

# THE ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY

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| <b>POLICY NO:</b>        | <b>RLSS008</b>   |
| <b>POLICY:</b>           | <b>SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK</b> |
| <b>ORIGINAL POLICY:</b>  | <b>March 2012</b>  |
| <b>LAST REVIEW DATE:</b> | <b>September 2024</b>                                      |
| <b>REVIEW DATE:</b>      | <b>September 2027</b>                                      |

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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) is committed to the safety and well being of all children and adults at risk. We support the rights of children and adults at risk and will act without hesitation to ensure a safe environment is maintained.

We are committed to the protection of children and adults at risk from harm, abuse and exploitation.

Children have a right to survival, development, protection and participation as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). RLSS will uphold these rights and apply the same rights to adults at risk.

This Safeguard Policy for Children and Adults at Risk has been developed to provide guidance on child protection and adults at risk and the prevention of child abuse and abuse to adults at risk for RLSS activities and the RLSS activities in which Member Branches of the RLSS participates.

The RLSS is obliged to adhere to local and international child protection and adults at risk protection criminal laws, which prohibit the abuse and exploitation of children and adults at risk. These include local laws where the RLSS events and activities may be held, and international laws and conventions in relation to all forms of child abuse and child exploitation.

## 2. SCOPE AND CONTEXT

This policy covers the RLSS Commonwealth Headquarters and the RLSS events and initiatives delivered directly by the RLSS Commonwealth and the Host of an event of the RLSS. This policy also provides guidance to the RLSS Member and Companion Organisations in the development of their own national policies on Safeguarding and it is hoped that they will at least embrace the Safeguarding Expectations and Best Practice set out in Appendix 3 or this Policy and seek further guidance and training where appropriate (e.g. Appendix 4).

## 3. DEFINITIONS/GLOSSARY

*Adult at Risk (plural 'adults at risk')* – An adult at risk is defined as a person aged eighteen or over (*unless under the law applicable to the adult, majority is attained earlier*), who has either a dependency upon others in the performance of, or a requirement for assistance in the performance of basic functions; a severe impairment in the ability to communicate with others; or has a reduced ability to protect themselves from assault, abuse or neglect. This can be as a result of a learning or physical disability; a physical or mental illness chronic or otherwise (including an addiction to alcohol or drugs); or a reduction in physical or mental capacity.

*Adult at Risk Abuse* – Adult at risk abuse is a term used to describe any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to an adult at risk.



*Child (plural 'children')* – In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 'child' means every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

*Child abuse* – All forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

*Child protection* – An activity or initiative designed to protect children from any form of harm, particularly arising from child abuse or neglect.

*Cyber Bullying* – Cyber Bullying is a form of bullying, which is carried out through various forms of social media including email, chat rooms, discussion groups, instant messaging or web pages and other formats that might develop over time.

Examples of cyber bullying behaviour are:

- Teasing and being made fun of;
- Spreading rumors online;
- Sending unwanted messages of an intimidating or threatening nature; and
- Defamation
- Grooming and sexting

*Particularly vulnerable children* – Children who are particularly vulnerable to abuse, such as children with physical and mental disabilities, homeless children, child sex workers and children impacted by disasters.

*Working with children* – Working in a position that involves regular contact with children, either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment

## 4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 4.1** The RLSS believes that any form of child abuse and adult at risk abuse and exploitation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- 4.2** The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the universal foundation for child protection. The fundamental principle of the Convention is that children have their own indivisible rights.
- 4.3** The RLSS recognizes its duty of care to take all reasonable steps to ensure that children and adults at risk are safe from harm.
- 4.4** Adherence to this Safeguarding Policy is a mandatory requirement for all staff and volunteers. The RLSS will ensure that all staff, volunteers and relevant stakeholders are made aware of this Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults at Risk and their responsibilities.
- 4.5** All decisions regarding the welfare and protection of children and adults at risk are made based on the Best Interests of the Child Principle (Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). This principle refers to decisions considering that the child or adult at risk receives maximum benefit possible from services provided, and that the positive impacts of any course of action outweigh any negative impacts.
- 4.6** The RLSS believes that all children and adults at risk should be equally protected and assisted regardless of their gender, nationality, religious or political beliefs, family background, economic status, physical or mental health or criminal background.

## 5. CONTEXT

### 5.1 Global Context of Child Abuse

Child abuse is a global problem that affects both boys and girls. It has existed since the beginning of time and is deeply rooted in cultural, economic and social practices. Children can be abused physically, sexually, emotionally



and through neglect. Some children are forced to endure the most hazardous forms of child labour including sweat shops and prostitution. In some countries boys are kidnapped and forced into armed conflict as soldiers. In many countries children experience severe corporal punishment in schools. Children living in poverty are more at risk of child abuse and exploitation.

According to the World Health Organisation (2016) a quarter of all adults report having been physically abused as children.

An estimated 1.2 million children may be trafficked every year. (Every Child Counts, New Estimates on Child Labour, International Labour Organisation April 2002; UNICEF 2007)

1 million children enter the commercial child sex trade every year (UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child came into force in 2002)

160 million children are involved in child labour; more than 79 million are working in hazardous situation or conditions. (Child Labour: Global Estimates, International Labour Organisation, 2020)

One in 5 women and 1 in 13 men report having been sexually abused as a child

Child protection laws are generally focused on abuse of children by adults, but children are not safe if the adults do not address children's abuse of their peers (i.e. Bullying).

### **5.2 Context of RLSS Activities and Events**

The RLSS periodically runs events and activities which engage its Member Branches and their members. These events may include children and adults at risk.

For the most part the RLSS events and activities are run on behalf of the RLSS by their Member Branches.

This policy provides guidelines associated with:

- RLSS organized and run events and activities
- RLSS events and activities hosted by the RLSS Member Branches on behalf of the RLSS
- RLSS Member Branches attending RLSS Events/Activities with children and adults at risk
- Use of Children's and adults at risk Images
- Employment of Staff and Volunteers

## **6. RLSS ORGANISED EVENTS & ACTIVITIES**

The RLSS is a UK-based charity and is therefore bound by the laws of the United Kingdom for all events and activities organized directly by the RLSS.

### **Code of Conduct for working with children**

In addition to the RLSS UK Safeguarding Policy, the RLSS has implemented a child and adults at risk safe code of conduct to protect children, adults at risk, staff and the organisation by providing clear behavioural guidelines and expectations.

The RLSS's child and adults at risk safe code of conduct can be viewed as Appendix 1.

For events and activities organized directly by the RLSS

- A risk assessment will be undertaken and the results recorded
- A designated person will be appointed to be responsible for all matters relating to safeguarding children and adults at risk
- The attention of those running the event or activity will be drawn to this Policy and to the RLSS Safeguarding Expectations and Best Practice set out in Appendix 3



## 7. EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES HOSTED BY RLSS MEMBER BRANCHES ON BEHALF OF RLSS

Where an event and/or activity is being hosted by an RLSS Member Branch on behalf of the RLSS, the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Laws and Practices of that country will be abided by.

In the case that there are no Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Laws and Practices in place, or the RLSS Board, on awarding hosting rights to the Member Branch, has deemed that country's Child and Adults at Risk Protection Laws and Principles to be unsatisfactory, then the Child and Adults at Risk Protection Laws and Practices of the United Kingdom will be abided by and the RLSS UK Safeguarding Policy – Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults will be adopted.

Child and Adults at Risk Protection is stipulated in a clause of all Hosting Rights Agreements with the RLSS Member Branches and the RLSS Member Branches agree to abide by this policy in the signing of the Hosting Rights Agreement.

## 8. RLSS MEMBER BRANCHES ATTENDING RLSS EVENTS/ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN AND/OR ADULTS ATRISK

In the circumstances where the RLSS Member Branches are attending RLSS Events/Activities with children and/or adults at risk, it is the responsibility of each individual RLSS Member Branch to put in place appropriate child protection safe guards for their children and/or adults at risk in accordance with their own country's Child and Adults at Risk Protection laws and their own organisational Child and Adults at Risk Protection Policy, which cover both attendance at the event/activity, as well as travel to and from the event/activity.

The RLSS Member Branches attending RLSS Events/Activities with children and/or adults at risk should be able to provide evidence to the RLSS of proof of satisfying their nation's requirements for working with children and adults at risk, with appropriate child and adults at risk protection safeguards.

In addition to their own safeguarding measures, the RLSS Member Branches attending RLSS Events/Activities with children and/or adults at risk will also need to be mindful of and abide by Child and Adults at Risk Protection laws of the country in which the event is being hosted.

## 9. USE OF CHILDREN'S & ADULTS AT RISK IMAGES

The RLSS will at all times portray children and adults at risk in a respectful, appropriate and consensual way.

Our guidelines on the use of children's and adults at risk images are:

- A child and/or adult at risk should always be portrayed in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner.
- Children and/or adults at risk should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- A child and/or adult at risk and their family/guardian must always be asked for consent when using their images. Written consent and waiver for the use of the images should be obtained from the parent/guardian and assent should be obtained from the child and/or adult at risk.
- When asking for consent to use the image, details should be given as to how and where this image will be used.
- There should be no identifying information of the child used in the publication of images with their location.
- When utilising an image of a child or children provided by an RLSS Member Branch, it must be explicitly confirmed that there has been approval gained for use of the image by the child and their family.
- Children should be portrayed as part of their community.
- Local cultural traditions should be assessed regarding restrictions for reproducing personal images.
- Images should be an honest representation of the context.



- When sending images electronically, file labels should not reveal identifying information.
- There should be compliance at all times with the RLSS Privacy and Data Protection Policy RLSS022

## 10. EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The RLSS is committed to child and adults at risk safe recruitment, selection and screening practices. These practices aim to recruit the safest and most suitable people to work in our programs. Our child and adults at risk safe practices include:

- Promoting our child and adults at risk safe commitment on our website, and in all job advertisements.
- All applicants will be made aware of the RLSS's Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults at Risk and be informed of the recruitment screening requirements.
- All positions will be assessed for the level of risk in relation to contact with children and adults at risk.
- Positions working directly with children will require the highest level of screening [e.g. Enhanced Disclosure and Barring checks (DBS), Police Clearances, Police Checks] and the applicant must possess relevant qualifications and experience in working with children and adults at risk.
- Interviews will be conducted for all positions, ideally face-to-face, but telephone or virtual interviews maybe necessary in the international context in line with safe recruitment.
- In positions working directly with children and/or adults at risk, the panel will explore the candidate's motivations for working with children and/or adults at risk, which will include value-based questions seeking information about the candidate's attitudes to children and/or adults at risk, professional boundaries, accountability, teamwork and how they have responded to ethical dilemmas.
- A minimum of two reference checks will be required for all preferred candidates.
- Where the candidate is working directly with children and/or vulnerable adults in the United Kingdom, they may require an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS).
- Where the candidate is working directly with children and/or adults at risk in another country in the Commonwealth, they will abide by the Child and Adult at Risk Protection laws and procedures within that country. If there are no measures in place, or the measures are deemed unsatisfactory, then the candidate will complete a Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS) and abide by UK Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection laws and practices. Where it is not possible to request a DBS check, most countries' police forces will supply a 'Certificate of Good Conduct' to the applicant. The [London Diplomatic list](#) contains the addresses and contact details of all Embassies and High Commissions in London. For UK nationals who live abroad, or non-UK Nationals now apply for an [International Child Protection Certificate \(ICPC\)](#).
- In positions working directly with children and/or adults at risk, employees and volunteers will be provided with current mandatory Child and Adult at Risk Protection awareness, which will include, but not be limited to, the RLSS Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults at Risk and procedures and local and international laws associated with Child and Adult at Risk Protection. Employees and volunteers working directly with children and/or adults at risk will be required to undertake this awareness before beginning working with children and/or adults at risk.

The RLSS's Safeguarding Expectations and Best Practice in Safeguarding set out in Appendix 3 will be used for such awareness

## 11. CYBER BULLYING

The RLSS utilises online and social media as a forum for correspondence and information sharing. We acknowledge that these forums can be targets for cyber bullying.

The RLSS does not tolerate any form of bullying. In the instance that an incident of cyber bullying occurs on one of our forums, it is removed as soon as the organisation becomes aware of its existence. It will then be investigated by the RLSS or referred to the relevant Member Branch for their appropriate level investigation.

The RLSS requests that all Member Branches ensure their members are aware of the dangers of cyber bullying when engaging in online and social media forums.



## 12. ACCESS TO THE POLICY

This policy will be available for viewing by any person on RLSS's website or a copy will be sent upon request.

## 13. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information or to report any suspected or detected breaches of this policy please contact:

**The Royal Life Saving Society, Commonwealth Headquarters,**  
Red Hill House, 227 London Rd,  
Worcester WR5 2JG,  
UNITED KINGDOM

Tel: +44 (0)1905 958 444

Email: [commonwealth@rlss.org.uk](mailto:commonwealth@rlss.org.uk)

Website: <http://www.rlsscommonwealth.org>

**Attention: Deputy Commonwealth President**

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## APPENDIX 1

### RLSS CHILD & ADULTS AT RISK SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, engaged by the RLSS, agree that while implementing the RLSS sanctioned activities;

#### I WILL:

- Treat all children, young people and adults at risk in our program with respect.
- Conduct myself in a manner that is consistent the values of the RLSS
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers.
- Respect cultural differences.
- Encourage open communication between all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers and have children and young people participate in the decisions that affect them.
- Report any concerns of child or adult at risk abuse.
- At all times staff and volunteers should be transparent in their actions and whereabouts.
- Take responsibility for ensuring they are accountable and do not place themselves in positions where there is a risk of allegations being made.
- Self-assess their behaviours, actions, language and relationships with children and adults at risk.
- Speak up when they observe concerning behaviours of colleagues.

#### I WILL NOT:

- Engage in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or adults at risk.
- Use inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory language when speaking with a child, young person or adult at risk.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child or adult at risk can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes.
- Take children or adult at risk to their own home/hotel or sleep in the same room or bed as a child or adult at risk.
- Smack, hit or physically assault children or adults at risk.
- Develop sexual relationships with children or adults at risk or relationships with children or adults at risk that may be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Behave provocatively or inappropriately with a child or adult at risk.
- Condone or participate in, behaviour of children and adults at risk that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in a way that shows unfair and differential treatment of children or adults at risk.
- Photograph or video a child or adult at risk without the consent of his/her parents or guardians.
- Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way.
- Seek to make contact and spend time with any child or young person outside the event/activity times.
- Use the RLSS's computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras inappropriately, nor use them for the purpose of exploiting or harassing children or adults at risk.
- Hire minors as domestic labour.

#### Use of children's and adults at risk images for work related purposes

When photographing or filming a child or adult at risk for related purposes, I must:

- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children and adults at risk in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- Before photographing or filming, obtain consent from the child/adult at risk and/or their parent or guardian. When asking for consent to use the image, details should be given as to how and where this image will be used.



- Ensure there is no identifying information of the child used in the publication of images with their location. When sending images electronically, file labels will not reveal identifying information.
- Ensure children are portrayed as part of their community.
- Ensure local cultural traditions are assessed regarding restrictions for reproducing personal images.
- Ensure images are an honest representation of the context and the facts.

I understand that the onus is on me, as a person engaged by the RLSS, to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child abuse when implementing the RLSS sanctioned activities.

I have read and understand the *RLSS Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults at Risk RLSS008*.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**APPENDIX 2**

**IMAGE RELEASE FORM – CHILD/ADULT AT RISK**

**Parent/Guardian Approval**

I ..... , (parent or guardian’s name) give permission for my  
.....(name) to have their picture recorded on film or by photographic through participation  
in activities organized by The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) on ..... ,  
at.....

I give permission for these images to be used by RLSS for the purposes of promoting and producing communication materials  
for RLSS including those distributed via but not limited to video, print and internet media. These images will remain the  
property of RLSS to be used as its sole discretion for the above-mentioned purposes.

Signed: .....  
(Signature of parent/ guardian for children under 18)

Date: .....

Print name: .....

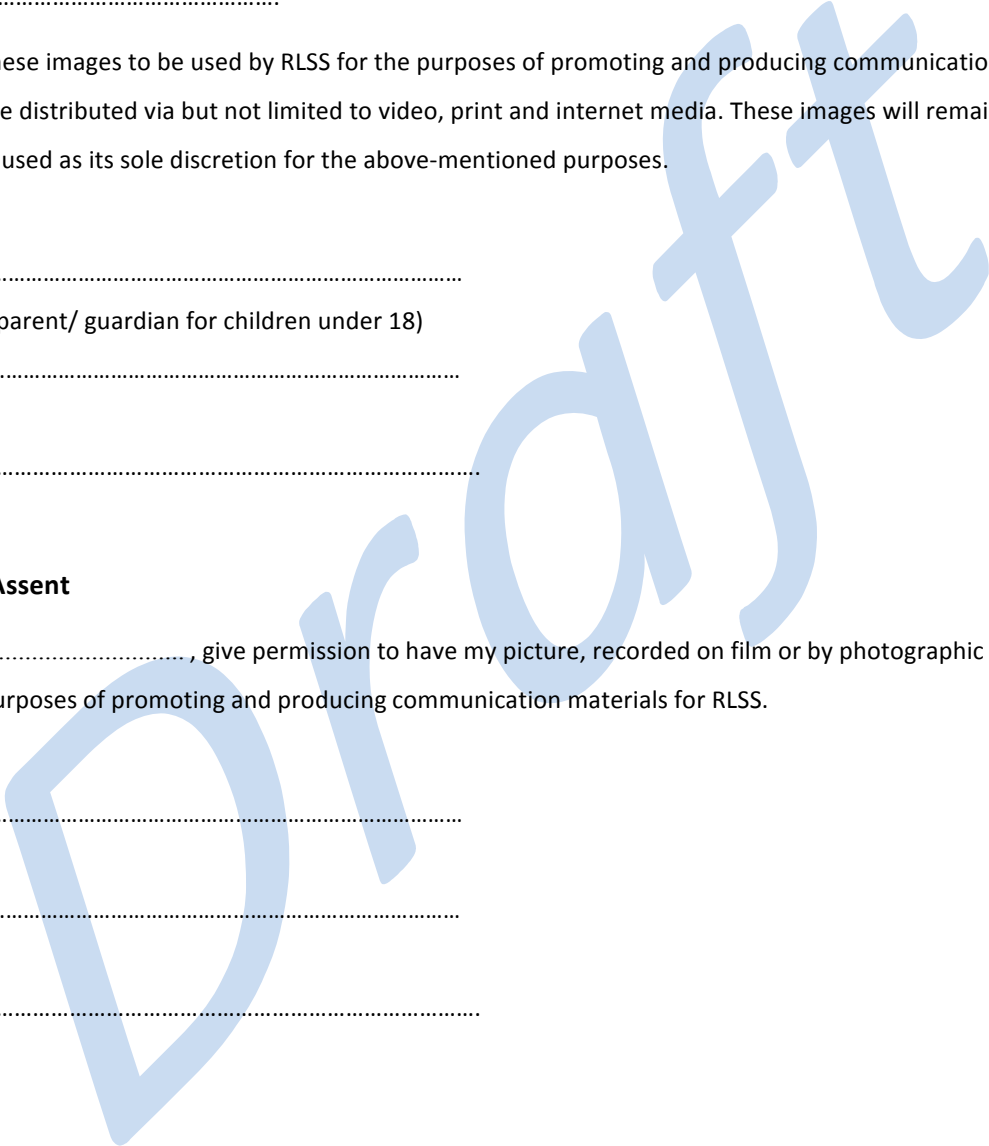
**Child/Adult at Risk Assent**

I ..... , give permission to have my picture, recorded on film or by photographic images,  
used by RLSS for the purposes of promoting and producing communication materials for RLSS.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Print name: .....



## APPENDIX 3

### ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY - SAFEGUARDING EXPECTATIONS

Scope and Definition – We expect the wellbeing of all participants in our activities to be upheld and respected at all times. This extends beyond child protection, which is generally understood in most communities around the world, and includes all vulnerable adults as well. This may be as diverse as helping a person who finds themselves in an unfamiliar situation from suffering harm, to recognising that someone is being forced to do something against their will.

All persons acting in the name of RLSS have a duty to safeguard others participating in our activities, and to seek the help of experts if advice is needed.

Each country will have its own laws and customs, but must respect those of other member countries when travelling there. At UK events for example there will be an appointed Safeguarding officer, as there is in all clubs and Branches, through whom all Safeguarding matters are dealt with. It is not usually the responsibility of the person observing a safeguarding incident to investigate, merely to report to the designated person. Some practises will be illegal in some countries, but not in others.

Safeguarding is a complex matter and training on its various aspects is available from several sources. RLSS Commonwealth Headquarters will be able to advise on sources of training (e.g. Appendix 4), if required.

#### RLSS BEST PRACTICE IN SAFEGUARDING

##### EXAMPLES OF THINGS WHICH MAY GIVE RISE TO CONCERN

All types of abuse or potential abuse, including financial, neglect, sexual, physical, domestic, psychological, emotional, organisational, and discriminatory.

Particular activities such as Radicalisation, Female Genital Mutilation, Modern Slavery and Bullying may also give rise to Safeguarding concerns.

##### MUST DO

- Treat all persons with respect and dignity at all times.
- Put the welfare of all vulnerable people first.
- Ensure that all physical contact with vulnerable people is done in an open environment, but having regard for privacy and dignity.
- Ensure consent is gained before any physical contact is made, except unavoidably in life threatening situations.
- Report all concerns or unavoidable breaches of the “must do” rules to a designated person as soon as possible.
- Report any life threatening safeguarding situations to the police immediately.

##### MUST NOT DO

- Engage in social media or texting conversation with vulnerable people.
- Be alone with a vulnerable person, except unavoidably in a life threatening situation.
- Discuss your concerns with anyone other than the designated person for this unless it is deemed necessary to involve the police or social services at an early stage.
- Conduct an investigation. Initially only listen and establish facts.
- Accuse anyone of lying.



- Exercise any form of prejudice.

## GUIDANCE AND DEFINITIONS

All people have RIGHTS that you must RESPECT. You have a RESPONSIBILITY to RECOGNISE a safeguarding RISK, and REPORT and RECORD your RESPONSE to any safeguarding CONCERNS. You must COMMUNICATE this with CONFIDENCE and CONFIDENTIALITY, being sensitive to CULTURE and operating within the above CODE of CONDUCT of “must do’s” and “must not do’s”

1. Rights - everyone has the right to have equal opportunities and not be discriminated against because of their gender, sexuality, religion or beliefs, or indeed the way they dress or the food they eat.
2. Respect – It is a safeguarding issue if someone is persuaded to do something against their will, such as taking a medication or engaging in sexual activity.
3. Responsibility - It is everyone’s responsibility to deal with safeguarding matters appropriately and not overlook or hide a concern.
4. Recognise – Some concerns, such as physical abuse or neglect may be easier to recognise than others, such as Modern Slavery and Female Genital Mutilation. If you do not understand these terms or want some specific training on them, speak in the first instance with the RLSS Commonwealth Headquarters if you don’t know where to access it, and some direction will be sought for you. All of the topics mentioned above are encountered in the UK safeguarding departments, but may not be well known in other parts of the world. This is no indication that they don’t occur, merely that they are not known or spoken about.
5. Risk – There is an element of risk in almost everything we do. For example crossing a road is potentially dangerous, so if we don’t cross any roads, we will not be run down by a car. However if we apply that to every risk, then no activity would take place at all. Therefore it is essential that we assess every activity for risk and do everything possible to minimise those risks. An example around safeguarding is mentioned above when we say you must not be alone with a vulnerable person.
6. Report – means you need to tell the designated safeguarding person of your concerns as soon as you can.
7. Record – means you need to write down exactly what you have seen or has been told to you, without adding opinion, investigation or advice.
8. Response - means you must do something once you are aware.
9. Concern –this is any occurrence you see or has been reported to you that has safeguarding implications.
10. Communicate – do this clearly without opinion or prejudice.
11. Confidence – Have confidence to report concerns- don’t think it is someone else’s responsibility.
12. Confidentiality – remember you are reporting a concern, and not conducting an investigation. Do not discuss this with anyone else, other than the designated person or police. You may be wrong, and could cause a lot of unintended harm to a vulnerable person or an innocent potential abuser.
13. Code of Conduct –this is the advice and actions set out in this communication. Everyone is expected to abide by it.



## APPENDIX 4

### **Safeguarding information through YouTube videos from Haringey Council, United Kingdom**

(downloaded 25 June 2021)

A series of 5 short 4 to 5 minute videos designed to help everyone understand what we can do to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, what to look for and who to go to talk about any concerns you may have. It is particularly relevant for people working with children or adults at risk of abuse, whether as an employee or as a volunteer.

#### **Understanding safeguarding 1 of 5: What is Safeguarding?**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWO\\_WfnRW\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWO_WfnRW_U)

#### **Understanding safeguarding 2 of 5: Abuse Part 1**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JS33VJcaxjQ>

#### **Understanding safeguarding 3 of 5: Abuse Part 2**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ki7XsezOWw>

#### **Understanding safeguarding 4 of 5: Signs and Indicators**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8TTb\\_Zp43l4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8TTb_Zp43l4)

#### **Understanding safeguarding 5 of 5: Taking Action**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-ybDjFPDRk>

NB: all hyperlinks functional as at 13<sup>th</sup> August 2024

