



SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

BACKGROUND

At HM Forage we take safeguarding seriously and believe that protecting people from harm is everyone's responsibility.

The purpose of this Policy is to protect people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries, from any harm that may be caused due to them meeting us through our work.

This Policy applies to the HM Forage Board of Trustees, all HM Forage (and subsidiary charity) employees, including affiliate organisations, and to all paid and unpaid consultants, contractors, interns, secondees and volunteers that provide supplies, services or support, to HM Forage, or promote its work at any location in or out of the United Kingdom. All such parties are referred to as "stakeholders" in this document.

This Policy also applies to HM Forage's partners, vendors and other third parties, where it is included or referenced in relevant bid or tender documents, agreements, memorandums, purchase orders or contracts.

POLICY STATEMENT

HM Forage believes that everyone we meet through our work, 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. HM Forage will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by any "stakeholder".

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. These key areas of safeguarding may have different policies associated with them (see Associated Policies).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries, from any harm that may be caused due to their meeting HM Forage through our work. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of “stakeholders” associated with HM Forage
- The design and implementation of HM Forage’s programmes and activities

The policy lays out the commitments made by HM Forage and informs “stakeholders” of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

This policy does not cover:

- Sexual harassment in the workplace – this is dealt with under HM Forage’s Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Workplace Bullying – this is dealt with under HM Forage’s Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by HM Forage or associated “stakeholders”

SCOPE

This policy applies to the HM Forage Board of Trustees, all HM Forage (and subsidiary charity) employees, including affiliate organisations, and to all paid and unpaid consultants, contractors, interns, secondees and volunteers that provide supplies, services or support, to HM Forage or promote its work at any location in or out of the United Kingdom. All such parties are referred to as “stakeholders” in this policy.

APPROACH

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

PILLAR 1: PREVENTION

HM Forage will:

- Ensure all “stakeholders” 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 HM Forage. 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 “stakeholders”.
- Ensure “stakeholders” receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organisation.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING - which is guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

HM Forage “stakeholders” will 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

HM Forage “stakeholders” 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

HM Forage “stakeholders” must not:

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

Additionally, HM Forage “stakeholders” are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy Statement
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by HM Forage “stakeholders”

PILLAR 2: REPORTING

HM Forage will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to “stakeholders” and the communities we work with.

Any “stakeholders” reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistleblowing channels (or if they request it) will be protected by HM Forage’s Whistleblowing Policy.

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

HOW TO REPORT A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

“Stakeholders” who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to a manager. If the “Stakeholder” does not feel comfortable reporting to a manager (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to any other appropriate employee. For example, this could be a senior manager or a member of the Board of Trustees.

It is the responsibility of all HM Forage “stakeholders” to report any suspicions of wrongdoing without delay to prevent harm and abuse

Any “stakeholder” who has concerns can discuss their concerns with either a manager, or where they feel this is not appropriate the country project coordinator or a Trustee, or if they prefer they can raise their concerns by emailing contact@hmforage.org marking the subject Private and Confidential – Safeguarding Concern

PILLAR 3: RESPONSE

HM Forage will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations (see Procedures for reporting and

response to safeguarding concerns in our Complaints Policy and Whistleblowing Policy).

Where appropriate, HM Forage will:

- conduct a thorough investigation
- suspend any the member of staff accused, pending the disciplinary process
- report the accusation to the appropriate local authorities
- report the accusation to the police and support any criminal investigation

“Stakeholders” found to be in breach of this policy will be subject to the appropriate action by HM Forage. This will include:

- members of staff being subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- ending volunteer relationships
- termination of a “stakeholder’s” contract

The Charity Secretary will be responsible for ensuring that all reports of harm or abuse are logged and reported in line with this policy.

All incidents will be reported to the Board of Trustees

Where an incident is proven and meets the definitions of a serious incident, it will be reported to the Charity Commission, through its serious incident reporting process.

HM Forage will offer support to survivors of harm caused by “stakeholders”, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is essential that confidentiality is 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.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES:

Code of Conduct

Child Protection Policy

Complaints Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Bullying and Harassment Policy

PROCEDURE AND TIMING FOR REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This policy will be approved by the Board of Trustees and reviewed as a minimum every three years. Comments or suggestions on how this policy is operating should be sent to the Charity Secretary.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Beneficiary

Someone who directly receives goods or services from HM Forage's programme. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that the NGO serves, and 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 "stakeholders". 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).

Safeguarding

In our sector, we understand Safeguarding to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our "stakeholders" or programmes. In HM Forage we adopt the UK Charity Commission guidance that describes Safeguarding as meaning a person or group of people

eligible to benefit from a charity. Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all we do.

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.

Version Control

<i>Version No.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>By (Name, Position)</i>	<i>Details of changes</i>	<i>Reviewed and approved by Board of Trustees</i>
1	12/12/2023	Graham Hawkes, Trustee & Secretary	N/A	07/01/2024