



**IGNITE
PHILANTHROPY**
inspiring the end to violence
against girls and boys



Resource Pack

on

Survivor Informed Safeguarding

for

Survivor-led Organizations



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Background

Who is this Resource Pack for?

This Resource Pack has been created as a follow-up to the safeguarding workshops held for Thrive Together Partners and Sprout Fellows, so is focused on survivor-led organisations and groups but can be used by any organisation working in the field of Sexual Violence Against Children. It is based on a mapping exercise of safeguarding for survivor-led organisations with Thrive Together Partners as well as four workshops held with Thrive Together Partners and Sprout Fellows during February to May 2025.

How to use this Resource Pack

This pack of resources complements four workshops held with Thrive Together Partners and Sprout Fellows.

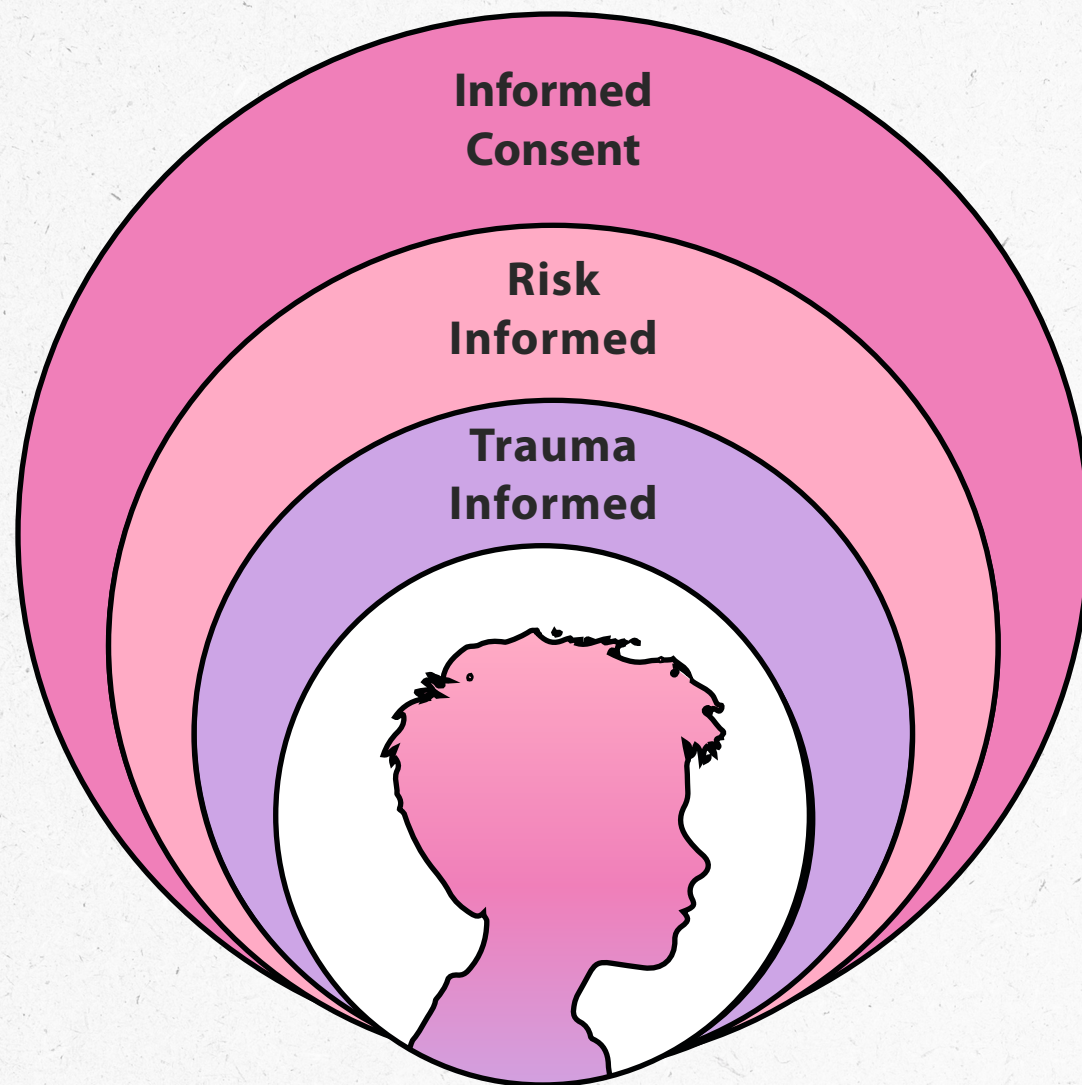
1. Global Safeguarding Standards - February 2025
2. Risk Management - March 2025
3. Reporting and Responding to Abuse - April 2025
4. Digital Safeguarding - May 2025

Key content from the safeguarding workshops has been included in this resource pack and learning from discussions with Partners and Sprout Fellows during the workshops has been incorporated. In addition, the Children Unite team has added our tips, suggestions or advice to the pack and links to relevant resources where possible

Survivor-Informed Safeguarding

Survivor-informed safeguarding was developed by Children Unite in 2022 for use with survivors (or those with lived experience of sexual violence) who are undertaking advocacy or activism on sexual violence. It is based on safeguarding work with young feminists.

Survivor-informed safeguarding uses three key practices:



1. trauma-informed approaches
2. survivor-informed risk and mitigation planning
3. regularly checking-in with survivors' on their consent

Trauma-informed is about:

- ✓ accepting that trauma exists and therefore using trauma-informed approaches so you can respond to trauma when it arises.
- ✓ providing appropriate support to your staff for dealing with trauma

For example: as most behavioural codes of conduct do not include measures to promote wellbeing and self-care include statements such as 'Look after your own wellbeing and that of others, to avoid burn-out and feeling pressured to work too hard' (from FRIDA Young Feminist Fund's Code of Conduct)

Risk-informed is about:

- ✓ Looking at the risks in your contexts (i.e. grassroots survivor organisation doing prevention work with communities) and
- ✓ Involving survivors in risk assessment and the development of mitigation strategies
- ✓ This isn't one-off exercise - risks should be regularly re-visited

For example: once there is a disclosure of abuse, it is often good practice (in many safeguarding standards) to report it to the police. However, you may need to do a risk assessment with survivors (who have experience of the police) that looks at the risks of reporting to the police to see whether it is safe to do so.

Informed Consent is about:

- ✓ being informed by survivors in your decision-making
- ✓ creating a safe space for survivors to communicate with you about their needs/recovery journey so that they are regularly reflecting and re-consenting to participate in activities.

Often as managers we might want justice for those who disclose abuse or we might think they need psychosocial support - the reality is all of us experience trauma in different ways and this is about respecting the fact that everyone's recovery journey is different.

Key Learning on Applying a Survivor-Informed Approach to Safeguarding

Applying a Survivor Centred, Individualised Approach

- 1. Recognising each survivor as unique**

Every survivor's experience is different. Decisions should be tailored to their specific circumstances, needs, and strengths, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach.
- 2. Prioritising the survivor's best interests**

All actions and decisions should place the survivor's best interests at the centre. Their safety, well-being, and right to recovery must be the primary focus throughout every stage of support.
- 3. Involving survivors as active participants**

Wherever possible and appropriate, survivors should be meaningfully involved in shaping the decisions that affect their lives. Their opinions, preferences, and perspectives are essential in determining what is truly in their best interests.
- 4. Continuously assessing and adapting to their evolving needs**

A survivor's situation may change over time. Support should include regular reassessments to identify risks, strengths, and protective factors, allowing decisions to adapt as their circumstances evolve.
- 5. Focusing on long-term well-being**

Support must consider not only immediate safety and needs, but also the survivor's overall development and future. This includes attention to their emotional, physical, educational, social, and cultural well-being, with the goal of helping them move forward in a way that is meaningful and sustainable.

Promoting Survivor Participation and Healing

- 1. Involving survivors in decision-making:**

Engage survivors meaningfully in decisions that affect their lives, such as case planning, living arrangements, and education. Their views should be considered with respect for their capacity, experience, and readiness to participate.
- 2. Demonstrating the impact of participation:**

Show survivors that their input matters by regularly reviewing and adapting plans based on their feedback. This reinforces that their voice has real influence and value.
- 3. Respecting each survivor's pace and readiness:**

Every survivor processes experiences differently. Allow time, space, and support for survivors to engage in the processes at a pace that feels safe and manageable for them.
- 4. Identifying 'safe' people:**

support survivors to identify 'safe people' who they feel comfortable with and consult on such things as their wellbeing and risk management. Safe people can be a lawyer, a therapist, a support worker, a family member, teacher, a community member or a peer.
- 5. Sharing information in accessible and inclusive ways:**

Use clear, respectful, and inclusive communication. This may include visual aids, simple language, and interactive tools to ensure survivors understand their rights, their options, and the steps being taken.
- 6. Empowering survivors and their support networks:**

Support survivors and, when appropriate, their families or caregivers in recognising, preventing, and responding to protection concerns. Focus on their strengths and build their capacity for self-advocacy, healing, and long-term well-being.

Using Trauma Informed Approaches

- 1. Assessing trauma:**

Assess each survivor's needs, support systems, level of trauma, ability to comprehend information, capacity for informed consent, and existing coping mechanisms.
- 2. Understanding how to respond to trauma:**

Staff acknowledge the impact of traumatic experiences on both survivors and those supporting them. They are trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of trauma and are committed to actively preventing re-traumatisation.
- 3. Accepting that trauma exists:**

Recognise that survivors may be triggered or destabilised during case management. These risks can be managed with appropriate support and do not mean survivors should halt their healing journey. This aligns with the principle of respecting each survivor's pace and readiness.
- 4. Risk informed:**

To ensure case management is safe for survivors, risks should be identified and mitigation strategies co-developed with survivors and their support networks or safe people. These strategies should be regularly revisited through reflective practice as new situations arise. Discussions about risk must be grounded in informed, ongoing consent.
- 5. Informed and continuous consent:**

Seek informed consent at every stage of the case management process. Consent should be viewed as a continuous dialogue, not a one-time event.

1 Global Standards on Safeguarding

On 20 February 2025, Ignite Philanthropy and Children Unite held a webinar with Thrive Together Partners and Sprout Fellows to outline the global standards on safeguarding.

Please see the PowerPoint slides: [Webinar on Global Safeguarding Standards.pptx](#)

Key takeaway: Global standards and what is considered 'good practice' focus on combating internal threats (of sexual abuse) by staff towards female 'beneficiaries' in humanitarian contexts. Consequently, global standards do not reflect the environments in which survivor-led organisations operate. This means that, as survivor-led organisations or groups, we need to **adapt our safeguarding policies and practices to our local contexts and operating environments** - focusing on the risks to our staff or volunteers and our service users.

Overview of Global Standards on Safeguarding

Keeping Children Safe Standards	
What is expected in the standard:	Relevance to survivor-led organisations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A child safeguarding policy in place that reflects the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The policy is approved by management and widely published. ✓ Clear responsibilities and expectations on staff and anyone working with children, including training and support to safeguard children. ✓ Child safeguarding procedures that are applied across the organisation. ✓ Accountability so that the organisation monitors and reviews its safeguarding measures. 	<p>Standards can be applied to most contexts.</p> <p>Simple & accessible language and approaches are used throughout the standards.</p> <p>Practical tools and checklists are provided to help organisations implement the standards.</p> <p>An easy-to-use facilitation guide is provided.</p>

UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC)

What is expected in the standard:	Relevance to survivor-led organisations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A policy in place to prevent Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) ✓ Measures to prevent SEA including staff training, recruitment and reporting processes. ✓ Organisations inform communities they work with about their safeguarding policy and practices. ✓ A dedicated SEA focal point (staff member) or department. ✓ A code of conduct and the Secretary General's Bulletin (ST/SGB/2003/13) or respective codes of conduct are included in contracts. 	<p>Focuses on a survivor-centred approaches</p> <p>Links to local communities</p> <p>Working notes are provided in English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Ukrainian and Arabic.</p> <p>Note: all UN agencies or organisations working in partnership/funded by UN agencies are required to comply with these standards.</p>

Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS Alliance)

What is expected in the standard:	Relevance to survivor-led organisations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify and address Sexual Exploitation, Abuse & Harassment (SEAH) risks in organisations and programme activities. ✓ Policies in place to prevent and respond to SEAH. ✓ Inform communities of the organisation's work to prevent SEAH. ✓ Put in place reporting systems for communities, with reporting and investigation processes that prioritise the safety, needs and interests of survivors. 	<p>Incorporates local communities and capacity issues.</p> <p>Standards are provided in English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Arabic.</p> <p>The standards are endorsed by governments.</p>

FCDO (UK Government) Enhanced Due diligence

What is expected in the standard:	Relevance to survivor-led organisations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A safeguarding or PSEA policy in place ✓ A code of conduct ✓ A safer recruitment procedure ✓ Provision of training and/or increase knowledge on safeguarding ✓ A risk management process ✓ Reporting mechanisms (including a whistleblowing mechanism) ✓ Survivor-centred responses ✓ Safeguarding standards are regularly reviewed with clear lines of accountability. 	<p>These standards are part of the UK Government's commitment to improving safeguarding in the international development and humanitarian sector, following high-profile cases of sexual abuse and misconduct in past years.</p> <p>As the UK Government was the first government to develop and respond to safeguarding, they have influence with other governments and donor agencies.</p>

Key Gaps in the Global Standards

The Children Unite team identified some key gaps in the global standards when comparing them to the contexts of survivor-led organisations.

Capacity & Resourcing

- ✓ Most standards require staffing and a budget to implement. As survivor-led organisations are often grassroots and small - this will require staff or volunteers undertaking multiple roles and activities may be limited by budget constraints

Focused on specific contexts

- ✓ Many of the standards are focused on sexual abuse, exploitation or harassment and have been developed for use in humanitarian contexts.

Bureaucratic & complex

- ✓ The language in the standards is donor-centric, and can be jargon filled and technical so is not easily accessible or understandable for many people.

One-size-fits-all approach

- ✓ The standards do not reflect cultural, contextual, or community-based safeguarding practices.
- ✓ Survivor-led groups often operate in informal or activist spaces, where power-sharing and lived experience are central; this can clash with the top-down, compliance-driven model of safeguarding promoted in the standards.

Lack of trauma-informed flexibility

- ✓ Survivor-led organisations often prioritise healing, dignity, and empowerment, but the standards may lack flexibility for trauma-informed approaches or peer-led responses.
- ✓ Survivors may not want to engage with formal mechanisms, especially if they replicate structures of control or mistrust.

Imbalances in power & voice

- ✓ The standards often don't acknowledge or address the power imbalances between large INGOs and smaller, locally led organisations.
- ✓ Survivors often have limited or no input in shaping what "safeguarding" looks like in practice under donor-led frameworks.

Reporting & investigation barriers

- ✓ Expectations around confidential, independent reporting mechanisms and investigations are difficult to meet for small organisations - as they take a lot of staff time, specialist expertise or resources to implement.
- ✓ There may be real fears of retaliation, community backlash, or even safety risks when reporting abuse in close-knit and or community environments.

Key Learning from the Webinar on Global Standards

In the presentation to Partners, the Children Unite team identified two key **gaps and weaknesses of global standards** on safeguarding as they relate to survivor groups

- ✓ PSEAH: Many standards focus on only sexual abuse and exploitation and humanitarian aid settings (disaster and crisis)
- ✓ All standards have been written for large INGOs or UN agencies and their foreign (Western/ North American) staff (predominantly white men)

This results in a bias towards developing internal safeguarding mechanisms where staff are seen as a key risk to local communities (beneficiaries of aid or local staff from the community). In addition, compliance requires many organisational resources to implement - in particular staff time.

Partners felt most confident using the terms 'Zero Tolerance', 'Do No Harm' and 'Safeguarding' and were less confident using the terms 'Best Interests', 'PSEA' and 'Duty of Care'.

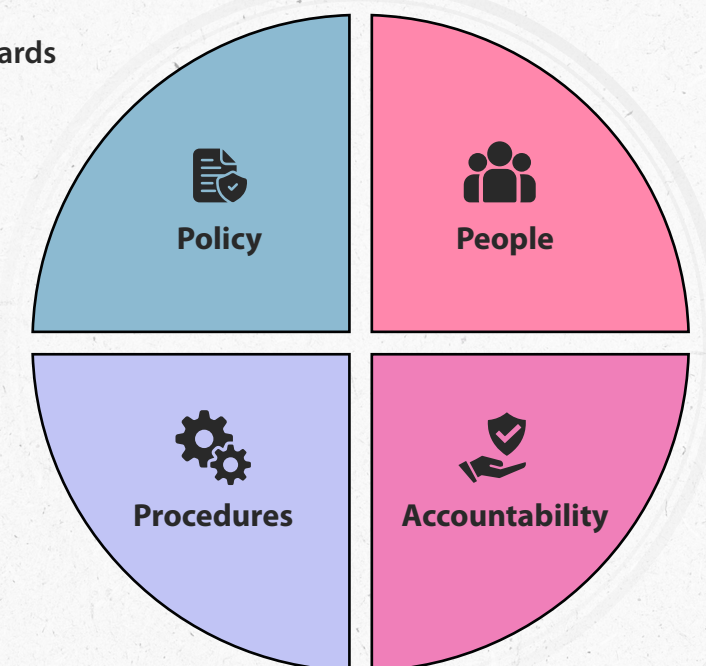
Using the Global Standards to Develop a Safeguarding Policy

Use the following guidance to create a safeguarding policy for survivor-led groups and organisations

Use the **Keeping Children Safe Standards** as a basis for your policy

These standards are most relevant to Thrive Together Partners because they:

- ✓ Can be applied to most contexts
- ✓ Use simple & accessible language and approaches
- ✓ Include practical tools and checklists
- ✓ Have an easy-to-use facilitation guide
- ✓ Focus on children



However, the Keeping Children Safe Standards have some gaps:

- ✓ The standards don't focus on adults (over 18-year-olds)
- ✓ They are Eurocentric (have been developed by large INGOs in the Global North)
- ✓ They require organisations to have many resources to implement (mainly staff time)

Policy

Keeping Children Safe Standards highlight 3 key areas that safeguarding policies should include:

- ✓ **Describe your organisation's commitment:** The organisation develops a policy that describes how it is committed to preventing and responding appropriately to harm towards children.
- ✓ **Reflect children's rights:** The policy reflects the rights of children to protection in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. You may want to include references to other international or regional conventions on people with disabilities, women and girls etc.
- ✓ **Easily accessible:** The policy is publicised and easily accessible to children or service users.

People

- ✓ Safe people is about trying to deter people who want to abuse/harm your beneficiaries/service users from working for your organisation (and proving that staff are not a risk to beneficiaries/service users).
- ✓ The concept of 'safe people' comes from the scandals highlighted in the webinar on global safeguarding standards where foreign (European/North American) staff abused their power to sexually abuse and exploit local 'beneficiaries' of aid or humanitarian assistance.
- ✓ Consequently, the concept of 'safe people' does not fit well with survivor-led organisations - which tend to have survivors on the staff team - and there is not a culture of 'us' (for staff) and 'them' (for beneficiaries).

Keeping Children Safe Standards highlight 3 key areas regarding 'safe people' that safeguarding policies and procedures should include:

- ✓ **Clear roles and expectations for staff:** The organisation places clear responsibilities and expectations on its staff and associates and supports them to understand and act in line with these. For example, all staff should report any concerns about safeguarding to a designated person who is responsible for safeguarding (often called a safeguarding focal point).
- ✓ **Recruitment processes for staff and volunteers have robust measures in place:** we suggest making reference checks for all new staff and volunteers.
- ✓ **Provide a behavioural code of conduct or engagement guidelines:** provide guidelines for engaging or collaborating with staff, volunteers or community members such as parents or children and young people. Codes of conduct outline appropriate and inappropriate behaviour that encourage healthy boundaries and clearly define misconduct.

Procedures

Procedures are the guidelines, processes and tools that are used to implement policy. Keeping Children Safe Standards highlight 5 key areas that safeguarding procedures should incorporate:

- ✓ **Cross organisational:** Safeguarding procedures are applied across the organisation. Child safeguarding is integrated into core business processes and departments; such as strategic planning, budgeting, recruitment, programme management, and procurement, to ensure it is a consistent feature of all operations.
- ✓ **Context mapping:** Organisations carry out local mapping exercises on the legal, social welfare and child protection arrangements.
- ✓ **Risk Management:** risk assessments and mitigation strategies should inform most of your procedures.
- ✓ **Integrated:** Child safeguarding measures are integrated with existing processes and systems such as your strategic planning and budgeting.
- ✓ **Responding appropriately:** Your reporting and responding processes are developed so that they are accessible to those who might report abuse (the staff and the children/young people your organisation supports). Examples of this include: anonymous email addresses so that people can report abuse via email and are not identified

Accountability

The Keeping Children Safe Standards highlight 4 key areas where accountability can be incorporated into safeguarding practice:

- ✓ **Monitoring:** Implementation of child safeguarding policies and procedures is regularly monitored.
- ✓ **Learning is shared:** Progress, performance and lessons learned are shared with key stakeholders such as senior managers and/or board members of your organisation. This ensures that 'safeguarding' is regularly discussed internally within your organisation.
- ✓ **Learning from practice:** Learning from practical experience on the ground informs policy review and changes to child safeguarding measures.
- ✓ **Reviews:** Policies and practices are reviewed at regular intervals and formally evaluated by an external evaluator/auditor every three years.

Tips for Survivor-led Organisations on Adapting Policies

- ✓ **Example policies:** If you are going to base your safeguarding policy on an example, choose a policy that targets children as these tend to be stronger and more inclusive than policies targeting 'vulnerable adults'.
- ✓ **Mapping of services:** You may want to ask other NGOs, or even UN agencies for their local mapping exercises - many of them have to do this as part of their safeguarding procedures.
- ✓ **Budgeting:** Allocate a budget for 'safeguarding' in all your funding proposals most funders will not deny this.
- ✓ **Obtaining consent:** As many survivors do not want to give written consent due to fears around fraud or becoming identifiable - there are other options: a) verbal consent, recorded by staff in a secure and confidential manner (via their phone) b) anonymous consent, where survivors agree to use pseudonyms or initials c) digital consent, using encrypted online forms or apps that protect their privacy.
- ✓ **Monitoring policies and procedures** or sharing learning may be a challenge for small, unregistered organisations however there are simple ways to monitor progress and share learning.

For example, one of your volunteers receives a disclosure of abuse when doing an outreach session but does not know what to do, or who to report to. When you discuss this with your staff team, you find that other volunteers have experienced something similar. To manage this, you discuss the issue with the leader/director of the organisation and agree to a) train volunteers more frequently and b) once a month to discuss safeguarding and best practice in your team meetings. These two measures are reported to the management/governance committee for the organisation and to all staff and volunteers.

Resources and Tools on Safeguarding Policies

Guidance on developing safeguarding policies or procedures:

- ✓ [Developing Policy and Procedures](#) from Keeping Children Safe
- ✓ [Safeguarding International Standards](#) This document explains the Keeping Children Safe standards and gives advice on how to implement them
- ✓ [Quick Guide Note to Develop and Review Safeguarding Policy](#) from Safeguarding Resource Hub

Guidance on monitoring safeguarding practice:

- ✓ See [Section 5 Monitoring of Safeguarding Practice](#) (pages 18-20) of ChildHope's Safeguarding Policy
- ✓ [Measuring improvements in the way organisations prevent and respond to SEAH](#) - a 'how to' guide from Safeguarding Resource Hub on tracking progress

Examples of key safeguarding policies or tools:

- ✓ [Feminist Safeguarding Policy](#) from FRIDA Young Feminist Fund
- ✓ [Terms of Reference for a Safeguarding Focal Point](#) - from HelpAge
- ✓ [Template for a Behavioural Code of Conduct](#) - from Safeguarding Resource Hub
- ✓ www.ignitephilanthropy.org/s/Global-Safeguarding-Standards-Resource-Pack.pptx
- ✓ www.ignitephilanthropy.org/s/Digital-Safeguarding-Slides-Final.pptx
- ✓ www.ignitephilanthropy.org/s/Reporting-and-Responding-to-Abuse.pptx
- ✓ www.ignitephilanthropy.org/s/Risk-Management-Workshop-Slides.pptx
- ✓ www.ignitephilanthropy.org/s/Tools-for-Resource-Pack.docx
- ✓ www.ignitephilanthropy.org/s/Completed-Risk-Register-on-Reporting-Abuse.docx


2. Managing Risks

On 20 March 2025, Ignite Philanthropy and Children Unite held a workshop with Thrive Together Partners and Sprout Fellows to explore how to manage risks. In the workshop, participants undertook a risk assessment that focused on the **risks when reporting abuse to the authorities**.

Please see the PowerPoint Slides: [Workshop on Managing Risks](#)

Key takeaway from discussion: Risk management should incorporate well-being and joint decision-making with survivors. Risk assessment and mitigation planning should be undertaken regularly with staff teams and others - and focus on different areas of operation (an advocacy event, prevention activities, a staff retreat etc.). Because the staff team will include those with lived experience of sexual violence (whether they identify publicly as survivors or not) risk management should incorporate the risks and mitigations for survivors.

What is a RISK?


 A risk is the chance of something happening that will have a negative effect on a person or activity.

An example - Imagine it is late at night and you have met a friend at a cafe and **you put your phone right on the edge of a table**.

Risks for the example:

- ✓ If you leave it there, there's a risk **it might fall and break**
- ✓ If you leave it there, **someone could take it or steal it**

What is a MITIGATION?

 Mitigations are the measures or steps you take to minimize potential damage or loss to a person or to an activity.

Mitigations for the example:

- ✓ If you **move the phone to the middle of the table**, you reduce the risk of falling or theft.
- ✓ If you **put the phone in your pocket or a safe place like your bag**, you mitigate the risk completely.

What is Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is a process of **identifying potential risks, evaluating how serious they are, and finding ways to reduce or manage them**.

Tips for Survivor-Led Organisations on Risk Management

- ✓ Survivors are part of the staff team for survivor-led organisations so it's important to undertake risk assessments and planning for survivors
- ✓ Focus safety/mitigation plans on addressing the safety/security of staff and re-traumatisation of staff.
- ✓ When identifying risks - focus on the **'harm'** that can happen i.e. staff can be harassed by perpetrators of abuse when they are providing support to a victim/survivor of abuse.
- ✓ When identifying mitigation strategies focus on **immediate** actions that can be undertaken **by your team** to reduce the risk in the short-term.

Workshop participants used a [Risk Register](#) to make a risk assessment and a mitigation plan that focused on reporting and responding to a disclosure of abuse.

Please see the [Completed Risk Register for Reporting Abuse](#) for the risk assessment and mitigation plans discussed during the workshop.

Key Learning from a Risk Assessment of Reporting Abuse

The key overarching risk identified by workshop participants was that the victim/survivor would be **re-traumatised (experiences emotional distress) from the reporting process**.

Participants identified that emotional distress can be caused by such things as:

- ✓ intensive questioning by the police
- ✓ being questioned multiple times by the police
- ✓ use of victim blaming language and communication by the police or by community members
- ✓ stigmatisation (harassment, name calling etc.) by community members

Immediate actions that can be taken by your team:

- ✓ Map mental health and psychosocial support on offer to victims (i.e. organisations that can provide these services in your locality)
- ✓ Offer mental health and psychosocial support to the victim as soon as they disclose abuse to you.
- ✓ Provide a staff member to act as an 'advocate' who bridges the information/support gap between victims and the justice system i.e. they explain each step in the reporting process and accompany the victim to the police station, to court etc.
- ✓ In order to prepare the victim, explain what will happen once their report has been submitted to the police, the legal process, how they will be questioned or interrogated etc.
- ✓ Provide guidance or advice to victims that explain their rights during the reporting/legal process.
- ✓ Let family members or supportive people (those the victim trusts) know how to support victims (explain the reporting process to them/how to avoid using victim blaming language etc.).

Risk Area 2: Breaking confidentiality: the police or family members disclose personal information (name, address etc.) about the victim to the community

- ✓ The police may give out personal/private information about the victim or family members may discuss the abuse with community members.

Immediate actions that can be taken by your team:

- ✓ Avoid using victim blaming language, communication and behaviour (see guidelines for practitioners in useful resources and tools below)
- ✓ Provide advice/support to the victim's family members on how to keep confidentiality, how to discuss the abuse situation with the victim without ignoring them or triggering them.

Risk Area 3: Victims are stigmatised (harassed, called names, isolated, threatened) by family members or community members

- ✓ Victims can experience stigmatisation, discrimination, even 'hatred' from community members or, at the other end of the scale, a lack of encouragement from the community to report abuse. This is often because many community members (particularly religious communities) refuse to believe that abuse can happen in their communities. Therefore reporting abuse is seen as being against traditional values or cultural beliefs.

No immediate action was identified by participants, however, **longer term actions** included:

- ✓ Undertake community awareness programmes on children's rights and what 'abuse' is (what consent is etc.) such as door-to-door awareness programmes or discussions with religious leaders, village leaders.
- ✓ Undertake community prevention programmes on child abuse
- ✓ Provide life skills training and support to children/victims.

Risk Area 4: Privacy: survivors' privacy is compromised. For example, news and media share details (name and address) of survivors in newspapers and online

- ✓ As people are more connected online and everyone thinks they are a journalist online. There is a rise in survivors' privacy being violated through sharing of their photos, videos, name and address online.

No immediate action was identified by participants, however, longer term actions included:

- ✓ Undertake or support campaigns calling for an anonymous reporting mechanism/hotline number
- ✓ Promote the use of guidelines for practitioners on how to prevent victim blaming language, communication and behaviour (see guidelines for practitioners below)

Risk Area 5: The communication and support needs for victims with disabilities (i.e. deaf community) are not met during the reporting process.

- ✓ Participants discussed how this would affect the reporting process. It would mean that deaf victims do not report abuse (effectively) and do not access effective support due to communication barriers

Immediate actions that can be taken by your team:

- ✓ Provide somewhere for the victim to stay i.e. safe house, safe place during process of reporting
- ✓ Identify and provide interpreters/signers for victims with hearing disabilities.
- ✓ Identify and/or provide free/pro-bono legal support for child victims.

Resources and Tools on Risk Management

Guides on how to manage or assess risks:

- ✓ Guidance on Completing a Risk Register
- ✓ Participatory Risk Assessment: Scenario Planning
- ✓ Participatory Risk Assessment: World's Worst
- ✓ [Guidance on Risk Management](#) (see pages 2-35) from Keeping Children Safe
- ✓ [Guiding Principles on Preventing Victim-Blaming Language, Communication and Behaviours](#) New guidance for practitioners from ECPAT International

3. Reporting and Responding to Abuse

On 17th April 2025, Ignite Philanthropy and Children Unite held a workshop with Thrive Together Partners and Sprout Fellows to explore how to report and respond to abuse. In the workshop, a Thrive Together partner shared personal experiences, providing valuable insight into real-world challenges. Participants also engaged in breakout groups to work through case study activities. A core focus of the workshop was on the key decisions involved in reporting concerns to the authorities and what influenced these decisions.

PowerPoint Slides: [Workshop on Reporting and Responding to Disclosures of Abuse](#)

Key takeaway from discussion: Due to pressure felt by many organisations to take a formal reporting route when disclosures of abuse are made (i.e. reporting to the police or social welfare) it is important to involve those disclosing abuse (survivors) in the decision-making processes regarding reporting and responding to their disclosure.

Case Example: Veronika Odinkova, Astra Foundation

My name is Veronika and I'm a social psychologist and director of Astra Foundation which operates in Armenia. At Astra we focus on research, prevention, education and advocacy. We do not provide services for children or adults who have experienced sexual violence. And in our work, we face disclosures of sexual abuse both here in research activities and also within our awareness raising campaigns and prevention campaigns. And, of course, these disclosures often demand and need immediate responses. The ideal response scenario would be to identify a survivor and promptly refer them to a specialized service that provides both psychological support and access to justice. However, such services do not exist in Armenia.

I would like to say a few words about the context in Armenia which has a significant impact on reporting and impacts on kids suffering abuse. This one context can be roughly divided into equally important parts. The first, is the formal structures and mechanisms - like laws, procedures, available services and available referral systems. The second, as equally important, is the culture and social norms which shape how children and adults behave in the situation of abuse. The formal systems in Armenia are, I would say,

in the development stage. So, there is no national child protection hotline. There are no centralized referral mechanisms for child victims of any abuse. And there is no clear enforceable mandatory reporting clause [in laws] and mechanisms. Mandatory reporting only applies to the healthcare sector. And as a result, the majority of identified cases of sexual violence among children are those cases which involved pregnancy or physical traumas and injuries from rape that require hospitalization so are identified by the visible medical consequences of sexual abuse. And most importantly, police are not trained in working with children who have experiences of sexual abuse.

And the state response is often inadequate. I know cases where children remained in the same home as the perpetrators even after the abuse was disclosed to officials and to police. And just no meaningful action was taken. And also, the important context is that confidentiality is extremely fragile here in Armenia. In a country of just three million people - everyone knows each other. And reporting to police inevitably results in a breach of confidentiality. Quite often the perpetrator is kind of a friend or relative to the policeman, officials and other people who make decisions on the case. And even some professionals (we do training for professionals), even some professionals, they believe that reporting to the police causes more harm than the abuse itself. Especially when we are speaking about cases which are considered to be less severe for example when there was no physical contact with the child's body – like with online sexual abuse. So, in terms of cultural context, there are also some cultural features that impact Armenia as a family-orientated and collectivist society. And the idea of family owner[ship] is extremely powerful, child survivors may be blamed for bringing shame to the family and when the child discloses the abuse to a professional the very first thing they often say is *'please do not tell my parents'*. This means that what the fear and pressure children feel is not just about the abuse itself but how the families respond and in many cases children are more scared about the reactions from home and from parents than of the abuse being addressed. And the result is a culture of avoidance and fear, everyone is afraid of making things worse so they just choose to do nothing in these situations.

Doing nothing is not an option for us at Astra Foundation, so we had to develop a temporary solution for such situations. We are not a service organization but we cannot ignore disclosures of abuse. So, now we have a 24/7 crisis psychologist who acts as a first point of contact for survivors or concerned individuals who approach us. And we have created a list of trusted contacts in child protection agencies and state systems so that we can reach out directly in high risk cases and avoid the whole bureaucracy regarding

the breach of confidentiality. But let's be clear, this is not a sustainable system, we are just filling the gaps that should not exist. So, here are the three key areas we should strengthen in the context of Armenia:

- ✓ The first clear survivor-centered reporting and response mechanisms, guided by the best interests of the child.
- ✓ The second is a practical guide for risk assessment before reporting to the authorities who, what, where and the consequences of reporting.
- ✓ And the third is a framework for interpreting what is the 'best interests' of the child in our context. Where the children are not always recognized as rights holders, they are cherished but they are a possession of the families. They do not make their own decisions in this cultural setting.

So basically, we have to change the systems so that the children can speak safely and adults know what to do - and protection should not depend on personal connections. It should work independently. So, this is very briefly our situation. Thank you very much for listening.

Reporting: Reporting procedure is the formal process that outlines what steps must be taken when someone has a concern or receives a disclosure about potential harm and abuse. It aims to ensure that all concerns are handled **consistently, safely**, and in line with **legal** and organisational responsibilities.

Response: Response refers to how you respond when a safeguarding concern is raised or a disclosure is made. It **focuses** on your **immediate actions** when someone tells you, or you suspect that they or someone else is at risk of harm and abuse.

Case management: Case management is a step-by-step support process that puts the survivor at the centre. It involves **listening to their needs**, creating a **personalised plan, connecting them with services** (like legal, health, or housing), and regularly **reviewing progress**. The goal is to ensure safety, healing, and long-term well-being while respecting the survivor's opinion, choices, and pace.

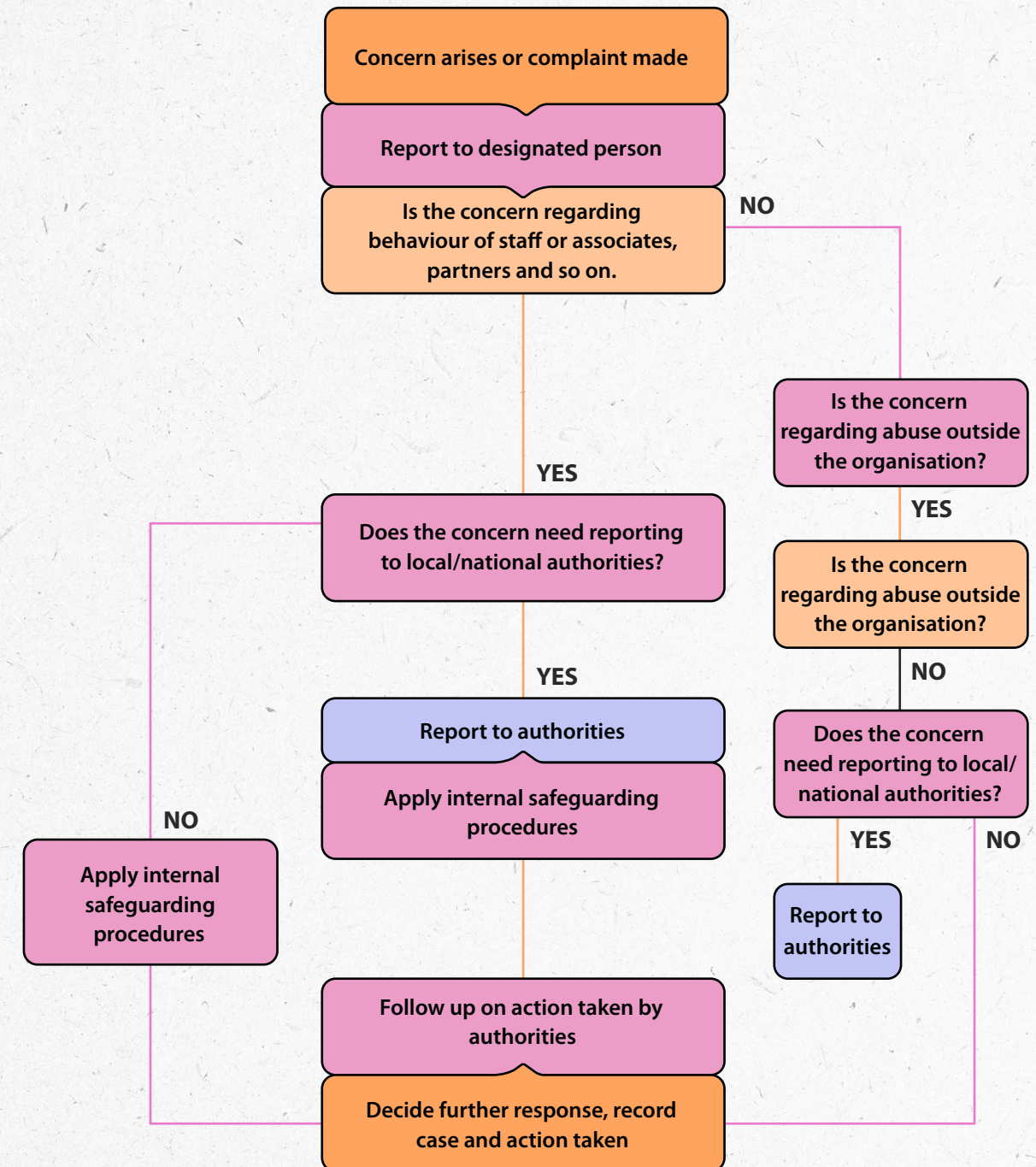
Key steps for case Management ¹



¹Inter-agency Child Protection Case Management Guidelines 2nd Edition 2024.pdf Page 13

Reporting Flow chart: this is a visual diagram that outlines the step-by-step process for reporting an issue or concern within an organisation or system. It helps staff or service users know exactly who to inform, when, and how, and it ensures a consistent and accountable response.

Example of A Reporting Flow Chart² (note: this example is not survivor-centred)



² Keeping children Safe: Global Standards 2024. Page 32-35

Tips on Adapting a Reporting Flowchart to be Survivor-Centred

- ✓ Who does it cover (staff, volunteers, service users)? Does it include reporting violations experienced *in the community* by staff, volunteers, visitors or partners?
- ✓ Looking at the flow chart depicted. **At what points in the diagram will you consult the survivor of abuse to inform your decision?**
- ✓ How much influence or weight will the survivor's opinion have in the decision not to report to the authorities?
- ✓ What are the timelines for consulting the survivor and keeping them informed?

Tips on Managing Safeguarding Cases

Usually the safeguarding/protection lead or case worker would lead a case management meeting.

- ✓ It is often best practice to include the staff member who has a rapport / relationship with the survivor and who the survivor trusts and disclosed this abuse to. This person can also liaise with the survivor for continuity and support their care.
- ✓ Victims/survivors should be encouraged to identify a "safe person", a trusted person (usually an adult) to support them through this process.
- ✓ **A key question is:** Who holds responsibility or has a stake in the outcome of the case? Generally, this decision should be a collaborative process - as staff will have knowledge (what the reality looks like, understand the legal process, immediate care and how to access support services) and survivors will have knowledge of their reality, the risks they may face and their context as well as their capacity/resources/energy to cope with what might be in store for them.
- ✓ Any staff involved in the case management meeting should have relevant knowledge (therapy, legal context, SRHR etc.) and/or connections with professionals who have direct knowledge of these areas.
- ✓ **Confidentiality:** limit the number of staff and anonymise all notes of the meeting. As survivors to identify a safe and confidential space for the meeting to take place.

Resources and Tools On Reporting and Responding to Abuse

Guidance on developing a flow chart:

- ✓ Keeping Children Safe: [Developing child safeguarding policy and procedures](#) Page 37-41 (Translation in: English, German, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Slovak, Spanish, Ukrainian). A workshop guide on how to develop a flow chart and reporting procedure.
- ✓ Safeguarding Resources Hub: [Case Handling Flow Chart](#) (Translation in: English, Amharic, Swahili, Bangla, French, Turkish).
- ✓ Bond Safeguarding [Dealing with Safeguarding Reports](#) - A reporting procedure template.

Guidance on case management:

- ✓ [Inter-agency Child Protection Case Management Guidelines 2nd Edition 2024.pdf](#) pages 79-80: A guide on case management for children (can be adapted for adults).
- ✓ Keeping Children Safe: [Global Standards](#) See page 42-44 covers how to develop your reporting and response procedure.
- ✓ A referral and consent form is a document used to refer a survivor of abuse or trauma (e.g. domestic abuse, sexual violence) to support services with their informed consent. This creates transparency with the survivor and allows the survivor to have control over what support services they take up.
- ✓ See this example of an interagency [Survivor Referral and Consent Form](#) from the Global Protection Cluster

4. Digital Safeguarding

On 15th May, Ignite Philanthropy and Children Unite held a workshop with Thrive Together Partners and Sprout Fellows to explore Digital Safeguarding. In the workshop, participants explored digital safeguarding, practised moderation, online risks and explored a case study in smaller groups.

Key takeaway from discussion: As many organisations are increasingly operating online, to address digital safeguarding it is important to understand the key attributes of online safeguarding and ensure a basic level of digital security is in place.

Digital safeguarding: is about taking **proactive steps to ensure safety online**. This means any digital products/sites are **designed and operated** in a way that **safeguards and protects users from harm and abuse**.

Key Elements of Digital Safeguarding

1. Digital Privacy: It means **keeping your personal information safe** when you use the internet. For example: having control over how data, such as messages, photos, browsing history, location, and personal details, is collected, stored, and shared by websites, apps, and digital services.

Digital privacy also includes:

- ✓ Respecting others' confidentiality online
- ✓ Not sharing people's name, phone number, or location without permission
- ✓ Keeping your passwords secret
- ✓ Being careful about what you post online (information, stories, pictures)
- ✓ Knowing who can see your photos, messages, or information
- ✓ Only using safe websites and apps

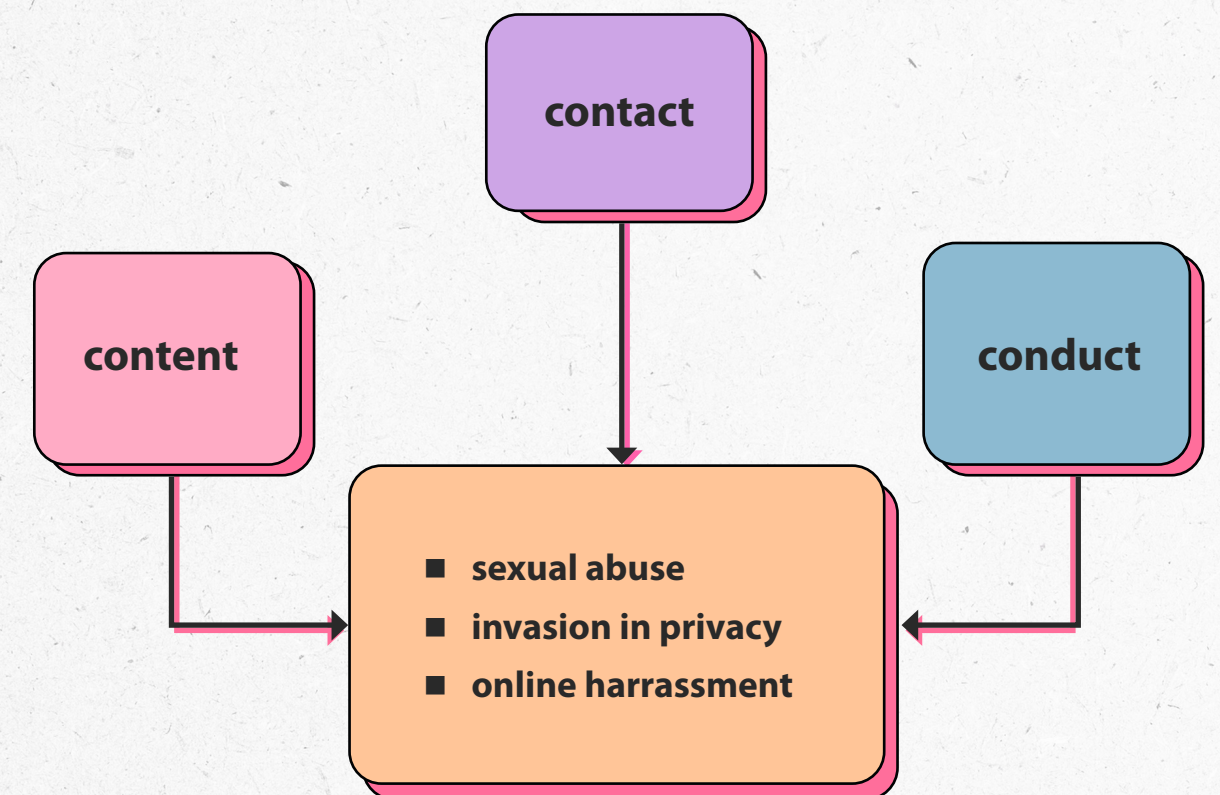
2. Digital security: refers to the **tools, practices, and measures** used to **protect devices, networks, and data** from threats like hacking, malware, data breaches, and unauthorised access. It ensures that personal, sensitive, or organisational information remains safe and protected online.

Digital security also includes:

- ✓ Using strong passwords and two-factor authentication
- ✓ Keeping software and antivirus tools updated
- ✓ Avoiding suspicious links, emails or downloads
- ✓ Secure Wi-Fi and internet connections
- ✓ Protecting who can get into your devices, accounts, or information

3. Personally Identifiable Information (PII) means any information that can show who you are, such as your name, address, phone number, photo, or ID number. It can also include: email address, date of birth, school or workplace name, bank or health details

Types of harm, abuse and risk online



Examples of Content Risks

- ✓ Online harassment or stalking
- ✓ Abusive comments or messages
- ✓ Sharing private Information without consent
- ✓ Sexual harassment
- ✓ Impersonation or fake accounts
- ✓ Grooming
- ✓ Encouraging harmful behaviours
- ✓ Failure to report harmful content

Examples of Contact Risks

- ✓ Online harassment or stalking
- ✓ Abusive comments or messages
- ✓ Sharing private Information without consent
- ✓ Sexual harassment
- ✓ Impersonation or fake accounts
- ✓ Grooming
- ✓ Encouraging harmful behaviours
- ✓ Failure to report harmful content

Examples of Conduct Risks

- ✓ Online harassment or stalking
- ✓ Abusive comments or messages
- ✓ Sharing private Information without consent
- ✓ Sexual harassment
- ✓ Impersonation or fake accounts
- ✓ Grooming
- ✓ Encouraging harmful behaviours
- ✓ Failure to report harmful content

Tips on Managing Harmful Posts and Comments Online

Decide the level of risk for posts and comments:

1. GREEN: No Risk - Keep the comment

2. AMBER: A possible online risk. Keep the comment, but respond carefully and monitor it

3. RED: Clear online risk. The comment should be removed immediately and reported if necessary

Online Report and Response

For online reporting and response you may want to think about the following:

- ✓ What posts will be hidden or deleted?
- ✓ Who will it be escalated to **or** who will decide next steps on how to deal with the post/comment?
- ✓ How will you respond? This could be through:
 - canned/scripted responses
 - signposting/referring to services
 - supporting the 'victim' directly
- ✓ How is the case being documented?
- ✓ Do you need to refer or report the content / perpetrator to the site on which the harm took place?

Post hidden/deleted to protect privacy

Flagged to (decide named) person

Scripted response to connect to services

Document post & response in a Moderation Log

Sign post & Report to site if relevant

For support in **reporting and removing harmful images and content** contact the **Internet Watch Foundation** <https://www.iwf.org.uk/> who can remove harmful content especially online child sexual abuse materials.

Tips for Safeguarding Online Events

Before the event

- ✓ **Pre-registration Required:** Only allow access to users who register in advance with verified email addresses.
- ✓ **Unique Access Links:** Send individual, non-shareable access links to prevent unauthorized entry.
- ✓ **Waiting Room Enabled:** Host manually approves each participant before entry to the session.
- ✓ **Limit Participant Visibility:** Hide participant email addresses and full names in the platform settings.

During the event

- ✓ **Disable Private Messaging:** Turn off participant-to-participant direct messaging to reduce risks of grooming or inappropriate contact.
- ✓ **Moderate Chat Function:** Assign a moderator to monitor chat for inappropriate messages or contact requests.
- ✓ **Remind of Boundaries:** Share clear rules about not sharing personal details or asking others for contact info.
- ✓ **No Sharing of External Links:** Block or restrict links in the chat to avoid exposure to harmful content or phishing.

After the event

- ✓ **Do Not Share Contact Lists:** Keep participant contact details confidential, even internally.
- ✓ **Follow Up Safely:** If a follow-up is needed, contact participants through official channels only.
- ✓ **Reporting Mechanism:** Ensure participants know how to report unwanted contact and receive support

Resources and Tools on Digital Safeguarding

- ✓ For more information on how to enhance safety and security online refer to [AVA's \(Against Violence and Abuse\) Digital Safeguarding Resource Pack](#) This resource pack covers everything you need to know on digital safeguarding!

Other resources

- ✓ [Digital Risks in programming](#)
- ✓ [Digital Tips and Guidance: Girl Effects Digital Safeguarding Guide](#)
- ✓ [Digital Safeguarding Tips and Guidance](#) covers digital privacy, safety and security - from Girl Effect

Examples of digital safeguarding policies:

- ✓ [Safety on Online Platforms Policy Guidance](#) from Plan International
- ✓ [Safeguarding Policy: Digital Privacy, Security, Safety Principles & Guidelines](#) from Girl Effect. This policy focuses on women and girls.
- ✓ [Digital Safeguarding Policy](#) from Girl Guides

