

Duty of Care Policy 2025 – 2030	
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The signatures below certify that this document has been reviewed and accepted and demonstrate that the signatories know all the requirements and are committed to ensuring their provision.

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Approved by	Name	Gender Links Board	Signature	
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These policies are based on the laws in all the countries where GL operates. If there is a conflict between the policies and national laws, the national laws will take priority, unless the policies have been standardised across countries in the interest of fairness. All GL employees, associates, and consultants are required to adhere to GL Policies as outlined in their contracts. This policy should be read in conjunction with all relevant policies.

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Abbreviations

DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
GL	Gender Links
HSC	Health and Safety Committee
HQ	Head Quarters

I. Introduction

The Gender Links (GL) duty of care policy prioritises the safety, security, and well-being of everyone associated with our organisation. It embodies our commitment to fostering a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment. We aim to create a workplace culture that fosters trust, respect, and inclusivity, enabling individuals to voice their concerns without fear of reprisal. Adhering to international best practices, we continuously strive for improvement and excellence to ensure our policies remain relevant and effective. This policy guides our decisions and actions, reinforcing our dedication to creating a thriving and equitable work environment for all.

Purpose of this policy

The purpose of the Gender Links (GL) Duty of Care Policy is to:

1. Define the responsibilities and obligations of GL and its personnel regarding duty of care.
2. Establish procedures to identify, assess, and mitigate risks to ensure the safety, security, and well-being of employees, volunteers, partners, service providers, and stakeholders.
3. Provide guidelines for responding to incidents and emergencies in a timely and effective manner.
4. Promote a culture of safety, respect, and accountability within the organisation.
5. Support the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of individuals associated with GL, fostering a workplace environment that is conducive to productivity, creativity, and personal growth.
6. Ensure compliance with legal requirements and ethical standards related to duty of care, thereby mitigating the potential for liability and reputational harm.

Scope

This policy applies to all Gender Links employees, volunteers, partners, service providers, and any other individuals working on behalf of the organisation.

Definitions

Duty of Care: The obligation to assess the potential consequences of our actions on others, closely tied to the concept of negligence. It constitutes a legal responsibility for individuals to exercise reasonable caution to prevent harm or injury to themselves and/or others under their care. This necessitates that representatives guarantee their actions (or lack thereof) do not jeopardise the safety or well-being of others.

Harm: Harm refers to any physical, psychological, emotional, or financial injury or damage experienced by an individual. In the context of this Duty of Care Policy, harm can encompass a wide range of negative outcomes that affect the well-being and safety of employees, volunteers, partners, service providers, and stakeholders. This includes but is not limited to:

Physical Harm: Injuries or illnesses resulting from accidents, unsafe working conditions, or exposure to hazardous substances.

Psychological Harm: Mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, or trauma resulting from work-related activities or environments.

Emotional Harm: Negative emotional impacts such as fear, distress, or feelings of insecurity caused by bullying, harassment, discrimination, or other hostile behaviours.

Financial Harm: Economic losses suffered by individuals due to workplace incidents, such as loss of income, medical expenses, or legal costs.

Reputational Harm: Damage to an individual's reputation or standing within the organisation or broader community, often arising from unfounded allegations or breaches of privacy.

Compliance: The obligation of all individuals to adhere to the Duty of Care policy. Failure to comply may result in legal ramifications, including the possibility of termination of employment or contract.

Harassment and Bullying: Unwanted behaviour that creates a hostile or intimidating environment.

Risk: A situation exposing an individual to danger, harm or loss.

II. Principles

1. Safety and Security

- Risk Assessment: GL shall conduct regular risk assessments to identify potential hazards and vulnerabilities and implement appropriate measures to mitigate identified risks.
- Emergency Preparedness: GL shall develop and maintain an emergency response plan and ensure all employees are trained in emergency procedures.

2. Health and Well-being

- Work Environment: GL shall provide a safe and healthy work environment that complies with local and international health and safety regulations.
- Mental Health Support: GL shall offer, where possible, mental health resources and support to employees and promote a culture of openness and support regarding mental health issues.

3. Equality and Non-discrimination

- Equal Opportunities: GL shall ensure all employees and stakeholders are treated with respect and dignity by promoting equality and preventing discrimination based on gender, race, disability, or any other characteristic.
- Harassment and Bullying: GL has a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and bullying as outlined in the [GL Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Safeguarding Policy](#).

4. Training and Awareness

- Continuous Education: GL shall provide regular training and development opportunities related to safety, health, and well-being, to ensure employees are aware of their responsibilities under this policy.
- Information Dissemination: GL shall ensure all employees, volunteers, partners and stakeholders have access to this policy and relevant information and resources regarding duty of care practices.

III. Responsibilities

1. Management

- Ensure the implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Conduct regular reviews and updates of the policy to reflect current best practices and legal requirements.
- Provide necessary resources for effective risk management and incident response.

2. Employees, volunteers, partners, service providers and stakeholders

- Adhere to the guidelines and procedures outlined in this policy.
- Report any identified risks, hazards, or incidents to the appropriate authority.
- Participate in training and development programs related to duty of care.

3. Health and Safety Committee (HSC)

- Oversee the implementation of health and safety measures.
- Review incident reports and recommend improvements.
- Conduct regular safety audits and risk assessments.
- Refer to [Annex A](#) for the GL Health and Safety Statement.

IV. Procedures

1. Incident Reporting

- Immediate Action: In the event of an incident, ensure immediate safety measures are taken to protect individuals.
- Documentation: Fill in and submit the **GL incident reporting form** to the Health and Safety Committee (HSC) in a timely and accurate manner.
- Investigation: A thorough investigation must be conducted by the HSC to determine the cause of the incident and implement corrective actions to prevent recurrence.

2. Emergency Response

- Communication: GL shall ensure clear lines of communication for reporting emergencies and ensure all employees are aware of these procedures.
- Evacuation Plan: GL shall maintain an up-to-date evacuation plan and conduct regular drills to ensure readiness. This applies to GL headquarters (HQ), country offices and GL Cottages.

3. Health and Safety Audits

- Regular Audits: GL shall conduct regular health and safety audits to identify potential risks and ensure compliance with this policy.
- Follow-up Actions: GL shall implement corrective actions based on audit findings and monitor the effectiveness of these actions.

V. Duty Travel

This section should be read together with the **GL Travel Policy**.

GL recognises that duty travel is an integral part of its operations, often necessitating staff and representatives to travel domestically, regionally, or internationally for work-related purposes. In line with our commitment to duty of care, the following guidelines apply to duty travel:

Risk Assessment and Preparation: Before any duty travel, a thorough risk assessment should be conducted to identify potential hazards and risks associated with the destination, mode of transportation, accommodation, and local conditions.

Employees and representatives undertaking duty travel should be provided with comprehensive pre-travel information and resources to ensure they are adequately prepared for the trip.

Travel Safety and Security: GL is committed to prioritising the safety and security of staff during duty travel. Measures should be taken to minimise risks, including but not limited to:

- Utilising safe and reputable transportation options.
- Choosing accommodation in secure areas.
- Providing emergency contact information and support mechanisms.

Health and Well-being: Staff members should be encouraged to prioritise their health and well-being during duty travel. This includes:

- Adhering to recommended health and safety protocols, such as vaccination requirements.
- Accessing medical facilities and resources as needed.
- Managing stress and fatigue associated with travel through adequate rest and self-care practices.

Communication and Support: Clear lines of communication should be established between travellers and designated points of contact within the organisation. This enables prompt assistance in case of emergencies or unforeseen circumstances.

Regular check-ins should be conducted to monitor the well-being of employees during duty travel and address any concerns or issues that may arise.

Documentation and Reporting: Comprehensive records of duty travel should be maintained, including itineraries, emergency contact information, and incident reports.

Staff members are encouraged to promptly report any incidents, accidents, or safety concerns encountered during duty travel to facilitate appropriate response and follow-up action.

Training and Education: Staff members embarking on duty travel should receive relevant training and guidance on travel safety, emergency procedures, cultural sensitivities, and local laws and customs.

Ongoing education and awareness initiatives should be provided to ensure travellers are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to mitigate risks and respond effectively to travel-related challenges.

Daily Subsistence Allowance: GL aims to support the well-being and financial security of employees during duty travel, thereby enhancing their overall safety and satisfaction while fulfilling their professional obligations. Staff undertaking duty travel may be entitled to receive a daily subsistence allowance (DSA) to cover essential expenses incurred during their travels. The DSA is intended to ensure that employees have access to adequate nutrition, accommodation, and other necessities while away from their usual place of work.

Staff are responsible for submitting accurate and timely DSA claims by the **GL travel policy**.

VI. Monitoring and Review

- Policy Review: This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective. Any changes will be communicated to all staff members.
- Feedback Mechanism: A mechanism for staff to provide feedback on the policy and suggest improvements must be put in place.

VII. Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. All staff, volunteers, service providers and partners are expected to uphold the highest standards of duty of care in their roles.

Annex A: GL Health and Safety Statement

At Gender Links (GL), we are committed to ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of all individuals associated with our organisation, including employees, volunteers, partners, service providers, and stakeholders. We recognise that maintaining a safe and healthy work environment is paramount to our success and the fulfilment of our mission to promote gender equality.

Our commitment to health and safety is underpinned by the following principles:

1. **Prevention:** We proactively identify and mitigate risks to prevent accidents, injuries, and illnesses in the workplace. This includes conducting regular risk assessments, implementing appropriate control measures, and providing relevant training and resources to employees.
2. **Compliance:** We comply with all relevant health and safety legislation, regulations, and standards to ensure that our workplace practices meet legal requirements and industry best practices. We strive to continuously improve our health and safety performance through ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and review.
3. **Communication:** We foster open and transparent communication channels to promote awareness of health and safety policies, procedures, and responsibilities among all employees and stakeholders. We encourage active participation and collaboration in health and safety initiatives to create a culture of shared responsibility and accountability.
4. **Support:** We provide support and assistance to employees to address health and safety concerns, incidents, or emergencies promptly and effectively. This includes access to first aid facilities, emergency response procedures, and counselling services to promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being.
5. **Continuous Improvement:** We are committed to continuously improving our health and safety performance through regular review, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms. We actively seek input from employees and stakeholders to identify areas for enhancement and implement corrective actions as necessary.