



Hertbeats (St Albans & District Cardiac Support Group)

Safeguarding Policy and Guidance

(April 2025)

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Updates and revisions

Hertbeats policy, procedures and guidelines will be reviewed on a regular basis. They are subject to change at any time, based on updated legislation and feedback regarding best practice.

Policy approved by: Hertbeats Committee

Date policy approved: April 2025

Next review date: 04 April 2027

Hertbeats (St Albans & District Cardiac Support Group) Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

Hertbeats aim to provide exercise opportunities, practical advice, information and help to cardiac patients and their families in the St. Albans and surrounding areas. We are an informal social group that arranges a variety of activities and gatherings – all opportunities to meet old and make new friends. Hertbeats helps those with heart problems lead a fuller life by arranging exercise groups, walks and social activities and outings.

Hertbeats was formed in 1997 to provide practical advice, information and help to cardiac patients and their families within the St. Albans, Harpenden, Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield area. Hertbeats is affiliated to the British Heart Foundation www.bhf.org.uk and Arrhythmia Alliance www.heartrhythmalliance.org

It is an informal social group that arranges activities for both patients and ex-patients. Exercise groups, trips, golf, regular friendly gatherings and talks by interesting speakers gives members the opportunity to keep fit, socialise and meet new and old friends.

Membership of Hertbeats is open to anyone with an interest in cardiac problems and to those who just want to get involved in any of the club activities. Whilst not offering formal medical advice, Hertbeats members often learn much about their ailments and the practical means of coping, by talking to other members who have had similar experiences.

We welcome vulnerable adults on all activities that are suitable for them as individuals. We are not able to provide specialist care and support for people who have special needs or who are unable to care independently for themselves. We are also committed to supporting fully our walk leaders and event/outings organisers in their work to deliver our charitable aims and strategic objectives, including protecting them from potential liabilities and false suspicions and allegations of abuse.

NB: In the event that Hertbeats pays for a taxi service to provide transport for members to attend Hertbeats meetings, AGM, etc, this service is completely independent of Hertbeats. The taxi providers have their own policies and procedures as required by legislation (Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022).

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2. Policy Statement

Hertbeats is committed to Safeguarding Adults in line with national legislation and relevant national and local guidelines. We will safeguard adults by ensuring that our activities are delivered in a way which keeps all adults safe.

Hertbeats is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.

Actions taken by Hertbeats will be consistent with the principles of adult safeguarding ensuring that any action taken is prompt, proportionate and that it includes and respects the voice of the adult concerned.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Hertbeats to safeguarding adults and to ensure that everyone involved in Hertbeats is aware of:

- The legislation, policy and procedures for safeguarding adults.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding adults.
- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult within Hertbeats.

4. Scope

This safeguarding adult policy and associated procedures apply to all individuals involved in Hertbeats including the Committee, Fitness Instructors, Walk Leaders, Event/Outings organisers, Volunteers and Members and to all concerned about the safety of adults whilst taking part in our organisation, its activities and in the wider community.

We expect our partner organisations, including for example, affiliated clubs, suppliers and sponsors to adopt and demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice as set out in this Safeguarding Policy.

5. Commitments

Hertbeats will take all reasonable measures to protect the welfare of participants including vulnerable adults and adults at risk involved with Hertbeats's activities and minimise their risk of harm by:

1. Having appropriate safeguarding guidance and practices in place, tailored to the organisation's needs, and striving to ensure they are implemented.
2. Producing practical and appropriate guidance for the participants on our procedures, ensuring it is easily available and publicised
3. Ensuring that decisions made will allow adults to make their own choices and include them in any decision making.
4. Ensuring incident reports are completed correctly and promptly.
5. Supporting walk leaders and event/outings organisers in dealing with concerns about abuse, keep appropriate contact details and ensure incidents and referrals are reported to the Committee promptly and accurately.
6. Working closely with appropriate partner agencies (BHF)
7. Protecting personal data including making sure we have permission to display any images on our website or social media accounts.

Hertbeats Safeguarding Guidance

Section A: Specific guidance for participants (What we ask members to do)

When attending Hertbeats activities

1. If you are an adult who is unable for whatever reason to care for themselves independently, or needs specific help in order to participate in an activity safely (for example because of an illness or disability), you must be accompanied by another adult such as a carer or support worker who takes responsibility for your care. If you are a Hertbeats member and the activity is aimed at members, there is no need for your carer or support worker to be a member too.
2. If you are a carer or support worker accompanying someone who is unable to care for themselves independently or who needs special assistance, please be aware you are responsible for their direct care and/or special assistance, and that this is not the responsibility of Hertbeats walk leaders, or event/outings organisers.
3. Please tell the walk leader or organiser discreetly and in confidence about any medical conditions that may affect the ability of you or the people in your care to participate safely in the activity/event.
4. Before and during the activity, please follow the advice of the leader or event organiser. Leaders and organisers have to take responsibility for everyone's safety and enjoyment, and can refuse to accept people who in their judgement may place themselves or the group in danger or seriously disrupt the activity, so long as a judgement is not based on stereotypical assumption or prejudice.
5. To take part in exercise classes, you must:
 - be a member of Hertbeats. This is necessary for insurance cover, and costs £7.50 per annum.
 - have successfully completed your Cardiac Rehabilitation and have been given the all-clear to continue exercising. OR
 - you must have a letter from your GP stating that s/he believes you are safe to participate in exercise sessions.
 - When attending, or prior to, your first exercise class, please bring along a photocopy of your "discharge" papers from Cardiac Rehab (BACPR Transfer Form) or the letter from your GP
6. If you have any concerns about the behaviour of anyone participating in an activity, such as abusive, threatening or inappropriate behaviour, raise this discreetly with the walk leader, event/outings organiser or a Committee Member.
7. If you have concerns that a vulnerable person or adult at risk is being placed in danger or abused, you can raise this with the walk leader, event/outings organiser or a Committee Member. If you suspect that anyone is ever in immediate danger, call the police. Be sensible and self-aware and avoid placing yourself in situations where your actions may be misinterpreted.
8. If someone discloses abuse to you, always make sure the person speaking up feels they are being listened to and supported but don't agree to keep confidences. Explain it is your duty to pass on information appropriately.
9. Keep concerns confidential. Only share details as necessary to the walk leader, event organiser or a Committee Member.
10. Don't put yourself in difficulty or danger by attempting to investigate the case yourself or to challenge the alleged abuser or by agreeing to supervise a vulnerable adult or adult at risk while a carer is absent especially if this means being left alone with them.

Hertbeats Safeguarding Guidance

Section B: Specific guidance for walk leaders, event/outings organisers

Participation in all activities is subject to its suitability for individual participants. Walk leaders and event/outings organisers sometimes need to make judgements that take into account the safety and enjoyment of everyone involved in an activity. So long as a judgement is not based on stereotypical assumption or prejudice, walk leaders are well within their rights to refuse a participant if they believe this would result in danger to the individual or danger or major disruption to the rest of the group.

Be aware that:

- People with special needs must be accompanied by someone responsible for their direct care (who needn't be a Hertbeats member).

Be sensitive about taking photos and films of meetings, outings and walks. Ask the participants first if anyone would prefer not to be featured and respect their wishes.

Welcoming vulnerable adults

Hertbeats walk leaders, event/outings organisers cannot provide direct care to anyone with special needs. We ask for a carer to accompany them if necessary. Vulnerable adults may have varying degrees of independence and sometimes it will be at the walk leader's or organiser's discretion whether or not they can participate unaccompanied. We encourage people with special needs to contact walk leaders or event/outings organisers beforehand to discuss the suitability of the activity.

When leading a walk or putting on an event/outing:

1. Ensure publicity helps people judge the suitability of an activity.
2. Be prepared to discuss the suitability of an activity with enquirers and ensure people with special needs know they must be accompanied by someone responsible for their direct care. Carers do not have to be Hertbeats members.
3. Make sure the carer or support worker knows they are responsible for the direct needs of the person they are accompanying.
4. Take a note of an emergency contact number and any important medical details that can be passed to the emergency services if required.
5. It can be difficult to identify levels of independence, and these may change over time. For example, an individual who has been attending walks or events on a regular basis may experience deteriorating physical or mental health. If you have concerns and feel they should be accompanied by a carer, you can seek advice from the Committee. You could ask the individual tactfully and discreetly to arrange to bring along a carer in future.
6. Carers and support workers accompanying vulnerable adults on activities intended primarily for members are not required to be members themselves.

Concerns about abuse

Although your group or event/outing may rarely include vulnerable adults or adults at risk, it is possible you may have concerns from your own observations of participants, or have such concerns raised with you. As a trusted adult, you may even have abuse disclosed to you by a victim. Abuse can include not only physical and sexual abuse but also emotional abuse and neglect. Vulnerable adults and adults at risk can also be at risk of financial exploitation or may come to harm through self-neglect or their own behaviour.

The signs to look out for include:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries
- Belongings or money going missing from the person
- The person no longer attending or enjoying Hertbeats activities, or responding to contact from other members of the group
- A change in confidence or behaviour of a person e.g. if they are withdrawn and quiet around a particular person or people, when usually they are outgoing and confident.
- A change in appearance of the person e.g. losing or gaining weight, deterioration in personal hygiene or way of dressing.
- Someone else (e.g. a parent, carer or family member) always speaking for the person and not allowing them to make their own choices
- The person showing fear of, or not wanting to be around, a particular individual or group of people It is not Hertbeats responsibility to investigate or intervene in suspected cases of abuse or ill treatment, but it is our responsibility to refer such cases to the appropriate authorities and to recognise that as organisers and leaders of activities in a position of trust, we may be made aware of signs of abuse, or even have it disclosed to us.

When there are concerns about abuse, Hertbeats recommends the following procedures: NB It is an important principle to allow adults to make their own choices and include them in any decision making.

1. If anyone is under serious threat of physical harm or in need of urgent treatment during a Hertbeats activity:
 - Dial 999 immediately and ask for the police, if a criminal offence is being or is likely to be committed, and/or ambulance in cases of medical need.
 - When it is safe to do so, make notes of the incident and its outcome, fill in an incident report form (Appendix A) and return it to the Secretary (secretary@hertbeats.org.uk).
 - If there is an issue of violence or abuse, be prepared to answer further questions from the police. Contact the Committee for support.
2. If there is no immediate danger but you have a suspicion or concern that abuse is taking place or when an allegation of abuse has been made:
 - Make a note of your concerns as soon as possible, within an hour of any incident if you can.
 - Contact a Committee Member.
 - Fill in an incident report form (Appendix A) and return it to the Secretary.

Appendix A: Hertbeats Safeguarding incident report form

Please complete this as fully as possible if you have any concerns.

This form will be used by walk leaders, event/outings organisers or Committee Members to record concerns or suspicions of abuse. The form should be sent to Hertbeats Secretary (secretary@hertbeats.org.uk) within 24 hours of the incident. If you need some assistance or support, please contact a Committee Member.

Form Completed by	
Your name:	Your role (walk leader/event organiser/Committee Member)
Contact phone number:	
The person at risk's details	
Name:	
Address/phone number:	
Details of the concerns/ allegations	
Are you recording: Delete as appropriate Disclosure made directly to you by the person? Disclosure or suspicions from a third party? Your suspicions or concerns?	
Date and time of disclosure:	
How did the alert arise?	
Name/ address/ phone number of person reporting the concerns, if different to the person completing the form:	
Who is aware of the allegations/ concerns?	
Date and time of incident:	
Details of the allegation/suspensions. State exactly what you were told/ observed and what was said. Use the persons own words as much as possible. Include: Name of perpetrator Address (if known) Phone number/ email (if known)	
Action taken so far:	
Any additional information or comments:	
Date submitted:	

Once completed, please return this form immediately ideally by email to secretary@hertbeats.org.uk