

Safeguarding Policy

What is Safeguarding?

OCA understands 'safeguarding' to mean taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff - particularly sexual exploitation and abuse. Safeguarding includes taking steps to protect people, especially children and adults at risk, from that harm by responding appropriately when harm does occur.

Why do we need this policy?

Unless individuals feel safe and are treated well, with dignity and respect, it is impossible for them to realise their full potential or to benefit fully from the economic opportunities and development activities intended for their benefit. To facilitate this, OCA undertakes a coordinated approach to protecting children and adults at risk within OCA, and it advocates the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk a priority in its dealings with all its stakeholders.

In this policy OCA regards children and adults at risk as:

- Children under the age of 18, irrespective of the age of adulthood in the country where they live; and
- Persons over the age of 18 who, for any reason (for example their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, physical, mental or other disability, social, civic or health status, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic disadvantages, indigenous status, or migration status) may be unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

This policy sets out OCA's commitment to safeguarding children and adults at risk in all its activities, whether within OCA, at visits to its partners, or working with partners.

Scope

This policy applies to all OCA staff worldwide, exclusive contractors, volunteers, interns, board of trustees, committees with governing board-delegated powers and others representing the organisation, unless explicitly exempted.

OCA commitments

- OCA is committed to preventing harm to children and adults at risk and does not tolerate any form of harm to children and adults at risk within the OCA's working environment.
- OCA shall implement a Whistleblower Policy aimed at encouraging a culture of accountability where staff are confident that they can raise any matter of genuine concern regarding people working in OCA without fear of reprisal and knowing that matters will be investigated appropriately and regarded as confidential.
- OCA shall designate a Global Safeguarding Officer to coordinate the implementation of this policy.

Key principles underpinning OCA's response to Safeguarding

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all individuals associated with OCA must be vigilant on matters of safeguarding and must report any concerns or suspected wrongdoing to the Global Safeguarding Officer.
- The best interests of children and adults at risk shall be central in all decisions and actions relating to safeguarding.
- All children and adults at risk regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, physical, mental or other disability, social, civic or health status, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic disadvantages, indigenous status, or migration status shall be treated with respect and dignity.
- Confidentiality shall be maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need-to-know basis only and should be kept secure at all times.