

Terms of reference: Evaluation of Children’s Resilience Fund (phase 2), strengthening CSOs in Ukraine

Introduction

Integrity Action is a charity registered in England and Wales, and based in London. We have no physical presence outside the UK, but we work closely with our partners to implement our programmes and pursue our vision for a just and equitable world. Our aim in the Children’s Resilience Fund is to meet the needs of the children of Ukraine, supporting them to withstand the multi-dimensional effects of conflict via the strengthening of local services.

Phase 2 of the Children’s Resilience Fund is providing capacity support and funding to 16 Ukrainian civil society organisations (CSOs). Alongside our partner, Crown Agents Ukraine, we have awarded over £1.6million in grants to CSOs who are helping children to process and recover from the effects of conflict.

We are now seeking evaluators to help us prove and improve our ability to manage effective grant-giving programmes, to provide capacity strengthening initiatives, and ultimately to deliver change in the lives of children. Successful candidates will need to operate within Kyiv, and/or other selected areas of Ukraine as may be safely allowed by the external context.

Full details on applying are set out in this document, and the closing date for responses is Sunday 4th May. We expect the full assignment to require between 35-60 billable days, depending on methodology, with the final evaluation report due in November 2025.

PROGRAMME BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION	2
EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND PURPOSE	5
EVALUATION APPROACH, PRINCIPLES, AND RISKS	6
EXISTING DATA	8
BUDGET AND DELIVERABLES	8
APPLICATION DETAILS	9
ANNEX 1: FURTHER DETAILS ON GRANTEES’ PROJECTS AND CAPACITIES	11
ANNEX 2: RESPONSIBLE USE, APPROPRIATE PRACTICES, AND INTEGRITY ACTION’S ETHICAL COMMITMENTS	12

Programme background and description

The Children's Resilience Fund (CRF) was established in 2023, and the first phase was implemented by Crown Agents International Development (CAID) in partnership with Crown Agents Ukraine. This phase ran from September 2023 to July 2024, during which time approximately £650,000 worth of grants were awarded to 11 Ukrainian CSOs¹.

Since August 2024, Integrity Action has been responsible for the design and management of the CRF in place of CAID. Crown Agents Ukraine have remained as a partner, providing consistency between phases 1 and 2, and the cohort of 16 grantees includes seven who have continued from phase 1.

The first grants to CSOs under phase 2 were awarded at the end of 2024, and the programme is due to run until October 2025. Each CSO is using their grant to implement their own project, and so in their own way contribute to the shared CRF goal, which states: "Children, including the most vulnerable, are capable of successfully dealing with & recovering from the effects of conflict".

Most – but not all – of the projects are directly providing mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and rehabilitation services to children, although with differing approaches and focus areas. Examples of other project activities include one CSO who is working with law enforcement agencies on a cross-sectoral approach to managing cases of child sexual abuse, and another who is giving children practical support on issues related to legal rights, such as helping them to access social security. All activities can be grouped into four areas:

- a. Rehabilitating children
- b. Supporting caregivers
- c. Improving service access
- d. Strengthening systems of protection

Activity, output, and outcome statements have been developed for these areas, with this synthesised framework serving as an implied theory of change for the whole portfolio of projects. This framework has been used to develop MEL indicators and tools, and is available in Annex 1 of this document.

As well as awarding grants, the CRF is providing a programme of capacity-building for grantees. This gives CSOs access to technical expertise aimed at strengthening their abilities to support children, both within these current projects and beyond.

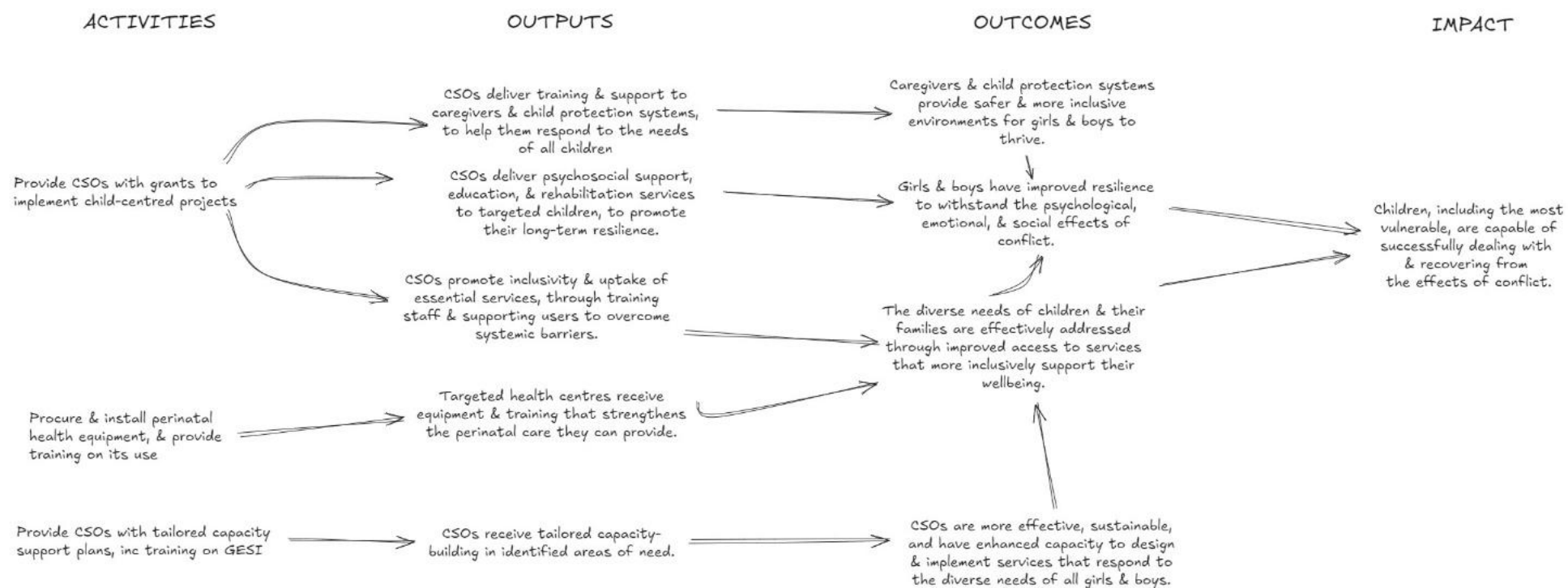
All grantees have completed a self-assessment of their existing capacities, and ten priority areas of requested or required support have been identified. These areas are listed in Annex 1, although they cover almost all aspects of organisational health.

¹ This figure is not included in the £1.6m noted in the introduction, which is purely from phase 2

Capacity support in each area will be led or facilitated by relevant thematic experts. Each area will have a working group of representatives from the grantee CSOs interested in that area, as well as forums for group discussion, resource libraries, and opportunities for twinning/peer support and tailored mentoring for each organisation.

A working model of how all components of the Children's Resilience Fund fit together is illustrated on the following page. The purpose of the evaluation now being commissioned is described more thoroughly in the following section, but it should be noted that its primary focus is the outcome from the bottom-right of this image; "CSOs are more effective, sustainable, and have enhanced capacity to design and implement services that respond to the diverse needs of all girls and boys".

Note that this diagram includes a final component of the CRF, which is the procurement of specialist medical equipment for perinatal care for a small number of targeted health centres. This element of the CRF is primarily logistical, and is not in scope of this evaluation since its success will be assessed separately.



Evaluation questions and purpose

The core questions to be answered in this assignment are:

1. How effectively has the Children's Resilience Fund enhanced grantees' abilities to design and deliver projects that respond to the diverse needs of children? What key factors enabled or hindered such effectiveness?
2. How effectively have selected grantees been in delivering their project goals? To what extent (if at all) have children or families experienced improvements in their wellbeing, resilience, or social inclusion; and/or have other stakeholders experienced improvements in their skills or practices?
 - a. In what ways have grantees identified and engaged with marginalised groups in their projects, and how successful have these approaches been?
3. How well does the CRF align with grantees' needs and aspirations, and to what extent (if at all) has this contributed to organisations' long-term ability to support conflict-affected children beyond the funding period?
 - a. Which aspects of the CRF have been most and least valued by grantees and other stakeholders? How has it compared to other funding or support mechanisms they have experienced, and what improvements would they recommend for future iterations?

The first two of these questions reflect the DAC criterion of *effectiveness*; i.e. exploring whether the CRF is achieving its stated outcome of strengthening Ukrainian CSOs, and in turn whether those CSOs are achieving their own stated outcomes and improving lives for children. Meaningfully answering these questions will require consideration of *impact*, per the diagram above, while noting that this is not a strict impact assessment.

The second question is not expected to be answered in-depth for all grantees, with a successful approach likely to focus on 3-4 purposively selected projects.

It is also not expected that this evaluation will undertake an academic assessment of CSOs' learning outcomes, but will focus on how grantees have made use of the support they've received and any subsequent changes in their behaviours, policies, and project results. From a grantee perspective, these questions can be seen as representing levels 3 and 4 of the Kirkpatrick model.

The third question considers the two DAC criteria of *relevance* and *sustainability*; examining whether the CRF focused on the right things, and the likelihood of any lasting benefit. Answers should also consider changes experienced by other non-grantee organisations, such as service providers that have strengthened their policies or practices due to CSOs' support.

As noted in the introduction, the purpose of the evaluation is to both *prove* and *improve* the value of the CRF. Sub-question 3a is an explicit reminder of this, although answers to all questions should help Integrity Action and Crown Agents Ukraine understand our distinctive value and the strengths and weaknesses of our programme design. Answers should also consider the replicability of the CRF's approach across different sectors or contexts, as well as the adaptations that may be necessary in each case.

These three questions are not equally weighted, but instead have a hierarchy of importance of approximately 40% for the first question, 35% for the second (including 2a), and 25% for the third. Across all of them, the evaluation should be open to capturing all differences (if any) that the CRF approach is making to attitudes, norms, or the lives of those involved. This includes active consideration of unintended as well as intended changes, which may be negative as well as positive.

Evaluation approach, principles, and risks

Approximately half of the 16 supported CSOs are based in Kyiv, with others located across the Kharkiv, Odesa, Dnipro, Lviv, and Rivne regions, as well as in Kamianets-Podilskyi. Their projects are spread across almost all government-controlled oblasts of Ukraine. It is not expected that evaluators will visit the majority of project sites or grantees' offices, and so a degree of remote data collection will be required.

The evaluation should seek to include input from all 16 grantees. This includes question 2, although as mentioned above it is expected that in-depth studies will be undertaken for a sample of 3-4 projects. Selection of these will need to consider grantees' readiness and capacity to engage, as well as practical issues around accessing project participants, and so the sample will be purposively chosen through a process led by Integrity Action and Crown Agents Ukraine.

There will be an in-person gathering for all grantees towards the end of the programme, at which the evaluators' presence will be required. This is being scheduled for September, with a probable location in Uzhhorod (Zakarpattia region). The purpose will be to reflect on grantees' experiences of the CRF, and it will therefore be a good forum for evaluators to share and validate their emerging findings.

We recognise that the situation in Ukraine is volatile, and that this poses severe risks to the delivery of the CRF and of this evaluation. The conflict is ongoing, with Russian strikes affecting multiple urban centres including those where some grantees are located. While this risk remains high, we will not encourage any actors to travel to any areas in which they are not already located and where strikes may reasonably be anticipated.

Crown Agents Ukraine will continue to monitor the security situation, from Kyiv and in collaboration with CSOs, and will have the final say on authorising any evaluation activities. Any such authorisation may be withdrawn at any time for reasons of safety.

Any evaluation activities that risk exacerbating the effects of conflict and/or amplifying community tensions will not be permitted, and may result in the termination of the contract.

Considering the evaluation's purpose and the design of the CRF, it is expected that the successful candidates will apply a theory-based methodology. Approaches such as Most Significant Change or Outcome Harvesting may be useful for capturing narratives of emergent change, and/or the context-mechanism-outcome analysis of a Realist evaluation may fit particularly well. Selected principles of process tracing or contribution analysis could also add insight into specific questions.

However, Integrity Action does not have a preferred methodology for this evaluation, and applicants are free to propose any methodologies that adhere to our **PICTURE** principles on quality evidence, appropriate practice, and responsible use. These define *quality evidence* as that which is:

1. **Precise.** Claims are not generalised, but are specific about their context and have findings disaggregated according to relevant social and demographic differences.
2. **Inclusive.** The perspectives of communities and other stakeholders are clearly represented in all evidence, with space given to divergent views.
3. **Credible.** The data and methodology accurately measures what it is intended to measure, with sample size and composition being in proportion to the conclusions sought.
4. **Triangulated.** Data is collected consistently from multiple sources, with tools to capture both quantitative and qualitative information.
5. **Useable.** Evidence is fit for purpose and responds to users' needs and timelines, with no data being collected unless there is a clear purpose or commitment to using it.
6. **Results-focused.** Evidence clearly demonstrates what (if any) changes have happened, and explores our contribution to these alongside the roles of other actors and factors.
7. **Ethically collected, analysed, and used.** Quality evidence processes are ones that are appropriate and responsible, and that focus on improving the lives of participants.

As per the **E** of **PICTURE**, we view collection, analysis, and use of quality evidence as an ethical issue, and the above principles set the framework for how we think about evaluation ethics. 'Appropriate' and 'responsible' practices around evidence are further defined in the Annex of this document. Our assessment framework for translating these principles into measurable criteria is available on request.

In addition to the above principles, Annex 2 includes the ethical commitments that Integrity Action makes, and to which successful candidates would be expected to commit. However, we understand that ethical practice can require more fluidity than

just procedural compliance, and emergent issues are to be identified as they arise and will be managed by Integrity Action.

Finally, the successful application will take consideration of the specific risks and ethical issues surrounding the programme's focus on children. Appropriate measures will need to be taken to safely collect, store, and analyse data about children and their wellbeing.

Existing data

It is expected that this evaluation will make use of existing programme knowledge in addition to collecting new primary data. Aside from background information, the main resources that may be of value are:

- Capacity self-assessment forms completed by grantees, which include a combination of narrative and multiple-choice questions and a series of 1-10 scales. Baselines have already been captured, and this will be repeated at the end of the programme. There may also be additional assessments conducted within individual capacity working groups.
- Progress and learning reports from grantees to Integrity Action. Mid-term reports are being collected in April, and final reports will be collected by October. These include a mix of narratives, case studies, and quantitative reporting against a selection of indicators such as tracking of participants.
- Grantees' own MEL systems and data. Each grantee has agreed a set of 5-6 KPIs, which will be included in the reports above, but these are largely at the level of activities or reach.

Note that MEL is an area in which many grantees need support, and evaluators should not expect to find robust and consistent systems or theories of change at project-level. However, we know that several of them are looking at higher-level outcomes – often, perhaps, without realising that this is part of MEL. Examples include psychological assessments of supported children, and observations of policy change among third parties.

Deliverables

The successful applicants will be required to deliver:

- An inception report, to include any refinement to the evaluation questions alongside final detail on the methodology, workplan, budget, and tools for data collection and analysis
- A final evaluation report, that clearly answers the core evaluation questions
- A brief, engaging evaluation summary document²

² Examples from past Integrity Action studies may be found on the learning section of our website, for example [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

The final two outputs are due by 28th November 2025. Drafts of each report should be submitted in good time for feedback to be given and acted upon. As noted above, the September gathering of grantees is seen as an opportunity for findings to be verbally presented and tested in advance of submission of the draft report. The following table outlines when key milestones are expected:

Output / Activity	Date expected
Closing date for proposals	4 May
Interviews with shortlisted candidates	15-21 May
Appointment of successful candidate	22 May
Draft inception report shared with Integrity Action	20 Jun
Final inception report approved by Integrity Action	27 Jun
Draft evaluation report shared with Integrity Action	24 Oct
Final evaluation outputs submitted and approved	28 Nov

Payment will be made in three instalments, with 30% of the contract value being paid on approval of the inception report, 40% on satisfactory receipt of the draft evaluation report, and the final 30% on approval of the final evaluation outputs. There is some flexibility on the timing of the inception period, if required.

The Children's Resilience Fund will officially end in October, with some grantees' projects finishing before that time. Final reports from grantees are due ahead of the programme's end, and the timeline above has been created to allow evaluators to review these before finalising their own report – noting that some of this data may still be received *after* the draft evaluation report has been submitted.

Application details

Applications are welcomed from individuals or teams, whether belonging to an organisation or otherwise.

The following skills and experiences are essential criteria for applicants:

- Strong understanding of appropriate methodologies, their benefits and limitations.
- Experience of conducting similar or comparable assignments, with examples that can be shared.
- Excellent facilitation and communication skills in both English and Ukrainian, with experience of working collaboratively with civil society organisations.
- Ability to operate within Ukraine to the extent required by the proposed methodology and as is allowed by the context.
- Demonstrable ability to present findings in a clear, concise format.
- Understanding of the safeguarding and child protection protocols required to appropriately access and handle relevant project information from grantees.

Thematic knowledge or experience in the fields of child protection or psychosocial wellbeing would be an advantage. Applicants should have appropriate levels of professional indemnity insurance and public liability insurance, and fulfil all the necessary legal requirements to conduct this assignment within Ukraine.

Interested parties should submit a proposal to Integrity Action, to include:

1. A brief cover letter demonstrating how you or your team meets the essential criteria above (*no more than two pages*).
2. An outline of your proposed approach, including explanation of why it is suitable for this evaluation as well as any associated risks and proposed mitigations (*no more than three pages*).
3. A draft high-level work plan and summary budget, to include the daily rates of all individuals involved and what role they each play within the team (if applicable). Proposed budgets should be inclusive of all costs, including any professional fees, travel, printing of any materials, and all relevant taxes.
4. CVs for all individuals, with references available to be contacted³.
5. Maximum two examples of previous work that demonstrates skill or experience relevant to this assignment. These may be provided as links, or if unpublished then they may be attached and will be reviewed in confidence.

Applications will be assessed on the relevance and suitability of their proposed approach (55%), the expertise and experience of the applicant/team (35%), and the quality/coherence of the proposal's overall structure and use of budget (10%). Consideration will also be given to each proposal's value for money; it is expected that the successful candidate will budget for between 35-60 days of consultancy.

Please send your complete proposals to daniel.burwood@integrityaction.org by the end of 4th May 2025.

Please note that, due to capacity, we cannot commit to giving feedback on unsuccessful applications.

³ Referees will only be contacted for applicants who reach the interview stage, and applicants will be informed in advance

ANNEX 1: Further details on grantees' projects and capacities

As described in the programme background, the 16 grantee CSOs are each implementing their own unique projects. Integrity Action has reviewed these and enumerated 12 distinct pathways of change, of which each project includes an average of three. Some pathways are being implemented by nearly all CSOs (such as directly providing psychosocial support and rehabilitation services to children), while others are the domain of just one grantee.

These pathways have been combined into the four areas noted on page 2, which are further detailed as follows:

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
CSOs provide psychosocial support, education, & rehabilitation services to targeted children, to promote their long-term resilience.	Girls & boys are equipped with practical knowledge & life skills that aid their recovery, self-care, and social reintegration.	Girls & boys have improved resilience to withstand the psychological, emotional, & social effects of conflict.
CSOs provide practical & emotional support to families & caregivers, to help them respond to children's needs.	Families & caregivers receive practical training & access to peer support networks & opportunities for social interaction.	Families & caregivers have improved abilities to provide inclusive & nurturing environments for all girls & boys, including those living with conflict-related psychosocial issues.
CSOs promote inclusivity & uptake of essential services, through training staff & supporting users to overcome systemic barriers.	Children & their caregivers are supported to access health, education, & other services provided by professionals who understand their specific needs.	The diverse needs of girls & boys are effectively addressed through improved access to services that more inclusively support their wellbeing.
CSOs provide professional training & support to child protection systems, to promote coordinated & gender-responsive strategies across sectors.	Child-facing professionals have enhanced capacities to appropriately protect girls & boys from exploitation, abuse, and discrimination.	Child protection systems are more effective & gender-responsive in their prevention, identification, & management of cases of abuse.

This can be viewed as a synthesised theory of change for all CSO activities, although it should be remembered that it a) has been created retrospectively, and b) is not intended to represent or replace the individual theories of change that underlie the 16 unique projects.

This framework has then been combined with the wider CRF activities (capacity-strengthening and procurement of health equipment) to create the model shown on page 4.

The ten CSO capacity areas that have been identified for support during this programme are listed below. These are given in no particular order; those *in italics* are the four where capacity-strengthening is beginning first (in April 2025).

1. Strategic leadership
2. *Gender equality & social inclusion*
3. *Safeguarding & child protection*
4. *Fundraising*
5. Communications & advocacy
6. *Programme development, monitoring, evaluation, & learning*
7. Compliance & internal policies [includes e.g. financial management, procurement, whistleblowing]
8. Technology, data protection & information security
9. People & culture
10. Programme delivery

ANNEX 2: Responsible use, appropriate practices, and Integrity Action's ethical commitments

Integrity Action's **PICTURE** principles, given on page 7, further state that all data must be collected, analysed, and used appropriately and responsibly.

Appropriate practices

Our data is collected and quality-assured:

- With the active and informed participation of affected communities, including those at risk of exclusion
- By teams with appropriate skills and characteristics to capture the voices of different groups
- Using justifiable methodologies, relevant to the purpose and context
- Using reliable tools, neutrally worded, that produce consistent and meaningful results
- In alignment with existing programme management and organisational needs, capacities, and timelines

Our data is analysed and reviewed:

- Collectively, through ongoing dialogue with participants and other stakeholders to sense-check and validate conclusions
- Sensitively, with understanding of the local power dynamics and their importance
- Systematically, with clear logical links between data collected and conclusions reached
- Transparently, so that methods are protected from intended or unintended bias
- In comparison to other relevant data sources, such as through use of baselines to show whether a change has occurred

Responsible use

Our evidence is presented and used:

- In accordance with what was communicated and agreed with participants
- In accessible formats for all appropriate audiences, including consideration of language and literacy. One piece of evidence may need to be shared in multiple formats
- With acknowledgment given to everyone who contributed significantly (unless anonymity was requested), and with references provided for all sources used
- Without assumptions, especially regarding any unidentified changes or causal links between identified changes and the programme
- With aggregation of people avoided wherever possible, and with real case studies presenting the real stories of real individuals

Communication of our evidence is open about:

- The tools and methodologies used to collect and analyse data, and any associated limitations
- The questions and audiences that drove the collection and analysis activity, and how the evidence responds to these needs
- The results and changes identified by the analysis, whether intended or unintended, negative or positive
- The sources of quotes or judgements, with any conflicting perspectives clearly presented and explored⁴
- The independence, or otherwise, of everyone involved in data collection, analysis and presentation; including explanation and justification of any potential bias

Integrity Action makes the following additional commitments to ethical research and evaluation:

- We will respect the dignity, privacy, and agency of all who contribute to, or are affected by, our research. We will work within all international human rights conventions and covenants to which the UK is a signatory, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as all relevant local and national laws.
- We will recognise the burdens and costs for all stakeholders in participating in our research, and will only conduct such activities when the benefits can reasonably be expected to outweigh the risks. This includes aiming for evidence of a sufficiently high quality that it can be used for its intended purpose.
- We will pursue objectivity, while recognising that all stakeholders will bring their own agendas. We will not use tools or methods designed to produce misleading results or misrepresent findings, and our communication of evidence will be clear about the roles of authors and participants. We will encourage and enable all

stakeholders to follow appropriate procedures if they feel under pressure to provide inaccurate results.

- We will take reasonable precautions to ensure our design and application of tools, methods and methodologies do not cause harm to participants; such as stress, loss of dignity or self-esteem. This includes consideration of the extent to which methods or questions are intrusive or sensitive, and applies to the wellbeing of the data collectors as well data providers and subjects.

This requires consideration of local behaviours and norms, and the ways in which risk of harm may vary based on each individual's gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, marital status, social position, sexual orientation, level of education, physical and mental health, and more.

- We will maintain confidentiality of information, and store all records in line with our data protection policy. Identifiable data will not be shared or used without consent, but any publication of evidence will include publication of anonymised primary data alongside a description of the methodology to allow validation of findings.
- We will ensure participation in our research is based on informed consent, with each individual being accurately informed of the purpose and what the method involves – including their right to refuse or withdraw. Where feasible and appropriate, this information should be provided in advance (e.g. before potential participants have travelled to the venue). It also includes providing participants with contact details should they later wish to make a complaint, withdraw their consent, or simply find out more about the activity.

In the case of children, informed consent should be obtained from both the child and their parent or guardian. In the case of vulnerable adults, a judgement should be made about their capacity to give consent; if it is deemed that such capacity does not exist then the individual's participation should be reconsidered, and only proceed if there is a justifiable purpose and with the informed consent of a guardian or next of kin.