



ROYAL CARE FOUNDATION

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

August 04, 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

The Royal Care Foundation provides grants to support projects and programs catering to the requirements of vulnerable communities and groups. Given the nature of these initiatives, there exists a potential for abuse to occur within the framework of these projects and programs.

Aligned with its mission, the Royal Care Foundation is strategically positioned to advocate for and uphold best practices among its staff and the personnel of its affiliated partners. This includes individuals who are directly or indirectly involved in working with Vulnerable Persons and Communities.

The objectives of this policy are:

- a) To advocate for and guarantee the protection of Vulnerable Persons and Communities directly supported by Royal Care Foundation and its affiliated partners.
- b) To establish mechanisms that ensure the reporting and resolution of any instances of abuse against Vulnerable Persons within the framework of Royal Care Foundation's projects and programs.

2. VULNERABLE PERSONS COVERED BY THE POLICY

- a) All individuals below the age of eighteen, including children and young people, deserve protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence. This commitment aligns with the fundamental rights outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989
- b) Vulnerable adults, defined as individuals aged eighteen and above who, due to various reasons, are unable to care for or protect themselves against harm or exploitation, are entitled to specific protection.
- c) Both children and vulnerable adults, (collectively referred to as "Vulnerable Persons,") possess individual rights and must be treated with dignity and respect.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of the Board are responsible for:

- a) Ensuring adequate measures are in place to assess and address safeguarding risks.
- b) Putting in place adequate safeguarding policies and procedures, including relevant HR matters.
- c) Making sure policies and procedures are effectively applied in practice and that mechanisms are in place to assure compliance.
- d) Ensuring those safeguarding policies, practices, and performance are robustly and regularly reviewed to ensure they are up to date and fit for purpose.
- e) Actively promoting a safe culture and strong awareness of everyone's safeguarding responsibilities.
- f) Taking steps to help deter and prevent safeguarding issues from occurring.
- g) Ensuring there are mechanisms in place to promptly identify and act upon emerging safeguarding trends or issues.
- h) Ensuring that serious incidents are reported to the appropriate authorities.

The Strategic Management Team is responsible for:

- a) Ensuring the policy is implemented.
- b) Discussing safeguarding matters at Strategic Management Team meetings at periodic intervals to help ensure progress and address any challenges with implementing the policy and any cases arising.
- c) Presenting an annual safeguarding report on any instances and action taken/lessons learned to the Board.

The Safeguarding Officer is also responsible for:

- ❖ Ensuring awareness raising/training is undertaken for staff and stakeholders.

All Managers are responsible for:

- a) Ensuring all new employees receive policy training as part of their induction.
- b) Ensuring measures are implemented within their area of responsibility.
- c) Following up and addressing issues appropriately.

HR staff is responsible for:

- a) Implementing the necessary protective procedures when recruiting new staff.
- b) Documenting who has signed the policy.
- c) Ensuring that briefing on this policy is built into Induction processes.

All staff are responsible for:

- a) Adhering to this policy and the Code of Conduct.
- b) Reporting concerns using the Whistleblowing policy and procedures set out in the Code of Conduct.

4. CONTEXT

The Royal Care Foundation expects commitment and action from its staff and all stakeholders at national and international levels, to stop and prevent abuse of vulnerable persons.

- a. Abuse** is any behavior towards a person that causes harm, endangers life, or violates rights. Examples of abuse include:
- I. Physical abuse.
 - II. Sexual abuse.
 - III. Sexual exploitation including:
 - i. Sexual relations with a person under the age of 18 regardless of the age of consent.
 - ii. Use of prostitutes even if locally legal.
 - IV. Commercial exploitation, including child labor and modern slavery.
 - V. Financial or material – stealing or denying access to money or possessions, expecting favors of any kind in exchange for Royal Care Foundation assets or involvement in a project.
 - VI. Emotional abuse.
 - VII. Neglect and negligent treatment;
 - VIII. Discrimination – abuse motivated by discriminatory attitudes towards age, race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or cultural background.

Promoting and ensuring the protection of Vulnerable Persons from abuse and exploitation is an important element of the Royal Care Foundation's mission.

5. PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

- a.** The Royal Care Foundation staff, Board members, volunteers, and contractors (referred to as "staff" hereafter) shall adhere to the following principles:
- I. All Vulnerable Persons have rights as individuals, without discrimination of any kind and irrespective of race, color, sex, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic, or social origin, property, disability, sexual orientation, birth or other status.
 - II. All Vulnerable Persons have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
 - III. All Vulnerable Persons shall be encouraged to fulfill their potential and inequalities shall be challenged.
 - IV. The welfare of Vulnerable Persons should be safeguarded and promoted.
 - V. Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of Vulnerable Persons.
 - VI. Non-profit or development organizations have a particular duty of care to Vulnerable Persons with whom they work and come into contact with and with whom their representative's work.
 - VII. If a non-profit or development organization works through partners, they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for the Vulnerable Persons involved in their partners' programs.
 - VIII. Recognition of the importance of working in partnership with Royal Care Foundation's Partners in the protection of Vulnerable Persons.
 - IX. Staff will be viewed as representatives of the Royal Care Foundation

even when not during working hours and their responsibility to act following this policy therefore applies at all times.

- b. Royal Care Foundation staff shall strive to make Royal Care Foundation's activities safe and caring environment(s) for all people, and in particular Vulnerable Persons.

A **Caring Environment** is one:

- I. in which the health, safety, and welfare of Vulnerable Persons have been assessed and catered for;
- II. in which staff are aware of the possibility of abuse and take reasonable measures to prevent that possibility; and
- III. where there is a sound and known reporting system for any incident.

- c. Activities undertaken by Royal Care Foundation shall be planned, organized, and delivered by the principles of Royal Care Foundation's Policy for Safeguarding of Vulnerable Persons.

6. PARTNERS

Royal Care Foundation will advance the protection of Vulnerable Persons, where possible, through its relationships with its partners, considering the particularities of the development context in which Royal Care Foundation operates.

Royal Care Foundation expects its partners to pursue their work in the same spirit and create a Caring Environment for Vulnerable Persons.

Royal Care Foundation expects partners who work directly with Vulnerable Persons to develop an appropriate code of conduct that identifies the types of prohibited conduct that would cause abuse to Vulnerable Persons and provides guidance for their staff to avoid any acts of abuse against Vulnerable Persons. In pursuing this goal, the Royal Care Foundation recommends as a reference the resource material provided by the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance, in particular.

Royal Care Foundation therefore will:

- a. Implement in its template for agreements with partners, consultants, and service providers or grantees (together "**Royal Care Foundation partners**") a clause, which aims to ensure the adherence of Royal Care Foundation's partners to this Policy for Safeguarding of Vulnerable Persons. The clause shall read as follows:

"Royal Care Foundation believes that all vulnerable persons, meaning children under the age of eighteen years and vulnerable adults, require protection from all forms of abuse and exploitation.

Wishing to promote and ensure the highest standards in this regard, Royal Care Foundation expects the Recipient [alternatively: the consultant/ the service provider/ the partner] to adhere to its Policy for Safeguarding of

Vulnerable Persons and to promote the values and standards laid down in this Policy in its work.”

- b. Actively promote its Policy for Safeguarding of Vulnerable Persons by making the Policy publicly available through the Royal Care Foundation website (www.royalcarefoundation.org); and
- c. Provide relevant guidance to Royal Care Foundation’s partners, aimed at the safeguarding of Vulnerable Persons.

7. PROCEDURE

- a. Royal Care Foundation expects its staff to be alert to signs that may suggest a Vulnerable Person is at risk of abuse or exploitation. Royal Care Foundation also expects the employees of Royal Care Foundation’s partners to adopt the same approach.
- b. Royal Care Foundation shall treat any allegation or concern regarding the abuse of a Vulnerable Person seriously. The reporting procedure outlined below shall be followed strictly by Royal Care Foundation staff. In following the reporting procedure, particular care shall be taken concerning an individual’s right to privacy and confidentiality when information is shared with appropriate people in the course of following up an allegation.
- c. To facilitate reporting, the Royal Care Foundation has designated a **Safeguarding Officer**, who shall be responsible for ensuring that the Policy for the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Persons is implemented and followed. The Safeguarding Officer is the Director of Strategic Operations.

The role of the **Safeguarding Officer** is to:

- I. Receive and register reports of abuse of Vulnerable Persons from Royal Care Foundation staff or staff of Royal Care Foundation’s partners.
 - II. Collect additional information as appropriate.
 - III. Assess risk.
 - IV. Consult with Royal Care Foundation’s leadership, legal staff, program staff, and Country Managers as appropriate.
 - V. When appropriate, consult with external organizations including partners, local agencies, and community leaders.
 - VI. Make a formal referral if appropriate to the Royal Care Foundation Senior Management (Operations) Committee, Royal Care Foundation’s partners, or local authorities.
- d. If any of the following incidents occur, a Royal Care Foundation staff member must make a report to the Safeguarding Officer:
 - I. Abuse is observed or suspected.
 - II. An allegation of abuse is made.

- III. A Vulnerable Person discloses abuse.
- IV. A complaint is made about the possible abuse or exploitation of a Vulnerable Person by a Royal Care Foundation staff member or partner.

Upon receipt of the report, the Safeguarding Officer shall act as appropriate, following the reporting procedure as outlined above.

- e. Royal Care Foundation staff working on project development or monitoring have to be alert to possibilities of the abuse and exploitation of Vulnerable Persons. If such abuse or exploitation is observed, Royal Care Foundation staff has to inform the Safeguarding Officer. The staff member should not attempt to investigate the allegation or to discuss it further other than with the Safeguarding Officer who is responsible for further investigation and, if necessary, referral to the police and/or appropriate local authority in the jurisdiction where the reported incident has or may have taken place.
- f. Royal Care Foundation expects its partners to develop and implement a relevant protection and reporting procedure, in line with the size and complexity of their organization, based on relevant risk assessment and observation of the international standards, as promoted, inter alia, by the Keeping Children Safe Coalition and the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance.
- g. Where a Royal Care Foundation project includes working directly with vulnerable persons (e.g. young people taking part in a workshop), a risk assessment must be carried out in advance and approved by a member of staff. This will include factors such as travel to/from the event; the need for chaperones; safe spaces; access to washrooms and parental consent.

8. REPORTING ABUSE

The Safeguarding Officer, after being informed of an allegation, will make a preliminary assessment, and determine the course of action appropriate to the seriousness of the alleged offense. As a matter of principle, once it is decided that an alleged abuse needs to be investigated, then the Safeguarding Officer will disclose all relevant information to the Senior Management (Operations) Committee.

The following are key steps in any process to substantiate any reported allegations:

a. Investigate

The Safeguarding Officer will consult with the Royal Care Foundation managers as appropriate; if the abuse occurred within the context of a project, both the relevant Executive Director and the relevant program lead will be consulted.

The allegation will be investigated and the individual(s) concerned informed of the allegations against him or her, and the course of action to be taken. At the same time, the Safeguarding Officer will ensure that all information in the possession of the individual suspected is secured for investigation. If appropriate to safeguard Royal Care Foundation during the investigation period, the individual alleged to have committed the abuse may be taken out of his/her position. This may mean the individual is put into another position, put on leave with pay, or suspended without pay.

b. Collect evidence.

Depending on the magnitude and the complexity of the offense, investigations will be carried out by the Royal Care Foundation or where deemed appropriate, by local authorities. The involvement of external parties must be approved by the Safeguarding Officer.

c. Report

Ensuring a report is issued on a timely basis detailing the findings and conclusions of the investigation including recommendations for action to be taken. The report will only be disclosed to the Executive Director and Board, and others with a need to know. This is important to avoid damaging the reputation of those suspected of wrongdoing and subsequently found innocent.

9. ACTION

In all cases, the course of action will be determined in consultation with the relevant Director and the Royal Care Foundation's legal team.

10. PREVENTION

- a.** Royal Care Foundation will follow preventative measures to make the workplace and Royal Care Foundation's projects and programs safe for vulnerable people. Such measures will also protect staff and the reputation of the organization. The Royal Care Foundation will also encourage its Partners to adopt the highest possible standards in accordance with the scope of their operations and structure.
- b.** Royal Care Foundation will ensure that all Royal Care Foundation staff and partners working directly with Vulnerable Persons and, in particular, with children, introduce a system of checks when recruiting new staff that considers the following if appropriate:
 - I. The same standards should be applied to paid, non-paid, short-term, or permanent staff.
 - II. When a new job is being designed, the role and the issues of child and vulnerable adult protection and risk in that job shall be carefully considered:
 - a)** What contact with children or vulnerable adults will the job involve?
 - b)** Will the employee have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults, or hold a position of trust?
 - c)** What other sort of contact may the person have with children or vulnerable adults (e.g. via email, telephone, letter, Internet)?
 - III. Making clear in job descriptions, terms of reference/role briefs for all posts (including where short-term contracts or consultants are being recruited) – whether the role includes any specific responsibility for working with Vulnerable Persons and for safeguarding.
 - IV. For all positions, the selection criteria will include the need to understand and abide by the Royal Care Foundation's organizational policies and values.
 - V. Where relevant, the selection criteria shall outline the relevant experience needed and:

- a) Application forms that ask for consent to gain information on a person's past convictions/pending disciplinary proceedings shall be developed and documentation to confirm identity and proof of relevant qualifications shall be requested, this is applicable for roles that involve safeguarding issues.
 - b) The interview process shall be well planned and the interviewers have the relevant experience and knowledge about child and vulnerable adult protection and best practice and how to question the candidate appropriately to elicit responses on this subject.
- VI. Up to three employment-based references, including the most recent employer, shall be taken and the identity of referees shall be verified by ensuring that references are received on headed paper or company/organization email addresses. Questions should be asked regarding conduct as well as job performance. Where the postholder will have responsibility for working with children or vulnerable adults, the reference request will include a particular question regarding the suitability of the candidate to work with this group.
- VII. As many background checks as possible should be conducted.
- VIII. The use of probationary periods of employment to ensure suitability once in post shall be considered.
- c. Staff and partners working directly with Vulnerable Persons and, in particular, with children, should assess the possible ways that children come into communication contact with staff, and decide what procedures they need to follow to prevent possible abuse through digital communication such as SMS text, email, internet chat rooms, photo phones, digital cameras, etc.
- d. Royal Care Foundation and partners working directly or indirectly with Vulnerable Persons, and in particular with children, will foster and implement guidance for staff responsible for events/activities involving children in a development context.

11. SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Royal Care Foundation expects its staff, volunteers, partners, and in particular, those working directly with children, to use the Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF) Child Protection Self Audit Toolkit to assist in good project design and delivery. This toolkit is annexed to this Policy as Annex 1.

ANNEX 1

CHILD PROTECTION

The list below provides additional standards to support effective child protection and will assist staff and partners when working with children and young people.

Children and the organization

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- 1 The organization and its local partners are very clear about its responsibility to protect children and make this known to all who come into contact with them.

 - 2 The way staff and local partners behave towards children suggests that they are committed to protecting children from abuse.

 - 3 There is good awareness of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC) or other children's rights instruments and this is seen as a basis for child protection in the organization.

 - 4 Managers and senior staff ensure that children are listened to and consulted and that their rights are met.

 - 5 The organization and its local partners make it clear that all children have equal protection rights.

 - 6 The organization and its local partners manage children's behavior in ways that are non-violent and do not degrade or humiliate children.
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Policies and procedures that help keep children and young people safe

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- 1 The organization and its local partners have a written child protection policy or some clear arrangements to make sure that children are kept safe from harm.

 - 2 The policy or arrangements are approved and endorsed by the relevant management body (e.g. senior management, board, executive, committee).

3 The policy or arrangements have to be followed by everyone.

4 There are clear child protection procedures in place that are provided step-by-step.
guidance on what action to take if there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare.

5 There is a named child protection person/s with a clearly defined role and responsibilities.

6 The child protection procedures also take account of local circumstances.

Preventing harm to children and young people

1 There are policies and procedures or agreed ways of recruiting staff and assessing their suitability to work with children, including where possible police and reference checks.

2 There are written guidelines for behavior or some way of describing to staff and local partners what behavior is acceptable and unacceptable especially when it comes to contact with children.

3 The consequences of breaking the guidelines on behavior are clear and linked to organizational disciplinary procedures.

4 Guidance exists on the appropriate use of information technology such as the Internet, websites, digital cameras, etc. to ensure that children are not put at risk.

5 Where there is direct responsibility for running/providing activities, including residential care, children are adequately supervised and protected at all times.

6 There are well-publicized ways in which staff can raise concerns, confidentially, if necessary, about unacceptable behavior by other staff or representatives.

Implementation and training

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- 1 There is clear guidance to staff, local partners, and other organizations (including funding organizations) on how children will be kept safe.

 - 2 Child protection must be applied in ways that are culturally sensitive but without condoning acts that are harmful to children.

 - 3 There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe.

 - 4 All members of staff and volunteers in the organization and its local partners have training on child protection which includes an introduction to the organization's child protection policy and procedures where these exist.

 - 5 All members of staff and local partners are provided with opportunities to learn about how to recognize and respond to concerns about child abuse.

 - 6 Work has been undertaken with all local partners to agree on good practice expectations based on these standards.
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Information and communication

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- 1 Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse.

 - 2 Everyone in the organization and the local partners know which named staff member has special responsibilities for keeping children safe and how to contact them.

 - 3 Contact details are readily available for local child protection resources, safe places, national authorities, and emergency medical help.

 - 4 Children are provided with information on where to go for help and advice concerning abuse, harassment, and bullying.

 - 5 Contacts are established at a national and/or local level with the relevant child protection/welfare agencies as appropriate.

 - 6 Staff members with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support, and information.
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Monitoring and review

1 Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection measures put in place by the organization.

2 Steps are taken to regularly ask children and parents/carers their views on policies and practices aimed at keeping children safe and the effectiveness of these.

3 The organization uses the experience of operating child protection to influence policy and practice development.

4 All incidents, allegations of abuse, and complaints are recorded and monitored.

5 Policies and practices are reviewed at regular intervals, ideally at least every three years.

6 Children and parents/carers are consulted as part of these safeguarding policies and practices reviews.

Adapted from Keeping Children Safe