



Realising Potential - Enabling Change



Bridge of Hope Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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Statement of Intent

Bridge of Hope works to support children and young adults across the developing world to access education and through this endeavour, enhance community development.

Bridge of Hope is committed to promoting the dignity and basic human rights of every person we work with.

Bridge of Hope is fully committed to the protection of all children and young adults through its work. The guiding principle of our child protection and safeguarding policy is that Bridge of Hope believes that it is always unacceptable for children or young people to experience any kind of abuse.

The Bridge of Hope child protection and safeguarding policy is in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the UN Declaration of Human Rights. (UNDHR)

About this Policy

Bridge of Hope is committed to ensuring the safety of those children and young adults it supports as well as its board members, and volunteer representatives. This safeguarding policy must be read by all members of the charity and the declaration signed and returned to the Charity Director.

We will make sure that representatives of Bridge of Hope and our partner organisations on the ground are provided with clear guidelines and procedures to follow that will not only help avoid inappropriate, misguided or wrong behaviour, but will also provide information as to what action to take should they be concerned about a child or a young person's welfare.

Bridge of Hope will seek to only work with other charitable organisations who are committed to the same principles.

This policy covers the safeguarding of children (Part A) and adults at risk (Part B) as the charity's work encompasses both groups, although there are similarities in many of the safeguarding actions required to safeguard children and adults who may be at risk.

Differences in requirements are also set out in this policy.

Working in the UK and Overseas

Bridge of Hope has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk. Bridge of Hope is a UK based charity, regulated by the UK Charity Commission, however the children and adults who make up our beneficiaries are based overseas in countries where safeguarding law and practice is different to the UK. We will adopt, where possible, the standards used in the UK, taking into account the working practices and cultures of the countries where we work. UK guidance has stressed the importance of effective joint working between agencies and professionals who have different roles and experiences.

Our partner charities and agencies are based both in the UK and overseas. In line with the Charity Commission guidance, Bridge of Hope will endeavour to safeguard all those coming into contact with Bridge of Hope both in the UK and overseas and therefore this includes:

- Our beneficiaries and their families
- Our Trustees
- Our volunteers
- Our fund raisers
- Our partner agencies and charities
- Our grant givers

In this policy, we highlight UK laws and practice unless otherwise stated.

Part A: Safeguarding Children

The responsibility for safeguarding of children lies with everyone who is working actively on behalf of Bridge of Hope. This includes trustees and volunteers who through their engagements have direct or indirect contact with, or access to information about children.

The definition of a 'child' is as follows.

'Anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means children and young people throughout.

Key Principles

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children access education in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all our sponsored children to have the best outcomes.
- Taking action to enable more children to access education and thus avoid potentially harmful environments when out of school.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

Bridge of Hope takes a child-centred approach to safeguard and promote the welfare of every child. A child centred approach means keeping the child in focus and working in partnership with them and their families.

Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and if children are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Recognising Child Abuse – Terms and Definitions

All representatives of Bridge of Hope agree to be trained in Safeguarding and Child and Adult Protection and will aim to recognise and act upon any form of abuse. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) identifies the following categories of abuse which we have a duty to prevent.

Abuse includes:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional abuse

Radicalisation (Prevent Duty)

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and other forms of extremism. Extremism is defined as - the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Signs of radicalisation include:

- Being overly secretive about online viewing
- Displaying feelings of isolation
- Becoming more argumentative or domineering in their viewpoints.
- Questioning their faith or identity.
- Downloading or promotion of extremist content.
- Social isolation – losing interest in activities they used to enjoy, distancing themselves from friends and social groups.
- Altered appearance

Concerns regarding suspicions of radicalisation will be discussed with the Charity Director. Overseas, staff and volunteers will also work to ensure they follow the local procedures regarding radicalisation.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse is defined as:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercing, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been intimate with partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality".

The abuse can encompass but is not limited to Psychological, Physical, Sexual, Financial and Emotional.

A domestically abusive relationship may be based around coercive and controlling behaviour. Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation used to harm, punish or frighten the victim.

Overseas, staff and volunteers will seek advice from appropriate agencies with a view to protecting and supporting children in situations of domestic abuse where possible.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

In some of the countries where Bridge of Hope operates, the practice of FGM may not be against the law as it is in the UK. In other countries, despite FGM being against the law, it may still be widely practised. Bridge of Hope will work with the laws in place within the counties where we operate, relating to the safeguarding of children.

Indications that FGM may have already occurred include:

- Prolonged school absence with behaviour change on return.
- Bladder or menstrual problems.

In countries where staff are concerned about FGM and where the practice is illegal, staff should seek advice from the charity's Safeguarding Lead and endeavour to follow the country's reporting procedure.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Grooming

CSE is defined as follows:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

(HMGov Feb 2017)

CSE through the use of technology can occur without the child's immediate awareness, for example, being persuaded to post explicit images without any immediate gain or payment. People who exploit children usually have power over them by virtue of age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic means.

Violence, coercion and intimidation are common and involvement in exploitive relationships is characterised by the child's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic, emotional vulnerability. Often children who are victims of sexual exploitation do not realise that they are being exploited

Disclosure Of Abuse Made By A Child

In addition to recognising the signs of abuse above, Bridge of Hope will also ensure that children are listened to and that any disclosures or allegations are taken seriously:

The term 'disclosure' commonly relates to a child reporting abuse in their lives. It is distinct from the term 'allegation' which usually relates to a concern being raised regarding someone working or volunteering with children.

Bridge of Hope representatives will always make it clear that as a result of the information heard, they must take action to ensure that the child and other children are safe. Keeping silent is not an option.

Staff will listen carefully, not ask leading questions and record the detail of the disclosure reflecting the language the child used and the questions asked.

If a child is in immediate danger, Representatives of Bridge of Hope will endeavour to keep them safe by contacting the necessary services to support the child in need. Where there is cause to believe a child will harm themselves, it may be necessary to call an ambulance or medical support services as an emergency.

Representatives overseas must liaise with the Safeguarding Lead within the NGOs and respective schools that Bridge of Hope is working with and seek support through the country's safeguarding processes, as well as informing the Bridge of Hope in the UK

Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Adults Who Work Or Volunteer With Children (Allegations Management)

Any concern regarding a member of staff working or volunteering with children should be referred to the Charity Director, whether or not the member of staff or volunteer works or volunteers directly for Bridge of Hope.

The Charity Director should also inform the Chair of Trustees and follow the mandatory allegations management process if there is concern that the person has:

- Harmed or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may be unsuitable to work with children

The Charity Director will work with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), attending any multi-agency allegations management meeting involving police, children's social care and any other employer to determine the way forward. Bridge of Hope will take the LADO's advice on when and how the individual should be informed so that evidence may be preserved and children protected.

Where an allegation is made against a member of staff or a volunteer overseas who also works or volunteers in the UK, the process above will also be followed.

Where an allegation of abuse is made against someone working only overseas, Bridge of Hope will inform the Charity Director as well as the police and authorities in the country where the incident is alleged to have happened. The Charity Director will seek the advice of Trustees on whether the incident meets the thresholds for referral as a Serious Incident to the Charity Commission.

Online Safety

It is important to be aware of the risks of vulnerability and exploitation through the use of I.T. Bridge of Hope are alert to the potential risks that children and young people may be exposed to, and that steps are taken to mitigate the risk of this occurring.

Content – e.g. exposure to age inappropriate material, inaccurate or misleading information, socially unacceptable and illegal material (e.g. inciting violence, hate, intolerance, images of abuse).

Contact – e.g. grooming using communication and social media leading to inappropriate behaviour or abuse.

Commerce – exposure to inappropriate advertising, on-line gambling, identity theft and financial scams.

Culture – bullying via websites/social media, mobile phones and other communication technologies, inappropriate downloading of materials, exposure to inappropriate advertising, on-line gambling and financial scams.

Bridge of Hope staff must not add their beneficiaries to any personal social media sites. They must not take photographs of children on personal devices without permission and any images must only be for charity purposes and consented to by the individuals.

Part B: Safeguarding Adults

There are 10 categories of abuse for adults:

- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Psychological abuse - can be by action or omission - e.g. causing someone to feel scared by not coming back when you say, or causing them to feel frightened by telling them something that isn't true
- Neglect - including acts of omission such as not providing medication
- Self-neglect
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern Slavery - exploitation of people who have been forced, deceived, or coerced into a life of labour and servitude
- Domestic abuse
- Discriminatory abuse - can be from staff, other beneficiaries
- Organisational abuse - where abuse has become part of the organisation's culture.

Many of the signs are similar to those in children. However, while a child can never choose to be unprotected, adults can choose to take risks and to place themselves in risky situations, or refuse to accept protection as long as they have the capacity to make such a decision.

Overseas, laws regarding the protection of adults, processes in place to protect them and reporting procedures will differ to UK law. Bridge of Hope staff will report all

concerns to the Charity Director and seek to ensure that local laws and processes are followed.

Part C: General Safeguarding Information

Training

All new Bridge of Hope representatives and trustees will sign to confirm that they have understood the Bridge of Hope Safeguarding Policy and will comply with these procedures.

All staff and trustees must ensure that they attend regular Safeguarding training in accordance with the requirements and standards of Bridge of Hope.

Record Keeping

Staff and volunteers will keep accurate contemporaneous records which will be stored securely.

Notes should be factual, avoid jargon and acronyms and will include the language of the child or adult and the questions that were asked. The time, date, name of the member of staff and the rationale for any decisions should also be included.

Staff and volunteers will treat information confidentially unless disclosure is justified.

Safer Recruitment and Selection

Bridge of Hope will ensure that safer recruitment processes are followed both in the UK and overseas. Job descriptions and advertisements for posts will make reference to our commitment to Safeguarding as a charity.

This will include:

- The intention to seek Enhanced Clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for all Trustees and UK volunteers as well as the local equivalent for overseas Representatives.
- (through other available vetting services)
- Clear statements within job descriptions and person specifications.
- Training and guidance on the charity's Safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Appropriate references will be sought.
- Any uncertainty or inconsistency about an applicant will always be followed up and resolved.

Bridge of Hope endeavours to protect its beneficiaries in all aspects of its educational work and commits to a culture of zero tolerance towards all forms of abuse.