

Global Safeguarding Framework 2023-2028

Document control

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Introduction

WaterAid's vision is to transform lives through sustainable and safe water, sanitation and hygiene. Wherever we work in the world, we adopt a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of any kind.

We recognise that safeguarding issues have the potential to derail our good work. Our [values](#) define our culture and unite us across the many countries in which we work. Alongside these we have a clear [Global Code of Conduct](#), [Global Safeguarding Policy](#), and [Global Safeguarding Standards](#). Our commitment to gender equality, social inclusion and addressing unhelpful power dynamics internally strengthens our safeguarding approaches.

WaterAid has strict safeguarding oversight and governance in place. At a high level all safeguarding activity is reported to all member boards, allowing for scrutiny and transparency. Each member board has a safeguarding lead board member. Boards are actively responsible for ensuring WaterAid rightly discharges its safeguarding duties, and that senior leaders are held accountable for creating a culture which promotes and champions safeguarding.

Safeguarding Strategic Priorities 2023-2028

The Global Safeguarding Framework captures the renewed direction of safeguarding within both WaterAid's Global Strategy (2022-2032) and the Global People and Culture Strategy. It identifies the following key strategic safeguarding priorities:

- ❖ Individuals and communities are protected and able to safely raise concerns
- ❖ Partners prioritise and contextualise safeguarding
- ❖ WaterAid staff and representatives confidently uphold safeguarding standards
- ❖ WaterAid contributes to strengthening safeguarding in the sector.



Safeguarding Strategic priority 1: Communities and individuals with whom we work are protected and able to safely raise concerns

Communities and individuals are at the centre of WaterAid's work. Whether directly, or through our partners, WaterAid has a responsibility to ensure that everyone, reached or engaged with through our work, is protected from harm. If harm should occur, individuals must feel confident and able to raise concerns without fear. Across the sector, ensuring there are effective reporting mechanisms in place, remains a challenge. WaterAid and its representatives are committed to finding ways to improve this. Ensuring WaterAid and its representatives are considered trustworthy and reliable is critical to our safeguarding work, our legitimacy and our mission. Individuals in communities and settings where we work, must feel able to report safeguarding concerns and incidents freely and safely, with the belief that culturally appropriate, and survivor centred actions are taken in response.

We will achieve this by:

- × Making sure that existing community reporting mechanisms are consistently promoted

- x Identifying context specific ways that communities and individuals feel confident to report and integrate these into formal reporting pathways
- x Promoting WaterAid's independent reporting malpractice service
- x Integrating safeguarding related questions within WaterAid's wider mechanisms for obtaining feedback from communities and individuals on WaterAid's work
- x Supporting staff to apply a survivor centred approach to initial disclosures and concerns

Safeguarding Strategic priority 2: Partners prioritise and contextualise safeguarding

Building partnerships and alliances are an integral part of WaterAid's strategy for achieving universal access. Within these partnerships safeguarding is central and must be prioritised by all partners regardless of type, size, or influence. WaterAid is committed to strengthening the safeguarding capacity of partners and collaborators where needed and to learning from our partners' safeguarding successes. Contextualisation of safeguarding is fundamental, and therefore partners should be able to demonstrate that their safeguarding mechanisms are adapted to their staff and the communities, setting, or contexts in which they work.

We will achieve this by:

- x Embedding the Partnership Toolkit including risk framework and associated risk assessments
- x Exploring how best to support partners to receive and cascade Safeguarding Awareness and Training
- x Incentivising partners to report safeguarding concerns to WaterAid by adopting collaborative responses.
- x Supporting partners to ensure there are accessible and safe mechanisms for feedback from their staff, and people reached through their work so that safeguarding issues can be identified.
- x Safeguarding Standards are mainstreamed within our partner organisations' culture.

Safeguarding Strategic priority 3: WaterAid staff and representatives confidently uphold safeguarding standards

WaterAid staff and representatives (including volunteers, consultants, board members, partner staff, contractors) sign the Global Code of Conduct when joining WaterAid and are made aware of expected standards around behaviour and adhering to these. All staff and representatives receive safeguarding training which is relative to their role and required safeguarding competencies. We want to ensure we have a workforce that is confident and committed to upholding safeguarding standards and contributes to ensuring a positive safeguarding culture.

We will achieve this by:

- x Taking targeted action to assimilate safer programming practices
- x Embedding and further strengthening consistent safer recruitment practices including with our volunteers
- x Expanding safeguarding awareness training to include prevention and capacity building that unpack the complex dynamics that can cause safeguarding issues to arise.

- × Addressing the barriers to staff understanding of the safeguarding process
- × Leaders who confidently steer and champion a strong safeguarding culture

Safeguarding Strategic priority 4: Contribute to strengthening Safeguarding in the sector

WaterAid recognises that for everyone to be safe, the International Development sector must continue to do better and improve and strengthen its safeguarding approaches and practices. WaterAid is therefore committed to contributing to local, national and international, sector-wide safeguarding initiatives, to share and learn from our challenges and successes, to be accountable, and to lead by example.

We will achieve this by:

- × Ensuring WaterAid is represented on key safeguarding committees, networks and working groups globally.
- × Sharing WaterAid's good safeguarding practice by contributing to the evidence base as to what works, particularly in partnerships and alliances.
- × Identifying innovative opportunities for joint solutions on shared issues within the sector, with a focus on community awareness, reporting and strengthening.

Continued Safeguarding priority and collaborations: Strengthening WaterAid's safeguarding culture and infrastructure

The above four priorities build upon the fundamental ongoing work to ensure our safeguarding culture and infrastructure remains strong. The approach of plan, do, review as a continuous cycle is applied to all safeguarding work which is never linear. As such, WaterAid will continue to ensure its' safeguarding policy, procedures and practice are robust, that a 'speak up' culture continues to be promoted, that survivor centred responses are prioritised, and case management systems effective.

We will achieve this by:

- × Supporting each member to manage their overall safeguarding risk registers
- × Strengthening audit and feedback mechanisms to ensure there is a good understanding of what is working and what may need improvement
- × Using feedback to improve experiences and effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and reporting mechanisms
- × Developing case management and data reporting capabilities that enable better trend analysis and identify areas of required focus
- × Developing an annual safeguarding work plan which outlines each priority's activity alongside measures of success. This will be published annually in support of the Global Safeguarding Framework.

- x Ensuring senior managers across the federation have appropriate safeguarding KPI's in order to be accountable.