

PeaceRep Safeguarding and Researcher Conduct

1. Rationale

PeaceRep recognises that, for a research programme of this design and size, there is safeguarding risk. PeaceRep’s risk register identifies this as:

Risk of safeguarding incident occurring despite safeguarding measures in place for the programme; and associated risk of a safeguarding incident going unreported.

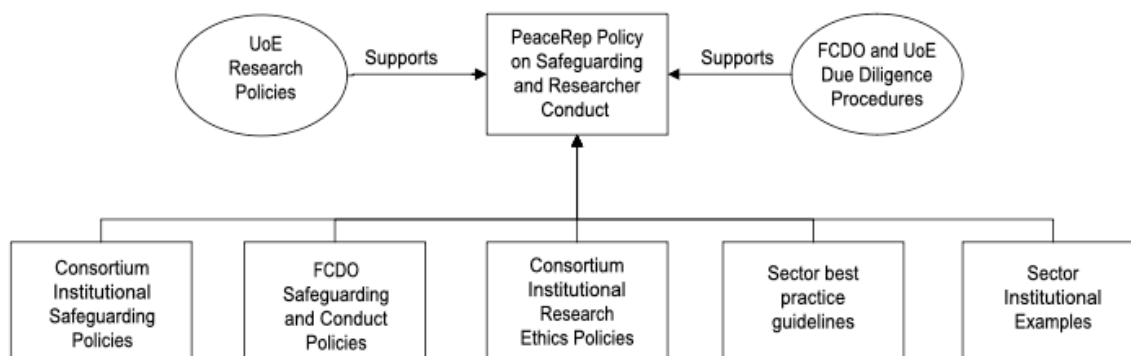
This risk is graded as ‘possible’ likelihood with ‘major’ consequences. In mitigation:

PeaceRep operates under strict safeguarding procedures, supported by institutional protocols and research ethics commitments. PeaceRep has a named Safeguarding Officer, and requires all partners to commit to the required ethical standards and duty of care responsibilities for research. This is reflected in PeaceRep’s Due Diligence reports, both between FCDO and UoE, and between UoE and all consortium partners, which was refreshed in 2024/5. PeaceRep signposts Reporting Concerns on its website, with multiple routes for reporting which mitigates the risk of non- or under-reporting incidents. PeaceRep participates in FCDO’s partner safeguarding meetings, focused on best practice.

After mitigation, the overall safeguarding risk to the programme is graded as ‘moderate’. This document outlines PeaceRep’s approach to safeguarding and researcher conduct; its responsibilities and undertakings; the responsibilities and undertakings of PeaceRep staff, affiliated researchers and contractors, and downstream partners; and routes for reporting concerns.

2. Approach to Safeguarding

PeaceRep’s policy on safeguarding and researcher conduct draws from the following sources:



As consortium lead, PeaceRep is governed by UoE’s umbrella [safeguarding policies](#) and reporting mechanisms. UoE endorses and is subject to the UKCDR International Development Research Funders Statement on Safeguarding and endorses [UKCDR Guidance on safeguarding in international development research](#). UoE addresses other aspects

of safeguarding (such as Protection of Children and Protected Adults, Modern Slavery and Whistleblowing) within multiple existing policies which are in place to ensure a comprehensively safe environment for all people that the organisation engages with.

UoE's [Safeguarding in Research](#) policies state that it is the responsibility of Principal Investigators (PIs) to ensure compliance with these standards. All PIs conduct their work within UoE's usual line management structures, offering formal routes of responsibility, support, consultation and advice. Should the PI be unable to execute any part of their responsibilities, these line management structures would apply. In the case of PeaceRep, the Head of the School of Law would assume any responsibilities usually held by the PI, either fully or partially. This will be communicated clearly to the funder, all partners, and all contractors.

Due to its design size and operational context, PeaceRep takes the view that these institutional policies should support a robust programme safeguarding approach that covers research ethics and researcher conduct.

All consortium partners, PeaceRep staff and affiliated contractors and downstream partners are required to work within the parameters of these standards while working on behalf of PeaceRep.

i. Due Diligence

All PeaceRep research and activities are subject to the completion of due diligence on partner organisations. FCDO last completed due diligence on UoE as lead organisation in 2024/5; UoE last completed due diligence on all partner organisations in 2024/5. In all cases, due diligence has been satisfied that organisations are fit to conduct development research in fragile contexts with public funding.

Consortium organisations are responsible for conducting their own due diligence on downstream research partners, and undertake that this is concluded successfully before any PeaceRep research or operations may begin.

In all cases, due diligence must be undertaken regularly, with an interval of no more than four years.

ii. Risk

PeaceRep maintains a programme risk register, which is submitted to FCDO for review as part of quarterly reporting. PeaceRep's risk register was subject to a full refresh in Y5 Q2/December 2025 and includes the safeguarding risk outlined above in 'Rationale'.

All consortium partners undertake to complete and submit a risk register and downstream partner register to UoE as part of their usual quarterly reporting. Each partner risk register should include a risk assessment on safeguarding.

iii. Research Ethics

Consortium partners' research ethics procedures are assessed as part of due diligence. All PeaceRep research is subject to institutional research ethics policies, and approval must be received in writing before research may commence. Where research is being undertaken by an

independent researcher, ethics approval should be sought from Edinburgh Law School's ethics committee and is subject to the same.

Consortium partners undertake to store all research ethics submissions and approvals, and make these available to UoE on request. Ethics submissions and approvals should be stored for a minimum of seven (7) years following the conclusion of the work covered in the submission.

iv. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Consortium partners' EDI policies are assessed as part of due diligence. UoE has [a set of policies covering EDI](#) relating to staff and students, and supplements these with published positions on contemporary concerns, including world events. PeaceRep research and operations take place within the parameters addressed in these policies, and complying with UK legislation, including the Gender Equality Act.

3. Researcher and staff code of conduct

UoE has a [Policy on Disclosure of Intimate Relationships](#). This Policy is owned by Human Resources, and focuses on staff-student relationships. As a research programme, PeaceRep follows this policy and supplements the intentions of this policy with its own researcher and staff code of conduct.

UoE states:

The University aims to provide its students and staff with an environment in which they can excel and thrive. It recognises that close and often long-lasting relationships can and do form between students and staff members, and between workplace colleagues.

The University does not wish to interfere in the personal lives of its students or staff. Nor does it seek to prohibit intimate relationships between consenting adults. However, it has to recognise that there are risks when one party is in a position of power, trust and authority relative to the other.

This policy seeks to minimise these risks and in so doing protect all of its students and staff.

PeaceRep is funded by UK development funding via FCDO with an obligation to 'do no harm'. Organisations across the development sector have given careful thought to their commitment to preventing and responding to all safeguarding concerns, with many implementing employee codes of conduct. For example, [OXFAM addresses their approach to safeguarding policies and procedures here](#), with an [Employee Code of Conduct](#) that outlines individual responsibilities and a commitment to adhere to seven institutional safeguarding policies. All employees must sign this declaration. The organisation takes a robust approach, stating that:

Sexual relationships between Oxfam Employees or Related Personnel and community members we work with are forbidden. Given the contexts where Oxfam operates, such relationships may be based on inherently unequal power dynamics and may undermine the credibility and integrity of Oxfam's relief and development work. Oxfam Employees and Related Personnel must declare any previously existing relationships with community members we work with to their line managers or HR focal point.

As a leading peacebuilding organisation, PeaceRep partner, Conciliation Resources, operates within a series of organisational policies that also includes a Code of Conduct to which all board members, employees, volunteers and contractors have to sign on appointment. FCDO employees are governed by an employee conduct overseas policy, which addresses relationships and power dynamics both in the workplace and in the community context and at home. While not forbidden, FCDO staff are advised to be mindful of their position when embarking on a new relationship in the workplace, or with anyone from the local community, and are obligated to inform the respective parts of Human Resources, line management, and the respective country office if such a relationship is entered into. There are also security considerations as part of this process.

All organisations operate a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and abuses of power.

PeaceRep draws on these examples alongside UoE policies to outline the following terms for researchers and contractors. Consortium partners and affiliated researchers and contractors must declare that they adopt these terms as a code of practice and will abide by it. These should be read in conjunction with PeaceRep's safeguarding procedures outlined in this document, which it may implicate – nothing in these terms should be taken to reduce any programme or institutional safeguarding measures.

For this purpose, UoE definitions apply.¹

- a. Any intimate relationship in the field between international researchers and local people often involves power imbalances and cultural differences relating to social values and, in particular, the status of women. This means that the meaning and impact of the intimate relationship is experienced differently by each, in ways that can have disproportionate consequences for the local actor in the event the relationship ends.
- b. Such relationships are strongly discouraged regardless of whether the local actor has a relationship to the programme or not.
- c. Relationships should not be conducted with (a) local researchers working on the programme; (b) research subjects; due to power imbalances, and capacity for a range of pressures and the reputation of the researcher or programme.
- d. Where an intimate relationship arises with a local actor in the field in the course of, or as a result of, conducting of the research relating to the programme, then: the existence of the relationship and the standing of the local actor and their relationship, if any, to the programme, should be disclosed to UoE who will then decide what action if any is appropriate.
- e. All intimate or business relationships with sub-contracted researchers or research subjects should be disclosed.
- f. Disclosure should be made to the programme's Principal Investigator and/or Safeguarding Officer.

4. Reporting Concerns

¹ Intimate relationship: any one-off or ongoing consensual contact which is for example romantic, intimate and/or sexual in nature. Local actor: an actor who is a national of the country being studied.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Concerns may be reported via the three routes below, or formally or informally to any PeaceRep staff member or affiliated person – for example, a person working with or within a consortium organisation whose post is not funded by the programme directly.

Any reported concern received in these ways must be escalated to the Safeguarding Officer, regardless of an incident taking place or alleged to have taken place. It is the responsibility of PeaceRep consortium leads (programme Co-investigators) to ensure colleagues are aware of this responsibility, and that reports can be made in confidence to the Safeguarding Officer directly, or via the consortium lead (Co-investigator).

There are three formal routes for reporting concerns regarding PeaceRep research, research methods, staff, affiliates and contractors.

- i. PeaceRep has a named Safeguarding Officer for the entire PeaceRep consortium including downstream partners. The Safeguarding Officer can be contacted directly with any concerns, and considers safeguarding alongside duty of care responsibility and risk assessments.

For the overall PeaceRep programme, Dr Harriet Cornell (Programme Manager) is the named Safeguarding Officer. Should this change, partners will be notified in writing, and should Cornell be unavailable (e.g. on leave) her out-of-office will include clear details of whom to contact.

- ii. PeaceRep falls under UoE's umbrella [safeguarding policies](#). Concerns can be reported directly to UoE via the [UoE Reporting Concerns](#) mechanism. PeaceRep partners have similar robust measures in place, confirmed as part of UoE's due diligence procedures and monitored as part of annual sub-grant amendment processes.
- iii. PeaceRep complies with [FCDO's Reporting Concerns](#) policy via the PeaceRep website. Concerns can be reported directly to FCDO in this way.

5. Compliance

- i. This document is circulated to consortium leads (Co-investigators) and UoE contractors in January and June of each calendar year.
- ii. Consortium leads undertake to inform all PeaceRep-funded staff at their organisations of PeaceRep's policy on safeguarding and researcher conduct and confirm in writing to the Safeguarding Officer that this has been done.
- iii. Consortium leads undertake to inform all PeaceRep downstream partners, including independent researchers and contractors, of PeaceRep's policy on safeguarding and researcher conduct and confirm in writing to the Safeguarding Officer that this has been done.
- iv. Consortium leads undertake that they have outlined specifically (a) the responsibility of reporting concerns; and (b) the formal and informal routes of reporting concerns; to

all PeaceRep-funded and affiliated staff, researchers, contractors and downstream partners.

- v. Consortium leads undertake that all research and operations conducted under PeaceRep comply with the Accountable Grant Head Terms and terms of sub-grant agreements concerning due diligence, research ethics, and risk. For example but not limited to: all downstream research partners will be subject to due diligence investigation prior to partnership; all field research will be subject to institutional ethics evaluation and no work will commence until written approval is given; all consortium partners will complete and return a risk register and downstream partner register to UoE as part of their quarterly reporting (template provided).
- vi. This policy and reporting concerns mechanisms can be found publicly on the PeaceRep website here: <https://peacerep.org/reporting-concerns/>

6. Document History and Review

Document Owner: Dr Harriet Cornell
Reviewed by: Dr Harriet Cornell; Professor Christine Bell; Shauna Thompson
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