



Funder  
Safeguarding  
Collaborative

# Shaping Safer Practice

Five years of collective  
learning and action

2021–2026

**Safeguarding (noun):**

The actions taken to prevent harm, abuse or exploitation and promote the welfare and wellbeing of anyone who comes into contact with the organization.

# About us

**Funder Safeguarding Collaborative (FSC) was created with the aim of strengthening the ability of grant-making organisations to prevent abuse and exploitation across their grant-making and operations.**

We were founded in 2021 by Comic Relief, Global Fund for Children, The National Lottery Community Fund, Oak Foundation, and Porticus, which came together with a shared commitment to creating a safer world.

From our origins as a small group of aligned funders, FSC has grown rapidly and is now a diverse global network of more than 115 philanthropic organisations that collectively manage an annual grant-making budget of over \$9 billion. Our members share an ambition to transform the role of funders in safeguarding by driving action that creates safer organisational cultures and practices to keep people safe from harm.

FSC aims to build a world where safety and wellbeing are at the heart of every organisation. As the only philanthropic-support organisation dedicated to safeguarding, FSC offers high-quality, specialised support tailored to the unique needs of our members. All knowledge and income generated through our work is reinvested into the network, helping transform grant-making practices for the better.

## Our Vision

A world where safety and wellbeing are at the heart of every organisation.

## Our Mission

Together we are transforming the role of funders in safeguarding, by driving action that creates safer organisational cultures and practices.

## Our Values

### Champion Safety

We believe everyone has the right to be safe and a duty to take action to prevent harm and promote the wellbeing of others.

### Promote Continuous Learning

We acknowledge what we don't know, value the knowledge that diverse voices bring, and commit to continually learning, adapting, and then learning some more.

### Build Trusting Relationships

We cultivate relationships based on mutual trust and respect, creating inclusive spaces where individuals feel safe to ask questions, learn from mistakes, and improve their practices.

### Challenge Power Imbalances

We actively identify and challenge power imbalances and structural inequalities that get in the way of building safer organisations.

# A message from the Steering Committee

## It is hard to believe that Funder Safeguarding Collaborative is five years old.

Since 2021, we have actively built something that did not previously exist: a space where funders can come together to engage seriously with safeguarding—sharing practice, testing ideas, and strengthening how they support the organisations and communities they fund. We are proud of what has been achieved in that time. This report offers a window into that progress, highlighting the work, evidence, and practical guidance developed alongside our members, staff, and knowledge partners. It reflects a collective effort to move safeguarding from intention to action.

This progress has taken place in a context that is increasingly complex. Funding constraints, shifting political environments, and growing pressures on civil society all shape how safeguarding is understood and prioritised. These realities do not make the work less necessary—if anything, they reinforce its urgency. Safeguarding is not static, and neither is the role of funders within it.

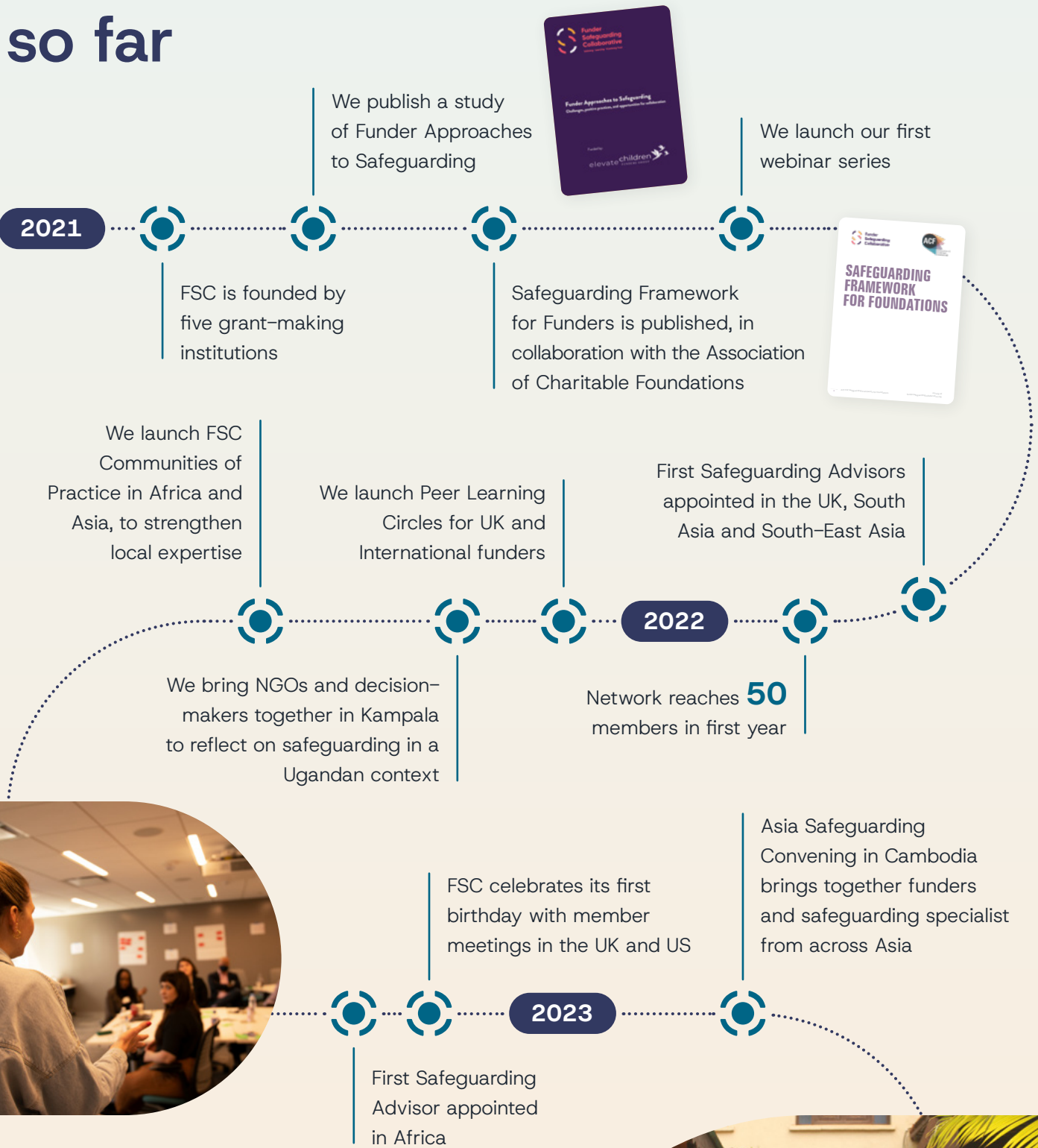
Our mission remains constant: to support funders to strengthen their practice in ways that are thoughtful, proportionate, and grounded in real-world complexity. We are ambitious about what this can achieve—not only within individual organisations, but across the wider funding ecosystem. The first five years have demonstrated what is possible through collective effort. The next five will require that same commitment, as we continue to learn, adapt, and work together to help make organisations and the communities they serve safer.



As the FSC network turns 5, what stands out is how much is possible when funders have a space to learn together, and turn intentions into practical action. Oak Foundation has been proud to support the Collaborative since its inception, and it has been powerful to see a small group grow into a global network that's helping shift grant-making practice for the better”

— Oak Foundation

# Our journey so far





New strategy launched, setting out strategic goals to steer our work

First Safeguarding Advisor appointed in the US

2024

First in-person convening for international funders



Peer learning circle for US and Canada funders launches

100th member welcomed by FSC

2025

Open-access training courses launched on safeguarding in grant-making and designated safeguarding lead training

We launch research into safeguarding in grant-making

Appointment of first Safeguarding Advisor focusing on mainland Europe

New website launched, helping FSC to reach more people with our publications and online guidance

2026

We launch a consultant directory in partnership with Nonprofit Builder



Our groundbreaking report 'Safeguarding in Philanthropy: Safer grant-making for greater impact' is launched

Launch of co-creation process to develop safeguarding practice standards for funders



# Our work and strategy

## Strategic goal 1

### Strengthen the evidence base for safeguarding in grant-making organisations

- ✓ We have established FSC as a recognised point of reference for safeguarding resources for funders.
- ✓ We have published ten research reports and guides, providing clear, relevant, and actionable information on a range of topics.
- ✓ For FSC members, we have built a comprehensive resource library, bringing together relevant knowledge, tools, and best practice examples from a range of funders.
- ✓ More than 90% of members have used our online resources. 85% report that our publications have made a moderate to strong contribution to helping them achieve their safeguarding priorities and objectives.

## Strategic goal 2

### Increase awareness, understanding and commitment to safeguarding among grant-making organisations

- ✓ Our peer learning circles provided 33 online and five face-to-face spaces, enabling safeguarding leads to share challenges, discuss new approaches and learn from one another.
- ✓ We brought members together for eight community conversations to reflect on key issues such as climate and environmental work and grant-making to individuals.
- ✓ We have advocated for the role of funders in relevant networks and coalitions. In partnership with member organisations we have shared learning at conferences and events and by publishing in journals and online forums.
- ✓ More than 95% of members who attended a peer learning circle say they made a moderate to strong contribution to helping them achieve their safeguarding priorities and objectives.

## Strategic goal **3**

### **Increase action to improve safeguarding practice within grant-making organisations and the organisations they fund**

- ✓ Our advisors delivered more than 2,500 hours of specialised technical support to members, multiple bespoke training programmes and 13 open training sessions. This has enabled funders to improve policies and procedures, and built confidence and capability across our network.
- ✓ We established local networks of safeguarding specialists in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria and Pakistan. And we provided FSC members with a curated global directory of safeguarding consultants via the Nonprofit Builder hub.
- ✓ Our training and consultancy support is highly rated by members, with an average score of 4.3/5 for work delivered.



**As we deepen our engagement with the populations directly impacted by our grant-making, safeguarding has become essential to how we operate. Joining FSC connected us to a community of funders committed to learning and improving together.”**

— David and Lucile Packard Foundation

## Q Case Study

# Strengthening safeguarding practice at the Henry Smith Foundation

Henry Smith Foundation is one of the UK’s largest independent funders. It supports organisations helping people through some of life’s toughest transitions and points of crisis, with a focus on reducing social and economic disadvantage.

## How FSC has supported and strengthened safeguarding at the Henry Smith Foundation

- » Strengthened safeguarding leadership at the Henry Smith Foundation by enabling the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Leads to deepen their expertise, draw on collective experience, and build a trusted peer network through FSC events.
- » Provided a supportive and confidential space to share thinking on live safeguarding cases, helping Henry Smith to navigate complex decisions with greater confidence and clarity.
- » Played a key role in supporting Henry Smith Foundation to review, challenge, and strengthen its safeguarding policy and practice, ensuring it remains robust, proportionate, and fit for purpose as a relational funder.

- » Delivered a bespoke safeguarding briefing for trustees, increasing trustee confidence and capability by clearly setting out safeguarding fundamentals, key risks, and trustee responsibilities within the context of the Foundation’s evolving grant-making strategy.
- » Enabled the Henry Smith Foundation to contribute back to the sector by sharing learning and practical experience through FSC events, guidance, and tools.



**FSC plays a vital role in keeping our safeguarding knowledge up to date within an ever changing landscape. It has enabled us to strengthen our safeguarding approach as a charity and as a funder, so that we are confident in helping grantees build strong safeguarding cultures, aligned with statutory and best practice requirements.”**

— Angela Riches Heed, Henry Smith Foundation

# Publications and research



## ACF–FSC safeguarding framework for foundations

2021 • [View publication](#)



## Funder approaches to safeguarding

2021 • [View publication](#)



## Safeguarding and participatory grant-making: An essential guide

2023 • [View publication](#)



## US landscape analysis

2024 • [View publication](#)



## Do no harm: A safeguarding roadmap for community foundations

2024 • [View publication](#)



## Asia landscape analysis

2025 • [View publication](#)



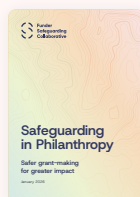
## Safeguarding in South Asian contexts

2025 • [View publication](#)



## UK landscape analysis

2025 • [View publication](#)



## Safeguarding in philanthropy: Safer grant-making for greater impact

2026 • [View publication](#)



## Safeguarding when funding lived experience-led organisations: An essential guide

2026 • [View publication](#)

Find out more and download the publications at [fundersafeguardingcollaborative.org/resources](https://fundersafeguardingcollaborative.org/resources)

FSC's member resource library brings together curated manuals, research, safeguarding guidance, and good practice examples of funder policies covering a diverse range of topics such as:

- » Digital safeguarding
- » Funder approaches to safeguarding
- » Safeguarding standards
- » Participatory grant making
- » Reporting and response to safeguarding concerns
- » Safeguarding in media, communications and fundraising

# Network development

## **As the FSC network has grown, we have adapted our structure to ensure effective support for our community.**

We strengthened our internal capacity and governance. Our team expanded to 12 staff and consultants with diverse safeguarding expertise spanning multiple regions, funder models, and programmatic areas. We established a Steering Committee to guide our direction and decision-making, and we introduced robust systems and processes that enable us to operate efficiently and support our expanding membership.

We made significant progress toward establishing a stable financial foundation for the network. We launched a revised fee structure that accommodates member organisations' varied size and engagement levels.

We partnered with members, whose contributions are helping to extend our influence and the support we offer both within and beyond our network.

Recognising that impact is achieved through the work of our members, we are working to understand and respond to their needs. Our annual member survey will capture insights into their safeguarding policies, practices, challenges and priorities to inform our future support and resource development.

Our network has grown to over 115 members, representing funders of all sizes, and working across a wide set of geographies and programmatic areas. We continue to shape our resources and guidance to reflect the diverse requirements of this global community.



**Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and funders have a real role to play in making it practical, consistent, and rooted in the realities partners face. We've supported FSC because its mission is clear and its approach is grounded in learning, trust, and action."**

— Imaginable Futures

# Intention to action: FSC Member practices

In 2025, we asked our members to share information on their safeguarding arrangements. The findings of the survey provide valuable insights into current safeguarding practices across funder organisations.

More than  
**85%**

of FSC members report having **core safeguarding policies and procedures** in place and reviewing these at least every two to three years.



**92%**

of members have a **designated person with responsibility for safeguarding**, although this is usually part of a wider role.



**100%**

of members say safeguarding is integrated into their **assessment/ due diligence processes**.



**68%**

said their **safeguarding policies and procedures** had improved moderately or significantly.



**80%**

of members now **include safeguarding in induction** for all new staff.

**95%**

include safeguarding as part of their grant monitoring.

**96%**

of members **inform the Board** of safeguarding concerns or allegations.



**65%**

provide **additional training** to staff involved in grant-making.

**55%**

said the **integration of safeguarding within their grant cycle** had improved moderately or significantly.



**88%**

report to the Board about safeguarding implementation and practice.



**71%**

said their organisation's **capacity and governance for safeguarding** had improved moderately or significantly.

**87%**

report the Board reviews safeguarding risks.

More than  
**80%**

of members consider FSC has made a **positive contribution to improvements in safeguarding policies and procedures**.

## Q Case Study

# How FSC members are helping to strengthen the safeguarding ecosystem

FSC provides opportunities for members to invest in research and pilot projects to strengthen the safeguarding evidence base.

## Porticus: helping develop evidence-based practice standards

Porticus, a founding member of the FSC network, is helping to fund a two-year project to develop evidence-based practice standards for funders.

Funders have an important role to play in motivating action and ensuring accountability for safeguarding, in their own organisations and in the organisations they fund. At present, however, very little is known about the most effective ways for philanthropy to promote safer practice. The creation of the standards is one of the ways FSC is seeking to address this challenge.

“

**Being part of FSC allows us to share knowledge, develop best practices, and champion higher standards for the entire sector.”**

— Diederik Slot, Global Designated Safeguarding Officer, Porticus

## Children’s Investment Fund Foundation and Laudes Foundation: a global network of safeguarding experts

Funders often struggle to identify consultants with the right mix of contextual understanding, technical expertise, and credibility to work alongside their grantee partners. The Children’s Investment Fund Foundation and Laudes Foundation supported FSC to establish local networks of safeguarding experts,

known as Communities of Practice, in eight countries across Africa and Asia, with a year-long programme of peer capacity building, mentoring, and quality assurance. We are now working to replicate the Communities of Practice model in new regions.

“

**We’re proud to support FSC’s work to strengthen networks of safeguarding experts and connect funders with trusted, high-quality service providers across regions. This collaboration is solving a real challenge for funders.”**

— Angela Albornoz, Global Compliance Director, Children’s Investment Fund Foundation

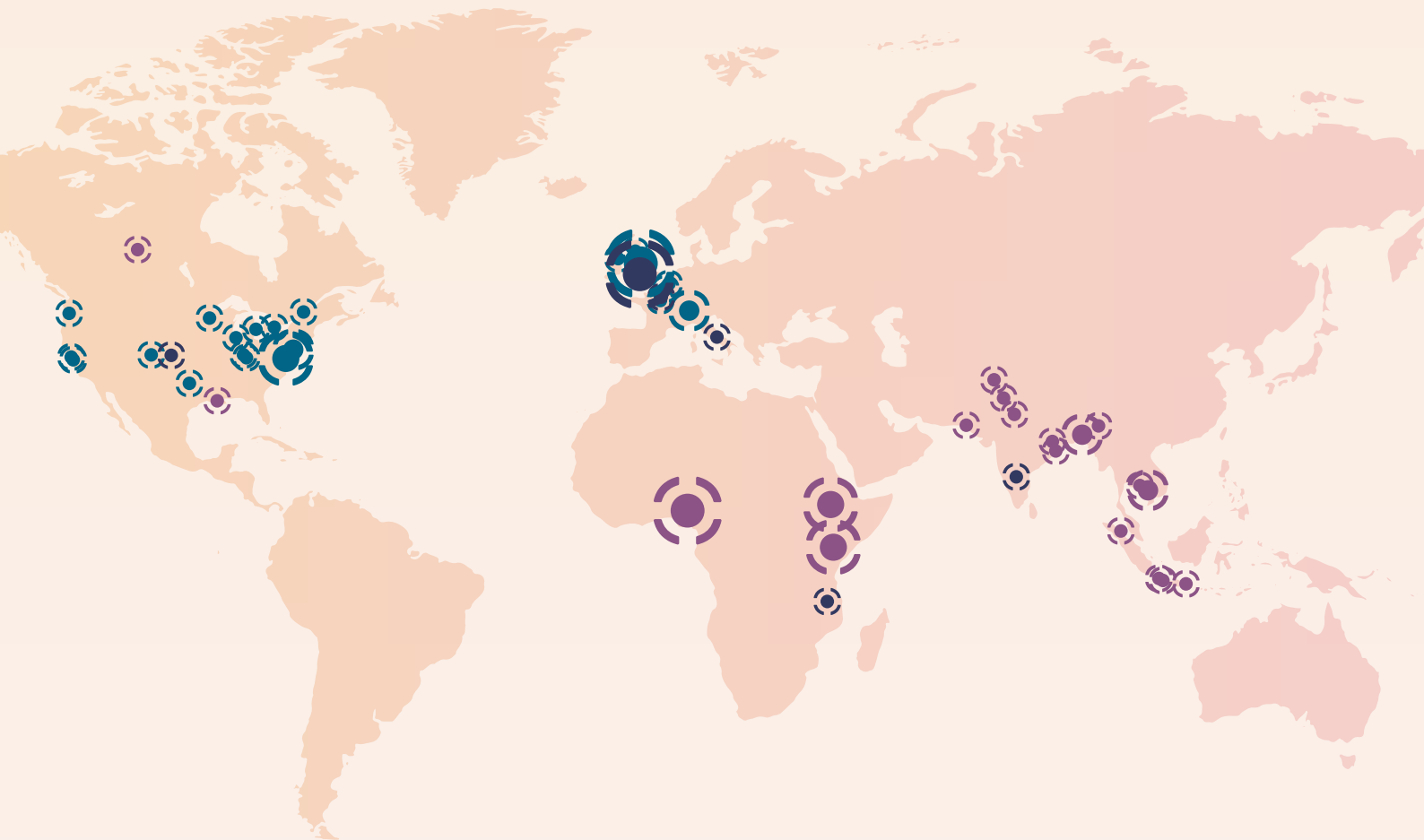
“

**Funders can play a crucial role in improving standards across the sector. Laudes is delighted to contribute to this initiative.”**

— Stephen Birtwistle, Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager, Laudes Foundation

# FSC reach

- Member
- FSC Team
- Community of Practice Participant



## Steering Committee

### Angela Albornoz

Children's Investment Fund  
Foundation

### Jonathan Beloe

CHS Alliance

### Stephen Birtwistle

Laudes Foundation

### Steina Bjorgvinsdottir

Funder Safeguarding  
Collaborative

### Kathleen Flynn

Independent Consultant

### Alice Gentile

Oak Foundation

### John Hecklinger

Global Fund for Children

### Diederik Slot

Porticus

### Emma Wokowu

Safeguarding Resource  
and Support Hub

### Deogratias Yiga

Impact and Innovations  
Development Centre

## Founding members

Comic Relief UK

Global Fund for Children

The National Lottery  
Community Fund

Oak Foundation

Porticus

## Funding members

Children's Investment  
Fund Foundation

David and Lucile Packard  
Foundation

Global Fund for Children

Imaginable Futures

Laudes Foundation

Oak Foundation

Porticus

## Network members

The A B Charitable Trust

Amplify Change

Arts Council England

Association of Charitable  
Foundations

Battersea Dogs & Cats

BBC Children in Need

BGF foundation

Big Change

Blagrove Trust

British Science Association

Children's Investment  
Fund Foundation

Choose Love

City Bridge Foundation

Comic Relief

Comic Relief US

Community Foundation North East

Conservation Collective

Co-op Foundation

Corra Foundation

Creative Scotland

Cumbria Community Foundation

David and Lucile Packard  
Foundation

DHL UK Foundation

The Dulverton Trust

DWF Foundation

Economic Mobility and  
Opportunity Fund

Education Outcomes Fund

Elevate Children Funders Group

Empower

Epic Foundation

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

Fadica

Focus Central America

Focus for Health

Fondation CHANEL

Fondation pour l'égalité de genre

Forvis Mazars Foundation

Foundation Scotland

Foyle Foundation

The Freedom Fund

The Fund for Global Human Rights

GHR Foundation

Girls First Fund

Global Dialogue

Global Fund for Children

Global Fund for Women

Global Greengrants Fund UK

Groundwork UK

Gower Street

## Network members (continued)

Guy's & St Thomas' Foundation

Halifax Foundation for Northern Ireland

Henry Smith Foundation

Howden Foundation

IDP Foundation

Ignite Philanthropy

Impetus

Imaginable Futures

John Lyon's Charity

Just Beginnings Collaborative

Kering Foundation

Kerslake Robshaw Foundation

KPMG Foundation

Laudes Foundation

Leathersellers Foundation

Legal Education Foundation

LGBTI Youth Fund

Light–En

Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales

The London Community Foundation

Malala Fund

Masonic Charitable Foundation

Mastercard Foundation

Maudsley Charity

The National Lottery Community Fund

Nationwide Foundation

Neo Philanthropy

Oak Foundation

Old Dart Foundation

Openwork Foundation

Ovo Foundation

Pathy Family Foundation

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Pears Foundation

People's Health Trust

People's Postcode Lottery

Phillips Foundation

Porticus

Premier League Charitable Fund

Resilio Fund

Safe Online

Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts

Samworth Foundation

Segal Family Foundation

The SHM foundation

Sir John Fisher Foundation

Standard Chartered Foundation

Stewardship

Sweaty Betty Foundation

Swiss Philanthropy Foundation

Trust for London

Vibrant Village Foundation

Virgin Money Foundation

Virgin Unite

Vitol Foundation

Wellcome Trust

Westminster Foundation

William Grant Foundation

Woven Foundation

Yorkshire Funders

Youth Endowment Fund

Youth Futures Foundation

Youth Music

Zurich Community Trust

# What comes next?

## **As we celebrate the achievements of our first five years, we look forward to what comes next.**

The context for safeguarding work is becoming more complex, not less. Heightened humanitarian need, shrinking civic space, and growing pressure on funding flows all shape how safeguarding is understood and prioritised. There are no simple or uniform solutions. But five years of practice have shown that when funders engage seriously by investing time, asking difficult questions, and supporting their partners with care, meaningful change is possible. The task now is to deepen that engagement, ensuring that safeguarding is not treated as an add-on, but as integral to how funding is designed, delivered, and evaluated.

The publication of sector practice standards in late 2026 will mark an important step, but they are not an endpoint. Their value will lie in how they are used: to prompt reflection, to guide decision-making, and to strengthen accountability across the wider ecosystem.

Alongside this, we will continue to invest in the relationships that underpin progress. This means expanding our network, strengthening partnerships across regions, and adapting our support to meet members where they are. Change in this space is iterative and often uneven; it requires persistence, openness, and a willingness to learn from both progress and setbacks.

We invite funders, partners, and peers to be part of what comes next. This means committing not only to the principles of safeguarding, but to the ongoing work of putting them into practice—resourcing it adequately, engaging with it honestly, and contributing to collective learning. It also means recognising that no single organisation can address these challenges alone. The progress of the past five years has been built on shared effort; the next phase will depend on it even more.



**At Global Fund for Children, we're proud to have supported FSC from day one. We are committed to backing the next phase of their work and encourage other funders to join us as the network continues with its ambitious plans to strengthen decision-making and accountability across the philanthropic system."**

— Global Fund for Children





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