



# Funder Safeguarding Collaborative

Safer grant-making. Higher impact.

## FSC Safeguarding Commitments

### About FSC

The Funder Safeguarding Collaborative (FSC) is a global network of philanthropic funders who are committed to driving action to strengthen safeguarding. FSC achieves change through generating new knowledge, raising awareness of the role of funders in safeguarding and providing technical support to help funders promote a culture of safeguarding, in their own organisations and the organisations they fund.

### Our Commitment to Safeguarding

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 that are not in line with our values, even if these do not reach the threshold of abuse.
- **Prevention:** taking proactive steps to prevent all forms of harm, abuse or exploitation connected to the organisation and its operations. This includes challenging power imbalances and structural inequalities that place groups or individuals at risk of harm.
- **Protection:** taking timely action to address any actual or suspected harm, abuse or exploitation. This includes referring cases of abuse or exploitation to relevant agencies outside of the organisation.

This document outlines our commitment to safeguarding and the positive practices we expect our team to demonstrate. FSC recognises that anyone can be vulnerable to harm and this will vary depending on context, individual circumstances and intersecting identities. We are committed to safeguarding anyone who comes into contact with FSC, irrespective of age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief.

As a special initiative hosted within Global Fund for Children, our Safeguarding Commitments align with and are supported by the procedures and processes contained in the [GFC Safeguarding Policy](#). All members of the FSC Team (employed staff and consultants) must comply with GFC's policy whilst also fulfilling FSC Safeguarding Commitments.

While our Safeguarding Commitments are 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. Steering Committee members will be expected to comply with FSC Safeguarding Commitments throughout their engagement with FSC. In addition, anyone participating in FSC events and learning spaces will be made aware of FSC's and expected to comply with FSC's Values in Practice (Appendix A).

## Commitment 1: 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.*

### **Recruitment**

- FSC is committed to culturally and contextually relevant safeguarding and will proactively recruit team members who bring diversity of knowledge and experience.
- Anyone interested in joining the FSC team will be interviewed to ensure their suitability for the role and alignment with FSC values.
- At least two professional references are obtained prior to confirming appointment.
- Criminal background checks are completed in line with GFC's Safe Recruitment procedures and will depend on the level of safeguarding risk inherent within the role.

### **Cultivating Awareness**

- We accept that screening for potential offenders is necessary, but do not believe that this is sufficient to ensure safe practice. Instead, we aim to cultivate awareness and positive practices on an ongoing basis.
- All team members must read and adhere to the GFC Safeguarding Policy, FSC's Safeguarding Commitments and Values in Practice upon joining FSC.
- New members of the team receive a briefing on safeguarding within 1 month of joining FSC. All employed staff also attend GFC's Safeguarding Induction Training within 3 months of commencing employment.
- Steering Committee members receive a briefing on safeguarding as part of their onboarding process.
- The FSC team is provided with ongoing learning opportunities through team meetings, participation in FSC training and learning events. FSC will commission external training on specific topics where required.
- 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 put our values into practice.

## Commitment 2: Promoting Safe Practice

*We commit to embedding safeguarding across all our work and promoting strong safeguarding practice among our members.*

### **FSC Learning Events**

- Risk assessments are completed for in-person events or any engagement with children or adults at risk, and to ensure proactive steps are taken to reduce potential risks.
- When planning events, FSC considers potential power dynamics and takes steps to ensure an inclusive space for individuals with differing knowledge, identities, language and cultures.
- Anyone participating in FSC trainings and events is made aware of 'FSC Values in Practice' and expected to adhere to these when interacting with others.
- Boundaries of confidentiality are clarified to allow open and honest discussions. While FSC and participants may share the learning from the discussion, they are prohibited from naming individuals and organisations without consent.

- FSC provides information on how to raise a safeguarding concern in our membership agreements and at the start of FSC events and training.

### Technical Support to Members

- FSC provides space for members to reflect on a broad range of safeguarding issues and consider the different options available for action. However, the responsibility for safeguarding rests within the member organization.
- FSC maintains a confidential record of all discussions which are held in line with GFC's data protection policy and procedures. Access is restricted to the FSC team and GFC's Global Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Members should not disclose any personally identifiable information to FSC when discussing issues related to any individuals or organizations they are working with.
- FSC does not provide legal advice, and the member is responsible for ensuring that its actions are compliant with laws and regulations in any jurisdiction where it operates.
- If FSC believes that the actions or omission of a member could lead to significant harm, this will be escalated as a safeguarding concern in line with the procedures set out in this document.

### FSC Members

- FSC does not require members 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.
- When joining FSC, Members must agree to FSC's Values in Practice. 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.
- Every 2 years, members are asked to reflect on the changes they have made to strengthen safeguarding within their organization. Where barriers or challenges are identified, FSC will work with members to identify and implement strategies to address these.

## Commitment 3: Listening & Responding

*We commit to safeguarding everyone connected with our work and to taking action in response to any concerns that compromise safety and well-being.*

### Reporting

- FSC takes a low-level concern approach to safeguarding. This means that we are committed to identifying and addressing behaviours and practices that are not in line with our values or undermine our culture of safeguarding, even if these do not reach the threshold of abuse.
- We encourage anyone connected with our work to 'speak up' if they encounter behaviours or practices which make them feel uncomfortable, unsafe or that they deem are inconsistent with FSC values.
- Concerns can be raised with:
  - Any member of the FSC team.
  - FSC's Technical Director who acts as FSC's Safeguarding lead  
[kwalkersimpson@fundersafeguardingcollaborative.org](mailto:kwalkersimpson@fundersafeguardingcollaborative.org)
  - GFC's global designated safeguard lead if you are uncomfortable raising your concern with FSC or the concern relates to the conduct of the Technical Director  
[safeguarding@globalfundforchildren.org](mailto:safeguarding@globalfundforchildren.org)

- Whenever a member of the FSC team becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, no matter how small, they must inform the FSC Technical Director within one working day.
- To ensure accountability, FSC's Executive Director and GFC's global designated safeguard lead (GDSDL) will be informed of all safeguarding concerns.
- GFC's designated Board member/trustee for safeguarding and GFC's Co-CEOs will be informed of any allegations of abuse or exploitation against the FSC team.

### **Responding to Concerns**

- The FSC Technical Director is responsible for safeguarding within FSC and will ensure that appropriate action is taken.
- Given FSC's low-level approach to safeguarding concerns, the response must be proportional to the seriousness of the concern which has been raised.
- When addressing lower-level concerns, such as behaviours which do not align with FSC values or breach procedures, FSC will:
  - Speak to the individual involved to clarify expectations and identify potential reasons for the behaviour.
  - Identify steps to prevent similar occurrences in the future. This might include providing further training, guidance or support.
  - Consider any structural conditions and organizational practices that may have contributed to the concern and make changes to FSC's ways of working where indicated.
  - Seek assurance that the individual will address the behaviour and explain the implications if similar concerns emerge in the future.
- When addressing allegations of abuse or exploitation, actions will be decided in collaboration with GFC's Global Designated Safeguarding Lead and will follow GFC's reporting and response procedures. Actions may include, but are not limited to:
  - Ensuring support is provided to the anyone affected and that all possible steps are taken to ensure their safety and welfare.
  - Ensuring that referrals are made to relevant agencies, including the police, local authorities and regulators.
  - Liaising fully with investigations by statutory agencies or, where appropriate, initiating an internal investigation.
  - Where the allegation relates to a member of the FSC team, deciding whether it is necessary to suspend the individual to reduce any further safeguarding risk, pending investigation. Any suspension will be taken in line with GFC procedures.
- All concerns, however small, are documented on FSC's safeguarding record form. This includes a record of all discussions, communications, referrals and decisions. Access to these records is restricted to the FSC Technical Director, FSC Executive Director and the GFC Global Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **Addressing Inaction**

- FSC will provide feedback to anyone raising a concern, highlighting action taken as well as steps to learn and improve organizational practices. However, it may not be possible to provide detailed information in order to maintain the confidentiality of those involved.
- Any concerns that FSC has failed to act, can be raised with FSC Executive Director, GFC's Global Safeguarding Lead or reported to GFC via whistleblowing policy

## Commitment 4: Mutual Accountability

*FSC commits to ensuring mutual accountability for safeguarding which balances oversight ('accountability to leadership') with support ('accountability to FSC team').*

### *Leadership Oversight*

- FSC's Technical Director is the Safeguarding Lead within FSC and is responsible for ensuring safeguarding is embedded across FSC's work.  
[kwalkersimpson@fundersafeguardingcollaborative.org](mailto:kwalkersimpson@fundersafeguardingcollaborative.org)
- Efforts to embed safeguarding are overseen and supported by FSC's Executive Director.  
[sbjorgvinsdottir@fundersafeguardingcollaborative.org](mailto:sbjorgvinsdottir@fundersafeguardingcollaborative.org)
- Ultimate responsibility for safeguarding rests with GFC. GFC's Global Designated Safeguarding Lead provides oversight on behalf of GFC.  
[safeguarding@globalfundforchildren.org](mailto:safeguarding@globalfundforchildren.org)
- FSC's Technical Director meets with GFC's Global Designated Safeguarding Lead bi-annually to review safeguarding and identify areas of learning and improvement.
- On an annual basis, FSC's Technical Director gives a presentation on safeguarding to the FSC Steering Committee. This includes details of any concerns reported, any patterns or themes that have emerged, and any actions taken in response.
- FSC Safeguarding Commitments are reviewed annually and approved by the GFC's Global Designated Safeguarding Lead and the FSC Steering Committee.
- The annual review of FSC's Safeguarding Commitments takes into account any learning from safeguarding concerns, feedback from the FSC team and members, as well as and changes in law, regulation and best practice.

### *Leadership Support*

- FSC Directors are expected to lead by example and actively support safe practice. To ensure accountability, leadership appraisals include 360 feedback from the FSC team.
- FSC conducts annual learning and reflection sessions with individual team members to understand their experience of working with FSC. This includes ensuring that they feel supported and that safe working practices are effective.
- We encourage dialogue about safe practice in team meetings. Team members are encouraged to ask questions, raise concerns and initiate changes to improve practice.
- Resources for safeguarding (training, team development etc) are included in FSC's annual budget

## Appendix A: FSC Values in Practice

Everyone who engages with FSC, including members, will be made aware of 'FSC Values in Practice' and are expected to adhere to them when engaging in FSC-related activities. All breaches will be taken seriously and addressed in line with the procedures set out in FSC's Safeguarding Commitments.

***Champion Safety: We believe everyone has the right to be safe and a duty to take action to prevent harm and promote the wellbeing of others.***

- We treat everyone with dignity and respect and do not engage in any form of abuse, exploitation or harassment.
- We avoid language which is discriminatory, defamatory, abusive or which could cause offense.
- Whenever we become aware of behaviours which are not in line with FSC values, we inform a member of the FSC team or contact:
  - FSC Technical Director [kwalkersimpson@fundersafeguardingcollaborative.com](mailto:kwalkersimpson@fundersafeguardingcollaborative.com)
  - GFC's global designated safeguard lead [safeguarding@globalfundforchildren.org](mailto:safeguarding@globalfundforchildren.org)

***Build Trusting Relationships: We cultivate relationships based on mutual trust and respect, creating inclusive spaces where individuals feel safe to ask questions, learn from mistakes, and improve their practices.***

- We respect difference and do not discriminate on the grounds of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief.
- We respect the courage it takes to express uncertainty or show vulnerability and respond with kindness and compassion.
- We respect the boundaries of confidentiality and do not disclose information or resources which have been shared in confidence.

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

- We are generous in sharing our knowledge and experience but do so without seeking to dominate or exclude others.
- We acknowledge gaps in our knowledge and avoid acting beyond our expertise.
- If concerns are raised about our words or actions, we listen, learn and take action to address any concerns.

***Challenge Power Imbalances: We actively identify and challenge power imbalances and structural inequalities that get in the way of building safer organisations.***

- We acknowledge the unconscious bias created by our personal history and identity and seek to increase our awareness of how this affects our interactions with others.
- We acknowledge the power and privilege we hold in relation to others and are willing to engage in discussion and action to address inequity.
- We speak up when we observe behaviours, practices or systems that discriminate, exclude or oppress others.