



Enhancing and developing safeguarding at SOS Children's Villages International

As a result of information from two independent, external reports, the governance body of SOS Children's Villages International, which is the umbrella organisation for the independent national chapters of SOS Children's Villages, has established an independent special commission into serious allegations of safeguarding, governance and other failures.

Though the details of the investigation remain confidential, we at SOS Children's Villages UK know that we are not under investigation ourselves. We would like to assure you that SOS Children's Villages International leadership have taken this very seriously and, in that light, have set up a special commission with the mandate to consider and recommend any further action as well as to initiate investigations into unresolved allegations, as well as implementing a wide-ranging Safeguarding Action Plan in a commitment to fulfil its promise to keep children safe. This Action Plan has **eight prioritised actions**:

- 1. Immediate support for those who have experienced abuse**
- 2. A safeguarding ombudsperson system**
- 3. An incident management system**
- 4. A focus on promoting child and youth empowerment**
- 5. A code of conduct and other human resources initiatives**
- 6. The prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) regulation implementation**
- 7. The establishment of an Independent Special Commission** - The Independent Special Commission will address past and contemporary allegations of failings, including child abuse, corruption, misuse of funds, and breaches of UN guidelines and regulations that protect children's and employees' human rights. The Independent Special Commission has begun its work, and updates are being provided on [the International Office's website](#).
- 8. Specific, targeted support for countries with a high risk**

For more detailed information on the Safeguarding Action Plan, please visit the [dedicated page on the International website](#).

SOS Children's Villages UK welcomes these developments and strongly supports increased investment in the safety and protection of those with whom we work, to consolidate the progress that has been made in recent years. While it is fair to say that the vast majority of children and young people in our programmes experience the best possible care, this response and renewed focus on safety and protection is the only way forward if we are to achieve an environment of zero tolerance for safeguarding violations, uphold the rights of those with whom we work and meet our goal of ensuring every child grows up feeling safe, loved and supported.

SOS Children's Villages UK reviewed its approach to safeguarding in 2018 and, among other things, introduced requirements for background checks for staff and volunteers and visitors to our programmes. We are committed to transparency about the safeguarding risks that exist in our work. We report safeguarding incidents in our programmes to the Charity Commission and publish that information in our Annual Report. SOS Children's Villages International publishes an annual safeguarding report, a link to which is on our website, and we submit a copy to the Charity Commission, too.