

Keeping Children Safe

Ending child abuse in organisations worldwide

Closing child safeguarding gaps in emergencies



A checklist

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Who is this resource for?

This checklist is aimed at all types of organisations providing support to children as a result of the conflict in Ukraine. This includes businesses, such as hotels who are offering shelter and food to refugees.

Abusers often exploit conflict and crisis situations to target children and this document is meant to be as a quick and practical checklist especially for organisations unfamiliar with child safeguarding to help close any child safeguarding gaps and protect children they come into contact with from abuse.

Keeping Children Safe offers free child safeguarding technical support and detailed resources to organisations supporting refugees from Ukraine.

Find out more at: www.keepingchildrensafe.global.

Child safeguarding

Child safeguarding is the responsibility that organisations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes and partners do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organisation has about children's safety, within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities. A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

Child safeguarding in emergencies

Safeguarding children during emergencies presents a number of unique challenges for organisations

For example:

- Abusers often travel to the area in order to target children and may infiltrate organisations set up to help and protect them.
- Rapid mobilisation of staff and volunteers can mean that effective background checks are not conducted.
- Community protection mechanisms may breakdown.
- The change in power dynamics that results from humanitarian action – when staff and volunteers have access to goods and services that are desperately needed by children – can create an environment for exploitation.

The most vulnerable members of the community, including children, are often most affected by this.

- Organisations may not have experience of the safeguarding risks in responding to emergencies of experience of a specific region and how to access safeguarding support and referral mechanisms.



A safeguarding checklist for emergencies

Carry out risk assessments

It is vital that the emergency risk assessment includes an assessment of the potential risks to children of the organisation's operations, programmes and partners.

This should cover all activities implemented by the organisation, which may involve children, directly or indirectly. The following steps should be taken:

- Identify who is at risk.
- Identify the factors that might put them at risk.
- Identify how they are at risk.
- Identify what is currently in place to reduce the risk.
- Calculate the level of risk (high, medium or low).
- Consider additional actions needed to reduce the level of risk.

Ensure safe recruitment and selection of staff/volunteers

Analyse the role and think about the issues of child safeguarding and risk in that job:

- What contact with children will the job involve?
- Will the employee/volunteer have unsupervised access to children, or hold a position of trust?
- What other sort of contact may the person have with children (for example, via email, phone, letter, internet)?
- Ask for documentation to confirm identity and proof of relevant qualifications.
- Include some specific questions in the interview that draw out people's attitudes and values in relation to the protection of children.
- Take at least two, and up to three, references.
- Assign child safeguarding focal points and train them to perform their role effectively.

The specific responsibilities for the focal point for emergencies are:

- Design induction and training opportunities for child safeguarding which can be delivered rapidly in a range of contexts.
- Work with managers to ensure that emergency response programmes and operations integrate child safeguarding appropriately, including in programmes and operations being managed remotely.
- Develop communication materials for children and young people on keeping safe in an emergency and the organisation's responsibilities to them.
- Work to ensure that monitoring and evaluation activities being undertaken in emergencies incorporate a specific child safeguarding component in their area of operation.
- Work to establish community-level complaints mechanisms that facilitate the safe reporting of concerns by beneficiaries.
- Receive reports in regards to the safety or wellbeing of a child, responding in accordance with the organisation's internal complaints mechanism and plan and participate in any investigation into a child protection incident.
- Advise on response and referrals, where local systems are compromised or do not serve the communities adequately.

Develop written guidelines for conduct of adults towards children

A code of conduct is a clear and concise guide of what is and is not acceptable behaviour or practice when employed or engaged by the organisation. It should include acceptable and unacceptable behaviour with regards to children. All staff and associates, including volunteers, should agree to the code of conduct

when they are employed and/or start their job. It should also be made clear what action the organisation will take if the code is broken or not followed correctly.

Organisations should develop their own code of conduct. See pages 9 and 10 for examples of dos and don'ts of inappropriate and appropriate behaviour around children.

The following need to be considered:

- Children/carers are made aware how to report a safeguarding concern and to whom.
- Reports related to children need a rapid reporting and response timeframe. immediate responses may be required, for example, finding immediate support or help for a child – organisations need to make sure there are designated individuals who have the information and capacity to manage immediate responses.
- Serious or criminal harm to children allegedly caused by someone connected to the organisation should be referred to the relevant child protection authorities or structures, as well as being managed internally. Organisations will need to coordinate with the child protection authorities or structures for the response.
- A complaint made against a staff person or volunteer should immediately result in making sure that the person no longer has contact with children and the matter is investigated.
- Any concern should be treated seriously and with confidentiality.
- The priority should always be the safety and best interests of the child.
- Identifying information about children should be shared on a 'need to know' basis only.
- Staff and volunteers should be trained in receiving disclosures and allegations from children, keeping in mind the following:
 - Act on your concerns. If in doubt, speak out!
 - Child-centred. The protection of children is the most important consideration.
 - Time counts. Ensure timely, effective, confidential and appropriate responses to child safeguarding issues.

Examples of dos and don'ts for inappropriate and appropriate behaviour around children

Don't engage in sexual activity with a child.

Don't have a child/children with whom the employee/volunteer is in contact in a work-related context stay overnight at their home or any other personal residential location or accommodation.

Don't use physical punishment, discipline, or physical force of any kind towards children, including the withholding of essential items.

Don't use language with or behave towards a child in a way that is inappropriate, offensive, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.

Don't fondle, hold, kiss, hug, or touch children in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way.

Don't sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are in contact in a work-related context.

Don't do things of a personal nature for children, unless the child is unable to do so for him/herself. For example, taking a child/young person to the toilet/bathroom; helping them get dressed/undressed. If this needs to happen, then it is recommended that an adult not be alone with the child and have another same-sex colleague accompany you.

Don't act in ways that shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.

Don't discriminate against, show differential or preferential to, or favour particular children.

Don't use computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras, or other electronic devices or mediums to exploit, abuse, harass, or bully children. It is inappropriate for staff to 'friend' children on social media.

Don't use computers, mobile phones, or video/digital cameras or other electronic devices, to access, view, create, download, or distribute Child Sex Abuse Material.

Don't take, share or post pictures of children.

Examples of dos and don'ts for inappropriate and appropriate behaviour around children

Do require all personnel to make certain that a child is not alone with one adult in any setting, and require that another adult be with the employee and child and that the child is in an open public place, where others are around and in plain view of others.

Do restrict personnel from providing transportation (car rides) to individual children. Please ask a safeguarding focal point for guidance if transportation is required for a single child.

Do offer a warm smile and reassurance.

Do allow the child to play and interact with other children while supervised.

Do contact one of the child protection focal points if a child seems upset or withdrawn.

Do make sure the child's basic needs are met.

Do listen to what the child has to say and document any important information.

Do explain what will happen to them in terms of next steps.

Do put in place procedures for handling complaints.

Do report all safeguarding concerns at all times.

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