

Safeguarding children in emergencies

A pocket guide



Keeping
Children
Safe

Foreword

Keeping Children Safe decided to develop a toolkit ‘Child safeguarding measures for use in Emergencies’ after noting the absence of a resource that would help organisations to develop and implement child safeguarding measures swiftly during emergencies.

To accompany the toolkit, Keeping Children Safe have also produced this pocket guide. The purpose of the pocket guide is to provide a snapshot of what is needed for child safeguarding which is easily portable. The full toolkit should also be read and understood by all.

During an emergency there are six minimum standards that should be met to safeguard children. These standards are based on the 11 original standards for Keeping Children Safe and reflect input from Keeping Children Safe’s emergencies working group, members of the UNICEF Child Protection Working Group and 286 survey respondents in 83 different organisations. These informants identified the most frequently encountered difficulties when trying to develop and

implement child safeguarding measures and the standards which are necessary to work to in emergency settings. The toolkit was piloted in Sri Lanka in early June 2010.

The standards below provide a framework for developing, implementing and monitoring organisational child safeguarding policies and practices.

Descriptions of the standards, full guidance and short training sessions on understanding and implementing the standards can be found in the ‘Child safeguarding measures for use in Emergencies’ toolkit. This pocket guide will help you understand the concerns which require a safeguarding response, how to adapt a safeguarding policy to the local context, the roles and responsibilities required to implement policies and procedures and what is good practice on recruitment, complaints handling, communicating the policy and procedures and monitoring and evaluating their effectiveness.

Keeping Children Safe, 2012

Standard 1

Assessing the risk and ensuring that the appropriate child safeguarding measures are developed

Standard 2

Clear segregation of responsibilities among staff

Standard 3

Dissemination and understanding of the child safeguarding measure in place at all levels

Standard 4

Safe recruitment processes are developed and implemented at all levels

Standard 5

Mainstreaming of the Child Safeguarding Measures by all sectors in the organisation

Standard 6

Monitoring and Evaluation processes



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Safeguarding Children in Emergencies

Introduction

All children, whoever they are and wherever they are, have a right to be protected from harm and have their welfare promoted. While it has been known for some time that children are especially vulnerable to natural disasters and armed conflicts, lessons learned from the past have shown that too often organisations do not prioritise the safeguarding needs of children when emergencies strike. Yet children suffer the consequences in the absence of such measures and abuse is likely to occur every time an emergency happens.

Safeguarding Children in Emergencies: a Pocket Guide is designed to help organisations ensure that they are keeping children safe during emergencies. It provides a handy reference containing the minimum standards required to safeguard children, helpful checklists, and guidance notes.



Assessing and addressing risks to children in emergency programming

Concerns that require a safeguarding response

Abuse within the community or by aid workers

Children may have been at risk of, or experiencing, abuse before an emergency struck. Stress in families and communities and disruption may lead to new cases of abuse. Communities will come into contact with many more strangers and foreigners than before the disaster. Some of the strangers and foreigners may not always behave appropriately with children and their community.

Ensuring the appropriate use of media communications

The use of children's visual images, both photographic stills and video, should maintain the respect and dignity in the portrayal of children, families and communities.

Increased risk to children because of the inadequate implementation of relief projects

It is vital to ensure that emergency relief projects perform a child safeguarding / child protection risk assessment prior to their implementation to ensure that project activities will not further marginalise children or place them at further risk. *For example, during distributions the safety of children will have to be ensured, their special needs attended to and make sure that the distribution mechanisms do not cause harm.*

Concerns that require a programmatic intervention

Basic services not reaching the most vulnerable children

Access to basic services can be an issue before an emergency, but there are additional factors during an emergency that can increase the vulnerability of some children and their families. This will vary with each disaster. Vulnerability factors can include remoteness from the main centres of distribution, loss of primary caregivers, injuries or illness due to the disaster.

Separation from their families

During the chaos that often accompanies an emergency, families may rush to escape and find a safe haven but lose their children along the way. Children's caregivers could be killed during the emergency.

Recruitment into fighting forces

Children (under 18) are vulnerable to forced recruitment by armed groups or they "volunteer" as a means of survival.

Trafficking/exploitation

Children are at risk of trafficking and exploitation due to their vulnerability. Traffickers may target poor families with incentives such as the promise of a job in the city.

Placement in orphanages

Families who feel they cannot cope and meet the needs of their children [especially single parents, or families where there is no income] may feel that they

should put their children into institutions. Leading children's organisations believe that family-based care in the community is the preferred option.

School drop-out

Children may be at risk of dropping out of school for financial reasons, or because they are unable to cope with academic activities following the emergency.

A checklist for keeping children safe in different programme areas

Adapted from *World Vision International*

This checklist tries to ensure that children are protected in different programming areas by identifying a range of factors which need to be considered when keeping children safe when designing a programme and to

maintain their health and wellbeing. The checklist can be used at the assessment stage. N.B. This checklist is not exhaustive but simply provides a guide for you to build on.

Risk assessed

Action needed?

- | Risk assessed | Action needed? |
|---|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> An assessment has researched children's contributions to household economy and their views. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cash for work programmes do not include children under the legal age for employment. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The age at which work is legal for children is known | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The impact on children of cash for work programmes is monitored regularly. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Micro credit staff have training in child protection and know what to do if they have concerns when visiting a family. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> There is a clear definition in country of exploitative child labour. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cash payments are conditional on education, health and other programmes. | |

Environmental Health

Action needed?

- Average family size has been surveyed and appropriate numbers of latrines and washing facilities planned.
- Women's and children's views on design and safety aspects (where they do / don't feel safe) have been sought and taken into account in design of latrines, washing facilities and waste disposal areas.
- Community committee is functioning and represents the whole community including children and is consulted on environmental health issues.
- Education programmes on environmental health are in place.
- Any contracts have included the NGO's behaviour protocols and other core child protection principles.
- The community knows how to report any infringements of these codes and principles.
- Sanitary provision takes into account women's and children's need for safety and privacy.
- Any communal / shared toilets have locks which can be opened from the outside.
- Facilities for the washing / disposal of female hygiene protection are in place and information has been given to women. The facilities provide a discrete place for washing and drying intimate items.
- Women have been consulted about female hygiene protection (disposable or washable) so that plans are appropriate.
- Local bottom washing practices (washers or wipers) have been accounted for in planning.
- In bottom washing communities, suitable receptacles are provided.
- Arrangements have been made for trash / rubbish collection with a local agency / municipal authorities.
- Communities know if the water is safe to drink.
- If the water is not safe to drink, there is a programme to explain what must be done to the water (iodine / boiling / filtering).

Environmental Health

Action needed?

- Where iodine or chemicals for water purification are provided, a programme specifically targets children to avoid poisoning.

- Where chemicals are provided they are clearly labelled in the local language and in pictorial form as poisonous, and the community knows what to do if they are ingested.

- Infants' diaper / nappy situation has been researched and arrangements have been made for safe disposal of faecal matter.

- Carers know where to dispose of faecal matter / soiled nappies etc

- Responsibilities for cleaning of communal areas have been agreed with the community committee (and local authorities if applicable).

- There is an information point at the settlement and clear responsibility for looking after it and updating it

- Communal sanitation facilities are well lit.

- There is a system for cleaning communal sanitation facilities.

- There is a designated safe space for children to play, with equipment if possible.

- Any playground equipment is well maintained and someone specifically checks it every day, reporting damage to a designated person.

- The needs and wishes of vulnerable groups such as child headed households, households with disabled people, widows, and elderly people have been taken into account in planning and design of water and sanitation.

- The heights of basins and water points take into account the different sizes of people using them.

- Where water has to be carried, suitable carriers which women and children can use are provided.

- Floor plates in latrines, and latrines themselves, are appropriately sized for children.

Environmental Health

Action needed?

- Grab handles are placed in latrines for children who find it hard to balance, and also the elderly / disabled.

- Chain flushes are long enough for children to reach.

- In situations where previously running water was available, but now wells or tankers are used, a campaign explains the hazards of dirty buckets being placed in tanks etc.

- Showers / baths have extra privacy (secondary enclosures if necessary) for women.

- Men and women have separate shower and latrine facilities.

- More latrines are provided for women as children also use them.

- Latrine use is promoted, especially in communities where latrines are the new area for collection of trash / rubbish.

- Soap is provided regularly, in dishes if necessary (because it's slippery when wet and if dropped gets dirty).

- Families have receptacles for household rubbish disposal and arrangements for collection of them.

- Communal areas have rubbish bins / trash cans and arrangements are in place for emptying them.

- Where recycling is possible, separate receptacles are provided.

- Plastic bags are not used to supply non-food items (risk of suffocation by small children).

- Water tanks are always covered.

Child safeguarding in the local context

NGOs and other agencies work in a variety of settings with great variations in understanding and arrangements for child safeguarding. There are sometimes different understandings of what 'child abuse' means.

You should work through the following questions with your staff:

- What kinds of behaviour are seen in the local area that may cause harm to children?
- Who causes the harm?
- Are there any common practices or traditions that could harm children?
- How do they affect children?

The agency needs to give clear guidance to staff, partners and other organisations (including funding organisations) on how the child safeguarding policy will be adapted and applied practically in these different circumstances. The guidelines must be applied in ways that are sensitive to different cultures but without condoning practices that are harmful to children.

Identifying local resources

After identifying the local factors (faiths, traditions, practices and situations) that affect children, the next step is to map out existing legal and social resources in the community. Either through discussions or as a task set within a timeframe, you need to find out as much information as possible about the local environment / context, including:

- Political situation
- Legal and social context and structures
- Links to local community
- Any existing guidance or child safeguarding protocols
- Resources (medical, education, community leaders, resident committees, individuals).

Once you have done the mapping activity, it is essential that you collate the information, as this will help you to develop the right local procedures.

Developing a child safeguarding policy

The following is a suggested structure for your policy:

Introduction

A brief introduction to the document, why it has been developed and who is covered by the policy.

Policy statement / commitments / values

This is where the organisation should make a statement of commitment to promote the well being and development of children and to keep them safe from harm. Refer to your organisations overall mission.

What is the problem you are trying to address?

State the organisation's understanding of safeguarding children and the problem of child abuse. Include definitions.

What are you intending to do about it?

This is the main part of the policy and needs to include:

- Safe recruitment
- Behaviour protocols / Code of Conduct
- Education / training
- Communication guidelines
- Management responsibilities
- Reporting / responding
- Implementation and review

Developing procedures to support your policy and ensure that these are mainstreamed through all projects

Following is a checklist to determine what needs to be actioned to ensure that local procedures are in place.

- Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP) is discussed and adapted to fit local context.
- Hold meetings with staff to identify elements that need to be adapted and how best to put the policy into operation (focusing on statement of commitment, code of conduct and local reporting process).
- Guidance on CSP / reporting is developed.
- Practical guidelines developed to help staff in the reporting process e.g., what to report and to whom, what will happen – step-by-step guide, information about the capacity of local support mechanisms, principles of confidentiality, what to do with anonymous reporting.
- Guidance on external reporting where there are possible criminal breaches.
- Reporting process is well publicised to all staff / others.
- Reporting process is developed for both internal and external reporting; documented, distributed and posted in relevant language(s).
- Reporting process is discussed and addressed in induction, training, etc.
- Roles and responsibilities made clear for those raising / receiving reports.
- Roles and responsibilities documented in relevant language(s), for internal and external reporting.
- System in place to monitor understanding by staff and others, including children.
- Local resources for Child Safeguarding (agencies, community, individuals etc.) identified / mapped and contacts identified who can provide advice / assistance with safeguarding incidents.
- Identify individuals, agencies or local groups with expertise (legal, social, religious, etc) who can provide help / guidance to the process.
- Compile a list of specific contacts - ensure names, addresses, phone numbers are available for easy access by staff.
- Agencies prioritise the safety and dignity of disaster-affected populations, particularly children
- Humanitarian response programmes are based on a comprehensive analysis of the context which includes an analysis of the child safeguarding risks

- ❑ Humanitarian assistance and services are provided equitably and impartially, based on the vulnerability and needs of children affected by disaster
- ❑ Disaster-affected children and communities are pro-actively engaged as informed partners in responding to safeguarding concerns
- ❑ Agencies recognise the State as the primary actor responsible to ensure the safeguarding of children
- ❑ The rights, needs and capacities of vulnerable children and communities are reflected in all stages of agency response
- ❑ Agencies respond appropriately to incidences of child rights abuses in conformity with their mandate and recognised good practice. An organisation MUST refer the case on – in the best interest of the child – should their organisation not have the necessary mandate and expertise for dealing with such incidents.



Roles and responsibilities

The following is a descriptive list of the safeguarding responsibilities of staff at all levels within the organisation.

Adapted from Plan-International, Child Protection, Say 'Yes!' To Keeping Children Safe Procedure Overview.

All Country, Departmental, Regional and National Directors and Senior Managers

Must ensure that all new employees receive a copy of the Child Safeguarding Policy, prior to or at the time of issuing an employment contract. They must read, sign and return a copy of the policy to show that they are aware of and agree to act in accordance with the Policy. The signed copy must be placed in their personnel file.

All Country, Departmental, Regional and National Directors and Senior Managers

Must ensure that all staff receive child safeguarding training which is relevant and appropriate to their engagement with your organisation.

Boards and all Country, Departmental, Regional and National Directors and Senior Managers

Must ensure that all Associates in their area of responsibility are informed of and have signed up to the Child Safeguarding Policy and applicable local procedures while working for your organisation.

All Country, Regional and National Directors

Should ensure that each country office has in place local procedures to respond to incidents of child abuse that are consistent with the global Child Safeguarding Policy and related implementation procedures. Local procedures should be developed with the assistance of local advisers in

accordance with local law. Any deviation from the global policy must have prior formal approval from the relevant Regional Director or National Director.

Managers

Must ensure that all Visitors (*e.g. donors, journalists, media, researchers, celebrities etc*) in their area of responsibility, who are in contact with children through your organisation, are provided with and have signed and returned a copy of the Child Safeguarding Policy. Visitors should be informed that they must comply with the policy in all contacts and communications with children during their visit.

Must ensure that children and families with whom we work are aware of the Child Safeguarding Policy and applicable local procedures, so that they know what behaviours they can expect from Staff, Associates and Visitors, and to whom any concerns should be reported.

Must ensure that safeguarding measures from the Child Safeguarding Policy are fully implemented within their areas of responsibility as it applies to them.

Must ensure that any breach of the Child Safeguarding Policy is investigated in accordance with local procedures and the organisation's disciplinary procedures.

Must be guided by the principle of 'the best interests of the child' when reporting and responding to incidents.

Must ensure that those who have reported concerns are given appropriate care, support and protection in dealing with the distress, safety concerns and potential reprisals which may arise from an incident or from reporting such concerns.

Local safeguarding roles

- Attend all local strategy meetings / discussions held under these procedures.
- Make child safeguarding reports, as per Local Child Safeguarding Procedures (including completion of child safeguarding incident report forms).
- Discuss subsequent action required, to ensure the safety and welfare of individual children (in cases of internal abuse); and to the extent that is appropriate and practical, for cases of external abuse.
- Make appropriate referral to organisations that can provide emergency and ongoing support to child abuse cases.
- Monitor the progress of all cases, with the possible exception of those of internal abuse (where the need for confidentiality may require this task to be undertaken by the Country Director or designate).
- Attend or initiate regular e.g. monthly, review meetings with Country Director / national level Child Safeguarding Focal Point, to examine all open cases.
- Ensure that all new recruits have had a thorough Child Safeguarding Policy induction (i.e. half day or longer) prior to commencing any field work.
- Report / discuss any concerns (Human Resources Department / Country Director) that child safeguarding issues may not be adequately taken into consideration by individual staff members or recruitment processes in general.
- Facilitate regular opportunities to discuss concerns about practice within teams or with other colleagues to help develop a safe working environment and an open and supportive management culture.
- Work with programme managers / staff to ensure that programmes at operational sites are integrating child safeguarding into all activities so as to prevent (or address) situations where children may be put at risk of harm, abuse or exploitation because of the way the project / programme is designed or implemented.
- Work with programme managers to establish community-level complaints mechanisms that facilitate reporting of concerns by beneficiaries. (Note - programme managers have the prime responsibility for this task, but focal points can co-ordinate and help facilitate the process)
- Ensure or arrange for ongoing capacity building of staff in general child safeguarding issues, through formal training, discussion of case studies, refresher sessions, etc.
- Work with programme managers to ensure that awareness is regularly raised amongst beneficiaries including children, about the Child Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct, complaints mechanisms, etc
- Work with programme managers in his / her operational area to ensure that M&E activities are incorporating a specific child safeguarding component, for example monitoring for
 - 1 potential risks associated with the design and implementation of the project
 - 2 beneficiary (especially children's) knowledge of the Child Safeguarding Policy and mechanisms for raising concerns / complaints about staff or safeguarding risks
 - 3 staff conduct with beneficiaries.
- Provide child safeguarding advice locally.

National level child safeguarding focal point

...responsibilities in relation to receiving concerns and complaints

- Maintain basic management and statistical information to give a local picture of the extent and nature of reported abuse and exploitation and liaise with the Director of Global Child Safeguarding at Head Office, on this.
- Initiate regular e.g. monthly, review meetings with Country Director and local level Child Safeguarding Focal Points, which examine all open cases.
- Monitor whether reporting procedures are followed.
- Identify training needs or disciplinary issues where reporting procedures are not being followed.
- Initiate and maintain strong linkages with external agencies in relation to specific reports of abuse.
- Maintain an overall picture of reports and issues.
- Ensure that all staff, representatives and staff of partner agencies are made aware of the contact details of their respective focal points for receiving child safeguarding concerns / complaints.

...responsibilities to provide overall support to the wider implementation of policies and procedures

- Undertake (or arrange for) periodic independent reviews of staff conduct with beneficiaries. This process must include getting direct feedback from children.
- Provide technical and co-ordinating support to the team of focal points to ensure standardised approaches are taken, lessons learned are documented and disseminated, and child safeguarding expertise is built.
- Provide child safeguarding advice locally.
- Work closely with Human Resource Department to ensure all representatives and new recruits are given appropriate and adequate Child Safeguarding Policy induction prior to being sent to the field.

Country director or designate responsibilities

- Liaise with external statutory agencies and their equivalents in non-statutory organisations regarding child safeguarding matters and child abuse cases
- Identify and address training needs of staff in relation to keeping children safe.
- Lead the mapping process to identify and develop Local Child Safeguarding Procedures for reporting and responding to child abuse.
- Build and maintain relationships with partners and other organisations, including national statutory agencies, to promote the continuous development and monitoring of inter-agency child safeguarding practices.
- Support or lead the inter-agency collection and management of information about the reported occurrence of child abuse and exploitation.
- Make decisions or support the decision-making process in individual external reports of incidents, in line with local child safeguarding procedures.
- Train and support child safeguarding focal points and managers in undertaking their respective child safeguarding responsibilities.
- Appoint child safeguarding focal points.
- Work closely with Human Resources Department to ensure that Job Descriptions clearly reflect the specific child safeguarding responsibilities of the respective post-holder, especially those in management positions, and child safeguarding focal points

Remember

During emergencies, staff change fast – either they are given new responsibilities or new staff are brought in locally or from abroad. It is therefore crucial to ensure that all staff are made aware of who has which responsibilities in the organisation to ensure the implementation of the safeguarding policy and its procedures. It is also crucial to ensure that regular updates are done every single time there is a staff change which impacts on the division of responsibility. This update will need to be dated and widely circulated.

For example - Print it and place it on the message board of the office as well as delivering it to concerned partners and communities.

Send it to all by email



Recruitment and selection of staff

1. When you are designing the job, analyse the role and think about the issues of child protection and risk in that job:
 - What contact with children will the job involve?
 - Will the employee have unsupervised access to children, or hold a position of trust?
 - What other sort of contact may the person have with children (e.g. via email, telephone, letter, Internet)?
 2. Develop clear job descriptions, terms of reference / role briefs for all posts including short-term contracts, or where consultants are being recruited.
 3. Make sure that the selection criteria outline the relevant experience needed if the post involves direct work with children.
 4. Make sure that the commitment to keeping children safe is included in details of any post sent to prospective job candidates.
 5. Develop application forms that ask for consent to gain information on a person's past convictions / pending disciplinary proceedings.
 6. Ask for documentation to confirm identity and proof of relevant qualifications.
 7. Make sure you have a well-planned interview process – make sure the interviewers have the relevant experience and knowledge about child protection and best practice.
 8. Include some specific questions in the interview that draw out people's attitudes and values in relation to the protection of children. Can they give examples of where they have acted to protect a child, what they learnt from this, what impact it has had their current practice?
 9. Take up to three references including some from previous employees or others who have knowledge of the candidate's experience and suitability to work with children.
 10. Verify the identity of referees.
 11. Conduct as many background checks as possible.
 12. Consider the use of probationary periods of employment to ensure suitability once in post.
- Make it standard practice to:**
1. Ask questions about extended unemployment breaks on résumés.
 2. Ask questions about people's motivation to work in youth organisations
 3. Ask questions about their relationship with referees – this has often revealed that the referee only has a small amount of knowledge about the person.
 4. Ensure reference checks are done and contact at least two people
 5. If the referees are not suitable, get more.
 6. Always check and / or secure referees from children's organisations.
 7. Check with other referees or managers in an organisation given by the candidate. Often the better person to check, along with the referee given, is the senior manager or director.
 8. Ask referees about the suitability of the candidate to have direct contact with children. Another good question is – "does the referee know of any issues or

incidents involving the candidate and his / her contact with children?”

9. Make notes of the referee's comments and place them on the personal file of the candidate.
10. Keep the resume (bio-data) of the person in their personal file, if recruited, along with any notes made during the interview.
11. Have two international staff and a national staff member at each interview to allow for each person to contribute their feelings about the candidate's suitability to have access to children.

Recruitment checklist

A recruitment checklist will help evaluate whether or not you have the appropriate checks and procedures in place to screen out anyone who may be unsuitable to work with children. The following checklist is adapted from Save the Children's child safeguarding policy

❑ Job advertisements contain reference to the organisation's Safeguarding Policy:

- Put child safeguarding statement in any advertisement for post
- child safeguarding statement and specific responsibilities of the post holder should be included in the job description

❑ Information to candidates includes reference to Child Safeguarding (CS) and CS recruitment and selection procedures

Information to applicants includes:

- summary of child safeguarding policy
- disclosure of convictions form
- consent to criminal records check form

❑ Employment interviews pay attention to CS factors and suitability of candidate to work with children / within CS policies

Develop interview questions to determine attitudes, perceptions, behaviours of the candidate about children / child safeguarding issues (should be general but also specific to the position)

Employment interview:

- identification and resolution of employment gaps
- questions on convictions / disciplinary record
- questions on child safeguarding issues relevant to role

❑ Successful candidates are subject to thorough background checks prior to employment being confirmed Pre-employment vetting:

- criminal record checks
- reference enquiry form to include specific reference to work with children
- sight check on qualifications claimed on application form
- employment history checked through
- passport requested as proof of identity, where available
- reference checks include questions about candidate's previous professional or personal conduct around children (and any concerns)

❑ Any employee who has access to children's data must have the same background checks as those employees who have direct contact with children

- review of staff who have access to child data
- procedures in place to undertake checks

Complaints mechanisms and responding to a concern

At some stage, staff and associates will inevitably be confronted by child safeguarding issues of one kind or another. All staff must immediately report any concerns in accordance with the applicable local office procedures. Although it may seem simple to respond to a concern, to avoid confusion a reporting grid, like that from Plan International below, is useful.

Nature of concern

A minor incident is witnessed or reported to a staff member – e.g. a teacher is seen delivering a mild slap to a child’s leg, a father is reported to have shouted harshly at his son in a village

Recording / reporting action

This is a minor incident / low level abuse and the alleged perpetrator is outside the scope of the Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP).

Therefore no formal reporting required under the CSP, unless in-country / local legislation considers this behaviour to be abusive.

Note: The office may decide to record such incidents for its own monitoring purpose as such incidents may in time give rise to patterns of behaviour that may require some form of intervention, either with an individual or as part of a programme / advocacy response to an identified protection issue that appears to be prevalent.

If this is the case then this decision should be detailed in the local reporting and responding procedures.

Nature of concern

A serious incident is witnessed by a staff member – e.g. a teacher in a school with no association to your organisation hits a child in his class resulting in the child receiving a broken arm

Recording / reporting action

The alleged perpetrator is outside the scope of the CSP, but the scenario here represents a serious physical assault and quite probably a criminal matter.

Therefore reporting under the CSP is required:

- This incident should be reported to the police and within the local office in line with local procedures.
- The incident should be recorded using the Incident / Loss Notification Form and a notification made to the Regional Office (RO) and International Headquarters (IH).

Annual data on cases dealt with is collected by International Headquarters.

Nature of concern

A serious incident external to your organisation (i.e. the alleged perpetrator and victim have no formal relationship with your organisation) is reported to a staff member of your organisation. The staff member is therefore aware of a case of serious physical or sexual abuse in the community and ensures that this is reported to the local statutory agencies responsible for dealing with child protection cases. Your organisation may be active in making or supporting this referral.

Recording / reporting action

The alleged perpetrator is outside the scope of the CSP but the scenario is a serious abuse / crime which has been reported to staff. We need to ensure and track that we have correctly referred the matter on, be aware of and monitor any other level of involvement

Therefore reporting under the CSP is required:

- This incident and referral / support action taken should be reported within the local office in line with local procedures.
- The incident should be recorded using the Incident / Loss Notification Form and a notification made to the RO and IH.
- Details on your organisation's involvement, support / advice given should be recorded.

Annual data on cases dealt with is collected by IH.

Nature of concern

Any incident / concern, serious or minor, reported / witnessed / suspected / rumoured / alleged against a staff member from your organisation, Associate or Visitor.

Recording / reporting action

The alleged perpetrator falls within the scope of the CSP. All incidents whether minor or serious should be reported under the CSP:

- Incidents should be reported in line with the local office in line with local procedures.
- The incident should be recorded using the Incident / Loss Notification Form and a notification made to the RO and IH.

Annual data on cases dealt with is collected by IH.

When a child safeguarding concern is brought to your attention- **ACT**

Act on your concerns. If in doubt, SPEAK OUT!

Child-Centred. The safeguarding of children is the most important consideration.

Time counts. Ensure timely, effective, confidential and appropriate responses to child safeguarding issues.

From Plan International, Child Protection Policy, "Reporting and Responding to Child Protection issues in Plan".

When a concern is brought to your attention

1. Always make sure the child is safe. Address the immediate health and welfare needs of the child.
2. Report any concerns in accordance with applicable local office procedures. A report may be made to the relevant director (Country, Regional, National, IH) depending on the location of the abuse, or your line manager or designated Child Safeguarding Focal Point immediately (but within 24 hours maximum).
3. An allegation of child abuse is a serious issue. In following the Child Safeguarding Policy and local procedures, it is essential that all parties maintain confidentiality. You should share information purely on a 'need to know' basis. In addition, unless abuse has actually been proven, you must always refer to "alleged abuse".
4. Cooperate fully in any investigation of concerns and allegations.
5. All offices should have written procedures in place related to reporting and responding to child safeguarding issues. These should also be available in the local languages and Staff should be familiar with them. Ask the Child Safeguarding Focal Point in your office for a copy of the local procedures.
6. If you are uncertain of what to do, you can speak to the Child Safeguarding Focal Point or your senior manager.

Dos and Don'ts when receiving complaints

Do

- React calmly and listen carefully to what is being said.
- Reassure the complainant that s/he was right to raise the concern.
- Take what is said seriously - the 'unthinkable' is possible.
- Address any immediate protection/ health needs before you undertake any reporting, take proper steps to ensure that the physical safety, psychosocial needs and medical needs of the complainant are addressed. A mapping tool should help identify health agencies and other services that could be contacted to provide an appropriate response to the complainants needs.
- Create trust with the informant
- Gather information in the concern or incident. Ask only the number of questions required to gain a clear understanding of the complaint so that it can be passed on via the appropriate reporting procedures. The best questions to help do this are the "W" questions:
 - "What (happened)?"
 - "Where (did it happen)?"
 - "When (did it happen)?"
 - "Who (did it/was there)?"Asking "why?" something took place is discouraged as is "How?"
- Explain that there are limits to ensuring confidentiality, that information will only be shared on a "need to know" basis and it is in their best interest that the abuse is reported.
- Explain to complainant what will happen next - who in the organisation will be told, and externally who will be told e.g. parents / guardians, health agencies or social services. Inform him / her that you will let them know what happens.
- Report on the complaint, as per the reporting procedure, at the earliest opportunity.

Don't

- Panic or show any extreme reaction (e.g. shock, distaste, disbelief) to what is being said
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Make negative comments or judgemental statements against the person whom the allegation is made. Remain objective.
- Approach or inform the alleged abuser of the complaint made
- Agree to keep secrets
- Permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegation(s)

Recording information

- The use of a standard reporting form is a sensible way of making sure that you gather all the relevant and important information.
- Any concerns, allegations or disclosures should be written down as soon as possible. Records should be signed and dated. It is very important that staff and others never promise confidentiality either to a child disclosing abuse or to an adult disclosing concern about another adult or information about their own behaviour. Staff and others must make it clear that they are obliged to follow this policy and explain the possible outcomes that will result from information being given to them.
- Records should be detailed and precise. They should focus on what you and the other person said, what was observed, who was present and what happened. Speculation and interpretation should be clearly distinguished from reporting.
- Any concern, disclosure or allegation is alleged rather than proven at this point.
- All such records should be treated as confidential. They should be passed only to the persons specified in the reporting model. It is the responsibility of each individual in possession of the information to maintain confidentiality. In certain instances, there will be the obligation for staff and others to report concerns to the appropriate external bodies. This will usually occur as a consequence of the reporting procedure, however if urgent action is required in order to protect children then it may be prior to the reporting procedure.



Possible Signs and Indicators of Abuse

A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse, and it is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening.

Adapted from information provided by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

Physical Abuse

Possible physical signs:

- Bruises, bruising which looks like hand or finger marks, burns, cigarette burns, scalds, sprains, dislocations, human bites, cuts
- Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly
- Untreated or inadequately treated injuries
- Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen

Possible behavioural signs

- Becoming sad, withdrawn or depressed
- Having trouble sleeping
- Behaving aggressively or being disruptive
- Showing fear of certain adults
- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted
- Showing lack of confidence and low self-esteem
- Being very passive and compliant
- Using drugs or alcohol
- Chronic running away

Emotional Abuse

Possible signs:

- Physical, mental and emotional development is delayed
- Highly anxious
- Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder
- Low self-esteem
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing

Sexual Abuse

Possible physical signs

- Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas.
- Genital discharge or urinary tract infections
- Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting
- Sexually transmitted infections

Possible behavioural signs

- A marked change in the child's general behaviour. Unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unusually aggressive.
- Showing unexpected fear or distrust of a particular adult(s).
- Child starts using sexually explicit behaviour or language, particularly if the behaviour or language is not appropriate for their age.
- The child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new "secret" friendship with an adult or young person.

Neglect / Negligent Treatment

Possible signs:

- Dressed inappropriately for the season or the weather (exposure symptoms might include recurrent colds, pneumonia, sunburn, frostbite, etc).
- Poor personal hygiene
- Is inadequately supervised or left in the care of an inappropriate care giver.
- Untreated medical problems
- Frequently hungry
- Is malnourished (this may be seen as being undersized, having low weight and a sallow complexion, lacking body tone, and being constantly tired).
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Low self esteem
- Poor social relationships



Disseminating the policy and procedures

The child safeguarding policy must be made available to all staff and stakeholders. The following is a useful checklist to determine whether the policy and procedure are being disseminated well enough.

Internal

- Ensure all staff receive at least a condensed version of the child safeguarding policy (CSP) in a language they understand.**
- Designate a member(s) of staff with responsibility for distribution.
- Develop supporting documents and materials that explain the policy to staff, in local language(s) as necessary.
- Staff at all levels are briefed / trained on CSP appropriate to their roles.**
- A standard induction programme is developed.
- All staff should receive initial induction / briefing at time of recruitment.
- A system is in place to ensure all staff receive follow up CSP training within three months of induction / recruitment.
- Key issues arising from training are documented for inclusion in future discussions / meetings.
- Training records are kept to track which staff have attended induction and training sessions and to help review their outcomes.
- Ongoing CSP / CSP-related training is scheduled as appropriate.

External

- CSP / local materials disseminated to all partners / other key actors.**
- Develop a list of partners / key actors who should receive CSP, etc.
- Disseminate a condensed version in relevant language(s), accompanied by a covering letter which should indicate plans for subsequent activity as appropriate.
- Agreements reached with partners must include a commitment to implement a child safeguarding policy**
- Develop a checklist of formal and informal partners who require briefing.
- Hold meetings with partners to brief and discuss / develop action plans.
- Develop and implement a work plan to carry out training / support.
- Develop systems to monitor (and document) implementation of action plans (e.g. through checklists, progress meetings).
- Publicise CSP widely, including to children you are working with / in contact with.**
- Identify key groups of children and others who need to be informed, e.g., other beneficiaries, spouses / children of staff.
- Develop and implement a plan for informing these groups.
- An ongoing process should be in place for newly identified groups and refresher sessions.

An appropriate Monitoring and Evaluation system is in place

1. For future monitoring purposes, there is a written plan showing:
 - what steps will be taken to keep children safe
 - who is responsible for implementing these measures
 - the selected indicators against which progress will be measured
 - when these tasks will be completed.
2. Regular monitoring and evaluation visits will be conducted in all projects sites (including those of partner organisations)
3. The human and financial resources necessary for monitoring and evaluation efforts are made available.
4. During emergencies CSP will need to be monitored and evaluated frequently, as the fast-changing situation will mean you need to make constant adjustments.
5. Processes are in place to ask children and parents / carers about their views on policies and procedures for keeping children safe.
6. All incidents, allegations and complaints of abuse are recorded and monitored.
7. Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures
8. A summary is made of the number of incidents of abuse and number of complaints;
9. Monitoring and evaluation visits verify that the Child Safeguarding Measures are known and understood by concerned partners and communities; records of these visits are kept
10. Monitoring and evaluation visits verify that procedures identified for reporting and responding to cases are updated and functional; records of these visits are kept
11. Adjustments are made in the light of monitoring and evaluation results and complaints received; records are kept of the steps taken
12. A record is kept of all monitoring and evaluation visits, including who conducted them, and what future visits are planned.

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Solveig has worked for over 15 years in the humanitarian sector with the United Nations, governmental agencies and INGO's. She specialises in child protection in emergencies and is an expert on children's needs assessment following disasters, programmatic strategy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

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All children,
whoever they are
and wherever they
are, have a right to
be protected.

Lessons learned from the past have shown that too often organisations do not prioritise the safeguarding needs of children when emergencies strike. Yet children suffer the consequences in the absence of such measures and abuse is likely to occur every time an emergency happens.

Safeguarding children in emergencies: a pocket guide provides a handy reference containing the minimum standards required to safeguard children, helpful checklists, and guidance notes.

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