



ACTION FOR CHANGE & EMPOWERMENT (A.C.E)

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

## 1. Introduction

At Action for Change & Empowerment (A.C.E.), we are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all individuals, proactively preventing the exploitation of those working with A.C.E, particularly vulnerable groups, such as children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

This Safeguarding Policy ensures that everyone involved with our organization, including staff, volunteers, trustees, and external partners, are both protected from harm as well as understands and follows the necessary procedures to protect those in our care.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 2.1 Ensure the safety and well-being of (but not limited to) children, young people, and vulnerable adults involved in our programs and activities.
- 2.2 Provide clear guidelines for safeguarding procedures, including the identification and reporting of safeguarding concerns.
- 2.3 Promote a culture of safeguarding where all individuals feel respected and protected.
- 2.4 Ensure compliance with legal obligations and best practices related to safeguarding.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals working for Action for Change & Empowerment, including:

- 3.1 Employees and volunteers.
- 3.2 Trustees and board members.
- 3.3 Contractors and external partners.

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3.4 Any individual involved in the delivery of our projects, services, and activities, particularly those working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults.

## 4. Safeguarding Principles

In our aim to protect our people from harm and exploitation, we are guided by the following key principles:

4.1 **Protection from Harm:** We are committed to protecting individuals from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

4.2 **Equality and Respect:** All individuals will be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances.

4.3 **Empowerment:** We will empower individuals to make decisions about their own lives, ensuring they are involved in safeguarding processes.

4.4 **Transparency and Accountability:** We will be transparent in our safeguarding practices and accountable for the safety and well-being of individuals involved with the organization.

4.5 **Zero Tolerance for Abuse:** We maintain a zero-tolerance policy for any form of abuse or mistreatment, whether physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful.

## 5. Definitions

5.1 **Abuse:** The intentional mistreatment, neglect, or harm of a person. Abuse may take different forms, including physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse.

5.2 **Vulnerable Adults:** Individuals aged 18 or over who may be at risk of abuse due to factors such as age, illness, disability, or other circumstances.

5.3 **Child Protection:** A part of safeguarding that focuses on preventing the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children under the age of 18.

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## 6. Responsibilities

### (a) Board of Trustees / Directors

6(a).1 Ensure the Safeguarding Policy is implemented and regularly reviewed.

6(a).2 Oversee the safeguarding practices of the organization and ensure legal compliance.

6(a).3 Approve safeguarding training and ensure that all staff and volunteers are trained in safeguarding.

### (b) Safeguarding Lead / Or Appointed representative

6(b).1 Oversee the safeguarding procedures and serve as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns.

6(b).2 Ensure that safeguarding incidents are appropriately handled and reported to the relevant authorities.

6(b).3 Provide advice and support to staff, volunteers, and trustees regarding safeguarding matters.

### (c) Employees and Volunteers

6(c).1 Follow safeguarding guidelines and report any safeguarding concerns immediately.

6(c).2 Participate in safeguarding training and support the organization's efforts to protect individuals in its care.

### (d) External Partners

6(d).1 Adhere to this safeguarding policy and demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding best practices.

## 7. Safeguarding Procedures

### (a) Recruitment and Screening

A.C.E. will ensure that all individuals who work or volunteer with children, young people, or vulnerable adults undergo a rigorous recruitment process, which includes:

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7(a).1 Criminal (DBS) background checks (where applicable) .

7(a).2 Reference checks from previous employers or organizations.

7(a).3 Interview processes to assess suitability for the role.

## **(b) Training and Awareness**

7(b).1 All staff and volunteers will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction, with periodic refresher courses.

7(b).2 Specialized safeguarding training will be provided to those working directly with vulnerable groups.

7(b).3 All staff will be made aware of the signs of abuse, how to report concerns, and the organization's safeguarding policy.

## **(c) Reporting and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns**

7(c).1 Staff or volunteers must immediately report safeguarding concerns to the designated Safeguarding Lead.

7(c).2 Safeguarding concerns include, but are not limited to:

7(c).2.a Suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect.

7(c).2.b Concerns about the behavior or well-being of an individual.

7(c).2.c Observing actions that may indicate abusive or inappropriate behavior.

7(c).3 The Safeguarding Lead will assess the situation and determine necessary actions, which may include contacting external authorities (e.g., child protection services or police).

## **(d) Confidentiality**

7(d).1 Safeguarding information will be kept confidential and only shared with relevant authorities or individuals involved in addressing the concern.

7(d).2 Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis, ensuring that confidentiality is maintained while safeguarding the individual's welfare.

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## (e) Managing Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

7(e).1 If there are concerns that a staff member or volunteer has committed an act of abuse, an immediate investigation will take place.

7(e).2 The individual will be suspended from their duties pending the outcome of the investigation.

7(e).3 If allegations are substantiated, disciplinary actions will be taken, which may include dismissal or legal action.

## 8. Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers are expected to:

8.1 Treat all individuals with respect and dignity.

8.2 Never engage in any form of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.

8.3 Avoid any behavior that could be interpreted as abusive or inappropriate.

8.4 Maintain professional boundaries and avoid situations where they are alone with a vulnerable individual unless necessary and appropriate.

8.5 Report any safeguarding concerns or suspicions of abuse.

## 9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legal requirements and best practices.

9.2 Safeguarding incidents will be monitored, and reports will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for review.

9.3 Feedback from staff, volunteers, and external partners will be gathered to improve safeguarding procedures.

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**Policy Owner:** Board of Trustees / Directors

**Policy Lead:** Safeguarding Lead

**Audience:** Employees, Volunteers, Trustees, and External Partners

**Formally Endorsed By:** Board of Trustees / Directors / Coordinating Committee

**Last Reviewed:** 01/09/2025

**Next Review:** 31/08/2026

Bola Obanubi

Director, A.C.E NGO

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