systems.

2.2. User Access Levels:

- Access to systems and data is granted based on the principle of least privilege (only the necessary access for work duties).
- Only authorised personnel can access sensitive data, and access will be regularly reviewed.
- Staff and volunteers should notify the IT team if access permissions need to be changed or revoked.

2.3. Account Management:

- All user accounts must be disabled immediately when staff, volunteers, or service users leave the organisation.
- Shared accounts must be avoided unless absolutely necessary.

3. Data Security and Protection

3.1. Data Storage:

- All sensitive data must be stored securely in Uppertunity's encrypted cloud system or secure internal servers.
- Physical copies of sensitive information must be kept in locked cabinets with controlled access.
- No personal or sensitive data should be stored on USB sticks or personal devices without encryption and management approval.

3.2. Data Transmission and Sharing:

- Sensitive data must only be shared via secure and encrypted communication channels (e.g., encrypted emails, secure file-sharing platforms).
- Personal or client information must never be sent via unencrypted email or messaging apps.
- Staff must verify recipient identities before sharing sensitive information.

3.3. Data Retention and Disposal:

- Uppertunity follows a strict data retention policy to ensure data is not kept longer than necessary.
- Any sensitive data that is no longer required must be securely deleted from digital systems and shredded if in physical form.

4. IT Infrastructure and Device Security

4.1. Device Management:

- All devices used for work must have password protection and, where possible, encrypted storage.
- Staff should lock their devices when unattended and log out of systems after use.
- Any loss or theft of work-related devices must be reported immediately.

4.2. Software and Updates:

- All operating systems, applications, and security software must be regularly updated to protect against vulnerabilities.
- Only approved software and applications should be installed on Uppertunity devices.
- Unauthorised software or file downloads are strictly prohibited.

4.3. Network Security:

- Staff must connect to secure networks only. Public Wi-Fi should not be used without a VPN.
- Internal Wi-Fi networks must be password-protected and regularly monitored.
- Firewalls and antivirus software must be enabled and regularly updated.

5. Email and Internet Security

5.1. Phishing and Fraud Protection:

- Staff must be cautious of unsolicited emails requesting sensitive information.
- Do not click on unknown links or download attachments from unverified sources.
- Suspicious emails should be reported to the IT team immediately.

5.2. Acceptable Use of Internet and Social Media:

- Personal internet use must not interfere with work responsibilities.
- Employees must avoid accessing or sharing inappropriate, illegal, or harmful content.
- Social media use must comply with Uppertunity's Social Media Policy.

6. Incident Reporting and Response

6.1. Security Incidents:

- Any suspected data breach, unauthorised access, or cyberattack must be reported to the IT team immediately.
- Staff should not attempt to resolve security issues independently but must follow the designated reporting process.
- The IT team will assess the situation and take appropriate action, including notifying relevant authorities if necessary.

6.2. Data Breach Response Plan:

- In the event of a data breach, Uppertunity will follow the Data Protection Policy and report serious breaches to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) within 72 hours if required.
- Affected individuals will be informed of any breach that poses a risk to their personal data.

7. Training and Compliance

7.1. Staff Training:

- All staff and volunteers must undergo IT security training upon joining Uppertunity.
- Regular refresher training sessions will be conducted to ensure compliance with security practices.

7.2. Compliance and Monitoring:

- Compliance with this policy is mandatory, and violations may result in disciplinary action.
- Regular audits and security reviews will be conducted to identify and mitigate risks.

8. Policy Review and Updates

8.1. This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in technology, regulations, and best practices.

8.2. Any modifications to this policy must be approved by Uppertunity's management and IT team.

14. Volunteer Policy

1. Introduction

Volunteers are a vital part of Uppertunity, supporting our mission and strengthening our services. This policy outlines our commitment to volunteers, the expectations of volunteers, and how we ensure a positive and mutually beneficial experience.

Definition of a Volunteer:

A volunteer at Uppertunity is someone who, without financial expectation beyond reimbursed expenses, undertakes tasks at the request and on behalf of the organisation. Volunteers must be at least 16 years old, with no maximum age limit.

2. Role of Volunteers

Volunteers support Uppertunity's strategic aims by:

- Enhancing services for our clients
- Bringing new skills, ideas, and perspectives
- Increasing community engagement
- Supporting the overall mission of Uppertunity

Volunteers do not replace paid staff but complement and enhance our work.

3. Uppertunity's Commitment to Volunteers

We strive to:

- Treat volunteers with respect, appreciation, and fairness.
- Provide clear roles and expectations.
- Offer support, training, and supervision to help volunteers succeed.
- Foster an inclusive, positive, and engaging volunteer experience.
- Ensure volunteers are properly integrated into the organisation.
- Reimburse agreed-upon expenses.
- Protect volunteers' health, safety, and wellbeing.
- Comply with data protection and confidentiality policies.
- Ensure fair recruitment, free from discrimination.

Volunteers are recognised for their time and commitment through team events, awards, and regular appreciation.

4. Volunteer Expectations

Volunteers must:

- Treat staff, members, clients, and fellow volunteers with respect.
- Represent Uppertunity professionally and positively.
- Commit to non-discrimination and inclusivity.
- Provide advance notice if they cannot attend a shift or wish to leave.
- Adhere to Uppertunity's policies and procedures.
- Give constructive feedback about their experience.
- Engage in training and development opportunities.
- Be consistent and reliable, particularly due to the needs of the clients we work with.

5. Support for Volunteers

5.1 Induction

All volunteers receive an induction covering:

- Uppertunity's mission and values
- Role expectations
- Code of conduct
- Relevant policies and procedures

5.2 Training & Development

Volunteers are offered training opportunities to enhance their skills and confidence in their role.

5.3 Mentoring & Feedback

Each volunteer has access to regular mentoring and reflection with the manager to discuss progress, raise concerns, and explore future opportunities.

6. Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities

Volunteers have the right to:

- A safe and supportive environment.
- Clear guidance and supervision.
- Fair and equal treatment.
- Meaningful work that contributes to Uppertunity's goals.
- Express concerns or grievances and receive a fair resolution.

Volunteers are responsible for:

- Maintaining confidentiality.
- Following Uppertunity's policies (health and safety, safeguarding, GDPR, etc.).
- Reporting concerns to the manager.
- Acting in the best interest of Uppertunity and its clients.

7. Volunteer Involvement & Feedback

Volunteers can contribute ideas and feedback through:

- Regular meetings
- Anonymous suggestions
- Direct communication with management
- End-of-service exit interviews

We listen to volunteers and act on their feedback to improve experiences.

8. Legal & Policy Compliance

8.1 Recruitment & Selection

- Uppertunity has an open and fair recruitment process for volunteers.
- Volunteers must complete a basic application.
- Where necessary, volunteers must undergo a PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) check.
- Two references are required for volunteers working with vulnerable groups.

8.2 Insurance

Volunteers are covered by Employers' and Public Liability Insurance, providing protection for injuries or accidents while volunteering.

8.3 Health & Safety

Volunteers must follow Uppertunity's Health & Safety policy to ensure a safe environment.

8.4 Grievances

Volunteers can raise concerns with their designated contact (manager). If unresolved, they can escalate the issue to the Board of Trustees.

8.5 Confidentiality

Volunteers must respect confidentiality agreements, ensuring client and organisational information remains private.

9. Volunteer Placement Process

Before starting, the manager will:

1. Define a volunteer role description.
2. Ensure the role benefits both the volunteer and organisation.
3. Discuss and agree on working hours, tasks, and supervision.
4. Obtain necessary background checks (PVG) if applicable.
5. Provide induction, training, and ongoing support.

10. End of Volunteering

- Volunteers can end their role at any time but should provide notice where possible.
- If a volunteer has completed at least two months, they can request a reference.
- An exit interview is offered to reflect on the experience and explore future opportunities.

11. Volunteer Expenses

11.1 What We Cover

Volunteers can claim expenses for:

- **Public Transport:** Fully reimbursed with receipts.
- **Taxis:** Reimbursed for those with disabilities.
- **Mileage:** Pre-approved travel costs may be reimbursed.
- **Other Costs:** Any other essential expenses must be pre-approved by the manager.

11.2 Refreshments

Volunteers receive **complimentary tea and coffee** while on-site, as well as one free soup on days they are volunteering, and 50% off menu items from Uppertunity.

12. Final Statement

Uppertunity is committed to ensuring a positive, fulfilling, and impactful volunteer experience. Volunteers are valued members of our community and essential to achieving our mission.

15. Risk Management Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a structured approach to risk management within Uppertunity, ensuring that risks are identified, assessed, managed, and monitored effectively. This supports Uppertunity's charitable aims and purposes, safeguards its assets, ensures financial stability, and protects staff, volunteers, and clients.

This policy aligns with The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (the 2005 Act), which requires trustees to act with care, diligence, and in the best interests of the organisation. The Board of Trustees will exhibit a higher level of care in managing the organisation's risks than they would in their personal financial affairs.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all activities within Uppertunity and is a fundamental part of the organisation's risk management framework. It applies to:

- Trustees
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Third parties working with Uppertunity

All individuals associated with Uppertunity must be aware of risks, understand how to identify and report risks, and ensure they follow risk management processes.

3. Risk Management Framework

3.1 Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees

- Oversees risk policy and reviews risk reports.
- Approves actions to mitigate risks.
- Ensures appropriate governance structures are in place to manage risk.
- Convenes a special meeting if a critical risk arises.

The Manager

- Ensures that risk management is embedded in daily activities.
- Reviews risk reports and ensures continuous improvement in risk management.
- Ensures that staff and volunteers are trained in risk awareness.

Line Managers & Project Leads

- Ensure team members follow the risk management policy.
- Identify, assess, and report risks to the Manager.
- Implement risk treatment plans within their area of responsibility.

Employees & Volunteers

- Are responsible for identifying and reporting risks.
- Must follow all risk-related policies and procedures.
- Participate in risk awareness training as required.

4. Risk Management Process

Uppertunity follows a structured risk management approach to identify, assess, mitigate, and monitor risks. The process includes:

4.1 Identifying Risks

- Risks are identified by staff, volunteers, trustees, and stakeholders.
- Risks can be reported through risk assessments, team meetings, or incident reports.
- Risks should be categorised based on the following risk categories:

Risk Categories:

- **Financial:** Funding issues, cash flow risks, fraud, financial mismanagement.

- **Governance:** Board performance, conflicts of interest, decision-making issues.
- **External:** Economic conditions, funding changes, external partnerships.
- **Compliance & Regulations:** Legal obligations, GDPR compliance, safeguarding policies.
- **Operational:** Service delivery risks, IT failures, human error, equipment failures.
- **Reputation:** Public perception, social media risks, negative publicity.

4.2 Assessing Risks

- Risks are evaluated based on:
 - **Likelihood** (Rare, Unlikely, Possible, Likely, Almost Certain)
 - **Impact** (Insignificant, Minor, Moderate, Major, Critical)
- A risk matrix is used to prioritise risks.

4.3 Managing and Mitigating Risks

- Eliminate the risk where possible.
- Reduce the risk through controls, policies, and training.
- Transfer risk through insurance or partnerships.
- Accept low-level risks that are manageable.

4.4 Monitoring and Reviewing Risks

- The Risk Register is updated immediately when new risks are identified.
- The register is reviewed at each Board meeting, and outdated risks are removed.
- Urgent risks will trigger a special Board meeting for immediate action.

5. Risk Reporting

- Line Managers prepare risk reports for their areas, including risk treatment plans.
- The Manager reviews all risk reports before Board meetings.
- The Board reviews risk reports at each full meeting.
- If a critical risk is identified, a special Board meeting will be held.

6. Annual Risk Review

- This policy is reviewed annually by the Board to ensure it remains relevant and effective.
- The risk management process is assessed for continuous improvement.
- Any necessary updates to the policy are approved by the Board.

7. Conclusion

Effective risk management is essential to Uppertunity's success. By following this policy, Uppertunity can proactively manage risks, ensure financial and operational stability, and protect its people and mission.

16. Trustees Code of Conduct Policy

1. Introduction

Trustees of Uppertunity are responsible for the good governance of the organisation. As such, they have a duty to act in the best interests of Uppertunity and its beneficiaries, prioritising these interests above any personal, professional, or financial interests.

Trustees must ensure that their actions and decisions reflect the values and mission of Uppertunity, maintaining public trust and avoiding any activity that may bring the organisation into disrepute.

This Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour and accountability expected from trustees to uphold the integrity of Uppertunity.

2. Key Responsibilities of Trustees

Trustees must:

- Act in the best interests of Uppertunity and its beneficiaries, prioritising these interests above all else.
- Follow Uppertunity's governing documents and comply with relevant laws, including charity regulations.
- Ensure proper use of the organisation's resources, making sound financial and operational decisions.
- Declare and manage conflicts of interest, following Uppertunity's Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Act collectively and in a transparent manner, making decisions in line with Uppertunity's objectives.
- Uphold the organisation's values, ensuring that Uppertunity remains inclusive, ethical, and effective.
- Respect confidentiality, handling sensitive information appropriately and responsibly.
- Maintain good relationships with fellow trustees, staff, volunteers, members, and stakeholders.
- Promote and protect Uppertunity's reputation, ensuring their actions support the credibility and integrity of the organisation.

3. Expectations of Trustees

3.1. Meeting Attendance & Participation

- Trustees are expected to attend at least 75% of board meetings in any given year.
- Absences must be communicated to the Chairperson in advance, with valid reasons provided.
- Trustees are expected to come prepared, having read necessary documents in advance of meetings.
- Active participation in discussions and decision-making is required.

3.2. Conflict of Interest & Ethical Behaviour

- Trustees must declare any conflicts of interest at the earliest opportunity.
- Trustees should avoid situations where personal, financial, or professional interests may compromise their role.
- Trustees must not accept gifts, favours, or hospitality that could influence their decision-making.
- Trustees must not misuse their position for personal gain or to benefit close associates.

3.3. Confidentiality & Data Protection

- Trustees must maintain confidentiality regarding sensitive matters discussed in board meetings.
- Confidential information must not be shared with third parties unless authorised by the board.
- Trustees must comply with Uppertunity's Data Protection Policy when handling personal or organisational data.

3.4. Collective Responsibility & Decision-Making

- Decisions made by the majority of the board should be supported by all trustees, even if personal views differ.
- Trustees should engage in constructive discussion and work collaboratively.
- All decisions should be made with Uppertunity's mission and beneficiaries in mind.

4. Removal of a Trustee

4.1. Failure to Fulfil Trustee Responsibilities

- If a trustee fails to attend more than three consecutive meetings without a valid reason, or fails to attend at least 75% of all meetings within a year, the board may vote to remove them.
- This decision will be made following a formal review by the board.

4.2. Breach of Code of Conduct

A trustee may be removed if they:

- Commit a serious breach of this Code of Conduct.
- Fail to comply with the Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Engage in gross misconduct, including fraudulent or unethical behaviour.

4.3. Removal Procedure

- The trustee will receive written notice outlining the concerns and reasons for potential removal.
- The trustee will have the opportunity to respond and present their case at a board meeting.
- A vote of two-thirds of the trustees is required to remove a trustee.

5. Commitment to Good Governance

By accepting a position as a trustee of Uppertunity, individuals agree to:

- Adhere to this Code of Conduct.
- Uphold the values and mission of Uppertunity.
- Be accountable for their actions and governance of the organisation.
- Act in the best interests of Uppertunity and its beneficiaries at all times.

This policy ensures that trustees act responsibly, ethically, and transparently, safeguarding the future of Uppertunity.

17. Ethical Fundraising Policy

1. Introduction

Uppertunity is committed to ethical, transparent, and responsible fundraising practices. We recognise that how we fundraise directly impacts the trust of donors, supporters, beneficiaries, and the wider public. This policy outlines our commitment to fundraising that aligns with our values, legal obligations, and ethical principles.

We will always strive to be open, honest, fair, and compliant with UK laws and best practices, including the Code of Fundraising Practice and guidance from the Fundraising Regulator and Charity Commission.

This policy applies to trustees, employees, volunteers, fundraisers, and third parties acting on behalf of Uppertunity.

2. Ethical Fundraising Principles

2.1. Transparency & Honesty

- We will always provide clear, truthful, and accessible information about Uppertunity's work and how donations are used.
- All fundraising communications will be accurate, respectful, and never misleading.
- We will submit realistic budgets when applying for funding and use funds for their intended purpose.
- We will publish reports on our impact and financial accountability annually.
- We comply with all legal requirements for openness and honesty when engaging with donors and the public.

2.2. Donor Rights & Responsibilities

- Donors have the right to:
 - Know how their donations will be used.
 - Receive prompt acknowledgment and thanks.
 - Have their data protected in line with our Data Protection Policy.
 - Opt out of communications at any time.
- We will never pressure individuals into giving donations.
- We respect donors' wishes if they request anonymity.

3. Fundraising & Vulnerable Donors

We are committed to protecting vulnerable donors and ensuring that fundraising is always conducted responsibly. If an individual appears to be vulnerable, we will:

- Not pressure them into donating.
- Be respectful and patient, using clear and simple communication.
- Consider their communication preferences.
- Decline donations if we believe the donor is not competent to make the decision.

4. Representing Our Beneficiaries

- We will respect the dignity, rights, and privacy of beneficiaries when using their stories in fundraising materials.
- We will only use images, quotes, and stories with full consent.
- We will avoid exaggeration, exploitation, or misrepresentation.

5. Ethical Conduct for Fundraising Staff & Volunteers

- We have a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, bullying, exploitation, or harassment.
- We maintain a culture of respect, equality, and inclusion.
- All fundraising staff and volunteers receive training in ethical fundraising and how to handle donations appropriately.

- A whistleblowing process is in place for staff and volunteers to report unethical or illegal fundraising practices.

6. Fundraising Due Diligence & Donation Acceptance

6.1. Due Diligence on Donors

Uppertunity will undertake due diligence on donors and major gifts to ensure:

- Donations do not come from illegal, unethical, or high-risk sources.
- The donor's activities align with Uppertunity's mission and values.
- Large anonymous donations are carefully assessed for risk.

If a donation may damage Uppertunity's reputation or compromise its integrity, the Board of Trustees may refuse or return the donation.

6.2. Restricted Donations

- If a donor requests their donation to be used for a specific purpose, we will respect their wishes.
- If we are unable to use the donation for the specified purpose, we will inform the donor and, if appropriate, offer a refund.

6.3. Refusal of Donations

We reserve the right to refuse donations if:

- The donation comes from illegal, unethical, or unknown sources.
- The donor's values conflict with Uppertunity's mission.
- Accepting the donation would compromise our independence or integrity.

7. Fundraising with Commercial & Corporate Partners

We will not partner with any business or commercial entity that:

- Acts in a way that is contrary to Uppertunity's values and charitable objectives.
- Produces or sells goods/services that could harm our beneficiaries or the environment.

For corporate partnerships:

- All agreements will be reviewed to ensure fairness and alignment with our mission.
- We will set up clear monitoring and review systems to evaluate the partnership's impact.
- The Board will disclose commercial partnerships in our Annual Report.

8. Fundraising Regulations & Trustee Responsibilities

Uppertunity's Board of Trustees will:

- Ensure compliance with Charity Commission guidance (CC3a).
- Follow the six principles in Charity Commission CC20 on trustee duties in fundraising.
- Provide regular oversight of fundraising activities and manage risks effectively.
- Address fundraising complaints promptly and effectively.

9. Fundraising Complaints & Whistleblowing

Uppertunity has a clear process for handling fundraising complaints:

1. Complaints should be directed to the Manager in the first instance.
2. If unresolved, the issue will be escalated to the Board of Trustees.
3. If further action is required, complaints can be referred to the Fundraising Regulator or Charity Commission.

We encourage whistleblowing in cases of:

- Fraudulent, unethical, or coercive fundraising.
- Misuse of donor funds.
- Any other breach of this policy.

18. Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy

1. Policy Statement

Uppertunity is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all staff, volunteers, clients, and visitors. Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to work in an atmosphere free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination.

Harassment and bullying in any form will not be tolerated. This includes behaviour that occurs:

- Within the workplace (including remote work settings).
- During work-related activities, such as events, meetings, or training sessions.
- On social media platforms or any form of digital communication.
- Outside working hours if it impacts the work environment or relationships within Uppertunity.

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, service users, board members, and visitors. Uppertunity recognises that harassment and bullying can have severe physical, emotional, and professional consequences. Workplace bullying can create a toxic environment, leading to stress, absenteeism, decreased productivity, and loss of self-confidence. This policy outlines the responsibilities of all individuals in preventing and addressing bullying and harassment effectively.

2. Key Principles

- **Zero Tolerance:** Uppertunity has a strict zero-tolerance policy on bullying and harassment. Any complaint will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.
- **Fair and Respectful Workplace:** All individuals are expected to contribute to a positive and supportive work environment.
- **Protection from Retaliation:** No one who raises a complaint will face victimisation or unfair treatment for doing so.
- **Confidentiality:** Complaints will be handled discreetly, and information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- **Accountability:** Everyone has a responsibility to uphold this policy and report any misconduct they witness.

3. Definitions of Bullying and Harassment

3.1. What is Harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted behaviour that offends, humiliates, intimidates, or threatens an individual. It is the impact of the behaviour, rather than the intent, that determines whether harassment has occurred.

Harassment can be:

- **Physical:** Unwanted touching, intimidation, aggressive behaviour, physical assault.
- **Verbal:** Offensive remarks, malicious gossip, jokes, name-calling, threats, slurs, or unwanted propositions.
- **Non-Verbal:** Staring, offensive gestures, written communications, displaying offensive images, graffiti, or digital harassment.
- **Discriminatory:** Harassment based on age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, or any protected characteristic.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Unwanted sexual advances, inappropriate comments, pressure for sexual favours, or sharing sexually explicit material.

3.2. What is Bullying?

Bullying is persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behaviour that undermines, humiliates, or injures the person it is directed toward. Unlike harassment, bullying does not necessarily relate to a protected characteristic.

Examples of bullying include:

- Public humiliation or belittling remarks.
- Persistent and unjustified criticism.
- Setting unrealistic deadlines or unmanageable workloads.
- Spreading rumours or gossip.
- Deliberately excluding someone from workplace activities.
- Making threats or engaging in intimidating behaviour.
- Using social media or digital platforms to harass or intimidate someone ("cyberbullying").
- Setting someone up to fail (e.g., withholding important information).

3.3. What is Not Bullying?

Reasonable and lawful management actions are not considered bullying when conducted in a fair and appropriate manner. Examples include:

- Providing constructive feedback on performance.
- Assigning reasonable work duties.
- Disciplinary action taken under company policy.
- Making legitimate business decisions, such as restructuring or promotions.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. Responsibilities of All Staff, Volunteers, and Clients

- Treat others with respect and dignity.
- Refrain from engaging in any form of harassment or bullying.
- Report any witnessed harassment or bullying incidents.
- Foster an inclusive and positive work environment.

4.2. Responsibilities of Managers and Leaders

- Lead by example and actively prevent bullying and harassment.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of this policy.
- Take all complaints seriously and respond promptly.
- Provide support to those affected by bullying or harassment.
- Implement appropriate disciplinary action when necessary.

5. Procedures for Reporting Bullying and Harassment

5.1. Informal Resolution

- If you feel safe doing so, speak directly to the person responsible and explain that their behaviour is unwelcome.
- If you are uncomfortable approaching the individual, seek support from a manager or trusted colleague.
- Managers should intervene early and attempt to resolve conflicts before they escalate.

5.2. Formal Resolution

If informal action is ineffective or inappropriate, a formal complaint should be made. Complaints should be submitted in writing and should include:

- Details of the incidents, including dates, times, and locations.
- Names of witnesses (if any).
- Any steps already taken to address the issue.

Who to report to:

1. Your manager – If appropriate, report the complaint to your direct supervisor.
2. Chair of Trustees – If the issue involves your manager, or if you are unsatisfied with their response, escalate to the Board of Trustees.
3. External Authorities – If necessary, complaints can be made to OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator), ACAS, or the whistleblowing charity Protect.

Note: Complaints about serious criminal behaviour, such as assault, should be reported directly to the police.

6. Investigations and Outcomes

- **Confidentiality:** Investigations will be handled discreetly, and information will only be shared with those involved in resolving the issue.
- **Fair Process:** Both the complainant and the accused will have an opportunity to present their case.
- **Support Available:** Both parties may bring a support person or representative to meetings.
- **Possible Outcomes:**
 - Mediation or facilitated discussion.
 - Training or coaching to address inappropriate behaviour.
 - Formal disciplinary action, including warnings or dismissal for serious offences.

If a complaint is found to be made maliciously, disciplinary action may be taken against the complainant.

7. Protection Against Retaliation

Uppertunity strictly prohibits retaliation against any person who raises a concern under this policy. Anyone found to have victimised a complainant or witness will face disciplinary action.

8. Training and Awareness

- All employees will receive training on anti-harassment and bullying during induction.
- Regular refresher courses will be provided.
- Managers will receive additional training on conflict resolution and appropriate workplace behaviour.

9. Record Keeping

- Informal complaints will not be recorded unless they escalate into a formal complaint.
- Formal complaints and investigations will be documented and stored securely.
- Records of complaints will be kept for 12 months, unless required for longer by legal or regulatory authorities.

10. Review and Monitoring

- This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.
- Staff and volunteers will be consulted for feedback and improvements.
- Reports on trends and recurring issues will be analysed to improve workplace culture.

Uppertunity is dedicated to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive. Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated, and all complaints will be taken seriously. If you have any concerns, do not hesitate to report them. You deserve to work and engage in an environment free from harassment and bullying.

For further guidance, contact your Manager, the Chair of Trustees, or an external authority such as ACAS or OSCR.