



**ORDER OF MALTA
AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION**

**GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS
POLICY**

1. Premise

The following guidelines provide a general framework within which the AASMOM Safeguarding Policy should be implemented by each AASMOM Region.

2. Scope of Policy/Contextualizing for Different AASMOM Regional Locations

The AASMOM Safeguarding Policy has been developed utilizing global best practice and standards in Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults (C/YP/VAs) protection. While there are recognized, global minimum standards for the format and sections which the AASMOM Safeguarding Policy contains, the Policy should be adapted to the AASMOM regional context and be tailored to the needs and programs of each Region.

3. Assessing Risks in New or Current Programs

The AAMOM recognizes that there are a number of potential risks to C/YP/VAs in its service, particularly in those programs where AASMOM personnel is in contact with C/YP/VAs. In recognizing these risks, AASMOM personnel should proactively assess and manage risks to C/YP/VA to reduce the risk of harm. The Regions should also ensure the protection is mainstreamed throughout their projects and activities along with consideration of C/YP/VAs protection risks when conducting a risk assessment for any project, particularly those where AASMOM personnel comes into direct contact with C/YP/VAs. A risk assessment should always be conducted during project design, and periodically reviewed during the life cycle of the project.

4. Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Safe Recruitment

A police background or criminal check for the country where the individual currently resides should be required. Individuals need to provide their consent to a criminal record check and should be informed of the purpose for which the resulting police clearance certificate should be used, including being sighted by the organization.

AASMOM recognises that in limited instances it may prove impossible to obtain a reliable criminal record check. For locations or individuals where a police background check is not feasible, other measures should be taken to screen the individual's suitability to work with C/YP/VAs. This may include gaining additional personal references, such as from neighbours and the parish priest, for example. A statutory declaration, or local legal equivalent, outlining efforts made to obtain a foreign police check, and disclosing any charges and spent convictions related to C/YP/VAs exploitation, may be accepted in lieu of a police background check.

5. Child Safeguarding Focal Points

It is recommended that the AASMOM Regions have one person per physical location designated as a Safeguarding Focal Point ('SFP') to receive allegations or complaints. This person could be an AASMOM member. There should also be one central Safeguarding Officer (SGO)—Article 7 of the AASMOM Safeguarding Policy—that will support the SFPs in capacity development, monitoring compliance, and support for taking and reporting complaints, and conducting investigations.

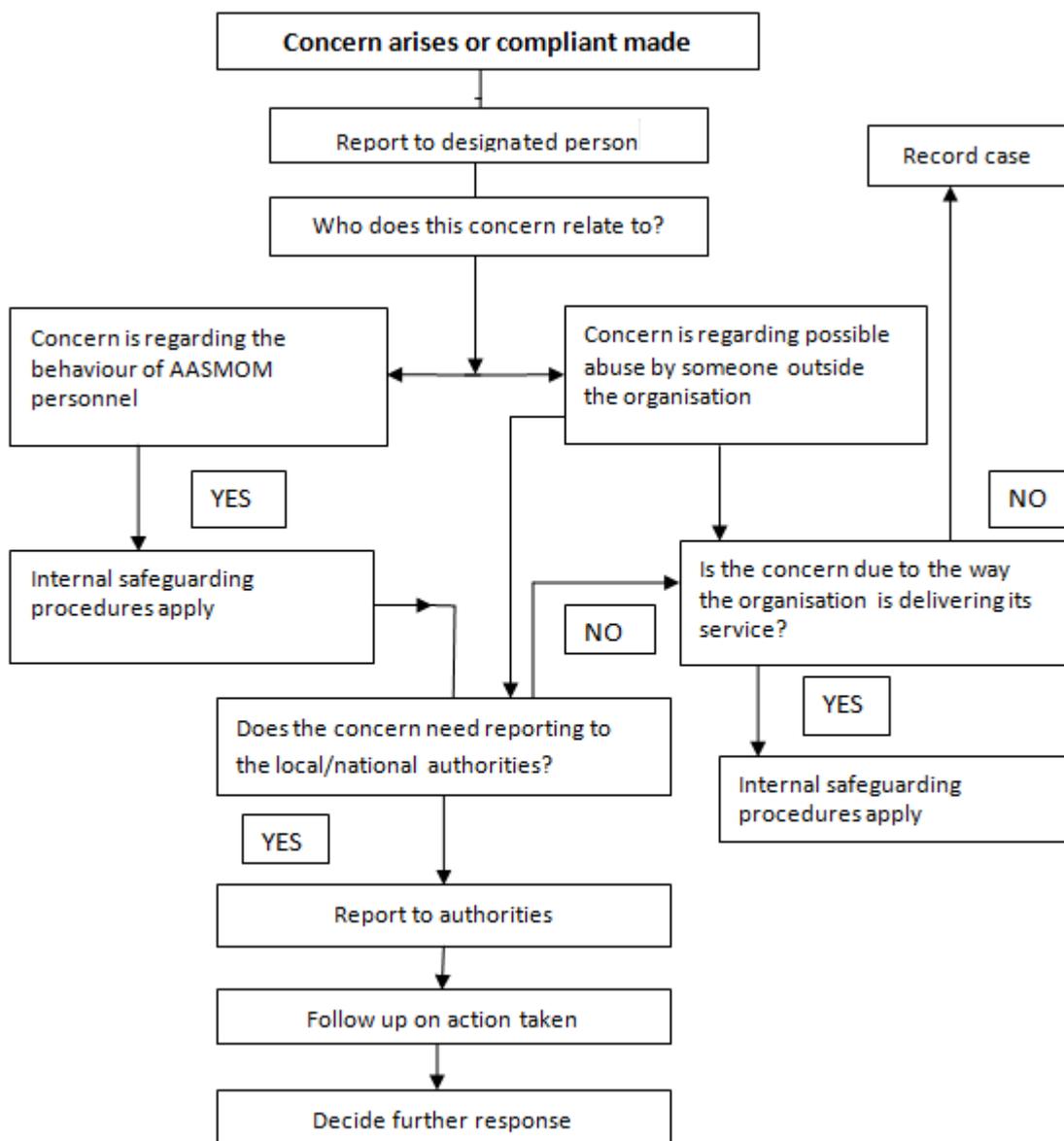
Each Regional Hospitaller should be responsible for supervising implementation and monitoring of the AASMOM Policy at the regional level. The central SGO may need to support the SFPs, for example in reporting serious violations or criminal cases to the AASMOM Transitional Council; or contacting external authorities or agencies for support in conducting investigations; or modelling leadership for enforcing the Policy.

6. Timeframe and Flowchart for Reporting

Each Region should decide the timeframe within which cases need to be reported by personnel; the general recommendation is within 24 hours of the incident being observed or reported, or as soon as possible after that. Time is of the essence when C/YP/VAs may be at risk. Having one SFP per location will assist in the efficiency of reporting and will simplify

the process. Each Region should also decide the amount of time they will allow for completing the investigation of a case (a thorough and fair investigation will most likely take as long as 2 months or more).

Each Region is encouraged to develop a clear, user-friendly flow chart for reporting cases. This will help to ensure that the process is understandable by everyone. The following is an example of a reporting procedure that can be adapted for each Region.



7. Handling External Concerns

The Regions should be able to clearly differentiate between *internal* and *external concerns*. *Internal concerns* are those where persons covered by the AASMOM Policy are the alleged perpetrators. *External concerns* are abuses which would usually be considered criminal under local legislation, and perpetrated by persons not described in the scope of AASMOM Policy. In situations where local legislation may be weaker than the AASMOM Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct, AASMOM personnel should be obliged to abide by the AASMOM Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct, keeping in mind at all times the best interests of the Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adults.

The Regions should keep a list of referral or service agencies, as well as a contact list of all relevant local, regional and national-level authorities, including police, social or C/YP/VAs welfare, health, and others. These lists should be readily available to all SFPs. The Regions should also have a list of all Federal, State or Territory legislation and procedures related to C/YP/VAs protection and welfare, including legislation related to mandatory reporters, state guardianship and referral pathways.

The Regions should not ignore any C/YP/VAs protection issues of concern; however, abuse in the wider community is an *external concern*, and the Regions' SFPs need to have the mechanism for appropriately and efficiently referring cases. Clearly, if a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate need of attention then the SFPs must act, but they must consider in advance how much support they are qualified or able to provide, and recognize when it is best to refer. Each Region can realistically only follow up on cases concerning abuse committed by its own personnel and others associated with the agency. The Regions do not have the mandate nor the resources to intervene in every case of abuse committed in the community; therefore Regions are reminded that the purpose of the AASMOM Safeguarding Policy is to cover the behaviour of personnel and others associated with the AASMOM own programs.

8. Protection Incident Reporting

Ideally the person making the report will complete the form in writing, however every allowance should be made to support persons who are unable or unwilling to write, in which case the SFP, or the person taking the report, should complete the form. It is important to keep a written record of all events—dates, names, times, places. However, this information

must be kept strictly confidential, and stored in a secure place accessible only by the SFP or other relevant individuals, as needed for investigation and follow-up of the case.

9. Training for AASMOM Personnel

The style, approach, and content of training will necessarily vary depending on the Regions' programs and audience, but should include, at a minimum:

- An introduction/overview of the concepts of C/YP/VAs protection and safeguarding.
- A discussion on how safeguarding policies and procedures can protect C/YP/VAs, the AASMOM and its personnel—and what can go wrong when there are no procedures in place.
- An introduction to and discussion of the Policy, ensuring all participants understand the purpose of the policy, the content, and terminology.

It is recommended that refresher training is conducted for AASMOM personnel on an annual basis. All new AASMOM personnel directly involved in programs and activities with C/YP/VAs need to have a brief introduction/overview session once they have had a chance to read through the policy.