Global Safeguarding Policy

United Purpose takes the safety and well-being of all those we work with, and our staff, very seriously. We have a zero-tolerance policy on any abuse caused by UP personnel or operations. Any concerns, whether witnessed, suspected, or experienced, should be shared confidentially with UP’s Safeguarding & Well-being Committee members, through national email addresses or directly to the UK through concerns-uk@united-purpose.org

1. Overview

1.1. Introduction

This policy is written to protect the people we work with and for, particularly children and vulnerable adults, from any harm caused by United Purpose (UP) personnel or operations. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated with United Purpose
- The design and implementation of United Purpose programmes and activities

This policy does not cover abuse in the wider community that is not perpetrated by United Purpose or associated personnel.

This document first sets out the context (1.2); the scope of the policy (1.3); and key terms used to define the policy (1.4). Information then follows on how to raise a concern (1.5) and the importance of confidentiality (1.6). In section two, the policy statement sets out our organisational commitment (2.1), staff commitment (2.2) and the guiding principles for putting this policy into practice (2.3). The final section guides policy implementation, with an overview of procedures (3.1), details of procedures (3.2) and four objective areas to support best safeguarding practice at United Purpose (3.3).

Annexed are the Safeguarding Snapshot (Annex 1) Staff Self-Declaration (Annex 1) and Representatives Self-Declaration (Annex 3) which summarises key policy clauses and information for staff and associated personnel to sign and support them in their safeguarding duties.
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1.2. **Global Context and Approach**

United Purpose (UP) is an international development agency with an innovative community-led approach to delivering the Sustainable Development Goals and eradicating global poverty and inequality. It is UP’s legal and moral duty of care to keep the people we work with and for safe. UP Board of Trustees are accountable to the UK Charity Commission for England and Wales for any harm caused by UP associated personnel or operations and take all safeguarding matters extremely seriously. As part of sector-wide efforts to strengthen safeguarding practice, UP are a signatory to the Bond Safeguarding Commitments, to enhance accountably, drive up minimum standards, improve capacity to meet those standards and incentivise cultural change.

We recognise that safeguarding policy breaches across the development and humanitarian sector are under-reported. For this reason, UP views well-being as a distinguishing factor in our safeguarding policy, choose to frame safeguarding in neutral, contextualised terms and recognise the need for a dynamic, adaptable and practical implementation of this policy.

1.3. **Who is covered by this Policy**

This policy is binding for all contracted UP staff, international and local, UP associated personnel, representatives and implementing partners which include: staff, volunteers, trustees, visitors, researchers, donors, consultants and for anyone else representing UP in any capacity.

1.4. **Key Terms**

**Safeguarding** – Safeguarding is about keeping people safe and promoting the health, safety and well-being of the people we work with and for. The purpose of safeguarding procedures is to prevent abuse or harm caused by UP personnel, operations or programmes; support a safe, respectful and nurturing culture; respond to any concerns or incidents that arise; and, report these through relevant pathways so that appropriate people are informed and lessons are learnt and implemented to reduce further risk.

**Abuse** - the improper use of power or position at United Purpose, or any action, in-action or behavior, which may cause harm to a person in the short or long term.

**Harm** - this includes psychological or physical harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, coercion, negligence, any other infringement of a person’s health, safety, well-being, development or dignity. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- **Psychological Harm**: Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) harassment and/or bullying, humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name-calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation.

- **Sexual abuse**: The term ‘sexual abuse’ means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

- **Sexual exploitation**: The term ‘sexual exploitation’ means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another — this definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

- **Negligence**: Failure to act with due care and responsibility for the safety and well-being of others, as explained in this policy. This includes, but is not limited to, failing to act on and reduce risks, or failure to raise a concern through proper channels in a timely and confidential manner.

**Do No Harm** - a principle used in the humanitarian and development field, which refers to organisations’ responsibility to minimise the harm they may be doing inadvertently as a result of their organisational activities.

**Safeguarding Concern** - a feeling or worry that a person may be at risk of harm, or may have been harmed, by the organisation’s staff, associates, programmes or operations. A concern may have been directly seen or heard or suspected through hearsay or other information. United Purpose staff are contractually obliged to raise any concerns they have to their designated Safeguarding & Well-being Committee.

**Safeguarding Incident** - when UP personnel or operations verifiably perpetrate abuse or cause harm. Incidents may be against either of the following:
• Project participants, defined as any individual who stands to benefit directly or indirectly from development programming or humanitarian assistance.

• Staff or associated personnel where the perpetrator is in a direct position of authority, i.e. through line management or senior leadership. Other harm related concerns between staff should be escalated to a safeguarding incident only if they cannot be resolved through line management or relevant HR processes.

A Child – a child means every human being below the age of 18 years (UNCRC). Every child is to be treated equally, without discrimination, including, but not exclusive to, ethnicity, religious belief, cultural status, gender identity, sexual orientation, or age

At-Risk / Vulnerable Adult - A person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect themselves from harm, or make informed decisions free from duress or influence is significantly impaired. This impairment could relate to power or economic imbalance; physical or mental disability; illness; old age; emotional fragility or distress; gender; ethnicity; religious beliefs or otherwise. Vulnerability can be temporary or indefinite and should be seen as a continuum, which reflects the shifting nature of vulnerability in the context of our work

Associated Personnel (Representatives) - All paid or unpaid staff, volunteers, freelancers, researchers, consultants, contractors, board members, trustees, media representatives, national and international visitors, appointed or recruited by UP or deemed to be representing UP in any way in the UK or worldwide

UP Partners: Refers to programme delivery partners that UP (either the UKO or a Country Office) have a funding agreement with to deliver programmes.

Informed Consent means the capacity to give consent based on agency and all available information, according to the age and evolving capacities of the person. The person must fully understand the purpose of the activity for the consent to be informed.

1.5. How to raise a safeguarding concern?

Any person who is concerned about the health, safety or well-being of a person, caused by UP staff, representatives or operations, should raise this immediately to a member of their Safeguarding and Well-being Committee or line manager. They may do so in person through the secure national committee email address (enter national email address), or another appropriate channel. If the person does not feel comfortable sharing information in this way (for example, if the committee member is implicated), they should raise their concern to another appropriate staff member, for example, a senior manager or HR team. Any person can directly email the Global Safeguarding and Well-being Committee at concerns-uk@united-purpose.org.

1.6. Response

United Purpose will promptly respond to all concerns raised, keeping the interests and well-being of those affected at the heart of our approach, and according to agreed procedures and legal obligations.

Any person found in breach of this policy will be subject to disciplinary procedures, and, may be suspended during an enquiry. United Purpose will offer support to any person who has experienced harm caused by staff or associated personnel.

1.7. Confidentiality

Confidentiality must be maintained at all stages of the process when responding to safeguarding concerns or incidents. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need-to-know basis only, it should be kept secure at all times, and anonymised when included in reports or learning documents.
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2. Policy Statement & Principles

2.1. Organisational Commitment

As United Purpose (UP) works to overcome vulnerability in conditions of extreme poverty, inequality and insecurity, we recognise that the natural process of our work can create an imbalance of power between UP operations, staff and associated personnel and the lives of people we support. It is UP’s moral and legal duty to ensure that this power is never abused in a way which causes or risks harm and that all people who receive or deliver development programming or humanitarian assistance, do so in a way that is safe, respectful and nurturing.

Safe. UP take a zero-tolerance position on abuse and believe that all people, especially children and vulnerable adults, who benefit from our work, or through partner-led initiatives, should have access to safe, inclusive, high-quality programmes in an environment that supports physical health and well-being. For example, UP will be proactive on risk reduction and implementation of safeguarding procedures in this policy to prevent any harm caused by our personnel, associates or operations.

Respectful. United Purpose believes that all people, regardless of age, sex, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin, have an equal right to protection and development. Our approach is to work with the greatest respect for human dignity; we value diversity, confidentiality and do not discriminate against any person for any reason. For example, when using someone’s identity, UP will only do so if they have given informed consent. UP will only portray people with a sense of dignity.

Nurturing. United Purpose believes that a safe and respectful environment depends on the concerns of all people being raised and responded to. This is especially important for at-risk/ vulnerable adults, minority groups and children. UP is mindful of the legitimate reasons which prevent concerns being raised, and so we are committed to creating space and systems to nurture staff’s awareness and confidence to speak out. For example, we will listen and trust information that arises, treat this information confidentially and always feedback to people affected.

2.2. Associated Personnel Commitment

All United Purpose associated personnel are obliged to:

- Work in a way which does not abuse or cause harm as defined in this policy
- Uphold our code of conduct and support a safe, respectful and nurturing environment that keeps people safe and promotes well-being across UP programmes and partners
- Raise any concerns, suspicions or incidents relating to abuse or harm caused by United Purpose staff member or associated personnel to the safeguarding and well-being committee, your line manager or another senior manager
- Stay up to date and informed of safeguarding policy and procedures at UP and, where possible, promote safeguarding messages and feedback channels to stakeholders

All associated personnel of United Purpose are expected to uphold the highest standards of behaviour and Code of Conduct at all times, and must not engage in the activities below.

Child safeguarding: United Purpose staff and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
- Sexually abuse or exploit children
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking

Adult safeguarding: United Purpose staff and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at-risk adults
- Subject an at-risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse: United Purpose staff and associated personnel must not:

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics
2.3. **Principles**

The implementation of this policy is guided by our organisational values and the following principles:

**Best Interests** – to act with the best interests of people affected by safeguarding breaches at heart and always ‘do no harm’ especially vulnerable groups and children.

**Participation** – to enable all staff and stakeholders to participate in the development and implementation of this policy and safeguarding procedures.

**Universality** – to apply a safeguarding lens, to everything we do, across all levels of operations.

**Accountability** – to uphold accountability for staff and management and instil a strong sense of individual and organisational responsibility to act on any concerns that arise.

**Assurance** – to build organisational trust that all concerns are received in good faith, treated confidentially and acted on with appropriate rigour.

**Impartiality** – to remain objective, never judge or discriminate against people and respect the beliefs and perspectives of others.

3. **Implementation**

Below is an overview and details of best practice procedures at United Purpose and objectives to support their implementation.

3.1. **Overview of Procedures**

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<td>• Zero Tolerance, Risk Reduction</td>
<td>• Safe Employment Cycle (recruitment, induction, training, appraisal; exit interview)</td>
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3.2. Procedure Detail

- **Zero Tolerance** - share zero-tolerance messages on abuse with staff and stakeholders and set clear disciplinary procedures for safeguarding policy breaches.
- **Risk Reduction** - identify and reduce harm related risks, especially for vulnerable, minority groups and children.
- **Safe Recruitment** - feature safeguarding throughout the recruitment process, e.g. job advert; interview questions (see Safe Recruitment Guidelines).
- **Code of Conduct** - localise and promote use and understanding of UP Code of Conduct and organisational values to enhance personal accountability and promote a safe, respectful and nurturing culture (see Code of Conduct).
- **Safeguarding Self-Declaration** - all staff and representatives receive safeguarding induction with safeguarding snapshot and sign self-declaration (see Safeguarding Self-Dec 2020 - Staff and Safeguarding Self-Dec 2020 - Reps).
- **Relationship Disclosures** - create and make staff aware of relationship disclosures where there is an imbalance of power or position (see Personal Relationships at Work Policy).
- **Safe media guidelines** - follow safe media guidelines and seek informed consent (see Safe Media Guidelines).

- **Reporting Pathways (Internal and External)** - clear reporting pathways are mapped, agreed and followed, e.g. external pathways to local health, psychosocial services, or local authorities; internal pathways from in-country safeguarding committee to global safeguarding committee and governance; external pathways to donors or other relevant stakeholders.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation** - regularly review the effectiveness of safeguarding practice, e.g. set implementation objectives and indicators objectives; assess knowledge and understanding of staff and stakeholders.
- **Documentation and Lessons Learnt** - all safeguarding decisions should be documented, reported appropriately and reviewed with lessons learnt and implemented.

- **Employment Cycle** - embed safeguarding in the employment cycle, e.g. probation period; ongoing training; appraisals, exit interview (see Safe Employment Cycle Guidelines).
- **Project Cycle** - embed safeguarding in project design and delivery, e.g. identify and tend to needs of vulnerable groups; inclusion of safeguarding budget lines (staff time, training, travel); promote safeguarding messages and feedback channels and proactively solicit feedback.
- **Partnerships** - include safeguarding clauses in partnerships agreements; evidence partners commitment to safeguarding (see Partner Self-Audit Tool).

- **Safeguarding & Well-being Committee** - establish and maintain committee of safeguarding stewards and focal points to support policy implementation (see Safeguarding & Well-being Committee TOR).
- **Feedback Channels** - put in place and promote a range of accessible ways to receive safeguarding concerns and incidents, e.g. in person; by phone; written via concerns email address; or suggestion box.
- **Feedback Flowchart** - adapt and follow feedback flowchart to respond to concerns or incidents raised, e.g. assess; action plan; inform; fact-find and verify information; psychosocial support; reporting pathways (see Feedback Flowchart & Incident Classification Guidance).
3.3. **Implementation Objectives**

The following objectives are designed to support the implementation of UP’s safeguarding policy and procedures and are designed to achieve our overarching goal: to enhance staff well-being and increase the number of safeguarding concerns raised and responded to appropriately.

- **Systems** - To consolidate efficient, accessible and adaptable safeguarding policies & procedures across United Purpose.
- **Culture** - To strengthen a safe and thriving culture where all staff and stakeholders understand safeguarding and have the social confidence to raise concerns and manage associated distress.
- **Learning** - To contribute to and collaborate with best practice through a dynamic safeguarding learning and support network, both internally and externally.
- **Working with Partners** – To reciprocally strengthen, support and evidence our partner’s commitment to safeguarding.

END

**ANNEX 1**: Safeguarding Snapshot

**ANNEX 2**: Safeguarding Self-Declaration 2020 – Staff

**ANNEX 3**: Safeguarding Self-Declaration 2020 – Reps