

Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose of this Policy

- 1.1 This policy sets out WCMC's approach to safeguarding people from abuse, harm and neglect.
- 1.2 This policy is concerned with the safeguarding of both adults and children.

2. Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to:

- 2.1 staff, interns, fellows and advisors
- 2.2 trustees
- 2.3 volunteers and students.

3. Who does this policy aim to protect?

This policy aims to protect:

- 3.1 People engaged in the delivery of WCMC's charitable work; and
- 3.2 People who come into contact with WCMC staff and projects, including in the course of fieldwork, other forms of research and educational, training and outreach activities.

4. What kinds of harms does this policy seek to address?

- 4.1 This policy is particularly concerned with the protection of people from the types of harm listed in Box 1. below.

Box 1. Types of harm

- I. **Modern slavery** - encompassing slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, and domestic servitude
- II. **Domestic abuse** - including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse perpetrated by anyone within a person's family. It also includes so-called "honour" based violence
- III. **Discrimination** - abuse that centres on a difference or perceived difference, particularly with respect to race, gender, disability, sexuality or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act
- IV. **Organisational abuse** – this can range from more serious one-off incidents to ongoing ill-treatment. It can be through gross neglect or continual poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation
- V. **Physical abuse** - includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, restraint, and misuse of medication. It can also include inappropriate sanctions
- VI. **Sexual abuse** - includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented, or was pressured into consenting
- VII. **Financial or material abuse** - includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, and coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions. It can also include the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits
- VIII. **Neglect and Acts of Omission** - includes ignoring medical or physical care needs and failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services. It also includes the withdrawing of the necessities of life, including medication, adequate nutrition, and heating
- IX. **Emotional or psychological abuse** - includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, abuse of power by those in positions of authority, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation, or withdrawal from services or supportive networks
- X. **Cyber bullying** - where someone repeatedly makes fun of another person online, or repeatedly picks on another person through emails or text messages. It can also involve using online forums with the intention of harming, damaging, humiliating, or isolating another person. It includes various different types of bullying, including racist bullying, homophobic bullying, or bullying related to special education needs and disabilities

- XI. **Forced marriage** - this is a term used to describe a marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will
- XII. **Mate crime** - a “mate crime” is when “vulnerable people are befriended by members of the community who go on to exploit and take advantage of them”
- XIII. **Radicalisation** - the aim of radicalisation is to inspire new recruits, embed extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals to the legitimacy of a cause.

5. Our approach: overview

5.1 This policy sets out our approach and expectations with respect to:

- i. Identifying people at risk of harm and abuse
- ii. Recognising and reducing the risk of harm and abuse
- iii. Reporting
- iv. Investigating reports
- v. Learning and continuous improvement
- vi. Supporting people at risk of, or who have suffered, harm
- vii. Openness and transparency
- viii. Working with partners to improve safeguarding.

5.2 Protecting people and safeguarding responsibilities is a governance priority for WCMC. This policy will assist trustees and staff in promoting a fair, open and positive culture and ensure all involved feel able to report concerns, confident that they will be heard and responded to.

5.3 Everyone in the organisation has a responsibility not just to comply with this policy, but to promote its principles in order to foster a culture of safeguarding within WCMC.

6. Our approach: key definitions and principles

6.1 While the harms addressed by this policy may be experienced by any person, certain people are subject to particular risks of harm and exploitation and for these reasons are given special protections under law, namely

- a. children; and
- b. adults at risk of vulnerability.

These groups are defined in Box 2. below.

Box 2. People at risk

A **child** is defined for the purposes of this policy as **anyone under the age of 18**.

An **adult at risk of vulnerability** is defined for the purposes of this policy as anyone aged 18 or over who:

- I. has needs for care and or support
- II. as a result of care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from abuse
- III. is currently experiencing or is at risk of abuse.

An adult may be at risk of vulnerability if they

- I. have a mental or physical illness
- II. have a learning disability
- III. have addiction problems
- IV. are frail.

However, whether an adult is at risk of vulnerability (or not) is something which changes with their circumstances – it is not fixed.

6.2 We recognise that the issues covered by this policy are sensitive and that flexibility will be needed in some cases to ensure that a situation is not worsened, and that harms to a person are not exacerbated by the application of this policy. In cases where the appropriate course of action is not immediately apparent, WCMC will draw appropriately from relevant internal and external expertise to properly identify and assess the risks and benefits of different options and to help define the actions that may be needed to help protect the rights and interests of the person(s) concerned. In all cases, however, WCMC intends and expects that this policy will be interpreted and implemented in the manner best calculated to respect

- a. The dignity and autonomy of the person(s) affected; and
- b. The right of all people to equality and non-discrimination on the basis of age, ability or disability, gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital status or transgender status.

7. Our approach to reducing the risk of harm and abuse

- 7.1 WCMC will take a proactive approach to recognising the signs and symptoms of harm and abuse in any of the categories included in this policy. WCMC will therefore seek to create an environment in which there is zero tolerance of harm or abuse and do everything we can to foster a culture in which people feel safe and encouraged to speak up when they witness, or suspect, harm or abuse is taking place.
- 7.2 WCMC will use this policy to use to inform and guide all project level risk assessments and detailed risk mitigation steps within projects¹.
- 7.3 When recruiting new staff, interns and advisors, WCMC will follow a following 'safe recruitment' procedure to ensure new recruits into the organisation do not have a history of inflicting harm or abuse, and to ensure they are aware of how seriously WCMC takes the issue of safeguarding:
- I. Inclusion of safeguarding-relevant questions on application forms
 - II. Inclusion of least one interview question that covers safeguarding, equality, and diversity knowledge and skills
 - III. Reference checks and verification of qualifications and experience
 - IV. Inclusion of safeguarding policies and procedures in the induction process
 - V. Completion of the necessary criminal checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Where it is not possible to obtain a DBS check, some countries' police forces will supply a 'Confidence in Good Conduct' as an alternative.
- 7.4 Once recruitment has taken place, WCMC will use the probationary period to review any issues relating to safeguarding as well as providing regular safeguarding updates, information and training.
- 7.5 The Board of Trustees have appointed a designated safeguarding trustee and each Board meeting will have a standing agenda item on safeguarding.

¹ See also WCMC 'Ethical standards in research policy' which may also be applicable in this context. See also paragraphs 40, 41.

8. Our expectations as to behaviour

- 8.1 WCMC staff, interns, advisors, trustees, volunteers and any other persons engaged in the delivery of WCMC charitable work must never (inside or outside working hours) engage in any of the acts or behaviour covered by this policy. Any individual who engages or has engaged in such acts or behaviour will be deemed to have committed an act of gross misconduct and will be subject to relevant disciplinary procedures.
- 8.2 We do not tolerate abusive or exploitative behaviour from any of our project partners or contractors, or their employees, subcontractors and suppliers. We make clear our expectations as to their conduct and we use whatever leverage we have (including through contractual means) to ensure that the standards of conduct set out in this policy are adhered to. To this end, we ensure that relevant contracts and project documents reserve for us the rights to terminate the relevant relationship with immediate effect in the event that the relevant party (or any of their employees, subcontractors or suppliers) is alleged or found to have been engaging in any of the exploitative or abusive acts or behaviours covered by this policy.
- 8.3 For further clarification of what this means in relation to the particular category of sexual harm and abuse, WCMC staff, interns and advisors, trustees, volunteers and any other persons engaged in the delivery of WCMC charitable work through our work must:
- I. never engage in sexual activity with a child or vulnerable adult under any circumstance. This includes in any country where the age of majority or the age of consent is lower than 18 years. A mistaken belief that the child is over 18 is not a defence
 - II. never use a position of trust and authority to request or coerce any sexual service or favour
 - III. In relation to beneficiaries of WCMC operations, never use funding, assistance or services as leverage for sex or sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour
 - IV. never use WCMC or partner organisation facilities, staff or resources for the purpose of arranging or facilitating access to sex workers by any person, including visitors to WCMC offices or operations

- V. never use computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or other technology (including drones) inappropriately², or to exploit or harass children, adults and vulnerable adults, or access or disseminate exploitative material through any medium or channel
- VI. never procure sex for others or use a third party to do so
- VII. never have sex with sex workers when working or volunteering in the UK or overseas, even if it is legal in the country
- VIII. always be aware that sexual behaviour is an area of particular sensitivity, where conduct may more easily be seen as offensive or be misinterpreted
- IX. always immediately inform your line manager or other appropriate contact if you become engaged in a personal relationship within a work context (and, on your discretion, outside the work context) which may be perceived as inappropriate or exploitative, or where real or perceived unequal power dynamics exist. Advice about whether relationships fall into this category should be sought from the People team
- X. Failure to comply with these policies is likely to constitute gross misconduct and lead to termination of employment.

9. Our approach to encouraging the reporting of harm and abuse

9.1 Any individual who has concerns, suspicions or hears allegations of harm and abuse should report this in the first instance to their line manager. 'Reports' include disclosures, allegations, complaints and/or incidents. Reporters are not required to confirm their suspicions or provide solid proof before making a report and will be protected from retaliation or any kind by this policy. It is preferable that reports are made as soon as is reasonably possible after the allegation or incident occurs.

9.2 In some circumstances it may not be appropriate to report to a direct line manager in which case a report should be made to the Head of Operations (who will act as WCMC's designated safeguarding lead), the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and/or

² WCMC appreciates that defining 'inappropriate use' of such technologies is difficult and many cases might be considered borderline. At a minimum, everyone to whom this policy applies should think twice before sending messages or social media posts which have the potential to cause harm to the recipient(s). In situations where messages are sent 'in good faith' but the recipient then requests that no further messages of a similar tone or content are sent, then any further similar messages will be deemed 'inappropriate' in the context of this policy and subject to disciplinary procedure.

any designated project-level safeguarding staff. There is also a designated 'safeguarding trustee' on the Board should, for any reason, anyone wish to report directly to them. Contact details of these individuals are available on request from the People Team.

- 9.3 All reports made will be kept strictly confidential and investigated promptly and appropriately. Please also refer to WCMC's Whistleblowing Policy which may also be relevant when reporting.

10. Our approach to investigating reports of harm and abuse

- 10.1 Once a report of harm and abuse has been made, WCMC's Head of Operations may lead an investigation and act as WCMC's 'designated safeguarding lead' and, in those cases where reports of harm and/or abuse are upheld, subsequently take action (or recommend to the CEO that action is taken) in line with WCMC's disciplinary policy. If, for whatever reason it is inappropriate for the Head of Operations to lead the investigation, the designated safeguarding trustee will instead lead the investigation, supported, if appropriate by the CEO and/or an appointed external safeguarding expert.
- 10.2 When conducting an investigation, the investigating officer will follow this procedure:
- I. Seek consent from the person concerned. If you feel that they do not have capacity to consent, you can act without consent but you must log your decision
 - II. Collect all available relevant facts and appropriate information
 - III. Make a written record of the concern
 - IV. Tell the person involved what you are going to do about the concern and note any views that they may have regarding how they wish the matter to be dealt with
 - V. Tell only the people who need to know – such as your safeguarding officer
 - VI. Consider the balance between listening to someone's wishes and needing to refer information where others may be at risk
 - VII. Inform the person involved about the outcome of any process.
- 10.3 Information about the individual making the report will be treated and shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis. This applies equally to the WCMC Board, who must have oversight of the incidents at an appropriate level of detail, but will not necessarily be privy to names or places if they do not need that information.

- 10.4 In specific circumstances, WCMC may decide not to proceed with an internal investigation. This is likely to be a rare occurrence but includes those cases where proceeding may compromise criminal or regulatory investigations by relevant authorities. In such cases, it may be more appropriate to refer the report for external investigation in accordance with applicable legal and regulatory requirements. This decision will be taken after adequate risk assessment.
- 10.5 WCMC will keep records in relation to all reports and incidents and ensure that all such record keeping is fully compliant with legal data protection and privacy laws (including the General Data Protection Regulation).
- 10.6 The WCMC Board will be periodically appraised of any report or incidents. In cases which are particularly serious and might therefore require urgent Board involvement the Chairman of Board and/or the designated 'safeguarding trustee' of the Board must be informed immediately. Routine reports to the Board will be limited to a description of the number and type of matters raised and their outcomes, which will allow the Board to monitor the frequency and types of issues arising, seek assurance that they are being adequately dealt with under existing systems, ask any pertinent questions and consider what, if any, changes need to be made to the organisation's overarching arrangements.
- 10.7 The Board will be responsible for ensuring WCMC is compliant with this policy and also decide when and if to report incidents to the Charity Commission, DBS, insurers, donors and other relevant bodies as appropriate.

11. Our approach to learning and continuous improvement in relation to safeguarding

- 11.1 WCMC will continue to pursue learning and opportunities for improved practice in relation to all aspects of safeguarding through, for example, undertaking reviews following particular incidents or patterns of incidents where potentially systemic issues are identified during investigations. As part of this process, the voices and experience of survivors may be captured with consent and in line with data protection regulations.
- 11.2 WCMC will ensure relevant safeguarding staff are identified and given appropriate training in relation to the policies and procedures and that this training is

periodically updated. As a minimum, all WCMC staff and project partners will complete an Equality and Diversity on-line course.

- 11.3 This policy will be reviewed and updated by Senior Management Team and the Board on an annual basis, or more regularly as and when specific issues not foreseen emerge.

12. Our approach to engaging with people affected by abuse

- 12.1 In engaging with people affected by the harms covered by this policy, we will
- I. respect their dignity, wishes and preferences
 - II. be guided by relevant internal and expertise as to the most appropriate means of engagement, in light of the particular needs and preferences of the person(s) concerned
 - III. take allegations seriously (being mindful of the many barriers that may prevent people from raising allegations at all, including concerns about their own physical safety) and never dismiss allegations out of hand (including on the basis that the allegation is “historic” in nature)
 - IV. prioritise the safety and security of affected people, taking appropriate steps to identify and respond to risks of retaliation to that person (or persons associated with them), from the abuser or from a third party (which may include protective measures such as “safe havens”)
 - V. respect requests for confidentiality or anonymity to the extent that this can be provided, being sure to clearly explain the legal and other constraints that may apply and, where appropriate, the implications these may have (e.g. as regards personal security and safety)
 - VI. take whatever steps we can to ensure they have access to adequate and timely information (subject any legal restrictions, e.g. pursuant to laws on employment and privacy) about the progress of any investigation and the outcomes of any relevant processes, including disciplinary processes; and
 - VII. learn from experiences, and from the feedback provided by affected people, in order to continuously improve our own policies and processes.

13. Our approach to openness and transparency

- 13.1 WCMC will follow Charity Commission guidelines and requirements under the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) that charities with a turnover exceeding £1m must report on major risks to which the charity is exposed. WCMC regards safeguarding as a major risk. Information of safeguarding incidents will

therefore normally be included in the trustees' report within the charity's financial statements together with a summary of the plans and strategies we are putting in place for managing safeguarding related risks.

- 13.2 All legal, regulatory and contractual reporting of safeguarding incidents will be completed in a timely manner in the interests of transparency and accountability.
- 13.3 This policy will be made available to the public via the WCMC website.

14. Our approach to safeguarding with our partners

- 14.1 As part of its due diligence in relation to potential partner organisations with which WCMC works, we will seek assurances that organisations have adequate safeguarding policies and procedures in place, including appropriate mechanisms to provide assurance on compliance.
- 14.2 This policy will be included in all contracts and memorandums of understanding with Partner Organisations (including all contractors).
- 14.3 WCMC's Head of Operations will act as the focal point for all safeguarding issues both within WCMC and in relation to external partners

Last updated May 2020