

# Partnerships in safeguarding policy and practice

**Safeguarding and Strengthening Practice Seminar**

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# Session outline

Existing safeguarding guidelines and statements



Frameworks for thinking about partner relationships



Thinking about partnership in relation to safeguarding



Issues emerging from research



Facilitated discussion

# Aims of the session

Share experiences, challenges, and strategies, associated with working in partnership in relation to safeguarding



Consider directions for engaging with different types of partners to ensure effective and responsive safeguarding



Discuss short- and long-term needs and priorities relating to partnerships and safeguarding

# Partners and safeguarding

- Complex 'chains' of actors at multiple levels
- How can organisations ensure that partners establish and implement safeguarding policies and procedures?
- How can organisations effectively and respectfully support partners to achieve broader safeguarding aims?



# Defining partners

When implementing programmes, which types of partners does your organisation engage with?

When you refer to 'partners', who does this include? Who is considered a 'partner'?

# Guidelines on partners and safeguarding

- **DFID Enhanced Due Diligence (2018):** Ensure safeguarding standards are 'cascaded down the delivery chain'
- **DFID Supply Partner Code of Conduct (2019):** 'Robust procedures are adopted and maintained' in any activities relating to DFID-funded work
- **Charity Commission (2018):** 'Proper due diligence' and 'clear lines of responsibility and reporting' with partners
- **Bond (2018):** 'We will agree minimum standards and ensure we and our partners meet them'

# Some challenges

- Differences in legal and socio-cultural norms and frameworks
- Tensions over perceived imposition of external standards
- Translating the term 'safeguarding' outside the UK
- Reconciling due diligence requirements and minimum standards with building 'equitable' partnerships

# Relationships with partners



- Different forms of power: e.g. control of resources, authority, legitimacy, knowledge
- UK-based organisations can hold power in relation to ‘downstream’ partners
- They also rely on partners: influence doesn’t only operate in one direction

# Relationships with partners

- Do not take place in purely 'national' or 'local' contexts
  - International inequalities in wealth and resources
  - Past interventions and historical interactions
- Relationships with partners can unintentionally reproduce forms of inequality
- More than just technical arrangements – they have significant implications for safeguarding efforts

# Statements on partnerships and safeguarding

- **Bond (2018):** Safeguarding ‘can only be achieved in collaboration with’ local partners, ‘more equal relationships between organisations’
- **2018 joint NGO statement:** Design safeguarding processes ‘in partnership with the communities that we work in’
- **CHS Guidance Notes:** Importance of ‘open dialogue and constructive criticism’ and ‘mutual learning and development’

# Partnerships and safeguarding

Thinking about partnership **specifically** in relation to safeguarding...

Is the process of working with partners **on safeguarding** different from other aspects of partnership?

What are some **benefits** and **challenges** in working with partners on safeguarding policies and procedures?

# Partnerships and safeguarding

- Commitments to equitable, collaborative, open, constructive partnerships
- What does this mean in practice, given existing regulatory and funder requirements?
- What kinds of relationships are established with partners through safeguarding efforts?



# Developing policies: Partners' perceptions

- Frustrations and resistance tied to perceptions of unequal relationships
- Aims and principles may be shared or accepted – but specific 'rules' **perceived** as imposed
- Lack of clarity about scope of safeguarding and fears of getting things wrong
- Safeguarding as a 'service' provided? Or as having mutual benefit?

# Developing policies: Knowledge and concepts

- Questions about **when**, **why**, and **how** (i.e. in what capacity) partners are brought into the process
- ‘Local’ protective, preventive, and reporting strategies?
- Translation of the term ‘safeguarding’ and distinction from related terms
- Different international partners: different definitions, scope, or ‘rules’ in safeguarding policies

# Developing and implementing policies

How do you understand the **respective roles** of your organisation and of 'downstream' partners in relation to safeguarding?

**When, why, and how** are 'downstream' partners involved in developing safeguarding policies and procedures?

# Implementing policies: Applicability in policy vs. practice

- Policies clearly apply to staff and personnel, and...
- ...those with formal/contractual relationships? Who represent the organisation? Associated with delivery of an organisation's work? Professional and personal lives?
- Who is bound by a given policy? And how far does responsibility and accountability for safeguarding reach **in practice**?

# Implementing policies: Expectations and accountability



- Understandings and expectations may be less clear **in practice** for different types of partners
- How do safeguarding expectations reach different categories of actors?
- Responsibility for oversight, monitoring, and accountability 'down the chain'?

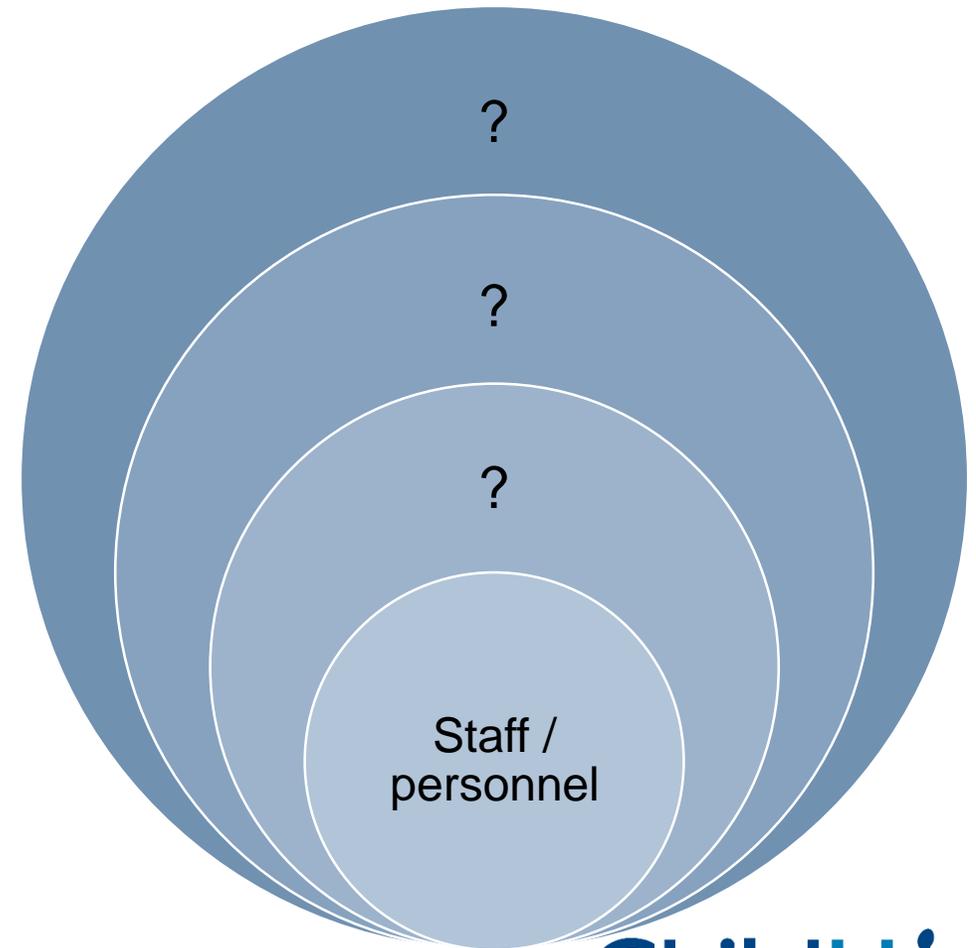
# Part 2



# Expectations, responsibility, and accountability

Where do different categories of 'partners' fall, in terms of expectations regarding responsibility and accountability for safeguarding?

How far do safeguarding policies reach **in practice**?



# Partnerships and safeguarding

What are the key concerns in working with partners on the **development** and **implementation** of safeguarding policies and procedures?

When, why, and how partners are involved in developing policies and procedures?

The respective roles of your organisation and of partners?

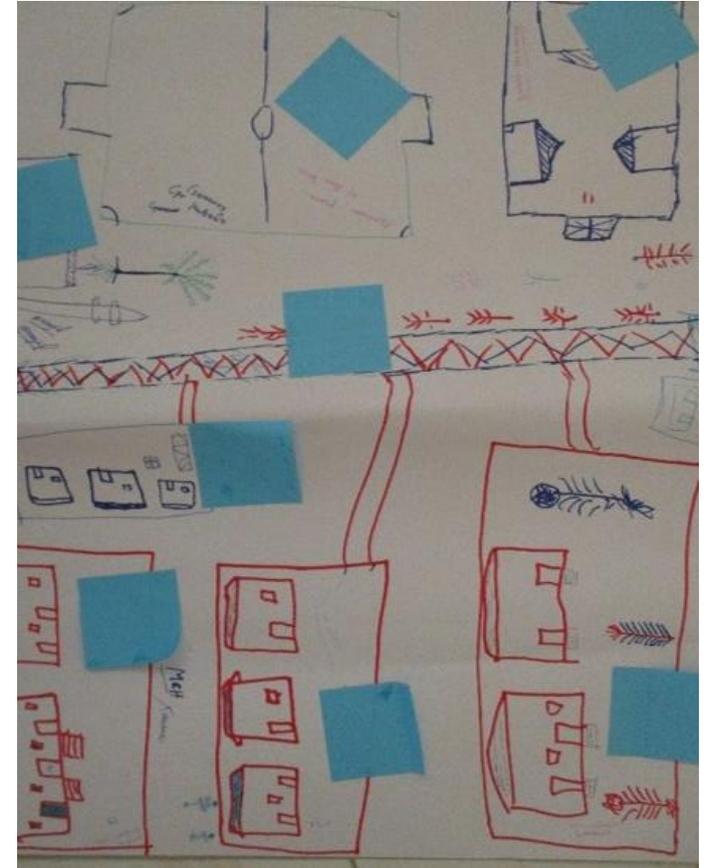
Working with partners on safeguarding as different from other aspects of partnership?

Who is involved in implementing programmes, and who is considered a 'partner'?

# Partnership strategies

Considering these challenges, what are some approaches or strategies that you / your organisation has adopted to work with partners in **developing** and **implementing** safeguarding policies and procedures?

Which approaches have been effective or successful? Which have been less so?



# Potential approaches: Engagement and 'buy in'

- Open discussion of how standards are developed, 'universality' vs. contextualisation, fears and concerns
- Acknowledgement of requirements by regulatory bodies and funders
- Responsibilities **and** benefits of safeguarding: shared interests and principles, not just risk and requirement
- To ensure greater buy-in, acceptance, and implementation

# Potential approaches: Collaboration and learning

- Collaborative approaches to safeguarding policy development
  - Recognising partners as 'experts' who can contribute to global safeguarding approaches
  - Processes of mutual learning
- Supporting information sharing among partners on strategies for partnership **and** safeguarding policy development and implementation

# Potential approaches: Expectations and accountability

- Explicit safeguarding expectations for all categories of partners involved in programme implementation
- Explicit pathways for ensuring information, monitoring, and accountability ‘down the chain’
- Open acknowledgment and establishment of systems of both ‘downward’ and ‘upward’ accountability
  - International organisations – ‘downstream’ partners – community collaborators

# Directions forward

To address key concerns and challenges associated with partnerships and safeguarding, what are the short-term and long-term needs and priorities that should be considered by organisations and funders?

Development of safeguarding policies and procedures		Implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures	
Short-term needs	Longer-term priorities	Short-term needs	Longer-term priorities

# Contact details



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