Network AID

Network Assistance for Illiterate Persons' Development
Recognising the Voice, Action, and Contribution of Illiterate Persons'

Africa

Network AID Africa

Safeguarding Policy and Procedure 2026

Protecting Everyone Against Harm

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

This document forms the basis of Network AID Africa Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding our constituents, partners, staff, volunteers, intern's consultants and any other party that comes in contact with Network AID Africa. It has been developed with support from Dave Jones of CCP, Gloucestershire.

This policy document is divided into two columns:
1. Section Heading: - to clarify the sections of the policy and procedures
2. Section Content: - Contains wording to be used in the policy and procedures with prompts to 'fill in the blanks' to allow personalization of content

Name of Organisation: Network AID Africa

Section Heading	Section Content
1. Introduction	Network AID Africa is a voluntary charitable human rights non-profit organisation that seeks to enhance the welfare and well-being of illiterate women and girls, youths, persons with disabilities and deprived children. Network AID Africa makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right and responsibility of every individual to stay safe. Network AID Africa comes into contact with her constituents through the following activities: scholarship/sponsorship, mentoring and coaching, training, internship, meetings, project implementation, awards, conferences, outreach, and social events. The types of contact with her constituents will be regulated and controlled. This policy seeks to ensure that the organisation undertakes its responsibilities about the protection of its constituent's persons within the organisation and persons who come in contact with the organisation and will respond to concerns responsibly and appropriately. This policy establishes a framework to support paid and unpaid staff/volunteer, in their practices and clarifies the organisation's expectations.

2. Explanation of terms	Explanation of Terms – Regulated and Controlled Activities. 1. Regulated Activity: - can be defined as 'frequent contact' with her constituents (once a month or more) or as 'intensive contact' (5 days or more within 30 30-day periods). 2. Controlled Activity: - includes e.g. ancillary roles such as caretakers where there may be contact with vulnerable groups. Also includes administrators, management advisory team members or goodwill ambassadors who can access data on vulnerable people.

3. Confirmation of reading	I confirm that I have been made fully aware of, and understand the contents of, the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for Network AID Africa. Please complete the details below and return this completed form to the finance and administrative coordinator or persons designated. Full Name : Signature: Date: Name of Witness On behalf of the Organisation Signature Date Country Coordinator………………….. Signature Date

4. legislation	The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are: 1. The Child Rights Act 2007 2. Sexual Offences Act as Amended 2019 3. The Right to Information Law 2010 4. The Three Gender Laws 2007 5. The Persons With Disability Act 2011 6. The Youth Commission Act 2011 7. The Cyber Crime Act 2022 8. The Employment Act 2022 9. The National HIV/AIDS Commission Act 10. The 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone

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Network AID Africa

5. Definitions	Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of our constituents wherever possible. In contrast, child, persons with disabilities and adult protection is about responding to circumstances that arise.

Abuse is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture. It can take several forms, including the following:
• Physical abuse
• Sexual abuse
• Psychological or Emotional abuse
• Neglect or Omission to act
• Financial or material abuse
• Child Sexual Exploitation
• Modern Slavery
• Self Neglect
• Domestic Abuse
• Institutional Abuse
• Discriminatory Abuse
• Harassment
• Radicalisation

Definition of a Child
A child is any person under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child) and the Child Rights Act 2007.

Definition of a Vulnerable Adult
A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.
This **may** include a person who: Is elderly and frail; Has mental health issues or illness including dementia; Has a physical or sensory disability; Has a learning disability; Has a severe physical illness; Is a substance misuser; Is homeless.

Definition of Constituent
These are persons or groups of persons directly benefiting from Network AID Africa programs and interventions (illiterate women and girls, youths, persons with disabilities and deprived children). |

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6. responsibilities

All Staff/Volunteers (paid or unpaid) have the responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare and wellbeing concerns using the required and appropriate procedures.

We expect all staff/volunteers (paid or unpaid) to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and positively involve people in developing safe practices.

Additional Specific Responsibilities

The following **have the responsibility to ensure:**
1. The policy is in place and appropriate (goodwill ambassador and technical advisory team members)
2. Liaison with and monitoring the Designated Safeguarding Lead's work (Senior Management Team)
3. Sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated to ensure that the policy can be effectively implemented (technical advisory team members through the overall budget process and SMT on allocation of those resources)

SMT have responsibility to ensure:
1. The policy is accessible (SMT)
2. The policy is implemented (SMT or Person Designate)
3. Liaison with and monitoring the Designated Safeguarding Lead's work (SMT)
4. The policy is monitored and reviewed (SMT or Persons Designate)
5. Seriously, swiftly and appropriately act on issues of welfare and well-being in the absence of SMT (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is (…). This person's responsibilities are:
1. Promoting the welfare and well-being of all (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
2. Keep up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
3. Take forward concerns about responses (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
4. Develop and maintain effective links with relevant agencies through attendance at strategy meetings, initial case conferences, core groups, protection agencies meetings
(Designated Safeguarding Lead)
5. Ensure staff/volunteers (paid and unpaid) have access to appropriate training/information (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
6. Receive staff/volunteer concerns about safeguarding and respond to all
7. Seriously, swiftly and appropriately act on issues of welfare and well-being in the absence of a person designate (SMT)

7. Implementation Stages	The scope of this Safeguarding Policy is broad, ranging and in practice, it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within the organisation. These include: 1. Whistleblowing: - ability to inform on other staff/volunteer practices within the organisation 2. Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures: - to address breaches of procedures/ policies 3. Health and Safety Policy: - including lone working procedures mitigating risk to staff/volunteer and constituents 4. Equal Opportunities Policy: - ensuring safeguarding procedures are in line with this policy, in particular around discriminatory abuse and ensuring that the safeguarding policy and procedures are not discriminatory 5. Data Protection Policy: - how records are stored, shared and access to those records 6. Confidentiality Policy: - ensuring that service users are aware of your duty to disclose 7. Staff Induction: - new members to the organisation are made aware of safeguarding and other related policies 8. Staff Training: - safeguarding is mainstream as part of all training **Safe Recruitment** Network AID Africa ensures safe recruitment through the following processes: 1. Provide the following safeguarding statement in recruitment adverts or application details –'recruitment is done in line with safe recruitment practices.' 2. Job or role descriptions for all roles involving contact with constituent children and/or vulnerable adults will contain reference to safeguarding responsibilities. 3. There are personal specifications for roles which contain a statement on core competency concerning child/vulnerable adult protection/safeguarding 4. Shortlisting is based on formal application processes/forms and not on provision of CVs 5. Interviews are conducted according to equal opportunity principles and interview questions are based on the relevant job description and person specification

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Gap Management

The organisation commits resources to providing DBS records checks on staff/volunteers (paid or unpaid) whose roles involve contact with children and /or vulnerable adults.

To avoid DBS gaps, the organisation will

1. DBS checks will be conducted for specific roles for all staff (paid or unpaid) working with children and vulnerable adults. It is a criminal offence for individuals barred by the … to work or apply to work with children or vulnerable adults in a wide range of posts.

2. No formal job offers are made until after checks for suitability are completed (including DBS and 2 references). However, a job offer can be made in exceptional and justifiable circumstances where employment/role could commence before DBS clearance).

In addition to checks on recruitment for roles involving contact with children/ vulnerable adults, for established staff, the following processes are in place:

1. The organisations will ensure established staff and roles are regularly reviewed through: -
    i. A 3-year rolling programme of re-checking DBS is in place for holders of all identified posts.
    ii. Through yearly job description performance review
    iii. Existing staff (paid or unpaid) who transfer from a role which does not require a DBS check to one which involves contact with children / vulnerable adults will be subject to a DBS check.

For service delivery contracting and sub-contracting

1. There will be systematic checking of safeguarding arrangements of partner organisations
2. Safeguarding will be a fixed agenda item in any partnership reporting meetings.
3. Contracts and memorandums of agreement for partnership delivery work will include clear minimum requirements, arrangements for safeguarding and non-compliance procedures.

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8. Communications training and support for staff	Network AID Africa commits resources for induction, training of staff/volunteers (paid and unpaid), for effective communications and support mechanisms to safeguard

Induction will include
1. Discussion of the Safeguarding Policy and confirmation of understanding
2. Discussion of other relevant policies
3. Ensure familiarity with reporting processes, the roles of line manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead and who acts in their absence
4. Initial training on safeguarding including safe working practices, safe recruitment, understanding child protection and adult safeguarding
5. A formal assessment of new members of staff's/volunteer competence in applying safe practices during the probation period will be conducted.

Training
All staff who, through their role, are in contact with children and /or vulnerable adults will have access to safeguarding training at an appropriate level. List the types of refresh training for staff.

Communications and Discussion of Safeguarding Issues
The organisation is committed to the following communication methods to ensure effective communication of safeguarding issues and practice:

1. Team meetings
2. SMT meetings
3. Board meetings one-to-one meetings (formal or informal),
4. Clinical supervision

Support
We recognise that involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be stressful for the staff concerned. The mechanisms in place to support staff include: (insert mechanisms) |

(8 continued)	Other aspects to highlight in the communications section might be 1. Participation in multi-agency safeguarding procedures and meetings to be involved in child/ adult protection procedures 2. Participation in joint client visits 3. Provision of a clear and effective reporting procedure which encourages reporting of concerns. 4. Encouraging open discussion during supervision and team meetings to identify barriers to reporting so that they can be addressed. 5. Inclusion of safeguarding as a discussion prompt during supervision meetings/ appraisals to encourage reflection 6. During meetings staff are reminded about policies and procedures Support – typical support mechanisms would include: 1. Debriefing support for paid and unpaid staff/volunteers so that they can reflect on the issues they have dealt with. 2. Seeking further support as appropriate e.g. access to counselling. 3. Staff who have initiated protection concerns will be contacted by the line manager within a certain timescale e.g. 1 week.

9. ProfessionalBoundariess	Professional boundaries are what define the limits of a relationship between workers and a constituent. There is a set of standards we agree to uphold that allows this necessary and often close relationship to exist while ensuring the correct detachment is kept in place. Network AID Africa expects staff/volunteers to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the organisation. The following professional boundaries must be adhered to: 1. Giving and Receiving Gifts from Constituent: - Network AID Africa gift policy rule will apply. However, gifts may be provided by the organisation as part of a planned activity. 2. Staff Contact with User Groups: - Personal relationships between a member of staff/volunteer (paid or unpaid) and a constituent who is a current service user are prohibited. This includes relationships through social networking dating sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp. It is also prohibited to enter into a personal relationship with a person who has been a service user over the past 12 months. The following are prohibited: - 1. Use of abusive language 2. Response to inappropriate behaviour/language 3. Use of punishment or chastisement 4. Passing on service users' contact details 5. Degree of accessibility to service users (e.g. not providing personal contact details) 6. Taking family members to a client's home with safeguarding concern 7. Accepting responsibility for any valuables on behalf of a client 8. Accepting money as a gift / Borrowing money from or lending money to service users 9. Personal relationships with a third party related to or known to service users 10. Accepting gifts/rewards or hospitality from an organisation as an inducement for either doing/ not doing something in their official capacity 11. Cautious or avoidance of personal contact with clients The following also contains guidance on staff/volunteer (paid or unpaid) conduct: 1. Code of conduct, internet policy, social media policy, protected disclosure policy, disciplinary process policy, confidentiality policy 2. Staff/volunteer/contractor/consultant must declare actual or potential interests by discussing them with the line coordinator or Designated Safeguarding Lead. 3. If the professional boundaries and/or policies are breached this could result in disciplinary procedures or enactment of the allegation management procedures

10. Reporting

The process outlined below details the stages involved in raising and reporting safeguarding concerns at Network AID Africa

Communicate your concerns with your immediate coordinator

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Seek medical attention for the vulnerable person if needed

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Discuss with the parents of the child Or with a vulnerable person. Obtain permission to make the referral if safe and appropriate

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If needed seek advice from the Children and Families helpdesk or Adults helpdesk

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Complete the Local Authority Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Incident Report Form if required and submit it to the authority within 24 hours of making contact

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Ensure that feedback from the Local Authority is received and their response recorded

The local authority has a process for reporting and this must be adopted. Network AID Africa is expected to complete the local authorities' initial contact form when informing them of a concern about a child. The use of this form and compliance with the policy is mandatory. Information on reporting concerns will be found at www.networkaid.org www.gscb.org.uk

If the immediate coordinator is implicated, then refer to their line coordinator or peer.

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11. Allegations Management	Network AID Africa recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its staff/volunteers (paid or unpaid) within the organisation or by a professional from another organisation. There should be a stated process for dealing with allegations against any professional or volunteer working for any organisation. There is an established allegations management procedure and flow chart for working with children in Gloucestershire which can be viewed by clicking on 'I work with children, young people and parents', then 'allegations management' from www.gscb.org.uk The process for raising and dealing with allegations is as follows: First step: Any member of staff/volunteer (paid or unpaid) from Network AID Africa is required to report any concerns in the first instance to their line coordinator / safeguarding person/peer. A written record of the concern will be completed by the individual /line coordinator/ safeguarding person/ peer. Second step- contact the local authority for advice. (for children) the … or (for adults) the… Third step – follow the advice provided
12. Monitoring	The organisation will monitor the following Safeguarding aspects: 1. Safe recruitment practices 2. DBS checks undertaken 3. References applied for new staff/volunteer 4. Records made and kept of supervision sessions 5. Training – register/ record staff training on child/ vulnerable adult protection 6. Monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned 7. Checking that policies are up to date and relevant 8. Reviewing the current reporting procedure in place The presence and action of the Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for Safeguarding is in post
13. Managing information	Information will be gathered, recorded and stored under the following policies Data Protection Policy, Confidentiality Policy, Disclosure Policy, Code of Conduct All staff/volunteers must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. The public interest in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, as judged by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise service users or their families/ carers that they will keep secrets.

14. Conflict resolution and complaints	Network AID Africa is aware of the Conflict Management and Grievance Redress policy on the resolution of professional disagreements in work relating to the health and safety of the staff/volunteer and its constituents. if necessary, this will be taken forward by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
15. Communicating and reviewing the policy	Network AID Africa will make its constituents and clients aware of the Safeguarding Policy through the following means: - 1. Statement of our website 2. Safeguarding element included in contract and agreement 3. Safeguarding complaint and reporting tool 4. Incident report or complaint form 5. IEC material produced and displayed in public places This policy will be reviewed by management with advice from the technical advisory team members, every three years and when there are changes in legislation.