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Safeguarding Policy for the For-ethiopia Trust

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Charity Number 1108526

POLICY GUIDANCE

What is meant by abuse?

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse can be:

- 1. Physical Abuse** includes any form of assault, over-medication or restraint.
- 2. Sexual Abuse** includes rape and any sexual act which was not actively consented to or which the person did not have the capacity to understand.
- 3. Psychological / Emotional Abuse** includes verbal abuse threats, bullying/ intimidation, coercion, and harassment.
- 4. Discriminatory Abuse** includes all forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment based on a person's disability, ethnic origin, religion, gender or sexuality – this is often called hate crime.
- 5. Financial Abuse** includes theft, borrowing money without repayment and any pressure in connection with wills or property, possessions or benefits.
- 6. Neglect** includes ignoring medical or physical needs, not providing access to appropriate health or social care, withholding necessities of life, such as medication, adequate food, water or heating.
- 7. Institutional Abuse** includes repeated instances of poor care, ill treatment of vulnerable adults, and unsatisfactory professional practice. This is often an indicator of more serious problems within a paid and/or regulated care environment.

Even when abuse might have been unintentional, the important factor is whether or not the vulnerable person is harmed.

What should I do if I suspect abuse?

Doing nothing is **not** an option.

Trustees **must** report to the relevant authorities.

Volunteers / Staff **must** report their concerns to a Trustee.

- Explain why you're concerned and who may be doing the abuse.
- Give the name, age, and circumstances of the vulnerable person.

See **Reporting Abuse** section

POLICY BACKGROUND

Are any of For-ethiopia's beneficiaries at risk of abuse?

The widest definition of "*beneficiaries*" covers all those who use our services at any time that could therefore include those in Ethiopia who use facilities that we have provided and those in the UK who come to our events . But are any of these beneficiaries vulnerable to abuse?

In drawing up this policy we have taken account of

- **The various definitions of “vulnerable”** Under the Care Act 2014 "Vulnerable Adults" are defined as "*those who have care and support needs, are experiencing or at risk of abuse / neglect, and are unable to protect themselves*". In Ethiopia our adult beneficiaries are not in a situation where they are receiving care or residential accommodation from us "in relation to their health or mental capacity", in that sense they are not vulnerable adults. However we recognise that common sense dictates that their poverty and circumstances render them potentially vulnerable. This is consistent with the definition that “a vulnerable adult is someone over 18 who has or may need help with their everyday living tasks, and who is for any reason unable to protect him/herself” used by various authorities including Bristol City Council: In addition those children / young people in residential accommodation owned by FDAE in Addis Alem are potentially vulnerable. We have therefore implemented Professional Boundaries guidelines which include the sharing of good practice with FDAE for their staff and a Code of Conduct for Trustees and Volunteers while in Ethiopia.

- **Reputational risk to the organisation.** It is indisputable that, should evidence or allegations of abuse arise in Ethiopia, our charity would suffer reputational damage that could only be mitigated by demonstrating that we are vigilant and doing everything reasonably practical to avoid abuse, including DBS checks of UK citizens when and where permissible.

- **Current practice in other organisations in the UK who are working with children and vulnerable adults.** Practice varies, but generally speaking most agencies who receive public funding for their work have all staff and volunteers checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). It

is a moot point whether or not DBS checks themselves have any practical benefit in reducing the risk of abuse.

- **Current legislation** in particular that in relation to the Care Act 2014 – makes clear that as a charity we have no legal right to undertake DBS checks of all our volunteers, but only of those who are involved in "*regulated activity*". Regulated activity covers any of the following categories: **i) Health Care, ii) Personal Care, iii) Social Work, iv) Assisting in the conduct of a person's affairs, v) Conveying/ Transport**. Any time a person engages in any of these activities they are engaged in regulated activity unless it is through a family relationship. A person whose role includes day to day management of any person involved in regulated activity is also in regulated activity. Only those involved in regulated activity as part of their work for the charity can be DBS checked with the additional request to access either the Barred Lists for Children or for Vulnerable Adults or both.

Conclusions

- **In the UK** Trustees and Volunteers of For-ethiopia are never in a situation at the events we organise where they have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults; they are always accompanied by their parents/carers as a matter of course. Trustees / Volunteers are also never engaged in regulated activity.
- **In Ethiopia** it is almost impossible to conceive of any situations arising where a visiting Trustee was on their own with a child or vulnerable adult both because of the nature of community life there and because they are always accompanied by FDAE staff and local officials and furthermore they would not be engaged in regulated activity.
- We have therefore been advised by u-Check that we cannot do safeguarding checks on our trustees in the UK under present circumstances and that this explanation of our situation would be accepted by DBS. In the event that we were to take on a volunteer working in Ethiopia who stayed in the hostel or had frequent contact with children there, then we would insist on a safeguarding check.

See related For-ethiopia documents

1. *Professional Boundaries – A Code of Conduct for Trustees & other Visitors to our Projects in Ethiopia.*
2. *Guide to Safeguarding for FDAE Staff.*
3. *Handbook for FE Volunteers working in Ethiopia.*

POLICY STATEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

It is the policy of the For-ethiopia Trust to ensure that any children or vulnerable adults who were to become beneficiaries of our services are made safe from abuse. If we also became aware of abusive situations outside our immediate responsibility we would notify appropriate authorities and care services.

To this end the For-ethiopia Trust will

1. Provide information / training to all trustees to support an awareness of abuse and share good practice with FDAE staff on Professional Boundaries and Code of Conduct which we ourselves would naturally follow when in Ethiopia.
2. In the event that in the future any volunteer including a trustee was working in Ethiopia and had either "*regular and frequent*" unsupervised contact with or responsibility for vulnerable beneficiaries in "*regulated activity*", DBS checks and access to the Barred Lists would be requested through u-Check who are registered with DBS as an umbrella organisation and will process the applications on our behalf. In such a situation The For-ethiopia Trust will appoint a Safeguarding Officer who will check and verify ID and liaise with u-Check.
3. Review operating procedures and this policy regularly in the light of experience to ensure that any opportunities for abuse are identified and minimised.

Reporting Abuse

- Reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse to the authorities is the responsibility of the Trustees. *In the first instance* volunteers should report allegations or suspicions of abuse in the UK to the Event Organiser, Safeguarding Officer, or any Trustee. In Ethiopia, report to the General Manager FDAE.
- If the allegations or suspicions involve a Trustee or the General Manager, the allegations or suspicions should be reported to the Chair or any other Trustee.
- Our Safeguarding Officer will report any serious allegations / evidence in the UK to Bristol City Council Care Direct 0117 922 2700 or the [Police 101](#). Likewise in Ethiopia reports will be made to the Local Authority and/or the Police.
- All cases of abuse are considered by the Charity Commission to be Serious Incidents which must therefore also be reported to them.

- If you have any concerns about safeguarding, have witnessed an incident or wish to make a complaint please email information@for-ethiopia.com. All reports are handled strictly in confidence.