

COMMONWEALTH ORGANISATION FOR SOCIAL WORK

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1 Introduction

The Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW) is committed to ensuring the safety, protection, and well-being of all individuals, especially vulnerable populations, involved in our programs, activities, and services. This Safeguarding Policy outlines our commitment to creating a safe and secure environment and preventing harm, abuse, or exploitation within our organization.

2 Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding refers to the protection of individuals, particularly children, young people, and adults at risk, from abuse, harm, neglect, and exploitation. It also involves promoting their well-being, ensuring their rights are respected, and providing support and assistance when needed.

3 Principles

COSW adheres to the following safeguarding principles:

- 3.1. Zero Tolerance: COSW has a zero-tolerance approach towards all forms of abuse, neglect, harm, or exploitation.
- 3.2. Respect for Rights: We respect the rights, dignity, and autonomy of all individuals, regardless of age, gender, race, disability, or other characteristics.
- 3.3. Accountability: COSW is accountable for preventing and responding to safeguarding concerns, and we will take appropriate action to address them.
- 3.4. Transparency: We maintain transparency in our safeguarding policies, procedures, and reporting mechanisms.

4 Responsibilities

- 4.1. Board and Senior Management: The COSW Board and senior management team are responsible for setting the organization's safeguarding agenda, ensuring adequate resources, and overseeing compliance with this policy.
- 4.2. Employees and Volunteers: All COSW employees, volunteers, and contractors must adhere to this policy and report any safeguarding concerns promptly.
- 4.3. Partners and Stakeholders: COSW will collaborate with partners and stakeholders who share our commitment to safeguarding principles and ensure they adhere to our standards.

5 Safeguarding Measures

5.1. Recruitment and Selection: COSW conducts thorough background checks and screening processes for employees and volunteers who work with vulnerable populations.

5.2. Training and Awareness: We provide training and awareness programs to employees and volunteers to recognize, prevent, and respond to safeguarding concerns.

5.3. Reporting Mechanisms: COSW maintains clear and accessible reporting mechanisms for safeguarding concerns, ensuring anonymity and protection for whistleblowers.

5.4. Response and Support: We have procedures in place for responding to safeguarding concerns, including offering appropriate support and assistance to victims and affected parties.

6 Reporting and Investigation

COSW will promptly investigate all safeguarding concerns and take appropriate action based on the findings. We will cooperate fully with relevant authorities in cases involving criminal activity.

7 Confidentiality and Data Protection

We respect the confidentiality and privacy of all individuals involved in safeguarding concerns, ensuring that their personal information is handled in accordance with data protection laws.

8 Review and Monitoring

This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with evolving best practices and legal requirements.

9 Conclusion

COSW remains dedicated to promoting a safe and nurturing environment for all individuals, particularly those who are vulnerable. This Safeguarding Policy is a testament to our commitment to ensuring the well-being and protection of all participants in our programs and activities.

Approved by:

COSW Board

27 January 2024