

External statement

Protecting vulnerable adults and children from harm is a critical priority for governments, policy makers, and the public worldwide. In recent years, there has been a growing focus on safeguarding against sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment in the aid sector. In response, many international development organisations have reviewed and strengthened their safeguarding measures and made sure that those in charge take responsibility and are held accountable.

Trócaire is committed to ensuring it has adequate and effective safeguarding practices, and in February 2023, it commissioned Duty of Care International to review its key policies, procedures, and internal controls and to provide a professional opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

This review was conducted against a framework based on international best practices. The review looked at policy, awareness, reporting, responding, risk management, and governance and accountability. It also conducted a deep dive into remote working and safeguarding, working with partners, and working with vulnerable groups. The interviewees represented a cross-section of senior governance, decision-makers, country programs, learning and accountability, and safeguarding focal points.

Trócaire has a strong safeguarding policy framework that is aligned with international best practices. The organisation is committed to protecting the people it works with, and it has a comprehensive set of policies and procedures in place to prevent harm and to respond to harm if it does occur. Trócaire has a system that ensures that any safeguarding concerns are reported and investigated promptly and confidentially. This system is trusted and effective and is seen as working very well by those who may use it. Trócaire's commitment to safeguarding is also evident in the extensive training and awareness that it provides to all staff, volunteers, and partner staff. A few minor recommendations for improvement were made in these areas, but these were only to enhance an already strong framework.

The partnership model and due diligence process is working well, with partners appreciating the support and guidance. Working with partners to strengthen safeguarding prevention, response and reporting mechanisms remains an important area of safeguarding work for Trócaire and its partners.

The governance of the safeguarding system has a dedicated resource overseeing its implementation, and the board-level committee providing oversight. There is a strong commitment from the Board and senior management to safeguarding. Given the importance of this area to Trócaire, we have recommended they examine how best to ensure current expertise and knowledge is sustained into the future.

Overall, the findings of the review are extremely positive demonstrating the overall strength of Trócaire's safeguarding system. What is in place truly represents safeguarding best practice and Trócaire stands as a leader in the safeguarding space. Trócaire is an organisation that embraces learning and ensures that the safeguarding system is a living system, where changes are made regularly and as needed. Most of the recommendations in the review are mostly small adjustments that would enhance the already exceptional safeguarding system Trócaire has in place. As one staff member said, Trócaire, has 'moved far beyond compliance' and is developing safeguarding systems that have moved policy into practice. We can confirm Trócaire's safeguarding systems and practices are robust, to a high standard and adequate and effective.



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