

# **Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedures**

**File Reference Number: DI – Serv2**

**Version: 2024**

**Approved by Depaul International Board of Trustees: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

**Lead responsibility for this Policy and Procedure is:**

Depaul International Director of International Programmes

## Index

	<b>Safeguarding children and adults at risk – policy statement</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Depaul International’s approach to safeguarding</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Underpinning legislation, quality standards and frameworks</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Roles and responsibilities</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Data protection, information sharing and confidentiality</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Reporting and managing concerns and allegations</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Safe recruitment and induction</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Capacity building of staff and others</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Safeguarding in communications</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Procurement</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Meeting safeguarding standards in subsidiaries</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Subsidiary reporting of safeguarding incidents to Depaul International</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Depaul International’s regulatory and donor reporting requirements</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>Safe services and programmes</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>14.</b>	<b>Monitoring of policy implementation and policy review</b> .....	<b>28</b>
	<b>Annex 1: Forms, signs and indicators of abuse</b> .....	<b>29</b>
	<b>Annex 2: Responding to disclosures guidelines</b> .....	<b>38</b>
	<b>Annex 3: Depaul International Incident, Safeguarding and Near Miss Report Form</b> .....	<b>39</b>
	<b>Annex 4: Sources of further information, support and specialist guidance</b> .....	<b>43</b>
	<b>Annex 5: Example safeguarding information for visitors</b> .....	<b>46</b>
	<b>Annex 6: Example safeguarding clause to be included in contracts</b> .....	<b>47</b>
	<b>Annex 7: The reporting of safeguarding incidents to Depaul International – further guidance for subsidiaries</b> .....	<b>48</b>
	<b>Annex 8: Serious Incident Notification Form for subsidiaries</b> .....	<b>52</b>

## **Safeguarding children and adults at risk – policy statement**

Depaul International aims to end homelessness through the delivery of high quality services for people who are, or are at risk of, experiencing homelessness across the world.

Depaul International does not deliver services directly; however, Depaul International works closely with subsidiaries that do deliver services, which includes frequent visits to their projects. Child protection and safeguarding children and adults at risk is the responsibility of everyone at Depaul International.

**This policy and procedure outlines processes to enable Depaul International staff (employees, volunteers, and trustees - hereafter referred to as ‘staff’), to safeguard children (aged under 18) and adults at risk across all Depaul locations.**

In particular, we are committed to having appropriate arrangements in place to:

- Respond swiftly to safeguarding concerns, incidents and/or allegations against staff, including clear reporting mechanisms and survivor-centered procedures
- Engage in safe recruitment practices, so we can to the best of our ability ensure only people deemed suitable to work with children and adults at risk are appointed
- Ensure our staff are trained in safeguarding, and can access support by a named Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)
- Apply a safeguarding lens across all areas of Depaul International’s operations, including communications activities and procurement
- Ensure subsidiaries have rigorous safeguarding policies and procedures in place
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored, and that serious safeguarding incidents and incident trends from across the Depaul Group are monitored

This policy applies where a safeguarding concern is suspected or exists, regardless of whether the individual is in receipt of a service from the Depaul Group or not. For example, it is applicable if we learn from a client that a friend or sibling is at risk. Depaul International takes a broad view of safeguarding as responding to any form of harm or abuse – we have measures in place to prevent harm being caused by Depaul to our clients, as well as procedures for raising concerns we may have about harm or abuse which happens in the community.

Children and adults at risk are best safeguarded only when all relevant agencies and individuals accept responsibility and co-operate with each other. Depaul International will work and co-operate fully with other agencies and organisations to ensure the well-being and protection of all children and adults at risk.

As the Group parent, Depaul International is also committed to supporting safeguarding best practice across subsidiaries. Subsidiary policy and procedures are approved, and reviewed on a regular basis, by the local Board of Trustees, and an audit is completed across the Group by Depaul International every 3 years. Additionally, Section 10 and 11 outline core safeguarding measures for Depaul subsidiaries and the reporting requirements of subsidiaries to Depaul International should a serious safeguarding incident occur.

### **Target audience**

This policy provides guidance on safeguarding children and adults at risk, as well as reporting requirements and escalation pathways for:

- Depaul International staff
- Senior management and safeguarding leads of subsidiaries

- Partner agencies working in close collaboration with Depaul International

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to keep the people that Depaul works with safe from harm.

As the Group parent, this policy highlights the responsibilities and measures in place for Depaul International staff and operations, but also our commitment to support subsidiaries to have in place robust safeguarding policies and procedures that enable them to safeguard the welfare of the clients they serve; develop and promote a culture of best practice with regards to client empowerment and holistic safeguarding; and take appropriate action if they are alerted to any safeguarding concerns related to any of their services.

## 1. Depaul International's approach to safeguarding

### 1.1 Guiding principles

#### Preventative:

We uphold the principle that all children and adults at risk have the right to grow up and live in a safe environment and be protected from all forms of harm and abuse.

We do this by ensuring that Depaul International and, where possible, all Depaul subsidiaries have rigorous safeguarding measures in place. Further detail on the application of Depaul International policy to subsidiaries can be found in Section 10, this includes:

- Having policies on safeguarding children and adults at risk
- Having safeguarding arrangements that place the welfare of the child or adult at risk at the centre of the process
- Ensuring staff are trained in safeguarding including the signs and indicators of harm and abuse, and are specifically aware of their safeguarding responsibilities in relation to their role

#### Responsive and proactive

- Being proactive and responding swiftly and appropriately when a safeguarding concern arises, and supporting any individuals who raise or disclose a concern
- Sharing information on progress with implementing safeguarding measures and learning on case trends and issues within the Depaul Group
- Taking prompt action and, as necessary, disciplinary action where we have identified acts of negligence, failure to report, failing to report through omission or intentionally not following the safeguarding policy and procedures<sup>1</sup>.
- Ensuring that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- Ensuring our policy and procedures are annually reviewed, comply with legislation and are aligned with best practice

#### Strengths-based

Depaul International takes the view that a strengths-based (and survivor-centred) approach should be utilised when supporting someone who has experienced, or is at risk of experiencing, harm or abuse. Should such a situation arise for Depaul International, this means:

- Involving the person and a relevant representative (such as their key worker or an independent advocate) at all stages;
- Focusing on and ensuring we record the outcomes they want;
- Empowering them so they feel in control;
- Focusing on their strengths and capabilities;
- Involving their community support networks;
- Being person NOT process led;
- Listening to their views regarding risk mitigation; and,

---

<sup>1</sup> This includes taking a "zero tolerance" approach to instances of abuse perpetrated by Depaul staff or representatives, the international sector commitment to preventing and reducing harm caused to communities by organisations.

- Documenting their experiences and their views in their words wherever possible.

## 1.2 Key definitions and terminology

### Safeguarding

The term safeguarding originates in the UK where it means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect<sup>2</sup>.

For Depaul International, safeguarding:

- Includes measures to prevent or minimise the potential of any harm or abuse occurring to those we work and have contact with;
- Involves the timely reporting of concerns by raising safeguarding alerts, responding swiftly and appropriately to safeguarding incidents, and providing support to individuals who raise or disclose a concern;
- Refers to both harm and abuse in the lives of those we work with, as well as possible harm caused by Depaul staff and projects.

In the international sector organisations use the term safeguarding specifically to refer to preventing and responding to harm caused by the organisation, or the people working in the organisation, to the people whom the organisation serves. As an organisation based in the UK but also working within a wider international context, Depaul International's approach to safeguarding is informed by both the UK view of safeguarding and international sector standards.

Therefore, Depaul's safeguarding policy and measures are focused both on preventing harm caused by the organisation to those we work with, as well as raising concerns we may have about harm or abuse in their lives. Harm that may be experienced by staff (for example, bullying and harassment) is covered by separate workplace policies.

Internationally, some policies and measures to safeguard those we work with may be referred to as 'protection'. For many international agencies, safeguarding is viewed as distinct from protection work in that the former is primarily concerned with preventing harm caused by the organisation, the latter with changing legislation, systems or services which support those experiencing harm within families and communities. Note also that in the UK, the term "protection" is used to describe a statutory responsibility in response to individual safeguarding cases where a risk of harm has been identified. Depaul International regards all of these aspects of reducing the risk of or responding to harm to children and adults at risk as relevant to our view of what constitutes "safeguarding".

### Child

A person who is not yet 18 years of age. The age of the child at 18 years is regardless of age of legal adulthood in different legal jurisdictions.

### Child abuse

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Children is defined<sup>3</sup> for the purposes of this guidance as:

- Protecting from maltreatment;

---

<sup>2</sup> NHS (2011) 'What is Safeguarding? Easy Read'

<sup>3</sup> UK Department for Education, Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018

- Preventing impairment of health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

UK child protection practice uses 'harm' and 'significant harm' to determine severity of child abuse and required statutory responses.

'Harm':

- Maltreatment
- The impairment of development and/or an avoidable deterioration in physical and mental health; and
- Conduct that appropriates or adversely affects rights or interests

'Significant Harm':

- The child's life is, or could be, under threat, for example due to neglect or physical abuse;
- There is, or could be, a serious, chronic or long-lasting impact on the child's health/ physical/ emotional/ psychological wellbeing; and,
- The child has little or no choice over vital aspects of their life, environment or financial affairs.

### Adult at risk

Depaul International's approach to safeguarding adults is informed by the Care Act 2014, meaning any person aged 18 years and over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, age, or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation. An adult at risk would also include incarcerated adults.

Given the nature of our work and the likelihood of exploitation and/or abuse increasing when individuals are in a vulnerable situation and where unequal power dynamics exist, any adult with whom Depaul works are considered as potentially at risk of harm, and, therefore, provisions of this policy would apply to Depaul's interaction with them.

### Adult abuse

There is not such a clear definition of Adult Abuse in UK legislation as there is for children. However, Adult Abuse is frequently defined as mistreatment by any other person or persons that violates a person's human and civil rights. The abuse can vary from treating someone with disrespect in a way which significantly affects the person's quality of life, to causing actual physical and emotional suffering (see 1.3, below).

The UK Department of Health Statutory Guidance Notes which accompany the Care Act state that organisations should not *'limit their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, as they can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual case should always be considered. Exploitation, in particular, is a common theme'*.

### Safeguarding concern/incident

Any situation where a child or adult at risk has, is, or is at risk of experiencing harm or abuse. This may include observations, information shared by third parties about a client, or disclosures made by children and adults at risk.

### Allegation

A suspicion or allegation that a safeguarding incident has occurred involving a staff member, volunteer or trustee as a perpetrator of abuse, or may be at risk of occurring (see 5.3).

### Disclosure

The process by which someone starts to share their experience of harm or abuse with others. This may take place over a long period of time rather than a one-off act. Disclosures may be made directly (making a specific statement about something that has happened) or indirectly (making an ambiguous verbal statement that suggests something is wrong). Disclosures may also be made behaviourally or non-verbally.

### Survivor/victim

The term 'survivor' refers to the person who it is alleged has been the subject of abuse or exploitation. The term 'survivor' implies strength and resilience. 'Victim' is used to mean the victim of an alleged perpetrator's actions. However, this is not intended to negate the dignity and agency of an individual.

## 1.3 Forms of abuse

Abuse can take many forms and it may be regarded not only as the commission or omission of an act, but also as the threat or risk of such. If a child or adult at risk is led to believe that they will be abused this is, in effect, the equivalent of the abuse taking place.

The Care Act sets out 10 forms of abuse which are listed below:

- Physical
- Psychological
- Financial or material
- Sexual
- Neglect or Acts of Omission
- Organisational
- Discriminatory
- Modern Slavery
- Domestic Abuse
- Self-Neglect

Note that in the international aid and development sectors, sexual abuse and exploitation of children and adults at risk by an organisation's staff is a form of abuse of particular concern.

In addition to the 10 forms of abuse arising from the Care Act, the **Multi Agency (Pan London) Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures** state the following may constitute a crime and should therefore be reported:

- Hate Crime
- Mate Crime
- Restraint
- Radicalisation

For more information on each of these forms of abuse, please refer to Annex 1.



## 1.4 Risk management

Effectively managing risks of harm (or potential harm) is integral to Depaul International's approach to safeguarding children and adults at risk. Depaul International must be alert to all potential safeguarding risks, and take reasonable steps to mitigate against these. In its role as Group parent, risk management is relevant in two main ways – both organisationally within Depaul International, but also in regard to its approach to supporting subsidiaries.

Depaul International maintains an organisational safeguarding risk assessment, which outlines the key areas of risk in relation to safeguarding across the organisation. The risk assessment details the strategies for removing or mitigating each risk, and the steps to be taken in the event of an incident occurring. This will be updated as required (for example, if a new safeguarding risk is identified in Depaul International's work), but will also go through a formal review annually alongside the safeguarding policy, and signed off by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Safeguarding risks are also listed in any risk register(s) relevant to Depaul International. In its role as Group parent, Depaul International's risk management also includes an oversight of safeguarding standards at subsidiaries. To assess these, Depaul International carries out a safeguarding audit with subsidiaries every 3 years, and has incident reporting mechanisms in place relating to safeguarding incidents at subsidiaries (see Section 11 for details).

As the provider of direct services to clients, Depaul subsidiaries are continually engaging in risk management – for example, by ensuring that risks arising from the delivery of services are managed, by supporting clients to understand and manage the risk of harm or abuse in their lives, or by managing the possible risks of harm/abuse to clients from subsidiary staff. Where needed or requested, Depaul International will provide subsidiaries with support to ensure that they have effective safeguarding risk management procedures in place.

## 2. Underpinning legislation, quality standards and frameworks

### 2.1. National and international legislation and standards applicable to Depaul International

Depaul International is a UK-based charity that also has an international reach through the operations of subsidiary charities in various countries. This means that Depaul International must operate within both domestic and international frameworks, with respect to relevant legislation and best-practice guidelines. Depaul International commits to meeting the highest standards relating to safeguarding in not only its internal operations, but also via its leadership of the Depaul subsidiary charities.

Depaul International will comply with all relevant domestic legislation and statutory guidance to safeguard children and adults at risk. This policy takes into account:

- ['Working Together 2018'](#),
- ['The Care Act 2014'](#),
- ['Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015'](#)
- ['Mental Capacity Act 2005'](#).
- This policy should be applied alongside other relevant legislation<sup>4</sup>, as well as local safeguarding policies and processes.

---

<sup>4</sup> Including the: Children Act 1989; Children Act 2004; Sexual Offences Act 2003; Mental Capacity Amendment Act 2019; Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation; Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Outlined below are the key pieces of relevant international legislation and quality frameworks which Depaul International’s approach to safeguarding are in alignment with. While this is not an exhaustive list, the tables outline those which we view as central in guiding Depaul International’s safeguarding culture and setting out the fundamental rights that the communities we work with can expect us to uphold.

<p><b>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</b></p>	<p>The UDHR sets out that all people have fundamental rights that must be observed and upheld internationally – these rights recognise their dignity, worth and freedom as human beings. It contains 30 articles including the rights to life, liberty, and privacy. Everyone has the right to a standard of living which is adequate for their health and wellbeing. Rights to freedom from discrimination, slavery, and cruel or degrading treatment are also outlined in the Declaration.</p>
<p><b>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</b></p>	<p>The UNCRC sets out the specific rights of all children, which must be observed and upheld internationally. It contains 54 articles including the right to life, and for a child to develop their full potential. Children also have the right to an adequate standard of living, and protection from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Children also have the right for their views to be respected.</p>

The following are considered the international standards which contribute to safeguarding children and adults at risk.

<p><b>Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability</b></p>	<p>The CHS sets out nine commitments that organisations should make to communities affected by crises, or in situations of vulnerability, and have been adopted by a wide variety of organisations across the humanitarian and international development sectors. For example, communities should not be negatively affected as a result of receiving humanitarian action. Communities should also be supported to know their rights, and complaints mechanisms should be accessible. Other commitments include key aspects of safeguarding such as procedures for reporting concerns, and the vetting and training of an organisation’s staff and volunteers.</p>
<p><b>Inter-Agency Standing Committee Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse</b></p>	<p>This standard requires sexual exploitation and abuse of children and adults at risk by an organisation’s staff and associates to be treated as gross misconduct, with the potential for dismissal. It includes prohibiting staff paying for sex or exchanging goods for sex, prohibits sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18, prohibits relationships with beneficiaries or partners that would be considered exploitative, obliges staff to report concerns and leadership and management to create a culture which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse.</p>
<p><b>Keeping Children Safe’s International Child Safeguarding Standards</b></p>	<p>KCS outlined these standards to help organisations meet their responsibilities in relation to UNCRC. The standards have been adopted by a wide variety of organisations working with children. There are four core areas, covering: the scope and content of safeguarding policies; the roles and responsibilities of staff; how safeguarding procedures are applied across the organisation; and accountability mechanisms.</p>

Please note that some of the resources referenced above were developed in the context of the humanitarian and/or international development sectors. Although this differs from the context of homelessness services that characterises the majority of the Depaul Group's work, we believe that the high standards for charities operating internationally which are outlined in these frameworks can and should underpin Depaul International's approach to safeguarding. Depaul International seeks to always uphold the "Do No Harm" principle when working in all contexts and with all communities. In practice, this could mean supporting Depaul subsidiaries to take preventative measures such as risk assessing projects and/or considering the impact of our services on the wider communities in which we work, and via the monitoring of Depaul Group safeguarding incidents.

Although not all Depaul subsidiaries nor Depaul International work directly with children, all could potentially encounter safeguarding issues in relation to children throughout the course of their work. Therefore, frameworks with a child safeguarding focus are also referred to above.

## 2.2 National legislation for each Depaul subsidiary

It is the responsibility of each Depaul subsidiary to ensure their local safeguarding policies and associated procedures align with any relevant local legislation (including employment legislation), as well as this overarching Depaul International policy. Where there is a conflict between legislation and the standards set out in this safeguarding policy, advice should be sought from local safeguarding and legislation experts about the appropriate measures to be implemented. Where requested or a need is identified, Depaul International can provide additional support to subsidiaries in understanding their legal obligations and their local implementation.

## 2.3 The role of the Depaul Group Values

The Depaul Group's shared values are central to every aspect of our work, including our commitments to safeguarding.

<b>We believe in rights and responsibilities</b>	Depaul believes that people have fundamental rights as humans and within the law. These rights must be upheld and safeguarded. Our approach to safeguarding our clients is guided by their rights and our responsibilities for upholding these.
<b>We put our words into action</b>	What we do matters more than what we say. Having clear safeguarding policy and procedures is important, but ensuring that these are put into practice is essential. Depaul is committed to listening to clients, volunteers and staff and acting on their ideas, a crucial aspect of an effective safeguarding culture.
<b>We celebrate the potential in people</b>	Depaul works to empower people affected by homelessness to make decisions, set goals, take risks and learn from their mistakes. Treating people with respect and empowering them to take ownership of their lives guides our approach to safeguarding. Additionally, our staff and volunteers are vital in achieving our mission – we are committed to developing their skills, so that they can carry out their roles safely and competently.
<b>We take a wider role in civil society</b>	Depaul works in partnership with other agencies to achieve the best possible outcomes for people affected by homelessness. Effective partnership working and inspiring

	best practice ultimately reduces the risk of harm to those we work with. Depaul also believes in justice for all through influencing structural change in society. Through effective safeguarding practice, we can support people to enjoy the fundamental rights afforded to them.
--	---

### 3 Roles and responsibilities

If you have a concern, seek immediate advice from the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Do not think: What happens if I am wrong?

**Think:** What happens if I am right?

Remember: We report concerns, NOT certainties.

You do NOT need evidence to raise a concern.

#### Professional Curiosity

Everyone must demonstrate Professional Curiosity at all times. Professional curiosity is a combination of looking, listening, asking direct questions, following up, checking out and reflecting on information received. It means:

- not taking a single source of information and/or just one piece of information and accepting it at face value; and,
- testing out your professional assumptions. If, for example, a client says 'I am fine' but your observations lead you to believe that they may not be, then gently probe some more. If you remain concerned after this, raise your concern with your manager, ask for time to reflect and unpick why you feel as you do.

Depaul International does not provide direct services to children or adults at risk. However, Depaul International staff frequently visit services and as such, are highly likely to come into contact with people Depaul subsidiaries are supporting. Staff also work closely with colleagues across the Group, and may become aware of a safeguarding concern through other staff members.

It is therefore crucial that all Depaul International staff are aware of this safeguarding policy and their roles and responsibilities. Failure to comply with this policy may be treated as misconduct and dealt with under Depaul International's disciplinary procedures.

#### All staff will:

- Ensure that their own practice is in line with the principles of safeguarding and conduct themselves as per the **Code of Conduct**, including (but not limited to):
  - Treating clients with dignity and respect
  - Having professional relationships with clients – unofficial contact or any form of sexual relationship is not permitted
  - A commitment to ensuring equality and inclusion
  - Maintaining appropriate confidentiality
- Be alert to signs and indicators that someone may be at risk of, or experiencing abuse or neglect
- Report any safeguarding concern to the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible, and within 24 hours

- If required in the event of a safeguarding incident or concern, complete a clear, factual and comprehensive Incident, Safeguarding and Near Miss form (ISN, Annex 3)
- Promote awareness of abuse and providing support and guidance to the adults, young people and children Depaul works with, within the scope of their role
- Engage openly and fully in training, personal development and reflective practice
- Maintain familiarity with this policy, re-reading from time to time as appropriate
- Avoid lone working with clients when visiting subsidiaries

#### **Management will:**

- Create and promote a safeguarding culture where employees feel able to raise concerns without fear of retribution
- Set positive examples on and off duty to promote the safeguarding policy
- Integrate safeguarding requirements into the systems and processes, programmes and projects they are responsible for
- Monitor that their teams, as well as those with whom the organisation has relationships, are aware of Depaul policies on the prevention and reporting of, and response to, harm and abuse. This includes the communities whom we serve
- Ensure that the DSO is supported to implement safeguarding in their area of responsibility, including training, monitoring and follow-up of the implementation of the safeguarding policy
- Include discussions on safeguarding and monitoring the implementation of the safeguarding policy in their team meetings and internal and external management reports, as appropriate or required
- If entering into any formal agreement with a partner, liaise with the DSO to agree what proportionate safeguarding measures should be attached to the agreement

#### **The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) will:**

- Induct staff in the safeguarding policy
- Support and advise the Depaul International team regarding safeguarding matters, and work with the team to create a learning culture around safeguarding
- Receive and record information regarding safeguarding concerns, maintaining clear and comprehensive records and completing clear, factual and comprehensive Incident, Safeguarding and Near Miss forms (ISN, Annex 3)
- Receive Incident, Safeguarding and Near Miss (ISN) Reports from other team members for sign off and processing
- Be the first contact point for any reports of serious safeguarding incidents in Depaul subsidiaries, as outlined in Section 11
- Ensure that where a safeguarding concern is raised by anyone in regards to local operations, the concern is recorded and processed in line with local safeguarding policies and procedures
- Lead/participate fully and with candor during safeguarding enquiries/investigations
- Ensure all cases are managed in accordance with this policy and good practice guidance on case management and investigation, including assessing received information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information and establishing the facts regarding the concern(s) as appropriate
- Escalate to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or, in their absence, the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding or the Chair, any serious incidents or concerns that are raised that could cause reputational risk
- Liaise with external professionals as appropriate
- Ensure the individual raising the concern, and the child/adult at risk are supported and have been able to access survivor support services

- Take the lead role in investigating allegations against a Depaul International member of staff or volunteer
- Ensure that the statutory protection agencies have been consulted and informed where appropriate, including any necessary formal referral within any timeframe set out by the relevant Local Safeguarding Board
- Oversee safeguarding within Depaul International and ensure Depaul International's strategies and policies in relation to safeguarding are relevant and effective
- Support subsidiary boards and management to have an effective Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy in place, and oversee Depaul International's support to subsidiaries to develop safeguarding best practice
- Promote the need for each subsidiary to have a Designated Lead for Safeguarding, and work closely with them to oversee Group Safeguarding reporting and the effective implementation of policies and procedures
- Provide advice and guidance, raise awareness and promote best practice in safeguarding across the Depaul Group
- Ensure a Group Safeguarding Audit is undertaken every 3 years to assess adherence to Depaul Group Minimum Standards and safeguarding best practice, and that any risks identified are addressed and reported to the Depaul International board and subsidiary boards as appropriate
- Ensure that Depaul International keeps abreast of best practice in the sector and legislative changes

The DSO is Mark Robinson (Director of International Programmes), or in their absence, Matthew Carter (Group Chief Executive).

To raise a safeguarding concern it is best to contact the DSO by telephone. They can also be contacted about any safeguarding-related matters or queries via email at: [safeguarding@depaulinternational.org](mailto:safeguarding@depaulinternational.org)

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will:**

- Oversee the role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Take the lead role in investigating allegations against a Depaul International member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- Be available for consultation and advice
- Work with the Trustees to manage threats to reputational risk arising from a safeguarding issue
- Advise the Senior Leadership Team and Board regarding safeguarding in relation to serious incidents and make recommendations to the Company Secretary when incidents are reportable to the Charity Commission and external regulators

The DSL is Matthew Carter (Group Chief Executive), or in their absence, Rhea Tariq (Trustee responsible for Safeguarding).

**The Group Finance and Resources Director will:**

- Ensure safe and effective recruitment practices are in place
- Ensure incidents identified as reportable are reported to the Charity Commission and other regulators as identified, as delegated by Trustees, and hold a record of these
- Advise on the disciplinary policy including suspension if an allegation of abuse is made concerning a Depaul International member of staff
- Ensure Depaul International's insurers are notified if there is an allegation of abuse concerning a Depaul International member of staff

### **The Trustees will:**

- Fulfil the Charity Commissions expectations around duty of care, ensuring Depaul International has taken necessary steps to safeguard and take responsibility for children and adults at risk, acting in their best interests and ensuring all reasonable steps are taken to prevent any harm to them
- Oversee, and manage within the Board remit, the assessment of the risks that arise from the charity's activities and operations involving children and adults at risk
- Ensure that Depaul International has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place
- Monitor organisational performance to ensure that safeguards are being effectively implemented in practice, for example reviewing the annual safeguarding report and challenging as appropriate
- Ensure reportable incidents are made to the Charity Commission
- Review case analyses, trends and issues to determine whether organisational changes are required to strengthen prevention and reporting/response measures
- Appoint a Designated Trustee Responsible for Safeguarding every 3 years, who will oversee the role of the Depaul International Designated Safeguarding Officer and Lead and ensure Depaul International's strategies and policies in relation to safeguarding are relevant and effective.

NB The Trustee Safeguarding Lead is Rhea Tariq

## **4 Data protection, information sharing and confidentiality**

Depaul International must protect any personal data of children and adults at risk, by processing and storing this in line with Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR), and Depaul International's Data Protection and Confidentiality policy. If Depaul International is made aware of a safeguarding concern, it is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process of acting upon this.

*There is no such thing as complete confidentiality.*

*Information given to a Depaul International staff member, volunteer or representative belongs to Depaul International, NOT to the individual that received it. If clients raise a safeguarding concern with Depaul International directly, they must be advised of this. All concerns must be relayed to the DSO and an incident report form completed as required.*

*Remember: we have a legal duty to report any concerns in relation to a colleague's actions that might be considered abusive, unethical or unboundaried.*

Depaul International follows the commitments below, in line with good safeguarding practice and its intersection with data protection:

- Information relating to a safeguarding concern and subsequent management of the concern should be kept securely at all times, including being accessible only to authorised individuals
- Any external sharing of information (i.e. outside of Depaul International) will only be carried out on a need-to-know basis, if required as an appropriate response to a safeguarding concern (see further guidelines about external sharing of information in 5.1 below)

- Depaul International promotes compliance to the GDPR and best practice in data protection across the Group, regarding its importance in relation to safeguarding

## 5 Reporting and managing concerns and allegations

It is essential that action is taken quickly – avoiding unnecessary delays – and professionally regarding all safeguarding concerns and incidents, prioritising the safety and wellbeing of the person(s) affected. Although Depaul International does not deliver services directly, there may be circumstances in the course of our work where we are made aware of the risk of harm or abuse to an adult at risk or a child, which necessitates a response from Depaul International. This could include (but is not limited to) situations in which a safeguarding concern is observed on a visit to a Depaul subsidiary, or if a client from a subsidiary contacts Depaul International to make an allegation against a staff member.

All Depaul International staff should be confident in the steps to be taken if they become aware of a potential safeguarding concern. If staff members become aware of such a concern during a visit to a subsidiary, they should first inform an appropriate local contact (such as a service manager, local safeguarding lead, CEO etc.) unless in exceptional circumstances (for instance – if the concern involves a staff member with senior leadership responsibility). If staff are unsure if a situation constitutes a safeguarding concern and there is no urgent risk of harm, staff can contact Depaul International's DSO first for advice. Staff should also write a factual account of the situation and, if not already done, inform the DSO (or in their absence, the DSL) as soon as is reasonably practical (and within 24 hours). The DSO will provide advice on further steps. If a disclosure is made directly to a staff member, they should follow the responding to disclosure guidelines in Annex 2 to ensure that the person is listened to and treated with respect.

If there is an urgent, serious risk of harm presented by the situation, then in the first instance the relevant local emergency services should be called, working closely as necessary with local subsidiary staff to manage the unfolding incident, before informing the DSO. Any instructions given by the emergency services must be followed.

Generally, safeguarding concerns taking place within a subsidiary will be managed under the safeguarding policies and procedures of that subsidiary. If the situation requires any further involvement from Depaul International, the DSO will lead on any follow-up action and contact with the subsidiary. Decisions about who else should be informed about the concern will be made on a need-to-know basis, including any internal and/or external reporting. If requested, all staff must comply with any safeguarding-related investigations (both internal and external) as required – for example, by making available any documentary evidence or other information necessary for the completion of the investigation.

### 5.1 External sharing of safeguarding concerns

As Depaul International does not provide direct services, it is unlikely that situations will occur in which Depaul International is required to share identifiable information relating to a child or adult at risk outside of the organisation. This would usually be within the remit of the individual subsidiary concerned if it related to a client, in line with their local policies and procedures.

However, if such a situation did arise for Depaul International (for example, a subsidiary's client contacts Depaul International directly and informs Depaul International of a serious, urgent risk of harm to themselves or others), external sharing of information containing identifiable information may be required. The guidance below outlines some circumstances in which this may be an appropriate measure to take.



Where possible, consent to share externally should be sought from the client – however, if the person is under 18 our safeguarding responsibilities mean we have to do so even if consent is not given. An adult at risk's legal right to consent marks a key distinction between approaches in safeguarding someone over 18 and safeguarding children. An adult at risk's wishes should be respected wherever possible, but their right to make choices about their own safety must be balanced with the rights of others to be safe.

Circumstances when external reporting may be required, even if consent is not given:

- when there is reason to believe that the person lacks capacity to give consent (the DSO should be consulted in this instance)
- when there is a possibility that any harm could occur to anyone else
- when it is in the vital interest of the individual to do so (they will experience significant life-threatening detriment or harm if we do not do so)
- when the alleged abuser is another client
- when a Depaul worker or other professional is implicated in the abuse
- for the prevention, detection and prosecution of a crime
- where a serious crime has been committed: The Department of Health offers the following guidance on what counts as serious crime: 'murder, manslaughter, rape, treason, kidnapping, Child Abuse or other cases where individuals have suffered serious harm'
- if Depaul is required to do so by a court order
- serious harm to the security of the state or to public order and crimes that involve substantial financial gain and loss will generally fall within this category
- the Terrorism Act 2000 makes it a criminal offence for a person to fail to disclose, without reasonable excuse, any information which he either knows or believes might help prevent another person carrying out an act of terrorism or might help in bringing a terrorist to justice in the UK
- where there is solid reason to believe that, despite capacity, the level of coercion, exploitation, manipulation or some other element of a power imbalance is so high that the person cannot freely give or withhold consent; such a decision should only be made in consultation with the DSO.

The reporting of serious safeguarding incidents with identifying information about clients removed (for example, notifying donors) is covered in Section 12.

## **5.2 Recording**

Full details of a safeguarding concern must be recorded in Depaul International's Safeguarding Log, and in an incident report form (see Annex 3) if required, within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident or concern. The completion and maintenance of these records is overseen by the DSO and stored securely, accessible only to authorised persons, in line with the Data Protection policy. All Depaul International staff are expected to observe our policy commitments on data protection and confidentiality. Disciplinary action may be taken against anyone who knowingly shares confidential information about a case inappropriately.

Where appropriate, the person raising a concern (or allegation – see below) will be kept updated about the progress of the investigation, unless the situation means that we must respect the privacy of affected people.

Information from the Safeguarding Log (with identifying data removed) is used to generate Board reports as needed for oversight of safeguarding trends and safeguarding risks which are relevant to Depaul International.

### **5.3 Allegations against a Depaul staff member, volunteer or partner**

**Anyone who becomes aware of any concern or allegation that could indicate abuse by a staff member (at Depaul International or a subsidiary) must report it to the DSO.** Reports will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. Investigations will be led by Depaul International's DSO or the equivalent DSO at a subsidiary, as required. Depaul International acknowledges that this can be a distressing and stressful situation for all involved, and will support all parties involved throughout the process. Depending on the nature of an allegation, it will be addressed either in accordance with this procedure or by the equivalent safeguarding policies and procedures in place at subsidiaries. If requested, Depaul International can offer support to subsidiaries to carry out a safeguarding investigation and/or review the case.

All staff raising concerns or making a disclosure, in good faith, about a colleague will be fully supported and protected in line with the Whistleblowing policy. Note that the Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998) does not apply to volunteers (including trustees).

Such concerns might arise if a staff member:

- Behaves in a way that has harmed or may harm a child or adult at risk;
- Commits a criminal offence against or related to a child or adult at risk; or
- Behaves towards a child or adult at risk in a way that indicates s/he may be unsuitable to work with these groups.

Primary consideration must be given to:

- Supporting the child or adult at risk or the person making the allegation and, if necessary, reaching a decision about suspension and disciplinary action being taken. In such cases suspension will be used as a neutral act which is designed both to protect the child or adult at risk and staff member.

#### **5.3.1 Allegations against a Depaul International staff member, volunteer or partner**

Where the safeguarding concern or incident directly involves a Depaul International staff member, volunteer or partner, the DSO will process the concern, involving relevant internal and external parties. Depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern or incident, this may involve Human Resources, local CEOs/Directors, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the police and other relevant local authorities. This will involve an assessment of whether the allegation threshold is criminal, constitutes abuse (including negligence), or contravenes Depaul International's Code of Conduct policy. The DSO will comply with any instructions given by police or other statutory authorities in the course of an investigation.

If a statutory investigation results in no further action, Depaul International reserves the right to address the issue through its internal procedures. Depending on the outcome, findings of serious misconduct will be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and any professional body the staff member may belong to.

Where a staff member leaves prior to the conclusion of an investigation relating to an allegation, the investigation must still be completed (if necessary, in their absence). Findings will be recorded on their personnel file and referred to the DBS if appropriate. Detailed information about a case will be confined to the DSO and DSL (if not involved in the allegations) and other relevant external parties.

The staff member against whom allegations are made will be:

- Given copies of this policy and procedure;
- kept informed throughout the process as appropriate;
- and reminded of Depaul UK's Employee Assistance Helpline that is also available to Depaul International staff.

### **5.3.2 Allegations/suspicious concerning a member of the Depaul International Senior Leadership Team**

If the allegation concerns a member of Depaul International's Senior Management Team (including the DSO), the matter should be escalated to the DSL (the Group Chief Executive).

### **5.3.3 Allegations/suspicious concerning the DSL**

If the allegation concerns the DSL, the matter should be escalated to the Trustee Safeguarding Lead or the Chair.

## **6 Safe recruitment and induction**

Through safe recruitment practices, Depaul International will to the best of our ability ensure only people deemed suitable work with children and adults at risk are appointed.

Depaul International will:

- Take up references from at least 2 previous employers before a formal job offer is made
- Ensure employment offers are conditional on a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, and that all staff are re-checked every 3 years as a minimum standard
- Request confidential disclosure of convictions as part of the recruitment process, including when recruiting staff from overseas where a DBS check is not possible
- Reflect safeguarding commitments and responsibilities in job adverts, role descriptions and terms of reference as applicable
- For relevant roles, ensure our selection processes include rigorous assessments, which test candidates understanding and experience of implementing safeguarding practices

Upon appointment, Depaul International will:

- Ensure new staff have read and understood the safeguarding policy and understand their responsibilities
- Ensure staff read and sign Depaul International's Code of Conduct
- Provide all staff with safeguarding training

## **7 Capacity building of staff and others**

In order to meet our organisational safeguarding commitments, Depaul International must ensure that all staff are fully informed about the requirements of this safeguarding policy and the specific requirements of their role. Everybody has a part to play in the prevention of harm and abuse, which includes being clear about their safeguarding responsibilities, and how safeguarding policy commitments apply in practice.

## **7.1 Induction and training**

All staff are required to read this safeguarding policy, Depaul International's Code of Conduct policy, and confirm their understanding of these expectations in writing (as well as other key Depaul International policies). The commitments outlined in these policies will be covered as part of induction.

All staff (including any volunteers in roles involving contact with clients, adults at risk and/or those under 18) are required to attend safeguarding training, including:

- A full-day course accessed via Depaul UK which gives an overview and practical introduction to safeguarding in a UK context, refreshed every 3 years as a minimum
- An internally-delivered safeguarding briefing, which outlines Depaul International's specific safeguarding responsibilities in its role as the Depaul Group parent, and with regard to the scope of its operation within both international and UK contexts. This session also focuses on the practical requirements of this policy which apply to Depaul International staff.

Trustees are required to attend trustee-specific safeguarding training which outlines the safeguarding responsibilities to be undertaken as members of the Board, refreshed every 3 years as a minimum.

For any other volunteers that do not include contact with clients, adults at risk and/or those under 18 as part of their role, safeguarding will be covered as part of their mandatory induction.

If an additional training need is identified for any Depaul International team member(s) – for example, based on the monitoring of new or changing safeguarding risks which are relevant to Depaul International's work, or regarding related processes such as the handling of complaints – further training will be arranged and provided as required.

## **7.2 Ongoing learning and support**

On an ongoing basis, staff will be regularly reminded that they can contact the DSO to:

- Discuss any concerns regarding safeguarding (no matter how slight);
- Request additional support regarding safeguarding;
- And/or clarify their specific safeguarding responsibilities.

Annex 4 also contains a list of local, national and international organisations which can be referred to for specialist information, support and advice regarding safeguarding. How these are used depends on the circumstances and the individual role of a staff member, but could include: informing the safeguarding measures in programme design if supporting a subsidiary with a funding bid; to aid the DSO in handling a complex safeguarding incident that Depaul International has been informed of; or in responding to a general request from a subsidiary for best practice resources in a specific area of safeguarding.

If a staff member needs to report or deal with a safeguarding issue, the procedures outlined in Section 5 must be followed in the first instance. In recognition that this can be a difficult experience for staff, supervisions provide an additional opportunity to debrief and reflect, and for further personal development. Depaul UK's Employee Assistance Helpline is also available to Depaul International staff.

Where appropriate, recent safeguarding cases (for example, serious incidents reported to Depaul International by subsidiaries) may be discussed as part of a reflective practice exercise

within team meetings, with any identifying details removed. The aim is to share knowledge with the whole team, and support the development of a fuller understanding of the safeguarding issues that can arise in the context of Depaul International's operations and the local contexts of subsidiaries.

### **7.3 Visitors**

If Depaul International arranges an external visitor to subsidiaries (for example, a donor), the risks involved in an individual visit and the length of visit must be considered, with safeguarding measures tailored accordingly. For example:

- If the visitor will be alone with clients at any point, or possibly become aware of confidential information, a risk assessment must be carried out.
- The sharing of safeguarding information with the visitor ahead of the visit, covering expectations about conduct and procedures for raising concerns. See Annex 5 for an example of safeguarding information that could be provided to visitors.

## **8 Safeguarding in communications**

Depaul International is committed to safeguarding clients during the course of participating in any communications activities – for example, if clients share their story and/or images for the purposes of fundraising or raising awareness of the work of Depaul. Communications activities can present a safeguarding risk to clients, if the way that these activities are carried out increases the risk of the client experiencing harm, or does not respect their rights and dignity.

Therefore, responsible procedures must be undertaken when involving clients in communications activities, including the following considerations:

- The importance of maintaining clients' dignity – for example, ensuring that images are representative of the experiences of our clients, while also avoiding stereotypes;
- Ensuring that clients are fully informed about how Depaul International will use their personal information, and storing this appropriately and securely (in line with Depaul International's Data Protection policy);
- Communications activities should only proceed when clients are able to provide fully informed consent (ideally, recorded in writing), and the client has capacity to make this decision – in line with Depaul International's Guidance on Photography and Consent;
- Procedures should be in place to reduce the chance that participation in communication activities causes harm to clients – for example, being mindful about how identifiable the surroundings are when taking photos, and ensuring that sensitive information is not shared inappropriately;
- Clients should be fully briefed about the activity, and offered follow-up support to a level appropriate to the nature of the risks associated with each individual activity.

Depaul International's Guidance on Photography and Consent outlines the steps to be taken for involving clients in communications activities in more detail. While any communications activities will generally be led by Depaul International's Communications team, these procedures must be followed by all staff or representatives of Depaul International (for example, a commissioned photographer) at all times where relevant. If you have any queries about safeguarding in communications, contact the Head of Communications and DSO for advice.

Where images and stories are collected by subsidiaries on behalf of Depaul International (for example, to contribute to the Depaul Group's Impact Report), subsidiaries will also be

expected to ensure that safeguarding measures have been undertaken locally and informed consent is gained in line with Depaul International's Guidance on Photography and Consent.

For any communications activity through Depaul International's channels which is deemed high risk (for example, featuring clients where services are being delivered in conflict areas), an individual risk assessment for that activity should be carried out and signed off by Depaul International's Head of Communications.

## **8.1 Social media**

Depaul International manages several social media accounts as part of its communications activities. Sometimes issues can arise on social media that highlight potential client safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Examples might include complaints about antisocial behaviour at services, or accusations against staff members. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly, and not acting could be detrimental to Depaul International. Please refer any issues to the Head of Communications immediately. If the concerns relate to online abuse, bullying or exploitation, the usual safeguarding incident reporting procedures will also apply as outlined in Section 5.

Staff use of social media in relation to their work with Depaul International is governed by the relevant Code of Conduct. This prohibits **any** form of unofficial contact with clients, therefore including via social media platforms.

## **9 Procurement**

Depaul International may occasionally work with partners to fulfil its organisational goals. All partners (including any suppliers and contractors) have a responsibility to adhere to safeguarding standards if working on a programme or delivering a service on behalf of Depaul International. Part of the procurement process may involve assessing the partner's capacity to adhere to safeguarding measures which are relevant to their scope of operations, but in line with Depaul International's Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct as a minimum. Our work with partners is based on respect, shared learning and a mutual commitment to working a way that upholds and safeguards the rights of all.

General principles relating to safeguarding in different types of procurement and/or partnership working are outlined below.

### **9.1 Partnerships involving the delivery of services or programmes to clients**

If Depaul International enters such a partnership with another organisation, a comprehensive set of safeguarding expectations will be agreed. These will take into account the specific safeguarding risks posed by the partnership, and outline the measures to mitigate against these. If relevant, Depaul International will work collaboratively with partners to implement these measures.

Section 10 also outlines the general safeguarding requirements that apply to subsidiaries, which intend to align the approach to safeguarding taken across the Depaul Group.

### **9.2 Grant-giving**

Where Depaul International provides grants to other organisations delivering services or programmes to clients, a condition of receiving the grant will be a commitment to keeping people safe. Specific safeguarding requirements will also be outlined which are relevant to the organisation receiving the grant, and the kind of work that they do.

### 9.3 Individual associates

Where individual associates are contracted by Depaul International to support its work (for example, specialist consultants), as a minimum they will be required to sign Depaul International's Code of Conduct and safeguarding policy as part of their contract. Individual associates must be aware of how to report any safeguarding concerns to Depaul International.

### 9.4 Non-client services

Depaul International may contract third parties to provide general organisational services (for example, a cleaning company), that are not expected to have access to clients and/or sensitive data. Depaul International will not knowingly engage with service providers that engage in practices related to modern slavery and/or trafficking, and/or breach relevant UK legislation concerning modern slavery.

### 9.5 Agreements and reporting

Where deemed relevant, agreements (for example, contracts or MOUs) with partners will include specific commitments to meeting safeguarding requirements, which are proportionate to the scope of their work on behalf of Depaul International. This could include requirements regarding access to sensitive data or clients, safe recruitment of individuals, and/or reporting of safeguarding concerns. If considered necessary, Depaul International's safeguarding policy may also be included as an appendix to an agreement. Staff entering into formal agreements with partners should liaise with the DSO to agree what is required in individual circumstances.

Safeguarding concerns involving a partner must be reported to Depaul International, and will be handled in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 5 of this policy. Breaches of an agreement by partners may lead to an agreement being terminated.

See Annex 6 for a detailed example of a safeguarding clause that may be included in agreements with partners. Safeguarding clauses are tailored as required to the safeguarding risks presented by individual partnerships and/or area of work.

## 10 Meeting safeguarding standards in subsidiaries

While Depaul International does not provide direct services, there are a number of Depaul International safeguarding standards that apply to subsidiaries. This is a key part of Depaul International's role in ensuring that subsidiaries uphold best practice in safeguarding in their service delivery. It is a requirement for all Depaul subsidiaries, as highlighted in the Depaul Group Agreement, to have a safeguarding policy in place. This should put the welfare of the child or adult at risk at the centre of the process; be annually reviewed; comply with legislation; and be aligned with best practice. It is the responsibility of each Depaul subsidiary to implement a process that allows for the swift, confidential and effective escalation and management of safeguarding concerns and incidents that will, in most cases, be managed within the subsidiary organisation. Depaul International commits to working with subsidiaries where a need to strengthen safeguarding practice is identified.

The following is a list of requirements that demonstrate subsidiaries are meeting core safeguarding standards:

- A safeguarding policy covering adults at risk and children, which includes:
  - relevant legal definitions

- reference to legislative framework and principles that govern this aspect of care within their specific jurisdiction
- provide as backup material to their safeguarding policies a copy of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child
- A Code of Conduct (or similar) which establishes the obligation of staff and volunteers not to exploit or abuse clients
- Procedures which outline the steps taken to ensure the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers, taking into account local legislation regarding vetting requirements
- Safeguarding induction training for all staff who have contact with children or adults at risk
- Specified safeguarding responsibilities for different roles within the subsidiary, including a Designated Safeguarding Lead/Safeguarding Focal Point, and Lead Trustee for Safeguarding (to act as the primary contact on the Board for the subsidiary's Director and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead to liaise with)
- Guidance on identifying and managing risks associated with the design and delivery of services
- Measures to ensure that any local partners also have regard for and uphold safeguarding commitments
- Recording and reporting systems, including for investigating allegations

When Depaul International works particularly closely with individual subsidiaries, for example through funding contracts or joint project delivery, the individual programme and/or area of joint working will be risk assessed, including a consideration of the safeguarding risks and appropriate measures to be agreed and put in place.

## 11 Subsidiary reporting of safeguarding incidents to Depaul International

### 11.1 Reporting of serious safeguarding incidents

Subsidiaries must report certain serious safeguarding incidents to Depaul International's Designated Safeguarding Officer. This is to ensure that Depaul International can meet any regulatory or reporting requirements, remain alert to potential reputational risks to Depaul, and to provide safeguarding-related support to subsidiaries if required. We will ensure that this reporting is not in conflict with local law or GDPR arrangements. **Incidents will be reported with identifying details and personal data removed, in all but exceptional circumstances.**

Certain types of safeguarding incidents need to be reported to Depaul International rapidly, due to the severity of the harm/abuse and the circumstances surrounding the incident. Below, timeframes relating to different kinds of serious incidents are outlined.

The specified timeframes do not necessarily relate to the time since the safeguarding incident itself occurred; rather, when the person responsible for notifying Depaul International at a subsidiary becomes aware of the incident.

#### **For notification to Depaul International within 24 hours:**

- Any alleged, suspected or confirmed instance of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and/or sexual harassment against a client by a Depaul staff member, volunteer or partner (including attempts)
- Any alleged, suspected or confirmed instance of any type of abuse against a client by a Depaul staff member with senior leadership responsibility



**For notification to Depaul International as soon as possible, within a maximum of 48 hours:**

- Any other safeguarding concern involving a Depaul staff member, volunteer or partner as the alleged, suspected or confirmed perpetrator
- Death of a client due to confirmed or suspected violence, suicide or neglect
- Violent assault of a client by another client, where this has resulted in life-threatening physical or severe mental harm
- Safeguarding incidents where organisational policies or procedures (including breaches of these) have caused serious mental or physical harm
- Safeguarding incidents which present a significant reputational risk

Annex 7 provides further details, examples and guidance for subsidiaries about the types of incidents to be reported under the categories outlined above. It is recognised that incidents happen regularly and that there will often be an element of local judgement to be made on the individual circumstances of each incident, when deciding whether to report to Depaul International.

While it is not expected that the full details about an incident will be available within the timeframes above, a brief notification to Depaul International that something has happened must be made within these time frames. These notifications can be made verbally via a phone call or via a brief email, in the first instance, or using the optional 'Serious Incident Notification Form' (Annex 8). As any investigations into an incident unfold, Depaul International's Designated Safeguarding Officer will collect further key details from subsidiaries about the incident (that it would be expected that subsidiaries will gather as part of their own usual procedures regarding safeguarding incidents), and store this information securely.

While identifying details/personal data will generally not be required, the information that Depaul International will collect will include the below. Subsidiaries may forward anonymised copies of their local incident report forms as part of the process. Subsidiary completion of a separate incident form is not required, as Depaul International will lead on gathering and recording the necessary information:

- Who was involved
  - Basic details of client(s) involved (including whether they were under 18 and their gender)
  - If the incident relates to a complaint about staff, volunteer or partner conduct – basic details of the subject of the complaint (including their gender and role within the organisation)
- Details of any actions taken and/or planned in response to the incident
  - Progress of any investigation
  - What support was offered and/or provided to the client
  - Whether there is any obligation for the subsidiary to report the incident to a local regulatory body and/or donor
- Details of any media involvement
- Whether the incident took place in a service funded by an international aid sector donor, and/or a service that Depaul International has contributed funding towards
- Any further learning for the subsidiary and/or Depaul International that could prevent reoccurrence and/or reduce the risk of further harm or incident reoccurrence

Depaul International's DSO is Mark Robinson (Director of International Programmes)  
[safeguarding@depaulinternational.org](mailto:safeguarding@depaulinternational.org)

## 11.2 Annual reporting

Subsidiaries are also required to provide Depaul International with an annual report on local safeguarding incidents. This will assist Depaul International to understand safeguarding trends and will inform our approach to facilitating safeguarding support to and across subsidiaries in the areas it is needed the most.

The annual report will request details of the following, pertaining to the previous 12-month timeframe:

- The number of safeguarding incidents and concerns, categorised by type:
  - How many incidents/concerns involved children; how many involved adults at risk; how many involved clients (as some may have related to other children or adults at risk who are not receiving services from Depaul)
  - Counts of incidents/concerns involving: physical abuse; emotional abuse; sexual abuse; financial abuse; domestic violence; neglect; exploitation/trafficking
  - Counts of incidents/concerns relating to staff, volunteer or partner conduct
- A short outline of local learning from these incidents and concerns
- Any requests for additional support or learning from Depaul International that would be helpful for the subsidiary in strengthening their safeguarding practice

## 12 Depaul International's regulatory and donor reporting requirements

### 12.1 Regulatory requirements

As a UK-based charity, Depaul International is regulated by the Charity Commission of England and Wales, which includes reporting requirements about serious safeguarding incidents. Where incidents occur at subsidiaries, compliance with any local regulatory requirements regarding reporting is the responsibility of that subsidiary.

There may be some circumstances under which Depaul International is also required to make a report to the Charity Commission of England and Wales if a serious safeguarding risk materialises – either within the context of Depaul International's direct operations or in specific circumstances where significant harm has been caused by Depaul subsidiary staff or activities, or relating to incidents occurring at subsidiaries where Depaul International has been involved (for example – if Depaul International has funded a particular activity which has resulted in a safeguarding incident, or has contributed funding towards a service in which a serious safeguarding incident has occurred).

Depaul UK is also required to report serious safeguarding incidents to the Charity Commission of England and Wales. Charity Commission reporting of serious safeguarding incidents occurring at Depaul UK is Depaul UK's responsibility.

For reference, the Charity Commission usually requires the reporting of a serious safeguarding risk if any of the following occur, and involves a judgement call about which incidents are serious within the context of Depaul International:

- Incidents of abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual) of beneficiaries of the charity (adults or children) which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and:
  - this happened while they were under the care of the charity
  - someone connected with the charity, for example a trustee, staff member or volunteer, was responsible for the abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual)

- Other incidents of abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual) of people who come into contact with the charity through its work, which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and are connected to the charity's activities
- Breaches of procedures or policies at the charity which have put people who come into contact with it through its work at significant risk of harm, including failure to carry out relevant vetting checks which would have identified that a person is disqualified in law from holding their position within the charity. This might be, for example, because they are disqualified under safeguarding legislation from working with children and/or adults at risk

## 12.2 Donor reporting

Depaul International will be aware of any reporting requirements set out by donors. It will be the responsibility of Depaul International's SLT to ensure that reports of safeguarding incidents are made to donors as required.

## 13 Safe services and programmes

Depaul International is committed to supporting subsidiaries to deliver services which are safe for those accessing them. This means that services are assessed for possible risks and designed in a way that minimizes the possibility for harm to be caused through accessing support from Depaul Group charities. This involves considering the possible impact, risks and broader consequences of how services are designed and delivered, including for example the location, times, staffing, advice provided and confidentiality. Where appropriate, Depaul International will support subsidiaries to ensure safeguards are integrated at all stages, so that any risks presented by services are well understood, actions to mitigate the risks are identified, and included in service plans.

With regard to children:

- Children's involvement in services and project activities must be accompanied by informed consent from the child (if over 16 years) and the child's parents. In some circumstances, subsidiaries may develop a local policy to enable them to work with children without parental consent, if their parents' knowledge of the support poses an additional risk. In this case the child should be deemed to have enough intelligence, competence and understanding to fully appreciate what's involved in the support they will receive (known as Gillick competent)
- The safe design of programmes involving adult participants should take account of whether those adults have children and the potential impact on them of their parent(s) involvement in the project, for example child care arrangements during project activities
- Particular care must be taken on involving children in activities or events which involve travelling away from home or otherwise present specific risks, for example advocating on sensitive issues

Similarly, with regard to adults, services involving adults with particular disabilities or who otherwise might be particularly at risk of harm, should ensure that the adults (or their carers) understand what participation in the service involves, consent to it and have the necessary care or support arrangements in place to be able to participate safely.

Services should ensure clients understand Depaul's commitments to safeguarding and protecting them from harm. This should be done using appropriate language and materials and include explicit reference to what they should expect from Depaul's staff.

Services should also ensure that staff are adequately prepared to respond to safeguarding concerns or incidents that arise, in a way that does not cause further harm to clients. For example, staff should be clear on local procedures for reporting concerns, internally and externally, which ensure that a client's personal information is not shared inappropriately. As another example, staff should receive training in order to be confident in how to respond to a client that has experienced harm or abuse, in a supportive and survivor-centred way that does not compound the client's initial trauma. Staff delivering programmes should also understand the inherent power dynamics that arise when delivering services<sup>5</sup>. Client involvement in programme delivery can also help safeguarding risks to be better identified and mitigated against.

#### **14 Monitoring of policy implementation and policy review**

The DSO coordinates safeguarding measures and supports the DSL, who has primary responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of organisational compliance with this safeguarding policy. The Designated Trustee for Safeguarding retains ultimate responsibility for ensuring that Depaul International's policies in relation to safeguarding remain relevant and effective. If any individual at Depaul International identifies a lack of compliance with this safeguarding policy or is concerned that Depaul International's safeguarding measures are not being implemented effectively, they should notify the DSO in the first instance, or the DSL if more appropriate for the situation. See also Section 5 which contains specific procedures for raising concerns and/or reporting incidents.

Depaul International monitors the completion of mandatory inductions and safeguarding training.

Where serious incidents occur or concerns are identified which indicate an urgent need for organisational changes to policies and procedures, these changes will be made as and when required to strengthen the implementation of this safeguarding policy throughout the year. A safeguarding report (including a summary of safeguarding trends, incidents, and any measures taken to strengthen safeguarding across the Depaul Group) is submitted to the Depaul International Board annually.

For monitoring the implementation of this policy's requirements that apply to subsidiaries, a safeguarding audit is completed by subsidiaries every 3 years with results presented to the Board. Additional opportunities to share learning about safeguarding as a Group will also be hosted by Depaul International, which will also cover matters relating to policy implementation as required.

Depaul International's safeguarding policy undergoes a full review at least annually to ensure continued legal compliance and alignment with best practice. It also undergoes an external review every 2 years. Updates will also be made as required – for example, in light of analysis of safeguarding trends and/or significant incidents, legislative changes, and/or feedback from stakeholders. Each version of the policy is signed off by the Board of Trustees. Where significant changes to this policy are considered that will impact subsidiaries, subsidiaries will be consulted as appropriate.

---

<sup>5</sup> When delivering services or programmes to people in situations of vulnerability, unequal power dynamics can arise in their interactions with organisations that have access to resources. There is a risk that those with more power (such as Depaul staff) can misuse this to abuse, exploit or exert undue pressure on our clients. Raising awareness of this should be integrated into Depaul's organisational culture, including staff training and in approaches to working with our clients.