

# Safeguarding Policy

## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Medical Research Foundation (the charity) recognises 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 charity is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its employees (including secondees), contractors, beneficiaries, volunteers and those connected to the activities of the charity.
- 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 charity.
  - Provide assurance that the charity takes 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 charity's staff or volunteers.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all who work and volunteer for the charity.

## 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 charity does 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 charity may come into contact with young people under 18 years of age, such as hosting a high school student for work experience, collecting real-life stories for publication, or in a voluntary capacity. In these circumstances, the charity's Young Person Risk Assessment process must be completed ahead of engagement with the young person.
- 2.3 The charity 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 charity.
- 2.4 The charity will also take all reasonable steps to protect from harm all beneficiaries, employees, volunteers, and those connected with the activities of the charity, by those who come into contact with the charity.
- 2.5 The charity 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 charity's Risk Registers as a stand-alone risk and will be kept under review by the Executive.

- 2.6 The charity will undertake extensive pre-employment security checks for all employees which include CRB checks, animal rights activism, and identity checks. Pre-appointment identify checks and due diligence will be undertaken for trustees and committee members, as well as office-based volunteers. The charity will take a risk-based approach to managing scenarios which require safeguarding considerations and build appropriate checks into its procedures and risk assessments.
- 2.7 To support this policy, the charity has in place supporting procedures for managing communications with vulnerable persons, which are designed to safeguard individuals contacting the charity who appear to be vulnerable.
- 2.8 The charity will ensure a member of its Board of Trustees is nominated to act as the trustee with responsibility for whistleblowing.

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### **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 charity who has suspicions or concerns that safeguarding malpractice has occurred, shall contact the Chief Executive, who shall ensure the whistleblowing procedures are implemented. Should the whistleblower feel unable to raise their concerns with the CEO, they should contact the 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 charity 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. An SIR will be made in any event and will include an explanation of the Charity's decisions on other external reporting.

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### **4. Related policies**

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

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### **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
V 2.1	September 2024	Policy revised	Maria Claridge
V 3.0	September 2024	Policy approved	Board of Trustees

## 8. Policy Owner

Name:	Maria Claridge, Director of Governance
Function:	Governance