



The Commonwealth

**The Commonwealth Secretariat Safeguarding
Policy for Children, Young People, and Vulnerable
Persons**

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title	Commonwealth Secretariat Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People, and Vulnerable Persons
Document Author(s)	HR
Document Owner	Director, Human Resources & Facilities Management
Document Status	Final
This Version Number	4.0

DOCUMENT AMENDMENT HISTORY

Version No.	Date	Amendment Summary
1.0	11 March 2020	
2.0	08 January 2021	Specific names have been removed. The Safeguarding Lead listed as the Director, Human Resources and Facilities Management and the Safeguarding Officer listed as the Legal Counsel.
3.0	12 January 2023	Updated to include Document Control and Document Amendment History and ComSec replaced with the Secretariat.
4.0	15/08/2024	Updated to include audit and Safeguarding Team recommendations.

Commonwealth Secretariat Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People, and Vulnerable Persons

1 PURPOSE

1.1 The Commonwealth Secretariat acknowledges that the nature of its work includes bringing staff, consultants, and project partners into contact with children, young people, and vulnerable persons. As such, the Secretariat acknowledges that it has a responsibility to ensure the safety of all children, young people and vulnerable persons by minimising the harm that may be done as a result of our activities.

1.2 The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- a) Ensure that the Secretariat takes all possible steps to ensure the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable persons against all forms of violence and creates an open and aware environment where concerns for the safety and wellbeing of a child, young person, or vulnerable person can be raised and managed in a fair and just manner, which protects the rights of all.
- b) Reflect our commitment to respect, promote, uphold, and protect the rights of the child as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and in line with Secretariat values.
- c) Provide staff and any person conducting work for, or on behalf of the Secretariat, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of children, young people, and vulnerable persons.

2 SCOPE

2.1 The Safeguarding Policy applies to any person conducting work for, or on behalf of the Secretariat including:

- a) trustees,
- b) board members,
- c) directors,
- d) managers,
- e) project officers,

- f) staff,
- g) young professionals,
- h) interns, volunteers,
- i) contractors, and
- j) consultants

- 2.2 This includes persons based in the Secretariat offices in London, Geneva, and New York, as well as anyone based in other countries or on mission.
- 2.3 All Representatives of partner organisations and accredited organisations who will be in contact with children, young people and vulnerable persons while working for, with or on behalf of the Secretariat are expected to comply with this Policy.
- 2.4 Additionally, the Secretariat partners and accredited organisations must have their own safeguarding policies and procedures in place that are consistent with this Policy and/or must commit to comply with this Policy whilst their own safeguarding policies and procedures are under development.
- 2.5 The Secretariat will treat any breach of this Policy seriously. Failure to comply with this Policy may incur sanctions ranging from disciplinary action (including dismissal) to termination contracts or partnerships, and where appropriate, may result in referral to the police or other relevant authorities.

3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The safeguarding standards are based on international best practice and reflect the values, principles and protections enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

4 POLICY STATEMENT

- 4.1 The Secretariat is fully committed to the gender responsive safeguarding of all children, young people and vulnerable persons from all forms of violence. We take very seriously our responsibility to ensure that we, as an organisation, and anyone who represents us, does not in any way harm, abuse or commit any other act of violence against children, young people and vulnerable persons or place them at risk of the same.
- 4.2 We recognize all children, young people and vulnerable persons, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital status or civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- 4.3 We have zero tolerance for bullying, harassment violence, and abuse (which includes sexual exploitation) against children, young people and vulnerable persons. We will challenge and do not tolerate inequality, discrimination, or exclusion.
- 4.4 We understand that the effects of abuse of children, young people and vulnerable persons are both devastating and long term, and we pledge to do all that is practically feasible to provide follow up support to that child, young person and vulnerable person, particularly through referral to appropriate agencies, and at the very minimum ensure that the child, young person, or vulnerable person is at no risk of experiencing that same harm.
- 4.5 To guarantee the effectiveness of this Policy, the Secretariat will ensure that:
- a) There is a designated safeguard lead (DSL).
 - b) There is a Safeguarding Team to promote consistency in the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy across the organisation.
 - c) The implementation and effectiveness of this Policy is reviewed annually, and the Policy is updated based on the findings.
 - d) A safeguarding report is compiled on an annual basis.

4.6 The Safeguarding Team will be composed of key individuals within the Secretariat. These are:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Director, Human Resources
Safeguarding Officer	Head of Social Policy Development
Designated staff members.	Includes the Safeguarding Officer and the Designated Safeguarding lead and one designate from the following Divisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Human Rights • Youth • Events • Human Resources • Legal Counsel • Facilities Management • CSSA Representative • Five Safeguarding Champions

4.7 The Safeguarding Team meets at least three times per year to ensure that relevant data is gathered to monitor organisational safeguarding practices and promote learning.

5 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

5.1 This policy should be read alongside other organisational policies, procedures, and guidelines, including:

- a) Whistleblowing Policy
- b) Code of Conduct and Ethics
- c) Attendance Management Policy
- d) Dignity at Work (Anti-bullying, Harassment) Policy
- e) Sexual Harassment Policy
- f) Information Technology Policy
- g) Health and Safety
- h) Recruitment and Selection
- i) Equal Opportunities

- j) School WorkExperience Policy and Procedure
- k) Non-Retaliation Policy
- l) Grievance Resolution Policy
- m) Grievance Resolution Procedures
- n) Mandatory Training Guidelines

6 SAFEGUARDING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Designated Safeguarding Officer

- a) To be the point of contact within the Secretariat for any issues relating to safeguarding.
- b) To support the senior leadership in managing any safeguarding concerns/investigations that may affect the reputation and standing of the organisation.
- c) To report any serious safeguarding incidents to the appropriate authorities and/or police in-country, as appropriate or required by applicable law or this Policy.

6.2 Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL)

- a) To promote awareness of this Safeguarding Policy and monitor its implementation.
- b) To function as a source of support and information for staff and others who are required to comply with this Policy, and where appropriate, grassroots partners, on safeguarding issues.
- c) To identify training needs and provide capacity development where needed.
- d) To maintain clear records of any safeguarding concerns that are reported, and the actions taken to address these concerns.
- e) To report any in-country issues or concerns to report any in-country issues or concerns to the Deputy Secretary-General DSG for further assessment and action as needed.

6.3 Safeguarding team

- a) To analyze data on safeguarding incidents and to generate learning and

- improve practice.
- b) To develop tools and training to support the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.
- c) To conduct an annual review of safeguarding implementation and effectiveness across the organisation.
- d) To coordinate an annual report on safeguarding.

7 SAFEGUARDING WITHIN HUMAN RESOURCES

Safe Recruitment

7.1 The Secretariat seeks to recruit staff who are committed to the highest standards of personal and professional conduct. This goes beyond simply complying with protocols and extends to ensuring that individuals have an appropriate set of personal and professional values and are committed to promoting the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable persons.

7.2 Recruitment of Staff

- a) Appointments of all new staff are conditional on a criminal record check from the relevant country, three references, as well as a copy of an official photo ID as proof of identity.
- b) For staff roles that include contact with children, young people and vulnerable persons, the job description will highlight this, and questions are included in interviews relating to safeguarding.
- c) Compliance with the Safeguarding Policy is a requirement for each staff member.

Staff Training and Support

7.3 The Secretariat will provide training and support designed to ensure that staff and others required to comply with this Policy understand their safeguarding responsibilities and have the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfil their responsibilities.

7.4 Compliance with this Policy is a requirement in all employees' contracts.

- 7.5 An acknowledgement of receipt of this Safeguarding Policy is included in the onboarding.
- 7.6 Capacity development on safeguarding is provided across the organisation on a regular basis, including refresher training within three months of the Safeguarding Policy being updated.
- 7.7 Supervision of staff and volunteers will be provided where appropriate.

Volunteers and Interns

- 7.8 Interns follow the same staff recruitment process as staff and Consultants.
- 7.9 Consultants include long -term and short-term consultants, contractors and service providers whose work involves direct or indirect contact with children, young people and vulnerable persons (to the extent such contractors or providers are legal entities, then the references to consultants shall refer to those individuals whose work for the Secretariat through such entities involves direct or indirect contact with children, young people and vulnerable persons).
- 7.10 Consultants are provided with a copy of this Policy prior to work commencing, which they must read and sign a commitment to adhere to.
- 7.11 Expectations with regard to safeguarding are explained in induction prior to undertaking assignments that involve direct or indirect contact with children and youth.
- 7.12 Contracts for Consultants include a clause requiring compliance with this Policy and the consequences of a breach.
- 7.13 Consultants of the Secretariat partners must adhere to the partner organisation's own safeguarding policies during the duration of the partnership.
- 7.14 Background checks are completed on consultants contracted by The Secretariat to work directly with the Secretariat partners where they may come into contact with children and youth.

Visitors

- 7.15 When The Secretariat guests participate in partner visits with our staff, we will ensure that:
- a) There is a clear purpose and reason for their visit (e.g., donor visiting a project, volunteer from a partner offering a brief training session).
 - b) We provide a review of relevant local context and customs.
 - c) We provide them with a copy of this Safeguarding Policy, and they are briefed on any additional safeguarding measures required by the partner, and they commit in writing to comply with the Policy and partner specific safeguarding measures.
 - d) They are not left unsupervised at any time with children, young people, and vulnerable persons.

8 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Safeguarding in Projects

- 8.1 The Secretariat has a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harm in any activity or interaction it is responsible for. This includes a responsibility to ensure that partners have the competence to fulfil their responsibilities safely and have the policies and procedures in place to prevent harm or abuse to children, young people, and vulnerable persons.
- 8.2 The Secretariat is responsible for ensuring that the organisation's funds are used properly and that due diligence checks are conducted to identify and verify who our partners are, to ascertain that they have the capacity and skills to deliver initiatives safely, and to monitor their activities and conduct. This responsibility is delegated to the section heads.
- 8.3 To ensure that our projects are working to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable persons, the following measures are in place:
- a). Due diligence/risk assessment checks of all prospective partners are completed, including a review of the policies, procedures, and processes that are in place to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable persons/Partners must fulfil the terms of their Letter of Agreement/MOU, which includes having a safeguarding policy in place by

the end of the first full year of funding and committing to comply with this Policy in the interim.

- b). Where personally identifiable data, including research involving children, young people and vulnerable persons, is shared between the Secretariat and the partner, a written data-sharing agreement is developed that covers the standard guidelines for ethical research of human subjects, including informed consent where relevant.
- c). Where necessary, the Secretariat provides additional capacity development to ensure the appropriate safe practices and policies are in place to ensure children, young people and vulnerable persons are safeguarded.

Visits to Partners

- 8.4 When visiting the Secretariat partner organisations, staff members must adhere to the partner's own safeguarding and child protection policies and processes for the entire duration of the visit, as well as this Policy, including the Secretariat Safeguarding Code of Conduct, while in the field. It is recommended that this information be requested prior to the visit wherever possible, to ensure adequate preparation is made.
- 8.5 Should our partners be concerned about the behaviour of the staff members or others subject to this Policy, they can report their concerns by emailing our DSL directly. The Secretariat will investigate all reports, and the fact of notifying the Secretariat of concerns will not impact the funding relationship between the Secretariat and the partner organisation.

Adaption to the Local Context

- 8.6 When working in different areas of the world, the Secretariat believes that:
 - a) Every child, young person and vulnerable person has the right to be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, and maltreatment, irrespective of their nationality, race, religion, or socioeconomic status.
 - b) Respect for local laws and customs is critical in following the appropriate reporting and response procedures when collaborating with our partners

to keep children, young people and vulnerable persons safe in diverse contexts. We understand that each country in which we operate has a different approach and understanding of what safeguarding means.

- 8.7 We understand that each country in which we operate has a different approach and understanding of what safeguarding means. Our regional programs teams will play a key role in supporting our partners to ensure that they are meeting the local context, as well as in ensuring that the Secretariat Safeguarding Policy remains fit for purpose within the context.
- 8.8 No matter where our staff, consultants, volunteers, or interns are in the world when visiting our partner organisations, if they see something that makes them feel uncomfortable or become worried about someone's safety, they must report directly to the DSL and, if appropriate, to the person responsible in the partner organisation. If the concern is about the partner, then this must be reported immediately to the DSL. If a child or youth is in immediate danger, a staff member, consultants, volunteers, and interns must call the relevant local authorities and then report immediately to the DSL.

9 CHILDREN AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

- 9.1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes children's right to participate and to have their views considered in matters that affect them. For the purposes of this Policy, participation is understood to be activities or initiatives where the Secretariat invites children or youth to take an active role in the delivery of our initiatives or to share their views, ideas, and experiences as part of our work.
- 9.2 **Participation**
- a) In order to safeguard their needs, children, young people and vulnerable persons (and their parents/guardians/carers) are provided with information in advance that explains the initiative and the role they are being asked to fulfil. They are given time to consider the request, and it is made clear that their participation is voluntary.

- b) Where children, youth or vulnerable persons agree to participate, a written agreement is produced outlining the Secretariat's expectations of them, the support they can expect from The Secretariat, and the extent/limit of their ongoing involvement. The agreement is signed by the child/young person or vulnerable person and their parent/guardian/carer, confirming their informed consent to participate. Separate consent is obtained for the use of any information provided by children and youth.

10 SAFEGUARDING IN COMMUNICATIONS

10.1 In our marketing and communications, the Secretariat believes in:

- a) **The best interests of the child/youth/vulnerable person:** The public use of images and stories of children, youth and vulnerable persons inevitably poses potential risks. Where there is a risk of potential negative consequences for children and youth, we make decisions that favour their safety and protection.
- b) **Dignity:** In our communications, we uphold the rights and dignity of the child, youth, or vulnerable person their family, and the wider community. We do not use language or images that stereotype, degrade, or shame children, young people or vulnerable persons.
- c) **Privacy:** The Secretariat upholds every child, young person's and vulnerable adult's right to privacy. The sharing of information is kept to the minimal necessary to achieve wider goals, and we never share information that could put an individual at risk.

10.2 We keep children and youth safe in our communications by following these guidelines:

- a) When using content created by children, young people and vulnerable persons, we share the right to use it with the partner involved provided we have received any necessary consents to do so.
- b) Where children, young people and vulnerable persons are survivors of violence or human rights violations, both the child/youth/vulnerable persons (and their parent/guardian/carer) and the Secretariat partner must

- give informed consent to their story being told.
- c) Consent must be obtained before taking photographs of children, young people or vulnerable person and for images to be used on social media, in recognition of the specific risks associated with posting imagery on the internet. Consent via a partner is acceptable if the partner has consent for images to be taken from participants and/or their parents/guardians.
 - d) All content, publications, and presentations featuring children, young people or vulnerable persons are reviewed by a senior member of the Communications team, to ensure that no child, youth or vulnerable person is put at risk. Where doubts exist, content decisions will be discussed with the DSL.
 - e) Images that could be considered sexually provocative or where children, youths or vulnerable persons are not fully clothed are not used.
 - f) The communications team stores consent documentation.
 - g) The Secretariat partners can refuse to participate in marketing activity if this has a safeguarding consequence for their organisation. This will not impact on the funding relationship with the Secretariat, nor will it prevent the partner from being involved in marketing at a later date.
 - h) If we receive a request to remove a photo from our archives, we will do this promptly.

11 SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

- 11.1 This Safeguarding Code of Conduct outlines the behaviour we expect of all our Senior management, staff, contractors, volunteers and interns, and others working for the Secretariat to deliver programs or the Secretariat-supported programs. It aims to help us protect children, young people and vulnerable persons from abuse but also serves to protect from allegations of inappropriate conduct. Any breach of this code will be taken seriously and investigated. This may result in disciplinary action (including termination) and/or referrals to relevant authorities such as the police or social services.

11.2 Responsibility

- a) Ensure that you have read and follow the Secretariat policies and procedures at all times.
- b) Never engage in any action that harms or exploits children, young people or vulnerable persons.
- c) Never engage in illegal activities or use illegal substances.
- d) Never behave in ways that are contrary to the values and mission of The Secretariat or could negatively affect the organisation's reputation.
- e) Report all allegations or suspicions of abuse immediately, using the Secretariat reporting procedures outlined at the end of this Policy.

11.3 Rights and Respect

- a) Respect differences and never discriminate on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), disability, marital status or civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief.
- b) Never act in a way that could be perceived as threatening, including the use of physical punishment or physical force to manage children or youth.
- c) Listen to children, youth, and vulnerable persons and take their contributions seriously.
- d) Never make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory, or sexually suggestive comments or gestures.
- e) Respect a child, young person, or vulnerable person's right to personal privacy and use caution when discussing sensitive topics.

Interactions with Children and Youth

- 11.4 Ensure that there is more than one adult present during interactions with children, young people and vulnerable person.
 - a) Avoid spending excessive time with any one child, youth or vulnerable person or otherwise showing favouritism.

- b) Never give money or a gift of any kind to individual children, youths, vulnerable person or their families.
- c) Never give a child, youth or vulnerable person your personal contact details or have contact with them via a personal email, phone or social media account.
- d) Never take a child, young person or vulnerable person to your home, hotel, or any other private space.
- e) Never engage in any form of sexual contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child or youth is not a defence.

Social Media Use

- 11.5 Never directly post images or stories about children or youth who are engaged with the Secretariat and/or our partners on your personal social media accounts.
- a) Never accept contact requests or engage via personal social media with children or youth you have met through the Secretariat or our partners, and please report and forward requests to the DSL.
 - b) Always think twice about what you post/share and what implications this may have for the organisation.
 - c) Never upload or post any racist, sexist, defamatory, obscene, or abusive content on social media (personal or official the Secretariat social media pages).

Upholding the Safeguarding Code of Conduct

- 11.6 If you become aware of any breaches of this code, please follow the procedure below:
- a) Report to your direct supervisor.
 - b) Confidential reports can be made to the DSL.
 - c) If the breach is not promptly addressed by your direct supervisor, you may escalate to the DSL who may initiate a grievance process in line with the relevant provisions of the Staff Handbook.

- 11.7 A person may report on an anonymous basis, although that may impede the DSL's ability to investigate the allegations thoroughly. A person preferring to report on an anonymous basis must do so by following the Secretariat's [Whistleblowing policy](#) and procedures.

12 REPORTING AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES

- 12.1 It is the responsibility of all to take seriously any concerns, complaints, allegations, suspicions, or incidents involving children, youth and vulnerable persons. Reporting these concerns to the DSL is a mandatory requirement. Failure to report will be considered a serious breach of 's Safeguarding Policy and could result in disciplinary action or termination of contract. There will be no retaliation of any sort against any staff member reporting in good faith in accordance with the Secretariat policies in effect from time to time.

Please follow the Secretariat's reporting and response Flowchart in Annex 2.

Internal Safeguarding Procedures

- 12.2 Concerns about harm or abuse must be internally reported where:
- a) You observe concerning behaviour/abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
 - b) The alleged perpetrator is a staff member, visitor, contractor, consultant, volunteer, Board member, trustee, Intern or associate, or a member of the staff of a partner organisation.
 - c) The alleged perpetrator is a member of the child's family or community, or is unknown to the child, young person, or vulnerable adult.
 - d) The alleged perpetrator is also a child, young person or vulnerable adult, although responses should take into account the protection and safety of both the victim and the alleged abuser.
 - e) The abuse is historical. The risks of harm to children or youth may persist and require investigation.

Duty of Care

- 12.3 The Secretariat has a responsibility to respond to cases of harm and abuse when these are identified through our engagement with children, young people, or vulnerable persons. We must not, however, initiate interventions or offer advice that requires specialist child protection expertise, as this is outside our area of competence and could inadvertently result in further harm to the child.
- 12.4 The Secretariat understands the need to make decisions that are appropriate and effective in the local context and consider local laws, culture, etc. The local partner organisation will take the lead in decision-making, following their safeguarding procedures, unless it is a concern about the partner, in which case local expertise/advice may be sought via the Secretariat's contacts/network.

Managing Disclosures

- 12.5 The staff members may find they are the recipient of a disclosure by a child or a partner in the field. The following offer direction of how to receive the disclosure safely and appropriately and follow the correct next steps:
- a) Is the child, young person or vulnerable person safe? If not, how can we ensure their safety?
 - b) Reread this Safeguarding Policy.
 - c) Think about what you might say/do and how you might present before it happens.
 - d) Try to be available to be spoken to. The child/youth/vulnerable person may not be ready when you are.
 - e) Listen carefully without interrupting. When it is appropriate, ask questions to clarify the allegation, but remember you are there to clarify facts, not to conduct an investigation.
 - f) Take any disclosures seriously, even if you cannot see any injury that would support the story.
 - g) Be sensitive—arrange a safe and private environment.
 - h) Stay calm—do not show shock or horror.
 - i) Be reassuring—tell the child/youth that they were right to tell and have done nothing wrong.

- j) Be responsive—acknowledge how difficult it was for the child/youth/vulnerable person to tell, explain what needs to happen next.
- k) Be honest—do not make promises that you cannot keep.
- l) Be supportive—put arrangements in place for initial support.
- m) Do not promise confidentiality.
- n) Do not delay action in response to a disclosure.
- o) Do not be afraid of being wrong or be concerned about starting an investigation.
- p) Do not pre-judge what you are told or make assumptions.
- q) Before taking any further action, immediately contact the DSL or, if unavailable, your supervisor to discuss the next steps. They will collaborate with you to decide who should be informed in the child's network.
- r) At the earliest opportunity, make a written record.

Concerns involving the staff members, consultants, and volunteers.

12.6 For concerns should be reported as follows:

- a) DSL to be informed immediately.
- b) DSL informs the Safeguarding team.
- c) If the alleged perpetrator is a staff member the grievance process outlined in the Staff Handbook will be followed.
- d) Where the individual is a UK national or resident, the DSL reports the matter to the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) in the area where they live in the UK if appropriate. This is in addition to any official in-country reporting.

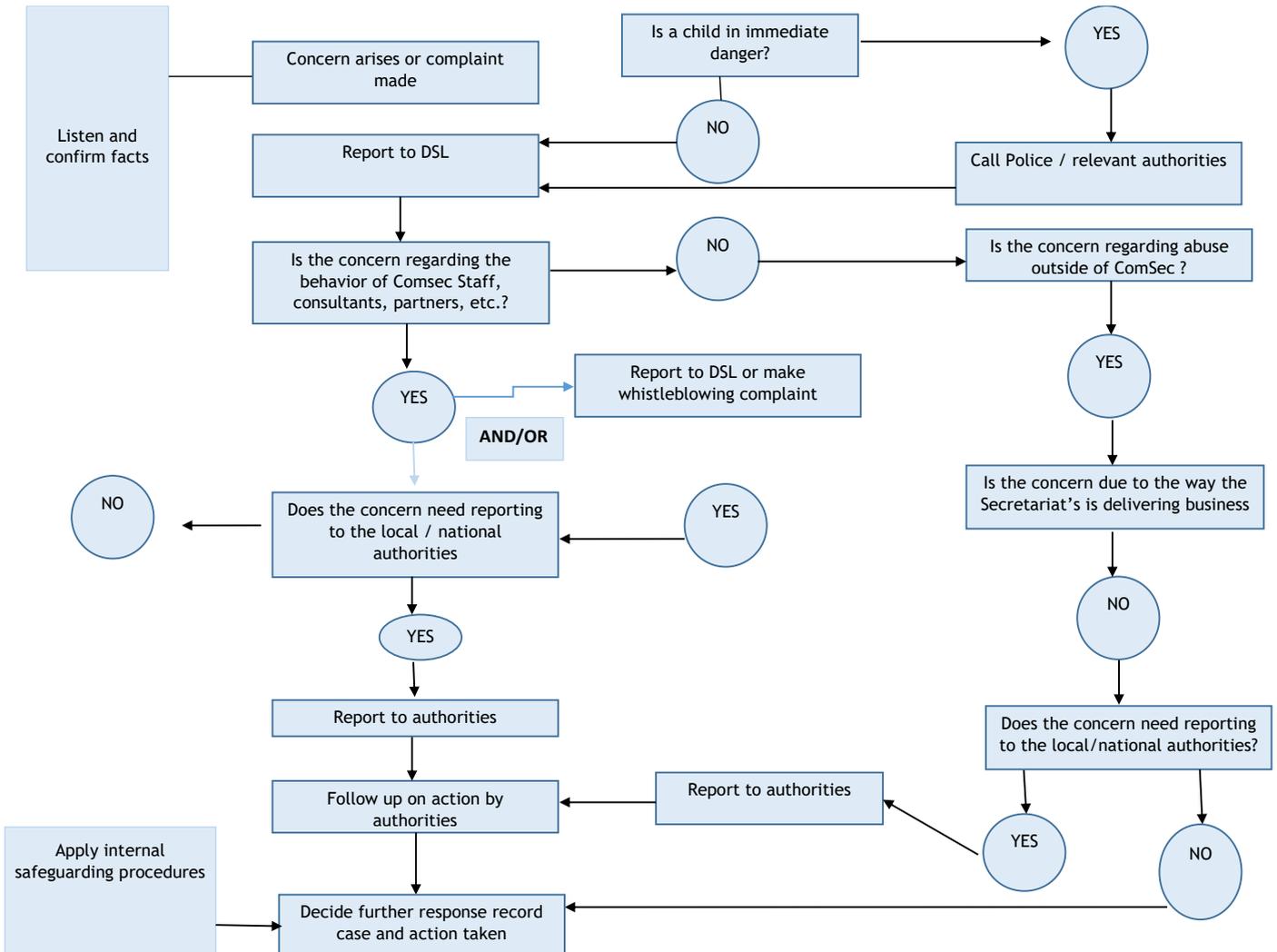
Annex 1 - Definitions

Term	Definition
Child	In keeping with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC Article 1), <i>a child is any human being under the age of 18 years.</i>
Abuse	All forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation and includes any action that results in actual or potential harm.
Youth/Young Person	In line with the UN definitions, include individuals - young women, young men, and young persons of other gender identities aged 15-24 years old.
Harm	Any detrimental effect on a child’s or young person’s physical, psychological, or emotion wellbeing. Harm may be caused by abuse or exploitation whether intended or unintended.
Safeguarding	<p>Refers to all of the actions that are taken to keep all children, young people and vulnerable persons that the Secretariat, it’s staff, contractors, volunteers etc. come into contact with safe - and includes the proactive measures put in place to ensure children do not come to harm as a result of any direct or indirect contact with the Secretariat.</p> <p>Safeguarding means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Protecting children, young people and vulnerable persons from abuse and maltreatment including online. b) Preventing impairment of children, young people and vulnerable persons’ mental and physical health or development. c) Ensuring that children, young people and vulnerable persons are provided with safe and effective care. d) Providing help and support to meet the needs of children, young people and vulnerable persons’ as soon as problems emerge e) Taking action to enable all children, young people and vulnerable persons to have the best outcomes. <p>Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children, young people and vulnerable persons identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This Policy includes response and reporting procedures, which detail how to respond to concerns about a child. The Secretariat acknowledges that the safeguarding context is different in each region in which it operates, and that the local context will be considered when making safeguarding decisions.</p>

Safeguarding definition based on HM Government, “Working together to Safeguard Children,” 2015 (updated 2023)ⁱ

Direct contact	Refers to face to face contact with children, young people and vulnerable persons.
Indirect contact	Refers to contact with children, young people or vulnerable persons online through their data - including images of a child and text posted by a child, young person or vulnerable person - and contact via a third party
Gender responsive safeguarding	Is a safeguarding approach that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Takes full account of gender in considering the specific needs of girls, boys and other gender identities. b) Integrates safeguarding measures that address protection risks for children, young people (girls, boys, young women, young men, and children of other gender identities), and vulnerable person that stem from issues relating to gender bias and discrimination. c) Supports the empowerment and fosters and the inclusion of girls, particularly in the safeguarding process, in a manner that promotes equality, equity and their increased safety and protection.
Vulnerable persons	A vulnerable person is any person who for whatever reason is unable to take care of, and protect, him or herself from significant harm or exploitation. This could be due to <i>inter alia</i> reasons of mental or physical disability or illness, social status, age, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and gender identity. As people's identities are shaped by multiple factors at the same time, one may be vulnerable on more than one grounds.
Staff	Anyone who works for the Secretariat in a full-time or part-time basis.
Volunteer	Anyone working for the Secretariat (full-time or part-time) and are not paid.
Intern	A student or trainee who works at the Secretariat for the purpose of gaining work (<i>with or without payment</i>) experience or to certify academic requirement.
Contractors and consultants	Individuals or groups temporarily engaged by the Secretariat to offer diverse services such as photography, supplies, consumable, and non-consumable materials. It can also include offering professional services such as research, documentation, training, evaluation etc.

ANNEX 2 - Reporting and Response Flowchart



Human Resources
August 2024