

## Personal Responsibility

It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent and report the physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect of any member of our community. The welfare of these individuals is paramount. All our community without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or belief.

Through your involvement with OWC, you have the responsibility to raise any concerns you may have or those which are reported to you according to this policy.

The policy also applies to all those engaged, commissioned or contracted to work with or on behalf of OWC in any capacity. OWC requires all partners to have a Code of Conduct or equivalent standards that set out, at a minimum, the obligation of staff not to exploit, abuse or otherwise discriminate.

OWC also expects all partners to have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures and makes its own policy and procedure available to them. All those who work or volunteer with OWC will have a clear understanding of what is required by this policy and of what to do if they have any concerns.

### 1. Scope

While this is an internal policy, we expect partners and others working on behalf of OWC to act in accordance with the key principles contained within it, and specific compliance requirements in respect of safeguarding as set out in relevant contractual agreements and included in our due diligence process.

Where “representative of OWC” is used in this document it refers to anyone who is a trustee, member of staff, volunteer or who is otherwise involved in carrying out OWC activities.

### 2. Policy Principles

The principles in this policy have been drawn from key international and regional instruments such as:

- International Standards for Keeping Children Safe
- UN Convention on the Rights of a Child
- IASC Minimum Operating Standards for PSEA
- Core Humanitarian Standard (*from a network of organisations committed to improving humanitarian and development work through the application of standards*)

OWC is committed to:

- Safeguarding the wholeness and wellbeing of beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, and all those connected with the activities of OWC, and ensuring they have equal rights to protection from harm
- Ensuring concerns or allegations are taken seriously, investigated and acted on as appropriate
- Ensuring all its staff, trustees, volunteers, consultants, contractors and partners or any representatives of OWC are familiar with this policy and know their responsibilities within it
- Ensuring our partners are aware of their responsibility as to the minimum requirements on safeguarding standards and support them in achieving this
- Ensuring all actions on protecting people are taken in the best interests of the person at risk. Ensuring that survivors of abuse are supported and alleged perpetrators are held to account
- Ensuring our recruitment practices are robust enough to ensure we never recruit anyone who poses a known risk
- Ensuring that alleged perpetrators of abuse are treated fairly and in accordance with local law
- Reporting criminal acts to the relevant statutory agency
- Reporting all incidents of sexual harassment and abuse to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)

- Reporting incidents to relevant donors
- Designing and delivering programmes which are safe for all and are based on the ‘do no harm’ principles
- Ensuring our beneficiaries and supporters are fully aware of the expected behaviour of our staff, volunteers, trustees, consultants and partners

### 3. Definitions

#### 3.1. Vulnerability

As defined by the Core Humanitarian Standard people may be vulnerable because of individual factors such as age (particularly the very young and the very old), disability or illness or because they are caring for others who are vulnerable. Social and contextual factors also contribute to people’s vulnerability. These include discrimination and marginalisation (e.g. in some contexts, the low status and power of women and girls), social isolation (including the lack of access to information), environmental degradation (e.g. soil erosion or deforestation), climate variability, poverty, lack of land tenure, poor governance, ethnicity, class, caste, and religious or political affiliations.

#### 3.2. Child

A child is defined as anyone under 18 years old, irrespective of local definition.

#### 3.3. Adults at risk

Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

#### 3.4. Abuse

A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. In order to safeguard all those in our community we adhere to the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child across the board, and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

- Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence.

Abuse may also include, but is not exclusive to:

- Physical abuse or physical injury, such as evidence of hitting, kicking or shaking, where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.
- Emotional abuse where harm is done by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection, such as degrading punishments, threats and not giving care and affection, resulting in adverse effects on behaviour and emotional developments of a person.
- Sexual abuse where exploitation of a person occurs. This includes rape, incest and all forms of sexual activities including pornography.
- Exchanging of benefits, for example goods, food and money in exchange for sexual favours.
- Neglect, where basic needs such as food, warmth and medical care are not met, or when there is a failure to protect a person from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in serious impairment of a person’s health or development.
- Sexual Harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which: violates your dignity, makes you feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated or creates a hostile or offensive environment.

You don’t need to have previously objected to someone’s behaviour for it to be considered unwanted.

Sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments or jokes
- physical behaviour, including unwelcome sexual advances, touching and various forms of sexual assault
- displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- sending texts or emails with a sexual content

## 4. Reporting

### 4.1. What to do when you suspect alleged abuse:

Actual, potential or suspected incidents of abuse must be reported immediately. Where appropriate you should make a report to your Line Manager who will inform Chair of the OWC Management Committee immediately who will ensure that the matter is appropriately investigated.

Alternative reporting mechanisms are also noted below.

The need to report arises in the following instances:

- Abuse is observed or suspected
- An allegation of abuse is made
- Someone discloses abuse

No representative of OWC will prejudice their own position or standing with OWC by responsibly reporting potential or suspected abuse.

#### 4.1.1. Reporting concerns

It is important to note that where representatives report concerns, it is not their responsibility to decide if abuse is taking place but it is their responsibility to pass these concerns on. Care must be taken regarding confidentiality and the sharing of information with appropriate people.

#### 4.1.2. Written report

Information given should be written in a report as soon as possible after the concern was raised (within 24 hours if possible). Any written records taken must be kept securely in a locked place or in a confidential electronic folder. Under no circumstances should any individual attempt to deal with the problem of abuse directly. An investigation team will be established supported by the OWC Chair. Alternatively, you can make a confidential report as defined in the Whistleblowing Policy.

### 4.2. Confidentiality

Your information will be treated in confidence. You do not have to provide personal details; however, such information will assist us in taking forward your concerns and enable us to provide you with a response on the outcome. If you ask us not to disclose your identity we will not do so without your consent, unless required by law.

## 5. Our Response

### 5.1. Disciplinary action

OWC can and will take any disciplinary action necessary against staff or others if they are found to have breached our Safeguarding Policy. If such an incident occurs, OWC's disciplinary policy will be invoked.

### 5.2. Breaches of the policy

There will be times when the behaviour of employees may constitute a breach of the Policy, but not be considered criminal conduct under UK or local legislation. In this instance OWC may consider providing other support to these staff, for example, training, counselling, increased supervision or transfer to other duties. This will be cognisant of any ongoing risk to beneficiary communities, staff and volunteers and we will always err on the side of caution. There may be cases where OWC feels it is appropriate to dismiss an employee even if the behaviour is not criminal, for example a gross violation of the Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

### 5.3. Confidentiality

Identifying information about safeguarding should be shared on a 'need to know' basis only. Any staff members who raise concerns of serious malpractice should be protected as far as possible from victimisation or any other detrimental treatment if they come forward with concerns, provided that concerns are raised in good faith. Deliberate false allegations will be made a serious disciplinary offence and investigated by OWC.

### 5.4. Reporting by OWC

The Chair of the OWC Management Committee will ensure that reports are made to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), relevant donors and where applicable to relevant statutory authorities.

### 5.5. Supporting those affected by abuse

OWC is committed to offering pastoral care, and to support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of OWC.

## 6. Recruitment

### 6.1. It is our policy that no-one shall work within OWC who:

- Has been convicted of or has received a formal police caution concerning an offence against children; or
- Has been convicted of or has received a formal police caution concerning sexual offences against adults; or
- Is notified to us as having a red flag in relation to safeguarding by a former employer

### 6.2. OWC will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form including a self-declaration disclosure in relation to safeguarding
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview where the applicant will be working with children, adults and risk or beneficiary communities
- Two references have been obtained including one from the most recent employer
- A Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check or local equivalent is completed, where available and appropriate for the role
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

### 6.3. Safeguarding Code of Conduct & Responsibilities

All representatives of OWC (including staff, trustees, consultants and volunteers) must follow the Safeguarding Code of Conduct, which is:

As a representative of OWC:

- I will ensure that my personal and professional conduct is, and is seen to be, of the highest standards and in keeping with OWC's beliefs, values and aims.
- I will treat all people fairly and with respect and dignity and recognise the professional opinion of others.
- I will seek to ensure that my personal conduct does not compromise OWC's values and does not impact on or undermine my ability to undertake the role for which I am undertaking.
- I will not say or do anything that would damage the reputation of OWC or which may bring the charity into disrepute.
- I will not abuse my position as an OWC representative by requesting any personal service or favour from others in return for any assistance by OWC.
- I will not enter into commercial sex transactions. For the purpose of this Code of Conduct, a transaction is classed as any exchange of money, goods, services or favours with any other person.
- I will not have sexual relations with beneficiaries, recognising in both cases the inherent unequal power dynamics and that such behaviours can undermine the integrity and credibility of OWC's work.
- I will not exchange money, offers of employment, employment, goods or services for sex or sexual favours, nor any forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour.
- I will not have sexual relations with children (defined as under 18 years old);
- I will ensure that my relationships and behaviour are not exploitative, abusive or corrupt in any way.
- I will respect all peoples' rights, including children's rights, and will not engage in any form of sexual abuse or exploitation of any persons of any age.
- If I become aware of any form of illegal activity, relating to OWC, its representatives or beneficiaries or where there is a safeguarding risk, I will make it known to the Chair of the OWC Management Committee.
- I will abide by OWC's Safeguarding Policy and will not engage in inappropriate or sexual behaviour with children under the age of 18.

- I will not abuse or exploit children under the age of 18 in any way and will report any such behaviour of others to my line management.
- I will refrain from any form of harassment, discrimination, physical or verbal abuse, intimidation or exploitation, both in and out of work.
- I will not enter into a sexual relationship with any beneficiary of assistance since such relationships are based on inherently unequal power dynamics and undermine the credibility and integrity of the work of OWC.
- I will not sexually harass, exploit or abuse any of my colleagues or others I come into contact within the course of my work.

## Responsibilities in relation to Children & At-Risk Adults

Representatives of OWC must not:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children or adults at risk • Develop physical/sexual relationships with children or adults at risk
- Develop relationships with children or adults at risk, which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Place themselves in a position where they could be accused of sexually abusing a child, young person or adult at risk, i.e. holding or hugging a child, young person or adult at risk, or physically touching children, young persons or adults at risk in a way that could be considered abusive in ways described in this document
- Spend time alone with children or adults at risk. Plan activities so that more than one person is present or, at least, other people are within sight and hearing. Wherever possible ensure that another adult is present to supervise the activity
- Take children/adults at risk alone in a car, even on short journeys
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child or adult at risk at risk of abuse
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Offer benefits such as food, favours, clothes, jobs, money in exchange for sexual favours
- Show favouritism to any individual for sexual favours in return.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or adults at risk, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.

Representatives of OWC must:

- Treat everyone with respect, recognising their right to personal privacy
- Be aware of situations that may present risks and manage these
- Plan and organise the event so that risks are minimised
- Avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour, such as tantrums or crushes
- If a residential event is being planned, ensure that adults and children have separate sleeping accommodation. Never sleep in the same room or bed as a child or adult at risk with whom they are working
- Remember that someone else may misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- Adults should avoid being placed in a compromising or vulnerable position. The adult is always considered responsible even if a child behaves seductively.

## 7. Programming and Partners

### 7.1. Context and cultures

OWC and its members work primarily in Scotland but across a broad range of circumstances. Translating safeguarding across these different contexts and cultures can be difficult. Some legal and cultural frameworks may vary but the commitment from OWC to protect people remains.

### 7.2. Programmes and projects

OWC has a commitment to design and deliver programmes which are safe for people. This will ensure that programmes and projects will be risk assessed including in the areas of people's safety, security, dignity and rights.

### 7.3. Partners

A commitment to safeguarding is fundamental to OWC's partnership approach to work. OWC, through its members and representatives, will challenge and help new and existing partners (where they are not

already doing so) to address safeguarding in their organisation and in the communities in which they work. All OWC partners will be required to evidence what measures they have in place to protect people at risk from abuse.

#### **7.4. International staff**

Any International staff in the course of their work should support partners and consortium members in their efforts to increase their awareness, knowledge and skills in relation to safeguarding issues through the provision of appropriate capacity building and resources.

#### **7.5. Exceptions**

Where a partner does not have a written Safeguarding Policy, the relevant international teams should ask the partner a series of questions that address safeguarding issues prior to any grant approval for projects and programmes overseas and obtain a commitment to developing and implementing a clear safeguarding policy. In all circumstances OWC's Safeguarding Policy will be provided to partners working with OWC and partners will commit to reporting any incidents to OWC.

#### **7.6. Emergency situations**

Safeguarding concerns may be more likely in emergency situations, particularly where people are displaced and separated from their families, or where the family is under extreme stress, people then become particularly vulnerable. Representatives of OWC are expected to be extra vigilant to follow the code of conduct, ensure reporting mechanisms and support partners at these times to ensure those people are protected from harm.

## **8. Governance & Oversight**

The OWC Management Committee provides oversight of the Safeguarding Policy. It receives confidential reports on incidents and approves separate reporting, where applicable, to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

### **Background**

The OWC Safeguarding Policy has been adapted from that of IDEAS, and thereby Christian Aid whose policy followed global best practice and used the experience and expertise of people working with ACT Alliance, the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) and Bond International.

### **Approval and review**

This procedure was approved by the One World Centre Management Committee on the date specified in the header of this document. It will be reviewed every three years. All trustees, staff and volunteers with One World Centre are required to sign that they have read and will comply with this procedure.