Tomorrow's Cities is the UKRI GCRF Urban Disaster Risk Hub

Safeguarding Policy

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Reporting concerns

If someone is at immediate risk of harm, and it is safe for you to do so, you should *immediately* call an appropriate local service – e.g. emergency services (police and/or ambulance) and/or building security – and consider seeking help from others to intervene.

If there is no immediate risk of harm, or the risk has passed, you should report the concern to one of the following contacts (as appropriate):

- Eliane Reid – Hub Operations Manager (via manager@tomorrowscities.org)
- Dave Bell – Hub Knowledge Exchange and Monitoring Specialist (via monitoring@tomorrowscities.org)

You can also report using this online form – which allows you to report anonymously, if you wish.

No concern is too small to report

Preventing harm in our work

1. Overview

Safeguarding is a new and specific requirement within Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) funded research programmes. It has emerged as an urgent focus due to the recent expansion of funding in international development research (such as the Global Challenges Research Fund) and recent high-profile cases of abuse in the wider development sector, which have exposed broader and deeper issues, many of which are relevant to research.

Safeguarding concerns people's right to be safe from harm, and is a part of ethical research practice in the context of international development. Typically, research ethics procedures only consider formal research activities and focus on ethical relations with research subjects (including the commitment to 'do no harm'). Safeguarding extends this responsibility proactively anticipate, mitigate and address harm to *any person we interact with or community in which we operate* and that relates to *any activity associated with the Hub.* See Annex 1 for further discussion on the relationship between ethics and safeguarding.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Whenever and wherever you project your identity as being part of the Hub or are able to influence the Hub and its activities, you are responsible for safeguarding. This applies to all disciplines and areas of our work, and is relevant to all stages of the research journey – including the legacy of impact we leave behind. Because Safeguarding is not constrained by formal research activities, it applies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in both professional and personal lives. Specific individual and organisational responsibilities are outlined in Section 3.

Our safeguarding commitment is to anticipate, mitigate and address harm caused to any person as a result of coming into contact with our people and activities, as a Hub. We will also respond to abuses in the wider community where they do not involve our staff and associated personnel, and a response is possible and required to protect vulnerable individuals in need. Within this commitment, our new global context of the **ongoing *Covid-19 pandemic*** requires special consideration (see Annex 3).

At its core, safeguarding is about *relationships of power*. Harm results from the ways in which power used and abused – especially over vulnerable people – and the different social structures that shape relationships of power and vulnerability (e.g. gender, seniority, race, class, caste, sexuality, age, dis/ability, pregnancy/ maternity, citizenship, and faith). Safeguarding is therefore a relational concept – it is not a property of an individual, but of the relationship between individuals in specific times and places. Examples of safeguarding risks are outlined in Annex 2.

By integrating safeguarding into our research practice, we also engage in ongoing learning towards better research, researchers and institutions. Power relations are complex, ambiguous and ever changing, meaning we often operate with significant blind spots to safeguarding risks and issues. This underlines the importance of taking inclusive and equitable approaches, focused on individual and collective learning, and led by locally owned agendas, to ensure that the contextual knowledge of people *not* in positions of relative power is centred. In these ways, good safeguarding practices go hand-in-hand with developing better research, researchers and institutions.

2. Principles and guiding questions

To ensure good safeguarding in practice, we – individually and collectively – will strive to act in accordance with these core principles (taken from the UKCDR Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research[1]**):**

1. **Rights of victims/survivors and whistle-blowers.** The rights of actual and potential victims/survivors of safeguarding incidents should be central, and there should be meaningful and effective pathways for support and redress.
2. **Equity and fairness.** Involvement of all research partners at the research design and planning stage is necessary to ensure that research questions and methodologies are contextually appropriate and do not pose an unacceptable risk of harm to researchers, participants or communities. Responsibilities and rewards in the research process should also be clearly identified and fairly shared.
3. **Transparency**. Transparent practice, policy and procedures for safeguarding form a touchstone characteristic of good practice. Transparency requires clear and public safeguarding commitments and policies, as well as openness about incidents or breaches and the measures taken to address them, while upholding confidentiality to avoid secondary trauma or harm.
4. **Accountability and good governance**. Accountability is a significant feature of approaches to address and prevent harm and underpins good governance in the research process. In order for accountability to be proportionate and realistic, the expectations of all actors/partners in the research process must also reflect the distribution of legal responsibility, power and resources, as well as recognition of realities on the ground in often challenging contexts.

The UKCDR Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research was produced through a recent evidence review[2] and wide-ranging international consultation via an online survey, in-depth interviews in three regional hubs (Latin America and the Caribbean, West Africa and South Asia) and events/workshops with different stakeholder groups in the UK, Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania.

Within the UKCDR guidance, ***rigorous and comprehensive role-specific guiding questions***, aligned with the core principles above, are given for:

- Research funders;
- Heads of research institutions;
- University vice-chancellors;
- Ethics committees;
- Research managers and administrators;
- Human resources, legal and finance teams;
- Individual researchers;
- Research participants; and
- Community members or stakeholders.

This advice is an important resource underpinning our safeguarding approach and responsibilities, and serves as key guidance for the Tomorrow's Cities community (individuals, teams and collaborating organisations).

[1] Available at: https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/170420-UKCDR-Guidance-for-Safeguarding-in-International-Development-Research.pdf

[2] Orr, D. et al. (2019) Safeguarding in International Development Research: Briefing Paper

This Safeguarding Policy was developed with expert advice from Safe for Children and the University of Edinburgh, and designed to be in line with UKCDR guidance and UKRI policy on safeguarding.

3. Individual and Organisational Responsibilities

3.1 Individual actions

Our shared responsibility for safeguarding starts with a commitment to engage in a reflective journey of ongoing action and learning.

It is the responsibility of every individual to adhere to the core principles laid out above (please see UKCDR Guidance for advice on how these apply to your particular role) and to commit to the following individual actions:

Awareness	• Learning to recognise how power relations and structural inequalities play out in different situations – including critical self-reflection of our role in shaping them. • Recognising the signs of abuse or exploitation. • Understanding how to report concerns. • Undergoing regular safeguarding training.
Prevention	• Promoting a culture with zero tolerance for power abuse, and where everyone feels safe to speak up and respectfully disagree. • Treating others with respect and dignity and working in the spirit of equity. • Actively work to do no harm and minimise safeguarding risks. • Act in line with ethical research guidelines and the Code of Conduct. • Act in line with laws/safeguarding standards
Reporting	• Report any safeguarding concerns to the relevant/appropriate: safeguarding focal point, other colleague (e.g. line manager), and/or or external organisation.
Responding	• Acting immediately with appropriate measures if disclosure is made to you directly. • Putting the safety, wellbeing and confidentiality of victims and survivors first.

3.2 Organisational actions

As a research programme, the Hub has a responsibility to facilitate processes at a collective level to anticipate, mitigate and address any harm that may occur across the varying contexts we engage with. This includes putting in place formal safeguarding governance structures, clear and effective reporting and responding frameworks, and capacity strengthening activities that develop across the lifetime of Tomorrow's Cities. We will also endeavour to identify and support existing 'informal' processes for protecting vulnerable people from abuse.

In doing so, we strive to promote an equitable social environment in which violence and abuse is less likely to occur and in which everyone knows their rights and feel able to disclose abuses.

All collaborating organisations (i.e. those with Framework Collaborative Agreements with the University of Edinburgh) are required to adopt and apply this policy (with special attention to the core principles laid out above, the role-specific advice in the UKCDR Guidance, and the specific actions described below) or to apply their own policy of a similar standard, by prior agreement.

Organisational actions include:

Awareness	• Ensure employees have access to, are familiar with, and know their safeguarding responsibilities. • Ensure employees have access to safeguarding training. • Ensure managers are aware of their role in maintaining a work environment free from harm and abuse.
Prevention	• Clearly articulate standards of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, in line with a zero-tolerance approach. • Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting and managing staff and associated personnel. • Actively work to do no harm and minimise safeguarding risks. • Ensure work is planned and undertaken in line with accordance with all applicable rules of collaborators' organisations and local national law. • Follow guidelines on how and when to involve national authorities in safeguarding issues.
Reporting	• Protect the safety and confidentiality of any staff reporting concerns or complaints. • Take all reports seriously. • Maintain reporting systems for concerns raised. • Enable an environment where people feel able and safe to raise concerns, in confidence and without fear of any detriment or retribution.
Responding	• Follow-up on all reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to this policy and our Code of Conduct. • Focus on protecting and supporting any victim or survivor involved.

4. Governance and procedures

Safeguarding is a Hub priority and requires leadership committed to the core principles of safeguarding described above. In line with these principles, ***an initial safeguarding governance structure and procedures for anticipating, mitigating, reporting and responding to concerns and incidents have be created (see Annex 4)***. These are based on the existing governance structure and processes of the Hub (e.g. with roles situated within the City Management Teams, the Senior Management Team, the Research and Impact Committees and the Advisory Board).

Safeguarding governance and procedures will be strengthened through engagement across the Hub, including with each City Team, and will include additional roles (e.g. designated safeguarding focal points and safeguarding champions) and context-specific approaches for anticipating, mitigating, reporting and responding to safeguarding risks.

At a minimum, the responsibility of those involved in the governance of safeguarding in the Hub includes:

- Developing and applying procedures and systems to effectively ***anticipate, mitigate, report and respond to safeguarding risks*** to people – with priority given to the most vulnerable within any given context – caused by the any aspect of the Hub' activities.
- Providing ***mandatory training*** and ***ongoing capacity strengthening*** to ensure that everyone within the Hub is aware of their responsibilities and standards of behaviour.
- Ensure that the ***working culture is marked by this policy,*** with emphasis on:
    - Respect and dignity for all;
    - Zero tolerance for harmful power dynamics that allow abuse to take place; and
    - Attention to conditions that present barriers to reporting, which include:
        - Attitudes of colleagues and managers;
        - Concerns about career prospects;
        - Concerns about being a 'good' researcher/fieldworker; and
        - Fear of jeopardising research.
- Identify and enable access to other ***relevant policies, procedures and guidance*** within the Hub and our collaborating organisations, as well as ***relevant national and international policies, legislation, agreements and standards***.
- Identify and enable access to ***external resources for receiving support*** for any safeguarding issues.

Annex 1: How do Research Ethics and Safeguarding relate?

Research ethics are the principles that govern how researchers should carry out their research – ultimately it concerns doing what is 'right'. They are applied through well-established procedures that consider the potential impacts of data collection, analysis and communication methods on participants, the immediate physical environment and the wider social and environmental context of research.

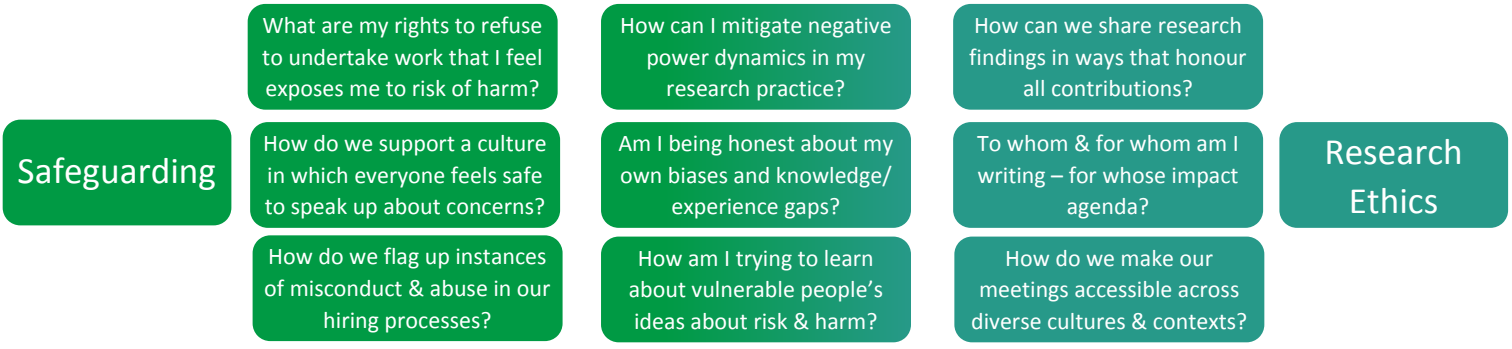
Safeguarding addresses people's right to be safe from harm relating to <u>any activity</u> associated with the Hub. This includes all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse, or harassment of research participants, our teams or the wider communities in which we operate. While this sits conceptually within ethical considerations of doing what is 'right', research ethics *procedures* do not typically provide protection beyond formal research activities, nor adequate reporting of and responses to incidents that occur.

Safeguarding seeks to address systemic gaps that can occur in the practice and scope of research ethics. It does so by extending our ethical responsibility to do no harm to putting in place effective and proportionate systems that anticipate, mitigate and address harm to *<u>any person we interact with or community in which we operate</u>* and that relates to *<u>any activity associated with the Hub</u>*. It also places an emphasis on supporting a culture of reflection, action and *<u>learning throughout the research lifecycle</u>* (including legacy) – rather than on static checks and punitive measures. In this way, safeguarding places responsibilities on all of us, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, whenever and wherever we project our identity as being part of the Hub, or are able to influence the Hub and its activities.

Research ethics and safeguarding concerns most clearly overlap around questions of how power operates through relationships within and between research teams and their research environment (people and places). Other areas of concern closely related to safeguarding include health and safety, and professional codes of conduct. A specific focus on safeguarding seeks to strengthen practice in all of these areas, ultimately providing new opportunities to benefit research impact, researchers and institutions.

While the research ethics and safeguarding relationship can remain ambiguous, the priority concern is that we centre the perspective of vulnerable people and put effective formal and informal systems and practices in place that protect them. Some primary considerations that could identify safeguarding concerns out with or in addition to research ethics include: what constitutes harm (e.g. between whom and who decides), in what settings (across all of our activities) and how are incidents anticipated, mitigated and addressed in practice?

Examples of research ethics and safeguarding questions that are distinct and that overlap:



Annex 2: Examples of safeguarding risks

Safeguarding risks are shaped by existing vulnerabilities based on social power relations and structural inequalities. They depend on a wide range of factors, including the context and focus of research, and are not limited to sexual abuse and exploitation, but include all forms of physical and psychological abuse, exploitation and neglect.

Safeguarding is therefore a relational concept – it is not a property of an individual but of the relationship between individuals in specific times and places. Research processes inevitably interact with existing vulnerabilities, and therefore either exacerbate, challenge or subvert them by creating new relationships or reconfiguring existing ones.

Relationships in Tomorrow's Cities include those between:

1. Researchers and the communities (local and professional) we directly engage with.
2. Members of research and operational teams (within and between City Teams and Hub governance structures).
3. Researchers and wider communities where research is taking place.

Examples of some safeguarding risks and mitigation actions, adapted from those identified by the UKRI GCRF Accountability and Responsiveness in Informal Settlements for Equity (ARISE) Hub (detailed in Aktar et al. (2020)) include:

Who is at risk?	What are the risks?	How can these risks be mitigated?
Research participants (e.g. communities, policymakers, practitioners)	• Participants perceived as being an agent for someone else (e.g. seen to be working against the government) • Sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment • Financial exploitation • Renewed trauma through reliving experiences during interviews • Lack of referral pathways leading to protection needs being unmet	• Staff training • Encouragement of reporting incidents/concerns • Identification of referral pathways • Strong institutional policies for child protection and anti-harassment • Sensitise staff on policies and signpost to them • Sensitise communities and staff on what to do and what not to do • Male/female pairs
Research teams (i.e. within cities, across the Hub, and including non-research collaborators, operational staff, consultants, contractors, students, interns and visitors).	• Sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment • Physical and psychological health risks from working in the community/within the political context. • Psychological harm from listening to trauma survivors • Harassment when carrying out work • Burnout/distress of those open to manipulation and corruption	• Debrief, support and supervision available for research team • Counselling services for those dealing with sensitive topics • Boundary setting • Data collection and project activities conducted in groups, preferably mixed gender
Wider communities we engage with	• Child abuse	• Establish report and referral procedures

(Including risks unrelated to research activities)	• Sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment • Child, early or forced marriage, gender-based violence, intimate partner violence • Female genital mutilation • Eviction/homelessness • Substance abuse • Stigma against certain groups	• Orientate researchers on relevant laws and policies • Provide safety guidelines and sensitise research team
Other risks	• Data protection/security • Opportunity costs of taking part in research. • Stigma of taking part in research. • False hope on perceived benefits shapes participation. • Unintended negative consequences due to participation.	• Orientation for staff on research methods, ethics and cultural sensitivity • Inform local authorities about the research • Inclusive and participatory methodology

Annex 3: Particular Covid-19 Safeguarding considerations

Pre-existing safeguarding risks increase and new risks emerge during any crisis for a number of reasons. These include:

- The potential for action on safeguarding to be overlooked, delayed or disrupted in the face of more immediate perceived needs;
- The ability to carry out basic institutional safeguarding functions may be compromised, and additional risks overlooked;
- Perpetrators of harm may seize the opportunity to act during windows of lower scrutiny and/or capacity to act;
- New forms of harm may emerge within new social contexts; researchers may be inclined to undertake riskier actions due to shifting baselines of what constitutes 'acceptable' risk.

Safeguarding risks created by Covid-19 – including transmission pathways and the direct and indirect impacts of the disease and varying societal actions taken to respond – are highly uncertain and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. This intractable uncertainty, coupled with the potential for significant and widespread harm that reaches beyond the direct health impacts of the virus, strengthens the imperative for taking a humble and precautionary approach to safeguarding risks, centred on the perspectives and needs of those known to be most vulnerable.

However, certain direct and indirect safeguarding risks are already know/anticipated and should receive heightened consideration. These include:

- People most vulnerable to the direct health impacts of the virus (e.g. those over 60yrs and/or with health conditions like lung/heart disease, diabetes, or conditions that affect their immune system).
- Increased risk of all forms of abuse, exploitation, harassment, and violence against women and girls across a wide range of settings (personal, public and professional);
- Increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence to children;
- Whistle-blowers being ignored or suffering retaliation;
- Mental health issues, intimate partner violence and job insecurity affecting staff;
- Increased financial vulnerabilities of research participants due to widespread job losses and economic recession; and
- Risk of myths around transmission and infection influencing research decisions and practice.

For a more comprehensive set of Covid-19 considerations, aligned with the core principles adopted in our Safeguarding Policy, please read the summary tables in: Practical application of UKCDR Safeguarding Guidance during Covid-19[1].

[1] Available here: https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/010420-UKCDR-Safeguarding-Companion-Piece_Practical-application-of-guidance-during-COVID-19.pdf