



Safeguarding Framework Tails of Freedom (Sri Lanka)

1. Introduction

Tails of Freedom is committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk and protecting anyone that comes into contact with us from harm.

This safeguarding policy is a part of our aim as an organisation to: **Uphold a safe, respectful and welcoming environment for all staff, board members, volunteers, partners, community informants, and patrons involved or interacting with Tails of Freedom.**

2. Definitions

Safeguarding is the development and maintenance of practices that protect people involved with the charity from harm such as staff, volunteers, supporters, and customers/fosterers. It is particularly relevant when involved with children and vulnerable adults (definition below). Safeguarding involves the embedding of best practices throughout the levels of stakeholdership at Tails of Freedom to ensure the protection of everyone we come into contact with, particularly vulnerable groups i.e. children and adults at risk.

In this policy the following definitions will apply:

- **A child** is defined by the Children Act 2004 as "a person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday".
- **An adult with care and support needs** means someone over the age of 18 who requires extra practical, financial or emotional support to manage their lives and be independent. This could include older people, people with a disability or long-term illness, or people with mental health problems. Care and support could include home care, personal assistant, day services or the provision of aids and adaptations.
- **An adult at risk** is defined as someone over the age of 18 who has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.
- **Third party** means any individual that ToF comes into contact with and includes actual and potential donors, informants, suppliers, contractors, business contacts, sponsors, fosters advisors, community members, Government and public bodies, including their advisors, workers and officials, politicians and political parties.
- **Colleagues or peers** refers to all individuals acting on the organisations behalf, including all employees, volunteers, advisors, team members or any other person associated with ToF's partners, wherever they may be located.



'Harm' refers to:

- Physical abuse - Hitting, slapping, pushing, shaking, locking someone in a room, tying to a chair, restricting their freedom.
- Psychological/Emotional abuse - Threats of harm, being left alone, humiliation, playing on known anxieties, intimidation, verbal abuse, bullying, blaming, constant criticism, controlling, depriving contact with others.
- Financial abuse - Stealing, theft, fraud, pressure to hand or sign over property or money, misuse of property or welfare benefits, or stopping someone getting their money or possessions, scammed by rogue traders, by scams online, by email or by post.
- Neglect - Failure to provide medical or physical care, access to a doctor or other services, or denying someone medication, food or heating, privacy or dignity, self neglect.
- Sexual harm - Any sexual activity that a person doesn't understand or want, photographing, sexual harassment, voyeurism.
- Self harm - The adult is engaging (or is likely to engage) in conduct which causes (or is likely to cause) self harm.
- Discrimination - Because of age, colour, disability, gender, race, religion, cultural background or sexual orientation.
- Institutional harm - The routines, systems, regime and culture of a service or an institution result in poor or inadequate standards of care and poor practice.

3. Responsibilities:

The Safeguarding Policy places a number of responsibilities on various groups of people involved in Tails of Freedom. These are as follows:

Board of Directors and Senior Leadership: have a duty of care to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place to prevent abuse from taking place and to appropriately manage any concerns. They also have a responsibility to ensure that all appropriate issues are reported in line with best practice and to appoint a Safeguarding Trustee Focal Point who will provide subject matter expertise and has delegated responsibility on behalf of the Board for ensuring that ToF maintains effective safeguarding policies, procedures and practices. The Board also has a responsibility to report any necessary issues flagged by the Safeguarding Lead to the relevant national regulatory body.

The Leadership Team will ensure that we

- build a culture of openness to enable issues and concerns about safeguarding to be raised and discussed.
- Build a sense of accountability between colleagues so that potential poor or abusive behaviour can be challenged.
- Maintain a reputation of robust standards and high standards of working

The Safeguarding Lead will: provide strategic oversight for all aspects of safeguarding at ToF and will ensure that policies and procedures are up to date, effective, appropriate and fully implemented.



All members of Tails of Freedom have a responsibility to

- 1) ensuring the safety of all those who are involved or interact with the organisation.
- 2) acknowledge our duty to act appropriately to any reports or suspicions of abuse.
- 3) be informed on safeguarding procedures and best practices.
- 4) advocate for the dignity of the person(s) experiencing harm
- 5) take seriously and respond quickly and appropriately to all suspicions and allegations of abuse, including referral to the relevant investigating agency
- 6) pay particular attention to ensure the safety and wellbeing of persons who do not have the capacity to decide how they want to respond to experiences of abuse
- 7) to recruit staff and volunteers through a system in which necessary background checks are made
- 8) manage ToF operations and planning in a way that promotes safety and actively prevents the possibility of harm
- 9) to provide guidance and management to staff and volunteers through support and training
- 10) to ensure that all peers have the same protection regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and ability.
- 11) to ensure all team members are aware of their responsibilities, including the identification of people at risk of significant harm. This includes any person within or interacting with the organisation who may need care and support, are experiencing ,or at risk of abuse or neglect and are unable to look after themselves

Tails of Freedom recognises that because of the day to day contact our team can have with outside community members and perpetrators of animal abuse we must

- establish and maintain an environment where team members and informants feel secure, are confident to talk and are listened to
- ensure team members know they can approach any senior member of ToF if they have any concerns

The overall responsibility for compliance monitoring lies with the Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer.

4. Dealing with a Disclosure

In receiving complaints or any concerning information the organisation will ensure that senior members are aware and trained to:

- listen carefully and stay calm
- REASSURE the person by telling them that they have done the right thing.
- INFORM the person that you must pass the information on, but only those that need to know about it will be told. Tell them who you are going to report the matter to (Safeguarding Officer).
- REACT – do not interview the person. Be sure that you understand what you are listening to, use open ended questions and do not attempt to put words into the person's mouth, keep questions to a minimum.

Note the main points carefully, specifically:



- Date, time and place of incident
- Name of person
- Name or details of person/s alleged to have been involved in the incident, if different from above
- Nature of incident
- Description of any physical or mental injuries observed if any
- Any other information given
- Confirmation that the informant has been advised of the next steps
- Signed, date and time of report

It is not the responsibility of ToF team members to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All members, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind.

ToF members should not investigate concerns or the allegations themselves but should report them immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy. The Safeguarding Lead or nominated Deputy will make referrals to the relevant agency.

ToF is committed to making safeguarding personal using a person-led approach that enhances involvement, control and choice throughout the safeguarding process. When making decisions about an adult at risk, consideration will be made using the six principles of adult safeguarding:

- Empowerment: people should be supported and encouraged to make their own decisions.
- Prevention: it is better to take action before harm occurs.
- Proportionality: the best approach is the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- Protection: support and representation should be provided to those in greatest need.
- Partnership: services should offer local solutions through working closely with their communities.
- Accountability: there should be accountability and transparency when delivering safeguarding practice.

5. Review

The ToF team meets regarding Safeguarding twice a year.

Tails of Freedom will keep its policy and procedures on safeguarding under annual review to take account of any new Government legislation, regulations or best practice documents to ensure that staff are kept fully up to date with their responsibilities and accountabilities with regard to the safety and wellbeing of stakeholders.

Tails of Freedom will aim to resolve any complaints within 10 working days of any formal complaint.



6. Safeguarding during times of national crisis

It is important to recognise that there are occasions when national or international emergencies (for example, financial crisis, pandemic disease, natural disasters or international conflicts) may impact the frequency and presentation of safeguarding risks. During such times, vulnerable members of society often face additional pressures alongside decreased services and support, resulting in an increased risk of abuse, harm and exploitation. Added to this, any disruption to our usual ways of operating could reduce colleague's ability to recognise and respond to the signs of safeguarding concerns.

No matter what the external pressure is, Tails of Freedom will continue to be committed to protecting and safeguarding everyone we come into contact with. The need for additional safeguarding measures, resources and protections required during times of difficulty will be identified, developed, implemented and kept under regular review.

7. Whistleblowing

ToF encourages people who become aware of wrongdoing in the organisation to report their concerns immediately. All incidents are investigated fairly and confidentially. We are committed to non-retaliation against colleagues or third-parties who report possible or actual violation of organisational policies. ToF will not discharge, demote, discriminate or otherwise retaliate against any peer or any other person who, in good faith, reports or threatens to report a violation of policy, or who cooperates with any government investigation of such reports.

At Tails of Freedom, we emphasise our responsibility to ensure the behaviour of our staff and volunteers is consistent with this policy. The organisation recognises its role in identifying cases of suspected abuse in making referrals to the appropriate investigating agencies. We are committed to the wellbeing of our community and strive to have a positive footprint as we work towards the betterment of companion animals in Sri Lanka.

.....
Shilpa Samarathunge
Director - Tails of Freedom
January 2024

.....
Kimaya de Silva
Safeguarding Lead - Tails of Freedom
January 2024