

Safeguarding Adult Policy Addendum for UK Staff

Overarching Accountability for Safeguarding within Oxfam: CEO and Chair of Trustees

Oxfam GB Safeguarding Contact Details	
Email	safeguarding@oxfam.org.uk whistleblowing@oxfam.org.uk
Confidential Helplines	English: 0044 (0) 1865 47 2120 Arabic: 0044 (0) 1865 47 2121 French: 0044 (0) 1865 47 2122 Portuguese: 0044 (0) 1865 47 2124 Spanish: 0044 (0) 1865 47 2123

This policy addendum is aimed at keeping vulnerable adults safe from harm perpetrated by Oxfam associates (staff, volunteers etc) in the UK.

Concerned that a vulnerable adult may be at risk from an Oxfam GB representative in the UK?

Or

Concerned that an Oxfam representative who is also a vulnerable adult may be at risk in the UK?

- If you believe a vulnerable adult is at immediate risk of harm, call **999**
- If you think a crime has been committed, but there is no urgent risk, you can call **101**
- Depending on the circumstance, you may know that there is someone dedicated to safeguarding where you are working (for example, in a school there will be a dedicated safeguarding lead). If so, alert them to the concern. They will report the matter to relevant authorities such as social services as well as to the Safeguarding Team.
- If there is not a safeguarding lead, you should have information about local social services and their contact details as part of the planning for the activity. You can also seek advice from the Safeguarding Adults Board Advice Line in your area, through contacting your local council:

<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

or through contacting the Local Government Association <https://www.local.gov.uk/>

- Alternatively the Association of Directors of Adults Services provides a list of regional Directors of Adult Services, as well as other helpful resources related to safeguarding adults and will be able to provide assistance with reporting a claim and provide advice on making your programmes safe for vulnerable adults and provide you with regional links to services: <https://www.adass.org.uk/regions2>
- For more information on safeguarding adults from **domestic abuse** see the website below: <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/adult-safeguarding-and-do-cfe.pdf>
- If the vulnerable adult you have concerns about is at risk of **modern slavery** and the risk is imminent, then call 999, you can also report your concern via the national modern slavery helpline: **0800 0121 700** or via the following website: <https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/report>
- Report any concerns to the Oxfam GB Safeguarding Team. The Safeguarding Team will assess any prevalent risk, will liaise with relevant authorities according to UK legislation in addition to any referrals you may have already made. Contact details for the Safeguarding Team are at the top of this document.

What should I do if a vulnerable adult discloses to me directly?

If a person discloses abuse to you directly, use the following principles to respond to them:

- Assure them that you are taking the concerns seriously
- Do not be judgmental or jump to conclusions
- Listen carefully to what they are telling you, stay calm, get as clear a picture as you can
- Use open ended questions
- Do not start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions
- Do not promise confidentiality; explain that you have a duty to tell the safeguarding team
- You can reassure them that they will be involved in decisions being made about them and actions taken as far as possible, although if there is a genuine concern that there is a risk of harm information should be passed to Adult Social Services and/or the police even if they have not given consent for it to be shared.

Your responsibilities are:

- To take action to keep the person safe if possible
- Always inform the Safeguarding Team of the matter
- Clearly record what you have witnessed or been told, record your responses and any actions taken
- If consulting with the Safeguarding Team will lead to an undue delay and thereby leave a person in a position of risk, you should raise a Safeguarding Concern yourself by contacting the Local Social Services Adult Team (or 999 if the risk is imminent)

What type of work could vulnerable adults be doing with Oxfam GB in the UK?

At Oxfam, we regularly serve, hire, employ or ask vulnerable groups to volunteer with us. This means that our staff and related personnel come into contact with these groups more regularly, and that our staff could be in a position of power in relation to these groups. This means that in these circumstances, these groups could be more vulnerable to abuse from our staff and/ or related personnel.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of examples of some of the work a vulnerable adult may be doing with Oxfam in the UK:

- Volunteering at festivals with Oxfam's activities
- Volunteering in Oxfam shops
- Volunteering in Oxfam HQ with administrative tasks
- Undertaking internships in Oxfam HQ or within Oxfam UK programmes

What does Abuse Look Like?

Abuse can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual must always be considered. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts and within a number of contexts. The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of the different types of abuse which may affect an adult at risk:

- **Physical** – includes, but is not limited to, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, unlawful or inappropriate restraint and inappropriate physical sanctions. It also includes cultural practices which can alter physicality in ways that cause distress, harm and/or cause lasting health ramifications such as Female Genital Mutilation.
- **Sexual** – is unwanted sexual activity or behaviour that happens without consent or understanding
- **Psychological** – is emotional abuse which causes distress and can be verbal and non-verbal.
- **Financial and material** – includes theft, fraud, exploitation and pressure in connection to wills, property, inheritance and financial transactions, or inciting an adult at risk to do any of these things on another individual's behalf; it may also involve the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions and benefits of an adult at risk
- **Discriminatory**- includes abuse based on an individual's race, gender, disability, faith, sexual orientation, or age; and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment or hate crime/incident.
- **Neglect or self-neglect** - includes a wide range of behaviours such as neglecting to care for one's own personal hygiene or health.
- **Domestic Abuse** – is “any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality”¹.
- **Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery** - Human trafficking is generally understood to refer to the process through which individuals are placed or maintained in an exploitative situation for economic gain. Trafficking can occur within a country or may involve movement across borders. Women, men and children are trafficked for a range of purposes, including forced and exploitative labour in factories, farms and private households, sexual exploitation, and forced marriage. Trafficking affects all regions and most countries of the world.

¹ Home Office [Guidance: Domestic Violence and Abuse](#)

- **Extremism** – Where a person is at risk of being drawn into violence, being influenced or exposed to the messages of extremist groups. The UK Government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Extremism also includes calls for death of members of the armed forces. (Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015)
- **Abuse as a result of faith, belief and harmful practices** – Abuse as a result of faith, belief and harmful practices can take many forms, some common factors may include things such as a belief that someone has been possessed by an evil spirit, which may make their 'condition' contagious; scapegoating those with physical or mental differences for perceived 'bad luck' or financial struggles.

