Nations Against Suffering in Sudan (NASS)

Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at-risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from harm caused due to their coming into contact with NASS. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of trustees, staff or personnel associated with NASS.
- The design and implementation of NASS's programmes and activities.

The policy lays out the commitments made by NASS, and informs all who deal with NASS of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

The policy does not cover:

- Sexual harassment in the workplace or whistleblowing – because at the moment there are no staff employed by NASS.
- Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by NASS or associated personnel.

What is safeguarding?

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programmes.

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our programmes, partners and staff. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centred and also protect those accused until proven guilty.

Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all we do.

Scope

- Any staff employed by NASS (there are none at the date of this policy).
- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to NASS, including but not limited to the following: consultants; volunteers; contractors; programme visitors including journalists, celebrities and politicians.

Policy Statement

NASS believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. NASS will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel.

This policy covers child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

NASS commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

Prevention

NASS responsibilities

NASS will:

- Ensure all staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy.
- Design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with NASS. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated.
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel.
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

Child safeguarding

NASS staff and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18.
- Sexually abuse or exploit children.
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking.

Adult safeguarding

NASS staff and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at-risk adults.
- Subject an at-risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

NASS staff and associated personnel must not:

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance.
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.

Additionally, NASS staff and associated personnel must:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by a NASS staff member or associated personnel to any trustee of NASS.

Enabling reports

NASS will ensure that safe, appropriate, and accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities we work with.

NASS will also accept complaints from external sources; such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

How to report a safeguarding concern

Any person who has a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding, should report it immediately to the Safeguarding Officer ("SO") or his deputy, by email.

The SO is Nigel Larcombe-Williams, registered social worker (registration number SW121988). Email: nigel.larcombe.williams@gmail.com. His deputy is Steven Leigh (email: stevenleigh@nass-charity.org).

Response

NASS will investigate safeguarding complaints and concerns promptly and the SO (or, if he is not able to do this, his deputy) is responsible for this. Following investigation, the SO will report his findings to the board of trustees of NASS, who will determine the action to be taken and advise all parties involved.

NASS will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to any staff found in breach of the policy.

NASS may, if resources permit, offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation).

Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality in maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need-to-know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.

Glossary of Terms

Beneficiary of Assistance

Someone who directly receives goods or services from NASS's programme. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that the charity serves, and also can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

Child

A person below the age of 18.

Harm

Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights.

Psychological harm

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to): humiliating and degrading treatment; such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

The term used by the humanitarian and development community, to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13).

Sexual abuse

The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual exploitation

The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to: profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

Survivor

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive; however, it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

At-risk adult

Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.