



**Geology
for
Global
Development**

Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) Policy

*Agreed by the Board of Trustees on
8 December 2020*

1. Introduction and Purpose

- a. Geology for Global Development (GfGD) believes that everyone has a right to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect. We are committed to promoting safe environments, which are free from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, bullying, psychological abuse and physical violence, for all individuals that are employed on, participate in, or otherwise come into contact with, the activities that we fund.
- b. **Safeguarding concerns people's right to be safe from all types of exploitation, abuse, and harm.** To this end, GfGD has developed a safeguarding policy to support all GfGD staff, volunteers, partners, and trustees (henceforth referred to as 'the GfGD team') to enhance their approach to preventing and addressing actual or potential exploitation, abuse, and harm in their activities relating to GfGD, building on good practice where it exists.
- c. This policy details the framework through which GfGD can establish a culture of safeguarding at all levels throughout the organisation. This policy is designed to
 - i. Outline GfGD's commitments to prevent exploitation, abuse, and harm, and to promote the health and wellbeing of all.
 - ii. Inform, guide, and direct the GfGD team in the use of GfGD's safeguarding framework.
- d. This policy is mandatory for all the GfGD team worldwide. It is for all the GfGD team to understand and abide by the guidelines outlined in this document, and by all policies and documents to which it is directly or indirectly linked.
- e. Actions of the GfGD team found to be in-breach of this policy will be subject to disciplinary procedures, and potential legal action.

2. Key Definitions

Abuse: Any action that violates a person's human or civil rights. This can take the form of physical harm, sexual, emotional, or psychological abuse. This can also include financial or material abuse and neglect. Abuse can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm.

Child. In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and for the purposes of this policy, is defined as any person – girl, boy, young woman, young man and children of other gender identities—under the age of 18 years. This definition supersedes any national legislation on age of majority/consent.

Exploitation. Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for the purposes of gaining benefit, including, but not limited to, monetary, social or political gain.

Harm. Any detrimental effect on psychological, physical, or emotional wellbeing and any other infringement of an individual's rights, including discrimination, neglect, injury, exploitation, and abuse. Harm may be caused in both intended and unintended ways.

Protected adult. Adults aged 18 and over who: are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights, or other interests and may therefore be or are at risk of harm. This **may** include a person who is elderly and frail, has a mental illness including dementia, has a physical or sensory disability, has a learning disability, has a severe physical illness, is a substance misuser, or is homeless.

Safeguarding: People's right to be safe from all types of harm (defined above), and therefore the responsibility of an organisation to ensure that its team, operations, and programmes do no harm and that any concerns are addressed and reported to the appropriate authorities.

3. Our Safeguarding Principles

- a. We believe that everyone has an equal right to protection from exploitation, abuse, and harm, irrespective of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or having a child, gender reassignment, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- b. We believe that everyone deserves dignity and respect, and that it is the GfGD team's social, ethical and professional responsibility to act with the highest standards of integrity, honesty and professionalism and to embed good practice in every aspect of our work.

- c. We consider safeguarding to be an organisational imperative, with primacy over the success of programmes or strategic objectives.
- d. We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, but that we have an organisational responsibility to put in place measures to ensure, as far as possible, the safety and wellbeing of all those with whom we work.
- e. We believe that the rights of actual and potential victims/survivors of abuse, harm, or exploitation and whistle-blowers should be central, and there should be meaningful and effective pathways for support and redress (see **Section 8**).

4. Our Safeguarding Commitments¹

Our collective responsibility is to anticipate, prevent, mitigate, and address exploitation, abuse, and harm caused to any person as a result of encountering our people and activities, as an organisation. To do this, we make the following commitments:

- a. Develop and enforce the highest standards in organisational culture, systems and practice required to prevent and tackle all incidents of exploitation, abuse, and harm, including building a culture where individuals feel able to report concerns and are confident that they will be acted upon.
- b. Ensure transparent practice, policy, and procedures for safeguarding. Transparency requires clear and public safeguarding commitments and policies, as well as openness about incidents or breaches and the measures taken to address them, while upholding confidentiality to avoid secondary trauma or harm.
- c. Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting to, managing, and deploying the GfGD team.
- d. Engage in equitable partnerships throughout the development, delivery, and dissemination of activities to avoid extractive and exploitative approaches.
- e. Continually strengthen our understanding and recognition of how power relations and structural inequalities play out in different situations, our role in shaping them, and the steps that can help to mitigate them.
- f. Ensure all members of the GfGD team take responsibility for safeguarding and doing no harm, and are aware of their responsibilities regarding the reporting of information to safeguard others (particularly, but not limited to, children, protected adults, and other vulnerable groups).
- g. Respond promptly, appropriately, and constructively to all information presented relating to actual or potential exploitation, abuse, and harm, and pledge to always believe and act on any disclosures made. We will take complaints seriously and respond to them within a reasonable time, to give confidence to those affected.
- h. Ensure the safety, health, and welfare of all those involved in any safeguarding issue, including survivors of safeguarding violations, those reporting safeguarding concerns, members of the GfGD team against whom complaints are made, and the GfGD team involved in managing and investigating complaints.
- i. Deal with all stakeholders fairly and professionally, adhering to relevant policies and standards at all time, and in compliance with UK law and the law of countries where we operate.
- j. Involve appropriate partners in the design and planning stages of relevant projects, to ensure that these activities and our operational approaches are contextually appropriate and do not pose an unacceptable risk of harm to the GfGD team, other partners or communities.
- k. Ensure accountability mechanisms are in place, including through effective charity governance and appropriate and accessible reporting mechanisms, to address and prevent exploitation, abuse, and harm.

All members of the GfGD team will be expected to follow these professional standards:

- a. Adherence to our [Commitment To Good Practice](#) (Code of Conduct) and other corporate policies.
- b. Completion of mandatory safeguarding training.
- c. Not engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18.

¹ Adopted in part from the core principles of the [UKCDR Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research](#), [Action Aid Safeguarding Policy](#), [Restless Development Global Safeguarding Policy](#), and the [UKRI Preventing Harm \(Safeguarding\) in Research and Innovation Policy](#).

- d. Not exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sexual favours. This is an abuse of power, contrary to our values.
- e. Not abuse or exploit children, young people, or vulnerable adults physically, emotionally, psychologically, sexually or otherwise, including by putting them in a position where they are at risk of exploitation, abuse, and harm (either through individual action, inaction or programme design and implementation).
- f. Not use a position of power to take unfair advantage of a fellow GfGD team member, community member, partner, or volunteer
- g. Not enter personal relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, or those who have been beneficiaries over the past 12 months.
- h. Zero tolerance of abusive language and inappropriate behaviours, ensuring they are reported immediately.
- i. Restricting the provision of gifts to those provided by the organisation as part of a planned activity.
- j. Not accepting money as a gift, borrowing money from, or lending money to service users.

Actions found to be in-breach of these standards will be subject to disciplinary procedures, and potential legal action.

5. Role-Specific Responsibilities

- a. Trustees have responsibility to ensure:
 - i. An appropriate safeguarding policy is in place, with a trustee acting as the safeguarding 'champion'.
 - ii. Sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated to ensure the policy can be effectively implemented.
 - iii. The policy is monitored and reviewed.
 - iv. Liaison with and monitoring of the lead safeguarding officer.
- b. The Executive Team have responsibility to ensure:
 - i. The policy is implemented, and local safeguarding arrangements are followed.
- c. The lead safeguarding officer is Dr Joel C. Gill (Executive Director, GfGD); their specific responsibilities are to ensure:
 - i. The policy is accessible
 - ii. The policy is implemented, and local safeguarding arrangements are followed.
 - iii. All members of the GfGD team have access to appropriate training/information.
 - iv. Develop and maintain effective links with relevant agencies.
 - v. Internal and external concerns received about safeguarding are responded to seriously, swiftly, and appropriately.
 - vi. Internal and external concerns about responses to allegations are swiftly forwarded to the appropriate stakeholders.

6. Meeting our Commitments and Responsibilities

- a. We will work with our partners in the geoscience and international development communities to strengthen our safeguarding practices and processes.
- b. We will commit resources for induction and training of the GfGD team, effective communications, and support mechanisms in relation to safeguarding.
 - i. *Induction.* All members of the GfGD team will be directed to this policy and other relevant policies, and new members will have a mandatory 1 to 1 meeting to discuss their roles and responsibilities in implementing this policy.
 - ii. *Training.* All members of the GfGD team will have access to safeguarding training at an appropriate level, depending on their roles and responsibilities.
 - iii. *Communications and discussion of safeguarding issues.* Safeguarding will be a standing item at senior-leadership and trustee meetings, with any issues, changes in policy, or concerns being discussed. An annual review of this policy will be completed by the Trustees.

- iv. *Project initiation.* An assessment of potential safeguarding issues and necessary mitigative steps will be an essential part of the design of any new project and must be completed before it is authorised to begin.
- v. *Support.* Involvement in situations where there is the risk of, or actual exploitation, abuse, and harm can be stressful for GfGD team members concerned. We will provide support to them by ensuring access to debriefing with appropriate personnel or helping them to identify appropriate counselling.

7. Work with Children

- a. GfGD does not proactively work with children or have dedicated services aimed at children. If this changes, and activities are designed and delivered that are specifically aimed at children, this safeguarding policy must be updated.
- b. While GfGD does not proactively work with children or have dedicated services aimed at children, we may, inadvertently come into contact with children during the delivery of our services (e.g., those in further education, aged 16 to 17, may register for and attend conferences or events hosted by third parties where GfGD representatives are participating).
 - a. *Our events.* We will coordinate events aimed at those over the age of 18 and ensure age verification is in place during the registration process. Where requests are made for those below the age of 18 to attend GfGD events, it will be made clear that an adult (e.g., carer, parent, teacher) must accompany them and they remain the responsibility of their accompanying adult at all times. Individual risk assessments will be produced as necessary.
 - b. *External-hosted events.* If the Safeguarding Policy of an event arranged by a third party where GfGD is due to participate, or sponsor/partner with, is not compatible with our Safeguarding Policy, we should not be involved with the event.

8. Complaints and Reporting

- a. If an incident of proscribed conduct occurs, then the aggrieved person or witness to the proscribed conduct is encouraged to report it promptly.
- b. Complaints can be raised through the [GfGD complaints procedure](#), reported to the [Charity Commission](#), or where appropriate, reported directly to the police.
- c. GfGD recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its team or others. The process for GfGD team members to do this is as follows:
 - i. If they see or hear anything of concern, relating to a safeguarding issue, this should be:
 - Documented in a timely manner (as soon as the concern is raised or noticed).
 - Reported to the designated safeguarding lead. If the safeguarding lead is implicated, then refer your concerns to their line manager or a trustee.

It may or may not be an obvious safeguarding issue, but combined with other concerns or left without action, it could develop into a serious issue.
 - ii. If someone confides in a member of the GfGD team that they think they are being abused, the individual should immediately contact the designated safeguarding lead.
 - iii. If, in their interactions with others, a GfGD team member suspects that there is abuse, neglect or they are otherwise in distress, they should raise their concerns with the designated safeguarding lead.
 - iv. In the event of an incident or allegation under this policy, the designated safeguarding lead will keep a dedicated log of all written and oral statements, along with a record of relevant conversations (via telephone, email, or other mediums).
 - v. A referral may be made to statutory authorities for criminal investigation in the relevant jurisdiction, whilst taking all possible steps to ensure that doing so will not cause further harm to the victim. Other actions may also include the termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements.
- d. If a legitimate concern is raised but proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, appropriate sanctions will be applied in cases of false and malicious accusations.

9. Policy Review and Monitoring of Implementation

- a. The Trustees will review this policy and all relevant procedures on an annual basis, and when there are changes in legislation.
- b. The implementation of this policy will be monitored by:
 - i. Ensuring appropriate checks are made when recruiting new GfGD team members (paid or unpaid).
 - ii. Making and keeping records of inductions, training, and internal discussions on safeguarding.
 - iii. Active monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned.
 - iv. Ensuring policies are up-to-date, relevant, and the GfGD team are aware of their contents.
 - v. Ensuring the safeguarding lead (Executive Team) and safeguarding champion (Trustees) are in post.
- c. We will make stakeholders aware of the Safeguarding Policy through our website, and with tailored statements on project information communications.

10. Related Policies and Documentation

- a. The scope of this Safeguarding Policy is broad ranging and relates to other policies and procedures within the organisation, or to which we adhere. These are largely grouped together into our [Commitment to Good Practice \(Code of Conduct\)](#) statement.
- b. Together these support all members of the GfGD team to enhance their approach to preventing and addressing actual or potential exploitation, abuse, and harm in their activities relating to GfGD.

11. Data Management

- a. Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with our [privacy notice](#). This sets out what to expect when GfGD collects personal information, and how this information is stored and accessed.
- b. Public interest in safeguarding may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need to know basis only, as judged by the designated safeguarding lead. All GfGD team members must be aware that they cannot promise confidentiality.