



Funder Safeguarding Collaborative

Listening · Learning · Practicing Trust

Introduction

In recent years, the ability of charitable organizations to protect the communities they serve has received considerable media and political attention. Although a number of organizations have been singled out for particular criticism, the problem cannot be isolated to a “few bad apples.” Instead, a commitment to keeping people safe requires a fundamental shift in organizational culture, a commitment to accountability, and an increased focus on the rights and contributions of survivors and communities.

It also requires a shift in the way funders view and respond to the safeguarding challenge. At present, “[resources for safeguarding are in deficit](#),” and a chronic lack of investment by donors has paralyzed efforts to achieve meaningful change. The UK Government has spearheaded efforts with bilateral donors, producing a series of commitments aimed at strengthening standards across the sector. Trusts and foundations have also come together to explore their role in relation to safeguarding, resulting in commitments aimed at greater collaboration to address key challenges.

This has included:

- A roundtable of Association of Charitable Foundations members resulting in a [framework on safeguarding for foundations](#)
- Safeguarding convenings hosted in London, Kampala, and New York to discuss strategies to strengthen safeguarding and explore opportunities for greater funder collaboration
- The [Cross-Funder Safeguarding Working Group](#) offering a safe space for funders to explore different aspects of safeguarding
- A systematic review, known as an evidence and gap map, on safeguarding commissioned by Porticus
- Development of plans to create a pooled fund that invests in holistic, evidence-based solutions to keep people safe

The Funder Safeguarding Collaborative (FSC) builds on all of these initiatives with the goal of promoting collaboration, listening, and learning among funders and implementing organizations in order to strengthen organizational cultures and practices that keep people safe. Comic Relief, Global Fund for Children (GFC), The National Lottery Community Fund, Oak Foundation, and Porticus funded the collaborative.

Vision and Values

Our Vision

A world where funders and organizations collaborate to advance cultures and practices that ensure the safety of the people they serve.

Our Mission

To promote collaboration, listening, and learning among funders and the organizations they fund to develop organizational cultures and practices that increase the safety of people participating in their initiatives.

Our Values

- Safety
- Partnership
- Shifting power
- Listening and learning
- Trust

Why We Exist

We believe that funders have a role in supporting implementing organizations to strengthen organizational cultures and practices to keep people safe, and that we need a space to come together to harmonize approaches. We know that locally led approaches to keep people safe work, and that groups need support that is truly tailored to their contexts. FSC does not see itself as a standard setting body, but as a catalyst, not demanding conformity to rules, but supporting localized initiatives that develop according to local realities and lived experiences.

What We Do

- Forge collaboration among funders to accelerate shared learning and influence the harmonization of policies, reporting structures, and priorities.
- Commission and share research on safeguarding practices globally.
- Engage organizations – both funders and practitioners – representing perspectives outside the Global North.
- Catalyze networks of practitioners committed to advancing safeguarding practices.
- Harmonize safeguarding cultures and practices among funders and their grantee partners.
- Pool funding to support locally led initiatives to advance safeguarding.
- Offer holistic solutions for funders seeking high-quality, flexible, and affordable safeguarding expertise through the Policy to Practice Exchange. (Further information is included below.)

How We Do It

- Take context into account by drawing on the expertise of practitioners, survivors, and those with lived experience.
- Value the time and resources organizations spend on improving and adapting their safeguarding practices.
- Advance the work together and arrive at decisions by consensus.
- Welcome collaborators and unique voices to the conversation.
- Honor each other's perspectives, and ensure all are heard.
- Create an environment of safety for sharing struggles openly.
- Prioritize learning and share learning openly.
- Recognize that holistic, sustainable solutions will require ongoing commitment, investment, and engagement from diverse stakeholders.

Collaborative Operating Model

The founding members of the collaborative are grantmaking organizations brought together by a shared commitment to a safer world for all, as well as an understanding that there is much we can do together to support the journey to get there. We believe that safe practices need to be a core part of the culture and practice of any organization.

The collaborative is in its early stages: it has five founding members with the overarching purpose of keeping people safe through information sharing and networking, alignment and harmonization among funders and their grantee partners, and pooling funds to support locally led initiatives to advance safeguarding globally.

FSC aims to provide a safe space for funders and other entities to explore ways to draw and build on existing #shiftthepower work and to amplify this by focusing on safeguarding. We know there is much work to be done: no one has finished their safeguarding journey, and no one has it all figured out. As a collaborative, we made a commitment to think big, start small. We want to make an impact, learn, adapt – and go again.

New members are welcome, and we are actively seeking groups to join from all over the world. Diverse membership helps ensure that the collaborative has understanding and awareness of locally led safeguarding approaches and experiences, as well as that the hardest-to-reach spaces are represented in the achievement of our mission.

Operating Model

As founding members, Comic Relief, Global Fund for Children, The National Lottery Community Fund, Oak Foundation, and Porticus operate the collaborative as a consortium bound by a memorandum of understanding within a steering committee model that has equal collective membership. As the collaborative grows, a smaller, strategic group may evolve in order to make some decisions quickly.

Global Fund for Children currently serves as FSC's development lead, designing key documents, recruiting new members, chairing meetings, and acting as the central financial and reporting entity. FSC welcomes all funders to join who share the following principles and are committed to working together to put them into practice.

Membership Categories

The collaborative is open to funders, NGOs, researchers, and other practitioners with diverse thematic and geographical priorities who are interested in sharing information, aligning strategically, and – where relevant – pooling funding. We will make proactive efforts to ensure the participation and contributions of individuals with lived experience and representatives from communities served by the programs funded. **We actively seek members from the Global South.**

All members will sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) when they join the collaborative, with terms appropriate for their membership category. The Steering Committee recognizes that not all new members will have established safeguarding protocols internally. We see this as an opportunity to support and offer resources to those who wish to join and develop at the same time. New members without baseline safeguarding practices are welcome, and current members will support them in their journey to establish safeguarding norms and processes.

We all continue to learn in this space and see this element as a core feature of achieving the mission of the collaborative. **We respect all members, regardless of their experience in safeguarding, their size, or their budget.**

What Members Are Expected to Bring, Gain & Contribute

- Openness to learning from others in the collaborative.
- Someone excited to dedicate time to meaningful collaboration.
- Frank and thoughtful input into the strategic direction of the collaborative.
- Enthusiasm for sharing safeguarding resources that help the wider community.
- Commitment to promoting, sharing, and contributing to the collaborative's work.
- Access to trusted people and organizations working globally to keep people safe.
- Willingness to exert influence in key spaces: development aid agencies, INGOs, foundations, corporations, governments, the media, etc.

The founding members have identified four types of membership: Steering Committee, Funding, Network, and Advisory Board. Steering Committee members will accept new members by consensus.

- **Steering Committee Members** make key decisions by consensus and look after the operations of the collaborative; they serve as central figures in securing funding for the work.
- **Funding Members** provide funding to support the work, but do not take an active role in the day-to-day work of the collaborative.
- **Network Members** are aligned with and believe in the work, contributing through expertise, convening, and/or dissemination of the work.
- **Advisory Board Members** share key skills and perspectives to advise the collaborative on specific topics and to provide an external check on how the

work is taking shape; they represent diverse geographies, lived experiences, and expertise.

New Member Process

1. Participate in an in-person/video meeting with a small group of core members.
2. Review and sign an MOU according to your membership category.
3. Receive your membership confirmation letter and welcome information.
4. Join the collaborative! This includes immediate access to shared resources, an invitation to join learning forums, and collaboration with ambitious and energized funders who cannot wait to welcome you.

Financial Model

The collaborative gives funders the opportunity to invest in evidence-informed initiatives that offer the possibility for sustained change. The founding members aim to recruit new members to add funds to the pool available every year to make safeguarding grants and to fund the work of the collaborative itself.

There is no minimum financial contribution required to become an FSC member, and it is not anticipated that every member will contribute every year, or at all. (See membership categories above.) Those that can make multiyear commitments are encouraged to do so, and to articulate these funding commitments as part of their membership MOU. Of the funds raised, a portion will further the collaborative's mission (through information sharing, networking, communication, and research); a portion will support the collaborative's operations (through convening, fund management, local intermediary selection, and donor relations); and the largest portion will fund local intermediaries, convenings, research, and other activities as decided by the collaborative. In Year One, there is approximately £450,000 available.

Country- or region-specific grantmaking will be managed, where possible, by aligned intermediary organizations within the country or region where the grants will be made.

Year One Nominal Budget*

FSC Development & Operations**	FSC Activities	Local Grantmaking (Uganda)***
£50,000**	£100,000 £26,000 for research funded by Elevate Children Funders Group	£300,000

* Top-level summary for the purposes of this document.

** £36,604 already committed to and received by GFC.

*** Includes costs for local intermediary.

Consensus

The members of the collaborative work within a consensus decision-making framework. According to [Seeds for Change](#), consensus decision-making is a creative and dynamic way of reaching agreement among all members of a group. Instead of simply voting on an item and having the majority of the group decide, a consensus group commits to finding solutions that everyone actively supports or at least can live with. This ensures that all opinions, ideas, and concerns are taken into account. By listening closely to its members, the collaborative aims to develop proposals that work for everyone.

Consensus means overwhelming agreement. In addition, it is important that consensus be the product of a good-faith effort to meet the interests of all stakeholders. The key indicator of whether a consensus has been reached is whether **everyone agrees they can live with the final proposal, after every effort has been made to meet any outstanding interests**. Consensus is neither compromise nor unanimity. Consensus aims to go further by weaving together everyone's best ideas and most important concerns – a process that often results in surprising and creative solutions, inspiring both the individual and the group as whole.

Conflict of Interest

We recognize there may be conflict of interest throughout the membership of this collaboration. Conflicts of interest can inhibit open discussions and may result in interested persons taking irrelevant considerations into account or making decisions that are not in the collaborative's best interests. They can also damage the collaborative's reputation if it appears that personal interests or loyalties influence members' decision-making within the collaborative. All members must therefore be aware of the possibility that they, or other members, could be affected by a conflict of interest. We ask new members to sign a conflict of interest policy along with the MOU.

Contact

Want to know more? We would love to tell you more about FSC. Please get in touch with the collaborative: uktrust@globalfundforchildren.org.

Policy to Practice Exchange

The Policy to Practice Exchange offers a holistic solution for funders who want to access high-quality, flexible, and affordable safeguarding expertise. In addition to capacity building and "Ask Anytime" advice services, the Policy to Practice Exchange helps funders streamline their approach through access to a centralized assessment database and a centralized case management service for responding to safeguarding incidents. Every time a funder joins the Policy to Practice Exchange, impact increases: everything we learn is shared with members and income generated is reinvested to support efforts to strengthen safeguarding globally. Services include:

