



Funder Safeguarding Collaborative

Listening · Learning · Practicing Trust

FSC Safeguarding Commitments

The FSC's vision is a world where organizational cultures and practices keep people safe from harm. FSC promotes greater collaboration, listening, and learning among funders and the organizations they support to strengthen safeguarding practices globally.

FSC defines safeguarding as the actions taken to prevent harm, abuse or exploitation and promote the welfare and wellbeing of anyone who comes into contact with the organization. This includes:

- **Promotion:** adopting policies and practices which promote a culture of dignity, respect and safety. This includes addressing behaviours which have the potential to cause any form of harm.
- **Prevention:** proactive steps to prevent all forms of harm, abuse or exploitation connected to the organisation and its operations. This includes challenging the power imbalances and structural inequalities which place groups or individuals at greater risk of harm.
- **Protection:** timely action to address any actual or suspected harm, abuse or exploitation connected to the organisation and its operations. This also includes ensuring relevant agencies are informed of harm, abuse or exploitation occurring outside the organisation.

FSC aims to strengthen safeguarding practices through three mutually reinforcing strategies: we *connect* funders to each other and provide access to resources on best practice; we provide high-quality *support* that is tailored to the needs of grant making organizations; and we act as a conduit for funders to *invest* in initiatives that advance safeguarding globally.

In line with our mission, we are committed to promoting a culture of safety and embedding practices that keep people safe from harm. This document outlines our six core safeguarding commitments and the positive practices which we expect our team to demonstrate in their day-to-day work.

1. **Listening and Responding:** We commit to safeguarding everyone connected with our work and to taking action in response to concerns that compromise our culture of safety.
2. **Learning and Improvement:** We commit to a continual learning and improvement, where we speak openly about challenges and encourage reflection rather than blame.

3. **Safe People:** We commit to ensuring that everyone acting on behalf of FSC is suitable for the role and has the support they need to fulfil their responsibilities to keep people safe.
4. **Mutual Accountability:** The leadership of FSC commit to mutual accountability for safeguarding which balances oversight ('accountability to leadership') with support ('accountability to FSC team')
5. **Promoting Safe Practice:** We commit to promoting safe cultures and organizational practices across our network.
6. **Investing in Safe Organizations:** We commit to ensuring our funded partners have appropriate safeguards in place while avoiding imposing approaches that undermine organizational ownership.

FSC is hosted by Global Fund for Children (GFC) and the FSC Safeguarding Commitments are supported by the procedures and processes contained in the [GFC Safeguarding Policy](#). All members of the FSC Team (employed staff, consultants, contractors and service providers) must comply with GFC's policy whilst also fulfilling FSC Safeguarding Commitments.

While this document is primarily designed to guide the day-to-day practice of the FSC team, our ability to embed a safe culture can only be achieved in collaboration with others. For this reason, our commitments include our approach to promoting safe practice among our Network Members (Commitment Five) and the organisations we fund (Commitment Six). In addition, everyone connected with FSC is made aware and must commit to 'FSC Values in Practice' (Appendix A).

Commitment 1: Listening and Responding

We commit to safeguarding everyone connected with our work and to taking action in response to concerns that compromise our culture of safety.

We believe that everyone has the right to be safe from all forms of harm and abuse. FSC recognises that everyone can be vulnerable to harm and that this vulnerability will vary on depending on individual circumstances (e.g. social and economic status, physical and mental health etc.) and intersecting identities (e.g. gender identity, race, religion, sexuality etc.).

We also recognise that individual safety and wellbeing may be compromised by behaviours that do not fit easily into these traditional categories of abuse and exploitation. Any behaviour which is inconsistent with our values, even if does not reach the threshold of abuse, can compromise the safety and well-being of those connected with our work and may lead to serious harm in the future.

For these reasons, FSC operates a low-level concern approach to safeguarding. This means:

- We encourage anyone connected with our work to 'speak up' if they encounter a behaviours or organizational practices which make them uncomfortable, worried or concerned or if they observe any behaviours which are not consistent with our values.
- Concerns can be raised directly with FSC in the following ways:

- Contacting the FSC Director
(kwalkersimpson@fundersafeguardingcollaborative.org)
- Contacting GFC's global designated safeguard lead via email
(safeguarding@globalfundforchildren.org)
- Making a confidential report through GFC's whistle-blower anonymous line
(GFCsafeguarding@lighthouse-services.com)
- The FSC Director is ultimately responsible for safeguarding and will ensure that appropriate action is taken. Given our low level approach to safeguarding concerns, the response must be proportional to the seriousness of the concern which has been raised.
- If the concern relates to the conduct of the FSC Director, this will be managed by GFC's global designated safeguard lead.
- In addressing the actions of individuals, FSC will take a contextual approach which examines the structural conditions and organizational practices that may have contributed to the concern.
- We will provide feedback to those raising the concern, highlighting the action taken to address the concern as well as explaining how we have attempted to learn and improve organizational practices.
- All concerns, however small, are documented with the action taken and learning relevant to the organisation. This contributes to our commitment to continually learn and improve.

Additional measures are in place to ensure accountability for the FSC response to any allegation of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional), neglect or exploitation.

- GFC's global designated safeguard lead (DSL) will be informed of all allegations of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional), neglect or exploitation and provides additional support and oversight.
- Together, the FSC Director and GFC's global designated safeguard lead will decide what action is required. This will include, but is not limited to:
 - Ensuring that appropriate support is provided to the person affected and that all possible steps are taken to ensure their safety and welfare.
 - Providing support to any witnesses or others who may have been affected.
 - Ensuring that all actions are consistent with local laws, including mandatory reporting legislation.
 - Ensuring that any criminal matters are reported to the police and/or authorities.
 - Liaising fully with investigations by statutory agencies or, where appropriate, initiating an internal investigation.
- Where allegations relate to the conduct of an FSC team member, GFC's global designated safeguard lead will also inform the designated Board member/trustee for safeguarding and the CEO. The staff member may be suspended, pending investigation.

Commitment 2: Learning and Improvement

We commit to continual learning and improvement, where we speak openly about challenges and encourage reflection rather than blame.

In order to create a culture where concerns can be raised openly and without fear, it is important that we proactively seek feedback about our ways of working and use this information as an opportunity to learn and improve. To achieve this:

- We review of 'FSC Safeguarding Commitments' annually in parallel with the review of GFC's safeguarding policy.
- Prior to the annual review of 'FSC Safeguarding Commitments', we seek feedback from the FSC team, our network members and others connected with our work, to identify practices that promote a sense of safety and areas which require improvement.
- The FSC Director produces an anonymised annual report that outlines our progress towards creating a culture of safety. This includes details of the number of concerns that have been reported, any patterns or themes that have emerged, and any actions or improvements that have been initiated.
- The full report is shared internally within the FSC Team, Steering Committee and GFC Global Safeguarding Team to promote reflection, identify additional learning and ensure shared responsibility for continual improvement.
- A summary of the report is shared with FSC Members and a copy published on the FSC website.

Commitment 3: Safe People

We commit to ensuring that everyone acting on behalf of FSC is suitable for the role and has the support they need to fulfil their responsibilities to keep people safe.

We believe that every member of the FSC team makes an active contribution to creating and maintaining a safe culture. We accept that screening for potential offenders is necessary, but do not believe that this is sufficient to ensure safe practice. Instead, we commit to cultivating awareness, sensitivity and positive practices on an ongoing basis.

- Anyone interested in joining the FSC team will be interviewed to assess their suitability for the role, including whether their attitudes and beliefs align with FSC values.
- References will be obtained for all team members and consultants prior to confirming the appointment of new team members.
- Criminal background checks will be completed on any team members who have access to sensitive information or are likely to have direct contact with children and communities as part of their role.
- All new team members receive a copy of the GFC Safeguarding Policy and 'FSC Safeguarding Commitments' and these are discussed during onboarding, with additional training provided within 1 month of joining FSC.
- FSC team members must read and agree to comply with 'FSC Values in Practice' and are asked to reflect on how they demonstrate FSC values in practice as part of their annual performance review.
- We encourage dialogue about safe practice in team meetings, supervision and annual performance reviews. Team members are encouraged to ask questions, raise concerns and initiate changes that improve practice.
- New team members co-facilitate FSC activities with a more experienced team member to promote practical, applied learning on how to approach our work and how we put our values into practice.

Commitment 4: Mutual Accountability

The leadership of FSC commit to mutual accountability for safeguarding which balances oversight ('accountability to leadership') with support ('accountability to FSC team')

We recognise the critical role played by senior leadership in ensuring safeguarding is prioritised and that the FSC team implement 'Our Commitments'. To support this, accountability for safeguarding is integrated into FSC and GFC governance structures.

- 'FSC Safeguarding Commitments' are approved by the GFC's Global Designated Safeguarding Lead and the FSC Steering Committee.
- The FSC Director sits on the GFC Global Safeguarding Team which monitors organizational safeguarding practices and promotes learning.
- There is a designated lead for Safeguarding on the FSC Steering Committee who meets with the FSC Director quarterly to discuss safeguarding across the organization.

While accountability and oversight to leadership is important, a safe culture also requires FSC team members to trust and have confidence in the leadership of the organisation. The FSC Director is accountable to the FSC team and wider network, and is expected to lead by example and provide the support and resources required to ensure a culture of safety.

- Leaders are expected to model a commitment to a safe culture, and this is explicitly included in their 360° annual appraisal.
- Leadership appraisals include feedback from the FSC team and members of the FSC network.
- The Designated Lead for Safeguarding from GFC and the FSC Steering Committee will facilitate listening exercises with the FSC Team to hear about their experiences, ideas and opinions and ensure these inform the overall FSC's approach to safety.
- Feedback is obtained from staff about the time and resources they need to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities and this is reflected in the annual budget.

Commitment 5: Promoting Safe Practice

We commit to promoting safe cultures and organizational practices across our network.

The FSC believes that all funders can make a valuable contribution to keeping people safe. We aim to remove many of the barriers that deter funders from engaging with the safeguarding challenge and actively promote a diverse membership. For this reason, Network Members are not required to have safeguarding policies and procedures in place at the time of joining FSC. However, we do expect members to commit to building safe organizational practices and implementing improvements over time.

- Network members must agree to our core values as a condition of joining FSC. Membership may be revoked if the FSC Steering Committee determines that a member has conducted themselves in a way that is contrary to FSC values.

- When registering for the FSC intranet, FSC webinars and events, FSC members are asked to read and commit to 'FSC Values in Practice' when interacting with others.
- Network members must commitment to taking action to ensure their organization and the organizations they fund protect people from harm. When renewing membership, members are asked to reflect on any changes they have implemented to improve safety across their organization. Members who are unable to demonstrate their commitment to improved practice may not be eligible for future membership.
- FSC members can access advice and resources from FSC to support the development organizational cultures and practices that keep people. However, the responsibility for safeguarding rests within the FSC member organization.

Commitment 6: Investing in Safe Organizations

We commit to ensuring our funded partners have appropriate safeguards in place while avoiding imposing approaches that undermine organizational ownership.

Investment in safeguarding is critical to improving standards. Although FSC is not a traditional grant maker, we do act as a conduit for investments from FSC members and may receive and disperse fund to implement initiatives aimed at strengthening safeguarding globally. At present, FSC is not a legally constituted organization and consequently, all funding is managed by GFC.

GFC takes all reasonable steps to ensure partners receiving grants have the competence to fulfil their obligations safely and have the policies and procedures in place to prevent harm or abuse. However, our approach also reflects FSC's commitment to shifting power and valuing the knowledge and expertise that exists within the organizations we fund.

- Due diligence checks include a review safeguarding policies, procedures, and processes.
- Once funding has been approved, FSC/GFC takes a relational approach to working with partners, engaging in regular dialogue with funded partners to support them in developing robust safeguarding practices and help where they face challenges.
- If funded partners do not have a safeguarding policy in place, FSC/GFC will provide accompaniment to help them develop and document the safe practices which their staff and organization must abide by.
- Where personally identifiable data is shared between GFC and the funding partner, a written data-sharing agreement is developed.
- Any visitors to work funded by FSC, must read and commit to 'FSC Values in Practice' and will receive a briefing on expected conduct prior to any direct contact with partners and/or communities.

Appendix A: FSC Values in Practice

At the heart of FSC are our core values of safety, listening, learning, practicing trust, and shifting power. To ensure that our values are embedded across all areas of our work, everyone connected with FSC will be made aware and must commit to 'FSC Values in Practice'. Any breach could result in the termination of any engagement with FSC.

Safety: We believe that everyone has the right to feel safe. We take action to ensure that our institutions and the organizations we fund protect people from harm.

- I will behave in a manner consistent with FSC values and treat others with dignity, respect and compassion. Abuse, exploitation or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.
- If I become aware of any behaviours or organizational practices which are harmful, compromise safety or are contrary to FSC values, I will inform FSC as soon as possible either by contacting:
 - FSC Director (kwalkersimpson@fundersafeguardingcollaborative.com)
 - GFC's global designated safeguard lead (safeguarding@globalfundforchildren.org).

Listening: We value the expertise of others and welcome the contributions that diverse voices bring to the conversation.

- I will listen to others and be respectful of their experiences and opinions.
- I will contribute to discussions without seeking to dominate or using language that could intimidate or discriminate against others.

Learning: We acknowledge what we don't know, value the knowledge that others bring, and commit to continually learning, adapting, and then learning some more.

- I will contribute my own knowledge and experience whilst recognizing that this may differ from those of others.
- If others raise concern about my words or actions, I will listen and seek to learn and address the concerns that are raised with me.

Practicing trust: We cultivate relationships based on mutual trust and respect. We create spaces where it is safe to ask questions, learn from mistakes, and challenge the status quo.

- I will not post content or use language which is discriminatory, defamatory, obscene, or abusive.
- I respect the boundaries of confidentiality and will not disclose information or resources which have been shared in confidence.

Shifting power: We actively promote a more equitable system that values and supports the power and knowledge within the organizations we fund and the communities they serve.

- I will not discriminate on the grounds of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability or religious beliefs.
- I recognize that my personal history and individual identity will create unconscious biases and commit to increasing my awareness of how this affects my interactions with others.