

Islamic Help UK

Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults



Islamic Help
EMPOWERING PEOPLE IN NEED

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NOTES

Activity	Name	Date
Original Policy Prepared by:	Shaukat Lal Head of International Programmes	March 2018
Original Policy Reviewed by:	Kamran Shahid Head of Institutional Funding & Partnerships	March 2018
Revised by:	Mohammed Ilyas Communications Manager	August 2020

APPROVED BY TRUSTEES:

This Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults was first approved on 25 March 2019 by the trustees of Islamic Help:

Sultan Niaz ul Hassan

Sultan Fiaz ul Hassan

Rafaqat Hussain

Mohammad Masood Alam Khan.

For security and protection, the signed version of this policy is securely kept in paper form by Islamic Help.

This policy is to be reviewed every year or sooner if required by internal organisational changes, a serious incident or external regulatory or legislative changes.

Other documents (available separately) to be implemented in association with this policy include:

- Incident Reporting Form: Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Code of Conduct: Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Risk Assessment (included in Risk Management Policy)
- Safer Recruitment Checklist (included in Recruitment Policy)

Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

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INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Help Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy applies to all Islamic Help staff, volunteers and its associates, partners, consultants, contractors and any others who engage with Islamic Help in any capacity.

This policy has been developed by drawing on and referencing global best practice and standards in child safeguarding.

It uses information, guidance and recommendations from a variety of sources including humanitarian organisations, NGOs, charities, child protection agencies, public authority and government bodies.

Child safeguarding refers to internal business-critical policies, procedures and practices that organisations use to ensure maximum protection and risk reduction for any children they [*this includes any partners, nominated representatives, consultants, contractors or others*] are in contact with or responsible for.

It also encompasses the protection of vulnerable adults at risk. A vulnerable adult is someone over the age of 18 who has disabilities, either mental or physical, that puts them in a position of vulnerability.

This policy is intended to be adopted with Islamic Help's other policies and procedures that promote best practice in the field of humanitarian work.

As this policy is a global organisation-wide policy, it should be adapted as required according to the local context of the countries where it is being used and implemented.

Any adaptations for local context should take account of political, cultural, faith, humanitarian and development settings, and should be tailored to local requirements, subject to any legislative rules, regulations or statutory instruments of the country concerned.

However, any adaptations for local context must **NOT** detract or dilute its core objectives – the protection of, and reduction of risk to, vulnerable adults and children.

Any amendments or variations to this policy can only be approved by the trustees of Islamic Help or their authorised representatives.

DECLARATION

Islamic Help is committed to safeguarding the dignity and wellbeing of every person it serves, and to respecting and promoting their basic human rights.

The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.

All children and adults at risk without exception have the right to protection from physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or belief.

All those who work for/with, or volunteer with, Islamic Help will be made aware of this policy and of what to do if they have any concerns.

Guidance is available for those responding to concerns so that they are properly dealt with, including sharing information about concerns with agencies that need to know and involve children, young people and families appropriately.

PRINCIPLES

The principles in this policy have been drawn from key international and regional instruments such as the International Standards for Keeping Children Safe and the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child. These include but are not limited to:

- All children and adults at risk have equal rights to protection from harm
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children and adults at risk
- Organisations have a duty of care to children and adults at risk with whom they work with/for, are in contact with or who are affected by their work and operations
- If organisations work with partners, they have a responsibility to help partners meet the minimum requirements on protection
- All actions on child protection are taken in the best interests of the child
- All actions on vulnerable adult protection are taken in the best interests of the adults at risk, these interests being paramount.

DEFINITION OF ABUSE

Abuse of children or vulnerable adults at risk occurs when adults or other children inflict hurt on children or young people under the age of 18 or adults at risk, physically or psychologically or in any other way.

Harm to children or/and adults at risk cannot always be easily categorised. However, broad kinds of abuse can be identified as follows:

- Physical abuse or physical injury to a child/vulnerable adult, such as evidence of hitting, kicking or shaking, or where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented
- Emotional abuse, where harm is done by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection, such as degrading punishments, threats and not giving care and affection, resulting in adverse effects on behaviour and emotional developments of a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- Sexual abuse where exploitation of a child, young person or vulnerable adult occurs. This includes rape, incest and all forms of sexual activities including pornography
- Neglect, where basic needs such as food, warmth and medical care are not met, or when there is a failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in serious impairment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult's health or development
- Exchanging of benefits, for example goods, food and money in exchange for sexual or other favours
- Bullying, which could include physical and verbal intimidation, including racist and sexist remarks; emotional intimidation for example, excluding or isolating someone.

IMPLEMENTATION

The protection from abuse and the rights of children and adults at risk will be addressed through the following steps:

Risk assessment/risk mitigation

Islamic Help recognises that there are a number of potential risks to children and adults at risk in our work, particularly in those programmes where staff or others are in contact with these groups.

Staff and others should:

- proactively assess and manage risks to children and adults at risk to reduce the risk of harm
- ensure that any activities they undertake include thorough and systematised safeguarding risk assessments
- ensure that safeguarding is a mainstream feature of projects and activities, particularly those where staff come into direct contact with children or/and adults at risk
- conduct a risk assessment during project design and periodically review it during the life cycle of the project.

The Programme Manager or other appropriate responsible person should commit to undertaking a review of their current programmes to assess any risks to children and/or adults at risk and develop mitigation strategies.

It is important that this assessment is gender sensitive and takes into account the specific needs of girls and boys, relevant to the local cultural, political, religious and humanitarian context.

While recognising that different types of programmes will require different risk assessments, the Safeguarding Risk Assessment Guide included in Islamic Help's Risk Management Policy will help assess the types of issues that should be considered with regards to potential risks to children or/and vulnerable adults in particular programmes.

Safer Recruitment

Islamic Help has a Safeguarding Recruitment checklist included in its Recruitment Policy. This lists the steps which should be taken throughout the hiring process, from designing the job description to formal engagement of the employee, to minimise the risk of engaging someone who may pose an unacceptable risk to children.

Islamic Help will ensure it regularly assesses the eligibility for roles to be DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked. Where a DBS is considered essential, a check will be undertaken prior to the commencement of employment.

It is our policy, and those responsible for the appointment of such workers MUST take all reasonable steps to ensure its practice, that no one shall work with children, young people or adults at risk within Islamic Help who:

- has been convicted of or has received a formal police caution concerning an offence against children as listed in the First Schedule of the Children and Young People's Act 1933, or
- has been convicted of or has received a formal police caution concerning sexual offences against children, young people or adults at risk.

This means that any representative of Islamic Help who, as part of their work or due to the nature of their work, is likely to have the opportunity for unsupervised contact with children, young people or adults at risk:

- will, where eligible, be required to be checked through the DBS [*or its equivalent*]
- will be expected to produce a valid disclosure certificate
- where the representative is not able to produce a valid certificate, they will be expected to undergo a police check
- if it is not possible to undertake police checks on staff or representatives recruited or engaged from overseas, checks should be undertaken by the use of reference.
- are expected at all times to conform with good practice in their work and where appropriate, undertake safeguarding awareness training.

Representatives of Islamic Help who are travelling on an overseas trip will be expected to have read, understood and accepted this policy and the Code of Conduct: Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults by signing the Code of Conduct – either in electronic or paper form - as part of their pre-departure briefing.

No representative who, due to the nature of their work, is provided with an opportunity to exploit their position in society will be engaged or employed without a valid certificate or police check or equivalent.

Behaviour

Representatives of Islamic Help who come into contact with children or/and young people or vulnerable adults must sign and adhere to the Code of Conduct: Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults.

The main points of the Code of Conduct include:

All representatives of Islamic Help **MUST:**

- Treat everyone with respect, recognising their right to personal privacy
- Be aware of situations that may present risks and manage these
- Plan and organise any events so that risks are minimised
- Avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour, such as tantrums, suggestive actions or behaviour, or similar
- Ensure that adults and children have separate sleeping accommodation if a residential event is being planned. Never sleep in the same room or bed as a child or vulnerable adult with whom they are working
- Remember that someone else may misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- Avoid being placed in a compromising or vulnerable position. No matter what the intent or actions of a child are, the adult is always considered responsible.

Representatives of Islamic Help **MUST NOT:**

- Physically or psychologically assault or abuse children or vulnerable adults
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children or adults at risk
- Develop relationships with children or adults at risk, which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Place themselves in a position where they could be accused of sexually abusing a child, young person or vulnerable adult, i.e. by holding or hugging them, or physically touching them in a way that could be considered abusive in ways described in this document
- Spend time alone with children or adults at risk. Plan activities so that more than one person is present or, at least, other people are within sight and hearing. Wherever possible ensure that another adult is present to supervise the activity
- Take children/adults at risk alone in a car, even on short journeys

- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child or vulnerable adult at risk of abuse
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Offer benefits such as food, favours, clothes, jobs, money in exchange for sexual favours
- Show favouritism to any individual for sexual favours in return.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or adults at risk, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.

Communications

Islamic Help is committed to data protection and privacy, and will undertake all communications with a child, young person or vulnerable adult in a safe manner, by:

- Taking particular care to ensure the privacy of the child, young person and/or vulnerable adult
- Never taking photographs or videos of a child, young person or vulnerable adult while they are in changing areas or bathing areas, or in a state of partial or full undress
- Never taking photographs or videos of a child, young person or vulnerable adult in an environment or circumstances that would cause them upset or distress, or expose them to harm, ridicule, harassment or victimization
- Obtaining consent (*verbal or written depending on circumstances*) from the child, young person or vulnerable adult and/or their parent/guardian to publish photographs or video materials featuring them.

Social media

Risks associated with internet and social media activities include: cyberbullying, grooming and potential abuse by online predators, identity theft and exposure to inappropriate content including self-harm, racist, hate and pornography.

Islamic Help will ensure risks associated with social media are explored and managed through the risk assessment and that staff follow the organisation's social media policy.

Management responsibilities

All line managers have responsibility to ensure that all representatives of Islamic Help are made aware of this Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct

All staff and representatives are to be given a copy of this Safeguarding Policy; the associated Code of Conduct and, where necessary or/and appropriate, the associated Incident Reporting Form

All new staff will receive training about safeguarding as part of their induction

All staff must acknowledge, either by electronic means or by signing the document, that they have read and understood the Code of Conduct and will act in accordance with it

Islamic Help's programmes and projects will be designed and delivered – with risk assessments and safety strategies - in a manner that is safe for children and adults at risk.

Training

Training will be carried out for all staff, from support service and administration up to senior management.

The style, approach, and content of training will vary depending on the audience, but will include, at a minimum:

- An introduction/overview of the concepts of child and adults at risk safeguarding
- A discussion of risks to children and adults at risk in the local context, from a cultural, faith-based, or programmatic point of view
- A discussion on how safeguarding policies and procedures can protect children and adults at risk, the staff and the organisation, and what can go wrong when there are no procedures in place
- An introduction to and discussion of the policy, ensuring all participants understand the purpose of the policy, the content, and terminology.

Reporting

The need to report arises in the following instances:

- Abuse is observed or suspected
- An allegation of abuse is made
- A child/vulnerable adult discloses abuse

All representatives of Islamic Help should be alert to signs that may suggest a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in need of help.

In many parts of the world, Islamic Help is required by local authorities and government bodies to respond to all concerns, allegations or suspicions by reporting them to the local police or/and the social services department or a body that will protect the child or vulnerable adult's interest.

Failure to do so may result in a child or vulnerable adult continuing to be abused and on occasions even the death of a child or vulnerable adult.

It is therefore imperative that any abuse – whether suspected, observed or alleged – **MUST** be reported through the appropriate channels.

It is not in anyone's interests for employees with knowledge of wrongdoing to remain silent. Islamic Help takes all allegations of malpractice very seriously, irrespective of whether they involve managers, staff, volunteers, members, suppliers, contractors or any others working for or with Islamic Help.

Employees with legitimate concerns about suspected wrongdoing or illegality within an organisation have a duty of responsibility to report it (otherwise known as whistleblowing).

Any employee who pursues this course of action is protected by law. No representative of Islamic Help will prejudice their own position or standing with Islamic Help by responsibly reporting potential or suspected child abuse or abuse of a vulnerable adult.

It is important to note that where representatives report concerns, it is not their responsibility to decide whether or not abuse is taking place but it is their responsibility to pass these concerns on. Under no circumstances should any individual attempt to deal with the problem of abuse alone.

Representatives must exercise extreme vigilance in keeping information confidential and sharing it only with appropriate people, as well as bearing in mind data protection and privacy legislation and requirements.

Information should be recorded in the Incident Report Form: Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults as soon as possible after the concern was raised (within 24 hours if possible). Any written records taken must be kept securely in a locked place.

Disciplinary

Islamic Help can and will take any disciplinary action necessary against staff or others if they are found to have breached this policy or the Safeguarding Code of Conduct. If such an incident occurs, Islamic Help's disciplinary policy will be invoked.

There will be times when the behaviour of employees may constitute a breach of this policy or the Safeguarding Code of Conduct, but not be considered criminal conduct under local legislation.

In this instance Islamic Help will consider providing other support to these staff, for example, training, counselling, increased supervision or transfer to other duties.

There may be cases, however, where Islamic Help feels it is appropriate to dismiss an employee even if the behaviour is not criminal, for example a gross violation of the Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

Identifying information about safeguarding should be shared on a 'need to know' basis only. Any staff members who raise concerns of serious malpractice should be protected as far as possible from victimisation or any other detrimental treatment if they come forward with serious concerns, provided that concerns are raised in good faith.

Deliberate false allegations will be considered a serious disciplinary offence.

The subject of the complaint (alleged perpetrator) and all witnesses must cooperate fully and openly with internal and statutory investigations and hearings. Their confidentiality will be protected and information which could identify them will be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

Handling external concerns

Islamic Help employees should be able to clearly differentiate between internal and external concerns.

Internal concerns are those where persons covered by this policy are the alleged perpetrators.

External concerns are abuses which would usually be considered criminal under local legislation, and perpetrated by persons not described in the scope of this policy.

In situations where local legislation may be weaker than this policy and its associated Safeguarding Code of Conduct, staff are obliged to abide by the Code of Conduct, keeping in mind at all times the best interests of the child or/and vulnerable adult.

Islamic Help should not ignore any protection issues of concern. However, abuse in the wider community is an external concern, and Islamic Help or/and its Safeguarding Representative/s need to have mechanisms for appropriately and efficiently referring cases to the appropriate authorities.

Clearly, if a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate need of attention then Islamic Help staff must act but they must also consider in advance how much support they or Islamic Help are qualified or able to provide, and recognise when it is best to refer to the appropriate external

authorities.

Informing communities and receiving complaints

Islamic Help should consider how they will inform children, adults at risk and communities on the conduct to expect of staff and others associated with the organisation.

Considerations should be made as to how community members, including children, can raise concerns over inappropriate behaviour by staff, ensuring the Safeguarding Code of Conduct is translated into all relevant languages and available in illustrative, low-literacy and/or a child-friendly format.

It must ensure that such information any names, e-mail addresses and phone numbers to access are correct and immediately updated when changes take place.

International

Islamic Help works in a large number of countries and across a broad range of circumstances.

Translating child protection/protection of adults at risk across these different contexts and cultures can be difficult. Some legal and cultural frameworks may vary but the commitment from Islamic Help to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults remains.

This commitment is fundamental to our partnership approach to humanitarian work. This means:

- All Islamic Help partners will be required to explain what measures they have in place to protect children and adults at risk from abuse
- Islamic Help, through its representatives, will challenge and help new and existing partners (where they are not already doing so) to address child protection/protection of adults at risk issues in their organisation and in the communities in which they work.

This support could be through a variety of means including raising awareness, knowledge and skills through the provision of appropriate capacity building and resources

Where the partner does not have a written policy, the relevant international teams should ask the partner to sign a declaration or Islamic Help's Code of Conduct: Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults to acknowledge they accept and will abide by its requirements, prior to any grant approval for projects and programmes overseas.

Islamic Help representatives will be extra vigilant in emergency situations where there is an increased risk of children being displaced or separated from their families, thereby increasing the potential risks they face.

Monitoring and review

Regular monitoring of risks, risk mitigation and the effectiveness of safeguarding measures will be incorporated into Islamic Help's monitoring processes and activities. The policy will be reviewed every year or sooner if required due to internal organisational or programme changes, any related serious incidents or if additional issues are identified or due to external regulatory or legislative requirements.

Some ways in which Islamic Help will ensure regular monitoring and review:

- Safeguarding is incorporated into the organisation's risk register and quarterly and annual reporting processes
- Safeguarding policy requirements are included in Grant and Partnership Agreements with local partner agencies, and contracts with vendors and consultants
- Child protection and the protection of adults at risk is included as a cross-cutting issue in partner proposal appraisal checklists, and in field monitoring report templates
- Senior management and the Board of Trustees will regularly review the risk register and organisation reports to ensure that safeguarding measures are in place and effective.

Safeguarding Representatives

The named staff Safeguarding Representatives for Islamic Help are:

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The above named Safeguarding Representatives will take responsibility for:

ensuring that everyone involved with the organisation is aware of the identity of the safeguarding representatives

- ensuring the policy is being put into practice
- being the first point of contact for safeguarding issues
- keeping a record of any concern expressed about safeguarding issues
- where necessary, taking further steps, such as referring concerns to other agencies
- bringing any child protection concerns to the notice of the Chief Executive and the Board
- ensuring that paid staff and volunteers are given appropriate training, support and supervision on safeguarding children and young people.