

Safeguarding Policy: including Child Safeguarding & Protection and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment



1. Introduction, Philosophy and Commitment

1.1 Introduction

Tearfund Australia (referred to as 'Tearfund', 'our'/'we'/'us' or 'the organisation' in this policy) believes that all people have equal and significant value and should be safe within programs and activities funded and/or run by Tearfund and our partners. We are committed to mirroring God's preferential relationship for society's most vulnerable and to creating environments—physical and online—that are safe, peaceful, and enabling for all, regardless of points of difference.

As an international development organisation, Tearfund is committed to safeguarding the dignity, safety, and wellbeing of all people, and especially those who are most vulnerable. We recognise that our development and humanitarian work, and that of our Partners, often brings resources into communities that can shift power dynamics and increase the risk of exploitation, abuse, and harassment—including risks to children.

We recognise that some individuals and groups experience heightened vulnerability due to many factors such as age, gender, family, social or socio-economic context, trauma, disadvantage, disability or illness, literacy, as well as factors like natural disasters, environment and conflict. We also recognise that vulnerability may be experienced by participants, staff, volunteers and partners involved in our work. Vulnerability may be temporary, or ongoing. Tearfund is therefore committed to working respectfully with all people in ways that uphold their protection and safety (including cultural safety), wellbeing, dignity, and security. We actively facilitate participation and inclusion of people from all cultural backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, and their families.

1.2 Philosophy

While compliance with applicable law is foundational, the philosophical basis of Tearfund's Safeguarding policy and guidelines are informed by three additional sources: Biblical principles, Tearfund values, and an understanding of good international development practice:

Biblical Principles

- All people are made in the image of God and as such have equal value and dignity, but our world is unequal.
- God has a preferential relationship with society's most vulnerable, and names our love of God as mirroring our inclusion and care of them (Matthew 25:31-36).
- God's love for the vulnerable is demonstrated by both Old Testament covenantal law, as well as in the teaching and practice of Jesus and the early church.
- God calls on the church to reflect His love for the vulnerable through its commitment to the whole person, which encompasses not just physical, social, spiritual and emotional needs, but also their particular context and situation.
- Christian scriptures teach that children are to be cared for and protected; children can participate in the community; children are to be educated; children can serve as an example to adults.

Tearfund Values

- Tearfund's Values include a commitment to the whole person, which is understood to encompass physical, social, spiritual, cultural and emotional needs, and the needs and opportunities of a range of life stages.
- Tearfund's Values include a commitment to respectful relationships, which inherently improves safety for people as it changes their position to a less vulnerable one.
- Tearfund's Values include a commitment to justice, meaning misconduct, abuse of power, and any exploitation of vulnerability and/or power inequality are not tolerated.

International Development Practice

- Tearfund is focused on empowerment and participation, understanding rights, sharing power, and building equality, in its work both in Australia and internationally. We understand that good development for a community must work for the most vulnerable groups.
- Tearfund affirms national and global commitments and laws that provide the legal framework for Child and SEAH protection. These include.
 - The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), an agreement which commits signatory countries to ensure that children's rights are upheld in the domains of safety, survival, development and participation.
 - The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) and its related UN conventions.
 - The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979.
 - Australian National and State Child Protection Standards.
 - Australian Charities & Not-for-Profits Commission External Conduct Standard 4 - Protection of Vulnerable Individuals.
 - Core Humanitarian Standards and the ACFID Code of Conduct.

1.3 Policy Commitments

Tearfund is committed to the protection of children and people who are vulnerable to abuse. Children have a right to survival, development, protection and participation as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Tearfund upholds a culture of zero tolerance towards all forms of abuse, including child exploitation, abuse and harm, and zero tolerance towards sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in all aspects of its work. Any illegal, exploitative, or abusive behaviour may be addressed through disciplinary action, legal proceedings, or termination of employment or volunteer arrangements. Tearfund People and Partners are expected to "do no harm", to abide by our Code of Conduct and policies and to comply with relevant state, national, and international laws across the jurisdictions in which we operate while working for or with Tearfund.

Tearfund also upholds a zero-tolerance culture for inaction to prevent, report or respond. Tearfund takes its duty of care seriously, demonstrating its commitment through its policies, guidelines and Code of Conduct. This includes responding to reports and complaints and aiming at all times to provide the safest possible environment and programs for children and those facing increased vulnerability to harm.

2. Purpose

This policy and its accompanying guidelines set out;

- expectations, responsibilities, systems, and processes designed to safeguard vulnerable people and uphold the respect, dignity, value and wellbeing of all.
- proactive actions to create a safe environment.
- responsive actions to ensure prompt and appropriate steps are taken when concerns or allegations arise.

3. Scope

This policy and its accompanying guidelines apply to all Tearfund People—including staff, volunteers Board members, partner visit participants, and any contractors or consultants who have contact with children or vulnerable people in the course of their work with Tearfund or its Partners (see Definitions).

It covers all work implemented or funded by Tearfund and is intended to be read in conjunction with the Child Safeguarding & Protection Guidelines (CSP) and the Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Guidelines, which together provide a tailored approach for implementation of this policy and to protecting children and vulnerable people.

This Policy is guided by and aligned with:

- The ACFID Code of Conduct.
- Australian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade's (DFAT) Child Protection Policy and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy (note that in applying a similar risk-based approach to safeguarding, Tearfund applies the higher Comprehensive Standard to both incidental or minimal contact with children and direct, sustained or significant contact with children).
- The ACNC's External Conduct Standard 4: Protection of vulnerable individuals.
- State and National Child Safe Standards.

4. Policy Principles

Tearfund is committed to safeguarding all people, especially children and individuals who have increased vulnerability to abuse and harm, through the principles outlined below applied to both CSP and PSEAH.

1. Zero Tolerance for Abuse, exploitation and harm

Tearfund has zero tolerance for child exploitation, sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment and harm in all aspects of its work. This means zero tolerance for acts of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, child exploitation, abuse and harm and zero tolerance for inaction to prevent, report or respond.

2. A Victim-Survivor Centred, Age-Appropriate Approach

CSP:

Tearfund will **prioritise the best interests of the child**. All actions and decisions will prioritise children's rights, safety and wellbeing and are underpinned by a 'do no harm' approach. We support the safe expression of cultural rights for all children. Responses to incidents should be trauma-informed, child-centred and enabling of access to appropriate support.

PSEAH:

Our approach is respectful, non-discriminatory, and survivor centric. Action to address SEAH should be underpinned by a 'do no harm' approach prioritising the safety, rights, needs and wishes of the victim-survivor. We will treat victim-survivors with dignity and respect, keeping them informed, protecting their confidentiality and involving them in decision-making. Responses to incidents should be trauma-informed and enabling of access to appropriate support.

3. Inclusion, Equity and recognition of Diversity

Tearfund's safeguarding efforts must be inclusive and equitable regardless of a person's circumstances, abilities, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, displacement, disability, religious, social, economic and cultural background. We recognise that people may be at increased risk of SEAH due to these factors. Safeguarding efforts will seek to address barriers to participation, protection, reporting and support - such as language, safety, discrimination and accessibility.

4. Prioritise Risk Assessment and Prevention

Tearfund will be proactive in promoting the safety of children. We will proactively work to identify, mitigate and minimise risks to children, and risks of SEAH for children and adults in both physical and online environments. Actions to protect all people and to create safe environments are embedded in policies and guidelines, programs, recruitment, screening, staff training, regular self-audits and daily operations to minimise risks and protect children, both in physical and online spaces.

5. Empowerment and Participation

CSP:

Tearfund safeguarding efforts must empower children to understand their rights, express their views and concerns, and participate in policy and implementation and other decisions affecting them in ways that are age-appropriate, voluntary and safe. Families and communities should be engaged as partners in promoting child safety and wellbeing, fostering trust and enhancing collaboration.

PSEAH:

Recognising that SEAH often stems from power imbalances, Tearfund will adopt a participatory approach to safeguarding, emphasising gender equity, autonomy, informed decision-making, and consent. Tearfund will prioritise consultation with women and girls when assessing SEAH risk and in developing and building on established trusted, effective culturally and community relevant measures and mechanisms to protect community members from SEAH.

6. Accessible, Responsive, Mandatory Incident Reporting

Tearfund commits to mandatory and timely reporting of child protection and SEAH concerns or incidents related to its activities (including mandatory immediate reporting in relation to any DFAT business) and requires this from its partners.

Tearfund commits to clear communication of safeguarding measures and to ensuring confidential, accessible (including to children) mechanisms for reporting concerns that are responsive to the needs and contexts of those affected. Reporting mechanisms must ensure that those who raise concerns are protected and that concerns are addressed in an effective, timely and appropriate manner. Tearfund adheres to procedural fairness when responding to safeguarding concerns or allegations.

7. Leadership of Safeguarding Culture

Safeguarding is embedded in Tearfund's governance, leadership, and organisational culture. We do this through shared responsibility and specific role accountability. Tearfund's leadership commits to actively leading, resourcing, reviewing, and continuously improving safeguarding policies and practices throughout the life of Tearfund. Feedback and accountability are practiced at all levels, including reporting to the Board regularly on safeguarding matters and issues.

8. Shared Responsibility

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all Tearfund People. The Tearfund Board provides oversight governance, while the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is accountable for implementation. Tearfund Partners must work towards and maintain appropriate safeguarding policies that also meet the relevant DFAT Standards and apply these to all personnel and subcontractors.

5. Safe People

5.1 Accountability for Key Responsibilities

Tearfund's Code of Conduct details expected and appropriate behaviour for Tearfund People who are in contact with children and people with increased vulnerability to SEAH.

All Tearfund People are expected to sign and abide by the Code of Conduct, which includes adherence to this Safeguarding Policy and its associated Guidelines. Within the ELT, executive responsibility for safeguarding sits jointly with Tearfund Australia's Director of People and Culture and the CEO.

Various Tearfund People and groups have specific responsibilities in regard to the Policy and Guidelines. They perform their roles by:

5.1.1 Tearfund Board

- Creating a culture of Safeguarding and providing governance guidance in relation to Child Protection and PSEAH at Tearfund.
- Approving the Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines.
- Reviewing the Safeguarding registers and reports at each meeting.

5.1.2 Chief Executive Officer

- Embedding a 'prevention and vigilance' culture at Tearfund in regard to Child Protection and SEAH.
- Ensuring that the Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines are upheld and informing the Board Executive (for escalation to full Board if needed) of any concerns relating to conduct and/or Child Protection and PSEAH that may present risk to Tearfund, Tearfund People, Partners, operations or other activities.
- Ensuring progress in relation to conduct and continuous improvement around Child Protection and PSEAH activities across Tearfund is included in standard reporting to the Board.
- Holding the Safeguarding Officer and Department Directors accountable to the Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines.

5.1.3 Safeguarding Officer(s)

- Leading and overseeing Safeguarding at Tearfund including coordinating training and monitoring compliance.

- Ensuring the Policy and Guidelines comply with Tearfund's obligations and contemporary practice and regular updating of these documents.
- Addressing any internal or external questions arising in relation to Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines.
- Managing any Child Protection and PSEAH concern in accordance with the Reporting Process.
- Informing the CEO of any key risk to Tearfund regarding conduct and/or Child Protection and PSEAH as well as ensuring relevant risk and incident registers are kept up to date and assisting the CEO in preparing the reporting set out above.

5.1.4 Department Directors

- Promoting the existence of the Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines to all employees.
- Ensuring department procedures, practices, plans and operations align with the Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines and that all relevant staff are aware of and understand their responsibilities according to both Policy and Guidelines.
- Receiving all subsequent enquiries concerning any employee dismissed for a breach of Policy, Safeguarding or Code of Conduct requirements [People & Culture Director specific responsibility].
- Ensure that relevant Tearfund activities within their department are properly assessed for risk to children and vulnerable adults.
- Monitoring and responding to any CSP and PSEAH risks or concerns arising within their department activities in collaboration with the Safeguarding Officer.

5.1.5 Managers and Supervisors

- Demonstrating a commitment to Safeguarding and modelling appropriate behaviour and practices.
- Communicating this Policy and all related procedures to Tearfund People during engagement and as required.
- Engaging with their teams in an open, honest and meaningful way to ensure they understand what is expected of them under the Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines.
- Constructively participating in the resolution of conduct and/or Child Protection and PSEAH concerns, questions or issues raised by Tearfund People.
- Supervisors of both staff and volunteers are responsible for relevant and effective risk management and ongoing management of conduct in accordance with Tearfund policies and guidelines.

5.1.6 International Partnership Managers

- Support partners to achieve full compliance with DFAT's Comprehensive Standards, ensuring any action plans are realistic, risk-sensitive and implemented within a reasonable timeframe, monitoring progress and providing technical assistance and capacity-building support where needed.
- Ensure partners are compliant with DFAT Essential Standards.

5.1.7 All Tearfund People

- Adhering to the principles and commitments under the Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines.
- Taking all reasonable care to ensure that their actions or omissions are not in breach of this Policy or Guidelines, nor directly or indirectly encouraging others to breach these; and reporting any Child Protection and SEAH concerns by following the Reporting Process.
- Reporting a change in their circumstances by reporting any current criminal or civil court proceedings relating to harassment, exploitation and abuse.
- Any person managing a Tearfund activity (i.e. Community Engagement Team Member or Fundraising Team Member organising or providing support as staff point person for an event,

Partnership Manager putting forward a project proposal or recruiting the services of a consultant evaluator, Program leader for exposure trips) is responsible for ensuring proper risk assessment occurs with supervisor approval prior to the activity and that the diverse needs of children and vulnerable people are cared for.

5.2 Safe Recruitment & Ongoing Screening

As part of our recruitment and induction processes, Tearfund will give attention to carefully selecting and training people who are likely to work with children or with people in vulnerable positions. Prior to commencing work, Tearfund staff and volunteers (including Board members), will be subject to rigorous screening and due diligence checks (see guidelines for further detail), considering levels of contact with children and vulnerable people. Roles at Tearfund are conditional upon the ongoing currency of these checks. People who pose an unacceptable risk to these people will not be offered paid or voluntary positions at Tearfund.

Tearfund People will be contractually required to sign and abide by the Tearfund Code of Conduct and to adhere to the Safeguarding Policy and respective Guidelines. All employment contracts will contain provisions for disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal of any person who breaches Tearfund's Safeguarding Policies and Guidelines.

5.3 Ongoing Awareness and Training

All Tearfund People will be made aware of Tearfund's Safeguarding Policy and guidelines, including how to report a concern about exploitation, abuse or harassment in programs funded or run by Tearfund and to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of all cultures including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of children.

Tearfund will communicate its Safeguarding Policy to relevant stakeholders as appropriate, including children, in a form that is accessible for them and is relevant to their context and level of contact with Tearfund.

Regular training will be made available to Tearfund People, tailored to the frequency and intensity of their contact with people in vulnerable positions in their work with Tearfund.

Tearfund supports Partners to source training – this may be from internal or external (including Tearfund Family) providers.

5.4 Power dynamics and Relationships

Where there are power imbalances at play (based on gender, age, ability, authority, social and economic inequality, cultural background etc.) the risk of exploitation (including sexual exploitation) is heightened, particularly in high-risk settings (such as in partner contexts). This is why Tearfund People are prohibited from engaging in transactional or exploitative sexual relationships in all high-risk settings (i.e. development, humanitarian and peacekeeping settings) and from engaging in sexual relationships with people who are participants in programs of Tearfund or Tearfund partners.

In addition, serious consideration and care should be taken before any intimate social relationship occurs in the course of conducting Tearfund activities in high-risk settings where there could be, or appear to be, partiality, preferential treatment or improper use of status or position. Tearfund People must immediately inform their supervisor or another Tearfund leader if they become engaged in a personal relationship which may be perceived as inappropriate or exploitative, or where real or perceived unequal power dynamics exist.

6. Safe Practices

6.1 Risk management

All programs that are funded or run by Tearfund will include an assessment of activity-related risks to vulnerable people, including children, in their planning, considering issues of power imbalances, gender equality, complaints and reporting, as well as prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. As part of assessing and managing risks to vulnerable people and children within our work, Tearfund will ascertain the resources available in various locations and jurisdictions for notification and assistance in the event that abuse is reported or suspected. Methods to reduce and mitigate risks are to be proportionate to the level of risk. CSP and PSEAH Guidelines should be implemented to manage and mitigate risks.

6.2 Reporting and Responding

All Tearfund People must report any known or reasonably suspected incidents of child abuse (see definition below), or sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH) immediately (within 24 hours) of becoming aware of the matter. In addition, any other non-compliance with this policy or Tearfund's Code of Conduct must be reported as soon as practically possible. This includes any witnessed, suspected, or alleged behaviour, as well as any indicators or disclosures of abuse. Any concern or allegation must be treated seriously, with appropriate urgency and sensitivity, adopting a trauma informed approach.

Reports may be made via the following methods:

- Tearfund's website—using the [Safeguarding Reporting Form](#)
- Phone—the Tearfund Safeguarding Officer: +61 3 9264 7000 or free call 1800 244 986
- Post—addressed to Tearfund CEO or Safeguarding Officer at PO Box 110, Forest Hill, Vic 3131 and marked "Strictly Confidential".
- Email—to the Safeguarding Officer: safeguarding@tearfund.org.au
- Talk to your Tearfund Supervisor, a member of the Tearfund Executive Leadership Team or a member of the Safeguarding Committee—which comprises the Safeguarding Officer, Tearfund CEO, International Program Director and People & Culture Director
- In situations where the CEO is the subject of a report or is the complaining party, the report should be made directly to the Chair of the Tearfund Australia Board (email chair@tearfund.org.au)
- A person wishing to make a complaint regarding an alleged breach of the ACIFD Code of Conduct may also make a complaint to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee. Complaints should be marked 'confidential' and emailed to: Chair, ACFID Code of Conduct Committee code@acfid.asn.au.

The reporting process will be communicated to all Tearfund People and will be accessible by them and also by those who may experience abuse in the course of a Tearfund program.

Anonymous reporting is possible and is better than not raising a concern. However, Tearfund is in a better position to act on the report if it is not anonymous as further information can be gathered in a more targeted manner.

6.2.1 Responding to reports

All concerns and allegations will be appropriately managed in accordance with the Child Safeguarding & Protection Guidelines and PSEAH Guidelines and in line with any relevant local laws, including potential mandatory reporting to relevant authorities (i.e. reporting of child harm under Australian law) where these obligations exist. Care should be taken to ensure that it is appropriate and safe to escalate and on-report. When considering escalation or on-reporting of SEAH, the wishes of the survivor must be considered.

The Safeguarding Committee (including the relevant Department Director) will determine the best response to concerns or allegations. This may include immediate reporting (within 24 hours) to an external party such as the relevant State or Territory child protection authority in Australia, or to DFAT. Reports to DFAT should be submitted via childprotection@dfat.gov.au or seah.reports@dfat.gov.au preferably using their [Child Protection and SEAH Incident Notification Form](#). Other follow up actions may include a report to the Tearfund Board, or commencement of an internal or external investigation.

All matters will be handled in a way which upholds the principles of protection of all parties involved, confidentiality, expedient reporting, truthfulness, fairness, procedural justice and professionalism. The outcome of an investigation may recommend a range of actions, including (but not limited to) training and/or disciplinary measures up to and including cessation of a volunteer role or employment dismissal. If a Tearfund employee's behaviour is under investigation, Tearfund may suspend them from work (on full pay) or transfer them to perform other work as directed.

All information from reports and investigations will be carefully documented and stored in line with Tearfund's data and privacy policies and insurance obligations relating to safeguarding matters.

7. Definitions

Child - A child is anyone under the age of 18.

Child abuse includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, ill-treatment, neglect, and online or digital abuse. It also includes a child or children witnessing such abuse against another child or adult. (See Safeguarding Children Guidelines for full definitions of each.)

Child exploitation refers to one or more of the following actions: • committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of abuse against a child • possessing, controlling, producing, distributing, obtaining or transmitting child exploitation material • committing an act of grooming, including online grooming • using a child for profit, labour, sexual gratification, trafficking, forced labour or any other personal or financial advantage.

Contact with children - Any interaction with or proximity to children. This includes both intentional and incidental contact, oral, written or electronic communication as well as in person contact. Most roles can be considered to involve contact with children at some point.

Cultural Safety - the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination and more than 'cultural awareness' and 'cultural sensitivity'. It empowers people and enables them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves.

Cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has been defined as 'the child being provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they are comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture... their spiritual and belief systems, and they are supported by Tearfund personnel ... (who) respects their culture and therefore encourages their sense of self and identity'.

Duty of Care - refers to the responsibility of the organisation to provide children with an adequate level of protection against harm. It is the duty of the organisation to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risks of injury.

Harm refers to any detrimental effect on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by financial, physical or emotional abuse, neglect, and/or sexual abuse or exploitation whether intended or unintended.

Safeguarding - measures taken to avoid or minimise the potential negative impacts of Tearfund's operations, business activities and partner's programs on the communities and the environments in which we work and operate. It also includes reporting any concerns the organisation has about.

vulnerable people and children's safety within the communities in which they work, to the appropriate authorities.

Safeguarding Officer (SO): The SO is responsible for the implementation of this policy across the organisation, and is an advice point for the organisation, assisting the Executive Leadership Team in the implementation of this policy. The SO is also a key person in reporting and responding to suspected abuse. This role is held by either member of the People & Culture Team as available.

Sexual abuse: The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. It covers sexual offences including but not limited to: attempted rape (which includes attempts to force someone to perform oral sex); and sexual assault (which includes non-consensual kissing and touching). All sexual activity with someone under the age of consent (in the law of the host country or under Australian state or territory law [16 years in most states and territories, 17 years in SA and TAS]) is considered to be sexual abuse.

Sexual exploitation: Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. It includes profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from sexual exploitation of another. A person can be sexually exploited through transactional sex (the exchange of money, employment, goods or services or other advantages for sex or sexual acts), even in places where sex work is legal.

Sexual harassment: Any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that occurs in circumstances in which a reasonable person, aware of those circumstances, would anticipate that the person being harassed might feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can take many forms. It can be overt, covert or subtle. It can be repeated or a one-off incident. Sexual harassment can happen in person, over the phone or online – including via social media. Anyone can experience sexual harassment, regardless of their sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex status. Sexual harassment can be perpetrated against project participants, community members, citizens, as well as staff and personnel.

Tearfund: In this document 'Tearfund', 'the organisation', 'we', 'us' or 'our' means Tearfund Australia.

Tearfund Partners: refers to any organisations who are supported by Tearfund to implement community development programs.

Tearfund People: refers to all Tearfund staff, volunteers (including Board members), consultants, exposure visit participants, and some specific contractors having contact with children or vulnerable people in the course of their work with Tearfund.

Victim-survivor: Victim-survivor is a term used to describe a person who is, or has been, sexually exploited, abused or harassed. The term 'victim-survivor' acknowledges both the harm suffered (victim) and the resilience or agency of the individual in coping with the aftermath (survivor). This term emphasises a supportive, rights-based approach to addressing their needs and upholding their dignity throughout the reporting and response process.

Vulnerable People/Person: A person is deemed vulnerable due to structural, cultural, systemic power dynamics and perceptions about a person, which means they are more susceptible to being taken advantage of. Perceptions and power dynamics may exist around people for many reasons, for example, because of their gender, disability, or ethnicity.

For the purposes of this document, a person is deemed vulnerable if they are aged 16 or over and are subject to any of the following contexts;

- a) They are placed in a vulnerable position by reason of a disaster or conflict and may be unable to take care of or protect themselves against significant harm, exploitation or abuse;
- b) They are project participants of Tearfund programs or Partners (due to the significant power difference between Tearfund People and the people we work with).

- c) They have particular care, support or special needs and as a result abuse occurs when that person is mistreated, neglected or harmed by another person who holds a position of trust e.g. they may be in custody or secure accommodation, or they are an expectant or nursing mother;
- d) They are dependent or reliant on others for the provision of basic services (not limited to safety, shelter, water, food), because of their context, such as:
 - A recipient of an NGO relief distribution, who may be at increased risk of exploitation or abuse as a result of their status or their lack of power and control;
 - An internally displaced person or refugee and/or an adult who is in an unfamiliar country and location;
 - A person in a relationship (work or social) or in contact with another adult who seeks to misuse their position of authority or trust to control, coerce, manipulate or dominate them.

8. Related references

Tearfund policies	External policies and documents
• Child Safeguarding & Protection (CSP) Guidelines • Code of Conduct • Discipline Policy • Event Risk Assessment Template • Gender Policy • Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse & Harassment Guidelines • Recruitment Policy and Guidelines • Safeguarding Reporting Form • Volunteer Policy and Guidelines	• ACFID Code of Conduct • Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy • Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Child and Adult Safeguards Implementation Handbook for partners

9. Change History

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years (or earlier if required), according to the policy review schedule (outlined in the Key Tearfund Documents Development and Management Policy) and in line with Tearfund Family standards and DFAT recommendations.

Date	Modification
Sept 2025	Change policy name and scope to include both Child Protection and Protection from SEAH, combined guiding principles and commitment sections unless nuances are required for implementation, moved role responsibilities from guidelines to policy doc, removed screening & application information that is repeated in the guidelines, added para regarding relationships (in line with employment contracts and DFAT MOU agreements), amended DFAT reporting requirements and definitions to align with DFAT's 2025 policy releases for child protection and PSEAH.
August 2022	Highlighting Board members as a volunteer role. Clarifying reporting timeframe and process.
December 2021	Updates following pre-accreditation review by external consultant including specification of Tearfund People, adding reference to Partner policies, and clarification of policy review frequency. Adjust Compliance and Safeguarding Officer to Safeguarding Officer. Updates to external policies and documents. Clarification of reporting options
June 2021	Changes to reflect creation of Executive Leadership Team and Group. Clarification of focus of policy to SEA elements of vulnerability. Safeguarding Officer (SO) reference updated to reflect appointment of Compliance and Safeguarding Officer. PSEAH policy cross-referenced to the Tearfund Australia Child Safeguarding policy. Clarification of responsibilities to align with Tearfund family standards. Alignment of Safeguarding Committee membership between the PSEAH policy and Guidelines
Jun 2020	Policy renamed and tightened into PSEAH only policy. Policy aligned with principles from both ACFID and DFAT guidance. TEAR renamed with Tearfund name in preparation for name change in October 2020