

Safeguarding Policy

The purpose of this policy is to protect people at risks and beneficiaries of assistance from any harm that may be caused by HelpZone's personnel, as well as all staff contracted or anyone working on behalf of HelpZone, or the design and implementation of its activities.

The policy lays out the commitments made by HelpZone and informs the Board, volunteers and personnel of their responsibilities concerning safeguarding.

HelpZone insists on the highest standards of civil and ethical behaviours and as trust form the basis of all its relationship it commits to apply this policy to its partners encompassing it in the contractual terms of all business relationships.

HelpZone reckons that everyone it comes into contact with, regardless of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin, has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation, and to be treated on an equal footing with its staff and personnel. As HelpZone's ultimate goal is improving the lives of people, it will adopt a "zero tolerance" approach aiming at protecting by all means people's health, wellbeing and human rights and will take all allegations of abuse seriously.

This policy will address the following areas: sexual abuse and exploitation, child abuse, discriminatory abuse, unethical and illegal employment practices, self-abuse, neglect, psychological and emotional abuse, financial abuse, online harassment, human trafficking, and taking advantage of any unequal power dynamics.

HelpZone is also committed to providing a work environment free from illegal drugs and the influence of alcohol.

This policy is also intended to address child safeguarding to ensure that HelpZone programmes and operations do not put children at risk of harm as well as to enable appropriate responses when concerns arise. HelpZone acknowledges that there are contexts in which children are a greater safeguarding risk and this can be perpetuated due to gender and social imbalances, as well as to additional vulnerabilities.

Child safeguarding encompasses all abovementioned forms of harms, as well as duly take into consideration the usage of information and communication involving children. HelpZone requires all its partners to meet at least the minimum requirements on child safeguarding and guarantees that child protection is enclosed in all short term and permanent contracts issued.

HelpZone commits to addressing safeguarding through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

Prevention

HelpZone will:

- Ensure that all staff receive training on safeguarding and are familiar with their responsibilities within this policy;
- Design and undertake all its activities prioritizing the protection of people from any risk or harm;
- Implement safeguarding procedures during the recruitment and deployment of staff and ensure they not engage in any of the areas addressed by this policy and that they contribute creating an environment

preventing safeguarding violations especially by reporting any concerns or suspicions regarding any breach of this policy – failure to notify them might itself be considered a basis for further disciplinary action –;

- Raise beneficiaries’ awareness on the content of this policy including the procedures to protect themselves and report any form of abuse.

Reporting

HelpZone will ensure that safe, appropriate and accessible means of reporting are made available to both staff and beneficiaries of our projects, as well as to external sources such as partners and official bodies. All safeguarding concerns may be reported via the email (info@helpzone.org).

HelpZone commits to maintain confidentiality when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information should be shared on a need-to-know basis only and should be kept secure.

Response

HelpZone will investigate and follow up safeguarding reports and complaints according to its statutory and contractual obligations and will adopt appropriate disciplinary measures, as well as share concerns with bodies and agencies entitled to know.