



The White Shadow Foundation Limited operates in line with the ACNC's best practices in connection with Safeguarding Individuals

SCOPE

Using the ACNC's guidelines, The White Shadow Foundation Limited strives to examine how to safeguard vulnerable people and outlines practical steps to ensure the charity is doing this effectively. We accomplish this by working within the below framework.

WHAT DOES SAFEGUARDING MEAN?

Safeguarding is protecting the welfare and human rights of people that are, in some way, connected with our charity and/or its work – particularly people that may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

The definition of safeguarding used to be narrower - it used to refer to protecting children or vulnerable adults. However, Australian legislation broadened the definition to include everybody. As such, safeguarding is part of The White Shadow Foundation's primary duty of care.

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

While all people must be protected from harm, there are additional legislative and ethical considerations for protecting vulnerable people.

Vulnerable people can include:

children and seniors, and;
people with impaired intellectual or physical functioning, and;
people from a low socio-economic background, and;
people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, and;
people who are not native speakers of the local language, and;
people with low levels of literacy or education, and;
people subject to modern slavery, which involves human exploitation and control, such as forced labour, debt bondage, human trafficking (including sex trafficking), and child labour.

Vulnerable people are not limited to a charity's beneficiaries or the users of its services. They can include a charity's staff, volunteers, and people in third parties, such as partners. Being able to recognise vulnerability in its various forms is important and the first step to being able to protect vulnerable people.

RISKS AND CONSEQUENCES

Safeguarding is a matter of concern for The White Shadow Foundation Limited. We aim to be aware of the changing risks that come with its scope of work, and the potential incidents of harm.

Incidents of harm may include:

Sexual harassment, bullying or abuse, and;
Serious sexual offences, such as rape, and;
Threats of violence or actual violence, and;
Verbal, emotional or social abuse, and;
Cultural or identity abuse (racial, sexual or gender-based discrimination or hate crimes), and;
Coercion and exploitation, and;
Abuse of power.

These incidents of harm can have a wide range of consequences:

Mental and physical health issues, or even death, for affected people.
Civil or criminal sanctions for the charity or individuals.
Anger in the community.
Damage to reputation and negative media attention.
Disruption to services.
Decrease in team cohesion, morale and productivity.
Inability to attract staff and volunteers.
Loss of donors and access to grants.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

The White Shadow Foundation Limited is registered with the ACNC and must continue to be not for profit and pursue solely charitable purposes. We must also keep financial records, and report information to the ACNC annually.

Specific obligations for safeguarding requires The White Shadow Foundation Limited to comply with Australian law and set duties for the charity's Responsible Persons (our board of directors). This includes the requirement to act with care and diligence and in the best interests of the charity at all times.

MANAGING RISKS

While everyone involved in The White Shadow Foundation Limited charity has a role to play in protecting people, the ultimate responsibility for a charity sits with its Responsible Persons. It is the Responsible Persons who must consider the unique and specific circumstances of the charity and ensure it is able to identify and manage the relevant risks.

There are seven steps that we take to help protect people from harm:

Identify and assess the risks and any legal and ethical obligations.

Commit to managing risks of working with vulnerable people.

Prevent harm and mitigate risks with clear and comprehensive policies, procedures and systems.

Engage people, including those from third parties, to help manage risks by adhering to policies, procedures and systems.

Detect changes in risks, instances of harm and of non-compliance with obligations.

Take action when concerns, suspicion or complaints arise.

Assure our charity's board that risks are being managed.

IDENTIFY AND ASSESS

There are three important actions in this step:

understand our charity's risks, and;
understand our charity's obligations, and;
determine what policies, procedures and systems our charity needs, to manage both.

By conducting a risk assessment we are able to identify the risks that come with our charity's work with people, prioritise each risk according to its likelihood and consequences, and identify the policies, procedures and systems that will deal with the risks. This is a methodical way to make sure that the charity has considered what could happen, and how it will deal with incidents that do happen.

We consider carefully the consequences of an incident – in particular, the effects on the victim, our charity's beneficiaries, its reputation, financial position, partners, and the morale of our staff. With lots of information to understand the risks, we strive to consult widely, for example through meetings, workshops and surveys, and identify information sources such as previous incidents, reports, events in other organisations, and media reports.

PREVENT

Policies, procedures and systems can reduce the likelihood and consequences of incidents. These are known as internal controls. It is important that they are appropriate for The White Shadow Foundation Limited, and address its specific risks.

Examples of procedures and systems include:

Due diligence. The research, background checks and preparation that our charity does to minimise the possibility of doing harm to people

Segregating duties and providing supervision. Policies or procedures that ensure the responsibility for high-risk situations is shared by more than one person

Managing third parties. Third parties are people or organisations that our charity works with, such as suppliers and partners. Managing third parties includes making sure they are capable of, and committed to, protecting people in their work. We use written agreements, contracts or memoranda of understanding, which prove to be useful in managing third parties.

ENGAGE

Engaging everybody involved in our charity and its work means communicating its expectations, raising awareness of any issue/s, and building a positive culture of protecting people.

We may communicate its expectations and raise awareness of the issue/s through formal channels such as policies, procedures and training resources, or less formal methods such as email updates, newsletters and face to face meetings.

To help develop and maintain a culture that values safeguarding, The White Shadow Foundation Limited considers these questions:

Does our charity's values support general safeguarding?

Has our charity considered the kind of culture it wants?

Does the leadership of our charity embody the desired culture, and do their words and actions encourage others to be part of it?

How do attitudes and events in our charity compare with the culture it wants to develop?

DETECT

It is important to detect incidents of harm, but it is also equally important to detect moments of non-compliance, with commitments and indicators, that risks might be changing.

To detect an incident of harm effectively, we ensure that:

Staff, volunteers and third parties report any concerns they have, including the option to do so confidentially, and;

There are ways for people to provide feedback, raise grievances and report suspected or actual incidents of harm, and;

People who report concerns or incidents of harm are protected, and;

There is a supportive culture that encourages staff and volunteers to speak up, and;

There is a clear and transparent system for investigating and responding to concerns.

TAKE ACTION

In the event of a suspected incident, our charity takes prompt action to understand what might have happened, what risks might exist, and how to protect the people affected.

ASSURE

The White Shadow Foundation Limited's board makes sure that there are regular reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures and systems. We review them annually and after any incident, considering the following questions at all times:

Are they up to date, reflecting the current working environment and legislation or regulation?

Do they reflect the current risks for our charity's work?

Do staff, volunteers and third parties follow the policies, procedures and systems properly?

Do the policies and procedures work, or are they ineffective?

What feedback has our charity received (if any) about its policies, procedures and systems?

What improvements could we make during our review process?

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