

# Policy on Keeping People Safe

## Introduction

Conciliation Resources' (CR) approach to keeping people safe is guided by our vision, mission and values. Our vision is of a world where people work together to resolve conflicts and promote peaceful and inclusive societies. We believe that everybody affected by conflict has a stake in peace. We work to create peaceful and inclusive change within societies in partnership with local people, to respond to violence, inequality, injustice and exclusion. And our mission is to provide practical support to help people who are affected by violent conflict achieve lasting peace.

Consistent with our vision, mission and values, we are committed to providing a safe environment for all those with whom we work and interact. The guiding principle of our policy on keeping people safe is that we believe that it is always unacceptable for children, young people or adults to experience any kind of abuse. We have a particular responsibility to ensure that the most vulnerable, children and at-risk adults, are protected. CR will also not tolerate abuse and exploitation of its staff, volunteers and partners by those we employ (in whatever capacity). CR has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual abuse and exploitation.

We believe in keeping people safe. We believe that protecting children and at-risk adults is the responsibility of everyone engaged in CR's work. The welfare of these individuals is paramount. All people have the right to protection from abuse regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, belief, gender, marital status or sex.

This policy explains who must be kept safe, who has a responsibility to keep people safe, and how we keep people safe in practice including recruitment, training, reporting and governance.

**Principles:** The principles in this policy have been drawn from key international and regional instruments such as: International Standards for Keeping Children Safe and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. CR is a UK charity and is, as such, required to comply with the requirements of the UK Charity Commission whose guidance is also taken into account in this policy. CR is committed to engaging with the international NGO community, contributing to and aligning with best practice in this area. For the removal of doubt these principles apply to all persons who come into contact with CR's work. These individuals will be referred to as "associated individuals". Our principles are:

- All children and at-risk adults have equal rights to be kept safe from harm.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children and at-risk adults.
- Organisations have a duty of care to children and at-risk adults with whom they work, are in contact with, or who are affected by their work and operations.
- Organisations have a responsibility to help partners meet the minimum requirements on protection.
- All actions in relation to keeping children safe are taken in the best interests of the child.
- All actions in relation to keeping at-risk adults safe are taken in the best interests of the at-risk adults.

## 1. Definitions

**Children:** All children under 18 years of age as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child irrespective of the laws and customs in country.

**At-risk Adult:** Any adult over 18 years of age could be at risk of harm and in need of being kept safe, including by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness and/or who lives with economic dependence, a conflict environment or cultural constraints.

**Associated individuals:** individuals who come into contact with CR, or its partner organisations, in the course of the work of CR.

## 2. Scope: Who is governed by this policy?

This policy applies to all CR representatives including staff (whatever their employment status), volunteers, contractors, and trustees. It also applies to programme visitors (including researchers, donors, students, journalists, celebrities and politicians). CR works with partners in country. This policy will be cascaded to all partners who will be expected to meet the standards set out in this policy. See below for more in relation to working with, and alongside, partners.

## 3. Abuse and exploitation

Abuse and exploitation of children and vulnerable adults can take many forms and includes:

- Physical abuse is the actual or likely physical injury or the failure to prevent it
- Emotional abuse is the actual or likely adverse effect of threatened abuse
- Sexual abuse and exploitation including rape, all forms of sexual activity, exchange of benefits (including food and money) for sexual favours
- Neglect, where basic needs such as food, warmth and medical care are not met, including lack of supervision
- Commercial exploitation, including child trafficking
- Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. The effect of sexual harassment is to violate the dignity of another person and to create an intimidating environment for them.
- Online abuse, including grooming
- Discrimination
- An abuse of a position of trust by charity trustees, workers, partners or volunteers

## 4. Working with partners in country

CR works in a large number of countries and across a broad range of circumstances. Translating keeping people safe, especially children and at-risk adults, across these different contexts and cultures can be difficult. But CR's commitment to protect children and young people and vulnerable

adults remains whatever the variation in cultural and legal frameworks and we expect our partners to adopt the same commitment. A commitment to keeping people safe is fundamental to CR's partnership approach. These issues may be more likely in emergency situations, particularly where children are displaced and separated from their families, or where the family is under extreme stress, children and young people then become particularly at-risk.

Representatives of CR are expected to create a positive environment, encourage a good reporting culture and be extra vigilant to follow the Code of Conduct at these times so as to ensure those children and at-risk adults are protected from harm. We acknowledge our responsibility and duty to act appropriately and to make sure that we promote good practice and work by all those partners who deliver the services directly. We expect our partner organisations to uphold the same commitment to prevent abuse and exploitation.

CR, through its Representatives, will work with and help new and existing partners to address any issues of keeping children and at-risk adults safe in their organisation and in the communities in which they work. We want to ensure that everyone is working to high standards and that we are all working together to best protect those who are at risk of abuse and exploitation. All CR partners will be required to explain what measures they have in place to keep children and at-risk adults safe from abuse and exploitation. International staff in the course of their work should support partners in their efforts to increase their awareness, knowledge and skills in relation to keeping people safe through the provision of appropriate capacity building and resources.

All written agreements between CR and its partners will reflect a shared commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Additionally, CR will conduct an analysis of how to keep people safe for each partner and programme to help them mitigate any such risk. We will expect all partners to read and comply with the CR Partner Code of Conduct. We will expect all partners to read and comply with the CR policy on keeping people safe or to have their own policy on keeping people safe that is equally or more robust. We will ensure that all partners we work with:

1. Submit their policies to us before starting any project;
2. Agree and ensure that keeping people safe from harm is part of the programme design and risk management and assessment;
3. Provide details on how they will create a positive reporting culture and how they will process complaints relating to harm and keeping people safe;
4. Ensure there is a means of reporting both locally and to the CR Designated Officer for those who have concerns. This applies to both those people in the community with whom the programme engages and those who deliver the programme;
5. Agree to report all concerns and suspicions to CR's Designated Officer;
6. Agree to co-operate with investigations; and
7. Are aware of CR's Complaints and Whistleblowing policies and will use them when necessary unless and until they have such policies of their own and provided that their own policies comply with the standard set out in CR's Complaints and Whistleblowing policies.

The adequacy of these steps will be assessed against CR's policy on keeping people safe and practices by the CR Designated Officer.

Where projects involve close contact with children and/or at-risk adults and the partner does not have a written policy, the relevant programme team will work with the partner to ensure adequate steps are taken prior to any grant approval for projects and programmes overseas. This will likely involve working with the partner to locally implement the CR Policy on Keeping People Safe. The

details of these requirements are further outlined in the Partner Agreement, including a clear statement that funding may be withheld and a relationship may be terminated in certain circumstances.

We will work with partners to ensure that the communities with whom they work also have appropriate people to whom they can report in confidence. This should be included in the analysis of how to keep people safe. Partners will ensure that members of the community they are working with know who to report a problem to.

## 5. Code of Conduct

All CR representatives must follow the Code of Conduct at all times and both inside and outside the workplace (see separate document). For clarity, CR representatives **shall**:

- Treat everyone with respect, recognising their right to personal privacy;
- Plan, organise and implement events in a manner which reduces risk;
- Foster a culture of mutual accountability so that potentially abusive behaviour can be challenged;

### **And shall not:**

- Engage in physical/sexual relationships with participants regardless of the age of consent since they are based in inherently unequal power dynamics (the mistaken age of a child or vulnerability of a person is not a defence);
- Behave physically in a way which is inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- Develop inappropriate relationships or use behaviour with children or at-risk adults, which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- Place themselves in a position where they could be accused of sexually abusing a child, young person or at-risk adult;
- Spend excessive time alone with children or at-risk adults, away from others, in a secluded area or behind closed doors, or where they cannot be seen and/or heard by at least one other adult who is not at-risk;
- Take children alone in a car unless it is absolutely necessary and with parental or guardian consent;
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child or at-risk adult at risk of abuse;
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- Offer benefits such as food, favours, clothes, jobs, money in exchange for sexual favours;
- Show favouritism to any individual for sexual favours in return; and
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade individuals including children or at-risk adults, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking.
- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse anyone

## Implementation

The protection from abuse and exploitation will be addressed through the following steps:

### 6. Risk assessment/risk mitigation

CR has a commitment to design and deliver programmes which are safe for all individuals including children and at-risk adults. This will ensure that programmes and projects will be risk assessed for safety and safety strategies developed.

In recognising these risks, individuals bound by this policy should proactively assess and manage risks to reduce the risk of harm. Staff should ensure that any relevant activities they undertake will ensure thorough and systematised analysis of risks. Staff should also ensure that keeping people safe is mainstreamed throughout projects and activities along with other cross-cutting issues. This includes consideration of keeping people safe when conducting a risk analysis for any project, particularly those where CR representatives come into direct contact with children and/or at-risk adults. An analysis of risks should always be conducted during project design, and periodically reviewed during the life cycle of the project.

### 7. Safe recruitment, procurement, induction and training

We shall operate safe recruitment practices and routinely take up and check references.

- As part of the recruitment process, CR may require prospective employees, volunteers and trustees to be subject to a criminal record check or equivalent so as to exclude those with a past sexual offences record or a record of any other type of offence that might put associated individuals at risk from employment. CR can provide information about how to obtain this check and the cost of this check will be covered by CR;
- Job descriptions should mention a commitment to keeping people safe and outline responsibilities for keeping people safe commensurate with the role;
- Interview questions will include questions on suitability to work with children or at-risk adults;
- CR will seek at least two professional references from individuals authorised to provide references at an individual's most recent employer/academic institution and at least one other recent employer/academic institution on the prospective employee's suitability to work with children and at-risk adults recognising that criminal record checks do not necessarily reveal risks associated with inappropriate behaviour; and
- Reasons for leaving previous employment will be fully documented and checked with the most recent employer.

As per the Procurement Policy, we shall operate safe procurement practices and routinely take up and check references.

- Keeping people safe should be mentioned in the Terms of Reference for consultants
- If a consultant is being interviewed, interview questions will include questions on suitability to work with children or at-risk adults
- CR will seek at least two professional references from individuals authorized to

provide references, including from the most recent employer. References will contain a keeping people safe question assessing the prospective consultant's suitability to work with children and at-risk adults

- A consultant should agree to the Policy on Keeping People Safe and Code of Conduct, which are included in the Consultant's Handbook mentioned in the Consultancy Agreement.
- A consultant should watch CR's keeping people safe video training for consultants.

## 8. Training

All staff, volunteers, consultants, and trustees will receive training consistent with their job roles and responsibilities including as part of their induction and subsequent refresher training. Creating an 'aware culture' in which all staff, volunteers and other representatives contribute to both the protection of children and at-risk adults and prevention of abuse and exploitation is crucial. Contractors who interact with children or at-risk adults will receive training consistent with their job roles and responsibilities. Contractors will be supervised by CR staff at all times when interacting with children and/or at-risk adults.

As part of their own approach to keeping people safe, partners will conduct training consistent with job roles and responsibilities. CR will endeavour to assist with this.

## 9. Keeping People Safe and Communications

CR is committed to respecting the privacy and rights of all those we work with. We will only publish stories, text and images, still or moving, of children or at-risk adults if written informed prior consent has been received from either the child or at-risk adult or their parent or guardian. Where a child is under 16 years old, prior written informed consent must be provided by their parent or guardian.

## 10. How to raise a concern about safety or harm

CR publishes its Policy on keeping people safe, Complaints Policy and Whistleblowing Policy on its website. We will accept concerns from associated individuals and members of the public. These concerns may be about harm that has occurred or may have occurred or people feeling unsafe.

The Incident Reporting Form can be found in Appendix 2 although you do not need to use this form to raise a concern; you can speak to any of those individuals listed in Appendix 1. A reporting flowchart can be found in Appendix 3. The following procedure will be followed for reporting and reacting to any witnessed, suspected or alleged incident of abuse or exploitation in violation of this Policy by an employee, contractor, volunteer, trustee or partner. The guiding principle in responding to any concerns around harm is that the safety and welfare of the child or at-risk adult should always come first. No one should be put at more risk by any action that may be taken.

If you have a concern, you should report it as soon as it is practicable and safe to do so. An allegation of abuse of a child or at-risk adult should be taken seriously at all times. It is not for you to decide whether or not abuse or exploitation has taken place but to raise your concerns and/or pass on any concerns which have been raised with you. You can do this verbally or in writing. You do not have to decide whether or not there has been abuse. The need to report arises in the following instances:



- You observe or suspect abuse.
- You hear or receive an allegation of abuse.
- A child or vulnerable adult discloses abuse.

We regard it as essential that all those who work with CR and who CR works with be encouraged to come forward with concerns either orally or in writing. For the avoidance of doubt, no representative of CR will prejudice their own position or standing with CR by responsibly reporting potential or suspected abuse. Disclosures and suspicions should always be investigated and acted upon swiftly making the welfare of the individual paramount. Any delay must be avoided.

Information given should be written in a report as soon as possible after the concern was raised (within 24 hours if possible). Any written records taken must be kept securely in a locked place. Under no circumstances should any individual attempt to deal with the problem of abuse alone. If a representative of CR suspects that child abuse or abuse of an at-risk adult is occurring, they should follow the reporting procedure.

If you suspect abuse, or someone discloses allegations to you, you should:

- Listen to the person, allow them to say what they feel they want to say, but don't ask leading questions.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. You may need to pass it on to someone in charge as you are concerned for their welfare.
- As soon as is possible, write down everything you can remember that the person said, as well as where and when the conversation took place. Include date and time of conversation(s) and any incident(s) disclosed. Reports should be factual and as accurate as possible.
- Opinions and presumptions should be avoided but, where it is felt relevant or important to include these, they should be clearly indicated as such.
- In the first instance, the only person who 'needs to know' is the CR Designated Officer who should be contacted as soon as possible. If he is not contactable, or if you would prefer, contact the International Safety and Compliance Manager. All contact details can be found in Appendix 1.
- But if the alleged incident relates to a particular member of staff, you should contact the Designated Officer directly. If the alleged incident related to the Designated Officer, contact CR's Chair.
- Having your details helps us follow-up. But if you want to be anonymous, send the information anonymously to the Chief Operating Officer by the following means:
  - Via anonymous [google form](#) (for CR staff)
  - Via email from an alternative & anonymous email address
  - Via anonymous letter
  - Via any other anonymous and confidential means or by asking to remain anonymous

It is essential that all parties maintain confidentiality and therefore sharing of information, which

could identify a victim or an alleged perpetrator should be purely on a 'need to know' basis. Unless abuse has actually been proved to have occurred one must always refer to 'alleged abuse'. Names and identities are not to be disclosed outside the group designated as 'need to know'. CR may be under a legal obligation to report anonymised incidents to certain authorities. Partners will ensure that members of the community they are working with know who to report a problem to.

CR will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy. During investigations, alleged perpetrators will be respectfully asked to take paid leave. CR will endeavour to provide support to victims and survivors.

## 11. Investigating a concern

CR will keep an incident log of concerns raised, in which all reports will be kept confidentially and securely. At the point at which the actual or alleged incident is reported, CR will report the incident to the relevant and necessary authorities in order to comply with its obligations as a UK-based charity and its obligations in the jurisdiction in which the incident occurs, if not the UK.

CR recognises the importance of a timely response to any concerns raised, while acknowledging that investigations can be challenging processes and that it is important not to do further harm by rushing an investigation process. Any ongoing investigations will be treated as a top priority by those managing, and those advising on, the investigation until the investigation is concluded. The process for investigating concerns is outlined in CR's Investigation Guidelines and the investigation will be conducted by an individual with the requisite experience.

CR will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy. During investigations, alleged perpetrators will be respectfully asked to take paid leave in accordance with CR's Disciplinary Policy. CR will endeavour to provide support to victims and survivors.

## 12. Management

All line managers have the responsibility to ensure that all representatives of CR within their remit are made aware of the policy on keeping people safe and code of conduct and are given a copy of all relevant guidance and procedures for reporting abuse. Regular monitoring of risks, risk mitigation and the effectiveness of measures to keep people safe will be incorporated into CR's monitoring processes and activities.

## 13. Board responsibility

The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for keeping people safe and must ensure that CR is taking reasonable steps to keep associated individuals safe. The Board must act at all times in the best interests of associated individuals and, where these do not conflict with the best interests of associated individuals, in the best interests of volunteers and staff also. All trustees will receive training on keeping people safe appropriate to their role.

The Board has appointed two Trustees for Keeping People Safe. Keeping People Safe is a separate item on the organisational risk register and a standing item at all quarterly board meetings.

The Board of trustees has approved this policy and will review it within the first six months and then at least annually thereafter. The Board will include keeping people safe in its regular risk review.



Review CR is committed to reviewing its policy and good practice in six months from the date of implementation and with annual reviews thereafter.

This policy was last reviewed on:

Date: 24th January 2024

**Appendix 1: Key Contacts for Keeping People Safe**

Safeguarding Address:

Safeguarding Officer  
Conciliation Resources  
1st Floor, The Brick Yard  
28 Charles Square  
London  
N1 6HT  
United Kingdom  
Dedicated Safeguarding Email: [safeguarding@c-r.org](mailto:safeguarding@c-r.org)

This email is manned at all times by the Designated Safeguarding Officer and, in his absence, the International Safety and Compliance Manager.

Designated Safeguarding Officer: Gavin Salmon (Interim Chief Operating Officer)

Email: [gsalmon@c-r.org](mailto:gsalmon@c-r.org)

Telephone number: +44 (0) 7731 376506

If you receive an automatic reply from this email address, you can contact the International Safety and Compliance Manager.

Designated Safeguarding Officer Cover: Ardlene Davies (International Safety and Compliance Manager)

Email: [adavies@c-r.org](mailto:adavies@c-r.org)

In exceptional circumstances, such as if a safeguarding incident involves the Chief Operating Officer or International Safety and Compliance Manager, you can contact the Chair.

Trustees for Keeping People Safe Email: [safeguardingtrustees@c-r.org](mailto:safeguardingtrustees@c-r.org)

**Appendix 2: Reporting Form**

*Note: Please remember that all information contained in this report must be kept confidential and must not be revealed to anyone except the person you reported to. You will be informed of next actions that will be taken.*

**Part One: About You**

Name:

Your role in (CR or Partner or other):

Details of any other organisation involved:

Your relationship to the child or vulnerable adult concerned:

**Part Two: About the Child/Vulnerable Adult**

Name(s):

Male/female:

Age:

Address:

Whom does the person live with?

**Part Three: About Your Concern**

How did you come to have a concern: was abuse or policy non-compliance observed or suspected? Was an allegation made? Did a child, young person or vulnerable adult disclose abuse?

Date, time and place of any incident(s) reported to you:

Nature of concern/allegation:

Observations made by you (e.g. individual's emotional state, any physical evidence)

Write down exactly what the child or person making a report said and what you said (or another informant said): continue on a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

Any other relevant information? (E.g. disability? language?)

Were other people involved or aware?

Have you already spoken to parents or carers or any other Safeguarding Personnel or Agencies? Yes or No \_\_\_\_

If Yes, who or whom?

Time and date of reporting:

Person(s) to who report was made: (name of supervisor/manager/staff):

Advice given by that person or agency:

Action Taken:

I understand that in making this report CR may have to inform authorities, in a confidential manner and only if necessary for the safety of the child, at-risk adult, the staff member, the partner, or to meet obligations to donors or under national law.

Signed:

Date:

### **Appendix 3: Raising Concerns and Response Procedure**

