

Safeguarding Vulnerable Beneficiaries Policy

AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL AID (AIA) recognises that in its work with children and vulnerable beneficiaries it has a responsibility always act in their best interests and ensure reasonable steps are taken to protect them from harm.

The safety and protection of vulnerable beneficiaries are the responsibility of all adults working for the charity.

Where vulnerable beneficiaries are believed to have suffered abuse, or alleged to be at risk of abuse, trustees and volunteers will take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate action is taken.

Introduction

AIA has a strong commitment to the welfare of all beneficiaries, and to their protection from abuse or exploitation. We want to develop and maintain an organisational environment that is free of harassment, abuse and exploitation, and to ensure the same high principles in all of our work with beneficiaries and partners.

This policy and procedure aim to deter, minimise and remove opportunities for abuse of children or vulnerable adults to occur within the work of the charity. Abuse can take various form:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Neglect
- Sexual

Definitions

Children - are defined as being someone under the age of 18.

Vulnerable Adults - are defined as someone 'who is or may be in need of community care services or humanitarian aid and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or protect themselves from harm'.

Beneficiaries – all those who benefit from our services.

Abuse – is a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to a vulnerable beneficiary who needs our help or support.

Abuse includes:

- physical abuse, hitting, slapping, punching, burning
- sexual abuse, rape, indecent assault, inappropriate touching
- emotional abuse, belittling, name calling,
- financial or material abuse, stealing, selling assets
- neglect and acts of omission, leaving in soiled clothes, failing to feed properly • discriminatory abuse (including racist, sexist, based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment)
- institutional

Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. It is important to remember that abuse is defined by the impact on the individual not the intention of the abuser, in other words if someone does not have their needs cared for this can be just as damaging as when abuse is carried out deliberately.

People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be doctors, nurses, social workers, advocates, volunteers or others in a position of trust. They may also be relatives, friends, neighbours or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse.

Responsibilities

All trustees and volunteers

All trustees and volunteers represent the charity and have a responsibility to safeguard from harm all those who need help and support in all the areas of the charities work.

Trustees and volunteers are inducted into this policy and procedure to ensure they have an understanding of what forms abuse can take and how to report any concerns.

All trustees and volunteers must share information on abuse or potential abuse.

Trustees

Trustees of AIA have a collective duty of care to take the necessary steps to safeguard all beneficiaries who use our charity for help and support. They must always act in the best interests of these beneficiaries and ensure they take all reasonable steps to prevent any harm coming to them.

The Trustees of AIA have a responsibility for the general control, management and administration of the charity. It is therefore vital that Trustees assess the risks that arise from the charity's activities and operations involving all beneficiaries and develop and put in place appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures to protect them. They must also undertake on-going monitoring activity to ensure that these safeguards are being effectively implemented in practice.

Trustees will ensure that safeguarding is included, where appropriate, in the strategic plans, risk assessments, communications and quality assurance processes of the charity.

Chair of the Trustees

The Chair of the Trustees is responsible for overseeing the safeguarding policy and taking appropriate action in the event of reported abuse.

Procedure

1. The following information will be sought from potential new Trustees or Volunteers undertaking regular projects on behalf of the charity.

- The names and contact information of two individuals prepared to give references
- Photo identification *e.g.*, passport or driver license
- The home address of the individual
- A signed trustee eligibility declaration (Appendix 1 for trustees only)

2. Trustees or Volunteers (as described above) will not undertake any duties on behalf of the charity until references and security information have been received.

3. Some of our beneficiaries are under 18, contact with these individuals will only be made with the express permission of the parent or guardian and generally in their presence.

4. All beneficiaries will be treated with respect, tact, understanding and genuine concern.

5. Inappropriate behaviour by any trustee or volunteer will be recorded promptly and immediately reported to the Chair of the Trustees, who will take appropriate action. If the inappropriate behaviour involves the Chair of the Trustees it will be reported to at least two of the following officers of the charity, vice-chair, treasure or secretary.

6. If a trustee or volunteer believes that a beneficiary is being abused outside the confines of the charity this will be reported to the Chair of the Trustees.

Appropriate action may include:

- Further clarification discussions with the perpetrator
- Further training
- Reporting to the police
- Advising social services
- Serious incident reporting to the appropriate body

7. It is often very difficult to identify abuse. If a trustee or volunteer has a “nagging doubt” that something is wrong, then even if there is no plan to report the incident outside the charity it must be recorded and must be brought to the attention of the Chair of the Trustees. Something that appears trivial at the time may prove vital later and may help to build up a pattern of abuse.

This policy and procedure will be reviewed at least annually.

TRUSTEE ELIGIBILITY DECLARATION

By completing and signing this form, you declare that you:

- 1. Are willing to act as a trustee of the organisation named above Understand your organisation’s purposes (objects) and rules set out in its Declaration of Trust and resolutions**

- 2. Are not prevented from acting as a trustee because you:**
 - have an unspent conviction for one or more of the offences listed here*
 - have an IVA, debt relief order and/or a bankruptcy order
 - are a disqualified company director
 - are a designated person for the purposes of antiterrorism legislation
 - are on the sex offender’s register
 - have been found in contempt of court for making (or causing to be made) a false statement

NAME: SARAH HOAYLAH

SIGNATURE: 