

<i>Policy Name:</i>	Adult Safeguarding and Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
<i>Updated By:</i>	Melita Alcock
<i>Version:</i>	One
<i>Approved By:</i>	MSIA Board
<i>Date of Approval:</i>	XXX 2019
<i>Date of Next Review:</i>	XXX 2022

Table of Contents

The MSIA Adult Safeguarding and Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy...	2
1. Introduction.....	2
2. Key concepts.....	2
3. Our commitment to adult safeguarding.....	3
4. Scope.....	3
5. Guiding principles.....	4
6. Key roles and responsibilities.....	4
7. Implementation.....	6
8. Core standards.....	6
Core Standard 1: Training and Awareness.....	6
Core Standard 2: Recruitment and Screening of Team Members.....	7
Core Standard 3: Safeguarding Risk Management.....	7
Core Standard 4: Code of Conduct.....	8
Core Standard 5: Incident Reporting.....	8
Core Standard 6: Incident Investigation.....	9
9. Breach of the policy or code of conduct.....	9
10. Policy monitoring and review.....	9
Annex 1: Concepts and Definitions.....	11
Safeguarding.....	11
Vulnerable Adults.....	11
Disability.....	12
Mental illness.....	12
Trauma.....	12
Environmental Vulnerability.....	13
Definitions of Abuse, Exploitation and Harassment.....	13

MSIA Adult Safeguarding and Preventing Sexual, Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy

1. Introduction

At MSIA we recognise that living a life free from harm and abuse is a fundamental human right, and an essential requirement for health and well-being. Throughout the world there are adults who may be subject to a greater risk of abuse, harassment, bullying, or sexual exploitation due to their circumstances or a context outside of their control. Safeguarding adults is about protecting the safety and well-being of all adults and providing additional measures to protect those least able to defend themselves from harm or abuse.

Safeguarding is a way of working that promotes the safety and welfare of people involved in the delivery of, or receipt of, humanitarian aid and development assistance and protects them from harm, including all forms of exploitation, abuse and harassment. This definition applies not only to the activities of MSIA, but to the activities of all programs within the MSI Partnership.

2. Key concepts

- **Adult** – An individual 18 years and above.
- **Vulnerable Adult** – Individuals 18 years and above who are, or may be, unable to take care of themselves and/or are unable to defend themselves against significant harm or exploitation. This vulnerability could be both temporary or permanently experienced.
- **Sexual Exploitation** - Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. It includes profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from sexual exploitation of another.
- **Sexual Abuse** - The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. It covers sexual offences, including but not limited to, attempted rape (which includes attempts to force someone to perform oral sex); and sexual assault (which includes non-consensual kissing and touching). All sexual activity with someone under the age of consent is considered to be sexual abuse.
- **Sexual Harassment** - A person sexually harasses another person if the person makes an unwelcome sexual advance or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, or engages in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.
- **Protection** - Measures and structures to prevent and respond to abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence affecting adults, particularly vulnerable adults in all sectors, contexts and environments.
- **Safeguarding** - The responsibility that organisations have to make sure their employees, operations, and programmes do no harm to individuals, and the active measures they take to prevent the harm and abuse of adults. Within this Policy ‘safeguarding’ refers to preventing harm, abuse and exploitation, and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment to all MSIA people, MSIA clients and any adults who come in contact with MSIA or the MSI Partnership.
- **MSIA People** - Includes all employees, trainees, volunteers, sessional workers, and agency staff. All the people to whom this Policy applies are collectively referred to as “MSIA People”.
- **Safeguarding System** – Consists of Six Core Standards that set benchmarks of good practice and accountability and require MSIA People to be constantly vigilant to prevent and respond to exploitation, abuse and harassment, sexual or otherwise.
- **MSI Code of Conduct** – A document that articulates the set of standards to which all MSI and MSIA People will be held. This document must be signed by all MSIA People upon commencement of their role.

3. Our commitment to adult safeguarding

MSIA recognises that its services and operations may pose risks, or harm, to individuals. MSIA is committed to actively preventing and minimising the likelihood of harm to clients and promoting a culture where abuse of any kind, including sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment is not tolerated and is dealt with promptly if it does occur.

We take our safeguarding duty of care very seriously. Our commitment is to:

- **Safeguard Clients:** by actively identifying clients who may be vulnerable and at risk of significant harm, by preventing intentional or unintentional harm, abuse, and exploitation within MSIA operations, and by promptly responding, if harm or abuse does occur.
- **Safeguard MSIA People:** by promoting a safe working environment for MSIA People, and by avoiding ambiguous workplace situations and behaviours which may be misinterpreted and potentially lead to false allegations against team members.
- **Safeguard MSIA:** by demonstrating a genuine commitment to safeguarding all our clients, our team members, and preventing cases of abuse happening which may tarnish MSIA's reputation and affect its ability to continue work and receive funding.

4. Scope

This Policy applies to all persons in the MSIA Partnership, including Marie Stopes Ladies, trainees, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and any other individual or organisation who provide services on behalf of MSIA.

This Policy applies during and outside of working hours, whenever someone can be considered to represent the organisation, in line with MSIA's zero tolerance approach.

MSIA has a responsibility to ensure that implementing partners, and others engaged in implementation, follow this Policy or develop their own following the MSIA guiding principles and standards. They include:

- Business partners (i.e., any individual or company contracted by MSIA to conduct a service, including consultants and suppliers)
- Social franchisees
- Visitors (including donors, consultants, researchers, journalists, supporters and spouses/partners of MSIA team members)

This Policy is a general policy that applies to all MSIA People – it does not provide specific guidance on consent issues in the context of medical procedures for **adults as this is the remit of the Medical Development Team**.

The policy should be read in conjunction with:

- MSI Code of Conduct
- MSIA Child Safeguarding Policy
- MSIA Communications Policy
- Global Anti-Modern Slavery Policy
- Global Equity and Diversity Policy
- Global Dignity at Work Policy
- Global Speaking Up Policy
- MSI Duty of Care of Service Providers
- MSI Counselling Guidelines on Informed Consent

5. Guiding principles

MSIA's commitment to safeguarding is guided by the following principles:

1. **Zero tolerance:** MSIA does not tolerate bullying, harassment, sexual exploitation or abuse of any adults, in any form, by anyone who works for or is associated with the organisation in any capacity.
2. **Empowerment:** Promote a culture of respect, dignity, empowerment and autonomy of vulnerable adults by promoting and respecting their own decision-making process, through client-led decision-making and informed consent. Where clients are unable to act on their own behalf, their interests are represented by a person authorised to make decisions on their behalf.
3. **Shared responsibility:** All MSIA People must commit to, and uphold, the principles and standards of MSIA's Safeguarding System.
4. **Prevention:** MSIA understands that abuse, exploitation and harassment of adults can happen anywhere, including within MSIA's operations. By accepting that this could happen, MSIA is committed to its prevention.
5. **Equality and Diversity:** MSIA is committed to supporting the well-being of all adults and safeguarding them regardless of their age, nationality, culture, ethnicity, gender, religious or political belief, socio-economic status, family or criminal background, or physical or mental health.
6. **Partnership:** Communities have an important role to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. By forming strategic partnerships with existing services and experts in the local community, MSIA works with those services, to respond quickly and appropriately to the needs of vulnerable adults. MSIA will identify and refer vulnerable clients, where possible, to other service providers who have expertise in the specific risk area.
7. **Confidentiality, safety and best interests of the individual:** All matters raised under the Safeguarding System are handled with integrity and with the utmost respect for the privacy of the adult at risk, putting their best interests first. Information will be shared only on a need to know basis; respecting client/provider confidentiality while protecting individuals. The level of response should be proportional to the risk presented, and least intrusive to the adult.
8. **Accountability and Transparency:** MSIA has systems in place to document, monitor and report on the implementation of its Safeguarding System, as well as mechanisms to ensure that management and team members are committed to, and are undertaking, their safeguarding roles and responsibilities to the best of their capacity.
9. **Act professionally whilst at the same time showing genuine care and compassion:** The MSIA Code of Conduct provides guidance to MSIA People in relation to the standards and principles expected across the organisation. MSIA requires that clients and colleagues are welcomed, informed and treated with respect.

6. Key roles and responsibilities

Regional Director

- Is responsible for adherence to and implementation of this Policy across the region;
- Serves as the focal point for receiving reports from the Country Director (CD) of an implicated country program, together with the Director of Safeguarding and Protection;
- Is part of the Decision Committee, together with the Director of Safeguarding and Protection, the Chief Operating Officer, the CD of the implicated country programme, the Senior Director of Global Programmes, and others as required;
- As part of the Decision Committee, provides guidance for the investigation and required follow up actions;
- In consultation and collaboration with the Director of Global Programmes, reports to the relevant donors;

- Reports to the local board on safeguarding;
- Maintains the risk register for the region, which includes safeguarding risks deemed as 'Significant';
- Maintains a Safeguarding Register that records allegations and reports of incidents in the region;
- Ensures Safeguarding risk management is a standing agenda item in quarterly review meetings with country programs.

Regional Safeguarding Leads (Australia Office)

- The Regional Director will nominate two (2) Regional Safeguarding Leads.
- Given its part-time nature, this role could reasonably be incorporated into the duties of an existing position.
- The Regional Safeguarding Leads will receive comprehensive training in both safeguarding issues, this Policy and related procedures from the MSI Director of Safeguarding and Protection.
- The Regional Safeguarding Leads:
 - Are responsible for ensuring that MSIA's Safeguarding System is effectively put into practice across the partnership and documenting how this is done;
 - Work with the country programmes to provide direct and practical support in understanding, implementing and monitoring the Safeguarding System;
 - Carry out 6 monthly compliance calls with country offices in the region to monitor and support implementation.
 - Ensure safeguarding risks are updated and fed into the risk register maintained by the Regional Director (RD) in collaboration with relevant program managers and Country-level Safeguarding Leads.
 - Serve as MSIA's focal points and representatives regarding safeguarding matters, and support Country Programs in dealing with safeguarding investigations, if and as instructed and guided by the Decision Committee;
 - Work with HR to organise structured and systematic training (i.e. following set criteria and reaching every team member on a regular basis) to ensure all team members are familiar with, and capable, of implementing this Policy;
 - Maintain and update the **MSIA Safeguarding Incident Reporting Procedures and Flowchart**, taking into consideration national laws and protection services available in their area of operation;
 - Serve as mentors for Country-level Safeguarding Leads and provide support to MSIA managers as required in implementing safeguarding requirements;
 - Are accountable to the MSI Director of Safeguarding and Protection on the implementation of the safeguarding policies across their region; and
 - Report to the Regional Director on compliance and challenges.

HR Manager will support the implementation of safeguarding recruitment processes at MSIA. They will ensure safeguarding is part of the induction of all new MSIA staff and training is provided on a regular basis. The HR Manager will ensure that representatives, associates and volunteers whose employment or engagement they are responsible for, sign the MSI Code of Conduct upon joining the organisation and understand its content. The HR Manager is responsible for supporting managers when recruiting staff, temporary staff, consultants and/or engaging new partners in carrying out police checks, undertaking due diligence processes and adhering to safeguarding requirements in recruitment. They will also be responsible for implement disciplinary actions as required.

MSIA Managers are responsible for the adherence to and implementation of this Policy in their area of responsibility. They should ensure visitors to any of MSIA's supported Country Programmes or

Support Offices, who may have direct contact with clients have signed the MSI Code of Conduct. Manager must also ensure the Code of Conduct is signed by business partners or any other person or entity MSIA enters a services agreement with. They will Report to the Regional Safeguarding Leads on compliance and challenges and ensure Safeguarding is a standing agenda item in regular team meetings. Managers are expected to lead by example.

Regional Finance Director will support the implementation of safe procurement processes across the programmes in the region. They will also provide support for safeguarding audits.

All MSIA People are expected to take active role in the implementation and adherence to this Safeguarding Policy. They must report any incidents or concerns they have regarding breaches to MSIA's safeguarding policies and Codes of Conduct, in line with the established reporting process, and carry out Safeguarding audits when visiting country programmes and report to Regional Safeguarding Leads.

The MSIA Board are overall accountable for ensuring MSIA's Safeguarding System is appropriate for the management of risk and the addressing any reported incidents.

The MSI Director of Safeguarding and Protection is responsible for the development and implementation of the Safeguarding System across the partnership. The Director provides support to country programmes implementing the Safeguarding System and further supports the implementation of continuous monitoring and compliance. They ensure that safeguarding is integrated into global business planning and risk assessment.

The Decision Committee will be established to review each complaint or incident separately. They will provide guidance to the country program on how to address such complaints, keeping in mind the interest of the complainant, the accused and MSI/MSIA. At all times, they will ensure confidentiality, reporting as appropriate to donors, and local authorities. The Decision Committee is comprised of the Director of Safeguarding and Protection, the Chief Operating Officer, the Regional Director, the Country Director and the Director of Global Programmes (on behalf of all donor leads when funding is involved). Other expertise may be seconded as needed. The Decision Committee is also responsible for ensuring Safeguarding incidents are included in the Country Safeguarding Register and Country Risk Register. They will also consolidate all incidents into the Global Safeguarding Register.

7. Implementation

The implementation of MSIA's Adult Safeguarding and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy is based on **MSIA's 6 Core Standards of Safeguarding**. These core standards set benchmarks of good practice in areas of operations which have the potential to impact on the safety and well-being of adults.

MSIA will ensure the adoption of similar policy and practices amongst its partner organisations and provide the necessary support to ensure they are able to meet the required standards. MSIA will support Country Programmes to develop and implement their Adult Safeguarding and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy/ies.

Implementation of this Policy across the Partnership is documented and monitored at the country level, and Country Programmes are required to report progress and compliance on a regular basis to the Melbourne Support Office.

8. Core standards

Core Standard 1: Training and Awareness

All MSIA People have a role to play in safeguarding and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH). To fulfil that role effectively and with confidence, they need to:

- Develop an understanding of safeguarding and SEAH issues and risks in their region and in the programs they support.
- Undertake and engage with the training provided by MSIA.
- Maintain knowledge of MSIA's Safeguarding System and procedures.

MSIA People will receive regular training on safeguarding and SEAH issues and risks, as well as MSIA's Safeguarding System. Where appropriate, MSIA will engage external support to deliver the component of training relating to adult safeguarding and SEAH and identifying safeguarding risks in their operations and the program they support. The Regional Safeguarding Lead/s will deliver the component of training focusing on this Policy and related procedures.

The training opportunities in the regional office will include, at a minimum:

- **Induction training** – delivered by Regional Safeguarding Lead/s as part of the general induction/orientation for new MSIA People within two months of beginning employment.
- **Regular training and refreshers** – delivered by Regional Safeguarding Lead/s (with external support of an expert if required) for existing MSIA People to ensure knowledge retention. This should take place every 12-18 months but no less than every two years.
- **Follow-up meetings for team members with safeguarding responsibilities** – facilitated by the Regional Safeguarding Leads. These bi-annual meetings will provide an opportunity for team members who have specific safeguarding share experiences and reflect on challenges and lessons learned.

Core Standard 2: Recruitment and Screening of Team Members

MSIA is committed to the careful screening of people before we hire them to ensure that MSIA People do not pose a risk to vulnerable people. MSIA adopts safeguarding recruitment procedures for the selection of all MSIA People. The procedures not only aim to identify possible offenders and people not suited to work in contact with vulnerable populations, but also to deter these people from seeking work with MSIA in the first place.

The safeguarding recruitment procedures effective across the MSIA Partnership aim to:

- **Ensure that a statement about MSIA's safeguarding policies appears in the wording of any job advertisements** and notes that successful candidates will need to sign a Code of Conduct and undergo a background check (this may prevent offenders from applying).
- **Ensure candidates are only considered for selection if they demonstrate, throughout their interview, that they hold attitudes and values that promote safeguarding.**
- **Ensure formal and valid documentation is provided** to confirm the identity of a candidate and proof of relevant qualifications and background.
- **Ensure official background checks are conducted for all new team members as a condition for employment:** this is a document from a government authority which details the criminal (and sometimes penal) history of a person (we look out for charges, convictions or investigations related to violence against vulnerable, assault, domestic violence, child abuse in all forms, inappropriate social behaviour or similar).
- **Conduct verbal referee checks with at least two of the candidate's most recent employers as a condition for employment:** asking a specific question to draw out the candidate's attitude and values towards vulnerable adults, equality and diversity, and exploring whether the candidate has had any related or behavioural issues in his/her previous workplace.

Core Standard 3: Safeguarding Risk Management

MSIA is committed to adhering to the Safeguarding System throughout all levels of the organisation. This means MSIA will work to continuously identify, monitor and mitigate, to the best of MSIA's capacity, all significant risk of harm in relation to vulnerable adults throughout MSIA's operations.

MSIA adopts a systematic and structured safeguarding risk management system for all day-to-day operations that is organised by the service delivery channel. The system includes:

- Identifying risks (i.e. detecting the potential for something to happen that will have an impact on clients, team members or MSIA as an organisation).
- Assessing the risks (i.e. evaluating the likelihood and level of impact on clients, team members or MSIA as an organisation).
- Mitigating the risk (i.e. developing strategies to minimise or address the risk, reducing the likelihood of harm and abuse from actually occurring).

The risk management system is documented, based on a standard template and is reviewed on a regular basis in order to adapt to changing conditions and context.

Management of risk also applies to all MSIA partners who come in contact with MSIA clients, whether they be sub-contractors or project partners. MSIA's 'downstream partners' are required in their agreements with MSIA to demonstrate adherence to safeguarding policies and processes, reporting promptly to MSIA any adult at risk of abuse or exploitation, any incidents within their own operations, or in relation to MSIA's operations.

Core Standard 4: Code of Conduct

It is important that all MSIA People, as well as MSIA business partners and visitors, clearly understand what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and professional boundaries with vulnerable adults and clients with whom they come into contact. It is also important that targeted communities understand what is expected of MSIA People, social franchisees, business partners and visitors. This not only makes everyone accountable for their actions, but also ensures that clients can recognise infractions and report any concerns.

MSIA has a Code of Conduct effective across the MSI Partnership which:

- Applies to all MSIA People (who are required to sign it upon recruitment)
- Applies to all MSIA social franchises and business partners.
- Provides for disciplinary measures in the case of breach, which are determined based on the severity of the breach, and may include dismissal of MSIA People, termination of agreements with social franchisees or business partners, and reporting to local authorities.

MSIA ensures that all MSIA People, business partners and visitors, as well as clients, beneficiaries and targeted communities are made aware of MSIA's Code of Conduct and understand how to report breaches and cases of misconduct.

Core Standard 5: Incident Reporting

Even with all the preventive measures detailed above, abuse, exploitation or harm may still happen. Keeping that in mind, it is important that MSIA has a system in place to respond in an appropriate, effective and timely manner, ensuring no further harm to the victim. For this to happen, it is crucial that all potential or confirmed breaches of this Policy and the Code of Conduct are detected and quickly brought to the attention of the Regional Director, who will then take appropriate action based on established internal principles and procedures.

All MSIA People, business partners and visitors must report **witnessed, suspected or alleged cases** of:

- **Abuse, exploitation or harassment, sexual or otherwise**, by another team member, representative, social franchisee, business partner, associate or volunteer;
- **Breaches of the Code of Conduct** by another team member, representative, social franchisee, business partner, associate or volunteer;
- **Abuse, exploitation or harassment, sexual or otherwise, within the community**, by someone outside the organisation, and which has been raised by a team member,

representative, social franchisee, business partner, associate or volunteer, or by a community member or any other person outside of MSIA.

These cases are required to be reported in accordance with MSIA's Speak Up Policy and MSIA's Safeguarding Incident Reporting Guidelines.

Core Standard 6: Incident Investigation

When a report has been received through any of the above Speak Up channels, all incidents must be urgently reported to the Country Director, Regional Director or the Director of Safeguarding and Protection. A **Safeguarding Decision Committee** will then be convened to provide direction and support to the investigation and any disciplinary processes that may follow.

Our overriding concern is always for the **safety, wellbeing, dignity and best interests of the victim/ survivor. MSIA treats all reported incidents relating to this Policy seriously.** MSIA will ensure that all parties are treated fairly; that procedures are transparent and in line with local law. MSIA aims to manage reported cases in a timely manner.

MSIA also commits to confidentiality as far as possible, in order to protect the alleged victim, the incident reporter, and the person against whom the allegation has been made. This requires all Program to have in place a clearly outlined and embedded **Incident Reporting Process and guidelines**, which not only reflect this Policy but also the context of their own internal structures, operations and management composition.

9. Breach of the policy or code of conduct

Following an investigation, any breach of Policy or the Code of Conduct by MSIA People, social franchisees, business partners and visitors will result in actions as appropriate. These may include:

- Meeting to discuss the breach and opportunity for the person to provide their account/understanding of the situation
- Further education on safeguarding policies and the Code of Conduct
- Formal warning and monitoring
- Transfer to other duties
- Performance management
- Dismissal of team members
- Report to police
- Termination of agreements (for social franchisees or business partners).
- These measures will apply in a transparent and fair manner and alongside any criminal investigation where relevant.

10. Policy monitoring and review

- The Regional Safeguarding Leads in MSIA are responsible for monitoring the overall implementation of MSIA's Safeguarding System in the region. Based on input received from
- Country-level Safeguarding Leads in 6 monthly monitoring and support calls, they will provide advice on general measures that can be improved or adapted to ensure individuals are safe across MSIA Country programs in the region.
- The Regional Safeguarding Leads will report to the Regional Director on compliance and challenges and consult with the Director of Safeguarding and Protection for guidance and support.
- this Policy will be reviewed every three years.

- The Regional Safeguarding Leads will review the information in their reporting flow chart and referral pathways one year from the date of adoption to ensure it is still current and do this on an annual basis thereafter.
- The Policy will be reviewed earlier if there are changes in relevant legislation, compliance requirements, local context or organisational structures and systems.

ANNEX 1: Concepts and Definitions

Safeguarding

The definition for the Humanitarian and Development sector is: “Safeguarding is a way of working that promotes the safety and welfare of people involved in the delivery or receipt of humanitarian aid and development assistance, protecting them from harm, including all forms of exploitation, abuse and harassment” The definition applies to both UK and overseas activities and it includes the full breadth of safeguarding, including harassment, intimidation, sexual exploitation and abuse.

Safeguarding is a preventative approach and involves promoting the safety and wellbeing of all adults who come into contact with our organization; with particular attention paid to the welfare of vulnerable people by protecting them from harm and recognising risks to their safety. Organisations have a responsibility to ensure that their employees, operations, and programmes do no harm to vulnerable adults. They do this through implementation of standards and measures to prevent abuse, exploitation, neglect and/or violence; responding adequately to any cases that may occur or be witnessed.

Vulnerable Adults

Individuals 18 years and above who are, or may be, unable to take care of themselves and/or are unable to defend themselves against significant harm or exploitation. This vulnerability could be both temporary or permanently experienced. It may result from: a mental health illness; a learning or physical disability; a sensory impairment; an imbalance of power from a dependent or unequal relationship; the influence of alcohol or drugs, the affected of trauma or for any other reason.

Adults may experience vulnerability either temporarily or permanently, due to:

- Reduced capacity to understand information, process information, or communicate opinions or decisions. This capacity may be task-specific and may fluctuate, as changes in a person’s condition can impair their ability to understand, retain, weigh up information and communicate their decisions.
- Their lack of freedom or ability to engage voluntarily. This could be a consequence of coercion or undue influence by means of force; threats; retribution; manipulation (including emotion-laden appeals); persuasion and inducements; or the undue influence of a partner; guardian; employer; or government authority.
- Their dependent and/or unequal relationships which can occur with either a partner, guardian, employer or government or local authority amongst others. These relations can put them at increased risk of being unable, or unwilling, to express their independent views. Their dependence or lack of status can also put them at real or perceived risk of suffering consequences should they not agree.
- Their circumstances can put individuals in a situation which incurs risk of significant harm, exploitation or abuse by people around them. The risk could be inflicted upon individuals by family members, friends, health providers, and other persons within a position of authority.

Note: Adults who are victims of trafficking or slavery are in extremely high-risk situations and are given special attention in MSIA’s Modern Slavery Policy.

Often it is not obvious who is vulnerable or at risk of harm and so we must be diligent to assess risk in all our clients. For instance:

- An illiterate person may feel intimidated or threatened by the status and power of an MSIA provider and therefore may be reluctant to express themselves.
- An MSIA client seeking a service in a highly restrictive or stigmatised environment may feel unable or unwilling to question the MSIA Service Provider.
- A person with a learning disability may find it more difficult to understand or process information or communicate their opinions or decisions.

- A person who is acting under duress or undue influence of a partner or guardian, may find it difficult to truthfully represent their own opinions or thoughts.
- A person acting under the influence of alcohol or drugs may experience an interference with their capacity to understand and process information or communicate their opinion or decision appropriately.
- A person who is a victim of domestic violence may find it difficult to communicate about their situation.
- Adults may have multiple vulnerabilities, such as a person experiencing a mental illness, who is also under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

MSIA People need to take extra effort to ensure that a vulnerable individual knows what to expect of a service and is making a truly informed choice.

Disability

A person with a disability will have a long-term physical; mental; intellectual or sensory impairment. This impairment, in interaction with various other barriers, may hinder their ability to fully and effectively participate in society on an equal basis with others. Disabilities can be mild to more severe impairments. A disability may exist from birth or be acquired later in life. A person can also have one or more disabilities.

- **Physical disability** is a physical constraint on a person's ability to perform an activity independently, for example: walking, bathing, toileting, etc. A person can be physically disabled due to two reasons:
- **Congenital/Hereditary:** Disability since birth. Or the disability developed at a later stage due to genetic problems, problems with muscle cells or injury during birth.
- **Acquired:** Through road or industrial accidents, diseases, and disorders such as stroke or cancer.
- **Mental disability** is a condition that limits a person's intellectual or emotional capacity; resulting directly or indirectly from injury to the brain or from abnormal neurological development.
- **Intellectual disability** is a disability characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability normally originates before the age of 18.
- **Sensory impairment** is when one, or more of the senses (i.e. sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste and spatial awareness) no longer functions normally, hindering a person's full and effective participation in society.

Mental illness

Any of a broad range of medical conditions (such as major depression, schizophrenia, obsessive compulsive disorder, or panic disorder) are marked primarily by sufficient disorganization of personality, mind, or emotions to impair normal psychological functioning. This may cause marked distress or disability. These are typically associated with a disruption in normal thinking, feeling, mood, behaviour, interpersonal interactions, or daily functioning. The impact of mental illness on a person's life may vary depending on the person's ability to self-manage, or manage by means of medication, the fluctuations of emotions related to a mental illness.

Trauma

Trauma comes about through emotional shock following a stressful event or a physical injury, which may lead to long-term neurosis. This may include but is not limited to: domestic violence, sexual assault or rape, accidents, being in a crisis or humanitarian situation, or a survivor of an atrocity.

Environmental Vulnerability

Anyone of MSIA's clients can be considered a vulnerable adult if they are currently experiencing or potentially experiencing a situation where they may be exposed to significant harm. This could include women seeking an MSIA service in a highly stigmatized or restrictive environment, particularly when seeking an abortion or PAC service; people who have literacy and language barriers; sex workers; people who suffer significant socio-economic disadvantage; people involved with criminal activities; youth; and people suffering from debilitating or incurable illness.

It is important to note that individuals may display characteristics of the above groups but not identify themselves as a vulnerable adult.

Definitions of Abuse, Exploitation and Harassment

- **Physical Abuse:** is the physical ill treatment of an adult that is wilfully inflicted. The abuse may or may not cause a physical injury; it includes such things as burning, slapping, pushing, kicking, hair pulling, rough handling, misuse of medicines, restraint and exposure to unnecessary risk or danger.
- **Emotional or Psychological Abuse:** is the wilful infliction of mental suffering on an adult. Psychological abuse may indicate that other forms of abuse are also taking place. Psychological and emotional abuse includes: threats, intimidation, humiliation, denial of personal respect and dignity, verbal abuse, bullying, instilling fear, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation.
- **Sexual Abuse:** is any form of sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault; involvement in pornography and sexual slavery; sexual acts which the vulnerable adult didn't want to do but was made to carry out; sexual acts the vulnerable person didn't understand or agree to. It also includes inappropriate touching of any part of the body, offensive use of explicit sexual language and denial of respect for a person's privacy. Please note that there may be a lack of awareness by the person that this type of abuse is wrong.
- **Discriminatory Abuse** This includes any abuse or harassment that is aimed towards adults at risk based on mental or physical ability, race, gender, culture, religion, age or sex.
- **Financial Abuse** This includes the theft or misuse of a person's property, money, benefits, pension, bank account, or other belongings without their permission.
- **Neglect:** includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, or withholding the necessities of life such as food, heating and medicines which causes the person to suffer. This also includes serious levels of self-neglect which could result in harm to themselves or others.
- **Exploitation:** refers to the use of individuals for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the individual. These activities are to the detriment of the person's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development.
- **Domestic Violence** is defined by an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse, between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners, or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional abuse. *'Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.'*¹
- **Bullying** is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/142701/guide-on-definition-of-dv.pdf

- **Harassment** is unwanted conduct which has the effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, threatening, or offensive environment for that individual.
- **Sexual Harassment** is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated. MSIA recognises that sexual harassment often occurs in unequal power relationships, as well as situations which create an environment which is hostile, intimidating or humiliating for the recipient. Sexual harassment can comprise of one or more incidents and/or actions, which may be physical, verbal and/or non-verbal. Examples of conduct or behaviour which constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:
 - Unwelcome physical contact including patting, pinching, pushing, groping, stroking, kissing, hugging, fondling or any other form of inappropriate touching
 - Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour, gestures or language (which the harasser may perceive as harmless)
 - Physical violence, including sexual assault or rape
 - The use of threats or rewards to solicit sexual favour
 - Comments or persistent questions on a team-member's appearance, age, private life etc.
 - Sexual comments, stories and jokes
 - Sexual advances
 - Offensive and/or sexually explicit e-mails, text messages or social media content
 - Repeated and unwanted social invitations for dates or physical intimacy
 - Condescending remarks, whistling or leering
 - Insults based on the individual's sex
 - Display of sexually explicit or suggestive material (physical or electronic)
 - Any person can be a victim of sexual harassment, regardless of their sex and of the sex of the harasser. MSIA recognises that sexual harassment may also occur between people of the same sex.