

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY
FOR
WOMEN INFORMATION NETWORK (WINET)**

COMMENCEMENT

The implementation of this First version of the policy shall commence on the 1st day of March 2019.

APPLICATION

This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of WINET, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff and volunteers.

DEFINITIONS

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults to protect them from harm.

Children

The Nigerian Child Rights Act (2003) and The Enugu State Child Rights Law (2016) states the legal definition of a child as “a person under the age of 18 years”.

Vulnerable Adults

A “vulnerable adult” is any person, 18 years of age or older, who is a resident or patient of a facility such as a hospital, group nursing home, day service facility, day activity centre and adult foster care home. A vulnerable adult also includes a person who possesses a physical or mental infirmity or other physical or emotional dysfunction that impairs the individual’s ability to provide adequately for his/her own care without assistance and because of the dysfunction or infirmity and the need for assistance, the individual has an impaired ability to protect himself from maltreatment”. (Hon. Justice Joseph Otabor Olubor, 2009).

Abuse

Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that deliberately or unknowingly causes harm, endangers life or violates their rights. Abuse maybe:

- Physical
 - Sexual
 - Psychological – repeatedly being made to feel unhappy, humiliated, afraid or devalued by others
 - Financial or material – stealing or denying access to money or possessions
 - Neglect
 - Discriminatory – abuse motivated by discriminatory attitudes towards race, religion, gender, disability or cultural background.

- Abuse may involve one or a combination of these factors.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is bullying or coercion of a sexual nature and the unwelcome or inappropriate promise of rewards in exchange for sexual favours.

WINET is obliged to ensure that every person who comes in contact with the organization experiences an environment that is free from sexual harassment.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF SAFEGUARDING POLICY

WINET works with children and vulnerable adults as part of its activities. These include training of people with disabilities in schools and their associations on various issues including sexual reproductive health and rights, access to justice and fundamental human rights.

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- Protect children and vulnerable adults who receive WINET's services.
- Ensure that WINET does not tolerate bullying, harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse of children and vulnerable adults.
- Provide principles that guide our approach to child protection.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of the legislations that seek to protect human and fundamental Rights of children and vulnerable adults in Nigeria including the Nigerian Child's Right Act (2003), Freedom of Information Act (2011), Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015, Administration of Criminal Justice Law of Enugu State (2017), Enugu State Child Rights Law (2016) and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (As Amended) and other International Conventions.

WINET believes that:

- children and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind.
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them.

WINET recognizes that:

- the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- all children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- working in partnership with children, vulnerable adults, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

WINET will seek to keep children and vulnerable adults safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a nominated safeguarding officer and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children and vulnerable adults, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
WINET will send a letter to the applicant's previous place of work for attestation to good character and will require letters from two referees who know the candidates' suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring that new staff, Board members and volunteers will receive orientation on the organization's Safeguarding policy.
- Implementing a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Sharing information regarding child protection and good practice with children, parents, and vulnerable adults with Board, staff and volunteers during meetings.

WHISTLE BLOWING

- Every staff, volunteer or Board member under this policy is entitled to be a whistle blower where breach of fundamental rights is complained against.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- Staff, Volunteers and agents of WINET shall exhibit a responsible and caring attitude towards their activities in respect of Children and Vulnerable adults.
- Staff, Volunteers and Agents of WINET should be willing to work beyond borders of politics, religion, culture, race, ethnicity and any other sentiments in their responsibilities to Children and Vulnerable adults.
- No Staff, Volunteers or Agents of WINET should violate Children and Vulnerable adults' fundamental rights in the cause of his/her work.
- Information about beneficiaries particularly Children and Vulnerable adults are expected to be kept in confidence, as the principle of confidentiality will guide information addressed to Staff, Volunteers and Board Members of WINET by Children and Vulnerable Adults.

NOTE: This code of conduct under this policy shall remain enforceable against all Staff, Volunteers, Agents and Board Members of WINET. Non-compliance will be sanctioned with suspension from the organization.

COMPLAINTS MECHANISM

- It shall be proper for a complaint to be made orally or in written form, addressed to the Safeguarding officer and Executive Director directly or to the Chairperson of the Board Hon. Justice Cordelia Chukwurah (Rtd.) who shall be the lead for the policy or Board member of WINET.
- Where Complaints are made in compliance with the above but not made to the Executive Director, such complaint must be forwarded to the Executive Director Miriam Menkiti (Cell no: 08063311962, Email: menkitim@yahoo.com) within 48hours, except where the complaint was made against the Executive Director; it shall be directed to the Programme Manager and assistant safe guarding officer, Ijeoma Obinna-Onwuka on Cell No: 08037807752.
- On receipt of any complaint, the Executive Director shall refer it to the Board Chairperson who is the lead for Safeguarding, she will investigate and make a formal report to the police within seven days.

DUTIES OF THE SAFEGUARDING OFFICER ARE TO:

- Receive information on activities that are planned by WINET that may involve children and vulnerable adults and plan how safeguarding will be covered.
- Receive information from any staff, volunteers, children, vulnerable adults, parents or carers who have safeguarding concerns and record it in a safeguarding register.
- Assess information promptly, carefully clarifying and obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate.
- Inform the safe guarding lead who will make a formal referral to a statutory child safeguarding agency or the police.

SAFEGUARDING REGISTER

- There shall be a Register on Safeguarding to be kept by the Safeguarding lead for recording reports that may be made concerning: Sexual abuse, Physical abuse, Psychological Abuse, Neglect, Health Challenges and Death.
- The register will be kept in a secured place separate from project materials and access to it will be restricted to volunteers.

CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULT SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

- WINET staff, volunteers, Board members must contact the Safeguarding lead if they have any cause to believe that children or vulnerable adults covered by this policy are in anyway at risk. The safeguarding lead will keep records of all such reports and their outcomes in the register, in accordance with laws on protecting data.

- WINET will identify children and vulnerable adults participating in its activities and ensure that there are appropriate support measures in place. This is most likely to be when one is seen to clearly have mental health difficulties or a disability that puts him or her into the legal definition of 'vulnerable'.
- Any member of staff or volunteer of WINET with concerns regarding an adult whom they believe or know to be vulnerable must contact the Safeguarding lead.
- The Executive Director and Safeguarding Officer shall inform all visitors of WINET of policies of this organisation and safeguarding expectations with respect to Children and Vulnerable adults.

WINET IS COMMITTED TO REVIEW THIS POLICY EVERY YEAR

This first version of the policy comes into effect on the 1st of March 2019.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miriam Menkiti', written in a cursive style.

Miriam Menkiti

Executive Director & Safeguarding Officer

Cell no: 08063311962

Date: 23rd May 2019