

# **SAFEGUARDING OF VULNERABLE PERSONS**

## **Principles of Practice**

## 1. About this document

- 1.1 Safeguarding of Vulnerable People: Principles for Practice should be read together with the Safeguarding Policy, OPM Code of Conduct and other related policies and procedures including but not limited to those relating to Equal Opportunities, Anti-harassment and Bullying, Whistleblowing, security, Health and Safety, travel, IT, Communications, Social Media, Modern Slavery and Anti-bribery and Corruption.
- 1.2 This document has been implemented following consultation with the Staff Consultative Committee.
- 1.3 This Principles of Practice does not form part of any OPM contract of employment and we may amend it at any time and notify you of the changes.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 The Principles of Practice applies to all Staff and Suppliers. All defined terms in this document shall have the same meanings given to them in them in the Safeguarding Policy.

## 3. Definition of Vulnerable Persons

- 3.1 The term "Vulnerable Persons" includes:
  - a) all children and young people under the age of 18 wherever situated anywhere in the world;
  - b) any person who may reasonably be considered vulnerable by reason of age or physical or mental disability or other relevant circumstances, examples of which are provided in Clause 9.3 below.

## 4. Personnel responsible for implementation

- 4.1 The Chief Executive Officer has overall accountability for the effective operation of these Principles of Practice and for ensuring compliance. Day-to-day responsibility for operating the Safeguarding Policy and these Principles of Practice and ensuring their maintenance and review has been delegated to the Head of Human Resources.
- 4.2 Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of these Principles of Practice and all Staff and Suppliers, for ensuring its success.

## 5. Objectives and Risk Assessment

- 5.1 In order to give effect to OPM's policy on Safeguarding, all activities which will or may involve Vulnerable Persons in any capacity whatsoever, must be subject to a written risk assessment by the senior manager responsible for the activity. The risk assessment must:
- a) define the objectives of the activity;
  - b) identify the risks to Vulnerable People associated with it;
  - c) evaluate the risks; and
  - d) define the steps necessary to mitigate them.

The documented risk assessment must be retained e.g. together with project or portfolio files, as applicable, and a copy of the risk assessment, lodged with the Head of HR.

## 6. Recruitment/Engagement

- 6.1 When recruiting or engaging Staff or Suppliers who may be required to work with or otherwise be in contact with Vulnerable Persons in connection with OPM's activities, OPM will:
- a) establish what checks of criminal records are necessary, bearing in mind the location in which the Staff/Supplier will work and his or her place of residence, and carry out such checks and ensure that all new recruits/contractors are vetted and or screened and their status monitored periodically;
  - b) check references carefully by conversations with referees and notes of those conversations should be retained on personnel or other appropriate file as the case may be;
  - c) include questions about appropriate behaviour towards Vulnerable Persons in interview procedures including examples of situations which may be relevant; and
  - d) include in application forms a question as to whether the applicant has ever been the subject of a complaint regarding the exploitation or abuse of a Vulnerable Person.
- 6.2 New Staff and Suppliers shall be given a copy of OPM's Safeguarding Policy together with this document and be required to read it and confirm that they have done so by signing and returning a copy to, in the case of Staff, to HR and in the case of a Supplier to the OPM lead contact. This document must be placed on the Staff member's personnel file or project or portfolio file in the case of a Supplier. The same process shall apply on each review of the Safeguarding Policy and these Principles of Practice, a declaration shall be provided by the

Staff member or Supplier in respect of the revised Policy and Principle of Practice.

- 6.3 Existing Staff and Suppliers shall be subject to the same robust checks as new Staff and Suppliers, where the former are appointed to work on a new project or activity involving Vulnerable Persons.

## 7. Training and awareness

- 7.1 Awareness training shall be mandatory for all new Staff and Suppliers (as appropriate) who will work with Vulnerable Persons and will be refreshed from time to time in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy. Appropriate records of attendance shall be maintained by Human Resources and or project teams as applicable.
- 7.2 OPM Safeguarding Training shall include instructions about reporting concerns about Safeguarding issues and to whom in and outside of OPM they should be reported.
- 7.3 Staff and Suppliers whose training is not up to date shall not be allowed to work with Vulnerable Persons, whether in the UK or otherwise.

## 8. Working with Suppliers (individuals and entities)

- 7.4 Suppliers must:
- a) if an entity, have a safeguarding policy of their own which sets the same and standards as those of OPM;
  - b) demonstrate that they or their personnel are aware of the policy and if the Supplier is an entity, that their personnel receive appropriate training and support and if an individual, that they have undertaken appropriate
  - c) acknowledge that they may, from time to time, be subject to spot checks by OPM.
  - d) if an entity, have an appropriate procedure in place for reporting safeguarding complaints and concerns and in the case of an individual Supplier or an entity adhering to OPM's Safeguarding Policy, have read and understood OPM's (and the client's) Safeguarding reporting procedures;
  - e) have in place a code of conduct made pursuant to its Safeguarding policy or if none, agree to adhere to the OPM Code of Conduct;
  - f) in the case of an entity undertake a risk assessment of its activities which may bring it into contact with Vulnerable Persons and ensure appropriate measures are implemented to mitigate against Safeguarding risks including, without limitation, having appropriate disciplinary measures for personnel and contractual Safeguarding provisions throughout their

It is the project manager's responsibility to ensure compliance with this clause.

## 9. Personal behaviour

- 9.1 All Staff and Suppliers who may work with Vulnerable Persons will be provided with a copy of these Safeguarding Principles of Practice and will be asked to read and sign it by way of acknowledgement. The signed copy will be retained as part of the Supplier or Staff member's records.
- 9.2 Staff and Suppliers who come into contact with Vulnerable Persons as part of their activities for and on behalf of OPM must comply with the Safeguarding Principles of Practice at all times irrespective of official hours of work.
- 9.3 People who are already vulnerable as defined in the Safeguarding Policy may become even more vulnerable if their circumstances are changed, for example, by a natural disaster, the loss of, or separation from, a parent or carer, or other cause. Equally a person who is not usually vulnerable may become vulnerable for similar reasons, even if the vulnerability is not permanent. Such a person may also be rendered vulnerable by other circumstances typically characterised by an imbalance of power e.g. the relationship between a local enumerator and his/her OPM Lead contact.
- 9.4 Adults who work with Vulnerable Persons are automatically in positions of trust and authority in relation to the Vulnerable Person which must not be abused in any way. Responsibility for personal behaviour includes not only what you do or not do yourself, but what you help or allow others to do, including turning a "blind eye". Responsibility for Safeguarding is both individual and collective.
- 9.5 OPM recognises that the Safeguarding Principles of Practice cannot and do not provide for every situation which Staff or Suppliers may encounter during the course of their work and the activities specifically prohibited in the Safeguarding Principles of Practice do not constitute a comprehensive list. Staff and Suppliers must therefore apply common sense to unforeseen situations on the basis of the overriding principles set out in the Safeguarding Policy. Staff and Suppliers must remember that they have a duty to behave at all times in a manner which preserves the reputation and good standing of OPM.
- 9.6 Staff and Suppliers are required to comply with local law whether working in the UK or elsewhere.
- 9.7 Staff and Suppliers must be sensitive to cultural differences between communities or between the country in which they are working and their country of origin or residence.
- 9.8 Staff and Suppliers must:
  - a) treat all people with respect whether or not they are vulnerable, regardless of race, ethnicity, colour, pregnancy or maternity, gender, gender identification, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, political, religious or personal opinions and beliefs.

- b) not use abusive language towards Vulnerable Persons or language or behaviour which is sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
  - c) not have any form of sexual contact with a Vulnerable Person.
  - d) engage in Transactional Sex i.e. the exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex including sexual favours or any form of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior on the part of a member of Staff or an OPM Supplier.
- 9.9 Staff and Suppliers must immediately inform OPM if they or their personnel working on OPM's business, if applicable are or are considering entering into a relationship with an individual who is or may be classed as a Vulnerable Person. In particular, all Staff and Supplier must declare their intentions in advance of contracting any marriage with a Vulnerable Person. Staff should speak to their HR Business Partner for further guidance and in the case of a Supplier, you should speak with your OPM lead contact.

## 10. Children under eighteen years

- 10.1 Staff and Suppliers dealing with children (i.e. under the age of 18 years regardless of the local age of majority) during the course of their work should:
- a) avoid working alone with a child or children, ensuring that another adult is present as far as possible;
  - b) never invite unaccompanied children to their private homes or give them lifts without another adult present;
  - c) never single out individual children for personal attention; d) not pay, in cash or kind, for sexual services of any kind from Vulnerable Person (or other person) in line with the Safeguarding Policy.
- 10.2 In the event that it is or may be necessary for the protection of a child or children from physical danger, it may occasionally be necessary for Staff and or Suppliers to make arrangements which breach of these Principles and where this is the case, the Staff and or Supplier must inform their line manager or OPM as applicable at the earliest opportunity and preferably, in advance of the arrangements being put into effect.
- 10.3 Similar considerations as those set out in paragraphs 10.1 and 10.2 above also apply in the case of Vulnerable adults.

## 11. Use of Multimedia and Vulnerable Persons

- 11.1 Use of multimedia i.e. filming, recording of audio, or photography of Vulnerable Persons, requires particular sensitivity. Staff and Suppliers must:

- a) observe local traditions and restrictions for reproducing personal or sacred images;
- b) acknowledge that the reproduction of any “likeness” i.e. image or voice of the Vulnerable Person constitutes processing of personal data by OPM requiring the explicit consent of the Vulnerable Person or their parent or guardian. Staff and Suppliers may must comply with OPM’s Data Protection Policy and relevant guidance including, without limitation, OPM’s “Guide to getting permissions and consents for video, audio and/or photographs”.

11.2 The dignity of Vulnerable Persons must be respected at all times and poses, sounds and words used in relevant multimedia should be dignified and respectful. Vulnerable Persons must not be photographed or recorded in a manner which could be seen as sexually suggestive, humiliating or demeaning. Advice should if necessary be sought from a member of OPM’s Communications and Marketing team.

11.3 Footage and descriptions of any likeness including names, ages and other personal information of the Vulnerable Person constitute personal data and must be stored securely and kept only for as long as is reasonably necessary and in line with any guidelines published by OPM from time to time for the retention of data or contractual data retention period.

## **12. Drugs and alcohol**

12.1 Staff and Suppliers must not perform any duties in relation to a Vulnerable Person when his or her judgement is impaired through use of drugs, alcohol or due to another cause.

12.2 Under no circumstances should a member of Staff or Supplier offer drugs or alcohol to a Vulnerable Person.

12.3 Should it ever be necessary for a member of Staff or Supplier to administer prescribed drugs or medication to a Vulnerable Person, he or she must do so only under medical supervision.

## **13. Gifts**

13.1 Staff and Suppliers must not accept gifts from Vulnerable Persons save for small gifts of low monetary (giving consideration of monetary value in the country where you are working) or cultural value. Staff and Suppliers may not give inappropriate or high value gifts to Vulnerable Persons.

## **14. Monitoring effectiveness**

14.1 The effectiveness of OPM’s Safeguarding Policy and Principles of Practice will be monitored through contracts, audits and spot checks.

## **15. Reporting safeguarding concerns**

15.1 If a member of Staff or a Supplier is concerned that a child or a vulnerable adult is at risk of Harm or abuse they should immediately notify their line manager, project manager, senior OPM manager or HR Business Partner and OPM lead contact, in the case of a Supplier.

15.2 Reporting a Safeguarding concern or complaint shall be done in accordance with OPM's

Safeguarding reporting process as set out in the Safeguarding Policy or in line with OPM's whistleblowing procedure by:

**Your report can be made confidentially using any of the following external mechanisms:**

- Calling the whistleblowing hotline number for your location (available on OPM's intranet and website)
- Calling OPM's external whistleblowing hotline from the UK on 0800 890 011 followed by 833-945-3461 when prompted
- Completing the web reporting form at [opml.ethicspoint.com](http://opml.ethicspoint.com)
- Emailing or calling the client's reporting mechanism e.g. for UK FCDO, the Counter Fraud and Whistleblowing Unit (CFWU) at [reportingconcerns@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:reportingconcerns@fcdo.gov.uk) or on +44(0)1355 843747

15.3 The principles of the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and UK Data Protection Act 2018 as outlined in the Data Protection Policy must be adhered to and all personal data collected as part of the initial report, fact finding and assessment, any investigation and follow up action shall be treated confidentially, only shared with those who have a need to know (including a legal need), stored securely and destroyed after the expiration of a reasonable period. It is vital that all parties remain confident that their personal information is secure and that privacy rights are maintained.

15.4 Staff and Suppliers shall:

- a) maintain a record of any action taken and the reasons for it together with a record of what information has been shared, with whom and for what purpose;
- b) be open with those concerned about what has been reported and how the information may be used, seek their agreement wherever appropriate and document this ;c) if there is doubt about any allegation made, seek advice initially without disclosing the details of the case, if possible; and
- c) consider the safety of all involved.

## 16. Investigations and Outcomes

16.1 All allegations of Harm, abuse or exploitation of Vulnerable Persons will be investigated according to OPM's Issues Concerns Reporting and Management Policy and Procedures in addition to any applicable local procedures. Following investigation any allegations upheld will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure or, as appropriate, including notification to clients and reporting by OPM to relevant law enforcement agencies



## 17. Communications

- 17.1 Workers should act in accordance with OPM's communication policies, including the IT and Information Security Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and the Social Media Policy. If faced with a Safeguarding allegation in connection with OPM, a member of Staff or a Supplier, you should not talk to the press or their agents. You should immediately seek advice from the Communications Manager if you are approached in relation to any allegations or other issues related to the Safeguarding Policy or these Principles of Practice.
- 17.2 Use of OPM's IT and communication systems to access child exploitation material or to engage in online grooming or cause Harm generally is likely to amount to gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal for employment or termination of your contract for services with OPM. All Safeguarding allegations will be investigated in accordance with paragraph 16.1 above and where upheld, appropriate action will be taken by OPM in response including, as appropriate, reporting to the relevant law enforcement agencies.