



CROWN AGENTS

ACCELERATING SELF-SUFFICIENCY & PROSPERITY



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Policy Summary and Guidance Manual

February 2018



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PREAMBLE /

Child Maltreatment is defined by the World Health Organisation as a global public health problem. The lifelong consequences to the child include impaired physical and mental health, poorer school performance, and reduced life expectancy. In countries with poor living standards and inadequate health, social and economic policies, children are at greater risk of abuse. Ultimately, pervasive child maltreatment slows a country's economic and social development.¹

Over the past two decades there has been a growing recognition that the abuse of children can and does happen in international development organisations. There is also an acceptance that children are at potential risk due to lack of due diligence, negligence and intentional harm. Lack of policies and procedures in organisations mean that incidents go unreported and the causes of harm therefore remain unaddressed.

The scope of Crown Agents work is global, with country offices in four continents and with new projects and locations set to increase with growth targets. Despite the fact that most of our projects may not relate specifically to children, it is inevitable that contact with children does occur directly and indirectly, and that this can occur both intermittently and frequently.

There is growing evidence that sexual offenders sometimes deliberately place themselves in areas of work where they can have access to children in order to harm them. Poverty increases the vulnerability of children to harm. Despite international legislation against child abuse, in practice, in many low income countries there is often weak implementation of law, and the statutory and judicial processes are inadequate in investigating reports, protecting children and punishing offenders.

As an ethical organisation whose aim is to promote positive and lasting change in systems, institutions and society, Crown Agents recognises the need to implement a Child Protection policy document that can guide our activities and provide minimum standards for our work. This document uses the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as a basis for our organisational policy. The UNCRC is a treaty ratified by over 190 countries and provides a near universal frame of reference for the rights of children. This international treaty provides a comprehensive framework for the protection, provision and participation of all children without discrimination, to ensure their survival and to reach their developmental potential.

¹ World Health Organisation www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs150/en/



1. Introduction

It is important that when we talk about Child Protection we have a shared understanding of what it means.

Child Protection

‘Child protection’ is a term used by many organisations for the work and programmes they undertake in the community or broader social environment to safeguard children. This may lead to confusion when discussing the child protection responsibilities and issues involved in managing an organisation.

Crown Agents defines Child Protection to mean:

The philosophy, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. This policy is about organisational child protection – i.e. building a ‘child-safe organisation.’

1.1 What is a Child Protection policy?

In the context of this policy, Child Protection is not referring to the prevention of accidents, nor are we focusing on a child’s principle human rights. We are referring specifically to the protection of children from abusive behaviour by adults.

A Child Protection policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children and which makes clear to all Crown Agents employees and individual contractors, the requirements and expectations in relation to the protection of children.

1.2 What is the purpose of such a policy?

Without adequate policies and procedures in place, allegations of abuse, founded or unfounded, can destroy an individual’s good reputation and undermine the organisation’s reputation and credibility. An effective policy creates confidence and credibility in Crown Agents as an ethical organisation which takes seriously its obligations to act in professional, transparent and trustworthy manner.

Crown Agents operates in a multiplicity of contexts and cultures. It is not possible to be prescriptive and specific for every situation. The purpose of the policy is to set out a *broad framework of principles* which each office will need to implement given local conditions and specific legislation. *This policy will nevertheless set out minimum and non-negotiable standards which will require compliance from all employees and individual contractors engaged by us.* Due to the dynamic nature of global child protection issues this policy will be reviewed every three years.

1.3 Definition of a child

For the purpose of this policy and in line with UNCRC, Crown Agents define as a child *any person younger than 18 years of age [irrespective of the age of majority or consent to sex in either the country where the child currently resides or in their passport country].*

1.4 Who does the policy apply to?

- a) This policy applies to all Crown Agents Group companies and individuals working at all grades in Crown Agents Group, including directors, officers, senior managers, all employees (whether permanent, full-time, part-time fixed term or temporary), trainees, seconded staff, casual staff, volunteers and interns (collectively “employees”) and individual contractors engaged by us (collectively “individual contractors”). The policy is binding during any work related activity. This will also include ‘out of hours’ activities for anybody on an overseas or remote assignment.
- b) In addition, where possible, through our contracts with sub-contractors and other business partners, we will seek their support and cooperation in the implementation of this policy and monitor their compliance with it.



- c) Any official Crown Agents visitors or any personal visitors who are intending to engage at any level with projects involving children, shall be required to read, agree to and sign the Code of Conduct.

1.5 What are our responsibilities

Everyone has a role in the safeguarding of children and promoting their welfare whether or not they are in direct contact with children.

This responsibility requires:

- adherence to the Child Protection Code of Conduct by all employees and individual contractors (as defined above in 1.4 a).
- the reporting of anyone who is, or is suspected to be, in breach of the Child Protection Code of Conduct.
- any knowledge or suspicions that may relate to a person's employment or engagement with Crown Agents should be reported regardless of when and where the events giving rise to the knowledge or suspicion took place.

1.6 Principles underpinning this Child Protection Policy

A number of key principles underpin the provisions of the policy. These include:

- The best interests of the child are the primary consideration in decision making. This means that a child centred approach is the dominant focus. The needs of the child therefore trump issues of expediency or the need to protect the reputation of an individual or an organisation.
- Taking responsibility and action when we believe a child to be at risk of harm or in need of protection.
- Recognising that it is impossible to eliminate all risk and that for many children in low income environments, risk of physical harm due to lack of supervision or adequate safety is an inevitable part of daily life. However, where possible everything should be done to reduce risk and limit the impact of harm.
- Honesty and transparency, by informing those with whom we work about the existence of the Child Protection Policy, and our adherence to the Child Protection Code of Conduct.
- Confidentiality. Information should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Only those with a legitimate need to access information may do so. Any written communication should be kept in a safe place. However, no information regarding actual or suspected child abuse shall be regarded as 'private' or 'confidential' and therefore left unreported out of a misguided concern for the interest of the suspected abuser. The interests of the child are paramount.
- Child protection principles as outlined in this policy shall form a key component of any risk assessments undertaken, and particularly in the context of humanitarian response projects. See 2.3.
- Support and training is necessary to remind and refresh staff of the requirements of the policy. A basic initial training will be completed by all designated staff and will be repeated every three years as a refresher course. Designated staff includes those employees on overseas assignments or in specific projects related to children.
- Monitoring and evaluation. Because the environments and contexts we work in are dynamic, this Child Protection policy will be reviewed at intervals of no more than three years.



2. Understanding Child Protection Issues

2.1 Definition of abuse

Crown Agents uses the following World Health Organisation definition of abuse²:

Child abuse (or maltreatment) constitutes all forms of physical and /or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or commercial exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

Internationally, four main categories of abuse are generally recognised:

Physical Abuse: Any non-accidental injury. This may involve beating, hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may be the result of excessive physical discipline.

Emotional Abuse: This is the *persistent* emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and long lasting effects on the child's psycho-social development. It may include: screaming at, frightening, belittling, scapegoating, mocking, isolating or stigmatising a child.

Neglect: This is the persistent failure to meet the child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's physical or cognitive development. N.B. Poverty often leaves children vulnerable and at risk, but this is not considered abusive behaviour because it is not intended to harm but is the result of factors beyond the caregivers' control.

Sexual Abuse: This involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening or gives consent. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

NB. Other types of sexual abuse commonly recognised are³:

Child sexual exploitation – the use of a child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form of consideration. It includes offering, obtaining, procuring or providing a child for child prostitution.

Child trafficking- this is reaching global epidemic proportions. It is estimated that a third of all human trafficking takes place in Asia and 30% of these are children⁴.

Child sex tourism - is the commercial sexual exploitation of children by foreigners. It usually refers to:

a) Persons who travel from their own country to another to engage in sexual acts with children,

or

b) Foreigners who engage in sexual activity with a child while overseas.

It often involves a third party who procures a child from local communities.

Child sex tourism is prevalent in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Pacific Islands.

Child abusive images – Any representation of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes. It includes producing, distributing, disseminating, importing, exporting, offering, selling or possessing child pornography for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

² World Health Organisation (WHO) www.who.int/topics/child_abuse

³ www.childsafe-international.org

⁴ www.childwise.net



2.2 Cultural issues

In all work undertaken or commissioned by it, Crown Agents seeks to work in ways that are culturally sensitive and which respect the diverse nature of the communities we work with. We recognise that there are many different ways of taking care of and nurturing children. There is a tension between ensuring that cultural norms are respected and at the same time ensuring that children are protected. All the rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child must be applicable to all children, without discrimination. Every child matters, wherever they live. Culture and tradition cannot be used to justify the abuse of children.

2.3 Humanitarian standards

Humanitarian action is an emergency response to a natural disaster or crisis situation. In such situations children are particularly at risk and require additional protection. Wherever Crown Agents is engaged in humanitarian work, there are particular standards which apply. These are documented by the Child Protection Working Group can be summarised in the following principles:

- To keep the child's best interests at the forefront of decision making and to avoid further harm.
- To ensure that Child Protection systems are upheld in these situations and that they are not overlooked due to other competing priorities.
- That any humanitarian action arises from prior preparedness of what the specific child protection issues might be, and that efforts to provide relief and alleviate suffering are sufficiently coordinated in order that children's rights are respected and protected.



3. Prevention

3.1 Local prevention strategy

Each Regional Human Resources Business Partner will appoint a staff member who is designated as the Child Protection Link (CPL) for that specific region. Depending on the size of the region and number of employees and individual contractors, it may be necessary to appoint more than one CPL. The CPL has the duty of ensuring that the Child Protection Policy is fully understood by all employees and individual contractors working within their designated remit of responsibility, whether it is a country office, or a regional location. The CPL should be a permanent staff member (not a volunteer) or individual contractor, who speaks the local language and who has the necessary seniority and skills to take on this additional role. The CPL may be a Country Manager. Any concerns, complaints or allegations will be brought to the CPL, who will document the complaint and make a decision about the next step in conjunction with the Human Resources Business Partner. The decision may be made to pass on a serious concern to Group Human Resources Director (see flow chart Appendix B).

The responsibilities of the CPL will be:

- Acquiring and maintaining an up-to-date understanding of national law as it relates to children, and an informed understanding of statutory bodies working in their area of responsibility.
- Ensuring awareness of and compliance with the Child Protection Code of Conduct.
- Providing refresher child protection training to all staff on a three yearly basis.
- Acting as a first point of contact for staff on child protection issues and liaising with local office management as necessary.
- Maintaining a list of relevant welfare agencies, and law enforcement contacts.
- Deciding what action to take if an allegation is made according to the reporting procedure flow chart attached as Appendix A whilst keeping confidential and accurate records.

Although this role may seem daunting, it is not necessarily so. If there is a clear focus on prevention through compliance with the Child Protection Code of Conduct, then risks of actual abuse are low.

3.2 Recruitment and employment

i. Pre-recruitment due diligence

Due diligence, undertaken as part of the recruitment process is an organisation's first chance to deter potential offenders. Crown Agents operates a zero tolerance approach to child abuse and will not knowingly employ for work with children anybody who has been convicted of harming a child.

ii. Organisational measures

- Before employing or engaging any employees or individual contractors, Crown Agents requires all prospective candidates to be subjected to and satisfactorily complete its Basic Due Diligence requirements to assess their suitability. This Basic Due Diligence includes obtaining satisfactory references and all candidates being required to sign a declaratory statement confirming that they have no convictions for any offence involving any type of harm to a child or children, and should declare anything that may affect their suitability to interact safely with children.
- in addition to satisfying Crown Agents' Basic Due Diligence requirements, candidate employees and individual contractors and any current employees or individual contractors who are going to have direct work-related contact with children⁵ must also satisfy Crown Agents' Additional Due Diligence requirement;

⁵ This is any project related activity which by necessity and intention involves face to face, verbal or physical contact with children.



- by providing a formal sworn statement that they have never been convicted in any country in the world of any offence involving any type of harm to a child or children, and
- where obtainable in their country of residence, cooperate with Crown Agents in its obtaining official written confirmation from the local authorities that the candidate has not been convicted of any offence involving any type of harm to children.
- Where reports of suspicions of child abuse are made about employees or individual contractors, careful consideration must be given to the appropriateness of continued employment or engagement with Crown Agents. Potential responses may include suspension, transfer to other duties during any internal or external investigation and dismissal if the allegation is proven.
- The Regional Human Resources Business Partner should be consulted and involved in all processes concerning directly employed staff to ensure that workers' or individual contractors' employment rights are not violated. The first point of contact with HR should be the office that was responsible for appointing the employee or individual contractor and where their contract was issued.

3.3 Training

Prior to engaging in any work for Crown Agents, all designated employees and individual contractors will be provided with a basic introduction to the Child Protection policy and have opportunity to ask questions of it. All existing designated staff will be required to undertake the basic training. Successful completion of training will be logged to ensure the widest possible training coverage across Crown Agents group.

3.4 Child Protection Code of Conduct

The Child Protection Code of Conduct (Appendix A) must be read, understood and signed by each new employee and individual contractor of Crown Agents. Because of the diverse and specific contexts in which we work, the principles within it, of *increased accountability* and *reduced isolation* in any interaction with children are fundamental to this Child Protection Policy. The Child Protection Code of Conduct supports the policy and provides a standard of professionalism that all employees are expected to maintain. The Child Protection Code is mandated by Crown Agents to ensure that in all our interactions with children we are above reproach and will avoid any misunderstanding that would undermine our organisational goals.



4. Procedures for reporting suspicions of abuse or breach of the Child Protection Policy

4.1 Reports of suspicions of abuse involving a member of local staff

If a child is believed to be at immediate risk of harm then a report to local authorities is necessary followed by a report to the CPL. An employee or individual contractor wishing to make a report of suspicions of child abuse should firstly provide a verbal, then a written report to their Child Protection Link. If the CPL regards the reported behaviour as potentially criminal under the local law, then the Human Resources Business Partner must be informed by the CPL and the matter is normally to be reported to the local law enforcement agency by the CPL as a matter of urgency. The report will also be forwarded promptly to the Group Human Resources Director.

4.2 Reporting to local authorities

The CPL will be guided by his/her knowledge of local legislation and culture. This will help to ascertain whether a report to local authorities will cause further trauma to a child or alternatively unjust and violent treatment of a suspected offender. The issues to consider are: the nature and circumstances of the complaint and whether local law has been violated. Any decision *not* to pass on a report will be taken in conjunction with the HR business manager and the reasons clearly documented and passed on to the HR Group Director.

If the reported behaviour meets the Crown Agents Policy definition of abuse, but is not regarded as potentially criminal behaviour according to the relevant country law, or if there is no follow up by local law enforcement, then the report is to be forwarded to the Regional Human Resources Business Partner who will consult with the Human Resources Group Director regarding the next steps. An external Child Protection Adviser may be consulted.

NB. Instances of child abuse by expatriates may well be criminal offences in their home countries and, where the local police do not follow up, the local authorities in their home countries may well be interested to do so.

4.3 Reports of suspicions of abuse or breaches of the Child Protection policy by, or implicating the CPL

Any employee or individual contractor wishing to report suspicions regarding their CPL should communicate directly with their Human Resources Business partner, or, in the event of fears of retribution or lack of action, they are encouraged to use 'The Ethical Line (TEL), Crown Agents confidential whistleblowing hotline, details of which can be found in the Reporting and Whistleblowing Policy and in the Global Code of Conduct. Alternatively, the TEL can be accessed via the web by following this link:

<http://www.expolink.co.uk/whistleblowing/for-employees> and by providing the company access code: "crownagentsTEL" or the information can be sent by e-mail (anonymised if preferred) to:

ca-tel@expolink.co.uk

4.4 Reports of convictions or dismissal by an expatriate employee or individual contractor

The relevant embassy or High Commission should be notified by the Group Human Resources Director of any national employee or individual contractor convicted of child abuse by a court of law, or where a national employee or individual contractor has been dismissed or disengaged by Crown Agents for gross or serious misconduct relating to a breach of the Child Protection Policy.

4.5 Non-compliance with the Child Protection Code of Conduct

All employees and individual contractors are required to comply with this Code. Any employee or individual suspected of not acting in compliance with this Code must be reported to the CPL. The circumstances surrounding the suspected non-compliance will be assessed, and the information passed on to the relevant Regional Human Resources Business Partner if necessary. Following a full internal review of the incident, disciplinary processes may be applied to the employee or contract termination procedures to the individual contractor, as appropriate. Non-compliance with this Child Protection Code of Conduct shall be considered a serious breach of contract by the employee or individual contractor concerned.



5. Child Protection Policy

5.1 Policy Statement

Crown Agents takes seriously the safety of children with whom our employees and contractors come into contact and operates a zero tolerance approach to child abuse. The sexual, physical or emotional abuse of a child (see definitions in paragraph 2.1 above) by any Crown Agents any employee or contractor is prohibited.

We will not knowingly recruit an individual for any child related work or activities who have been convicted of causing harm to a child.

Crown Agents will ensure that all new designated employees and individual contractors receive basic Child Protection Training.

An expatriate on an overseas assignment will be considered to be an ambassador for Crown Agents both inside and outside office hours and this policy is applicable for the length of the contractual period.

Each Regional Human Resources Business Partner will assign a designated Child Protection Link, who will be responsible for placing the Code of Conduct in a prominent place, and to receive, document and pass on any reports of abusive behaviour.

All employees and individual contractors have a responsibility to report any concerns regarding unacceptable behaviour towards children by colleagues and/or anyone working with or for Crown Agents. This information should be documented and reported immediately to the relevant Child Protection Link, who will ensure that relevant local authorities are informed as necessary.

All employees and individual contractors will be required to read and understand Crown Agents' Child Protection Code of Conduct and to sign that they agree to comply with it. Any refusal or failure to do so will be seen as a breach of his or hers contract of employment or other contract with Crown Agents.

5.2 Child Protection Code of Conduct for all employees and individual contractors of Crown Agents

This code applies to any interactions with children in the context of activities undertaken by any individuals working under a contractual agreement with Crown Agents. Employees and individual contractors will be expected to sign and agree that they will adhere to the following statements of intent:

- I will treat all children with care, respect and dignity, whatever their age, gender, religion, tribal group, economic position, disability or other status.
- I will speak to children with a tone and language appropriate to their age. I will not intentionally use gestures or language which engenders fear, humiliation or shame.
- I will not speak to a child in a sexually suggestive way nor use any non verbal communication that is flirtatious or demeaning.
- I will not engage in any form of sexually inappropriate activity with a child.
- I will not engage in sexual activity with a child, with or without their consent. This includes payment for sexual services to a child under 18 even if local law has a lower age of legal consent.
- I understand that as a responsible adult that it is unacceptable to respond approvingly to a child's flirtatious or sexually provocative behaviour towards me.
- I will not take a child to my home unless it is an emergency situation, in which case I will inform my line manager immediately.
- I will avoid situations where I am alone with a child. I will ensure that there are two adults present wherever possible. Where this is not possible, I will ensure that my interaction is visible to others. For example, by sitting in a public area or in a room with the door open.



- I will ensure that my motivation and actions are transparent and accountable. If a situation arises where isolated and prolonged contact with a child is unavoidable then I will inform my line manager as soon as possible.
- I will accept responsibility for personal behaviour as an employee or contractor of Crown Agents. If there is any situation that may be misinterpreted by a third party, then I will report this to my manager as soon as possible.
- I will ensure that any physical contact with a child is locally appropriate. I understand that physical punishment of an unrelated child is not permissible.
- I will not knowingly hire children for domestic or other labour that interferes with their education or time for essential rest. I will not engage them in any labour which places them at risk of injury or which is inappropriate to their developmental level.
- I will comply with local labour laws as they relate to children.

The use of children's images for work-related or any other purpose

- I will ensure that in all forms of communication, children are portrayed with dignity, not as helpless victims, nor in sexually suggestive poses.
- I will use sensitivity and discretion in uploading images of children or other vulnerable people on to personal social networking sites. Photographs should always be taken with their permission and in a way which protects their privacy and promotes their dignity.
- I will ensure that children who are primary subjects of text, photo or video resources must provide informed consent either themselves if they are above the age of 12, or by their parent or guardian.
- I understand that in any published material the child's family name and location should not be disclosed.

End of policy.

Policy to be reviewed not later than February 2018.



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