



Global Connections

Guidelines for developing a Safeguarding Policy for UK-based organisations or UK churches sending staff or volunteers overseas

Photo by Katerina Holmes from Pexels



These guidelines have been developed by Global Connections in consultation with Steve Bryant (WEC) and Rebecca De Vos (WEC) from the Global Connections TCK and Member Care Forum, Graham Fawcett from Thrive Worldwide, and professional advisors from thirtyone:eight.

CONTENTS

PAGE 3
UNDERLYING CORE VALUES

PAGE 5
INTRODUCTION
A Theology of Safeguarding

PAGE 10
CORE VALUE 1
Safeguarding policy & procedures

PAGE 11
CORE VALUE 2
Recognising international contexts

PAGE 15
CORE VALUE 3
Minimising Risk

PAGE 17
CORE VALUE 4
Safe recruitment

PAGE 19
CORE VALUE 5
Training

PAGE 22
CORE VALUE 6
E-safety

PAGE 26
CORE VALUE 7
Responding to allegations

APPENDICES

PAGE 33
APPENDIX 1
Sample Code of Conduct

PAGE 38
APPENDIX 2
The welfare and rights
of children

PAGE 39
APPENDIX 3
Definitions, signs and
symptoms of child abuse

PAGE 55
APPENDIX 4
Definitions, signs and
symptoms of adult abuse

PAGE 59
APPENDIX 5
Sample Incident Report Form

Definitions: 'Duty of Care',
'Relationship of Trust' and
'Abuse of a Position of Trust'

PAGE 62
APPENDIX 6
Useful UK addresses and resources

UNDERLYING CORE VALUES

We recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. Recognising that the overwhelming majority of interactions are positive, this guidance informs those situations where these interactions are abusive.

We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to:

“all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.

We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from:

“all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”

Safeguarding is of paramount importance. Safeguarding requires commitment from organisations, churches, trustees, volunteers, staff and their families to achieve the highest level of protection for children, young people and adults with whom they come into contact or who benefit from their work, and the adults who work with or volunteer with them.

UNDERLYING CORE VALUES

The following core values have been identified as the basis for these guidelines:

CORE VALUE 1:

All organisations have a written policy and procedures for keeping children, young people and adults safe.

CORE VALUE 2:

Safeguarding policy guidelines recognise the international contexts in which they need to be applied.

CORE VALUE 3:

Safeguarding policies seek to minimise risk of harm to children, young people and adults.

CORE VALUE 4:

A formal, thorough and safe recruitment process for mission personnel is adopted.

CORE VALUE 5:

Safeguarding training plays a vital part in protecting children, young people and adults within an organisation.

CORE VALUE 6:

E-safety is a critical component in safeguarding awareness.

CORE VALUE 7:

Allegations of unacceptable or abusive behaviour towards children, young people or adults (current or non-recent) are always listened to, taken seriously and reported to the relevant authorities.



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INTRODUCTION

Any organisation or church that has contact or works with children, young people and adults must ensure they are properly cared for and protected. Abuse happens in families, institutions or communities from every social, religious and cultural setting and can involve leaders, teachers and workers. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child, young person or adult. We should not think 'it could never happen in my organisation', because it might. Abuse is a serious crime and its consequences far-reaching.

Our motivation in producing these *Guidelines for developing a Safeguarding Policy* is based on our Theology of Safeguarding statement. We recognise the risks to children, young people and adults and our responsibility as Christians in protecting and safeguarding them to the highest standards possible.

The document will refer throughout to 'organisation' or 'organisations' and this should be taken to include the whole range of organisations, agencies and churches working with children, young people and adults and/or who have personnel with children, young people or adults.

BASIS OF THE GUIDELINES

- These Guidelines are designed to be used by any church or Christian organisation with a base in the UK acting as a sending agency overseas, both short-term and long-term.
- They are designed to safeguard children, young people and adults of families working overseas and children, young people and adults with whom organisations come into contact, both at home and abroad.
- It is recognised that different procedures might be needed in these different contexts. It is also recognised that there may be huge difficulties in operating safeguarding policies in the many different legal, social and cultural contexts in which organisations work.
- Although these guidelines have been formed specifically with cross-cultural contexts in mind, they can be useful in UK situations, both same-culture and cross-cultural.
- The guidelines are also designed to help national churches and organisations with whom the UK organisation or UK church partners.
- The principles behind the guidelines should apply to all personnel and their families working overseas. This includes national staff of UK churches and mission organisations, UK staff travelling/visiting overseas, volunteers working overseas, and mission personnel who work within the UK.

INTRODUCTION

GOALS FOR THE GUIDELINES

This document represents a minimum standard for members of the Global Connections network. With that in mind we are seeking to:

- demonstrate excellence in the area of safeguarding;
- establish a uniform minimum standard that all organisations can use as a basis for producing their own safeguarding policies and procedures;
- facilitate ongoing networking and sharing of resources in both prevention and response.

Guidelines should always lead to improvements in practice. These guidelines are offered as a basis to ensure that Christians take the safeguarding of children, young people and adults seriously. They are intended to be informative and helpful, and not restrictive or overwhelming. Our prayer is that all Global Connections members will take these guidelines seriously and that all churches and organisations will work through the suggestions and consider how they can make improvements. For this to be realised, a systematic approach to safeguarding is required and the guidelines contained in this document provide the basis for producing practical policies and procedures to ensure that staff and volunteers are well placed to protect children, young people and adults.

They are designed to help organisations and churches develop:

- A safeguarding policy
- Appropriate implementation in different locations
- Guidance regarding acceptable behaviour towards children, young people and adults, and between child-to-child
- Safe recruitment and management of workers
- Safeguarding awareness training
- Guidance regarding e-safety
- Guidance in responding to concerns

They are also designed to help UK organisations and churches to consider how their staff and mission partners are informed of policies, advice and resources.

TERMINOLOGY

There is a huge variety of churches and organisations involved in overseas mission, and different people use different terminology to mean the same things. We have therefore tried to be consistent throughout this document with the use of terms:

INTRODUCTION

- **Safeguarding** – this term is now in common use in the UK instead of 'child protection' and includes the addition of young people and adults, and so has been used throughout the document.
- **Child** – a child is defined in the UK as anyone below the age of 18 years.
- **Personnel or mission personnel** – where this term is used throughout the document it refers to all personnel for whom you are responsible, including people based overseas (sometimes called mission partners or missionaries) and those based in the UK, whether they are paid or voluntary, trustees etc.
- **Criminal Record Disclosures** – where we refer to Criminal Records Disclosures this includes the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (England and Wales), Disclosure Scotland (Scotland), Access NI (Northern Ireland), and the ACRO Criminal Records Office – International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC)¹.

APPLICATION FOR SENDING CHURCHES

Where a church sends people overseas directly without using a mission organisation, it should adopt the responsibilities usually carried out by a mission organisation. Churches need to be aware of the potential gap in country / culture-specific knowledge about safeguarding children, young people and adults, and seek advice and guidance where necessary.

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS

Sample documents have been provided in the appendices to serve as examples of key documents which every organisation needs to have. These can be adapted according to the needs of each organisation, keeping in mind the relevant portions of the guidelines.

OTHER GUIDELINES

These guidelines are part of a series of documents from the Global Connections network. We welcome all comments on the guidelines. Comments may include areas of disagreement or agreement, examples, suggestions for additions or deletions, resources which you have found useful, and questions. Please contact us using info@globalconnections.org.uk

¹ The UK Charity Commission and DFID have very helpful safeguarding support for international criminal record disclosure processes found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-enhanced-due-diligence-safeguarding-for-external-partners>

**Thank you for downloading this
free resource.**

**Global Connections exists to see Christians,
churches and agencies connected together for
God's Mission.**



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