



SHUK PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

Safe Horizon UK operates an online peer support group for Officers affected by psychological injury via Facebook. It is a 'secret group' which means it cannot be found on search engines or viewed by non-members.

There is also a support group for partners living alongside psychological injury which is operated the same way.

The support groups give a platform for sharing information and coping strategies. It is also a means of socializing, reducing isolation, validating experiences and symptoms. The groups help foster a feeling of belonging and community and can help to reduce feelings of despair.

Eligibility criteria

Partners and family members should not be given access to the main peer support group. Some partners may be authorized access where they meet the criteria for both groups, and this should be assessed on a case by case basis. It must be the overriding premise that Officers are afforded privacy on the forum, in the same way the partners are on their group. Members of the partner and family support group must be 18 years or over.

It is recognised there could be a conflict of interests, where two people in a relationship are on the same forum. There is also an increased risk of conflict should the relationship be in difficulty, breaking down or where separation has occurred.

Partners should not access the peer support group on behalf of the (ex) Officer because s/he does not have their own Facebook account. They are encouraged to create their own account. Where there are concerns about privacy, the member can use a pseudonym to protect their identity. The administrator must know which member the pseudonym relates to before adding them to the group.

To meet the criteria for accessing the SHUK peer support group the individual must:-

- Be a registered member paying full membership fees
- Be a serving or retired Police Officer or other frontline Police Staff

- Be affected by psychological injury – for example, PTSD, Anxiety, Depression (diagnosis is not necessary to qualify)
- Provide proof of service, such as wage slip, any headed letter from their employer, proof of Fed or NARPO membership etc.

To meet the criteria for accessing the SHUK partners' support group the individual must:-

- Be a registered member paying full membership fees or be on a joint membership with their partner.
- Be caring for or in contact with an (ex) Officer with psychological injury

Safeguarding

The group is administered by the Chief Executive Officer or by a nominated individual recruited by Safe Horizon UK.

Advice on where to seek assistance in an emergency when someone is at immediate risk of harm is located on the website home page and the online peer support group. The online peer support group must clearly state it is not monitored 24/7.

Safe Horizon UK will hold contact information for all group members for the purpose of arranging Police safe and well checks or requesting the attendance of emergency services should a group member make any disclosure that they or someone else is at immediate risk of harm.

Safe Horizon UK will ensure that all environments where service activities are delivered will not cause harm to vulnerable adults or children. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Adults and Children policy.

We encourage freedom of speech on the Safe Horizon UK online support groups and respect that everyone has different views, beliefs and humour. Members are made aware of their responsibility to refrain from abuse and offensive language or expression and are encouraged to contribute to the group in ways which make others feel welcome, safe and accepted. We do not tolerate behaviour which makes other users feel uneasy or unable to contribute to the page. As such, we reserve the right to remove posts which are aggressive in tone, abusive towards other users or disruptive to how the forum or page operates. Racist, sexist, homophobic or bullying posts will be removed at the earliest opportunity. Posts which are reported by other group users as offensive will be removed and advice given to users of the forum on what is and is not acceptable. Safe Horizon UK reserves the right to remove any group member from accessing the forum if the behaviour persists.

Confidentiality

Sharing or taking images of posts on either group is prohibited. Safe Horizon UK reserves the right to remove anyone from the group who breaches the safety and confidentiality of the group.

All contents are to be kept confidential and may contain privileged information.

In the event a disclosure is made which raises concerns about the safety and welfare of an individual or child, staff will refer to the safeguarding adults and children policy and act accordingly.

All group members are given a welcome pack following registration with Safe Horizon UK which includes our policy on when we may need to breach confidentiality. Information shared with Safe Horizon UK remains confidential except where there is reason to believe the member or someone else is at risk of harm.

Members of the group are advised to exercise discretion with the information they share. Safe Horizon endeavours to make this environment a safe place and cannot guarantee complete security of messages posted on the group page.