



Safeguarding Action Plan (external)

Safeguarding Action Plan -- External Version 2 June 2021

This document provides a summary of the SOS Children's Villages Safeguarding Action Plan 2021-2024.

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ICSR Report Recommendations

The Independent Child Safeguarding Review Global Report provides 46 recommendations in six categories:

1. Overall
2. Child Safeguarding measures within SOS Children's Villages International
3. Leadership and Organizational Culture
4. Oversight, Governance and Accountability
5. Care Quality and the role of primary caregivers
6. Justice and support for victims, survivors, and whistle-blowers

The full report with all 46 recommendations can be found on our international website (from 25 June 2021).

The report confirms [lessons we had already been learning](#) through our safeguarding work. These lessons are also reflected in our Child Safeguarding Annual Reports, which are available [on our website](#).

SOS Children's Villages is committed to implementing all of the report's recommendations, as well as making other improvements in our organisation to ensure safe environments everywhere we operate.

Our 24-Point Safeguarding Action Plan

SOS Children's Villages commits to implementing all of the ICSR Global Report recommendations. We have developed a safeguarding action plan that will address all the recommendations in a holistic way. This will include actions to transform the organizational culture and place safeguarding at the centre of everything we do – creating a safe environment for children, young people, and families we work with, as well as our staff and partners.

These actions address the ICSR recommendations and reflect SOS Children's Villages own learnings. Many of them had already been identified and initiated as part of our ongoing safeguarding work.

Eight of the actions are prioritised to address the most urgent points across the full range of the ICSR recommendations, and these are listed in bold. Below you will find all 24 actions mapped to the SOS Children's Villages (SOS CV) learning areas. Under the heading "mapping" you will also find them mapped to the ICSR recommendations. The prioritized actions (bold) actions are described in greater detail later under the heading "Prioritized Actions".

<p>SOS CV Learning area A Children and others that have experienced abuse: Holistic support, justice and incident management: Individual support and justice for each child, young person or person affected by abuse through strengthened incident management and capacity</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Immediate support for children and others that have experienced abuse -- to ensure those affected are supported towards healing, reconciliation, and becoming self-reliant 2. Ombudsperson system -- to represent the rights of children, young people and others affected by abuse 3. Incident management for persons that have experienced abuse -- consistently implemented across the entire federation
<p>SOS CV Learning area B All children and young people: Participation of children and young people in shaping safeguarding measures and understanding their rights</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Child and youth empowerment -- to ensure children and young people are involved in decisions regarding their care, prevent peer-to-peer violence and abuse, and give them a stronger voice in safeguarding 5. Youth development and participation -- to ensure that young people are empowered to participate in decisions affecting their care and development, and are supported in the leaving care process
<p>SOS CV Learning area C All Child and Youth Care Practitioners: Child and youth care practitioner working conditions, role, wellbeing, learning and development</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Working conditions for care practitioners -- to improve the working conditions and strengthen learning and development of child and youth care practitioners 7. Research on gender equality -- to improve understanding of attitudes and beliefs around gender and women's rights, experiences of discrimination, differentials in pay and conditions, and gender balance in leadership. 8. Learning and development for care practitioners -- to provide opportunities for individual, face-to-face, and digital training
<p>SOS CV Learning area D All federation stakeholders: People, culture and HR practices for safeguarding</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Federation culture development -- to build a safeguarding environment through practical, targeted initiatives 10. Code of Conduct/ values-based conduct -- to ensure the mandatory, global code is fully embedded across the federation; it will address bullying, power imbalances, and gender disparities.

11. Human resources competency framework – to demonstrate how staff can live our organisational values in our day-to-day work and integrate them into recruitment, performance management, and development
12. Review of all human resources policies – to ensure safeguarding is reflected and mandatory
13. Safe recruitment regulation – to ensure consistent and mandatory steps are taken in the recruitment process
14. Strategy for safeguarding capacity building – to ensure we have the right learning and development systems to support all our people, including child and youth care practitioners, support staff, managers and leaders
15. New global human resources policy with binding standards – an umbrella policy to ensure clarity and consistency across the entire federation
16. **Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) regulation implementation** – to fully implement the regulation already adopted by the International Senate, to promoting awareness and prevention and implementing reporting and responding processes

SOS CV Learning area E **Leaders and Managers: Oversight, leadership, governance and accountability for safeguarding**

17. **Independent Special Commission** – to take up past and contemporary cases of failings, including child abuse, corruption, and breaches of regulations
18. Alignment of integrity, compliance and safeguarding – to ensure our processes and procedures are working together effectively, including improved and integrated reporting and responding procedures
19. Child safeguarding policy update – to ensure ICSR recommendations and current best practice is reflected
20. **High-risk country support** -- to provide extra financial and management support to 25 member associations with a high-risk profile
21. Early warning system – to ensure safeguarding risks are monitored and escalated appropriately
22. Safeguarding resources in institutional donor projects – ensuring appropriate resources are in budgets

SOS CV Learning area F **Funders: Investment for high quality programmes across the Federation**

23. Increased investment in 70+ programmes to fix quality gaps – including monitoring, ensuring the necessary financial investment is made to improve quality in 70-100 programme locations
24. Increased support for member associations to implement Care Promise – including regular self-assessment and continuous improvement in areas such as programme admission standards and mental health support to programme participants

Mapping

Key elements of our Safeguarding Action Plan, labelled as 'prioritized actions', will ensure that we make progress towards implementing the recommendations as rapidly as possible.

Detailed mapping – 24 actions against 46 ICSR recommendations can be found [HERE](#)

Fast tracked actions ✓								
Prioritized safeguarding actions mapped against ICSR recommendations	1. Immediate support for children and other persons affected by abuse for historical incidents	2. Ombudsperson approach - world-wide in MAs and the GSC	3. Strengthen incident management	4. Child and youth training and participation for child safeguarding and child rights	10. Code of Conduct/ values-based conduct	16. Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) regulation implementation	17. Independent Special Commission	20. High-risk country support
Overall Recommendations	✓		✓				✓	
Child Safeguarding Measures SOS CVI					✓			
Child Safeguarding Leadership and Organisational Culture				✓	✓	✓		
Oversight, Governance and Accountability on Safeguarding							✓	✓
Care Quality and the Role of Primary Care Givers						✓		
Justice and Support for Victims, Survivors and Whistleblowers	✓	✓						

Prioritized Actions

NAME	DESCRIPTION	KPIs	MAPS TO ICSR
Special Commission	The independent Special Commission will address past and contemporary cases of failings, including child abuse, corruption, misuse of funds, and breaches of UN guidelines and regulations that protect children's and employees' human rights. The commission will investigate why failures occurred, while in other instances the organisation's policies and processes were appropriately followed through and important changes achieved.	Established by end May 2021; Further KPIs to be established as work proceeds	7.2; 7.3; 7.4; 7.30
Immediate support for children and others that have experienced abuse	Funding from existing reserves has been made available for direct individual support to all children, young people and other persons that have experienced abuse in SOS Children's Villages programmes, to ensure those affected are supported towards healing, reconciliation, and becoming self-reliant. This includes medical, mental health, psychosocial and legal support as well as support to improve their individual living situations. Support to be individualized, supportive, realistic, and empowering to the individual. To deliver this, we are setting up a system that can be monitored globally to ensure that every affected individual has a dedicated support person and plan, and every case is handled according to protocol. This is connected to the Incident Management action described below.	By 2024 100% of MAs will have implemented strict minimum standards on delivering individualised support 15% MAs by end of 2022	7.1; 7.5; 7.40; 7.41; 7.42; 7.46
Ombudsperson system	A safeguarding ombudsperson system throughout our global organisation will represent the rights of children, young people and others who have experienced abuse. Building on the model already practiced in some member associations, it will support children and others that have experienced abuse and anybody seeking resolution of concerns. The means by which support will be made available will be clearly communicated on our international website and across the 137 countries and territories where we work.	Interim Ombudsperson in GSC by end Sept 2021 100% of MAs covered by system by December 2023	7.40; 7.44
Incident Management for children and others that have experienced abuse	We will ensure a robust incident management system is consistently implemented across the entire federation. This includes additional staffing in member associations and regional offices. This will provide better support and access to justice for children, young people and others who have experienced abuse and will be complemented by Ombudsperson system.	Urgent gaps filled by end of 2021; 100% of MAs implement the new system by December 2023	7.2; 7.3; 7.4; 7.6; 7.7; 7.9; 7.33; 7.43; 7.45; 7.46
High-risk country support	We will provide extra financial and management support to 25 member associations with a high-risk profile to strengthen their child safeguarding through actions such as: assessment of risks; embedding of reporting mechanisms; involvement of external partners; training for management, boards, and practitioners; and more frequent safeguarding audits. Includes targeted	All 25 MAs to complete process and be audited by end December 2024	7.29

	prevention and holistic mental health support in each programme location.		
Child and youth empowerment	We will roll out the Protective Behaviours programme across the entire federation and ensure children and young people understand their rights. This programme, which has already been running in many countries, helps to ensure children and young people are involved in decisions regarding their care, serves to prevent peer-to-peer violence and abuse, and gives them a stronger voice in safeguarding.	100% of programmes implement Protective Behaviours by end of 2023	7.10; 7.19; 7.20
Code of Conduct and other human resources	We will update our Code of Conduct, already mandatory across the federation, and ensure it is fully embedded across the General Secretariat and in all member associations. The revised Code will address stronger focus on bullying, power imbalances, and gender disparities. The rollout will include multilingual e-learning tools to ensure consistency across the federation. It will be backed by a broader values-based conduct programme, which includes training and awareness to ensure staff understand how our organisational values of Accountability, Commitment, Courage, and Trust should be put into action. The Code of Conduct project will also be complemented with a comprehensive revision of all human resources policies to ensure safeguarding is prioritised and foregrounded in our key HR processes such as recruitment procedures, job descriptions, and appraisal processes. Underpinning the entire performance management system, there will be a new competency framework which ensures all understand and are assessed on their responsibilities for safeguarding.	Competency framework finalised by end 2021; New Code of Conduct established by January 2023; 100% GSC staff trained in new Code by Dec 2023 Three senior staff added to drive Code of Conduct and other initiatives by September 2021	7.8; 7.11; 7.14; 7.15; 7.16
Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) regulation implementation	The International Senate has already adopted a PSHEA regulation, and this will be fully implemented across the General Secretariat and all member associations. This includes promoting awareness and prevention and implementing reporting and responding processes.	Implemented in 100% of federation by December 2024	7.22; 7.38