

# On Call Africa (OCA) Safeguarding Policy

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused due to them encountering OCA. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated with OCA.
- The design and implementation of OCA's programmes and activities.

The policy lays out the commitments made by OCA and informs staff and associated personnel (such as volunteers and trustees) of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

This policy does not cover:

- Sexual harassment in the workplace – this is dealt with under OCA's Dignity at Work Policy.

## What is safeguarding?

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff, volunteers and/or programmes.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary below.

This policy is informed by ongoing monitored risk and is developed by OCA Staff, and where appropriate end users. It is the responsibility of OCA's Director and Trustee Safeguarding Lead to conduct an annual review of the policy, and it is the responsibility of the board of trustees to interrogate and approve any amendments. It is the responsibility of the board of trustees to ensure the effective implementation of the policy and provide oversight of the safeguarding

of children and at-risk adults that come into contact with OCA staff, volunteers and/or programmes.

## Scope

- All staff contracted by OCA.
- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to OCA, including but not limited to the following: consultants; Trustees; volunteers; contractors; programme visitors including journalists, celebrities, and politicians.

## Policy Statement

OCA believes that everyone we encounter, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. OCA has a zero tolerance to the contradiction of this policy and will achieve this by identifying and managing risks that may lead to harm. We take our duty of care seriously and will always aim to provide the safest possible programmes and environments.

OCA will:

- Design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects children and at risk adults from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with OCA. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated.
- Adhere to Zambian and international child and at risk adult protection criminal laws, which prohibit their abuse and exploitation. These include Zambian laws where OCA's programs exist, and international laws and conventions in relation to all forms of child and at risk adult abuse and exploitation.
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing, and deploying staff and associated personnel.
- Ensure that all staff and relevant stakeholders are made aware of the Policy and their responsibilities through inductions and onboarding.
- Ensure staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training on annual basis.
- Ensure that safeguarding leads, and the OCA safeguarding champion (project manager, Victor Malambo) receive comprehensive safeguarding training annually.
- Make sure this policy is available publicly via our website and programme team operating in rural areas using accessible safeguarding resources.

On Call Africa Safeguarding Policy		
VI	Issued 02/2021	Review 02/2023

- Ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities we work with.
- Provide communication channels for individuals participating in our programmes to express their views on matters affecting them and where possible be consulted in the development of the policy and the implementation of safer practices.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.
- Ensure that the OCA safeguarding code of conduct is printed and accessible at our base, training centre, in vehicles, at clinics and within communities.
- Work with village leaders and CHWs to develop a protocol for how OCA volunteers and staff should report suspected cases of abuse in their community.
- Ensure that government safeguarding policies and practices in relation to CHWs are reinforced through our training.
- Work with the Ministry of Health to review national safeguarding policies and practices in relation to CHWs and support their enhancement.

## Risk Management

Programmes that involve direct work with children and at risk adults are considered a higher risk and as children and at risk adults are part of every community in which we work, risk management (See OCA Risk Register and Safeguarding Action Plan) is an on-going activity within OCA and is part of the planning of all new activities or expanding existing ones where risk is assessed and managed to mitigate the risk of harm.

OCA identify that the main risks to the organisation are:

- Staff and associated personnel who have not been screened carefully e.g., through interviews, police and reference checks or are not supervised adequately.
- Activities which are carried out one-to-one and or at a home-based location.
- Activities which necessitate physical contact, e.g., medical investigations.
- Shared recreational living and professional working spaces where staff and associated personnel live and work together.
- Community engagement with children and at-risk adults.
- Working with children and adults who are already survivors of abuse and or exploitation.

## Staff and associated personnel responsibilities

OCA's code of conduct (see, OCA Code of Conduct) sets out non-negotiables of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour of all staff and associated personnel.

1. Do not put yourself in a position where you are alone with a child or at risk adult (as a volunteer doctor do not examine a child or at risk adult without a parent/guardian giving permission and being present. If this is not possible the volunteer doctor should be chaperoned by another medical professional registered with the Health Professionals Council Zambia.
2. Do not take photographs/videos of children, at risk adults or anybody else without consent first being recorded using an OCA consent form.
3. Do not subject a child or adult to sexual, emotional, or physical harm, exploitation, or abuse.
4. Do not exchange goods, money, favours, or services for sex.
5. Do not have sexual contact with a person receiving assistance.
6. Do not have sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18.
7. **Do** dress and behave in a manner sensitive to local customs.
8. **Do** consistently promote effective safeguarding in your work.
9. **Do** report any concerns you may have. If in doubt – report.

These non-negotiables always apply as staff and associated personnel of OCA – even outside office hours.

All staff and associated personnel are required to accept an agreement declaring that they have read and understood this Code of Conduct before commencing duties.

## Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

OCA is committed to child and at risk adult safe recruitment, selection and screening practices. These practices aim to openly recruit the safest and most suitable people to work in programs funded by OCA.

Our recruitment practices include:

- Open recruitment.
- Promoting our safeguarding policy in all job advertisements.
- Informing applicants of the screening requirements as part of the recruitment process.
- A minimum of two reference checks for all paid positions, the applicants most recent employer/supervisor must be one of these referees.

On Call Africa Safeguarding Policy		
VI	Issued 02/2021	Review 02/2023



- Dependent on role staff and volunteers are required to have a police clearance or relevant criminal history checks depending on their country of origin.
- All staff and volunteers are required to provide original proof of identify and qualifications where necessary.
- OCA Policies and Procedures are fully integrated with induction processes which include an introduction to safeguarding as part of basic training.
- All staff and volunteers are required to sign a declaration to comply with OCA's Code of Conduct confirming they have read and understood all associated policies.

## Use of Information and Media

OCA will always use a consent form (see OCA Information and Media Community or Individual Consent form) when gathering information and media. OCA will always portray children and at risk adults in a respectful, appropriate, and consensual way adhering to the following guidelines ensuring people should be:

- Promoted in adherence to local cultural traditions regarding restrictions for reproducing personal images.
- Used only as a representation of the context and facts.
- Portrayed in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner.
- Portrayed as part of their community.
- Adequately clothed and not in poses that could be sexually suggestive.
- Informed about how and where information and media will be used.
- Protected from sharing their identity (through, for example, not using full names, location or name of school).

Individuals will have the right to withdraw their consent at any time.

## Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

It is mandatory for all staff or associated personnel to report cases of harm and abuse and let others who are trained in safeguarding to investigate. This includes reporting concerns that come to your attention from the wider community such as members of the public, partners, and official bodies.

This means:

- you don't have to know if it's true.

On Call Africa Safeguarding Policy		
VI	Issued 02/2021	Review 02/2023



- you don't need to have understood any or some of what has been reported to you.
- you don't have to know if the survivor is under 18 years old.
- you don't need to be 100% certain whether the perpetrator works for your organisation or is a partner.
- you don't have to find a witness or a survivor.
- you don't have to investigate further (and you shouldn't).
- you don't have to decide if it's in the best interest of the child or adult for you to report.
- you don't need to have evidence.
- your responsibility ends with reporting, which you should do as soon as possible.

Any staff reporting concerns through formal whistleblowing channels (or if they request it) will be protected by OCA's Whistleblowing Policy.

## How to Report a Safeguarding Concern

A case report form template is available to help you provide as much information as possible.

All reports should be made either directly from the individual or organisation raising the concern or via someone acting on their behalf.

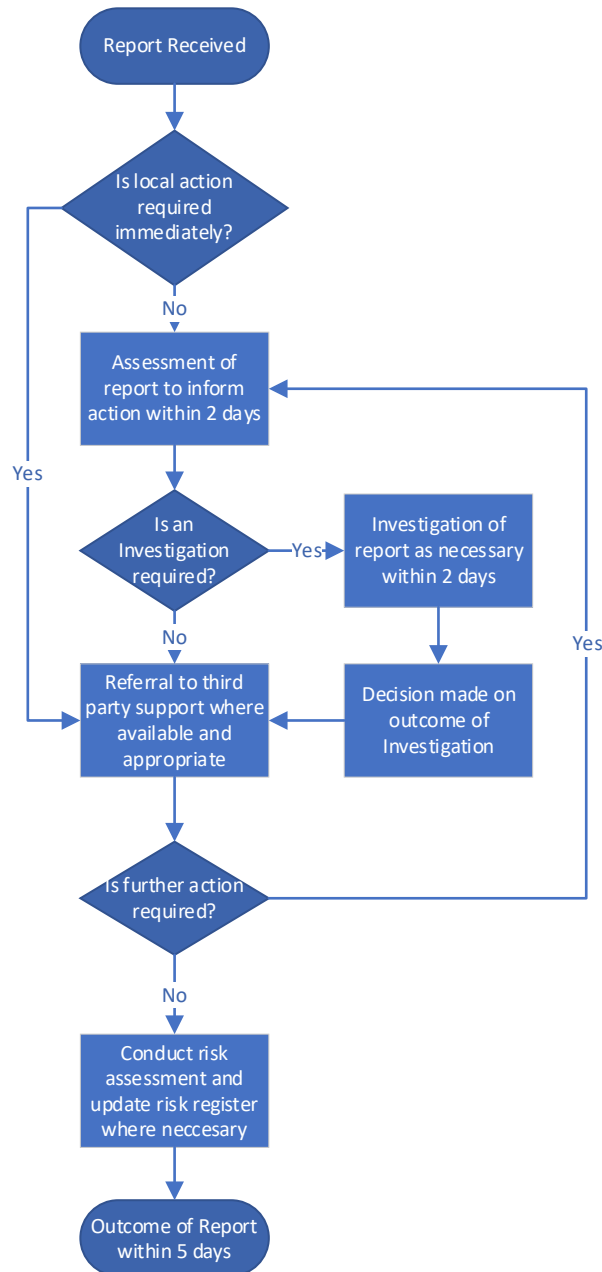
Safeguarding concerns that do not relate to OCA should be raised with a local safeguarding agency (all known safeguarding agencies will be listed below for you) or somebody you trust. This could be a friend, a teacher, a family member, a health care professional, a police officer, or someone else that you trust. Ask them to help you report it.

Concerns relating to OCA can be submitted to the OCA Programme Lead, or where the complaint relates to OCA's Programme Lead this should be emailed to the Board of Trustees Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- OCA Programme Lead, Rachel Lynch  
Email: [rachel@oncallafrica.org](mailto:rachel@oncallafrica.org)  
Mobile: +260 967554052
- OCA Trustee and Safeguarding Lead, Gavin McColl  
Email: [gavin@oncallafrica.org](mailto:gavin@oncallafrica.org)  
Mobile: +44 7799535161

## What Happens Next

OCA has a procedure for dealing with reports inclusive of safeguarding (See Dealing with Case Reports Process) that breach OCA’s Policies.



OCA will take appropriate action, the outcome may involve taking disciplinary action if misconduct has been proved, which may include dismissal in accordance with the relevant procedure against any employee, volunteer, or consultant who:

On Call Africa Safeguarding Policy		
VI	Issued 02/2021	Review 02/2023



- Has been found to be victimising another individual for using this procedure or deterring them from reporting genuine concerns under it.
- Made a disclosure maliciously that is known to be untrue or without reasonable grounds for believing that the information supplied was accurate.

In the UK and Zambia, OCA will where available, appropriate, and necessary refer cases to the Local Authority Safeguarding Board, Police, Independent Safeguarding Authority and Charity Commission. Where available, survivors will be signposted and or cases referred to local partners who can offer further support. All decision making on support will be led by the survivor.

## Notifiable events

Charity trustees have a responsibility to make sure that vulnerable beneficiaries are safeguarded. If there is an incident where there has been mistreatment of vulnerable beneficiaries, then we will inform OSCR about the incident, and what we are doing to make sure it cannot happen again. We will also inform funders where there is a requirement to do so, including FCDO. If a new grant agreement is signed that provides a definition of notifiable events that differs from OSCR, the safeguarding policy will be altered to ensure that grant agreements are being met by the organisation.

A notifiable event is defined by OSCR as including the following:

- A charity trustee, member of staff, volunteer or someone connected to our charity has mistreated or abused a vulnerable person while carrying out the charities activities.
- Allegations have been made that such an incident may have happened.
- There are grounds to suspect that such mistreatment actually took place.

## Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality is 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 always be kept secure.

The individual who reports a concern will be notified once the matter has been resolved, but outcomes are subject to confidentiality and may not be communicated.



## How to Support Somebody Disclosing a Concern with You

When a child or at risk adult tells you that he or she has been abused, they may be feeling scared, guilty, ashamed, angry, and powerless. You, in turn, may feel a sense of outrage, disgust, sadness, anger and sometimes disbelief. Regardless of the outcome, the child or at risk adult must be taken seriously

You can show your care and concern by:

- Listening carefully.
- Reassuring them you believe him or her.
- Reassuring them it is not their fault and he/she is not responsible for the abuse.
- Telling them you are pleased he/she told you.

You will not be helping them if you:

- Make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone.
- Push them into giving details of the abuse. Your role is to listen to what they want to tell you and not to investigate (beware of asking any leading questions as this may prejudice any subsequent investigation).

## Associated policies/practice

Case Report Template  
Code of Conduct  
Dealing with a Case Report  
Risk Register  
Safeguarding Action Plan  
Whistleblowing Policy

## Glossary of Terms

### **Beneficiary of Assistance**

Someone who directly receives goods or services from OCA's programme. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that OCA serves, and also can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

### **Child**

A person below the age of 18.

### **Harm**

Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights.

### **Psychological harm**

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement, and isolation.

### **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**

The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13).

### **Safeguarding**

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programmes. One donor definition is as follows:

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially at risk adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

This definition draws from our values and principles and shapes our culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our programmes, partners and staff. It requires proactively identifying, preventing,

and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable, and transparent systems for response, reporting, and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centered and also protect those accused until proven guilty.

Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all we do.

### **Sexual abuse**

The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

### **Sexual exploitation**

The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

### **Survivor**

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience, and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

### **At risk 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.

# On Call Africa (OCA) Safeguarding Code of Conduct

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On Call Africa Safeguarding Policy		
VI	Issued 02/2021	Review 02/2023



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- OCA Programme Lead, Rachel Lynch  
Email: [rachel@oncallafrica.org](mailto:rachel@oncallafrica.org)  
Mobile: [+260 967554052](tel:+260967554052)
- OCA Trustee and Safeguarding Lead, Gavin McColl  
Email: [gavin@oncallafrica.org](mailto:gavin@oncallafrica.org)  
Mobile: [+44 7799535161](tel:+447799535161)