

Principal risks

Our work to eradicate poverty is inherently risky, particularly in fragile or conflict-prone countries, or when speaking out on difficult or controversial issues. Managing risks effectively is integral to the achievement of our essential purpose, and governance structures are in place to ensure the early identification and management of key risks, and to support the delivery of our strategy.

The trustees are ultimately responsible for risk management and the effectiveness of our internal control systems. The major risks to which we are exposed, as identified by the trustees, have been reviewed and systems or procedures have been established to manage those risks.

The board has considered and approved the risk management policy and its appetite for risk. It has delegated the regular review of the risk management process to the audit and risk committee, which also oversees the work of the internal audit function and receives regular reports from the head of internal audit and risk. The audit and risk committee is made up of four trustees and an independent adviser. Its meetings are regularly attended by members of the directorate so they can participate in cross-organisational risk management discussions.

Our systems and procedures are designed to manage rather than eliminate risk and provide reasonable but not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

Senior management ensures that day-to-day risk management processes are embedded across the organisation through the effective implementation of policies and procedures. Risk registers have been developed at corporate, national, country and major-project levels. Risks are assessed on the basis of their likelihood and potential impact, along with the mitigation strategies in place to manage them in line with the board's risk appetite. The directorate reviews and updates the corporate risk register three times a year and it is shared with the audit and risk committee. The board formally reviews and approves it annually.

There are a number of working groups that manage risks in high-risk areas, as defined in the risk register. In 2017/18, these included the health, safety and security committee; the public policy group; the large programmes oversight committee; the data protection oversight committee; the anti-diversion oversight committee; the IT steering group; and the corporate advocacy group. Serious incidents

and near misses are monitored and inform the ongoing development of risk management strategies. We also have a crisis management committee in place to respond to any major incident. This consists of relevant directors and staff (depending on the nature of the incident) and has been successfully deployed when needed, to ensure that incidents are successfully and safely managed, protecting any staff at risk, and that communications are in place both internally and externally where relevant.

Risk management is embedded in our processes for the implementation and evaluation of our corporate strategy, Partnership for Change.

Internal audit is responsible for assessing the effectiveness of internal controls against a schedule of audits approved by the audit and risk committee, taking account of the corporate risk register. The results of the audits are reported to management and the directorate and summarised for the audit and risk committee. Management is responsible for implementing agreed actions arising from the internal audit process. Their progress is tracked and regularly reviewed by senior management, the directorate, and the audit and risk committee. Every year, the audit and risk committee also receives an annual assurance statement from the directorate, which details key controls in place during the year. This is supported by completion of the Charity Commission's 'internal financial controls for charities' checklist.

To supplement the schedule of audits, internal audit has implemented an internal control self-assessment process. It requires overseas offices and programmes, including our subsidiary Change Alliance, to confirm adherence to key controls and report on any material control breakdowns and actions to prevent their reoccurrence. This is intended to ensure the control framework is fully embedded internationally. Where gaps are noted, management is required to implement corrective actions and report on this to internal audit.

Where themes in these gaps are noted, they are reported to senior management and actions are taken to review and reinforce related policies and procedures. The results of the internal control self-assessment are reviewed with the audit and risk committee. A similar process is in place for our national and regional offices in Britain, Ireland and Spain.

The self-assessment responses are tested during the standard internal audit programme for countries and

offices that are visited as part of the internal audit plan. Internal audit also provides support to country teams in the development and regular review of risk management strategies relevant to their operations. Risk registers are attached to the self-assessment. Online risk training is a component of the core learning and development framework for all staff.

The countries in which we operate

Risk

Working to eradicate poverty requires us to operate in places that are inherently challenging because of conflict, corruption, natural disasters, weak infrastructure and poor governance. A material change in international dynamics, or in the conditions of specific countries or regions where we work, can hamper our ability to operate effectively and safely in those locations. These changes may include: a reduction in support for, or more aggressive clamping down on, civil society; economic or political collapse; conflict; or serious environmental disaster.

In recent years we have seen an increase in insecurity across the globe, particularly in many of the places where we are mandated through our humanitarian mission to work.

Conflict, lack of infrastructure and climate factors can all make it difficult to reach the most vulnerable communities and to monitor the performance of our programmes. This can affect the quality of our results.

Management

In the vast majority of our work, we operate through independent partners and members of ACT Alliance, which have roots in the communities in which they work. This ensures that we can respond quickly and sustainably to changing circumstances. It also enables us to access up-to-date information regularly to ensure our programmes remain relevant. Our partners are supported locally through country offices in many of the countries in which we work; they provide monitoring and evaluation, compliance training and support, networking opportunities and capacity building. During the year we have also directly implemented some projects, where the donor has required this. In these circumstances we ensure that standards and procedures are implemented as applicable to our partners and consistent with our donor requirements.

All of our staff travelling to and within our overseas operations understand their personal responsibility for security and adhere to our corporate policies and procedures. All country programmes have up-to-date security policies, provide briefings to visitors and adjust security assessments as appropriate in response to major changes in the political and security environment. Having confidence in our policies and procedures as well as our staff gives us the confidence to work in some of the most challenging locations. But, in the event of an escalation in insecurity and as a last resort, we may withdraw staff from insecure locations or delay the implementation of a programme.

We provide staff with compulsory security training and make security considerations a key part of all major programme decisions. Our London office hosts the European Interagency Security Forum and the ACT Alliance Security Coordinator, making Christian Aid a key hub for NGO security.

Case Study: From Violence to Peace

The situation

In 2016, more countries experienced violent conflict than at any time in nearly 30 years. If trends persist, by 2030 more than half of the world's poor communities will be in countries affected by high levels of violence.¹ This rise in violence has been accompanied by a global undermining of civil society space.² Attacks have increased against those at the frontline of protecting human rights and calling for peace locally, with more than 300 murdered in 2017.³ At the end of 2016 there were 40.3 million people living in protracted internal displacement caused by conflict and violence, notably in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, where internally displaced people face enormous obstacles to going back to their lives.⁴

The risk

Violence can rapidly reverse the development gains of our work. In the countries where we work, violence exposes people to terror and human rights violations, including being killed or physically harmed, gender-based violence, trauma and mental harm. We cannot seek to end poverty without addressing violence.

As a development agency, we affect conflict dynamics when we intervene; likewise, the conflict affects how we intervene. We need to understand this dynamic in order to be effective. We globally adopted a strategic change objective on tackling violence and building peace in 2012. This was in response to country programmes' feedback that we needed to do more to address complex violence in many countries. This strategic focus was welcomed at the time, as a necessary response to conflict and violence in many contexts, and as an opportunity to support existing work by partners in a more focused way. However, despite the huge need and the organisational priority, progress was slow and our efforts lacked strategic direction. We risked undermining our potential and missing opportunities for peace or conflict prevention.

How we dealt with it

To address the gaps in our response to violence and to provide direction, in 2016 a memorandum of

understanding was agreed, between Christian Aid and Christian Aid Ireland, for Ireland to take the global lead for the organisation. Christian Aid Ireland had developed significant experience in this area through a programme funded by Irish Aid. This is the first time in our history that a key thematic area has been coordinated outside London, and this supports the intention of the global partnership.

Following a review of our programme of work, Christian Aid Ireland developed a global strategy on violence and peace building, launched in November 2016. It draws on the reflections, priorities and vision of our country programmes, but also covers policy and advocacy, research and church engagement. The PeaceNexus Foundation provided a development grant to support us in globally developing our peace-building work. Four dedicated positions support this development, coordinating closely with country programmes, other colleagues and departments.

The result

There has been a step change in our work on violence and peace initiatives. Currently, 18 Christian Aid programmes across Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America are working on violence and peace building. This includes work funded by Irish Aid, the In Their Lifetime Fund, the UK (the Department for International Development (DFID), the Conflict Stability and Security Fund, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office), the EU, and an internal investment fund.

The Irish Aid funding supports an innovative approach developed with Queen's University Belfast. It uses adaptive programming and action research to accompany the humanitarian elements focusing on conflict sensitivity in building resilience in violence-affected places. This approach focuses on Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar and South Sudan. We are developing our expertise on peace building and have developed tools, resources and an internal learning group to support our in-country work. We are also working closely with our humanitarian colleagues to strengthen our response to conflict. We have developed our policy and advocacy capability and are engaging with key external, strategic audiences on violence and peace-building issues.

1 OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). 2015. States of Fragility 2015: Meeting Post-2015 Ambitions. Paris: OECD.

2 <https://www.civicus.org/documents/reports-and-publications/SOCS/2017/state-of-civil-society-report-2017-executive-summary-en.pdf>

3 <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/resource-publication/annual-report-human-rights-defenders-risk-2017>

4 <http://www.internal-displacement.org/internal-displacement/context-of-displacement/conflict-and-violence/>

Advocacy and popular campaigning

Risk

We speak out against the causes of poverty. In some situations, this can put staff and partners at risk. If communications are inappropriate or poorly researched, or erroneous statements are made, this could risk lives, damage reputations or harm key relationships. Similarly, we could be challenged by those with vested interests who merely object to us talking about the reality of our work and our partners'. We know that some governments do not want certain facts or realities revealed or would prefer comment or analysis from particular perspectives. Our partners' actions could draw us into litigious or conflict-related situations, particularly when they publish materials or take action with our financial support.

If we, or our partners, act in a way that is contrary to our public policy positions, this could seriously damage our reputation. In addition, poverty is a complex, multi-dimensional issue, and communicating it in interesting, accessible and engaging ways to supporters, the general public, donors and other stakeholders can be challenging.

Management

We have a public policy group that is responsible for approving and guiding our public policy in key areas. We have developed advocacy priorities that we believe will have the greatest impact on poverty, and our popular campaigning focuses on these priorities. We have a corporate advocacy group which provides oversight of advocacy projects. We ensure we have expertise in these focus areas and that communications are researched and checked by a peer-review process and external advisers, as necessary, prior to publication. Staff involved in all advocacy, campaigning and lobbying activities have a clear understanding of the context of the role, and the responsibilities and limitations of campaigning organisations as laid out in Charity Commission and other guidance, and we are clear about when issues need to be considered by trustees. Clear guidance is given to country programmes about the issues they need to consider when supporting partner publications.

Being clear about our core values ensures our own actions are aligned with our public policy.

We have a research, evidence and learning hub, whose role is to deepen the connections between

our programme practice and policy development, advocacy and campaigning, and to deepen the long-term understanding of the impact of our work.

Working through and with partners

Risk

We believe that in most circumstances the most effective way to reduce poverty is to work through independent partners that are rooted in the communities in which they work. This approach is not without risk, however, as partners may lack capacity, especially in challenging contexts or with new or more complex donor requirements. As a result, there is a danger that some of the projects we support may lack impact, misuse funds, be unaccountable or pose a safeguarding risk to beneficiaries. Apart from failing to deliver effective support to people in poverty and, at the extreme, actually causing harm, this could damage our reputation with donors and reduce our ability to fundraise. There is also a risk, in the changing environment in which we operate, that working through partners in some circumstances may not provide the most effective approach to our work.

Our corporate strategic framework involves a range of partnerships, including working with governments, civil society organisations and the private sector. We also work with suppliers, consultants and financial services providers as part of our day-to-day operations. We believe that these partnerships are essential to achieving our ambitions, but there is an inherent risk that working with others could dilute our strategy or lead us to compromise on our objectives. Our reputation could be damaged by association with the actions of others, over whom we have no direct control. A failure to invest in key relationships could also result in a loss of support for our cause or a failure to maximise our partnership potential.

Management

We thoroughly research our implementing partners before providing funding. Through our due diligence process, we consider the organisation's past performance and its governance and control processes. We monitor all of our funded projects and provide feedback to partners where issues are noted for future follow-up. We support partners, where necessary, in building their capacity, including training on donor compliance requirements. All partners that we fund to the value of £50,000 or more in any year are required to undertake an external audit.

We are a certified member of the Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance, which provides standards that are designed to promote the rights and dignity of vulnerable people and communities, and to enhance the effectiveness and impact of the assistance we provide. As such, we invite complaints and feedback from our beneficiaries. We also ensure that our partners have an appropriate code of conduct and safeguarding policy.

We commission and publish independent external evaluations of our work. We have a range of anti-fraud and corruption policies on matters including anti-diversion and abuse of funds, whistleblowing, anti-bribery, anti-money laundering, safeguarding and misuse of funds, which are all available to partners. Our requirements in relation to safeguarding, fraud and corruption are included in our funding and reporting agreements with partners. We have a process for fully investigating all incidents of safeguarding and corruption and ensuring that lessons are learned. Where appropriate, as a result of an investigation, we will end the partnership relationship and report matters to relevant local statutory agencies.

During the year we have worked with the board on a partnership refresh. This reviewed our current model of working through partners, in what circumstances we should perform direct implementation or a hybrid approach, and the partnership principles to which we should always adhere.

The large programmes oversight committee monitors the performance of major service contracts and major grants, and reviews the supporting risk management procedures.

We have a due diligence process to help us evaluate new business models for partnerships outside our traditional implementing partner and alliances base. This includes directorate and board involvement in determining the range and depth of partnerships and associated business models, and is underpinned by our core values framework. Our standard terms and conditions include a code of conduct for suppliers, which covers ethical and environmental considerations as well as ensuring other relevant compliance.

Programme design, quality and effectiveness

Risk

We work in many countries and with varied donor funding that has been diversifying in recent years.

We are committed to ensuring programme quality in all our work, but there is a risk that if we fail to ensure all of our projects are delivered to the highest standard, or fail to understand and comply with the specific donor requirements, we will fail to deliver the greatest impact to the communities we serve. We also run the risk that our donors will lose trust in our work and will cease future funding, which will ultimately impact those communities that benefit from our work.

If we do not select the right type of aid for particular communities in particular circumstances, or we use the wrong implementing partners to support us, we could miss the opportunity to maximise our impact with those most in need or we could inadvertently have a detrimental effect on local markets and prices. This is particularly relevant in emergency response situations where speed to delivery is critical.

Management

We have structured policies, procedures and systems in place to ensure that we carefully design our work taking account of beneficiary needs, the local economic environment and learnings that incorporate regional input as we develop our plans. We select appropriate partners and review the implementation. In some situations where it is deemed appropriate, taking account of partner capacity or donor requirements, we directly implement our work. We have monitoring and evaluation systems and perform evaluations periodically. We have processes in place to ensure that donor requirements are understood and applied by our local teams and implementing partners.

We are committed to ensuring that all our work - whether funded by institutional donors, trusts and foundations or individual supporters - achieves the highest quality output. However, we have identified that due to the increased complexity of our work and the limitation of our in-country resources, the quality standards we seek to apply may not have been achieved for some smaller projects in recent times. We have set up a programme quality taskforce to review this area and to develop an action plan for improvement. This priority area is being overseen by the directorate.

Economy, sector competition and financial strategy

Risk

Changes in the economy in the UK and elsewhere in the world can have a significant impact on both the propensity to give and the causes that supporters and donors are willing to support. Perceptions of the wealth of middle-income countries might provide a distorted view of the reality for the majority of people living in those countries. There is a political narrative that is hostile towards international development spend. This, along with increased competition for funds, may reduce the amount of income available for our programmes.

There is also a risk that donors may change their funding priorities to areas that are not aligned with our strategic priorities, or change the way their funds are disbursed. If we are unable to respond to the changing environment or fundraise in a way that engages current and new supporters, and our income drops, we may need to reduce the scale of our programmes.

The UK's vote to leave the EU and the impact on the political and economic environment is likely to have repercussions for our sector in both the short and long term, as the process for leaving the EU is actioned.

We have a closed final salary pension scheme which could give rise to future unmatched liabilities requiring additional funding, depending on economic and other factors. For further details please refer to note 23 of the Financial Statements.

Management

We have a reserves policy, which takes account of our principal risks. Performance against our reserves target is regularly reviewed with the board. This is supported by a three-year planning process. We have income and expenditure targets and regularly review our performance against them. We have a thorough planning process that challenges our income assumptions and how we spend our funds. We closely monitor our costs and seek opportunities to improve efficiency where possible. The operational management group, chaired by the chief operating officer, monitors performance against our operational plans as well as related risks and opportunities. In recent years we have been working on our financial resilience to ensure we have the agility

to absorb any shocks caused by external events and continue to maximise our impact with the poorest and most vulnerable communities. During the year we have successfully grown our institutional funding base across a range of donors.

We consider the potential impact of shifting government priorities, and the economy more generally, as the process for the UK's exit from the EU continues. We are continuing our engagement with DFID about the impact of the Brexit negotiations on humanitarian and other funding contracts. We have an established presence outside the UK in EU member states: Spain and Ireland. This will enable us to retain our voice in Europe irrespective of the UK's membership status. We also have a strategy of working in networks and coalitions, including with Bond in the UK and ACT EU in Europe.

Our programme management information system helps fundraisers to understand where our programmes are most closely aligned with donor interests. The finance, fundraising and investment committee considers fundraising plans and performance. We are continuing to develop a model of working that seeks to identify in-country fundraising opportunities, following a review of our operational model in India in 2013 and as part of our work on global partnership.

We have a loyal supporter base that shares our core beliefs and values. We continue to encourage our supporters to give, act and pray in solidarity with the poor and marginalised communities we support. We ask for, and respond to, feedback on our marketing, communications and fundraising activities through a variety of channels including surveys, focus groups and supporter panels. We provide case studies demonstrating the need for, and impact of, the work that we and our partners do.

We keep abreast of changes to fundraising regulation and data protection law, and work hard to ensure that our interaction with supporters is compliant. We are in the process of implementing a new customer relationship management system, which is intended to support transformational change to the way that we interact with our supporters. We believe this new system will further deepen our relationships with supporters and provide greater connectivity with our work overseas through a more digitally enabled platform.

We actively manage our pension fund liability with a long-term de-risking strategy that is approved by the finance, fundraising and investment committee, supported by professional advice as appropriate and close working

with the pensions trustee. The finance, fundraising and investment committee receives regular reports on investment performance and approves investment management plans.

Case study: Digital cash programming

The situation

We have long realised that in our humanitarian work, including emergency response, the provision of cash to beneficiaries provides them with dignity, flexibility and choice in using the funds for their direct and often varied needs. This method of providing assistance also benefits the local economy, creating a virtuous circle of support. The funds have historically been provided either in direct cash distributions or as part of a voucher system that enables purchases in a market forum.

Throughout 2017 we worked towards meeting our commitment to scale up the use of cash in humanitarian response where it is appropriate and market conditions are favourable, based on evidence from market assessments. Where possible, we have sought to deliver cash digitally using mobile money technology. This method of digital cash distributions has been piloted in our humanitarian response in north-east Nigeria.

The risk

Providing any form of humanitarian aid, in goods or cash, is open to inherent risk. For example, goods can be spoiled en route or may be inappropriate to a certain context; handling cash and vouchers, such as paper-based beneficiary identification cards used to collect food or other items, can increase personal security risks both for distributors and beneficiaries, who may also need to travel to collect the items. Vouchers may also be fraudulently replicated. The use of mobile money is not without risk, as it requires the transfer of beneficiary data from Christian Aid to third parties,

which could create data protection risks if not managed carefully. The consequences of improperly managed risk have the potential to be particularly harmful where we are working with the most vulnerable.

How we dealt with it

We partnered with Segovia, a private sector actor, to deliver e-transfers using Segovia's platform for cash distributions in Nigeria. Our beneficiary data was automatically loaded into the platform through a secure data collection tool. The data has been encrypted to a bank-level standard for transmission to third-party telecommunication entities and for storage, in line with UK and EU legislation. The platform also reduces the risk of manual error in calculating entitlements, offers a dual-level authentication of all payments and ensures fully auditable records of all transactions. The collection and storage of beneficiary data is embedded in our principles of targeting the most vulnerable individuals and households, and conforms to our robust registration and beneficiary selection criteria.

The result

We will continue our commitment to scale up the use of cash in humanitarian response, using e-transfers where this is feasible. Lessons from the pilot in Nigeria will enable us to develop a more robust solution for cash transfer programming – be it electronic transfers, direct cash or vouchers – that will promote adherence to detailed procedures and ensure protection of all beneficiary information. We are committed to ensuring, where appropriate, that our work benefits from innovations, including the use of digital technology to deepen our reach and impact and to reduce the risk of misuse or loss of charitable funds.

Christian identity

Risk

We undertake charitable activities on behalf of the British and Irish churches and with their support. Our core belief

is that all people are created equal, with inherent dignity and infinite worth. We are proud of our Christian identity, and our strong support from the churches. Partnering with the churches is fundamental to the delivery of our Partnership for Change strategy.

This partnership comes with risks, however. Negative external perceptions of Christianity and differences of opinion with churches on key issues could have a detrimental impact on our work. Tensions between the state and the churches, should they arise, could adversely impact our own relationship with governments. And we could also fail to make the most of our opportunities to engage the churches in the fight against poverty. The growth in religious extremism could hamper our ability to work in some locations and the effectiveness of our programmes.

Management

Our work to eradicate poverty targets the world's most vulnerable and marginalised people, regardless of faith. We work with alliances of other faiths and with secular organisations that share our determination to end poverty. We have an open recruitment policy and we do not proselytise.

Our strategy has, at its heart, the desire to engage the churches in the fight against poverty and help supporters put their faith into action. Our policy positioning draws on theological insight and reflection to strengthen our arguments but also to provide a deeper understanding for the Christian constituency.

Christianity underpins our core values and we have a role to promote understanding and tolerance of others, using our faith as a force for change and contributing to interfaith cooperation for the benefit of those in poverty.

Regulatory compliance

Risk

We operate in many countries with many different jurisdictions. Failure to keep abreast of national and local laws and requirements could compromise our ability to continue working in these places.

We work in an increasingly demanding regulatory environment. Failure to demonstrate compliance with the regulatory framework, as it evolves, could damage our reputation and result in fines and other penalties. Regulatory pressure can also restrict our ability to respond quickly to the most vulnerable in times of conflict. The unintended consequences of the counter-terrorism legislation, which quite rightly seeks to reduce the risk of organisations and individuals inadvertently

funding terrorism, are making it increasingly difficult to get funds to places where the need is greatest. This could mean a failure on our part to provide impartial support wherever there is suffering, and lead to negative public perception of Christian Aid. Of course, if Christian Aid funds were to be diverted into terrorist hands, we would be inadvertently funding activities to which we are entirely opposed. This would also carry significant reputational, legal and financial risk.

Management

We have in-country teams in many of the places where we work. They are responsible for ensuring compliance with national and local requirements, including registration, tax compliance and statutory reporting. Where required, external audits of our country offices are performed.

We monitor changes to regulation, and review our response with our advisers and trustees as appropriate. We provide induction and training to new trustees and have processes in place to keep the board apprised of relevant changes in regulation. Statutory and regulatory updates are a regular part of the audit and risk committee agenda.

During the year we have continued our work on counter-terrorism risk management. Our aim is to ensure that we continue to highlight the plight of those most in need and provide them with much-needed support, while ensuring we remain legally compliant. For defined high-risk locations, we have enhanced due diligence procedures that have been approved by the audit and risk committee. This work continues to be overseen by the anti-diversion oversight committee.

In May 2018 the General Data Protection Regulation came into force. During the year we have been working to embed compliance with the new regulation, including in-depth training of staff in the UK on top of the annual online data protection training that is compulsory for all staff. GDPR work is overseen by the data protection oversight committee and supported by our dedicated data protection manager.

In compliance with the Modern Slavery Act, we have developed a public statement on the steps we have taken to identify and tackle modern slavery in our work and in our supply chain. This statement is available on our website.

We have a clear safeguarding policy which is available to staff, trustees, volunteers and partners. We have appointed

a safeguarding manager to support the application of the policy across our work. This work is being co-ordinated alongside our commitment to the core humanitarian standard. All staff, trustees and specialist volunteers (those with a volunteering agreement who volunteer/offer time in our offices and elsewhere) must sign the code of conduct on appointment, and staff and volunteers perform training annually. We have been alert to the sector safeguarding crisis and have responded thoroughly to donor queries. Safeguarding is monitored by the audit and risk committee, which receives reports at each of its meetings. We have also appointed a safeguarding manager and have created a safeguarding governance group to ensure oversight of regulatory compliance and our plans to further embed our policy. We participate with relevant sector groups as part of our commitment to the development and implementation of sector best practice. We have reporting mechanisms, thoroughly investigate any safeguarding incidents that arise and, where appropriate, take disciplinary action and inform the relevant statutory agency. All such matters are reviewed on a confidential basis by the audit and risk committee and are reported to the Charity Commission.

Our policy on reporting serious incidents is approved and monitored by the audit and risk committee. This clearly identifies issues that require separate reporting to the Charity Commission. See p54 for more on safeguarding.

Human resources

Risk

Our work is predicated on the continued support and effectiveness of our staff. If we do not provide effective leadership and management, and if we do not look after the wellbeing of our staff, the implementation of our strategy could be significantly compromised and our reputation damaged.

Management

We have rigorous recruitment processes designed to help us select candidates who can best help us meet our core aims, and to ensure equal opportunities. Posts are advertised internally as a matter of course, and we use gender-balanced panels to interview job applicants. We would not knowingly appoint anyone who would pose a safeguarding risk. Our recruitment policies include structured interviews and the taking of references,

including from the most recent employer. The reference includes confirmation that the referee considers that the applicant would not pose a safeguarding risk. Where available and appropriate for the role, a Disclosure and Barring Service check or local equivalent is completed. New staff sign our code of conduct and are inducted in a range of policies that underpin our work.

We have a structured performance management system that is designed to monitor individual performance and we have also invested in leadership development. We have human resources policies designed to promote employee wellbeing and we provide regular and open communication to employees.

We regularly obtain feedback from staff through surveys, and we respond, by department, to the issues raised.

In line with our practice in the global South, we have increased the opportunities for staff in Britain, Ireland and Spain to give anonymous suggestions and feedback.

Information systems and cybersecurity

Risk

We live in an increasingly digitally connected world. Failure to keep pace with new technologies and ways of reaching our supporters and the communities we serve, in the way that they prefer, could reduce our impact and effectiveness. Failure to secure our information systems from attacks could lead to loss of service, loss of data and even put people at risk. This could damage our reputation, result in regulatory breaches and fines, and endanger staff and partners.

Management

We have developed initiatives to embrace digital technology and embed its use more effectively in our work. We have structured information systems, policies and procedures that are embedded throughout the organisation and supported by training where appropriate. Our IT security measures are regularly tested, including by internal audit, and staff are reminded of the risks of so-called "social engineering," whereby data is provided to unauthorised users pretending to be legitimate. Staff are also reminded of the risks of using social media and all staff annually complete online data protection training. Oversight of cybersecurity is provided by the IT steering group.