**THE SOKO FUND**

The Soko Fund, a Scottish based registered charity (No SC 035554), is an international aid organization that raises funds with the sole purpose of providing and administering scholarships and related forms of guidance and assistance to female students registered for degree courses in universities in Malawi, Central Africa.

# SAFEGUARDING ADULTS POLICY

1. This policy will enable The Soko Fund to demonstrate its commitment to keeping safe the adults with whom it works. The Soko Fund acknowledges its duty to respond appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

It is important to have the policy and procedures in place so that trustees, paid staff, volunteers, and scholarship holders can work to prevent abuse and know what to do in the event of abuse.

1. The Policy Statement and Procedures have been drawn up in order to enable The Soko Fund to:

* promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm, abuse and coercion occurring.
* to ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported.
* and to stop that abuse occurring.

1. The policy applies to all trustees, paid staff, volunteers, and scholarship holders who work with, on behalf of, or hold a scholarship from The Soko Fund

In order to implement the policy the The Soko Fund will work:

* to promote the freedom and dignity of the person who has or is experiencing abuse
* to promote the rights of all people to live free from abuse and coercion
* to ensure the safety and well being of people who do not have the capacity to decide how they want to respond to abuse that they are experiencing
* to manage the Fund’s activities in a way which promotes safety and prevents abuse
* recruit staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
* provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training

1. The Soko Fund will ensure that all trustees, staff, volunteers, and scholarship holders

* are familiar with this policy and procedures, which will be posted on its website
* will act within the process for maintaining confidentiality
* will pass information to an appropriate authority when a person is suspected of being at risk.
* will inform parties involved in the Fund’s activities that where a person is in danger or a crime has been committed a decision may be taken to pass information to another agency without the person’s consent
* will endeavour to keep up to date with relevant developments relating to preventing abuse and welfare of adults
* will ensure that the Designated Named Person understands his/her responsibility

The Designated Named Person for Safeguarding Adults in The Soko Fundis:

Brian Kerr, Chair of Trustees

4/1 Harrison Place

Edinburgh

EH11 1SF

[brian@thesokofund.org](mailto:brian@thesokofund.org)

They should be contacted for support and advice on implementing this policy and procedures.

1. **PROCEDURES**

# Introduction

The Soko Fund provides scholarships and other forms of assistance to female students at universities in Malawi, Central Africa. These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any student in her access to services provided by The Soko Fund. The procedures recognise that adult abuse can be a difficult subject for workers to deal with. The Soko Fund is committed to the belief that the protection of vulnerable adults from harm and abuse is everybody’s responsibility and the aim of these procedures is to ensure that all trustees of the organisation, staff and volunteers act appropriately in response to any concern around adult abuse.

### Preventing abuse

The Soko Fund is committed to putting in place safeguards and measures to reduce the likelihood of abuse taking place within the services it offers and that all those involved within The Soko Fund will be treated with respect.

The Soko Fund is committed to safer recruitment policies and practices for trustees, paid staff, and volunteers. This may include CRB disclosures (PVG Disclosure Scotland) for any staff and volunteers, ensuring references are taken up and adequate training on Safeguarding Adults is provided for staff and volunteers.

Although beneficiaries of the Soko Fund are exclusively resident in Malawi, the organisation will work within the current UK legal framework for reporting staff or volunteers that are alleged abusers.

Information will be available about abuse and the complaints procedure and the Safeguarding Adults policy statement will be available to scholarship holders, volunteers and any employees through the website (www.thesokofund.org).

# Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse

The Soko Fund will ensure that the Designated Named Person and any members of staff, trustees and volunteers have access to training about Safeguarding Adults.

**Abuse includes:**

# physical abuse

# sexual abuse: including rape, indecent assault, inappropriate touching, exposure to pornographic material

# psychological or emotional abuse: including belittling, name calling, threats of harm, intimidation, isolation

# financial or material abuse: including stealing, selling assets, fraud, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

# discriminatory abuse: racist, sexist, that based on a person’s disability and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment

### Designated Named Person for safeguarding adults

The Soko Fund has an appointed individual who is responsible for dealing with any Safeguarding Adults concerns. In their absence, a deputy will be available.

Designated Named Person for Safeguarding Adults:

Brian Kerr

Mobile Number: 07985984903

Emergency Contact Number: 07985984903

Name of deputy person: Julie Bremner

Mobile number: 07975913962

Emergency contact number: 07975913962

The roles and responsibilities of the named person(s) are:

* to ensure that all staff including volunteers and trustees are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they have concerns that a vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or has experienced abuse or neglect.
* to ensure that concerns are acted on, details clearly recorded and referred to an appropriate social care authority where necessary.
* to document fully what steps have been taken.
* to follow up any referrals and ensure the issues have been addressed.
* consider any recommendations from the Safeguarding Adults process.
* to reinforce the utmost need for confidentiality and to ensure that staff and volunteers are adhering to good practice with regard to confidentiality and security. This is because it is around the time that a person starts to challenge abuse that the risks of increasing intensity of abuse are greatest.
* to ensure that staff and volunteers working directly with service users who have experienced abuse, or who are experiencing abuse, are well supported and receive appropriate supervision.
* if appropriate staff or volunteers will be given support and afforded protection if necessary under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998: they will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and they will be kept informed of any action that has been taken and its outcome.

1. **Responding to people who have experienced or are experiencing abuse**

The Soko Fund recognises that it has a duty to act on reports, or suspicions of abuse or neglect. It also acknowledges that taking action in cases of adult abuse is never easy.

How to respond if you receive an allegation:

* Reassure the person concerned
* Listen to what they are saying
* Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible, using the person’s own words and including dates, times and names mentioned, and who the information is being given to
* Explain that the information may have to be passed on
* Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief
* Tell them that the information will be treated seriously
* Tell them what will happen next, and who the information will be shared with, if appropriate
* Don’t start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions
* Don’t promise to keep it a secret

All situations of abuse or alleged abuse will be discussed with the Designated Named Person or their deputy. If a trustee, staff member or volunteer feels unable to raise this concern with the Designated Named Person or their deputy then concerns can be raised directly with the appropriate social care authority. The alleged victim will be told that this will happen. This stage is called the alert.

If it is appropriate and there is consent from the individual, or there is a good reason to override consent, such as risk to others, a referral (alert) will be made to the most appropriate adult protection service.

If the individual experiencing abuse does not have capacity to consent a referral will be made without that person’s consent, in their best interests.

1. **Publication, Review and Amendment**

This statement of policy and procedures will be posted on the Soko Fund website. It will be reviewed annually at a meeting of the Trustees of the Soko Fund and amended as required in the light of relevant changes in circumstances and/or in light of changes in policy recommendations for international aid organization of a similar size and purpose.

At present (March 2018) the Soko Fund employs no staff in Scotland or Malawi; and has not yet recruited any volunteers here or in Malawi, aside from the trustees. In relation to Safeguarding, its responsibility is to Scholarship holders all of whom live in Malawi. *Before* the Fund recruits any staff and /or volunteers in future, this statement will be reviewed and updated as necessary, to ensure its practical application and effective implementation.

This Policy was approved by the Trustees of the Soko Fund on \_14th March 2018\_