

Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Medical Research Foundation and its linked charities (the Charities) recognise safeguarding as a key governance priority for all charities, regardless of size, type or income, and not just those working with those groups who have traditionally been considered to be vulnerable or 'at risk'; namely children and young people and vulnerable adults. The Charities are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its employees (including secondees), contractors, beneficiaries, volunteers and those connected to the activities of the Charities.
- 1.2 The policy aims to:
- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all employees, contractors, beneficiaries, volunteers and others who come into contact with the charities.
 - Provide assurance that the Charities take reasonable steps to manage safeguarding risks.
 - Ensure that everybody understands their roles and responsibilities with regards to safeguarding matters.
 - Ensure that appropriate action is taken in the event of any allegations or suspicions of harm from contact with the charities' staff or volunteers.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all who work and volunteer for the charities.

2. Principles

- 2.1 Legislative protection exists to ensure the safeguarding of those who are typically considered to be vulnerable or at risk of abuse or neglect. This includes:
- Children and young people under 18 years of age.
 - Adults (aged 18 and over) who are considered to be vulnerable or at risk.
- 2.2 The Charities do not provide support services to members of the public and will not usually work with those who fall within the remit of the legislation. From time-to-time the Charities may come into contact with young people under 18 years of age, such as hosting a high school student for work experience or in a voluntary capacity. In these circumstances, the Charities' Young Person Risk Assessment process must be completed ahead of engagement with the young person.
- 2.3 The charities will take all reasonable steps to safeguard and protect all beneficiaries and other connected people, from abuse or mistreatment by those working or volunteering for the Charities.
- 2.4 The Charities will also take all reasonable steps to protect from harm all beneficiaries, employees, volunteers, those connected with the activities of the charities, and those who come into contact with the charities.
- 2.5 The Charities will take a risk-based approach to manage safeguarding concerns. Issues of safeguarding will be considered as part of the risk assessment process. Safeguarding will be included on the Charities' Health & Safety Risk Registers as a stand-alone risk and will be kept under review by the Executive.

- 2.6 The Charities will ensure appropriate due diligence is undertaken on its partners, grant recipients, donors and when recruiting staff, volunteers and trustees.
- 2.7 The Foundation will ensure a member of its Board of Trustees, is nominated to act as the trustee with responsibility for whistleblowing across the charity group.

3. Taking action

- 3.1 An employee who has suspicions or concerns that safeguarding malpractice has occurred, shall follow the charity's Whistleblowing Policy.
- 3.2 A beneficiary, volunteer or another person who has come into contact with the charities who has suspicions or concerns that safeguarding malpractice has occurred, shall contact the Chief Executive of the Charity, who shall ensure the Charity's whistleblowing procedures are implemented. Should the whistleblower feel unable to raise their concerns with the respective Charity's CEO, they should contact the Charities' Whistleblowing Trustee. If the whistleblower feels unable to raise their concerns with the charity directly, they may raise the issue with the Charity Commission.
- 3.3 The Charities will ensure serious safeguarding incidents are reported adequately and appropriately to the Charity Commission via a Serious Incident Report (SIR). Reports to other external authorities, police and regulators will be made as is appropriate to the safeguarding incident. Decisions regarding whether reports to external authorities, other than the Charity Commission, will be fully risk assessed and not made if they are likely to cause further harm to the victim/survivors, or due process or the rule of law is not reasonably assured. A SIR will be made in any event and will include an explanation of the Charity's decisions on other external reporting.

4. Related policies

- 4.1 This policy sits alongside the Charities' various Codes of Conduct (including Trustee, Committee Member and Volunteer) Code of Conduct and the policies set out in the Employee Handbook. This includes the following key policies:
- Bullying and Harassment
 - Code of Conduct
 - Disciplinary
 - Grievance
 - Whistleblowing

5. Review

- 5.1 This policy will be reviewed triennially or as business reasons dictate.

6. Associated relevant legislation and guidance

- Charities Act 2011
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

- Charity Commission Guidance 'Safeguarding duties for charity trustees'
- Charity Commission Guidance 'How to report a serious incident in your charity'

7. Change History

Version	Date	Comments/changes	Author
V 0.1	August 2018	Draft document created	Maria Claridge
V 0.2	September 2018	Amended, approved for Board consideration	Angela Hind
V 1.0	September 2018	Policy approved	Board of Trustees
V 1.1	August 2021	Policy revised	Maria Claridge
V 2.0	September 2021	Policy approved	Board of Trustees

8. Policy Owner

Name:	Maria Claridge, Head of Operations & Governance
Function:	Governance