



Above: Storytelling, singing and play-based activities help children in Myanmar process the mental and emotional trauma of March 2025's earthquake

WORLD VISION UK SAFEGUARDING POLICY

REVISED 2025

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POLICY APPROVAL & REVIEW HISTORY

Policy Owner: Safeguarding Manager

ACTION BY FARCOM/ORCOM	RECOMMENDED DOCUMENT VERSION	APPROVED BY TRUSTEE BOARD	DOCUMENT VERSION
Complete review of Child Safeguarding Policy	19 June 2015	7 July 2015	1/2015
Annual Review	17 June 2016	7 July 2016	2/2016
Annual Review	10 November 2017	20 November 2017	3/2017
Annual Review	15 June 2018	6 July 2018	1/2018
Annual Review	14 June 2019	4 July 2019	1/2019
Annual Review	12 June 2020	6 July 2020	1/2020
Annual Review	11 June 2021	1 July 2021	1/2021
Substantial Review	17 June 2022	7 July 2022	1/2022
Annual Review	8 August 2023	1 September 2023	1/2023
Annual Review	2 August 2024	13 September 2024	1/2024
Annual Review	1 August 2025	12 September 2025	1/2025

Development and Review of this Policy: World Vision UK is responsible for ensuring the development, implementation, and annual review of this Policy, in accordance with United Kingdom Charity Commission’s Safeguarding Guidelines. World Vision UK may set stricter requirements in this Policy, as required by local law, best practice, or context.

WORLD VISION UK SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2025

which replaces and supersedes the World Vision UK: Child Protection Safeguarding Policy Procedure 2015.

World Vision UK is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity in the United Kingdom. World Vision UK is part of the World Vision Partnership which works together to bring real hope to children in the world's hardest places. World Vision UK fundraises, through Child Sponsorship and other regular and single donations from the UK public, as well as through partnerships and grants. Our programmes, which are all overseas, are child-focused, bringing sustainable change to places in need of immediate relief as well as partnering with communities looking for long-term development.

VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND BELIEFS

Our Vision: Our vision for every child, life in all its fullness. Our prayer for every heart, the will to make it so.

Our Mission: World Vision is an international partnership of Christians whose mission is to follow our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice, and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.

Purpose of Policy: This Policy details the standards to which World Vision UK operates in relation to raising awareness, to prevention of, reporting and responding to harm or abuse (suspected or known) of all beneficiaries. This Policy applies to:

Employees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trustees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agency workers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Contractors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Partners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Volunteers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Suppliers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Donors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sponsors & visitors to World Vision communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Service users	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	People with whom we work	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

We are committed to creating an environment where potential risks are identified, considered, and minimised and there are clear responsibilities and easily accessible processes and procedures to ensure this in all areas of our work. We will meet our commitment to safeguard and protect all people, doing NO HARM to others and ensuring zero tolerance to sexual abuse and exploitation, by acting in the following key areas:

A. Awareness

B. Prevention

C. Reporting

D. Responding

We are committed to continuous improvement of safeguarding efforts which emphasises prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and other forms of violence or harm. We abhor any misuse of power, status, or trusted position for any sexual or other exploitative purposes. We endeavour to tackle this root cause of abuse in our prevention and training efforts.

This Policy continues to emphasise the unique vulnerabilities and special protection requirements for children, along with the importance of preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) among other forms of abuse of adults living where World Vision has a programming presence.

UNDERPINNING STANDARDS

This Policy is underpinned by the following international and national legislation, good practice, and standards:

- (1) Human and Child Rights UN (United Nations) Charters, Conventions and Declarations, principally the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (UNCRC) and its Optional Protocols.
- (2) Modern Slavery Act 2015 – including World Vision UK's Modern Slavery Statement.
- (3) World Vision International Child and Adult Safeguarding Management Policy 2021, informed by international child protection and safeguarding standards outlined by Humanitarian Accountability Partnership-International (Building Safer Organisations), Keeping Children Safe Coalition, The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2019 Child Protection Minimum Standards, and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response.
- (4) United Kingdom national legislation relating to safeguarding, including the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 statutory guidance.
- (5) England and Wales Charity Commission's Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees Guidance (updated 2022).
- (6) World Vision International Standards and Guidelines for Implementation of the World Vision International Child and Adult Partnership Safeguarding Policy.
- (7) World Vision International Partnership Child-Safe Digital Engagement December 2023.
- (8) World Vision UK Data Protection Policy (May 2023).

APPLICATION

- (1) The provisions under this Policy will bind all World Vision UK Representatives always.
- (2) This policy will be read together with the World Vision UK Safeguarding Implementation Guidelines and all other relevant organisational policies (Recruitment Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Whistle-blowing Policy, Child-Safe Digital Engagement) as appropriate.
- (3) In the event where safeguarding policies/standards differ in text or implementation with other World Vision UK organisational policies or standards, the more stringent policy/standard will be applied.

A. RAISING AWARENESS

1.0 SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 Awareness: World Vision UK will equip all World Vision UK Representatives to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and obligations as set out in this Policy by ensuring:

- (1) All World Vision UK Representatives acknowledge in writing:
 - (a) The receipt, acceptance and understanding of this Policy.
 - (b) The receipt, acceptance and understanding annually of the Safeguarding Behaviour Protocols.
 - (c) If they become aware of any harm or risk to beneficiaries, they will inform the World Vision UK Safeguarding Manager immediately, and in any event within 24 hours.
 - (d) If they are required to travel, all World Vision UK Representatives must satisfy pre-visit protocols detailed within Section 4 of this Policy.All signed acknowledgements will be kept on record by the Safeguarding Manager.
- (2) Agreements with third parties, including, but not limited to, suppliers of services and grants, where the third party commits on behalf of its employees or any person or entity engaged by them.

Relevant contracts and agreements (whether referred to as an "agreement", "subgrant", "Memorandum of Understanding" or any other term) must include reference to the Safeguarding Policy. It is the responsibility of the hiring manager of the third parties to ensure that the protocols have been reviewed, signed, and are in place prior to the commencement of work. Managers must continue to work with and support third parties to secure their commitment to meeting the policy requirements throughout the term of engagement.

- (3) **All World Vision UK staff, volunteers and Board members** receive mandatory safeguarding training for at least three hours within the first three months of their association with World Vision UK, with periodic refresher training at least once every two years. Bespoke safeguarding training will be given to representatives who are more engaged with managing processes, procedures, behaviours or are in direct contact with beneficiaries.

1.2 Safeguarding Staffing:

World Vision UK Safeguarding Manager

Susan Cole: Phone **01908 841008** / Mobile **+44(0) 7808476697**

Emergency phone Mobile **+44(0) 07769490449**

Email **susan.cole@worldvision.org.uk**

2.0 SAFEGUARDING BEHAVIOUR PROTOCOL

All World Vision UK Representatives and affiliates who have access to beneficiaries, children and/or data or who will be dealing one-to-one with the public will abide by and acknowledge in writing the receipt and understanding of the Behaviour Protocols annually. One signature is acceptable from Contractors, Partners and Organisations on the understanding that they will be responsible for ensuring compliance with these protocols from all their associates. Signed acknowledgements must be kept on record by the Safeguarding Manager.

2.1 **Acceptable Behaviour:** World Vision UK Representatives will:

- (a) Create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse of children and adults and promotes the implementation of these Behaviour Protocols.
- (b) Ensure that the “two-adult” rule be applied, meaning two or more adults must be present always when in contact with children and vulnerable adults. It is also expected that World Vision UK Representatives will remain visible to other adults while working with children. This also applies to online virtual meetings involving children.
- (c) Be aware of situations that may present risks and manage and minimise these risks prior to the implementation of any activity, project, event, travel or programme.
- (d) Be careful how their language and actions will be perceived by another person, including on digital platforms, both online and offline, and must behave in a manner that demonstrates a respect for all beneficiaries, and communities with dignity and their rights.
- (e) Ensure that any physical and online contact with beneficiaries and children is culturally appropriate, never crossing personal boundaries or an invasion of privacy. To avoid misunderstanding, World Vision UK Representatives should not initiate physical or online contact with a beneficiary or child (unless circumstances prevail to reduce imminent danger to them).
- (f) Use positive, non-violent methods to manage beneficiaries’ behaviour, e.g. withdrawal of privileges.
- (g) Accept responsibility for personal behaviour and actions as a representative of World Vision UK.
- (h) Always be accountable for their response to a beneficiary’s behaviour, even if their behaviour is in a sexually inappropriate manner. World Vision UK Representatives should remove themselves from situations that could compromise or place them in a vulnerable situation, particularly if they may have contact with beneficiaries who, because of their circumstances and possible previous abuse or exploitation, may have experienced or may display inappropriate behaviour.
- (i) Immediately report through established reporting mechanisms any known or suspected safeguarding incident or breach of this Policy by a World Vision employee or affiliate, or a humanitarian aid worker from any other agency. Comply with related investigations (either internal and/or external processes) and make available any documents or other information necessary for the completion of such investigations.
- (j) Ensure a culture of openness and accountability within World Vision and affiliates to enable all safeguarding issues or concerns to be raised through proper channels, so that poor practice, potentially abusive or harmful behaviour does not go unchallenged.
- (k) Behave sensitively within the local context and consider how their actions may cause potential conflict and tensions within communities. Where their presence may be of detriment to beneficiaries or the community, World Vision UK Representatives will seek advice from the appropriate World Vision National Office senior Safeguarding manager.
- (l) Comply with World Vision Digital Engagement Guidelines in any online image or information sharing about beneficiaries in World Vision Programmes and be familiar with and responsible in the use of social media in all communications.

- (m) In the case of World Vision UK staff, immediately inform their line manager if they or anyone they reside with is involved in a criminal investigation that relates to or could be deemed to relate to any matter, issue or situation referred to in the Behaviour Protocols. Failure to disclose details of such investigation shall be deemed a breach and action shall be taken in accordance with the Behaviour Protocols.

2.2 Unacceptable Behaviour: World Vision UK Representatives within and outside their work environments will not:

- (a) Develop or seek a sexual relationship with any child or adult beneficiary, regardless of gender or of the country specific legal age of consent or age of majority. Such relationships are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. This also includes grooming for a future inappropriate relationship and condoning such behaviour and failing to report it.
- (b) Sexually exploit or abuse any beneficiaries (adult or child). Such behaviour constitutes an act of gross misconduct.
- (c) Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours and other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. This includes exchange of assistance that is already due to beneficiaries.
- (d) Communicate with a beneficiary in World Vision programme areas via digital platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter), via mobile technology (e.g. texting, WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom, Face chat), or online without consent and knowledge of his/her legal guardians. World Vision UK Representatives will not communicate on mobile, digital, or online platforms with children or adults in ways that are inappropriate or sexual.
- (e) Caress, fondle, kiss, hug or touch beneficiaries in an inappropriate, sexually provocative, or culturally insensitive way.
- (f) Use language, make suggestions, offer advice or act in ways that are inappropriate, offensive, or abusive, that may cause shame, humiliation, or are belittling or degrading in nature.
- (g) Spend excessive or unnecessary time alone with a beneficiary; take a beneficiary to a location where they may be alone with that beneficiary; or take a beneficiary away from others, behind closed doors or in a secluded area. This includes meeting virtually.
- (h) Condone or participate in behaviour with or towards beneficiaries that may be illegal, unsafe, or abusive. This includes practising harmful traditions (e.g. early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation), spiritual or ritualistic abuse (including voodoo, witchcraft), sexting and transmission of images.
- (i) Hire children in any form of child labour that may interfere or harm their physical, developmental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. World Vision UK Representatives should not hire children as "house help", even if they are in their home with their primary caregiver, who may be a house help.
- (j) Hit or use other forms of corporal punishment against a person, or physically assault or abuse a person regardless of whether this is locally or culturally acceptable.
- (k) Provide lifts to beneficiaries in a vehicle, except with express permission from line managers and the parents/primary caregivers/guardians of those responsible for children.
- (l) Discriminate against or show preferential treatment to a beneficiary to the exclusion of others (e.g. providing gifts or favours to a beneficiary or their family to gain trust, which is a form of sexual grooming).
- (m) Do things of a personal nature for a beneficiary that they can do for themselves.
- (n) Share personal contact details (home, work, hotel address, contact numbers or any social media identities) with any beneficiary, child or their family.
- (o) Stay silent, cover up or enable any known or suspected safeguarding incident or breach of Safeguarding Policy involving a World Vision Representative or affiliate.
- (p) Visit sponsored children unannounced, or participate in visits that have not been approved by World

Vision UK to sponsored children or World Vision programme communities.

2.3 Failure to comply with these behaviour protocols will result in:

- (a) Disciplinary action, which may result in suspension or dismissal from employment, volunteering/internship, partnership, contractual relationship, or Board membership.
- (b) Termination of sponsorship.
- (c) Termination of relationship with World Vision UK.
- (d) Notification to authorities, such as the police, if a criminal act is suspected or known to have taken place.

Individuals who have been found to have breached this Policy may have "Do Not Rehire" placed on their personal file. Partners and Contractors may have "Do Not Re-engage" placed on their file based on the nature of the case.

B. PREVENTION

3.0 RECRUITMENT

World Vision UK aims to create a culture that encourages and rewards positive behaviour and performance. World Vision UK recognises the benefits resulting from employing a diverse workforce. In line with World Vision International policy, we will intentionally and transparently encourage and support underrepresented groups into leadership positions. People with a prior conviction for any crime against children, or Sexual Exploitation or Abuse (SEA) against an adult will not be hired by World Vision UK.

Employees are expected to conduct themselves with dignity and respect towards one another, the children we work with and the community we engage with, to ensure compliance with child protection measures, to ensure full disclosure, and to maintain the professional standing of the organisation.

All employment is subject to the receipt of relevant checks, which include, but are not limited to:

- Providing proof of right to live and work in the UK.
- A DBS check, if, and at the level, relevant to the role that is satisfactory to World Vision UK.
- Receipt of employment and/or pastoral/personal references that are satisfactory to World Vision UK.
- Receipt of completed statements of misconduct from previous employers.

World Vision UK keeps all candidate information gathered through the recruitment process and fulfils the requirements of UK data protection laws.

3.1 Screening: World Vision UK will undertake diligent measures to screen all staff, volunteers, representatives, and Board members. These measures will include (where applicable): addressing safeguarding matters on application forms; questions during interviews and when obtaining references; DBS checks; meeting with the Safeguarding manager before engagement commences to ensure there is a clear understanding of this Policy and adherence to the Behaviour Protocols; probationary periods; performance management; and general supervision. Safeguarding screening measures will apply to all World Vision UK Representatives including independent contractors and consultants.

3.2 Background Checks: All candidates for employment, casual workers, interim/temporary workers, including independent contractors/consultants and volunteers, who may have contact with a beneficiary, children or systems containing sensitive personal data will undergo necessary identification and criminal

record/police background checks prior to appointment. Such checks will be refreshed at least every two years or as required by law or context. World Vision UK endorses the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme and will systemically check with previous employers about SEA issues by requesting a Statement of Conduct as part of the recruitment process. World Vision UK Representatives needing to travel overseas will be required to undertake an enhanced background check, which is refreshed every two years.

Cross References:

- World Vision UK Code of Conduct Policy
- World Vision UK Data Protection Policy
- World Vision UK Recruitment Policy
- World Vision UK Ethical Policy
- World Vision UK Anti Bribery Policy
- World Vision UK Equality and Diversity Policy
- World Vision UK Job Applicant Privacy Notice
- World Vision UK Employee & Worker Privacy Notice
- World Vision UK Consultant Worker Privacy Notice
- World Vision UK Board of Trustees Privacy Notice
- World Vision UK Volunteers Privacy Notice
- World Vision UK Contractor Policy
- World Vision UK Social Media Policy

4.0 VISITS TO WORLD VISION PROJECTS AND VIRTUAL MEETINGS

4.1 Visit Preparation: All visits to World Vision projects must be pre-approved by both World Vision UK and the relevant National Office. World Vision UK requires verification of a recent original DBS certificate for all adult visitors before any field visit. Unannounced or unapproved visits to sponsored children or World Vision project communities are not permitted and if they take place will be dealt with severely. A visit to World Vision projects is not an inherent right of the visitor, and World Vision UK reserves the right to decline or refuse any request to visit a sponsored child or World Vision project community.

- (1) Prior to visiting any World Vision project, all Representatives and Visitors must have undergone the following screening process:
 - (a) Sign a declaration that they have received, read, and understood the Safeguarding Policy and are prepared to abide by it and the Behaviour Protocols.
 - (b) Provide sight of their valid passport.
 - (c) Complete a safeguarding assessment with the World Vision UK Safeguarding manager, which will take place at the World Vision UK office in Milton Keynes, another mutually convenient location, or online as is appropriate.
 - (d) Visitors to provide a Disclosure Barring Scheme certificate that has been issued within the last 12 months.
 - (e) World Vision UK Staff travelling overseas must have completed face-to-face safeguarding training within the last 24 months.
 - (f) All World Vision UK Staff travelling overseas must undertake a de-brief after every trip.
- (2) If any Staff member or Visitor chooses not to comply with the provisions contained herein or fails in the screening process, that person will be prohibited from visiting or having contact with any World Vision project globally.
- (3) A minimum of eight weeks should be allowed for the completion of the screening process.

- (4) To ensure minimum disruption to children, families and communities, all requests for visits will be risk assessed and considered on a case-by-case basis.

4.2 Visitor Orientation: The following requirements apply to all visitors who visit a World Vision project or have direct contact with children:

- (a) All visitors are briefed on World Vision UK Safeguarding Policy, about the Behaviour Protocols (Section 2.1) and Communications (Section 5.0). They sign an acknowledgement of this Policy and understanding of the Protocols. The signed acknowledgement is kept on record by the Safeguarding manager.
- (b) The National Office (hosting office) will provide to visitors their Safeguarding Behaviour Protocols as well as local customs regarding appropriate interaction with beneficiaries together with the name and contact details of the local safeguarding lead.
- (c) Visitors will be accompanied by a World Vision Staff member at all times when visiting World Vision projects.

4.3 Virtual Meetings & Events: These meetings will be arranged and facilitated by World Vision UK staff to allow sponsors and donors to see and hear about projects, programmes and sponsored children. Some meetings involve just one sponsor speaking to their sponsored child while others are groups of sponsors joining online to hear from their sponsored children. Both the World Vision UK Safeguarding manager and the National Office safeguarding lead shall be kept informed from the time of planning these meetings to ensure all safeguarding requirements are met.

- (a) All World Vision UK participants are briefed on the World Vision UK Safeguarding Policy, about Behaviour Protocols (Section 2.1) and Communications (Section 5.0). They sign an acknowledgement of this Policy and understanding of the Protocol, and the signed acknowledgement is kept on record by the Safeguarding manager.
- (b) All World Vision UK participants are briefed on local customs and behaviours regarding their virtual interaction with beneficiaries, and should their behaviour and/or dialogue be inappropriate, the meeting will be terminated.
- (c) When possible, World Vision UK participants have a debrief after their virtual meeting or event with World Vision UK staff, and sponsored children are debriefed with local World Vision staff, for wellbeing and evaluation purposes.

5.0 COMMUNICATIONS, CONTENT AND MARKETING

5.1 Dignity: World Vision UK is committed to ensuring all communications are undertaken with sensitivity to safeguard each person's right to dignity, privacy and confidentiality. In all forms of communication, beneficiaries are treated and portrayed with dignity and not as helpless victims or in a sexually suggestive way.

5.2 Consent: Informed consent means the individual has an understanding of the purpose of the reporting or photography and gives written permission. World Vision staff must obtain informed consent from any identifiable individual, and from parents, primary caregiver or guardian where the subject is a child and they are the primary subjects of a story, photo and/or video resource gathering. Any identifiable individual has the information and right to withdraw this consent in the future.

Written consent is obtained from the individual or from the parent, primary caregiver or guardian in the following situations:

- (a) Where a beneficiary could be easily identified, or

- (b) Where the sensitive nature of their personal disclosure of their situation could cause a risk to his or her privacy, dignity, safety or reputation, or
- (c) Where otherwise required by applicable law (e.g. under the retained EU law version of the General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)).

When written consent is not possible to obtain, the reporter, photographer or videographer must confirm in writing that they explained consent and this was verbally obtained from the individuals involved, using local language, beforehand. It is best practice to film or record this action being taken.

Individuals, parents, primary caregivers or guardians must be given information on how they can withdraw consent if they wish to do so.

5.3 Empowerment: World Vision UK actively works to empower beneficiaries and donors to understand how to use safely and appropriately, and avoid risks associated with, digital technology and social media.

5.4 Prevention of Harm in Communications: World Vision UK is committed to compliance with all UK Data Protection law in respect to all individuals' rights. We have an obligation to report and record the unauthorised disclosure and processing of sensitive personal data such as the name and location of beneficiaries. Such data should not be used on World Vision websites or in any other form of communication by World Vision. As the data controller, we have the responsibility to ensure all materials and related data are processed lawfully. We are committed to storytelling that raises awareness of and promotes solutions to ending violence and abuse against children and adults. We take the following steps to prevent harm through communications, content gathering and marketing (including digital and offline photographs/videos/audio clips, stories, articles, or any other communication materials).

- (a) World Vision UK discourages direct, unfacilitated, undocumented communication through social media without World Vision UK's knowledge between a sponsor/donor/visitor and registered/non-registered children and between employees/volunteers/other World Vision affiliates and registered/non-registered children. World Vision UK cooperates with World Vision Partnership and National Offices to provide reporting and response options so that sponsors, donors, visitors and beneficiaries or their caregivers can report any incident(s) where either party feels uncomfortable or threatened.
- (b) Story Hub is the Partnership-wide database that serves as a central repository for case studies, images, videos and film. Records of the full consent obtained and content details including last names and specific locations, project names, and campaigns, which are essential for internal purposes (e.g. locating a child for follow-up stories) are stored on Story Hub.
- (c) **For external communications and stories**, we must continue to adhere strictly to our safeguarding guidelines:
 - I. Use "first name only" for individuals.
 - II. Omit specific village names, exact addresses, or school details.
 - III. Use pseudonyms as needed, ensuring they always come from local communicators and are never changed by Story Hub users.
- (d) Sponsorship welcome packs, World Vision UK websites, domains and social media platform profile pages contain a legal privacy and confidentiality disclaimer with reporting options for safeguarding concerns or incidents.
- (e) All external vendors who will be working with personally identifiable information of children (including photos/videos of them) must have an enhanced background check on record with World Vision UK.

5.5 Prevention of Harm in Sponsorship: Sponsorship is implemented in a manner that keeps the safety of beneficiaries as the top priority. This includes training of staff to recognise, report and respond to potential abuse and harm, and the secure handling and storage of personal information, and eventual disposal.

5.6 Sharing of Sensitive Information: World Vision UK is committed to protecting information about beneficiaries and their communities (families). We will not share information that is of a sensitive nature, such as health status or cause of death, unless we have been granted informed consent to do so (by the family).

C. REPORTING

6.0 SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT REPORTING

All staff and World Vision UK Representatives are made aware of their individual responsibility to uphold this Policy. Any member of staff or World Vision UK representative who is concerned about, suspects or is made aware of a safeguarding incident should report the matter immediately to one of the following:

- (a) The World Vision UK Safeguarding Manager (Susan Cole: Phone **01908 841008** / Mobile **+44(0) 7769490449** Email Susan.cole@worldvision.org.uk).
- (b) The National Office safeguarding lead (when in country).
- (c) World Vision's Whistleblowing freephone number (08000328483) or website (www.worldvision.ethicspoint.com).

In cases occurring overseas where World Vision UK is involved in funding the implementation of programmes and grants, when the incident concerns a child, World Vision employee or representative, reports will be shared with World Vision International to ensure that proper support, investigation and reporting of the incident to donors and regulators can take place.

6.1 Retaliation for Reporting: World Vision UK does not tolerate any harassment, retaliation, or adverse action whatsoever by any employee, director, contractor, or other affiliate because of any safeguarding report provided in good faith to World Vision, law enforcement or other recognised reporting mechanism.

- (a) No employee shall be adversely affected because they refuse to carry out a directive that could be construed as likely to create abuse or neglect of a child or an adult programme participant.
- (b) If an employee believes they are being retaliated against, the employee should immediately contact the Safeguarding Manager or report it through the Whistle Blowing hotline. Anyone who retaliates against an employee for making a good faith report will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. World Vision's commitment to anti-retaliation does not prevent a reporter from facing appropriate disciplinary action if they are found to have engaged in unethical behaviour or misconduct.

D. RESPONDING

7.0 RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING INCIDENTS

All World Vision UK employees and affiliates are responsible and obligated to report any suspicion of incidents as soon as they are discovered. Failure to report by one of the mechanisms below is a breach of this Policy and is

grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. In order to achieve effective and fair reporting and management of incidents, all incidents reported will be categorised and managed according to World Vision UK's Serious Incident Preparedness Plan and escalated if necessary.

Reports can be made to:

- **World Vision International Safeguarding Unit by email to safeguarding@wvi.org**
- **Safeguarding Manager – Susan Cole email susan.cole@worldvision.org.uk. 24-hour phone 07769490449**
- **Whistle Blower Hotline at worldvision.ethicspoint.com freephone 08000328483.**

Trustees are notified and informed immediately of any serious incidents so they can comply with their obligations to report serious incidents that meet the reporting threshold to the UK Charity Commission.

World Vision UK notifies their donors according to contractual requirements using information provided by World Vision International Safeguarding Unit and approved by World Vision International Legal.

7.1 Safeguarding Incident Thresholds

Three incident level thresholds are in place that determine World Vision UK's response:

Level 1	Abuse of, or harm to, a child or adult, in a community where World Vision has programme operations and that is not committed by World Vision employees or affiliates.
Level 2	Breach of this Policy, which puts children or adult beneficiaries at direct risk of potential harm but where no actual harm is believed to have occurred.
Level 3	An allegation or accusation of harm or abuse to a child or adult beneficiary by a World Vision employee or affiliate. Death or significant injury of a child or adult while participating in or at a World Vision activity or caused directly by a World Vision-related person.

7.2 Consequences and Outcomes: Violations of any provision contained in this Policy may result in:

- Disciplinary action, which may result in suspension and dismissal from employment, volunteering/internship, partnership, contractual relationship, or Board membership.
- Termination of sponsorship.
- Termination of a working relationship with World Vision UK that might include "Do Not Rehire" placed on their personal file.

Where it is appropriate to do so, in compliance with legislation and best practice, World Vision UK will report any violations to law enforcement and external agencies including but not limited to the police or relevant law enforcement agencies, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Unit (part of the National Crime Agency, NCA), the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the Charity Commission or the independent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). World Vision International Global Safeguarding Unit will also be informed of any relevant violations and take appropriate next steps.

7.3 Disclosure for Learning and Accountability: While World Vision UK maintains appropriate confidentiality

for individuals in safeguarding incidents, World Vision UK may disclose information about incidents, when lawfully permitted (e.g. misconduct disclosure statements) to support prosecution of suspected criminal activity, to meet donor and regulatory requirements, to support learning and accountability, and to prevent future incidents.

- 7.4 Safeguarding Investigations:** Safeguarding investigations follow a survivor-centred approach and investigators conduct the process in accordance with sector best practice to prevent further harm occurring. World Vision International Safeguarding Unit coordinate investigations and prioritise the safety, physical and psychological health and welfare of all survivors while upholding and promoting their rights of confidentiality, equality and access to justice.

E. SAFEGUARDING IN PROGRAMMING

8.0 SAFEGUARDING PROGRAMMING

World Vision's overarching approach is to strengthen the child protection system and put in place safeguarding measures that enhance the capacity and utilisation of existing mechanisms in programmes, regardless of the funding stream to protect children. World Vision UK ensures that the child protection minimum standards are implemented in all supported programmes.

This includes all efforts aimed at helping children to be safer within their families and communities, including empowering children. World Vision UK will actively support children and their parents/primary caregivers/guardians to understand how to safeguard themselves and others. This is done by providing training, sensitisation and reporting mechanisms that avoid risks to their safety and dignity, and by responding immediately to threats. All activities seek to increase awareness within communities and among partners and other stakeholders on any prevailing inequality and harmful social norms that may exist, and to increase their own capacity to keep all children safe. All projects, regardless of sectoral focus and funding sources, intentionally include regular monitoring of safeguarding and compliance checks. Projects also put in place reporting and complaints mechanisms that are inclusive and accessible to all participants and communities.

- 8.1 Safeguarding Essentials in Programming:** In all programmes (including development, humanitarian response and advocacy), World Vision seeks to do no harm to children or adult programme participants, to keep the interests of community members – especially children – at the centre of our activities, and to utilise opportunities to help children be safer within their families and communities. This includes consideration of local child protection threats and issues – including those that are due to socio-cultural gender inequalities and social exclusion – during the entire programme life cycle, and influencing local actors and groups to be safer organisations for children and adult programme participants. To ensure consistency in aid implementation, World Vision UK has Child Protection and Gender Quality and Social Inclusion mainstreaming guidance. We will use **World Vision's Safeguarding Risk Index**, which is based on the UN's Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Risk Overview, providing us with a data-driven lens to assess and monitor safeguarding risks across the World Vision Partnership.

- 8.2 Safeguarding with Partners:** All partners to be engaged in a project or programme led by World Vision UK must go through a due diligence process to assess the capability of the partner to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities. The World Vision Partner Safeguarding assessment tool must be completed, which will inform a safeguarding capacity plan for a partner if they do not yet reach the World Vision Partnership safeguarding standards.

- 8.3 Community Feedback and Complaints Mechanisms and Information Provision:** In all programmes, World Vision UK ensures that participants are provided with information on their rights, what behaviour they can expect of World Vision employees and affiliates, and how to report any concerns of abuse, exploitation or any breach of the Behaviour Protocols. World Vision UK supported programmes also ensure community feedback mechanisms are in place for participants to report both general suggestions and any incidents of misconduct by World Vision employees or affiliates. These mechanisms should be safe and inclusive, child-friendly and contextually appropriate, and are designed in consultation with the community.
- 8.4 Child Safeguarding as a Core Value:** In all programmes, World Vision UK seeks to do no harm to adults and children, to act in the best interests of the child, and to utilise opportunities to help children be safer within their families and communities.
- 8.5 Institutionalisation and Adoption:** World Vision UK does not facilitate the adoption of children or support programming within institutions where children stay for the long-term in ways that perpetuate the institutionalisation of children.
- 8.6 Child Participation:** World Vision UK's way of working fosters an environment whereby children are empowered as citizens and participants, promoting their own wellbeing and minimising any risk of harm or negative consequence resulting from participation in activities promoted by World Vision UK (whether in-person or online). Child participation programmes and activities are based on context analysis with clearly identified needs and expected results, along with accountability mechanisms (i.e. closing the feedback loop with children and young people), therefore we will measure progress towards achievement while mitigating risks through risk assessments. All programmes, projects, events and activities are guided by the World Vision Guidelines for Child Participation to ensure meaningful and safe participation of children. All World Vision UK staff are trained on child participation guidelines and good practice as part of mandatory Safeguarding training.
- 8.7 Ethics:** All World Vision UK project activities and events are designed and implemented to adhere to principles and ethics that safeguard the best interests of children and other vulnerable beneficiaries as a priority.
- 8.8 Informed Consent in Child Participation:** Child participation activities are voluntary and inclusive (especially of the most vulnerable children), and both children and parents/caregivers/guardians receive information on the activities to enable them to make informed decisions regarding participation, including consideration of risks that could be associated with the activity.
- 8.9 Child Travel:** World Vision sometimes supports children to travel to events, activities or for other opportunities. In such cases the parents, guardians or caregivers, or other legally required entity or individual, give informed written consent prior to travel and will be provided with a copy of World Vision UK's Privacy Notice for Children Under 18. The child's health, safety and wellbeing are the most important priorities during any travel supported by World Vision UK. Each child is assigned a World Vision staff chaperone. World Vision UK will not facilitate travel of children outside of their country to visit their sponsor.

F. BOARD OF TRUSTEES – OVERSIGHT OF SAFEGUARDING

- 9.0 Trustee responsibility:** The World Vision UK Board of Trustees (“the Board”) is responsible for holding World Vision UK accountable for compliance with UK safeguarding law and best practice and World Vision Partnership safeguarding policy and practice. The Board understands its legal duty to be accountable and responsible for safeguarding for all persons who represent, support or benefit from the operations of World Vision UK.
- 9.1 Lead Trustee:** The Board appoints one of its members as a “Safeguarding Lead Trustee”. The Safeguarding Lead is appointed for a term of three years. The Safeguarding Lead role description and specification is reviewed by the Board as part of the review of the World Vision UK Safeguarding Policy on an annual basis. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead to ensure safeguarding is considered within all governance meetings and decision making.
- 9.2 Board Oversight:** The Board mandates one of its committees (the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee) to provide oversight of Safeguarding and to report to the Board on material matters discussed in committee regarding safeguarding to ensure the Board is informed and engaged on safeguarding issues. This will include sharing with the Board the Annual Safeguarding Update Report, Safeguarding Action Plan and Serious Incident Preparedness Plan which is prepared annually in consultation with the World Vision International Global Safeguarding Team.
- 9.3 Trustee Undertakings:** Trustee recruitment and training is the same as World Vision UK employees and they also annually sign to confirm they have re-read the Safeguarding Policy and Behaviour Protocols, agreeing to uphold them.

DEFINITIONS

Abuse: A form of maltreatment of a person/s. Somebody may abuse or neglect an adult or child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Beneficiaries may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. There are four main types of child abuse as defined under the UK Government Guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023:

Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a beneficiary such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development and stability. It may involve conveying to a beneficiary that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the beneficiary opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or “making fun” of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on beneficiaries. These may include interactions that are beyond the beneficiaries’ developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the beneficiary participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying or sexting), causing beneficiaries frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or resulting in exploitation or corruption. Modern slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and debt bondage when exploitation by others for personal or commercial gain occurs, leading to loss of freedom. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of another, though it may occur alone.

Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a beneficiary’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the beneficiary’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent, a primary caregiver or guardian failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a person from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a beneficiary’s basic emotional needs.

Physical Abuse: This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a beneficiary. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent, primary caregiver or guardian fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a beneficiary.

Sexual Abuse: Forcing or enticing a beneficiary to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving an elevated level of violence, whether they are aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving beneficiaries in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a beneficiary in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can children.

Beneficiary: Regarding safeguarding, World Vision UK uses a broad, working definition of “beneficiary” to include not only those children and adults who directly participate in project activities, or receive specific assistance through World Vision, but also any child or adult residing in a community in which World Vision operates.

Child: In conformity with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, a “child” is defined as any person who is less than 18 years old, regardless of which country they live in. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in a secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

Child Labour: Work that is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful to children, or that interferes with their schooling.

Corporal Punishment: Defined by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child as: “Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light.”

Exploitation: Abuse of power or trust to use a person for the benefit of another. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour and sexual exploitation.

Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP) include:

- Female genital mutilation/cutting.
- So called “honour” based violence and “honour” killings.
- Early, child and forced marriage.
- Abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession.
- Breast ironing, also known as breast flattening.

Harmful traditional practices are based on tradition, culture, custom and practice, religion and/or superstition. They have often been embedded in communities for a long time and are born out of community pressure. They are committed and actively condoned by the child’s parents or significant adults within their community.

They include rituals, traditions or other practices that have a detrimental effect on the physical, mental, and emotional health of survivors. Many of the practices involve bias against groups of people, particularly girls and children with disabilities. Many involve physical abuse and pain, leading, in some cases intentionally, to death or significant injury. Others involve mental abuse.

National Office: A World Vision office in the country where World Vision projects are implemented.

Safeguarding: Preventing, reporting and responding to harm or abuse of beneficiaries and others in World Vision UK’s sphere of responsibility.

Sexting: Sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs, or videos, primarily between mobile phones. It may also include the use of a computer or any digital device.

Violence: The use or threat of physical force or power that harms another. Although abuse, neglect and exploitation are forms of violence, we include “violence” as a separate category to address additional threats from which beneficiaries need to be protected, including gang violence, bullying, harassment and playground violence.

Visitors: Anyone visiting a World Vision project or programme. May include but not be limited to World Vision UK Representatives, sponsors, photographers, or reporters.

Vulnerable: In need of special care, support or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.

World Vision UK Representatives: Any person who represents World Vision UK, whether under a contractual relationship, paid or unpaid position, or in a position of trust. This includes staff, volunteers, fixed term contractors, consultants, Board members, sponsors, donors, or people affiliated with World Vision.



Above: In June 2025, World Vision UK CEO Fola Komolafe MBE DL (front left) made a trip to Malawi alongside staff and Board members. Picture taken with Malawi President Lazarus Charwera (front centre) and staff in his office

World Vision UK
World Vision House, Opal Drive,
Fox Milne, Milton Keynes MK15 0ZR
Tel: +44 (0) 1908 84 1000
email: info@worldvision.org.uk
worldvision.org.uk

Follow us: @WorldVisionUK



At World Vision, our focus is on helping the world's most vulnerable children overcome poverty and experience fullness of life. For over 70 years, we have worked together with communities – of all faiths and none – even in the most dangerous places, inspired by our Christian faith.

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