



People & Culture Policy

PC242 - Survivor Support Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide survivor / victim support and referral information to Oxfam Australia offices in Australia and in countries where Oxfam Australia is Executing Affiliate.

2. Scope

This Policy applies globally to all Oxfam Australia (Oxfam) employees and those associated with the delivery of Oxfam work referred to as personnel (whether volunteers, consultants, or partners, where the abuse is associated with Oxfam's work). In countries where the policy contravenes local legislation, the local legislation must be followed with guidance from the Safeguarding Team, Country Director and/or the Head of People & Culture. Oxfam policy will apply where it is more stringent than local legislation. This policy will also apply to victims of Modern Slavery associated with Oxfam's work.

3. Policy Statement

Oxfam has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation, sexual abuse (including all forms of child exploitation and abuse) and harassment (SEAH). Oxfam will not tolerate its employees, volunteers, consultants, partners or any other representative associated with the delivery of its work carrying out any form of sexual exploitation, abuse (including child abuse) and harassment. Oxfam commits to supporting survivors of any incidents where the perpetrator is an Oxfam employee or the incident is associated with the delivery of Oxfam's work.

Support can include psycho-social counselling, access to Oxfam's employee assistance programmes (where available, in relation to staff) and/or access to other appropriate support as needed. Survivors can choose when they would like to take up the support options available to them. Oxfam will strive to assist survivors access support where it is available that is sensitive and appropriate to the individual's needs and capacity.

Safeguarding Team will use this Policy in conjunction with relevant employment/labour laws, duty of care and relevant criminal laws to inform decisions about how to respond to any complaints and concerns raised. For further advice, please contact your local SG Focal point. Safeguarding (SG) Focal Points and the Global Safeguarding Team will receive training on this Policy. This Policy also includes implementation plans.

4. Outlines and Content

The One-Oxfam Policy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and the One-Oxfam Child Safeguarding Policy outline Oxfam's aspiration to provide survivors of sexual exploitation, abuse (including child abuse) and harassment with access to competent support services. Recognising that access to and availability of quality survivor support services will vary from one context to another, this Policy introduces a set of common definitions, principles, and steps related to supporting survivors/victims to access support.

The Policy highlights:

- Core Principles of Survivor/Victim Support
- The kinds of support survivors/victims of SEAH and Child Abuse may need
- Implementation in Australia
- Implementation in programme countries and international offices

5. Survivor / Victim Assistance

Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) are forms of gender based violence. Survivors/victims of gender-based violence, including SEAH, may require specialised support services including:

- Medical assistance to treat injuries and support prevention of certain sexually transmitted infections like HIV;

- Psychological support, such as counselling, to address trauma and other long-term impacts of SEAH;
- Legal counselling to understand and provide advice on pursuing both legal and administrative claims;
- Immediate material assistance, such as shelter, clothing, or food, if, for example, a survivor/victim has had to relocate as a result of SEAH;
- Protection from ongoing situations of abuse and retaliation from reporting wherever possible.
- Children require special support and protections. Children are people under the age of 18.

6. Core Principles of Survivor / Victim Support

Oxfam strives for a survivor-centred approach to SEAH and Child Abuse survivor/victim support. The following guiding principles should be placed at the core of provision of survivor/victim assistance and support. These guiding principles are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

Assistance is prioritised based on a thorough assessment of need, availability and risk, as determined by Safeguarding specialists. We recognize that the availability of support varies from location to location, and that in some locations support is provided by Governments and in by civil society.

Oxfam acknowledges that survivors of abuse may not report immediately where abuse has taken place. Oxfam will support survivors of abuse which has been perpetrated by Oxfam employees and related personnel whenever it happened. Oxfam will also endeavour to support survivors of abuse which has been perpetrated by other people when such abuse is associated with the delivery of Oxfam's work.

Principle 1: Respect, Dignity and Protection

Assistance and support for survivors/victims should be based on the guiding principles of do-no-harm, confidentiality, safety and non-discrimination. Every effort must be made to ensure the dignity of survivors/victims at all times. Oxfam believes that support to the survivor/victim should be organised in a manner that allows survivors, as much as possible, to benefit from the support offered by Oxfam, and reduces risks of further victimization (including retaliation) in the process of;

- (i) reporting an incident,
- (ii) seeking assistance,
- (iii) throughout and following the investigative process.

This also applies to third party complainants who are not survivors, but who may require support in the aftermath of reporting a concern of SEAH or Child Abuse.

Principle 2: Assistance

Wherever possible, all survivors/victims should have access to support regardless of whether they wish to make a complaint or participate in an investigation. A survivor/victim does not need to identify the alleged perpetrator, participate in an investigation, or prove that they were victimized in order to receive assistance. The provision of assistance is not dependent on the outcome of an investigation. All forms of assistance and support should be survivor-centred, age and gender sensitive, and culturally appropriate, and should be provided through qualified services, programmes and networks that are contextually appropriate and in a manner that does not further isolate or stigmatize survivors/victims. Survivors/victims should have a say over what assistance is appropriate, and information should be provided regarding their full range of options within the means available.

Principle 3: information, engagement, and participation

To the greatest extent provided under the local law, and wherever possible, Survivors/victims have the right to be informed not only of their rights, but of how their complaint will be managed, including any mandatory reporting requirements and case management procedures, wherever possible prior to sharing their story. Their informed consent to share information should be voluntarily and freely given based on a clear understanding of the facts, implications and future consequences of sharing information. Survivors/victims should be informed that they have the right to withdraw or change their minds at any time. These rights may be subject to legal constraints in different countries, and to Oxfam's obligations, but we should be transparent as far as we can in identifying those constraints and obligations.

Oxfam should strive to ensure that information about internal and external support services for survivors is made available to both staff and people in communities where Oxfam and its partners work. This will need to be an ongoing process. Survivors/victims should where practical be provided with information concerning their case, such as an investigation and measures to prevent future abuses. Oxfam will endeavour to ensure that survivors/victims are regularly informed of the status of their case should the survivor/victim consent, and be contactable. Investigations into SEAH and child abuse allegations should be survivor-centred, effective, impartial, and transparent, and should be sufficiently independent of the alleged perpetrator(s).

P3a - Access to health care (where appropriate):

Survivors/victims should where possible be referred to a health care provider located as closely as possible to the survivor/victim's home that has the infrastructure, necessary supplies and trained clinical staff to provide free, safe and confidential clinical management of sexual assault in line with national and international standards, policies and guidelines, including:

- Providing confidential examination rooms;
- Obtaining informed consent;
- Performing physical examinations and providing treatment by a same-sex provider (including Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), emergency contraception if available, STI prevention and syndromic treatment; care of wound and life threatening complications; and pregnancy counselling);
- Providing psychological first aid;
- Documenting injuries and keeping careful written records in the event the survivor chooses to pursue legal action. *(Note: Medical or any other information regarding a sexual assault will be stored securely if required for the purpose of an investigation only. At the conclusion of an investigation, these records should be retained or destroyed in line with the wishes of the victim/survivor).*

P3b - Access to psychosocial support:

Trained advisers in psychosocial support and other related support includes:

- Quality, safe and confidential psychological and psychiatric support (free if possible);
- Immediate material support (e.g. clothing, food, petty cash);
- Direct support or referrals for livelihoods opportunities;
- Direct support or referral to educational opportunities;
- Direct support or referral to safe shelter.

Oxfam staff who are survivors/victims of SEAH may also have access to international online/phone counsellors contracted by Oxfam as part of an employee assistance programme. This should be an ongoing assessed service provision.

P3c - Access to legal counselling:

- Legal counselling may include advice on decisions about whether to make a legal complaint in-country (which should rest with a survivor, and be informed by their assessment of their safety). While legal counselling may be available to the survivor, Oxfam should not place undue emphasis on formal justice systems as a mechanism of response.
- In cases where the survivor chooses to pursue criminal prosecution, advice on protection of survivors and their family members from secondary and repeat victimization, from intimidation and from retaliation may be facilitated through consultation with local legal, gender based violence, child protection and other experts), as well as measures to protect the dignity of survivors during questioning and when testifying (e.g. by supporting a victim advocate or case worker to accompany the survivor to legal proceedings).
- Advice may also include procedures established under national law for the physical protection of victims and their family members, if these are deemed safe.
- International staff may have access to their embassy where they can receive immediate support and referrals for legal advice based on their nationality.

P3d - Access to safety and security:

- In settings where police response is deemed survivor-centred (by gender based violence, child protection and other local experts with whom Oxfam is coordinating), Oxfam offices could look in to referral to designated police personnel available for a survivor. Even when police response may be assessed as sub-standard, sharing accurate information about the likelihood that a case reported to the police will proceed to court and/or result in conviction is also important. Such information will help the survivor analyse the benefits versus costs or risks of reporting to the police.
- In countries where there is a mandate to report rape or other crimes deemed to pose a risk to others, the Safeguarding Focal Point should understand their responsibilities and inform the survivor of any and all mandates to report prior to taking a complaint so that the survivor can determine the information she/he wishes to share in the complaint.

7. Implementation

In Australia

In the Australia, the Safeguarding Manager and People & Culture Unit is able to direct survivors to sources of support. This may include, but is not limited to;

- Medical care is available through Medicare;
- International visitors should have medical insurance.
- Victim Support Services are available across Australia, some state based and some national, such as 1800RESPECT being a national service offering sexual assault, domestic violence counselling services, and;
- The Safeguarding Team can also refer to other specialist agencies who have networks of legal advisers (through Women's Advice networks).
- The police throughout Australia have designated personnel available for survivors.

Programmes globally where Oxfam is Executing Affiliate (EA):

The support available varies widely from location to location, and often within countries. Local knowledge is crucial. The Safeguarding Team and Safeguarding Focal Points will do what they can to provide advice on the local support available.

In many countries where Oxfam works, there are existing GBV and Child Protection coordination mechanisms (working groups, networks, sectors, sub-clusters, etc.) that have referral pathways in place. OXFAM EA Offices, working with specialist safeguarding support from the EA, therefore, have two main avenues to explore:

- Work with local GBV, CP and other experts to identify what services exist locally and how referrals can be made;
- Provide information about referrals for support for survivors/victims according to the referral pathway, share information about OXFAM case management procedures, agree on a clear follow-up plan and, where practical if requested, accompany the survivor to services.

Country security advice should be updated during the year to include contact points for local support where it has been identified, and to women's rights and gender based violence organizations. Each country team and each Country Safeguarding Focal Point should create an advice note to promote available survivor support. This should where possible include the kinds of survivor support: medical, psycho-social, legal and safety and security.

We recognise that in some locations it is harder to access support, and survivors may vary in the confidence they have in the available channels. Survivors can choose when they would like to take up the support options available to them. Oxfam will strive to facilitate access to support that is sensitive and appropriate to the individual's needs and capacity.

Employee assistance program (EAP):

Oxfam employees and their immediate family are entitled to access EAP support. This is a confidential, independent and professional counselling service. This is available regardless of whether the issue is related to a workplace problem or some other issue. To access the EAP, contact Converge International on 1300 687 327 Australia wide. International and National employees in field offices can call +613 8620 5300 or email eap@convergeintl.com.au.

8. Associated Policies and Procedures

- One Oxfam Policy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
- One Oxfam Employee Code of Conduct and Non-Staff Code of Conduct
- One Oxfam Child Safeguarding Policy
- Misconduct Standard Operating Procedures

9. Information about this policy

PC – Survivor Support Policy	Effective	June 2020
Pages 5	Next Review	June 2021, or when a One Oxfam Policy implemented
Policy Owner	P&C Associate Director	Approved by Adam Stanic, Acting People & Culture Associate Director