BRITISH COUNCIL

Cultural Engagement Programmes & Projects

Safeguarding resource pack for organisations and individuals who we work with

June 2024

British Council's Safeguarding Good Practice

The British Council has in place safeguarding measures, policies and processes in order to keep children and adults safe from abuse and harm.

The following slides offer examples of British Council safeguarding good practise and practical safeguarding guidance for anyone working on Cultural Engagement programmes and projects.

Safeguarding Policy

A safeguarding policy: is a set of procedures developed to protect children and adults, from abuse and harm and it typically includes the following elements:

- **Commitment:** a clear organisational statement to protect children and adults from abuse.
- **Definition of terms:** explanation of what constitutes abuse or neglect and identification of the groups, such as children and adults, that are covered under the policy.
- **Procedures:** instructions on how to recognize, report, and respond to safeguarding concerns.
- **Roles and responsibilities:** staff and non-staff members responsible for safeguarding
- **Upskilling & awareness raising:** regular upskilling and awareness-raising activities to educate staff and stakeholders about the importance of safeguarding and reporting abuse.
- **Monitoring and review:** Procedures for periodically reviewing and updating the safeguarding policy to comply with any changes in law, regulation or good practices.

Example: British Council Safeguarding Policy

Who needs safeguarding

Children	Adults
Anyone under the age of 18	Anyone 18 years and older

What is abuse?

Abuse occurs when a child or adult is mistreated, violated, neglected, exploited or harmed.

Abuse can result from the action or inaction of institutions, organisations and communities

Abuse can be the result of actions by children towards other children e.g., bullying.

Abuse can take place physically or virtually using digital devices including computers and mobile phones and electronic recording devices.

Abuse can involve the trafficking or exploitation of individuals or groups of vulnerable people for sexual, material or financial gain.

Abuse can result from discriminatory practices towards individuals or specific groups of people

Abuse can also result from not taking steps to report or prevent it

Abuse covered by British Council Safeguarding Policy

SEAH – Sexual Exploitation, Sexual/Physical Abuse and Sexual Harassment

Neglect - Refusing a child access to the basic needs in life – education, shelter, clothing, food, supervision and health care.

Emotional/psychological Abuse - deliberately subjecting a person to behaviour that may result in psychological trauma - depression, anxiety, PTSD

Exploitation (physical & sexual) – deliberate grooming of a child or adult for purposes of physical labour or sexual gratification or for trafficking

Digital abuse –using digital platforms for grooming, bullying, harassing, sexual exploitation or blackmailing purposes or for exposing a child to pornographic material

Localised forms of abuse – faith or ritual-based abuse, female genital mutilation, child marriage, corporal punishment, domestic servitude, enslavement etc.

Safeguarding Code of Conduct

A safeguarding code of conduct is a set of guidelines that outlines the expected behaviours and actions of individuals and organisations that work with children and adults.

The code of conduct is intended to complement the safeguarding policy and provide more specific guidance on expected behaviours and actions.

- Example: **British Council Safeguarding Code of Conduct**

Safeguarding Risk Assessments - identify and control risks

1. **Risk assessments -** a risk assessment is a process for identifying and evaluating potential risks of harm or abuse to children and adults and particularly those at risk.

2. **Risk management** - British Council risks are managed through risk assessments at the start a Programme or Project's lifecycle phase. The phases are Development, Inception, implementation and Closure.

3. **Risk Mitigation** - When a risk is identified, control measures are put in place to lower or prevent the risk from occurring and are regularly monitored to ensure they work.

4. **Risk Registers** - Programmes and Projects have a central risk register where safeguarding and organisational risks and control measures are recorded and monitored

Safer Recruitment and Due diligence

1. **Safer Recruitment**

The British Council's criteria for recruiting and selecting employees and suppliers and consultants includes relevant safeguarding experience, qualifications, and suitability to work with children and adults at risk. Employer references and appropriate background checks are undertaken prior to employing an individual.

2. **Exercising Due Diligence**

Due diligence checks are also carried out when selecting individuals or organisations who we work with by conducting appropriate background checks to ensure they do not have any historical or current record of abuse or exploitation which will hinder their selection to work with the British Council.

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Role of Safeguarding Focal Point/Lead

1. A Safeguarding 'Focal Point' supports the implementation of the safeguarding policy, organises training and is the first point of contact for reporting safeguarding incidents.

2. The Focal Point ensures that beneficiaries, have accessible and safe incident reporting mechanisms and know how to identify and report incidents and concerns.

3. British Council Focal Points work closely with the Global Safeguarding Team to handle incident reports, survivor care and liaison with external support services.

4. Organisations working with us should have their own Safeguarding Focal Points or Lead who will work with the British Council on monitoring safeguarding and incident reporting.

Why incidents and concerns should be reported

1. To prevent or reduce the risk of harm

The British Council strongly encourages abuse to be promptly reported in order to prevent or reduce the risk of harm.

2. To meet statutory and funding obligations

The British Council has a statutory obligation to report all serious and critical safeguarding incidents to its regulatory and funding bodies, including safeguarding incidents that occur within the organisations it works with.

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Reporting incidents and concerns

Reporting to a Focal Point		Incidents and concerns should be promptly reported to the designated Programme or Project Focal Point.
Reporting directly to the British Council		Alternatively, an incident or concern can be directly reported to the British Council through our website. Click on this link www.britishcouncil.org and scroll down to 'Raise a Safeguarding Concern'. Your report will be sent directly to the British Council's Global Safeguarding Team.
Reporting through Safecall		An incident can be reported through SafeCall if a person feels unsafe to report the incident or concern to you or prefers to report anonymously. It is often used for whistleblowing e.g. reporting fraud, theft or ongoing abuse.

Good practice – things to think about…

Key principles to consider when implementing safeguarding in your organization :

- Develop and implement a robust safeguarding policy and safeguarding code of conduct.

- Sign the British Council's Safeguarding Declaration if you are working as an individual consultant, contractor or supplier.

- Safely recruit your staff and volunteers and train them in their safeguarding responsibilities.

- Appoint and train safeguarding 'Focal Points' to support safeguarding implementation and to receive and handle incident reports.

- Undertake timely risk assessments to identify and mitigate potential safeguarding risks.

- Ensure that activities and events including travel and trips are risk assessed and safeguarding measures put in place to protect participants from abuse and harm.

- Ensure that safeguarding records and communications are held confidentially and are safe.

... good practice – things to think about

- Ensure digital platforms and content are risk assessed and made safe for all users.

- Ensure two adult members of staff (preferably a male and a female or two females) are always present when working with children and young people under the age of 18.

- Obtain appropriate parental/guardian consent prior to working with children in any capacity.

- Provide and promote safer reporting channels including 'SafeCall' to encourage and empower staff and beneficiaries to safely report abuse and harm.

- Ensure that a survivor/victim of an incident can receive the support they need to be kept safe from further harm. Avoid traumatizing a survivor by asking them to repeat their story.

- Promptly inform the British Council when a safeguarding incident or concern arises so that our funders and regulator can be informed.

- Apply lessons from past mistakes to improve and strengthen your safeguarding practices.

USEFUL LINKS TO GLOBAL RESOURCES

- <u>Safeguarding Resource Hub (RSH)</u> : Provides resources and support to help organisations develop and strengthen their safeguarding good practices including local safeguarding support services.

- <u>Safeguarding Essentials Pack</u> : Resources for developing and implementing a safeguarding policy.

- <u>BOND</u>: INGO umbrella body providing resources to connect, strengthen and champion civil society organisations. Safeguarding resources can be found here

- <u>International Agency Standing Committee (IASC)</u>: UN agency working towards the eradication of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH). IASC is home to the 6 Core principles for eradication of SEAH.

- <u>Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS)</u>: Home to the Core Humanitarian Standards aimed at strengthening safeguarding standards and accountability

- <u>The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</u>: UN agency tackling human trafficking

- <u>UNICEF</u>: Works globally to promote policies and expand access to services that protect children.

Essential Safeguarding Resources for UK-Based Organisations

- Safeguarding Hub : Safeguarding information and good practice sharing hub advice and support to organisations working with children.

- Disclosure and Barring Service: Vetting service for work in regulated activity with children & adults.

- International Child Protection Certificate : Vetting service for international work involving children

- UK Government Safeguarding children: UK Government's framework for safeguarding children

- Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) Guidance on SEAH (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment): information and advice on the UK Government's c approach to safeguarding.

- Charity Commission : Guidance on safeguarding for UK charity/voluntary sector