



Oxfam GB Reporting Misconduct at Work (Whistleblowing) Policy

Effective From:	July 2024
Policy Owner:	Director of Integrity
SLT Sponsor:	Chief Operating Officer
Approved By:	SEC
Union Consulted:	Yes
Date for Renewal:	July 2026
Geographical Scope:	For all Oxfam GB operations worldwide
Circulation:	Public

1. The purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline how Oxfam GB will:

- provide a means for reporters to disclose information that they reasonably believe amounts to misconduct, unethical conduct, or illegal practises in the workplace. A danger to someone's health and safety should be reported [here](#).
- ensure reporters who disclose such information will not be penalised for reporting and will be protected from victimisation as a result of reporting their concerns.
- extend the principles of the UK Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 to all those reporting concerns even if they are based outside the UK.
- communicate the obligation on all Oxfam GB employees and non-employees to report misconduct or suspicions of misconduct that has or is about to occur, without delay.
- take all reports of misconduct seriously and respond appropriately and effectively to disclosed incidents.

2. Policy jurisdiction

The policy is applicable to:

- trustees,

- employees,
- agency staff,
- consultants,
- workers,
- volunteers,
- people in the communities where we work,
- partners and contractors,

in all countries and regions where Oxfam GB is the legal entity, acting as Executing Affiliate (EA). This includes all Oxfam GB's globally located employees, Oxfam GB offices in the UK and Oxfam GB shops.

As outlined in the One Oxfam Code of Conduct all Oxfam employees agree to ensure both their professional and personal conduct is demonstrably consistent with Oxfam's values and standards.

Oxfam employees also agree to treat all people with respect and dignity, meaning this policy covers misconduct that occurs in both professional and personal capacity.

3. Definitions

3.1 Misconduct

Misconduct is defined in this policy as conduct relating to sexual, financial, or complex HR concerns which breach the Code of Conduct. A detailed list of definitions regarding misconduct can be found in Appendix 1. Suspected misconduct could be in the present (occurring now), future (be about to occur), or past (has already occurred).

3.2 Report

A report is a concern that has been raised through a reporting channel.

"Reporter" refers to the person raising the report of misconduct.

"Subject of complaint" refers to the person who is suspected or alleged to have committed misconduct.

4. Upholding the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct stipulates that all Oxfam employees will, to their best endeavours, report misconduct through recognised confidential reporting systems.

Employees, volunteers, trustees, and contractors have a duty to report through Speak Up reporting channels if they suspect misconduct has occurred, is occurring or might occur.

Victim-survivors of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment are not obliged to report their own abuse. The Safeguarding Team can be contacted directly to support and give guidance to victim-survivors or persons wishing to report on someone's behalf.

Managers have an individual responsibility to ensure that allegations of misconduct are reported to Speak Up.

5. Reporting misconduct

5.1 Reporting channel(s)

Suspicions of misconduct can be reported via:

- The Speak Up [online misconduct webform](#)
- OR
- Email: speakup@oxfam.org.uk

The reporting channels are available to all, and reports can be made in any language.

Reports or concerns can also be raised with Safeguarding Focal Points, Anti-Corruption Champions, a line manager and/or the Human Resources Team.

These reports must then be referred to Speak Up either by using the online misconduct webform or email.

5.2 Providing information

When reporting misconduct or suspected misconduct, providing as many details as possible will help in the initial review, risk assessment and any subsequent investigation (if required).

All forms of misconduct can be reported via Speak Up even if the reporter is unsure what type of misconduct has taken place.

Reports of misconduct should be reported if there is a suspicion that misconduct has taken place, is taking place or is about to take place. A 'suspicion' is the belief, opinion, or impression that an act of wrongdoing has occurred or has been attempted. The suspicion should be reasonably held (i.e., there should be some objective grounds for the suspicion – the person reporting should be able to explain why they are suspicious), but it might involve limited or no formal evidence.

Reporters should not undertake investigations into misconduct reported to Speak Up themselves unless instructed and authorised to do so by members of OGB's Anti-Corruption, HR Investigations or Safeguarding Teams.

The person making a report should reasonably believe that the information disclosed, and any allegations contained in it, are true at the time of the submission. No measures will be taken against staff reporting a genuine concern that later proves to be mistaken or misguided.

Individuals who intentionally raise a concern that *they know to be untrue*, or who are involved in deliberately spreading false information may face investigation and disciplinary action.

5.3 Anonymity

Reports can be raised to Speak Up anonymously.

If an individual prefers to report anonymously, they may choose to either by using the Speak Up webform, or by using a non-Oxfam related email or temporary email address to contact Speak Up. By providing a means of contact, further communication and further actions could potentially be taken.

If an individual prefers to report anonymously without providing a means of contact, neither the Speak Up Team, nor any other team, will be able to contact them. This option is available to all reporters who wish to remain anonymous, and using a non-Oxfam related email is not required for reporting anonymously.

In certain circumstances, where further information cannot be obtained or where risk to individuals cannot be assessed, anonymous reports may prevent investigations from progressing and consequently any action being taken.

A grievance cannot be made anonymously – see [Resolution Policy](#).

5.4 Confidentiality

Information reported to Speak Up will only be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis. The requirement for confidentiality extends to staff, management, and investigators. This level of confidentiality is required for the effective investigation and/or management of cases and is in the interest of reporters, witnesses, and those under investigation.

Reports made anonymously will be treated as confidential unless there is plainly no reason to do so, or the reporter has waived the requirement for confidentiality.

Any breach of confidentiality may be subject to an independent investigation and may result in disciplinary action.

Oxfam will sometimes need to disclose certain information to meet other ethical or legal obligations such as reporting to law enforcement, regulatory bodies or to progress to judicial action. Where possible, personal, or special category data and private information will be redacted. Oxfam will manage all information in accordance with the requirements of relevant data protection laws, including the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and, where necessary, conduct a specific risk assessment or privacy impact assessment.

5.5 Initial response

When a report has been made to Speak Up, an acknowledgement of receipt of the report will be provided within one working day by the Speak Up Team.

Support will be offered to all affected parties in accordance with case management standard operating procedures and for safeguarding cases, in accordance with the [Oxfam GB Survivor Policy](#).

Reports to Speak Up will then be passed to the relevant team for assessment, support and (where appropriate) investigation.

In some instances, only when it is appropriate and safe to do so, reports may be triaged by the Speak Up Team to more appropriate operational teams, such as Human Resources, Human Resources Business Partners, local management, Supporter Relations, Finance, Legal Services, Data Privacy, Shop Support, Retail Loss and Prevention, Health and Safety, Information Security or Security.

5.6 Case management

If the case continues to be handled by the investigation teams within Integrity & Ethics, then it will progress in accordance with case management standard operating procedures. The assigned investigator will provide a reporter with updates on the progress of the case regularly and inform the reporter when the case has been concluded.

To maintain confidentiality and protect individual privacy, investigators are not able to share detailed findings of the investigation, or any actions taken.

If a reporter, survivor, or Subject of Complaint is unsatisfied with the initial response, or investigation process, then a complaint can be raised via Speak Up. This complaint will then be directed to the Head of the relevant investigation team.

The Subject of Complaint can appeal the outcome of disciplinary action via the formal appeals process available under [OGB's Disciplinary Procedure](#).

5.7 Protection against victimisation reprisal and/or detrimental treatment

Under this policy, reporters will not be at risk of losing their job or suffering any form of detriment by any act or deliberate failure to act by Oxfam GB on the ground that they reported misconduct or suspected misconduct, if at the time of submission, the reporter reasonably believed that the information disclosed within a report is true, even if it is later discovered that they are mistaken.

Oxfam GB will take appropriate action, which may result in dismissal, in accordance with the relevant procedure against any employee, volunteer or consultant who has been found to be victimising another individual for using this procedure or deterring them from reporting concerns.

A complaint of detrimental treatment should be reported using the Speak Up reporting channels.

5.8 Reporting externally

Oxfam GB is regulated by the UK Charity Commission. The Speak Up Team are responsible for all reporting of serious incidents to the Charity Commission and it is not the responsibility of individual staff.

Oxfam employees can however report incidents to the UK Charity Commission that could seriously harm:

- the people a charity helps
- the charity's staff or volunteers
- services the charity provides
- the charity's assets
- and/or the charity's reputation.

Reporting to the Charity Commission may be suitable if you:

- Have exhausted Oxfam GB's internal Speak Up procedures or;
- You cannot raise your concerns directly with Oxfam GB in the first instance

The Charity Commission does not investigate personal grievances.

It is a criminal offence to knowingly or recklessly provide false or misleading information to the Charity Commission. More information on what and how to report to the Charity Commission directly is available [here](#).

6. Data Privacy

Oxfam is dedicated to handling personal data responsibly, the full Speak Up [Data Privacy Notice](#) is available here.

6.1 Webform

When making a disclosure via the misconduct webform the reporter will be informed of their data protection rights via this [Data Privacy Notice](#). Information on what type of data is collected and processed, in addition to where the data is stored and for how long are all outlined in the notice. The notice also contains details on how to access personal data about you, delete, or update information held about you by Oxfam Great Britain.

6.2 Email reports

All initial email responses to Speak Up provide a link to the [Data Privacy Notice](#), to inform reporters of their data protection rights. Information on what type of data is collected and processed, in addition to where the data is stored and for how long are all outlined in the notice. The notice also contains details on how to access personal data about you, delete, or update information held about you by Oxfam Great Britain.

7. Informing relevant authorities, donors, and other agencies

7.1 Informing relevant authorities

Where necessary and appropriate, the relevant authorities, including law enforcement, may be informed about an allegation of misconduct. This decision will be made by the Incident Management Panel overseeing the investigation or in cases of urgency, by the Head of the relevant investigations team.

With a reporter's consent, data may be shared with therapeutic services or other agencies to provide support.

7.2 Reporting to donors, affiliates and external stakeholders

In certain circumstances, Oxfam GB has contractual obligations to report misconduct to donors, partner affiliates and the UK Charity Commission. Steps are taken to prevent unnecessary disclosure of personally identifiable information and the names of individuals involved in a report or investigation are not routinely provided to these stakeholders.

The Speak Up Team are responsible for all external reporting relating to incidents falling within the scope of this policy. Any questions about external reporting should be directed to the Head of Speak Up or the Director of Integrity.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 All employees, volunteers, trustees, contractors, and partners

Employees, volunteers, trustees, contractors and partners have a duty to report through Speak Up reporting channels if they suspect misconduct has occurred, is occurring or might occur.

Victim-survivors of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment are not obliged to report their own abuse. The Safeguarding Team can also be contacted directly to support and give guidance to victim-survivors or persons wishing to report on someone's behalf.

8.2 All managers

Where a manager receives a report of a suspicion of misconduct, or they themselves suspect misconduct, they **must** report it to Speak Up **without delay**. It is a manager's responsibility to encourage a 'speak up culture' within their team.

8.3 Director of Integrity

Responsible for management oversight of the Speak Up team, Anti-Corruption, Safeguarding and HR Investigations Teams.

8.4 Speak Up Team

Responsible for monitoring Speak Up reporting channels and initial case management, including triaging a concern to an appropriate team for a response. Responsible for internal reports and notifying relevant donors when misconduct is alleged.

8.5 Anti-Corruption Team

Responsible for investigating financial related misconduct including theft, bribery, fraud, supplier nepotism and forms of aid diversion, including allegations of terrorist financing.

8.6 HR Investigations Team

Responsible for investigating matters of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or mistreatment by a senior colleague, and serious breaches of HR policies, where these are affecting more people than the individual making the report. Interpersonal disputes, including grievances, not involving a senior colleague are generally handled by operational management and HR teams.

8.7 Safeguarding Team

Responsible for investigating matters related to sexual misconduct, this includes, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, child abuse, and vulnerable adult abuse.

9. Associated policies and procedures

- [One Oxfam Staff and Non-Staff Code of Conduct](#)
- [One Oxfam Safeguarding Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Oxfam GB HR Policies](#)
- [Oxfam GB Survivor Policy](#)
- [One Oxfam Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)

Version Number	Date Approved	Approved By (Name & Title)	Brief Description of Changes
4	July 2024	SEC	Policy condensed for ease of reading.

3	July 2021		Review
2	July 2020	Council	Updated in line with Charity Commission Action Plan, safeguarding SOP and reporting concerns
1	November 2016	LT Sponsor	

Appendix 1

The below definitions of misconduct are not exhaustive.

Appendix 1: Misconduct Definitions		
Misconduct Category	Misconduct Type	Misconduct type description
Sexual Misconduct	Child Abuse	A child is defined as anyone under 18 years old. Child abuse can be physical (violence towards or deliberate injury of a child), emotional (behaviour which attacks a child's self-esteem), sexual (using a child for sexual stimulation or gratification), neglect (persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical/psychological needs) or involve any other sort of harm to a child, including possessing and/or the distributing of indecent images of children.
	Vulnerable Adult Abuse	A Vulnerable Adult or Adult at Risk is defined as someone "who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation". This can include people experiencing certain conditions (for instance physical or mental disability or illness) or certain types of vulnerability (for instance domestic abuse or displacement from their homes)
	Sexual Assault	Sexual assault is any unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature, including rape and attempted rape
	Sexual Harassment	Sexual Harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. It can happen to any gender, and can be physical (e.g. touching), verbal (e.g. offensive comments or phone calls), or non-verbal (e.g. display of offensive materials).
	Sexual Exploitation	Sexual Exploitation is the actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes. This includes any sexual relationship with beneficiaries and/or any the exchange of money, offers of employment, employment, goods or services for sex or sexual favours, or any forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. It can also include undeclared or unbalanced sexual relationships between staff, particularly those in the line of management.
	Other	Other PSEA, Safeguarding Children or Adults policy violation, breach of safeguarding policy & practice, FGM, forced labour, bonded labour, trafficking in persons, forced marriage, domestic slavery
Financial Misconduct	Fraud	An act or omission that attempts to intentionally mislead to obtain a benefit or to avoid an obligation. It can also involve an abuse of position. Examples might be forging/altering an invoice, or inflating a receipt submitted for expenses, or a third-party supplier deliberately providing sub-quality products, or providing less product than agreed.
	Theft	Dishonestly taking another's property without their consent, and with the intent to permanently deprive them of it. A possible example might be when an Oxfam GB office is broken into and Oxfam GB property taken, or where an employee deliberately fails to return their Oxfam GB laptop computer when they leave the organisation.
	Bribery	Where an individual improperly offers, gives or promises (or requests, agrees to receive or accepts) any form of material benefit or other advantage, whether in cash or in kind, to another in order to influence their conduct in any way.

	Nepotism	Favouritism granted to associates regardless of merit. Possible examples might include a manager awarding a contract to a company owned by a family member or friend on the basis of that relationship alone.
	Money Laundering	The process of turning proceeds of crime into property or money that can be accessed legitimately without arousing suspicion.
	Terrorist financing	Activities that provide financing or financial support to individual terrorists or terrorist groups.
	Other	Other financial misconduct or breach of financial policy
HR Misconduct	Bullying	Bullying is behaviour directed either against an individual or a group of individuals that creates a threatening or intimidating environment undermining the confidence and self-esteem of the recipient(s). It could be an abuse or misuse of power that humiliates or injures the recipient(s).
	Harassment	Harassment means verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct which meets the following three criteria: Is related to a person's characteristics, whether they are actual or perceived, which include: Age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Is unwanted. Has the purpose or effect of violating that person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive work environment for that person.
	Discrimination	An unlawful act against people at work because of any of the following areas: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.
	Breach of policy	A serious breach of Oxfam GB policy having a detrimental effect