

Safeguarding

Adults at Risk Policy

April 2018



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Purpose

To ensure that the British Council exercises its duty of care to safeguard Adults at Risk¹.

Scope

All employees globally, including indefinite and fixed term staff, temporary staff, freelance staff, and casual staff are expected to comply with this policy.

Definitions

Adults at Risk are people aged 18 years or over who:

- identify themselves as unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation;
- or are understood to be at risk, which may be due to frailty, homelessness, mental or physical health problems, learning or physical impairments, and/or impacted by disasters or conflicts.

Any adult anywhere can become at risk as a result of abuse of many different types or may be at risk as a result of a temporary or permanent situation. Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Commonly recognised types of abuse include:

- Physical abuse (including assault, rough handling, pushing, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, biting)
- Domestic violence (controlling, threatening, degrading or violent behaviour between people who are or have been, intimate partners or family members)
- Sexual abuse (including rape, attempted rape or sexual assault, inappropriate touching, sexual teasing or innuendo or sexual harassment)
- Psychological abuse (including use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing or verbal abuse or enforced social isolation)
- Modern slavery (including people trafficking, forced labour and forced domestic servitude)
- Discrimination (for example with regard to disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or race, religion or belief)

¹ In line with guidance from the UK Office of the Public Guardian (November 2015) we use the term 'adult at risk' in this policy in place of the term 'vulnerable adult'.

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- Institutional abuse (maltreatment of a person in a care facility or other institution).

In the context of the British Council, Adults at Risk may include customers who pay for our services, participants in our programmes, end-users or beneficiaries of projects that we manage, and users of our online or social media products.

Principles

The principles below govern this policy and its application:

- Empowerment – a person-centred approach that ensures that those affected feel involved and informed
- Mitigation – through planning, risk assessment and other measures minimising and managing situations where abuse could occur
- Protection – supporting victims so they can take action
- Responding quickly to suspected cases of abuse
- Proportionality – making sure what we do is appropriate to the situation and for the individual
- Accountability – making sure all organisations and individuals understand their role and accountabilities.

The following British Council principles and policies underpin this policy:

- Our values
- Our Code of Conduct
- Our behaviours
- Our commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Our Raising Concerns policy

Standards

Mitigating measures

In every situation we will actively work together with relevant organisations and individuals to take all appropriate measures to safeguard adults at risk and to respond to allegations and disclosures.

Where responsibilities are shared with or transferred to partners or other organisations the responsibility will be clearly identified and documented.

Risk assessments will be carried out to identify adults who may be at risk; the potential risks to them; and to identify measures to mitigate these risks. Risks and mitigating measures will be monitored and reviewed at appropriate intervals.

Roles which involve regulated activity (work which involves close and unsupervised contact) with adults who are or may be at risk must comply with safer recruitment policy and guidance.

Awareness training will be provided to all staff; additional training and support will be provided for staff who are more likely to have direct or indirect contact with adults at risk or potentially at risk.

Disclosures, allegations and incidents

All disclosures and allegations related to an adult at risk will be acted upon; all incidents will be reported and recorded in line with the procedures.

Any immediate safety and protection needs will be prioritised.

Our processes, actions and decisions will be informed by the need to take into account the wishes of the individuals at risk, and we will be mindful of the danger of increasing risk through our actions.

Where there is evidence a criminal offence has taken place, or a crime may be about to be committed, we will contact the appropriate authorities immediately.

We will strictly observe the provisions of data protection legislation and be mindful of other relevant UK and local legislation.

Roles and Responsibilities

We expect all employees to promote good practice by being role models, contributing to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve others in developing safe practices.

All employees have a responsibility to:

- follow the principles and standards laid out in this policy
- ensure that those with whom we work to deliver programmes and services globally, including consultants, partners, institutions and other organisations and individuals, are aware of and comply with this policy and related processes
- challenge and if necessary report any practices or behaviours which might lead to situations which place adults at risk.

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