

Accountable Now feedback pre-submission

Quality monitoring tools and anti-corruption

SIM Card

Sightsavers SIM card (which is published on our website and can be viewed by clicking [here](#)) is a key, external facing tool, used to track progress against our strategy through the design, implementation and evaluation of our policies and programmes. The tool highlights the data we collect to meet our strategic aims, as well as regularly updated narrative around challenges and successes. Sightsavers ultimate aims focus on sustainability, government ownership and empowerment of people with disabilities to participate equally in society.

There are four ultimate aims shown at the top of the SIM card, which link directly to our objectives on health, education and inclusion. The first two aims relate to governments ensuring eye health and education services, known as the 'supply side', are available to all. The third is about securing equality for people with visual impairments, and governments implementing the agreed conventions. The fourth is the 'demand side', covering both inclusion and health objectives, and focuses on people with disabilities being able to seek healthcare. We then take these aims and look at what we want to achieve for our beneficiaries over the strategic period, with the goal of undertaking demonstration programmes in eye health, education and social inclusion, that can be replicated and taken to scale by the duty bearers, state governments. In addition, in line with a separate but related strategic objective, we implement a range of programmes contributing to the elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs).

QSAT

Ensuring high quality projects is one of Sightsavers' strategic objectives, in response to which we have developed quality standards that outline effective practices in our areas of work. Sightsavers has a responsibility to ensure the projects we select, support, fund and manage, are of high quality. These quality standards act as a reference point against which a project may be evaluated, to assure staff that programme management decisions are being made in keeping with identified sector best practices, and to demonstrate that all efforts are being made to mitigate harm to beneficiaries and deliver the best possible outcomes in line with Sightsavers' vision and mission.

Meeting a quality standard means meeting the minimum level that all Sightsavers' projects are expected to reach. Our commitment to their compliance contributes to our organisational accountability and is crucial in instilling confidence in Sightsavers from the public, donors, partners and the beneficiaries which we work with and for. Our quality standards are reviewed periodically to ensure they remain relevant and consistent with new developments and recommendations.

Sightsavers has operationalised quality standards through the Quality Standards Monitoring Tool (QSAT) Sightsavers country offices are assessed against our PCM quality standards and project partners/facilities are assessed against our thematic quality standards.

QSATs are currently available for the following areas of our work:

- PCM (Project Cycle Management) – Our internal project cycle audit and quality control process
- Eye Health: in these thematic areas: Cataract, Paediatric Cataract, Diabetic Retinopathy, Low Vision and Refractive Error
- NTDs: in these thematic areas: Trachoma, Onchocerciasis, Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Soil-Transmitted Helminths

Anti-money laundering and terrorism finance

Sightsavers has two dedicated policies which set out our approach and adherence to legislation including the UK Money Laundering Regulations 2007, the Terrorism Act 2000, the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, the Bribery Act 2010, the Criminal Finances Act 2017. Namely our Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy and Global Anti-Terrorist Financing Policy. The policies were both updated in September 2022 by the Audit Committee and are reviewed at least every 3 years. They can be found here: [Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy](#) & [Global Anti-Terrorist Financing Policy](#)

Safeguarding and incidents

Annual safeguarding training for Global Designated Safeguarding Leads

Sightsavers operates a network of approximately thirty Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), who are positioned in each of our Country Offices and are key to the implementation of our Safeguarding Policy. The Safeguarding Leads run training for staff and partner organisations on safeguarding, this includes facilitating requests from national governments for safeguarding training for civil servants and other key stakeholders.

In October and November 2022 Sightsavers ran two annual safeguarding training sessions for its network of Designated Safeguarding Leads. 100% of attendees completed a survey which showed they “felt more confident on the topic of safeguarding as a result of the training” and gave the training a 4.8/5 rating when asked if they enjoyed the training. A core activity and action to come from this training is to embed safeguarding into our project monitoring tools, so that all staff who visit project sites are prompted to ask questions and note observations around safeguarding risks. This activity was designed in response to feedback from our safeguarding leads and findings from our internal audits, which as of 2022 cover safeguarding as standard. As a Global Safeguarding Team at Sightsavers, we are continually looking for areas to strengthen and regularly seek feedback in different ways, but the inclusion of safeguarding in our internal audits has been particularly useful, to help identify issues and drive change. Each DSL leaves the training with specific actions for them and their offices to implement on safeguarding, which feeds into their annual plans.

Pakistan and India training

We also organised the safeguarding training for faculty of Federal College of Education (FCE) in Pakistan. FCE is a teachers education institute mandated for capacity building of pre-service and in-service teachers. The training was so well-taken that FCE is going to cascade this to government teachers training, supported by World Bank. They will also use these skills to orient their student-teachers (pre-service) on safeguarding. The faculty liked the safeguarding training and requested us to conduct this training for their support staff as well.

We have learnt from this experience that if we need to embed the safeguarding in education systems, teachers training institutes can be an effective platform because they have reach to teachers and future teachers. This is also an effective way to create more and more human resources on safeguarding.

In North India, we have made it mandatory to orient OPD members and gender committee members (newly formed & old ones) on safeguarding issues, after a few concerns emerged among the members. This was followed by developing guidelines & protocols for OPDs. However, these trainings & orientations have made it clear that every member must follow rules of the OPD, nobody is exempt, and they cannot compromise on the safety of the members. Now, these OPD members have their own safeguarding policies, receive issues, and resolve them within the OPD groups. Members are also responsible for ensuring respectful and safe environments in the OPD meetings and workshops.

Introducing change

Racial diversity working group

One way that Sightsavers is reflecting on its culture and seeking to prevent incidences of intolerance, such as those of racism or racially prejudice behaviour, is by understanding the views and perspectives of staff on both the working environment and the attitudes of colleagues in relation to racial diversity. To tackle this organisation wide, staff from diverse backgrounds volunteered to form the Racial Diversity Working Group. One of its first tasks was to carry out an organisation survey on staff experiences at Sightsavers. This received a response rate of over 90% and was evaluated and analysed by an external consultancy, to see how we compared to other organisations in the sector and beyond. Whilst incidents of overt racism are rare, and where found have been dealt with via the mechanisms mentioned elsewhere in the report, e.g. through disciplinary processes. However, it did raise where improved cultural understanding could be initiated, better knowledge of the religious, ethnic and cultural aspects across the numerous countries where staff live. As well as influencing a drive towards increased localisation through regional recruitment and decentralising of roles, where there is no practical requirement for them to be based at UK headquarters level.

In addition to driving these shifts, the group has also embarked upon a series of celebratory cultural sharing events, publicising diverse festivals, foods and holidays that are important to our diverse employee base. Recently this included working with colleagues in our India

offices to share how some celebrate Diwali, the festival of light. As well as sharing recipes for traditional foods eaten during the festival. This received a fantastic response and engagement from staff, keen to learn about their colleagues. Most recently the group has also worked some of our Jewish staff members to show how they celebrate Hannukah with their families.

The combination of reviewing our policies and practices internally, engaging with staff in a frank way on diversity issues, and promoting cultural exchange activities with engaging content showing the diversity of Sightsavers' staff, represents a successful first 18 months for the group, as it seeks to promote systemic change alongside employee engagement on this issue.

Incident reporting

Sightsavers has a range of reporting mechanisms, each with an associated policy supporting the underlying procedures. Sightsavers also provides a reporting platform, for raising concerns and complaints, not just for internal stakeholders but for our partners, donors and project participants. The Speak Up platform provides a range of channels for reporting concerns and is available in over 100 languages, making it accessible to all our staff, partners and communities we work with.

The nature of the incident reported streams it through a mechanism most appropriate for its investigation, management and resolution. For example, safeguarding incidents are actively monitored at a board level through regular meetings between the Safeguarding team and a designated Trustee. The outcome, resolution and follow up action is determined on a case by case basis and reported to either the Board, Audit Committee, Board Representative or Senior Management Team. Sightsavers is keen to use relevant incidents as opportunities to strengthen systems and processes, and will communicate internally and externally with learnings if and when relevant to those strengthening activities.

Responding to feedback

Mass Drug Administration (MDA)

An area of Sightsavers' work where we are developing innovative ways to both gather and respond to participant feedback, is within our NTD portfolio, specifically our mass drug administration activities. It also provides lessons that we can apply to other areas of our portfolio this year and beyond.

The Participant Feedback Working Group recently looked at the framework for feedback applied in recent MDA activities, and how these had been applied in work in Cameroon and Nigeria. The work applied guiding principles around feedback and its purpose, including:

- Increasing participation and ownership
- Improving empowerment, accountability, and transparency

- Ensuring activities are responding to and addressing the needs and requirements of service recipients
- Promoting adaptive Programming
- Equity and Inclusion
- People-centred care

These were then applied to a project cycle model. What can we do in the context analysis stage, the design phase of an intervention, the implementation phase, and finally the review and scale up end stage.

To do this in practice feedback questions were integrated into the existing Coverage Evaluation Surveys (CES) and participants were asked in each district what their reasons for dissatisfaction and satisfaction were, from a list of options as well as the category 'other', where they were asked to elaborate. Additionally, they were also asked for ideas to improve the service. From these the programme teams were able to isolate some key areas of feedback for which the feedback loop could be closed. In practice this meant coming up with recommendations to improve the communication, and understanding, of the scope of the interventions and providing information to communities, so they are better informed.

Moving into the review and adaptive management aspects of this type of exercise, a set of recommendations and learnings for how to adapt the programme in the future were produced. With the adaptations then given clear, material actions for future programme work. A report was the produced showing the outcomes of implementing those actions.

This type of exercise was highly valuable for a number of key reasons:

- Feedback requests were incorporated into existing activities and processes as much as possible, both improving response and quality of answers
- It was not a token approach, but rather a valuable method by which improvements to communication and sensitisation processes, as well as the quality of the service itself, were gained
- Concrete ideas for how to improve the service were implemented and the programme was adapted, with better outcomes recorded
- The exercise set a baseline for future work
- The lessons gained have applicability beyond MDA work, to other areas of our programming