

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

PRAGYA

*This policy was formulated in October, 2018 and last updated/ reviewed on 1/4/2019.
Next review will be on 1/4/2020.*

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy asserts Pragma's commitments to safeguarding the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable communities that we work with and applies to all members of Pragma (including all staff, trustees, consultants, interns, volunteers) and all associates of Pragma (including all vendors, supporters, partners, suppliers). This policy covers both child and adult safety and well-being.

1.2 This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles cited in The Children's Act 2004 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), with special reference to article 19, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD), the UN Secretary General's Bulletin on Special measures for Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse issued in 2003, Care Act 2014, *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights*] aimed at safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Pragma strongly adopts the "do no harm" principle in delivery of all its projects.

1.3 Pragma has zero tolerance towards abuse and exploitation of vulnerable people. Every member associated with Pragma in whatsoever capacity including those mentioned in section 1.1 will have to adhere to and internalize the following principles:

1.3.1 Everyone has an equal right to protection from abuse and exploitation regardless of age, race, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or having a child, gender reassignment, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

1.3.2 The interests of the vulnerable person will guide the decision making at all levels of the organisation.

1.4 The aims of this policy are:

1.4.1 To provide an environment in which children and vulnerable people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, feel confident and know whom to approach if they are in difficulties.

1.4.2 To raise the awareness of all staff of the need to safeguard children and vulnerable people and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.

1.4.3 To acknowledge the need for effective and appropriate communication between all members of staff in relation to safeguarding the children and vulnerable people we work with.

1.4.4 To develop a structured procedure within the organisation which will be followed by all members of staff in cases of suspected abuse.

1.4.5 To ensure that all members within our organisation who have access to children and vulnerable people have been checked as to their suitability.

2. Definitions:

2.1 Safeguarding: Promoting and protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, exploitation and abuse. An Organisation has to ensure that their employees and volunteers, partners, vendors, operations and programmes do no harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults (together referred to as 'vulnerable people' under this policy); that they do not expose them to the risk of

discrimination, neglect, harm and abuse; and that any concerns the organisation has about the safety of vulnerable people within the communities in which they work, are dealt with and reported to the appropriate authorities. The organisation also has the responsibility for protecting its employees and volunteers when they are vulnerable, for example, when ill or at risk of harm or abuse.

2.2 Abuse: A violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take the form of physical, psychological, financial or sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Abuse can be a single act or repeated acts and can be unintentional or deliberate.

2.3 An Adult at risk: A person, 18 years and above, who by reason of disability, age, gender, social and economic status, illness, or the context they are in, may be unable to take care of or to protect him or herself against abuse, harm or exploitation.

2.4 Discriminatory abuse: Abuse motivated by a vulnerable person's age, race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or other personal characteristic.

2.5 Designated Person: An employee of Pragma who is assigned the responsibility of implementing this policy and ensuring timely reporting.

2.5 Financial or material abuse: It includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

2.6 Physical abuse: It includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

2.7 Psychological abuse – It includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Examples include not giving a vulnerable person opportunities to express her/his views, deliberately silencing her/him or 'making fun' of what s/he says or how s/he communicates. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a vulnerable person, which may include interactions that are beyond a vulnerable person's developmental capability. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), or the exploitation or corruption of a vulnerable person.

2.8 Sexual abuse: It involves forcing, enticing or coercing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the vulnerable person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving a vulnerable person in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse can be carried out by adults or other children.

2.9 Child: Anyone under the age of 18 years, irrespective of the age of majority in the country in which the child lives or in their home country.

2.10 Vulnerable person/people: For the purposes of this policy this is an umbrella term that covers children, young people and vulnerable adults.

2.11 Youth or young people – It covers individuals in the age group of 15 to 25. This group spans the categories of 'children and 'adults' but young people as a group have particular safeguarding needs and require distinct consideration aside from younger children and older adults.

3. Staff recruitment:

3.1 Staff recruitment: All recruitment of staff will include a full induction to the safeguarding policy, code of conduct and other policies, including procedures to follow should any safeguarding concern arise. While recruiting, the selection panel will make sure that questions regarding safeguarding are included in job interviews,

and that any roles with safeguarding responsibilities have those responsibilities explicitly outlined within the job description. During reference checks, information should be sought from previous employers / academic references to get more information of the suitability of candidate(s) in this regard.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 The Board of Trustees takes seriously its responsibility towards its beneficiaries, and has determined to follow international best practice to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable people; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our organisation to identify, assess, and support those who are suffering harm.

4.2 We recognise that all staff, trustees and volunteers have a full and active part to play in protecting children and vulnerable people we work with from harm, and that their welfare is our paramount concern. Pragma believes that our services should provide a safe, caring, positive and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

4.3 Pragma personnel are responsible for:

4.3.1 Referring the case, if there are concerns about a possible abuse or neglect, to the appropriate local authority of that country. A written referral will be faxed/posted/emailed to the local authority as soon as possible after becoming aware that the situation offers cause for concern.

4.3.2 Ensuring that all staff, including extension workers from the partner organisations, are aware of Pragma's Safeguarding policy and procedures, and know how to recognise and refer any concerns.

4.3.3 The designated person is responsible for providing an annual report to the Board of Trustees, detailing all the incidents and cases that were raised, including any changes necessary to the policy and procedures.

4.3.4 Keeping herself/himself up to date with knowledge to enable her/him to fulfil her/his role, including refresher training, as and when organised.

5. Confidentiality

5.1 We recognise that all matters relating to safeguarding are confidential.

5.2 The Designated Person will disclose personal information about a young person or child to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

5.3 However, all staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and vulnerable people.

5.4 All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child or a vulnerable person to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another.

6. Supporting Staff

6.1 We recognise that staff working in Pragma who have become involved with a child or a vulnerable person who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

6.2 We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Designated Person and to seek further support. This could be provided for all staff by, for example, the manager, or as appropriate.

6.3 We recognise that designated staff should have access to support and appropriate workshops, courses or meetings.

7. Allegations against staff

7.1 All Pragya staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child or a vulnerable person. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or vulnerable person to be conducted in view of other adults. Pragya strongly discourages any extra-work relationship between a development worker and a member of the community that we are working with. In the event of the formation of any such relationship, it has to be reported by the concerned staff member or his / her colleagues or the Manager to the Head of the unit.

7.2 We understand that a young or vulnerable person may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the manager or the seniormost person if the manager is not present.

7.2.1 The manager on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Designated Person for the implementation of the safeguarding policy.

7.2.2 If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the manager, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform a member of the Board of Trustees who will consult without notifying the manager first. The matter should be brought to the notice of the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

7.2.3 Suspension or termination of the member of staff against whom an allegation has been made needs careful consideration, and we will consult at the highest level in making this decision.

8. Whistleblowing

8.1 We recognise that children and vulnerable people cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

8.2 All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they should speak to the delegated 'whistleblowing' Trustee or the Designated Person for Safeguarding.

9. Physical Intervention/Positive Handling

9.1 Staff must use physical intervention as an absolute last resort, e.g. when a child or a vulnerable person is endangering him/herself or others and that, at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

9.2 Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.

9.3 Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention should be appropriately trained.

9.4 We understand that physical intervention of a nature, which causes injury or distress to a child, may be considered under disciplinary procedures.

10. Racist & Discrimination Incidents

10.1 Pragya will not work with partners, which explicitly discriminate on grounds of race, caste, or ethnicity. With regard to organisations, which do not openly discriminate in these terms, it is acknowledged that repeated incidents of discrimination or a single serious incident may lead to consideration of breaking the partnership.

11. Data Protection

11.1 All staff have to ensure that personal information is kept confidential unless we have the agreement of the individual and/or her/his parent/guardian, except where it is necessary to pass this to a specialised child welfare or law enforcement agency in relation to a safeguarding incident.

12. Policy Review

12.1 The Board of Trustees of Pragma is responsible for ensuring the annual review of this policy.