



CARE International UK

Protection Policy for Vulnerable Adults & Children

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Introduction

CARE international UK (CIUK) has a strong commitment to the welfare of all beneficiaries and their protection from abuse and exploitation. We want to develop and maintain an organisational environment that is free of harassment, abuse and exploitation, and to ensure the same in all of our work with communities.

We know that the children and vulnerable adults in the communities with whom we work can be at particular risk. For example, there is a growing awareness that sex offenders are targeting and infiltrating organisations in order to access children. International non-government organisations can be particularly susceptible.

This policy aims to deter, minimise and remove opportunities for abuse of children & vulnerable adults to occur in the scope of our work.

Although we do not usually place long term staff / volunteers / contractors within projects or communities we believe it important that everyone understands this policy. For those who are visiting or working with communities, we will ensure that they are also aware of, and work within, the specific protection policies of the Country Office.

We will also introduce protection requirements for all CIUK funded programmes (see Appendix 1).

The Policy

1. Scope

The policy applies to all:

- Staff (based in London or overseas)
- Contractors and consultants
- Partner agencies
- Volunteers and interns
- Trustees and other Board Committee members
- Journalists, photographers, film/TV producers
- Visitors

In this policy “staff” or “staff member” is taken to refer to all these categories.

2. Definitions

2.1 For the purpose of this policy:

- Children are defined as being someone under the age of 18.
- Vulnerable adults are defined as:
 - those aged over 18 years and who identify themselves as unable to take care of themselves / protect themselves from harm or exploitation; or
 - who, due to their gender, mental or physical health, disability, or as a result of disasters and conflicts, are deemed to be at risk.

2.1 Abuse can come in many forms:

- ***Physical abuse***
Purposefully injuring or threatening to injure a child or vulnerable person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.
- ***Emotional abuse***
A chronic attack on the recipient’s self esteem. It can take the form of name calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating.
- ***Neglect***
The failure to provide or ignoring the need for basic necessities of life (where such necessities are available), such as food, clothing, shelter, medication and supervision.

- **Sexual Abuse**
Rape, sexual assault or sexual acts to which a vulnerable adult has not consented to or has been coerced into giving consent through abuse. Engaging a child sexually regardless of consent.
- **Financial or material abuse**
Theft, fraud, exploitation, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Discriminatory abuse**
Ageism, racism, sexism based on disability or other harassment.

3. Awareness

- 3.1 We will ensure that all staff and others are aware of the issues and problems abuse and the risks to children & vulnerable adults.
- 3.2 All staff will receive information relating to this Protection Policy including the Expected Employee Standards during the induction process. Specific briefing and/or training will be provided as appropriate for staff visiting projects or working with communities. See Appendix 2 for a statement of our Standards for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults that will provide the basis of induction and training.

4. Prevention

We will ensure, through awareness and personal & professional conduct, that staff and others minimise the risk to children & vulnerable adults.

- 4.1 Recruitment and Selection
We have in place guidelines covering the recruiting process of all new staff, consultants, volunteers, interns and trustees. The recruitment guidelines will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that they accurately reflect child safe recruiting and screening standards.
- 4.2 Checks
We pay great importance to references before appointment. If any of our staff are deployed to work with communities, we will work with the Country Office to ensure that any other checks are carried out as appropriate.

At present we do not routinely carry out CRB checks on staff as they do not have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults. We will be reviewing this again in 2011.

4.3 Use of Child Photos and Information

Pictures, images, or other likenesses of children and/or information related to children & vulnerable adults that could compromise their care and protection will not be made available through any form of communication media without proper protection and understanding of their use. Images with corresponding text which may identify a child or vulnerable adult should be removed. We will also change names as appropriate.

This will be monitored and overseen by the Director of Marketing & Communications.

4.4 CI Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

As a worldwide organisation, we already have in place a policy that has been agreed the CARE International Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; this forms part of staff induction and the staff handbook.

5. **Reporting**

We will work with the Country Office to follow their policy and procedure. If the allegation is within the UK or involves a CIUK staff member we will follow the procedure below:

5.1 Incident reporting

It is mandatory for any allegation, belief or suspicion of sexual or physical abuse (past or present) by a CARE employee, sponsor, donor, board member, operational or other partner to be reported immediately to the HR Director (or in their absence to the Programme Director).

If a beneficiary (including a child or vulnerable adult) reports an incident, they must be taken seriously and listened to carefully. Once an allegation is made there should be an immediate response that protects them from further potential abuse or victimisation. Where appropriate, the family/carers of the victim should be informed of the allegation and action proposed and they should be consulted where possible as to the process to be followed. This process will be led by the Director of HR, in close liaison with the Country Office as it is likely to be appropriate for them to start this process.

5.2 Document the incident

As soon as possible (and definitely within a period of 24 hours of the disclosure), the staff member receiving the disclosure needs to have fully documented the allegation, including the time, place, witnesses. This report will be crucial evidence if the legal charges are made against the perpetrator.

All reports should be submitted to the HR Director, who will involve the Country Office from the outset and other CARE offices as appropriate.

- 5.3 Criminal offences relating to abuse or pornography
If any staff member is alleged to have committed or been arrested for, or convicted of, criminal offences relating to abuse or pornography the HR Director will consult and follow advice from the local social services, police and other authorities as appropriate.

6. Responding

We will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children & vulnerable adults where concerns arise regarding possible abuse. We will work closely with the Country Office to follow their policy and procedure. If the allegation is within the UK or involves a CIUK staff member we will follow the procedure below:

- 6.1 Distance the alleged perpetrator
The best interests of the child / vulnerable person may warrant the suspension of the staff involved. This will be done in accordance with our current disciplinary procedure that aims to investigate and make a fair and formal decision in a timely manner.
- 6.2 Confidentiality
Confidentiality is crucial to a fair and effective reporting procedure. It is unacceptable and potentially defamatory for concerns of abuse (and abusers) to be spread throughout the organisation rather than being directed through a formal complaints process. All participants must understand the importance of following the set reporting lines when concerns arise.
- 6.3 Reprisal
We will not tolerate any form of coercion, intimidation, reprisal or retaliation against any employee who reports any form of abuse or exploitation, provides any information or other assistance in an investigation.
- 6.4 Counselling support
Professional counselling support will be made available.
- 6.5 Investigation of complaints
Physical and/or sexual abuse is a crime. We are required to notify authorities when there are reasonable grounds for reporting abuse, particularly if the allegations are made in the UK or involve a UK citizen. Allegations made overseas we will consider national legislation and Country Office internal procedures to investigate and address the allegations.

We will follow our current disciplinary procedure to investigate and take action.

7. Monitoring & Review

We will report to the Board of Trustees all incidents and outcomes.

We will review this policy every year or earlier if warranted.

CARE International UK funded projects must have:

- Appropriate recruitment and screening processes, including criminal record checks prior to engagement, targeted interview questions and referee checks, for all those who will be working with children & vulnerable adults.
- A written procedure for the management of child protection complaints.
- Regular provision of child protection training for relevant staff.
- A protection policy setting out standards.
- A provision in all employment contracts that the organisation has the right to dismiss an employee or transfer the employee to other duties if he/she breaches the protection standards.
- A documented policy compliance regime, including specified sanctions for breaches.
- A reporting mechanism where the CIUK HR Director is informed promptly in writing if anyone implementing CIUK funded activities is alleged to have committed, been arrested for, or convicted of, criminal offences relating to abuse or child pornography.
- Protection strategies incorporated into the project risk management processes.

Standards for the Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults

Introduction

Our capacity to ensure the protection of children & vulnerable adults that we work with depends on the ability of staff to uphold and promote the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. It is recognised that our work often puts us in positions of power in relation to children & vulnerable adults in the communities that we work with. We have an obligation not to abuse this power.

We, the staff members of CARE, are personally and collectively responsible for maintaining these standards. Managers have a particular responsibility to uphold these standards, to set a good example, and to create a working environment that supports and empowers staff.

These Standards are intended to serve as an illustrative guide for staff to make ethical decisions in their professional lives, and at times in their private lives. While acknowledging that local laws and customs may differ from one country to another, the Standards are based on international legal standards.

The Standards apply to all staff members; any failure to uphold these standards will be a serious concern and may result in disciplinary action or dismissal, in accordance with CARE's disciplinary procedures. Consultants, volunteers and interns will also receive the Standards and are expected to follow them.

It is expected that all staff will:

- i. Treat all children & vulnerable adults (and indeed all our beneficiaries) fairly and with respect & integrity and to be aware of the power that they can have over beneficiaries by virtue of their employment with CARE.
- ii. Act in a way that seeks to care for and protect the rights of children & vulnerable adults and ensure that their best interests are of the paramount consideration.
- iii. Safeguard and make responsible use of information and resources. This includes the exercise of due care in all matters of official business, and not divulging confidential information about beneficiaries.
- iv. Uphold the integrity of CARE, by ensuring that personal and professional conduct is, and is seen to be, of the highest standard.
- v. Report any abuse by a CARE staff member, consultant, volunteer, intern or partner to the HR Director and other appropriate authorities.

- vi. Ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children or vulnerable adults. This will usually be a staff member from the Country Office.
- vii. Never to request any service or favour from a beneficiary (including children or vulnerable adults) in return for protection or assistance.
- viii. Never to engage in any exploitative relationships – sexual, emotional, financial or employment-related – with a beneficiary. This is regardless of the local age of consent, i.e., the local or national laws of the country. Failure to report such a relationship may lead to disciplinary action pursuant to CARE’s policies and procedures.
- ix. Refrain from any involvement in criminal or unethical activities that contravene human rights.
- x. We will endeavour to follow these guidelines when photographing or filming a child or vulnerable adult for work-related purposes:
 - Assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images.
 - Gain consent from the appropriate person. As part of this, we must explain how the photograph or film will be used.
 - Ensure images used to present beneficiaries (including children & vulnerable adults) in a respectful manner. Beneficiaries should not be presented in images that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
 - Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts.