Uppertunity Accessible Staff & Volunteer Handbook

About This Handbook

This is an accessible version of Uppertunity's Organisational Handbook.
It explains the main policies and responsibilities relevant to staff and volunteers.
The full Organisational Handbook contains additional information and detailed procedures.
Some roles may require further training or reading the full policies.
If you are unsure about anything in this handbook, please ask your manager.

We want everyone to have the information and support they need to work confidently, safely and independently.

If there is something you do not understand, you can ask your manager or another staff member to explain it.

You can ask for help if you:

- Do not understand a policy.
- Are unsure about your responsibilities.
- Feel unhappy or uncomfortable.
- Need support with a task.
- Want to raise a complaint.
- Are worried about someone's safety.
- Have noticed something that is wrong.

Who should I contact?

- **Your Manager:** For questions about your role, support needs, workplace concerns, expenses and general complaints.
- **The Safeguarding Lead:** For concerns about abuse, neglect or someone's safety.
- **A Trustee:** If your concern involves the manager or another senior person, or if you need to escalate a complaint.
- **Emergency Services:** Call 999 if someone is in immediate danger.

Remember

You have the right to:

- Ask questions.
- Be treated with respect.
- Feel safe at work.
- Receive support when needed.
- Raise concerns.
- Be listened to.
- Understand the rules and expectations of your role.

You also have a responsibility to:

- Follow Uppertunity's policies.
- Treat people fairly.
- Respect people's privacy.
- Report serious safety concerns.
- Ask for help when unsure.
- Work positively with others.

Speaking up is an important part of keeping Uppertunity safe, fair and welcoming for everyone.

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Part 1 – Welcome to Uppertunity

Everyone at Uppertunity has a part to play in creating a positive environment.

We ask you to:

- Treat people with kindness and respect.
- Be honest and responsible.
- Respect people's privacy and personal boundaries.
- Work together and support each other.
- Be open to learning.
- Help keep everyone safe.
- Ask for help when you need it.

We work together to make Uppertunity a place where everyone can belong, learn and grow.

1. About Uppertunity

What do we do?

Uppertunity is a charity that supports adults with additional support needs.
This includes people with learning disabilities, autism, mental health difficulties and other barriers.

We help people:

- Build confidence and learn new skills.
- Make friends and feel part of a community.
- Improve their wellbeing.
- Discover their strengths and interests.
- Become more independent.
- Try new experiences and opportunities.

We do this through creative workshops, social activities, volunteering, training and community projects.

What is important to us?

We believe everyone has something valuable to offer.
We want people to feel accepted, supported and encouraged to grow.
We work with people, not just for them.
This means we help people make their own choices, try things for themselves and build confidence.
We also believe that working together makes our communities stronger.

Our five values

1. **Creativity**

- We encourage people to explore, experiment and try new things.
- Creativity is not just about art. It can also mean finding new ways to solve problems or do everyday tasks.
- For example: Trying a different activity when something is not working.

2. **Empowerment**

- We help people build confidence and make their own choices.
- We support people to do things for themselves rather than always doing things for them.
- For example: Helping a member learn to prepare a meal instead of preparing everything for them.

3. **Mindset**
- We believe everyone can learn and grow.
- Making mistakes is part of learning. We focus on progress, not perfection.
- For example: Encouraging someone to try again when they find an activity difficult.

4. **Togetherness**
- We believe in supporting each other and working as a team.
- We encourage friendships, kindness, sharing and collaboration.
- For example: Helping a colleague who needs support or welcoming someone new.

5. **Sustainability**
- We want to look after our community, our environment and our resources.
- We try to reduce waste, reuse materials and make thoughtful choices.
- For example: Using leftover craft materials for a new activity instead of throwing them away.

2. Our Culture – How We Work Together

What is this about?

Our culture is how we behave, communicate and work together every day.
We want Uppertunity to be a welcoming, respectful and positive place for everyone.
This includes members, staff, volunteers, trustees, support workers and visitors.

Why is it important?

The way we treat people affects how safe, happy and included they feel.
A positive working environment helps everyone feel confident, supported and able to contribute.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We encourage everyone to:

Show kindness and appreciation

- Be friendly and welcoming.
- Thank people for their help.
- Celebrate achievements, even small ones.
- Notice when someone has done something well.

Treat everyone fairly

- Respect people's differences.
- Listen to different opinions.
- Avoid judging people.
- Do not show favouritism.
- Being fair does not always mean treating everyone in exactly the same way. Some people need different support.

Communicate openly and respectfully

- Listen when others are speaking.
- Speak kindly and clearly.
- Ask questions if something is unclear.
- Share useful information with your team.
- Be honest when something has gone wrong.

Work together

- Help colleagues and volunteers when you can.
- Share ideas, knowledge and skills.
- Include others in activities and conversations.
- Ask for help when you need it.

Be open to learning

- Try new things.
- Accept helpful feedback.
- Learn from mistakes.
- Be willing to change how you do something.

Encourage independence

- Give people time to try things themselves.
- Offer guidance rather than taking over.
- Recognise people's strengths and abilities.
- Respect people's choices.

What does this mean for me?

Everyone contributes to Uppertunity's culture.

For example:

- If a new volunteer arrives, introduce yourself and help them feel welcome.
- If a member is struggling with an activity, offer support rather than immediately taking over.
- If you make a mistake, be honest and ask how to put it right.
- If you disagree with someone, listen to their opinion and explain your views respectfully.
- If you see something that could be improved, share your ideas.

What if I need help or have a concern?

If you are unhappy, confused or finding something difficult, speak to your manager or another appropriate member of staff.
We encourage open conversations and want people to feel comfortable asking for help.

3. Our Code of Conduct – How We Behave

What is this about?

Our Code of Conduct explains the behaviour we expect from everyone working or volunteering at Uppertunity.
It helps us keep a safe, respectful and professional environment.

Why is it important?

The way we behave affects other people's safety, wellbeing and trust.
Members, families and colleagues need to know they can rely on us.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We expect everyone to follow these rules.

1. Treat everyone with respect

- Be kind and polite.
- Respect people's personal space.
- Do not use offensive or hurtful language.
- Do not bully, threaten or discriminate against anyone.

2. Keep information private

- Do not share private information about members, staff or volunteers.
- Do not discuss people's personal information with friends or family.
- Do not talk about confidential matters in public places.
- Only share information with people who need it for their work.

For example: If a member tells you something personal, do not tell other volunteers or members. If the information raises a safety concern, report it to the appropriate staff member.

3. Keep professional boundaries

- Professional boundaries are rules that help us maintain safe and appropriate relationships.
- Be friendly, but remember your role and responsibilities.
- Do not contact members privately outside Uppertunity.
- Respect personal space and avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Do not share personal information or become involved in members' private lives in ways that are inappropriate for your role.

4. Be reliable and responsible

- Arrive on time.
- Tell your manager if you are late or unable to attend.
- Know what you are expected to do.
- Follow instructions and safety procedures.
- Look after equipment and shared spaces.
- Ask if you are unsure about something.

5. Dress appropriately

- Wear comfortable, suitable clothing for your activities.
- Wear closed shoes for workshops and catering activities.
- Do not wear clothing with offensive words or images.
- Avoid clothing that is too revealing.
- Dress appropriately when representing Uppertunity at external events.

6. Follow our photography and social media rules

- Do not take photographs or videos of members unless you are an authorised staff member.
- Do not share members' photographs or personal information on your social media.
- You can share posts from Uppertunity's official social media pages.
- Ask a manager if you are unsure what is allowed.

7. Keep everyone safe

- Follow health and safety instructions.
- Use tools and equipment safely.
- Report accidents, hazards and unsafe behaviour.
- Do not take unnecessary risks.
- Tell a manager if you are worried about someone's safety.

8. Be willing to learn

- Listen to feedback.
- Take responsibility for your actions.
- Ask questions.
- Be open to new ideas.
- Support a positive team environment.

What behaviour is not allowed?

Some behaviours are never acceptable at Uppertunity. These include:

- Bullying, harassment or discrimination.
- Physical, verbal or emotional abuse.
- Threatening or intimidating people.
- Sharing private information without permission or another lawful reason.
- Stealing or misusing Uppertunity's property.
- Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while representing Uppertunity.
- Ignoring serious safety or safeguarding rules.

Breaking these rules may lead to action being taken, including disciplinary action or ending a volunteering arrangement, depending on the situation.

What does this mean for me?

You are responsible for your own behaviour. You should:

- Be a positive role model.
- Treat people with dignity and kindness.
- Follow the rules that apply to your role.
- Speak up when something is wrong.
- Ask for guidance when you are unsure.

What if I need help or have a concern?

If you are worried about someone's behaviour, tell your manager.
If the concern involves your manager, you can report it to an appropriate trustee.
If someone is in immediate danger, call 999.

4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Everyone Belongs

What is this about?

Everyone is different. People have different backgrounds, abilities, beliefs, identities and life experiences.
At Uppertunity, we want everyone to feel welcome, valued and included.

Equality means people should have fair opportunities and rights.
Diversity means recognising and valuing our differences.
Inclusion means helping everyone feel that they belong and can take part.

Why is it important?

Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.
Some people experience barriers that make it harder to take part in work, learning or community activities.
We want to remove barriers wherever we can.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We aim to:

- Welcome people from different backgrounds.
- Treat everyone fairly.
- Challenge discrimination and unfair behaviour.
- Make reasonable changes to support people with disabilities.
- Offer fair opportunities to work, volunteer and learn.
- Listen to people's views and experiences.
- Provide opportunities for training and personal development.

We believe in equity. Equity means recognising that different people may need different support to have a fair opportunity.
For example: One staff member might need written instructions, while another might find it easier to have a task demonstrated. Both people are doing valuable work, but they may need different ways of learning.

What does this mean for me?

You have the right to be treated fairly and respectfully. You also have a responsibility to treat others fairly.

This means:

- Respecting people's differences.
- Avoiding hurtful comments or jokes.
- Not making assumptions about what someone can or cannot do.
- Including people in activities and conversations.
- Being willing to make reasonable adjustments.
- Speaking up if you see unfair treatment.

For example: Do not assume someone cannot complete a task because they have a disability. Ask what support they might need.

What if I need help or have a concern?

If you feel excluded, discriminated against or treated unfairly, speak to your manager.
You can also raise a formal complaint using our Complaints and Grievances Policy.
Your concerns will be taken seriously and handled respectfully.

Part 2 – Keeping Everyone Safe

Everyone has the right to feel safe at Uppertunity.
We all have a responsibility to help keep members, staff, volunteers and visitors safe.
This section explains how we protect people, respect privacy and deal with safety concerns.

5. Safeguarding – Keeping People Safe

What is this about?

Safeguarding means protecting people from harm, abuse and neglect.
Abuse is when someone hurts, frightens, controls or takes advantage of another person.
Neglect is when someone does not receive the care or support they need to stay safe and well.
Harm can happen anywhere, including at home, in the community or online.

Why is it important?

Everyone deserves to feel safe and be treated with respect.
Some people may need extra support to recognise abuse, communicate their concerns or protect themselves.
We must listen to people and take concerns seriously.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We work to keep people safe by:

- Providing a safe and supportive environment.
- Completing safeguarding checks for relevant staff and volunteers.
- Providing safeguarding training.
- Following clear procedures when someone may be at risk.
- Keeping safeguarding information private and secure.
- Working with other organisations when necessary to protect people.

What does this mean for me?

You must:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Be aware of signs that someone might be experiencing abuse or neglect.
- Listen carefully if someone tells you they are worried or unsafe.
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately.
- Never investigate a safeguarding concern yourself.
- Follow the safeguarding training and instructions you receive.

Different types of abuse

Abuse can include:

- **Physical abuse:** Hitting, pushing or physically hurting someone.
- **Emotional abuse:** Threatening, humiliating or frightening someone.
- **Sexual abuse:** Unwanted sexual contact or behaviour.
- **Financial abuse:** Stealing money or taking advantage of someone's finances.
- **Neglect:** Not providing the care or support someone needs.
- **Discriminatory abuse:** Treating someone badly because of their disability, race, gender or another personal characteristic.
- **Online abuse:** Bullying, threatening or exploiting someone through the internet.

For example: If a member tells you someone is taking their money without permission, you must report this as a safeguarding concern.

What if I have a safeguarding concern?

1. **Listen and stay calm.**

Take the person seriously. Do not promise to keep the information secret.

2. **Make sure the person is safe.**

If someone is in immediate danger, call 999.

3. **Tell the Safeguarding Lead immediately.**

If the concern involves the Safeguarding Lead, or they are unavailable, report it to the appropriate manager or an uninvolved trustee.

4. **Record what happened.**

Write down the facts, including what the person said, using their own words where possible.

5. **Do not investigate.**

The Safeguarding Lead or other authorised person will decide what needs to happen next.

Remember: You do not need proof that abuse has happened before reporting a concern.

6. Bullying and Harassment – Treating People with Respect

What is this about?

Bullying is behaviour that hurts, frightens, excludes or humiliates someone.
Harassment is unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel threatened, intimidated, offended or humiliated.
Harassment can sometimes involve someone's disability, race, religion, gender or another personal characteristic.

Why is it important?

Everyone deserves to work and volunteer in an environment where they feel respected and safe.
Bullying and harassment can affect people's confidence, mental health and wellbeing.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We do not accept bullying or harassment.

We will:

- Take concerns seriously.
- Listen to people who report bullying or harassment.
- Look into complaints fairly.
- Support people who have been affected.
- Take appropriate action when someone behaves badly.
- Protect people from being treated unfairly because they raised a concern.

What does this mean for me?

You must treat others with kindness and respect.

Bullying and harassment can include:

- Calling people hurtful names.
- Making offensive jokes.
- Spreading rumours or gossip.
- Deliberately leaving someone out.
- Threatening or intimidating someone.
- Making unwanted sexual comments.
- Sending hurtful messages online.
- Repeatedly criticising or humiliating someone.

For example: Repeatedly making jokes about a colleague's disability is unacceptable.
Sometimes a manager needs to give feedback or explain that something must be done differently.
Fair and respectful feedback is not automatically bullying.

What if I experience or see bullying?

- Speak to your manager or another appropriate staff member.
- If you feel safe, you can tell the person their behaviour is not acceptable.
- You do not have to confront the person yourself.
- If your concern involves the manager, you can speak to a trustee.
- You can make a formal complaint if the problem is not resolved or is too serious to address informally.

You will not be treated unfairly for raising a genuine concern.

7. Health, Safety and Managing Risks

What is this about?

A risk is something that could cause harm or create a problem.
Managing risks means recognising possible dangers and taking steps to reduce them.

Why is it important?

We want everyone to feel safe while taking part in activities.
Being aware of risks can help prevent accidents and injuries.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We:

- Check activities and equipment for possible risks.
- Complete risk assessments.
- Provide safety information and training.
- Record accidents and incidents.
- Review safety concerns and make improvements.

What does this mean for me?

You must:

- Follow safety instructions.
- Use equipment correctly.
- Wear suitable clothing and footwear.
- Keep workspaces tidy and free from hazards.
- Report damaged or unsafe equipment.
- Tell staff if someone has an accident.
- Ask for help if you are unsure how to do something.

For example: If you notice water spilled on the floor, make sure people avoid it and tell a staff member so it can be cleaned safely.

What if I notice something unsafe?

Tell the manager or an appropriate staff member as soon as possible.
Stop an activity if you believe there is an immediate risk of harm.
If someone is seriously injured or in immediate danger, call 999.

8. Data Protection – Keeping Information Private

What is this about?

Data protection means keeping people's personal information safe.
Personal information includes:

- Names and addresses.
- Phone numbers.
- Medical information.
- Disability or support needs.
- Financial information.
- Emergency contact details.

Why is it important?

Everyone has the right to privacy.
People trust Uppertunity to keep their information safe and only use it for appropriate reasons.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We:

- Only collect personal information that we need.
- Store information securely.
- Limit who can access private information.
- Do not share information unnecessarily.
- Delete information when we no longer need to keep it.
- Respect people's legal rights regarding their information.

What does this mean for me?

You must:

- Keep personal information confidential.
- Only access information you need for your role.
- Never share passwords.
- Avoid discussing members' personal information in public.
- Keep documents and records secure.
- Follow instructions about storing and sharing information.

For example: If a member tells you about a medical condition, do not share this with another volunteer unless there is a legitimate reason connected to their role.
Sometimes information must be shared to protect someone from harm or meet a legal responsibility.

What if I make a mistake?

Tell the manager immediately if you:

- Lose a document containing personal information.
- Send information to the wrong person.
- Accidentally share private information.
- Think someone has accessed information without permission.

Report mistakes straight away. This helps us protect people and put things right.
If someone asks to see, correct or remove information Uppertunity holds about them, refer their request to the manager.

9. Photography and Social Media

What is this about?

We use photographs, videos and social media to share our activities and celebrate achievements.
We must make sure we respect people's privacy and choices.

Why is it important?

Not everyone wants their photograph taken or shared.
People have the right to decide whether they are comfortable being photographed.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

- Only paid staff are allowed to take photographs or videos for Uppertunity.
- Staff must ask for permission each time before taking a photograph or video.
- People can say no.
- Photographs and videos must only be used for the purpose agreed.
- Only authorised staff can post on Uppertunity's official social media accounts.
- Photographs must be stored securely and not kept on personal phones.

What does this mean for me?

You must:

- Never take photographs or videos of members during Uppertunity activities unless authorised under the policy.
- Never post photographs of members or Uppertunity activities on your personal social media.
- Never share private information about members online.
- Ask a manager before sharing anything if you are unsure.

You can share posts that have already been published on Uppertunity's official social media pages.
For example: You can share a post from Uppertunity's Facebook page. You cannot take your own photograph of a member and post it on your personal Facebook page.

What if I notice a problem?

If someone takes or shares photographs without permission, tell the manager.
If you accidentally share something you should not have, report it immediately.

10. Digital and IT Security – Staying Safe Online

What is this about?

Digital security means keeping computers, phones, accounts and online information safe.

Why is it important?

Unsafe online activity can lead to stolen information, fraud or damage to Uppertunity's systems.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We protect our information by:

- Using secure passwords and account protection.
- Limiting access to sensitive information.
- Keeping devices and software updated.
- Using secure systems to store documents.
- Providing training about online safety.

What does this mean for me?

You must:

- Keep your passwords private.
- Use strong passwords.
- Lock devices when you are not using them.
- Avoid clicking suspicious links.
- Never open unexpected attachments unless you know they are safe.
- Only use approved software.
- Keep work information off personal devices unless authorised.
- Follow instructions when using Uppertunity's computers and accounts.

Be careful of suspicious emails.

Sometimes people send fake emails to steal information.
These are called phishing emails.
For example: If an email asks you to urgently send a password or bank details, do not respond. Report it to the appropriate staff member.

What if something goes wrong?

Tell the manager or person responsible for IT security immediately if:

- You lose a work device.
- You click a suspicious link.
- You think someone knows your password.
- You receive a suspicious email.
- You accidentally share private information.

Do not try to hide the mistake or investigate a serious security problem yourself.

Part 3 – Working and Volunteering at Uppertunity

We want Uppertunity to be a supportive place where people can learn, contribute and develop their skills. This section explains what you can expect from us and what we expect from you.

11. Volunteering at Uppertunity

What is this about?

Volunteers give their time to support Uppertunity without receiving a wage for their volunteering. Volunteers bring valuable skills, ideas and experiences to our organisation.

Why is it important?

Volunteers help make our activities and projects possible.
We want volunteering to be a positive experience where people feel valued and supported.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We provide volunteers with:

- A welcoming and supportive environment.
- Clear information about their role.
- Induction and appropriate training.
- Support and guidance from staff.
- Opportunities to learn new skills.
- Feedback and mentoring.
- Opportunities to share ideas and concerns.
- Reimbursement of agreed expenses, in line with our expenses arrangements.

We also recognise and celebrate volunteers' contributions.

What does this mean for me?

As a volunteer, you are expected to:

- Be reliable and arrive on time.
- Let staff know if you cannot attend.
- Treat everyone with kindness and respect.
- Follow Uppertunity's policies.
- Complete training that is required for your role.
- Keep information confidential.
- Follow health and safety instructions.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Share ideas and feedback.

For example: If you usually volunteer on a Tuesday but cannot attend, tell your manager as early as possible so arrangements can be made.

You also have the right to:

- Feel safe and respected.
- Know what is expected of you.
- Receive support and guidance.

- Ask questions.
- Raise concerns.
- Learn and develop new skills.

What if I need help or want to make a change?

Speak to your manager if:

- You are finding a task difficult.
- You would like to try a new activity.
- You need extra support.
- You want to change your volunteering arrangements.
- You have a concern or suggestion.

You can end your volunteering role at any time, but we ask you to give notice where possible.
If you have volunteered for at least two months, you can request a reference.

12. Mental Wellbeing – Looking After Ourselves and Each Other

What is this about?

Mental wellbeing is about how we feel, cope with challenges and look after our emotional health.
Everyone experiences difficult days or periods of stress.

Why is it important?

Our mental wellbeing can affect our confidence, relationships and ability to work.
We want people to feel supported rather than judged when they experience difficulties.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We aim to:

- Create a positive and supportive workplace.
- Encourage open conversations about wellbeing.
- Treat mental health with the same importance as physical health.
- Support flexible working where possible.
- Provide training and wellbeing resources.
- Prevent bullying and discrimination.
- Offer appropriate support when someone is struggling.
- Explore changes that can help people manage their work.

What does this mean for me?

You can:

- Ask for support when you need it.
- Talk to your manager about work-related stress.
- Request changes that might help you manage your work.
- Take part in wellbeing activities.
- Seek professional support when needed.

You should also:

- Treat colleagues with kindness.
- Respect other people's privacy.
- Avoid judging people who experience mental health difficulties.
- Be aware of your own wellbeing.
- Let someone know if work is becoming difficult to manage.

For example: If you feel overwhelmed by several tasks, speak to your manager about your workload and what support might help.

What if I am struggling?

You can speak privately with your manager or another appropriate person.
We will listen and explore what support may be possible.
This could include changes to work arrangements, additional guidance or information about external support.
Personal information will be handled sensitively and shared only where appropriate and lawful.

13. Expenses – Getting Money Back for Work Costs

What is this about?

Sometimes staff and volunteers need to spend money while carrying out activities for Uppertunity.
An expense is a cost you have paid for something that was needed for your work or volunteering.

Why is it important?

We want expenses to be handled fairly and responsibly.
Uppertunity is a charity, so we must use our money carefully.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We:

- Ask people to get permission before spending money.
- Prefer to purchase items directly where possible.
- Reimburse expenses that have been approved.
- Require receipts for purchases.
- Pay approved expenses by bank transfer.

What does this mean for me?

Before buying something for Uppertunity:

1. **Ask your manager for permission.**

Do not assume a purchase will be refunded.

2. **Keep your receipt.**

A receipt shows what you purchased and how much it cost.

3. **Give your receipt to your manager.**

You can send a photograph or copy using an approved method.

4. **Submit your claim within 30 days.**

Approved expenses are normally reimbursed within 14 days of approval.

Expenses must be necessary and reasonable.
Travel to your usual place of work is not normally covered.
For example: If you need extra materials for a workshop, ask your manager before buying them.

What if I am unsure?

Ask your manager before spending any money.
Volunteers should check which travel and other expenses can be covered before making a claim.

14. Conflicts of Interest – Making Fair Decisions

What is this about?

A conflict of interest happens when your personal interests could affect, or appear to affect, decisions you make for Uppertunity.

Personal interests might involve:

- Money.
- Family members.
- Friends.
- Other jobs.
- Other businesses or organisations.

Why is it important?

We want decisions to be fair, honest and in Uppertunity's best interests.
People should be able to trust how decisions are made.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We:

- Ask people to tell us about possible conflicts of interest.
- Make sure decisions are made fairly.
- Keep records of conflicts when needed.
- Take steps to prevent personal interests from influencing decisions.

What does this mean for me?

You must:

- Be honest about possible conflicts of interest.
- Tell your manager if a personal connection could affect a decision.
- Avoid using Uppertunity's resources for personal business interests.
- Never accept bribes or inappropriate benefits.
- Ask for guidance when you are unsure.

For example: If Uppertunity is considering paying a company owned by your family member, you must tell your manager about the relationship.
Having a conflict of interest does not always mean someone has done something wrong.
The important thing is to declare it and manage it appropriately.

What if I am unsure?

Speak to your manager before making a decision or taking action.
It is better to ask early than to discover a problem later.

15. Ethical Fundraising – Raising Money Responsibly

What is this about?

Fundraising means raising money or collecting donations to support Uppertunity's work.
Ethical fundraising means being honest, fair and respectful when asking people for support.

Why is it important?

People who donate money or resources need to trust that we will use their support responsibly.
Nobody should feel pressured into giving money.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We:

- Explain honestly what donations will be used for.
- Treat donors respectfully.
- Never pressure people to donate.
- Keep donor information private.
- Use donations for their agreed purpose.
- Respect people's choices.
- Protect people who may be vulnerable to financial pressure.

What does this mean for me?

If you help with fundraising, you must:

- Be honest about Uppertunity's work.
- Be polite and respectful.
- Never pressure someone into donating.
- Follow instructions for collecting and handling money.
- Respect people's privacy.
- Ask for help if you are unsure how to handle a donation.

For example: If someone says they cannot afford to donate, thank them for their time and respect their decision.

What if I notice something wrong?

Tell your manager if you are concerned about:

- Donations being misused.
- Someone being pressured to donate.
- Money being handled incorrectly.
- Misleading information being shared.

Serious concerns about wrongdoing can also be raised under our Whistleblowing Policy.

16. Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) Responsibly

What is this about?

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, is technology that can help with tasks such as writing, summarising and generating ideas. Some examples include ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot and other approved AI tools.
AI can be useful, but it can also make mistakes.

Why is it important?

We want to use technology responsibly while protecting people's privacy and keeping human judgement at the centre of our work.
AI should help us work more efficiently, not replace our creativity, relationships or responsibility.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We allow approved AI tools for certain tasks.

These include:

- Helping draft emails or other written information.
- Generating ideas for workshops.
- Summarising non-confidential information.
- Helping create accessible documents.
- Explaining unfamiliar terms.
- Supporting planning and administration.

We do not allow AI to make decisions about people's safety, wellbeing or support needs.
AI-generated images and videos are not permitted.

What does this mean for me?

You must:

- Only use AI tools approved by Uppertunity.
- Check AI-generated information carefully.
- Correct mistakes before using the information.
- Never enter private or sensitive information about members or staff.
- Never upload confidential organisational documents unless this has been appropriately authorised under the policy.
- Never use AI to make safeguarding or personal support decisions.
- Avoid unnecessary AI use.

Remember: AI can give incorrect information, even when it sounds confident.
For example: You can use AI to help think of activities for a gardening workshop. You cannot use AI to decide how to respond to a member's safeguarding concern.

What if I am unsure?

Ask your manager before using an unfamiliar AI tool or entering information that might be confidential.
If you accidentally share private information with an AI tool, tell your manager immediately.

Part 4 – Speaking Up and Getting Support

At Uppertunity, we want everyone to feel confident speaking up.
Sometimes things go wrong, people disagree or someone behaves in a way that causes concern.
You have the right to raise concerns, ask questions and be listened to.
This section explains how to make complaints and report serious wrongdoing.

17. Complaints and Grievances – When Something Is Wrong

What is this about?

A complaint is when you tell someone that you are unhappy with something and want it to be addressed.
A grievance is usually a concern about how you have been treated at work or while volunteering.

Why is it important?

Everyone deserves to be treated fairly.
We want to know when something is wrong so we can try to resolve the problem and learn from it.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We will:

- Listen to complaints.
- Treat people fairly and respectfully.
- Take concerns seriously.
- Keep information private where possible.
- Investigate formal complaints when needed.
- Explain the outcome of a complaint.
- Protect people from unfair treatment for raising genuine concerns.

What does this mean for me?

You can make a complaint if you are unhappy about something at Uppertunity.

For example:

- You feel you have been treated unfairly.
- Someone has spoken to you disrespectfully.
- You are unhappy with how an activity is managed.
- You have concerns about another person's behaviour.
- A problem you have raised has not been resolved.

Step 1 – Talk about the problem

If it is appropriate and safe, speak to the person involved or your manager.
Sometimes problems can be resolved through a conversation.

Step 2 – Make a formal complaint

If the problem is serious or has not been resolved, you can submit a formal complaint to management.
The complaint should explain:

- What happened.

- When it happened.
- Who was involved.
- What you have already done about it.
- What you would like to happen next.

Step 3 – What happens next?

The manager will normally:

- Confirm they have received the complaint within five working days.
- Look into the concern.
- Arrange a meeting where appropriate.
- Provide a written outcome within ten working days of the meeting.

Step 4 – If you are unhappy with the outcome

You can ask the Board of Trustees to review your complaint.
The trustees will follow the next stage of the complaints procedure.

What if I need help making a complaint?

You can ask for help to understand or write your complaint.
You can explain your concern to a staff member you trust, who can help you identify the correct process.
If your complaint is about the manager, you can raise it with the trustees.
You will not be treated unfairly for making a genuine complaint.

18. Whistleblowing – Speaking Up About Serious Wrongdoing

What is this about?

Whistleblowing means reporting serious wrongdoing or dangerous behaviour connected to an organisation. This is different from a personal complaint about how you have been treated.

Why is it important?

Sometimes people notice serious problems that could harm others or the organisation.
Speaking up helps protect people, prevent wrongdoing and make sure Uppertunity acts responsibly.

What do we do at Uppertunity?

We encourage people to report serious concerns.

We will:

- Take reports seriously.
- Look into concerns fairly.
- Handle information confidentially where possible.
- Protect people from retaliation for raising genuine concerns.
- Take appropriate action when wrongdoing is identified.

What does this mean for me?

You should report serious concerns such as:

- Theft or fraud.
- Money being misused.
- Serious health and safety risks.
- Illegal activity.
- Serious breaches of confidentiality.
- Environmental damage.
- Someone deliberately hiding serious wrongdoing.

For example: If you discover that someone is deliberately misusing charity funds, this may be a whistleblowing concern.

How do I report serious wrongdoing?

Option 1 – Speak to your manager.
You can explain your concern verbally or in writing.

Option 2 – Speak to the Board of Trustees.
If your concern involves the manager, or you do not feel comfortable reporting to them, you can contact the Chair or an appropriate trustee.

Option 3 – Seek external advice or report to an appropriate organisation.
Depending on the concern, this may include:

- OSCR, the Scottish Charity Regulator.
- Protect, a charity that advises people about whistleblowing.
- Acas, which provides workplace advice.
- Your trade union, if applicable.

What happens after I report something?

Uppertunity will normally:

- Acknowledge your report within five working days.
- Consider whether an investigation is needed.
- Investigate fairly and confidentially where possible.
- Tell you about the outcome where appropriate.

You can raise a genuine concern even if you are not certain wrongdoing has happened.
The legal protections that apply may depend on your employment status and the circumstances of the report.