

Safeguarding Policy

1. Purpose and Statement of Commitment

World Aid Network (WAN) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all people who come into contact with the charity, particularly children, young people and adults at risk. The trustees recognise that safeguarding is a key governance priority for every charity, regardless of its size or activities, and is a legal duty under the Charities Act 2011.

This policy reflects the standards set out in the Charity Commission for England and Wales guidance "Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees" ([gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-protecting-people-for-charities-and-trustees](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-protecting-people-for-charities-and-trustees)) and applies to all trustees, employees, volunteers, contractors, partners and any other person acting on behalf of WAN, whether in the United Kingdom or overseas.

2. Scope: Who We Safeguard

This policy applies to:

- beneficiaries of WAN's humanitarian and clinical activities, including patients attending screening or surgical camps;
- children (any person under 18) and adults at risk, as defined by the Care Act 2014, who come into contact with the charity or its partners;
- trustees, employees, volunteers, interns and visitors;
- donors, supporters, members of the public and anyone else who interacts with WAN, including online.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

WAN operates in line with all applicable UK legislation and guidance, including (but not limited to):

- Charities Act 2011 and the Charity Governance Code;
- Children Act 1989 and 2004; Working Together to Safeguard Children (current edition);
- Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance on safeguarding adults;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012;
- Sexual Offences Act 2003;
- Modern Slavery Act 2015;
- UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018;
- Equality Act 2010;
- relevant local laws and recognised international standards (such as the IASC Six Core Principles on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) in the territories where partners operate.

4. Trustees' Duty

The board of trustees holds collective and ultimate responsibility for safeguarding within WAN. Trustees will:

- take reasonable steps to protect from harm anyone who comes into contact with the

charity;

- treat safeguarding as a standing item at every board meeting;
- maintain and review this policy and associated procedures at least annually, or sooner if circumstances change;
- ensure adequate resources, training and support are provided to deliver safe activities;
- promote a culture in which concerns can be raised openly and acted on promptly.

5. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The board appoints a Designated Safeguarding Lead from among the trustees. The DSL is the first point of contact for all safeguarding matters and is responsible for:

- receiving, recording and triaging safeguarding concerns and disclosures;
- liaising with statutory agencies (police, local authority children's and adults' social care, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where applicable, and the Disclosure and Barring Service);
- reporting Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission in line with section 9 of this policy;
- overseeing safer recruitment and induction practices;
- ensuring trustees, staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training.

Pending the formal appointment of the DSL, the Lead Trustee for Operations performs this role. The DSL may be contacted in confidence at safeguarding@worldaidnetwork.org or by post to the registered office.

6. Safer Recruitment, Induction and Training

All trustees, employees and volunteers are recruited under safer recruitment principles, including:

- a written role description specifying any contact with children or adults at risk;
- verification of identity, right to work and qualifications;
- two satisfactory written references, taken up before appointment;
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks at the appropriate level (basic, standard, enhanced or enhanced with barred-list check) for any role eligible under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 and the Police Act 1997;
- equivalent local vetting arrangements for personnel engaged through overseas partners, recorded in the partner's due-diligence file;
- a probationary period for paid roles;
- a structured safeguarding induction within four weeks of appointment.

All trustees and personnel complete safeguarding awareness training on appointment and refresher training at least every two years. The DSL completes higher-level training appropriate to the role.

7. Code of Behaviour

All persons acting on behalf of WAN must:

- treat every beneficiary, colleague and member of the public with dignity and respect;

- never engage in any form of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse, exploitation, harassment, bullying or discrimination;
- avoid being alone with a child or adult at risk wherever possible, and never in private settings;
- follow gender-sensitive screening and clinical procedures, including separate, appropriately staffed screening areas;
- obtain informed consent before any clinical examination, treatment or use of an individual's image or story;
- never offer or accept gifts, favours or payments that could be perceived as inappropriate or as a bribe (see the Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy);
- declare any relationships, conflicts of interest or prior allegations relevant to safeguarding;
- report any concern about the conduct of another person in accordance with section 8.

8. Recognising and Reporting Concerns

Safeguarding concerns may include disclosures of harm, observed indicators of abuse or neglect, allegations against a person in a position of trust, "near misses" and any incident that suggests a risk to people. All concerns must be taken seriously.

Procedure:

- Where a person is in immediate danger or a crime may have been committed, contact the emergency services on 999 (or the local equivalent) without delay.
- Report the concern to the DSL on the same day, and in any event within 24 hours, using the Safeguarding Incident Form.
- The DSL records the concern on the confidential Safeguarding Register, considers immediate protective action, and decides what onward referrals are required (police, local authority, LADO, DBS, regulator overseas, etc.).
- The DSL informs the Chair of Trustees promptly. Where a concern relates to the Chair or DSL, it must be reported to any other independent trustee under the Whistleblowing Policy.
- Records are retained securely in line with the Data Protection Policy and statutory retention periods.

9. Reporting Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission

The trustees will report Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission promptly, in line with the Commission's published guidance "How to report a serious incident in your charity".

Reportable safeguarding incidents include, but are not limited to:

- any incident in which beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others have been, or are alleged to have been, abused or exploited while in contact with the charity;
- any breach of safeguarding policies, procedures or codes of conduct;
- any incident giving rise to a referral to police, social services, LADO or DBS;
- a significant loss of money or assets, fraud, theft or financial irregularity;
- any incident that has caused, or risks causing, significant harm to the charity's beneficiaries, reputation, finances or operations.

Reports are submitted via the Commission's online RSI service at gov.uk. The DSL keeps a log of all Serious Incident Reports and the Commission's responses.

10. Working with Partners and Overseas Operations

WAN delivers programmes through accredited partner organisations overseas. Every partner agreement requires the partner to:

- maintain its own written safeguarding policy aligned with WAN's standards and the IASC Core Principles on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse;
- appoint a named safeguarding focal point with a secure reporting line to the WAN DSL;
- apply equivalent vetting checks to all personnel involved in clinical or beneficiary-facing work;
- report any safeguarding incident to WAN within 24 hours;
- cooperate fully with any investigation, audit or onward statutory referral.

Failure to meet these standards is grounds for immediate suspension of grant payments under the Grant-making Policy and may itself trigger a Serious Incident Report.

11. Whistleblowing and Confidentiality

Anyone who believes that a safeguarding concern is not being addressed, or who fears retaliation, is encouraged to raise the matter through the Whistleblowing Policy.

Whistleblowers are protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and may report directly to the Charity Commission, which is a "prescribed person" for charity-related disclosures. No person will suffer detriment for raising a concern in good faith.

12. Communication, Online Safety and Imagery

WAN follows the Social Media Policy and Data Protection Policy when communicating about beneficiaries. Photographs, video and case studies are only used with informed, recorded consent, never identify children or adults at risk without specific safeguards, and never depict people in a way that strips them of dignity.

13. Risk Management and Review

Safeguarding risks form a dedicated section of WAN's Risk Register and are reviewed at every quarterly board meeting. This policy is reviewed annually by the trustees, and immediately following any material change in legislation, regulator guidance, or after any Serious Incident.