



**Save the Children**

**Website Item  
on**

**Safeguarding Children  
July 2009-June 2010**



## **Safeguarding Children**

### **What is Save the Children doing to ensure that the children and young people we work with are safeguarded from abuse and exploitation?**

Save the Children UK aims to be a child safe organisation. This means that we will do all that we can to ensure that the experience of children and young people (and their families) of our organization is one that is free from any form of abuse or exploitation. We believe that their experience of Save the Children UK should at all times be marked by feeling respected and safeguarded.

#### **Within Save the Children itself:**

This means that anyone representing our organization will at all times (both in our private and professional lives) adhere to the highest standards of behaviour towards children, young people and their families. Wherever there are concerns regarding our own representatives, they will be investigated honestly and fairly with due regard to internal disciplinary procedures and national legal procedures.

#### **Within the wider community:**

Save the Children has well established global programmes of work addressing the right of children to be protected. We do this through direct action, policy change and campaigning. In addition, when we encounter individual cases of child abuse in their communities, our staff, representatives and partners will undertake sound child protection measures appropriate to the location and available resources.

### **What is involved in a Safeguarding Approach?**

We have adopted a Safeguarding approach aimed at ensuring that a range of proactive and preventative measures and systems are in operation and that where abuse or exploitation has occurred, clear procedures for the protection of those individual children are enacted. In addition we enforce a system for the investigation, disciplining and punishment of perpetrators. These systems are regularly monitored across all departments and country programmes and by our internal auditors. Most recently these have been assessed by independent, external reviewers.

We have reviewed and revised our policies and procedures and have developed clearer guidance in terms of:

- when to apply the policy
- what actions staff should take in reporting a concern
- procedures to be used in taking steps to protect a child when those concerns are based outside our organisation
- procedures to be used in taking steps to protect a child when those concerns lie within our organisation
- managerial and senior managerial responsibilities
- supporting tools
- training materials

These revised Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures are the foundation stones for making this a truly child safe organization. However, they stand alongside a well established set of commitments, approaches, policies and procedures which have been in operation for many years.

### **What are the building blocks for making ours a child safe organisation?**

We are committed to Awareness raising, Preventing, Reporting and Responding to issues of Child Abuse and Exploitation.

This reflects Save the Children International's Child Safeguarding Protocol the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Secretary General's Bulletin 2003/13, the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response and the Keeping Children Safe Child Protection Standards

### **What approaches do we use?**

Mainstreaming of responsibility i.e. this is the responsibility of each and every one who represents this organisation and not just one department or sector. Communication with children families and communities of their rights in relation to being respected and protected is seen as essential. We regularly audit and monitor implementation of these key areas. Our representatives agree to abide by a strict Code of Conduct backed up by well established disciplinary systems. Our trustees have direct and regular oversight of this area and we have adopted a central reporting system for a number of years. Staff and partner development through developing resources, toolkits and sources of support

### **What are some of the key policies and procedures in this area?**

- Global Safeguarding Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Global HR policies for recruiting, induction, staff development and training, performance management and disciplinary procedures
- Whistle-blowing, Complaints and Investigation mechanisms

Country specific Child Safeguarding Procedures  
Regional and Country HR policies and procedures designed to implement global policies.

## **Reporting and Accountability**

Any allegations and concerns relating to our staff and partners in this crucial area are reported centrally to Trustees on a 6 monthly basis. In the interests of stakeholder accountability, we publish the annual figures of complaints received against our staff and the outcomes of subsequent investigations.

Save the Children employs approximately 5,400 members of staff of over 50 nationalities, across 6 regions. The vast majority of these undertake their duties to the highest professional standards.

However, from July 2009 to June 2010, 10 complaints were made against staff members through our Child Safeguarding system. These varied greatly in nature and severity. Each complaint was thoroughly investigated. Following investigation:

3 cases led to staff being dismissed when allegations were proven.

1 of these cases led us to refer the case to national authorities as the case alleged an illegal act.

7 cases were found to be unfounded, unrelated to staff, unproven or malicious.

## **Finally**

This is a very dangerous and abusive world for children. The unfortunate truth is that Save the Children operates in some of the world's most hostile environments where children's rights are widely and routinely breached. As an organisation we address this across a broad range of activities. We are proud of the real difference that we do make to millions of children's lives, but we have to recognise that we cannot protect each and every child in all the countries where we operate. We also have to recognise that on rare occasions a very small minority of our own staff don't meet our own standards of professionalism. We will not rest until we can meet those standards at all times and in all locations. This framework will help us to ensure that our staff and representatives *proactively safeguard* the children who we have direct contact with. This is an ongoing daily activity for all our staff and representatives, regardless of location, role or circumstances. We will serve with pride, do no harm and do all in our power to make Save the Children *safe* for children.

Richard Powell  
Director Global Child Safeguarding  
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