

COMHLÁMH'S SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

Comhlámh is a member organisation that works to mobilise for an equitable and sustainable world. As the Irish association of development workers and volunteers, Comhlámh promotes responsible, responsive international volunteering and development work. We support people in their journey of working for social justice, working with returned volunteers, partner organisations and member group to foster just, inclusive societies, through progressive grassroots activism in Ireland and internationally. Comhlámh recognises it has a duty of care and is fully committed to the safeguarding of children and adults experiencing vulnerability in order to ensure that no person is harmed or placed at risk of harm as a result of their association with us. We believe that all people have a right to protection against all forms of abuse and harm, that the welfare and protection of all children and adults experiencing vulnerability is paramount and that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility in Comhlámh. Comhlámh seeks to create a safe environment for all. We believe that all children and adults experiencing vulnerability, including those seeking asylum and within refugee and migrant families; those from ethnic minority groups, those with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ people; and those living in poverty, have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously; have self-agency and the right to participate in as active global citizens contributing to decisions that affect their lives as well as to their own communities and wider society. We exercise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children and adults experiencing vulnerability through a commitment to the implementation of a rigorous code of behaviour, policies, and implementation procedures. We are also committed to actively building the capacity of Volunteering Sending Agencies (VSAs) to develop appropriate policies and procedures to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse or sexual exploitation.

- We are committed to placing the victim/survivor at the centre of implementing all policies, practices, and procedures, ensuring the protection of victims/survivors and their families against stigmatisation and further risk.
- We are committed to implementing robust whistle-blowing policies rooted in protected disclosure principles.
- We are committed to a zero-tolerance approach to misconduct in breaching our policies, codes, and procedures: including abuse, sexual misconduct, intimidation, and other acts.

Our approach to Safeguarding is guided by a number of key international and national principles, laws, and standards:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

- UN Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- The Children First Act 2015
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017.
- Our Duty to Care: The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People (2002)
- Better Outcomes Better Futures. The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020 (2019)
- 'Keeping Children Safe' 4 Standards
- HSE -Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse: National Policy and Procedures (2014)
- HIQA -National Standards for Adults Safeguarding (2019)

We also aim to uphold:

- the six core principles adopted in 2002 by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2002)
- the principles of the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (2003)
- the Key Pillars of Prevention and Response outlined in the OECD DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance (2019)
- the commitments outlined in the BOND UK 'Approach to tackling sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment in the aid sector' (2018)
- the Dóchas Safeguarding Code (2019)
- Irish Aid Guidelines for NGO Professional Safety and Security Risk Management (2013)

We fully endorse all of the above and will continue to draw upon these to strengthen all of our policies and procedures. Comhlámh recognises that safeguarding permeates all aspects of its work and therefore safeguarding considerations need to be reflected in all policies, procedures, and programmes. All Comhlámh personnel including the Board, members, staff, students/interns, and volunteers are responsible and accountable for the implementation of Comhlámh's safeguarding policies, practices, and procedures. For any concern, suspicion, disclosure, or allegation please follow policies and procedures as outlined in the whistleblowing or complaints policy as relevant.

This Safeguarding Statement, along with Comhlámh's Child Safeguarding Policy, will be reviewed every two years, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement and policy refers.