SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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If you have any general queries about this policy, please contact safeguarding@savethechildren.org

SECTION 1

1.1 Scope of this policy

1.1.1 This policy applies to:

Employees on UK contracts	☒		Trustees	☒
Employees on international contracts	☒		Contractors	☒
Agency Workers	☒		Partners	☒
Consultants	☒		Suppliers	☒
Volunteers	☒		Visitors to SCUK premises	☒
Donors	☒		Service Users	☒

1.1.2 Every individual working for and on behalf of Save the Children UK (SCUK) shares the responsibility of safeguarding children, community members, and each other.

1.1.3 This policy aligns with international human rights standards, UK legislation and the Save the Children Movement's Global Safeguarding Protocol.

1.1.4 At Save the Children UK, safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to ensure our staff, representatives, operations and programmes do no harm to the children and adults we work with and respond properly when harm occurs. We recognise that people may experience more than one type of harm at the same time, and that these harms can be connected and increase risk.

1.1.5 This Policy applies to staff, volunteers and representatives to ensure a safe and secure working environment free from abuse and harm, to help create an inclusive workplace where everyone can contribute and thrive.

1.1.6 At SCUK, reporting safeguarding concerns is not just encouraged; it is expected. All our staff, volunteers and representatives are expected to report all safeguarding concerns as quickly as possible, including lower-level concerns. This helps to identify, respond and prevent further harm, and increases trust with the communities we work in, and can prevent harm and abuse from escalating.

1.1.7 SCUK is committed to ensuring a safeguarding approach that has the best interests of children, and the experiences of victims/survivors, at the heart of all relevant processes and procedures.

1.1.8 Breaching this policy will be treated with the utmost seriousness, and may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment, appointment or contract, referral to law enforcement and the Disclosure and Barring Services (or equivalent in Scotland). This reflects our commitment to accountability and ensuring our Organisation takes responsibility for any harm it may cause.

1.1.9 SCUK has a zero-tolerance policy for inaction. This means that we will never tolerate acts of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and we have zero tolerance for inaction in preventing, reporting, or responding to abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Our approach towards zero tolerance does not mean there will be no reports or incidents of harm or abuse. Rather it signifies our commitment to act on all safeguarding concerns and actions will always be timely, appropriate, and grounded in our survivor centred approach.

1.2 Policy Statement

1.2.1 At SCUK, safeguarding children is our top priority and takes precedence over other considerations.

1.2.2 This Safeguarding Policy embodies our vision of a world where every child thrives, is heard and is valued, and can look forward to a more just, equal, and sustainable future. We are dedicated to creating safe environments where our staff, volunteers, representatives, operations and programmes actively listen to and protect children, their families and their communities, ensuring that we never intentionally expose them to harm, abuse or exploitation and respond immediately if harm, abuse or exploitation does occur.

1.2.3 SCUK seeks to uphold the highest standards of safeguarding across all aspects of our work. Every staff member, volunteer, and representative shares a common responsibility to prevent harm and take swift action to report any concerns that arise, including lower-level concerns.

1.2.4 There is no time limit to our accountability to children and their families; our safeguarding duty includes acting on any concerns relating to non-recent incidents of abuse (also known as historical abuse).

1.2.5 We ensure that everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, gender expression, identity, or relationship status, has equal protection from harm and abuse. These characteristics do not exist in isolation but often overlap, creating more significant effects and compounding negative outcomes, which may lead to systemic discrimination or disadvantage.

1.2.6 SCUK recognises that racism and discrimination can be linked to safeguarding risks and experiences of harm and can make people more vulnerable or treated unfairly. Because of this, concerns may be overlooked, not taken seriously, or not acted on. People may also feel less trust in safeguarding systems because of past or ongoing experiences. This can mean harm may be harder to see, may take longer to be reported, and people may be less likely to raise concerns. This is usually due to barriers in systems and responses - not because people don't want to report.

1.2.7 To ensure our safeguarding approach acknowledges this, we recognise the importance of integrating safeguarding strategies, striving to minimise an over-reliance on global minority perspectives and embracing other viewpoints as much as possible. At the same time, we ensure our core safeguarding commitments (see below: 2.1) remain non-negotiable in all circumstances.

1.2.8 This Safeguarding Policy should be read alongside SCUK's Duty of Care framework. Safeguarding is one of the primary ways SCUK discharges its duty of care by preventing foreseeable harm and acting where children or adults may be at risk.

1.2.9 This policy aligns with, and is supportive of:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Common Approach to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment
- IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
- Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability

SECTION 2

2.1 Our Safeguarding Principles and Commitments

2.1.1 This policy outlines our approach to creating safer environments to minimise the risk of harm and abuse, including sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (commonly referred to as 'SEAH'). SCUK will do this by:

- **Creating and maintaining safe environments** that protect children and their families from harm, abuse, and exploitation. Our human-centric approach emphasises flexibility and adaptability, empowering staff, volunteers and representatives to make context-specific safeguarding decisions while adhering to our core values. Our people create safe environments for communities as well as the people who represent us by building a strong safeguarding culture and upholding our Code of Conduct. We recognise this work is an ongoing, evolving process that requires continuous reflection, improvement, and adaptability to address emerging risks and needs.
- **Emphasising empathy, dignity, and respect**, we recognise how individuals' experiences are shaped by factors such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and lived experience. This ensures our safeguarding work is sensitive to the unique challenges and risks people face, enabling us to provide tailored support and interventions that prioritise their specific needs and circumstances. This includes recognising individuals may experience multiple, interconnected harms and ensuring safeguarding responses reflect this.
- **Prioritising the needs and voices of children and adults** who have experienced harm, by enabling access to specialist support and protection where required and seeing this as core component of our work. We support staff and volunteers through a supervision culture and access to specialist support and protection, ensuring that the children and communities we serve are at the heart of our efforts.
- **Cultivating a culture of open communication** where all concerns, no matter how small they may seem, are shared, heard, and addressed without fear of reprisal. By ensuring transparency in our safeguarding policies and making resources easily accessible, we foster an environment built on trust and openness.
- **Fostering an inclusive safeguarding environment** by engaging with diverse voices, including children, staff, volunteers, and community members. We actively collaborate with communities, grassroots organisations, and advocacy groups to ensure our safeguarding work is practical and effective, fully supporting the children and communities we serve.

2.2 Policy Principles

2.2.1 **Prevention:** all staff, volunteers and representatives are expected to create and maintain safe environments both in person and online, that both actively promote and protect the safety, dignity and wellbeing of children, their families and all staff, volunteers and representatives, to limit the risk of harm and or abuse as much as possible.
To achieve this, we focus on:

2.2.1.1 **Risk Assessments:** Conducting thorough contextualised risk assessments and putting risk mitigation in place for all activities, operations, and partnerships, with a specific focus on how diverse groups experience safeguarding risk differently. We expect all representatives to remember that child abuse is rarely directly disclosed. Staff and other representatives must be continuously alert to the possibility of abuse occurring, and demonstrate professional curiosity in observing, questioning, and exploring signs or indicators that may suggest abuse or neglect, rather than accepting explanations at face value. Concerns should be reported even where information is partial, unclear, or emerging.

2.2.1.2 **Training and Awareness**: Requiring all staff, volunteers and representatives to complete mandatory safeguarding training within four weeks of their engagement by SCUK and refreshing their knowledge every two years. Training integrates intersectional perspectives and real-world case studies to build a deeper understanding of four main areas: mitigating safeguarding risks, barriers to reporting, responding to survivors and fostering safer practice.

2.2.1.3 **Safer Recruitment: Implementing rigorous vetting procedures,** including background checks, relevant criminal records checks (for example DBS checks in England) where required and every three years thereafter, reference verification, and participation in the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme (MDS), ensuring that hiring practices identify and mitigate risks related to power imbalances and safeguarding breaches. In accordance with our obligations under the MDS, we will inform

necessary parties if a person has caused harm or poses a future risk of harm to vulnerable groups, including children.

2.2.1.4 **Technology developments:** as safeguarding risks evolve due to technology changes, physical harm and/or online harm and abuse can quickly escalate. We recognise that harm experienced or facilitated online is real harm, and can be significant, with impacts equivalent to in-person abuse. As part of our duty of care, we will take timely and proportionate action to prevent and minimise harm. This includes identifying and assessing technology-related safeguarding risks in our activities (including those linked to real-time capture, sharing, or manipulation of content); ensuring appropriate mitigations are in place and reviewed regularly; and maintaining an adaptive safeguarding approach in response to rapidly changing digital environments.

We are clear that the safety, dignity, and privacy of children and families must always be protected. Covert or non-consensual recording is strictly prohibited. Staff, volunteers, and partners must not use or wear any devices capable of covert recording when working with children and families and must only use approved technology in line with organisational guidance.

2.2.2 **Reporting:** we ensure a culture of reporting by promoting a **'no wrong door' approach**, making sure that concerns are connected to the right place, included for low-level concerns. We are committed to ensuring that everyone, including staff, volunteers, representatives and the children and communities we serve, know how to speak up on safeguarding concerns and feel safe doing so. When staff become aware of a concern they **must** notify the Safeguarding team within **24 hours.** Save the Children UK has established safe, effective, and accessible reporting pathways that welcome and help to protect all individuals regardless of their circumstances. To achieve this, we prioritise:

2.2.2.1 **Multiple and accessible, reporting options** being available to all stakeholders:

- Our online Webform or by scanning the QR Code below:

- By emailing the Safeguarding Team directly at focalpoint@savethechildren.org.uk (monitored Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm UK time)
- By contacting our externally-managed **Integrity Line** on **0800 085 2563** to make an **anonymous report,** 24 hours a day, seven days a week or online here (the form is available in multiple languages).

2.2.2.2 **Reporting of low-level concerns are actively encouraged** to ensure early intervention, preventing harm by identifying trends, disrupting unsafe practice, and building a transparent safeguarding culture.

2.2.2.3 **Clear reporting pathways** to the Safeguarding Team to ensure every concern is handled appropriately.

2.2.2.4 **Whistleblower protection measures** assure that individuals raising concerns are supported and shielded from retaliation.

2.2.2.5 **Mandatory reporting (including of Child Sexual Abuse):** In line with emerging statutory requirements in England, individuals in regulated activity with children may have a legal duty to report child sexual abuse when they are made aware of it. SCUK already does and will always promptly report all child sexual abuse concerns, to relevant statutory authorities, in line with UK law and statutory guidance. This includes reports of historical child sexual abuse.

2.2.3 **Responding:** various factors such as race, gender, sexuality, disability, and socioeconomic status can influence an individual's experience and vulnerability to further harm. Our response will address this using a survivor-centred and trauma-informed approach prioritising the needs and wellbeing of survivors. We ensure appropriate levels of confidentiality is maintained at all stages, sharing information only on a need-to-know basis. Where safeguarding concerns involve multiple or overlapping harms, responses will be coordinated to address immediate safety, wider risk, and longer-term support needs together, rather than treating concerns separately. We will:

2.2.3.1 **Take rapid, proportionate action** on safeguarding concerns, no matter how low-level the concern may be. This includes referral to local law enforcement if there is suspicion of a crime having occurred.
2.2.3.2 **Provide specialised support to teams** who have reported Safeguarding gaps within their work.
2.2.3.3 **Provide specialised, culturally mindful support services** (please see our Safeguarding Victim/Survivor-Centred Protocol) that address survivors' specific needs.
2.2.3.4 **Take proportionate disciplinary actions** for policy breaches, up to and including termination. This includes reporting to the Disclosure and Barring Services (or equivalent in Scotland) where appropriate.

2.2.4 **Learning and Continuous Improvement:** we recognise safeguarding is a **continuous journey of learning, adaptation, and reflection** and work to ensure that learnings are continuously embedded into relevant processes, procedures, and practices. We will:

2.2.4.1 **Use regular case reviews and trend analyses to help** identify systemic issues and inform improvements.
2.2.4.2 **Use learning from safeguarding incidents** and external reviews, including statutory inquiries and serious case reviews, to inform policies, training, and risk management.
2.2.4.3 **Ensure our ongoing staff development** includes training on our safeguarding approach to ensure effective safeguarding risk management.
2.2.4.4 **Evolving technology changes**: This includes monitoring emerging safeguarding risks, including those associated with new technologies and digital environments.

2.2.5 **Governance:** our governance structure plays a critical role in maintaining high safeguarding standards, overseen by the Safeguarding Committee and the Board of Trustees who will:

2.2.5.1 Ensure best practices are consistently followed and championed.
2.2.5.2 Hold leadership accountable for maintaining a strong safeguarding culture and regulatory standards.

2.3 Safeguarding those with whom we work

2.3.1 All staff, volunteers and representatives at SCUK must share an absolute commitment to protecting the children, their families and adults that we work with.

2.3.2 At SCUK, we work with children, their families and adults who may have experienced, or be experiencing, poverty, harm and and/or abuse. Children and adults in these situations may be at greater risk of further harm, abuse, or neglect and may need extra support. Our work with these groups must always be undertaken alongside careful risk management.

2.3.3 Alongside safeguarding children, we uphold the rights and dignity of adults and communities to live in safety, free from abuse or neglect when participating in our work. Those who are marginalised or face barriers to their safety and wellbeing - whether due to inequality or discrimination - may find reporting safeguarding concerns difficult. We are committed to finding ways for these groups to share their concerns in safe, accessible and effective ways.

2.3.4 Our responsibility to report extends beyond the children we work with directly. We understand abuse can happen in contexts that are not directly related to our work, but we still have a responsibility

towards reducing that harm such as sexual, physical, emotional, exploitative, or neglectful harm and abuse. That can happen anywhere—at home, in schools, during recreational activities, or online. Children can be harmed or abused by adults they know and trust or by other children and young people. We recognise children who are suffering from abuse or exploitation are often subjected to multiple forms of harm and disadvantage.

2.3.5 We take seriously the role we play to support the information sharing across child and adult protection systems when concerns are brought to our attention unrelated to our work.

2.3.6 All staff and representatives have a duty to report any allegation, concern, or suspicion of abuse. Not sharing concerns about potential harm or abuse could prevent someone from getting the protection and support they need and may put others at risk. Knowingly failing to report, withholding information, or mishandling allegations will lead to disciplinary action.

2.4 Expected behaviours

2.4.1 Staff, volunteers and representatives have a crucial role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, the communities we work with and each other. **They must always:**

- Adhere to this Policy.
- Act in accordance with the 'Children First' card, a code of behaviour for all representatives of SCUK, which ensures that the welfare and safety of children is always prioritised.
- Support children and families to understand the behaviour they can expect from our staff and representatives, how to raise concerns, and what will happen next.
- Remember that children's safety and wellbeing comes first. This principle takes precedence over all other considerations, including the maintenance of organisational, individual, or community relationships.
- Respect the privacy of children and adults in communications and advocacy, especially on social media, adhering to the Imagery Portrayal in Communications Policy.
- Ensure that all our engagement with the people we work with or encounter is appropriate, not exploitative or abusive, and does not take advantage of any imbalances of power that may exist. We take proactive measures to acknowledge and address these imbalances. Additionally, we empower children by informing them about the impact of their work with us, ensuring they have a positive experience that genuinely shifts the power to them, steering away from interactions that are exploitative, one-sided, and/or harmful.
- Ensure they are never alone with children when working but always be in within sight or hearing of another adult.
- Ensure their use of SCUK's information systems does not expose people to harm through failures in data security or misuse of technology.
- Consult the Safeguarding Lead (see below) for planning events or activities, ensuring they are managed appropriately and safely, and where the risk is assessed as high, involve the Safeguarding team.
- Report any allegation, concern of future harm, or suspicion of abuse or harm promptly, sharing all information that could aid in protecting those harmed or at risk of harm, and minimising risks to others.
- Immediately inform the Safeguarding team if they are under investigation by the Police or other statutory body for any crime; or have been convicted of a crime while working or volunteering for Save the Children
- Staff deployed to Save the Children International (SCI) Country Offices, Programmes or another Members must follow the local SCI safeguarding reporting procedures, in addition to this Policy.
- Ensure issues are appropriately escalated and recorded.
- Co-operate fully with investigations when requested to do so
- Actively look for opportunities to strengthen safeguarding within their area of responsibility.

2.4.2 Staff, volunteers and representatives must never compromise the safety and wellbeing of children, the communities we work with and others by participating in the following prohibited behaviours or actions either in person or online, **they must:**

- not attempt or engage in any form of child abuse or exploitation, including online.
- not attempt or engage in sexual activity with anyone under 18, regardless of local age of consent.
- Not attempt or engage in any form of abuse, exploitation or harassment towards others- this includes all types of harm such as physical, sexual, emotional, financial, neglect, stalking and domestic abuse
- Not engage in behaviours that demonstrate an intentional disregard for safeguarding practice and protection systems such as intentionally failing to obtain a DBS certificate (or equivalent in Scotland) for their role or withholding past misconduct information.
- avoid showing or sharing images where a child, children, or community members can be identified without prior informed consent / assent from the child and legal caregiver, particularly avoiding the use of a full name, specific location, and image together unless sufficient management of the risks are in place.
- not negotiate settlements or informal resolutions relating to safeguarding concerns; report them instead.
- Do not imply or suggest that payment, protection, assistance (including goods, services, financial support, employment, or any other opportunity) is given in exchange for participation in any form of unethical, exploitative or harmful behaviour, including sexual activity.
- not attempt to or engage in transactional sexual activity of any kind, regardless of the local or national law.
- not attempt to or engage in sexual activity where a power imbalance is abused or exploited (directly or indirectly) with other staff, representatives, volunteers, partner/supplier representatives.
- not abuse positions of power, including online, to exploit others, including taking advantage of others for material or other gain, including in our procurement processes and supply chains.

SECTION 3

3.1 Roles and responsibilities

3.1.1 **Trustees**

- Trustees must ensure all safeguarding concerns are reported to relevant agencies and foster an open culture for transparent handling of speaking up.
- Regularly review safeguarding measures, ensuring suitable individuals are in roles, and respond swiftly to concerns.
- Prioritise survivor-centred safeguarding responses and ensure an contextual approach is taken with regard to decision-making.

3.1.2 **Senior Leadership** *(including Executive Directors and Directors)*

- Monitor the effective implementation of safeguarding policies, ensuring they are responsive to diverse needs.
- Allocate resources to strengthen safeguarding infrastructure and training where gaps or weaknesses are identified.
- Ensure reporting mechanisms are inclusive, accessible, and widely understood.
- Promote a culture of open communication and speaking up, where concerns -no matter how minor -are encouraged, listened to, and acted upon without fear of retaliation.
- Are responsible and accountable for creating an environment where safeguarding the communities we work with, as well as each other, is prioritised and integrated into departmental systems and decision-making.
- Where an Executive Director determines that it may be necessary to deviate from this Policy, the decision must be discussed with the Safeguarding Director, agreed by the Executive Leadership

team, clearly documented with a rationale, and subject to appropriate oversight to ensure safeguarding principles are upheld.

3.1.3 **Line Managers**

- Ensuring appropriate levels of safeguarding risk management are in place; and being responsible for maintaining a safeguarding culture within their team.
- Normalise and encourage consistent reporting of all safeguarding concerns to the safeguarding team, including low-level concerns as an essential safeguarding tool.
- Foster open discussions about safeguarding within teams.

3.1.4 **Safeguarding Leads**

- Assess safeguarding risks in their areas, engaging with a range of colleagues to ensure issues are appropriately escalated and recorded.
- Encourage critical reflection on existing practices and processes through a safeguarding lens and collaborate with the Safeguarding team to highlight concerns and provide vital information to strengthen safeguarding practices.
- Embed safeguarding in divisional strategies and workplans to foster a healthy safeguarding culture, providing routine support on safeguarding relevant to your specialist area.
- Ensure their team or division is aware of their role as Safeguarding Lead.
- Support the Safeguarding team and / or develop safeguarding training specific to their team and or function.

3.1.5 All staff, volunteers and representatives must always uphold **expected behaviours**, as outlined in this policy.

3.1.6 All staff and representatives must read, understand, and sign the **Code of Conduct** as a personal commitment to upholding SCUK's safeguarding values.

3.1.7 Together, we create a world where every child is safe, empowered, and valued.

3.2 Management of Safeguarding Policy Breaches

3.2.1 Some safeguarding concerns relate to 'no fault/no harm' reports, where no harm is alleged to have occurred, but there was instead a potential failure within our Safeguarding systems or wider work that could have resulted in harm, or there is a risk of harm which needs to be addressed. These can also be known as 'low-level' concerns, 'near misses' or 'neutral' notifications. In these cases, a fact-finding approach is taken in which a discussion is held with the relevant team, clear learning points identified, and an action plan created.

3.2.2 For more serious concerns, the People team, Volunteering team and Safeguarding teams have distinct and collaborative roles in managing safeguarding concerns and investigations. SCUK's People team focuses on staff-related SEAH concerns and undertaking disciplinary actions in line with the Managing Conduct Policy. The Safeguarding team handles child and community-related concerns, including concerns involving volunteers. The Volunteering team follows up on any resulting volunteer-related actions in line with the Volunteering Policy. All teams ensure a survivor-centred approach throughout the investigation process and key staff from these teams will collaborate closely, maintaining confidentiality.

3.2.3 Together, these teams hold a joint responsibility to ensure a coordinated and thorough approach to safeguarding children, community members, staff, and volunteers. It is essential that every disclosure and safeguarding incident is reported and investigated promptly, safely, and in a manner that centres on the survivor. Immediate and high-quality assistance will be offered to every child and adult survivor of abuse, exploitation, and harm, ensuring that they are kept updated throughout the case management process and are aware of their right to withdraw from the investigation at any time.

3.2.4 All teams are committed to maintaining the confidentiality of identifiable case-related information, including the identity of survivors. Providing a clear line of communication to survivors is crucial, ensuring they understand how their case will be handled, which policy and procedures will apply, and any mandatory reporting requirements that the investigator will need to adhere to.

3.2.5 Key stakeholders, including the Director of Safeguarding, will be involved in commissioning internal investigations into safeguarding concerns, including reported breaches of this policy, in line with our Safeguarding Victim/Survivor-Centred Protocol. If a report relates to a breach of this policy by the Director of Safeguarding or the Director of People, the General Counsel and Company Secretary and/or the CEO will commission an investigation.

3.2.6 All concerns about the welfare of children and adults at-risk in the United Kingdom will be reported in accordance with statutory guidance, with referrals made to the relevant agency. In other jurisdictions, reports will be made to the relevant authorities as appropriate.

3.2.7 The Safeguarding team report all allegations of abuse and neglect to authorities, unless the abuse or harm occurs in a location in which reporting could place the child at increased risk (for example, risk of retribution or forced marriage to the perpetrator of sexual abuse). Within the UK, we always report all allegations of child abuse and neglect to the authorities. This includes referring all allegations in the UK or in relation to British citizens or those usually resident in the UK to the appropriate authorities.

3.2.8 SCUK is dedicated to transparency and accountability. Where appropriate, SCUK will report safeguarding concerns to the Charity Commission in line with the Commission's guidance on serious incident reporting.

3.2.9 We must all work together to foster a safe and supportive environment, ensuring the highest standards of safeguarding are always upheld.

SECTION 4

4.1 Supporting Documents

Type of document	Supporting documentation links
Policies	• Code of Conduct • Communication with Children • Data Protection Policy • Donations Acceptance and Refusal Policy • Gender Equality Policy • Health and Safety Policy • Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery Policy • Imagery Portrayal in Communications Policy • Managing Conduct Policy • Political Activity and Campaigning Policy • Research and Evaluation Policy • Respect at Save the Children Policy • Risk Management Policy • Serious Incident Reporting Policy • Social Media Policy • Trans Inclusion Policy

	• Volunteering Policy • Whistleblowing Policy
Procedures/processes	• Safeguarding Victim/Survivor-Centred Protocol • Safeguarding Case Management Standard Operating Procedure
SCI policies	• Child Safeguarding Policy • Code of Conduct • Data Protection Policy • PSEA Policy • Safety and Security Policy • Whistleblowing Policy
Law & Statutory Guidance	• Children Act 1989 & 2004 • Children and Families Act 2014 • Domestic Abuse Act 2021 • Mental Capacity Act 2005 • Modern Slavery Act 2015 • Online Safety Act 2023 • Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 • Sexual Offences Act 2003 • Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 • Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 • Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

4.2 Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Abuse of Power	Abuse of Power consists of improper behaviour by a someone with more power (or someone in a position of trust) for their own benefit or satisfaction and to the detriment of a person with less power, e.g., someone in a junior role or in a position which is dependent on SCUK services.
Adult At-Risk	Save the Children UK defines an adult at risk as any person aged 18 or over who has care and support needs and is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs may be unable to protect themselves. These needs may arise from disability, illness, age, trauma, addiction, or other circumstances, including where external factors (such as immigration status) increase vulnerability. For the purposes of this policy definition, risk may be temporary.
Adult Safeguarding	Adult safeguarding involves the responsibility of the Organisation to ensure all adults are protected from harm by staff, representatives, and third parties. This protection covers all our activities and operations, including our direct programming implementation, our work through partners, and our management of personal data.
Best interests of the child	The concept of the best interests of the child comes from Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC highlights the importance of supporting the child's needs for safety, health, wellbeing, family relationships, physical, psychological and emotional development, identity, freedom of expression,

	privacy and agency to form their own views and have them heard. In essence, the best interests of the child are whatever is best for that individual child. (not SC specific)
Child	Any person below the age of 18 irrespective of the age of the majority.
Child Abuse	Child abuse is any kind of physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation—whether for money or other reasons. It can cause harm to a child's health, development, survival, or dignity, especially when it happens in a relationship where someone has responsibility, trust, or power over the child. Abuse can also happen online or through social media.
Child Exploitation	Child exploitation is when children are used for someone else's benefit, pleasure, or profit, often leading to unfair, harmful, or cruel treatment. It can harm a child's physical or mental health, education, and emotional or social development. It includes things like manipulation, abuse, mistreatment, or oppression, and is one form of child abuse.
Child Protection	The terms child protection and child safeguarding are used interchangeably by some agencies. SCUK differentiates between child protection and child safeguarding by defining: - Child protection as relating to actions taken by countries, communities and organisations (through global child protection programmes) to prevent, mitigate and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence generally. - Child safeguarding as relating to child abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence as caused by an organisations staff and/or associates, operations and programmes.
Child Safeguarding	Making Save the Children safe for children. It involves our collective and individual responsibility and actions to ensure that all children are protected from deliberate or unintentional acts that lead to the risk of or actual harm by Save the Children staff, representatives and third parties, who come into contact with children or impact them through our development interventions, humanitarian responses and operations. This includes our direct programme implementation, work through partners and management of children's personal data (SCI definition)
Child Sexual Abuse	Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. It doesn't necessarily involve violence, and the child may not be aware that what is happening is abuse. Child Sexual Exploitation is a type of child sexual abuse, in which child may be groomed into exploitative situations and relationships – for example, children may be given gifts, money, drugs, status or affection in exchange for sexual activities. Child sexual abuse can involve contact abuse and non-contact abuse. Contact abuse happens when the abuser makes physical contact with the child, and non-contact abuse involves non-touching activities and can happen online or in-person (for example, encouraging or forcing a child to watch or hear sexual acts, or making a child masturbate while others watch). Child sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
Conflict Sensitive	A conflict-sensitive approach means understanding how activities and the situation they are delivered in (i.e. a conflict situation) influence each other. Being conflict-sensitive in Safeguarding demands that we pay extra attention to conflict scenarios and our safeguarding work in those contexts, especially any impact on reporting channels and safeguarding staff, individual impact of an investigation on potential survivors living in a conflict zone and so on. Conflict-sensitivity should also consider limitations of

	investigations regarding any risks to the investigation team members in a conflict zone. (drafted for comment)
Domestic Abuse	Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality
Ethnocentric	Evaluating a culture through the lens of another can lead to ethnocentrism, where one's own culture is deemed superior. This often results in bias and misunderstandings. It's important to approach cultural evaluation with sensitivity and respect for diversity to avoid misjudgements and to foster mutual respect.
Emotional Abuse	Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a person, which can include (but is not limited to) humiliating, mocking, belittling or isolating a person. It can also include persistently ignoring a person, being cold and emotionally unavailable during interactions with a person and/or not being positive or encouraging to a person or praising their achievements and successes.
Financial Abuse	Theft or financial exploitation for another's gain, such as Modern Slavery, deception to obtain or use funds, the purchase of unwanted or unnecessary goods or services, or coercion to make donations.
Harassment	Harassment is unwanted conduct which is either related to a relevant protected characteristic (race, gender etc), or is of a sexual nature, where the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating the victim's dignity or creating an environment that is intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive.
Inappropriate Behaviour	Breaches of SCUK values, the Code of Conduct and / or Child First Card.
Informed Consent [Informed Assent]	A person agrees to something freely and willingly after fully understanding what it involves. This includes knowing the risks, benefits, and any potential consequences of taking part. It also includes the person having the time, space and ability to ask questions and decide to participate or not without pressure or coercion (including perceived coercion – for example, the perception that support from Save the Children will be withdrawn if they do not consent to giving an interview). The person asked to provide informed consent (whether for themselves or for a child) must have the capacity to understand the information given to them, so that they can use it to make an informed decision.
Neglect of a child	Neglect is the most common type of child abuse and involves not meeting a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. Neglect can involve a parent or caregiver not providing adequate food, clothing or shelter, or leaving a child unsupervised and/or not keeping them safe from danger. Neglect can also involve failing to ensure a child receives appropriate health or dental care and/or a suitable education. Neglect often occurs alongside other types of abuse.
People who participate in our activities	Individuals or communities who receive direct or indirect assistance from Save the Children UK's activities, including but not limited to our campaigns, event, fundraising, and programming.
People with whom we work	Individuals or communities with whom Save the Children UK come into contact with through its programming and operations.

Physical Abuse	Physical abuse is when a child is deliberately hurt, causing physical harm. It can involve being pushed, punched, shaken, poisoned, kicked, bitten, spat at, burnt, restrained, or being struck with objects. There may be single or repeated incidents.
Imbalance of Power	A situation where one person has more authority, influence, control, knowledge, status, strength, or access to resources than another, making it difficult for the less powerful person to protect themselves, make free choices, or challenge decisions.
Person or People with disabilities	People with disabilities are those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory conditions that, when combined with barriers in society, can make it harder for them to achieve full and effective participation in society, on an equal basis with others.
PSEAH	Protection from Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment.
Psychological Abuse	Psychological abuse involves the regular and deliberate us of a range of words and non-physical actions used with the purpose to manipulate, hurt, weaken or frighten a person mentally and emotionally; and/or distort, confuse or influence a person's thoughts and actions within their everyday lives, changing their sense of self and harming their wellbeing See Child Abuse; Emotional Abuse for definition relating to children.
Representative	Those associated and acting on behalf of Save the Children UK, but not directly employed by Save the Children UK. This includes Save the Children's partners, agency workers, consultants, volunteers, Trustees, donors on visits to Save the Children's programmes, contractors, suppliers, and trainees.
Sexual Abuse	The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.
Sexual Exploitation	Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
Sexual Harassment	Unwelcome sexual advances (without touching). It includes requests for sexual favours, or other verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature, which may create a hostile or offensive environment
Transactional Sexual Activity	This is the exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex or sexual/sexualised activity, including 'sexual favours. Save the Children UK does not make any judgement of those who experience such transactions but recognises the inherent unequal power dynamic and so prohibits staff from exchanging money or anything else for such contact.
Trauma-informed approach	Trauma-informed practice is an approach to safeguarding which is grounded in the understanding that trauma can impact an individual's neurological, biological, psychological and social development. The 6 key principles of trauma-informed practice are safety, trust, choice, collaboration, empowerment and cultural consideration.
Victim / Survivor	A victim/survivor is a person who has experienced maltreatment or harm committed by a staff member or associate or as caused by SCUK's operations or programmes. The victim/survivor may be a staff member or a member of the community – child or adult.

	"The terms 'victim' and 'survivor' can be used interchangeably. 'Victim' is a term often used in the legal and medical sectors. 'Survivor' is the term generally preferred in the psychological and social support sectors because it implies resiliency." • In international development and humanitarian work, those working on sexual and gender-based violence or child protection concerns have most often used the term survivor. It is applicable to any individual who has experienced or been targeted by abuse, violence, exploitation, or neglect. • The term survivor infers the individual has resilience and, with support, will recover from the incident. • Whilst organisations should have a position on the term they use, the individual themselves must also be able choose whether they are referred to as a survivor or a victim.
Victim/Survivor-centred approach	A survivor-centred approach is one which places the survivor's experiences, considerations, and needs at the centre of our processes and actions, elevates the voice of survivors, and places their wishes, rights, dignity, safety, and wellbeing at the forefront of efforts to prevent and respond. This occurs from the initial concern or report, through to investigating, responding to concerns and potential incidents, follow-up actions, and case management. A victim/survivor-centred approach aims to ensure the rights of each survivor are upheld, and that each survivor is treated with dignity and respect. By putting the survivor at the centre of the process, such an approach promotes their recovery, reduces the risk of further harm and reinforces their agency.
Young People	In line with United Nations definitions, 'Young People' includes individuals aged 15 years to 24 years old. This group spans the categories of 'children', 'adolescents' and 'adults' but regards young people as having particular safeguarding needs and requiring distinct consideration aside from younger children and older adults.