

# **APT ACTION ON POVERTY**

**Charity Registration Number 290836**

**Company Registration Number 1872538**

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **1.0 Introduction**

APT Action on Poverty (“Action on Poverty”) has a commitment to high legal, ethical and moral standards. All members of staff, associated personnel and voluntary workers are expected to share this commitment. Partners with whom Action on Poverty work with overseas are required to put in place their own Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. Action on Poverty will assist its partners to develop such policies which should be no less rigorous than those adopted by Action on Poverty. Such requirements also normally form part of the conditions of grants awarded. Action on Poverty is absolutely committed to maintaining an honest, open and well-intentioned atmosphere within the organisation. We are therefore committed to preventing and minimising the risk of safeguarding violations, and to the follow up and reporting of any such cases.

Action on Poverty already has policies and procedures that support and link with this safeguarding policy. These include:

- Procedures for dealing with reports on safeguarding
- Child Protection Policy
- Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblowing) Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Anti Bullying and Harrassment and Policy
- Risk Register
- Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
- Staff Recruitment Procedures

These documents also provide a framework for direction and help to staff and volunteers who find themselves having to deal with suspected cases of safeguarding violations. Action on Poverty’s policies are reviewed at least every two years.

### **1.1 Definition: What is safeguarding?**

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur. In the context in this sector, this applies to the safety and welfare of people involved in the delivery or receipt of Action on Poverty’s development assistance.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary below.

### **1.2 Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with Action on Poverty. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of Action on Poverty personnel covered by this policy.

- The design and implementation of Action on Poverty's programmes and activities

The policy lays out the commitments made by Action on Poverty and informs personnel covered by this policy of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

### **1.3 Scope**

This policy applies to personnel covered by this policy as more fully defined below and applies whilst working for, representing or acting on behalf of Action on Poverty in particular at all times whilst travelling overseas and extends to any occurrences or matters arising which may cause or have the potential to cause damage to Action on Poverty's reputation or ability to pursue its aims, objectives or programmes.

Personnel covered by this policy includes but is not necessarily limited to:

- all employees contracted by Action on Poverty whether on full-time, part-time, fixed term or temporary basis ("staff")
- consultants, contractors and programme visitors including journalists, celebrities and politicians ("associated personnel")
- patrons, trustees, volunteers and interns and others providing services to Action on Poverty without remuneration ("voluntary workers")

### **2.0 Prevention**

Action on Poverty's Chief Executive is responsible for the following:

- Ensure all staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy
- Design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with Action on Poverty. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organisation
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process

Action on Poverty's Board of Trustees are ultimately responsible for this implementation, for reviewing safeguarding as a component of the risk register at Board Meetings, and for their responsibilities in the Procedures for dealing with Safeguarding Reports. The designated safeguarding officer at Board Level is Chair of the Board.

Responsibilities of personnel covered by this policy:

#### **Child safeguarding**

Personnel covered by this policy must not in the course of their duties for Action on Poverty:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18 or the age of consent where higher
- Sexually abuse or exploit children
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking

### **Adult safeguarding**

Personnel covered by this policy must not in the course of their duties for Action on Poverty:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at risk adults
- Subject an at risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect

### **Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse**

Personnel covered by this policy must not in the course of their duties for Action on Poverty:

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics

Additionally, Personnel covered by this policy are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by an Action on Poverty staff member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff member

Generally

Personnel covered by this policy must not:

- engage in any sexual, exploitative or abusive activity where it is illegal in a particular jurisdiction
- engage in any sexual, exploitative or abusive activity at any time which may cause or have the potential to cause damage to Action on Poverty's reputation or ability to pursue its aims, objectives or programmes.

## **3.0 Enabling reports**

Action on Poverty will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities we work with.

Any staff reporting concerns or complaints will be protected by Action on Poverty's Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblowing) Policy.

Action on Poverty will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

### **3.1 How to report a safeguarding concern**

Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to their Safeguarding Focal Point (Action on Poverty's Chief Executive) or line manager. If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to their Safeguarding Focal Point or line manager (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to another appropriate staff member - a senior manager or a member of the Board.

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Further information is included in Procedures for Reporting a Safeguarding Concern.

#### **4.0 Response**

Action on Poverty will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure. These are reflected in Action on Poverty's Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns.

Action on Poverty will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy – in line with our Grievances and Disciplinary Procedures. Depending upon the nature of the matter, it can lead to disciplinary action including temporary suspension from duties and loss of pay and benefits, dismissal either summarily or following investigations and criminal prosecution following reporting of the case to the police.

Action on Poverty will offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding appropriate support will be led by the survivor and decided on a case by case basis.

#### **5.0 Confidentiality**

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only, and will be kept secure at all times. Where information has to be shared for legal reasons, risks to the survivor and subject of concern be considered.

### **Glossary of Terms**

#### **Beneficiary of Assistance**

Someone who directly receives goods or services from Action on Poverty's programme

#### **Child**

For the purposes of this policy a person below the age of 18 or higher in any relevant jurisdiction.

#### **Harm**

Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights

#### **Psychological harm**

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation

#### **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**

The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)

#### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur. In our sector, we often use this to apply to the safety and welfare of people involved in the delivery or receipt of humanitarian aid and development assistance.

#### **Sexual abuse**

The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

**Sexual exploitation**

The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

**Survivor**

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

**At risk adult**

Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

*With thanks to BOND (British Overseas NGOs in Development)*

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*Adopted: September 2020*