

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Version	Review Date	Review by
0	July 2024	Executive Team
1.1	Sept 2024	Board

### 1. PURPOSE

The policy covers Renewable World's Commitment to protect all people (women, men, children) anywhere from harm caused by Renewable World employees, trustees, volunteers, partners and contractors. This includes both intended and unintended abuse, and it includes people within areas with a Renewable World programming presence as well as any individual with whom a Renewable World employee or Trustee engages. This policy states our approach as well as our stance on how we will mitigate safeguarding risks and respond to any reported incidents. Our care for individuals and communities is the paramount driver of this policy. However, it also serves to ensure compliance with legal requirements with the UK and our countries of operations.

### 2. DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

For ease of understanding this policy here are some definitions of terms used as well as explaining the scope of the policy:

**Child:** A child is any person under the age of 18, even if the definition within a country where Renewable World works defines it differently. We take the definition of a child according to international law as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

**Adult:** A person over the age of 18<sup>th</sup> year. Vulnerable adults are those who are over 18 but less independent or able to protect themselves. We will ensure via our policy and approach that Renewable World will not cause abuse to vulnerable adults or any adults.

**Staff, Trustees and Volunteers:** This term applies to all people employed by Renewable World whether it is an open or time-bound contract. The trustees are members of the board. And volunteers are individuals who may support Renewable World for a specific purpose and time but are not paid.

**Partners and Contractors:** Partner refers to organisations with whom we implement projects. These may be local NGOs or international NGOs and may, at times, include local government if we are doing joint work. A contractor is an individual or organisation with whom we are buying services from such as evaluation consultants.

**Safeguarding:** This refers to any abuse Renewable World employees, trustees, volunteers, partners and contractors may cause intentionally or unintentionally. Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) are very harmful forms of abuse. SEAH is included within Renewable World's scope of safeguarding. Safeguarding includes all types of abuse and characteristics about the individual abused (such as gender, age, disability, ethnicity and LGBTQ+) may be a factor in their abuse.

When Renewable World refers to safeguarding, we will ensure that we do not cause any abuse to those within areas where Renewable World programming occurs. But also, this policy also relates to any individual which a Renewable World employee, trustee, volunteer, partner and contractor engages with, including within their home, community, or other locations not within the programming area.

We recognise that it is important to ensure that abuse to staff does not occur, but this is covered under the Bullying and Harassment policy and not the safeguarding policy.

### 3. RESPONSIBILITY

The Renewable World Board of Trustees, in partnership with the Executive Leadership Team, are deeply committed to ensuring safeguarding of those people we engage with. They are ultimately accountable for ensuring safeguarding. However, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure safeguarding occurs as well as an incident being reported. Failure to report or take mitigating actions may result in disciplinary procedures.

Although we all hold the responsibility, Renewable World will also have a global safeguarding lead and a lead in each of the Country Offices. These leads will be point-people for any incident reporting but also will ensure that the safeguarding mitigation measures (in section 3) are implemented at country and project level. They are also responsible for ensuring all staff (and specific partner staff) have received orientation and training.

The Country Director will ensure that the safeguarding focal point person plans and delivers on these aspects. Also safeguarding will always be included in the country risk assessment and the standards' monitoring tool is a way for the office to identify the risks and plan to mitigate them. And the global safeguarding lead, with the support of the Executive Committee will have the overview of risks and mitigation progress on safeguarding and report to the board.

The Renewable World Leadership and then the Board of Trustees are ultimately accountable to ensure this policy is implemented and any incidents are addressed. Safeguarding will, therefore, be a standing order on the board meeting agenda as well as including safeguarding as an organisational KPI.

### 4. TYPES OF ABUSE

Abuse is any action by a person which causes harm (minor or significant) to another. The types of abuse include the following:

- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Digital abuse and abusive images

- Religious abuse
- Data protection breaches

Physical, sexual or emotional abuse are the most commonly reported type of abuse within the charity sector. However, we will not limit our understanding to these. Neglect is also an abuse as this over time can be damaging to a survivor physically and emotionally. As the digital use of organisations and individuals increases this is becoming a key potential area of abuse. And data protection breaches have the potential to put people at risk if the data is accessed by people intending to do harm. Religious abuse involves either deprioritising a person due to their faith or pressuring them on the basis of faith.

When we consider abuse, including in training, we will be aware that certain personal characteristics (such as gender, age, disability, ethnicity and LGBTQ+) may be a factor in the abuse.

## 5. OUR STANDARDS and APPROACH

### 5.1 Standards

Renewable World has zero tolerance toward incidents of violence or abuse against children or adults, including all forms of abuse, committed by Renewable World employees, trustees, volunteers, partners or contractors. We will take a survivor-centred approach. We also will be clear on our responsibilities to ensure safeguarding.

Our standards and approach will be in alignment with international standards including:

- The Core Humanitarian Standards - [Home | CHS 2024 \(corehumanitarianstandard.org\)](https://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/)
- The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Minimum Operating Standards on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Own Personnel (IASC MOS-PSEA). [Minimum Operating Standards - Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by own Personnel | IASC \(interagencystandingcommittee.org\)](https://www.interagencystandingcommittee.org/standards-protection-from-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-by-own-personnel/)

Renewable World has 8 standards, 5 of which are covered in the mitigation section, 2 in the response section and last being leadership commitment:

1. Renewable World will use safe recruitment processes (including Code of Conduct)
2. Renewable World will ensure Safeguarding training
3. Renewable World will ensure safeguarding within programming
4. Renewable World will ensure safe partnerships
5. Renewable World will have safe reporting systems
6. Renewable World will investigate all safeguarding incidents reported
7. Renewable World will have safe communications and data protection
8. Renewable World will have leadership commitment to safeguarding

### 5.2 Survivor-Centred Approach

Renewable World will take a survivor-centred approach. This means that we will put the needs and wishes of the survivor first above those of the organisation. Wellbeing support will be provided to the survivor and their wish to be involved in any investigation will be upheld, unless the incident warrants reporting or referring (advice will be sought in country to aid the decision on this).

## 6. SAFEGUARDING MITIGATION

Renewable World is committed ensuring safeguarding in all our operations but as no organisation can fully prevent abuse, it is important to take mitigating actions to reduce the likelihood of abuse.

### 6.1 Code of Conduct

Renewable World will have a Code of Conduct around a person's behaviour, which all employees, trustees, volunteers, partners and contractors must agree to and sign. All partners will have either have robust Code of Conduct or their leadership and project staff will sign the Renewable World Code of Conduct. This includes behaviour related to safeguarding. The code of conduct can be found with all Renewable World's policies.

### 6.2 Safer Recruitment and Employment

When recruiting, employees, trustees, contractors, and volunteers (whether paid or unpaid, full time or part time, temporary or long-term), Renewable World will adhere to a thorough and standardised procedure which will include:

- Including safeguarding with any recruitment advertisement and every job description / TOR.
- Explore safeguarding as part of the interview process with potential candidates.
- All potential employees, contractors, trustees, and volunteers shall be required to disclose any relevant criminal convictions, including those considered 'spent'.
- Gathering acceptable legal check documents for all staff expected to travel to project areas, including specific safeguarding checks. This will vary per country but includes police clearance certificates or a Disclosure and Barring Service check required in the UK. However, in countries where the police check has limited reliability, we may decide not to do this. However, we will always gather two, references which include comment on the applicant's character and whether they have any gross-misconduct (including safeguarding) incidents against them or being investigated.
- Gathering new legal checking documents at least every 3 years of employment.

### 6.3 Training

The Renewable World induction process for all employees, trustees, volunteers and contractors will include orientation on the Safeguarding policy along with the signing of the Code of Conduct. This will be given as soon as possible and definitely within the first month. No staff will be allowed to travel without completing this. Additional to this all staff will receive more in-depth safeguarding training at least once every two years.

Staff of partner organisations will also receive training (either organised by Renewable World or their own training if this is sufficiently robust) at the beginning of any new partnership or project. Orientation and Training will cover types of abuses, our code of conduct, how to mitigate the risk of a safeguarding incident, and the importance and how to report an incident.

When delivering the training we will consider cultural nuances and context, at times refining the approach for that context, while at other times, deciding to challenge a practice or belief which does not fit with good safeguarding practice. However, any such challenging will be done sensitively and respectfully, inviting staff to explore the issue and solutions.

## **6.4 Safe Partnerships**

When identifying and agreeing to work with any external individual contractor or organisation, Renewable World will carry out due diligence. This includes whether they have a sufficient safeguarding policy. If they do not have a safeguarding policy or it is not as robust as the Renewable World policy, then they must agree to follow our policy until the point where they have their own quality policy. This will be discussed and agreed between RW and the partner, at the outside of a partnership with an organisation. We will also ensure that partners receive necessary training (see section above). We will regularly discuss with partners on whether they are able and have sufficient understanding to implement our safeguarding policy.

## **6.5 Safe Programming and Procurement**

Safeguarding will be considered within all projects. Although Renewable World is not responsible for abuse which may be caused by community members or stakeholders. However, during the design process we will ensure that any programming approaches being proposed for a project, is not going to put anyone at risk of abuse.

Safeguarding will be part of Renewable World's ongoing risk assessment processes. This includes at global and country level as well as at project level. Each project will have a risk assessment which will be reviewed at least quarterly (more often if there is a heightened level of risk or insecurity) and ratings and action planning updated.

When procuring items, Renewable World will ensure that we will, to the best of our knowledge, not procure from companies which do not adhere to human rights standards (like using child labour).

## **6.6 Safe Communications and Data Protection**

Renewable World will ensure that our communications do not put any person at risk of abuse by others, with sensitive information being removed and no identifiable information provided. Names of individuals will only be used when permission is given, but it will also be changed for children or other vulnerable adults.

There is a link between this policy and the data protection policy and as such, we will ensure that personal data is stored securely to reduce the risk of a data breach which could result in a risk of a safeguarding incident occurring.

## **7. RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARING INCIDENTS**

Although mitigating actions aim to reduce the likelihood of safeguarding incidents, Renewable World recognises that safeguarding incidents may still happen. Therefore, it is paramount that incidents can be reported and then be properly managed. We will regularly engage communities around how well they understand and are comfortable to report an incident.

### **7.1 Reporting Concerns and Incidents**

We will ensure that communities (where there is Renewable World programming) know what behaviour from RW staff and partners is not acceptable, how they can report an incident, and that we will manage it with confidentiality and sensitivity. We will ensure that the reporting approach is simple and accessible. It is helpful if they are willing to identify themselves, but we will also allow

anonymous reporting. Any person sharing information in confidence should be told that it may need to be shared with relevant people and agencies (see below on responding to concerns).

This mechanism is separate to the main whistleblower mechanism as well as any project-level feedback on programming method. The community will be given information on who to report an incident to and the contact details. This will include the country safeguarding lead and the project manager. However, we will respond to an incident report regardless of which avenue it was reported through.

All employees, trustees, contractors, partners and volunteers must also report any incident that they see or hear of, however uncertain of the facts. They will not investigate the issue themselves but just state the facts as they understand them.

The Country-level as well as the global safeguarding lead will together review all reports, unless the incident reported relates to them. If an incident relates to the CEO or the global safeguarding lead, then the Chair of Trustees will lead the review of the incident and decide on the level of investigation needed.

## **7.2 Responding to Reported Concerns and Incidents**

Renewable World will take immediate action when an incident is reported, identifying a team to review and investigate the incident. If an allegation of abuse has been received then the named member of staff, trustee, volunteer or contractor, may be suspended or have their work activity restricted pending the outcome of an independent investigation.

The investigation will take a survivor-focused approach, ensuring that we do not cause further trauma to them. Additionally, wellbeing or emergency medical support will be provided for the survivor, if needed.

The initial investigation will be led by Renewable World but with the support of external experts as needed. For complex incidents we may decide to bring in experts to lead the investigation. Also, where there the incident constitutes a criminal offence and the evidence is compelling, the country team will decide how and when to report to the local authorities. We will then comply with their investigation and stop our own. We will follow any legal requirements, including informing the Charity Commission in the UK if significant incidents arise.

During the investigation we will provide organisational support to the individual with an allegation against them. We will also ensure confidentiality. Depending on the outcome of this independent investigation, Renewable World will take any further action which may be required which could include disciplinary action, dismissal and/or the ending of the relationship with Renewable World.

## **7.3 Reporting to the UK Charity Commission**

The UK Charity Commission requires all UK-registered charities to report serious incidents. This includes serious safeguarding incidents. Renewable World will report as soon as reasonably possible after it happens, or immediately after we becomes aware of it, following the requirements of the Charity Commissions - [How to report a serious incident in your charity - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity).

## 8. SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS MONITORING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

It is important for Renewable World to monitor how this policy is being put into action by Renewable World, as well as our partners. This information will enable the leadership and the trustees to hold the organisation accountable. Therefore, a set of KPIs will be developed and used to support each of the standards. These will be baselined and then remeasured every quarter for the UK and each country office, and we will have an action plan to help strengthen our journey to achieving all the standards. We will use a similar tool to measure safeguarding within our partners and any gaps will be addressed as part of our support to build their capacity.

## 9. SUPPORT TO OTHER RENEWABLE WORLD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This is a policy in its own right but there are links to other Renewable World policies and procedures:

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Complaints Policy and Process
- Data protection Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Procurement Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy