

Childlight Governance and Control Framework Guidelines: Metadata

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If you require this document in an alternative format, please email Childlight@ed.ac.uk or write to Childlight Global Child Safety Institute, University of Edinburgh, Third Floor, St John's Land, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, UK, EH8 8AQ.

Childlight Global Child Safety Institute

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1 Introduction

“Governance” is the overall system of rules, practices and processes by which an organisation is directed and controlled. Governance is important because it enables an organisation to:

- Create transparent rules and controls
- Guide leadership
- Align the interests of and build trust with employees, management, leadership, stakeholders and funders/investors
- Ensure accountability throughout the organisation
- Enable a sustainable future
- Manage performance objectives while considering other stakeholder interests

Governance is typically undertaken through boards, forums or individuals who have decision-making authority. Once direction is set by a governance board, for example, it is expected to be implemented.

Advisory boards and forums, in contrast, serve as problem-solving bodies that can offer suggestions or advice, that is non-binding. They can consist of a single individual or a group of independent, unbiased, external advisors.

Traditionally, “governance” and “advisory” were always separate, however, in Childlight there is an alignment between these two roles, with some forums having both decision-making and advisory roles.

This Governance and Control Framework Guidelines document is intended to set out the governance structures, forums, and responsibilities for how Childlight operates, both within the context of the University of Edinburgh, and internally within the organisation. Individual funders of, and investors in, Childlight may have additional governance requirements that are specific to their funding agreements – which are not captured within this guidelines document.

2 Control framework

The control framework is Childlight’s structured set of policies, procedures, and practices that ensure our effective management, compliance, and risk mitigation. It acts as our guiding model to monitor and regulate various operational processes, systems, and activities. Its goals are:

- Efficiency and effectiveness of our operations – smart control, not more control – ensuring we can be effective, ethical and responsible.
- Meeting legislative, regulatory and policy guidelines – proportionate compliance - ensures that we do not break any laws and can abide by policies that are in place to protect us from risk.
- Reliability of performance and impact - focus on maximising impact, the heart of everything that we do – and being transparent on this to those that hold us to account.

Where available, the University of Edinburgh's policies and guidelines should be followed as a starting expectation – for example, recruitment. Childlight may have additional guidelines, policies, processes, and templates that support these overarching University of Edinburgh processes, to provide, for example, greater control, meet specific terms set out by funders or partners, or tailor to Childlight's specific needs. This control framework of Childlight-specific documents encompasses:

Document Title
Childlight Governance and Control Framework Guidelines
Risk Management Procedures
Contracts and Collaboration Guidelines
Ethics Policy
Conflict of Interest Guidance
Childlight Code of Conduct
Research Quality and Integrity Policy
Document Management Policy
Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy
Protocol Development and Registration Policy
Research Project Set-up and Initiation Policy
Research Project Closure and Archiving Policy
Safeguarding and Disclosures Policy
Data Management Policy
Pathways to Impact Policy
Publication Guidelines
Use of AI in Research
Childlight Terminology and Style Guidelines
Searchlight Production Guidelines
Global Index Production Guidelines
Global Data Fellows Handbook
Business Continuity Plan
Perpetrator Tradecraft Risk Management

3 Childlight's position within the University of Edinburgh

Childlight is formally hosted within the University of Edinburgh, and is situated under the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, within Moray House School of Education and Sport. As such, there are areas of Childlight's operations that fall under the responsibility and decision-making authority of the University Court, the College, or the School and the university retains ultimate legal accountability for all staff and activities.

In tandem to this, Childlight has developed its own internal governance arrangements, through which the CEO reports to the Childlight Steering Board to manage areas of operations and strategy. These areas have a SLT owner but may be delegated to other individuals in the team as required.

For the purposes of this framework, the focus is on Childlight's governance, decision-making and accountability structures, while recognising the University's overarching role. The table below sets out the areas of responsibility and accountability, and who owns these.

Area	Accountable	Responsible	Delegated To	Communicated / Informed
People and Talent Management	University Court	Holyrood HR	Line Managers	Childlight CEO Childlight COO Childlight Global Director of Data MHSES/COL DoPS CAHSS Registrar
Finance Administration and Management	University Court	CAHSS Head of Finance MHSES/COL DoPS	Childlight Finance Manager	Childlight CEO Childlight COO Childlight Global Director of Data Edinburgh Research Office Central Finance MHSES RKEI CAHSS Registrar
Risk Management	University Court	MHSES	Childlight CEO	MHSES/COL DoPS CAHSS Registrar
Research Quality	University Court	MHSES Director of Research	Childlight Global Director of Data	Childlight CEO Childlight staff

Area	Accountable	Responsible	Delegated To	Communicated / Informed
			Childlight Quality & Compliance Manager	
Contracts and Agreement	University Court	Edinburgh Research Office Legal Services Edinburgh Innovations Procurement	Childlight COO Childlight agreement owners	Childlight CEO Childlight Global Director of Data Childlight Quality & Compliance Manager
Childlight Strategy, Vision, Mission	Childlight Steering Board	Childlight CEO	Childlight Senior Leadership Team	Childlight staff Funders Public Partners
Childlight Pillar: Research & Insight	Childlight Global Director of Data	Research Workstream Leads Research Project Leads		Childlight staff Funders Public Partners
Childlight Pillar: Communications, Publications & Events	Childlight CEO	Childlight Head of Comms & Outreach		Childlight staff Funders Public Partners
Childlight Pillar: Technical Advisory	Childlight CEO	Childlight Director of Technical Advisory Programme		Childlight staff Funders Public Partners
Childlight Funding / Grant Management	University Court	Principal Investigator	ERO Childlight COO Edinburgh Innovations	Funders MHSES RKEI
Childlight Budget Allocation [individual grants]	Principal Investigator	Principal Investigator	Childlight Senior Leadership Team, by strategic pillar [e.g., Research & Insight, Comms, Publications & Events, C-TAP, Strategy & Admin]	

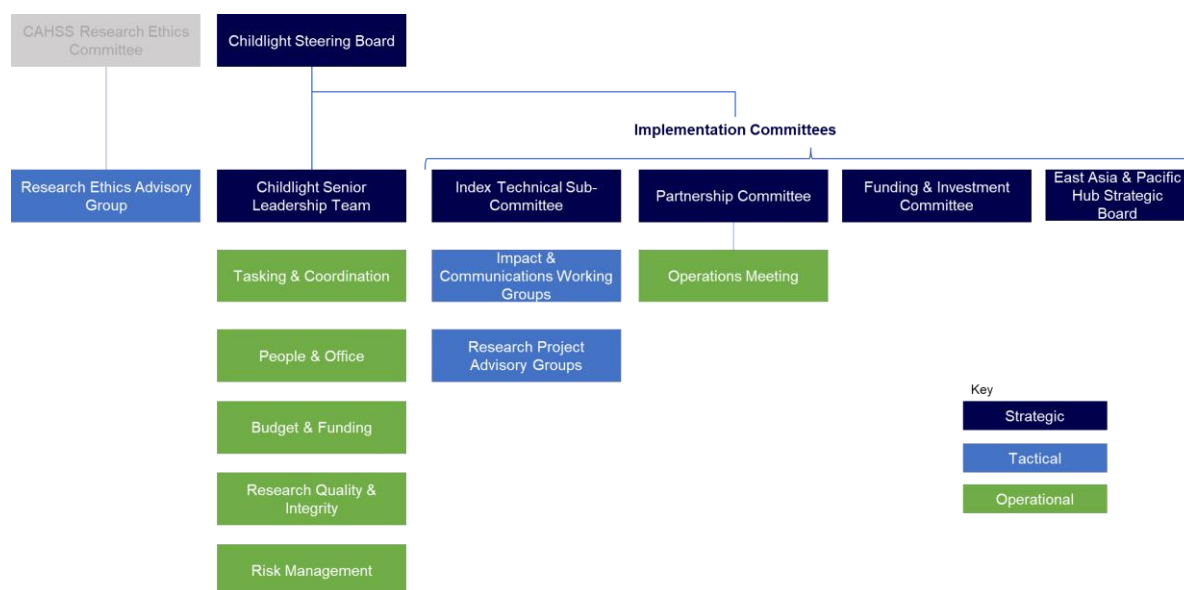
Area	Accountable	Responsible	Delegated To	Communicated / Informed
Childlight Impact	Childlight CEO	Childlight Pathways to Impact Manager		Childlight staff Funders Public Partners
Childlight Global Data Fellows Programme	Childlight Global Director of Data	Childlight Global Data Fellows & Ambassadors Programme Manager		Childlight staff Partners
Childlight Data Governance and Management	Childlight Global Director of Data	Childlight COO	Childlight Quality & Compliance Manager	Childlight staff Partners
Childlight Estates	University Court	MHSES/COL DoPS	Childlight Office Manager	Childlight staff
Childlight Safeguarding & Disclosures	University Court	Childlight CEO	Childlight Wellbeing & Safeguarding Officer	Holyrood HR MHSES/COL DoPS Childlight staff Public Partners

4 Childlight-specific governance

Childlight thinks about governance at three different levels:

- Strategic – the direction of Childlight, including its vision, mission, goals – and the activities, capabilities, and funding required to achieve these.
- Tactical – the plans required to achieve the strategic direction and objectives, whilst considering the overall vision and mission.
- Operational – the implementation of the processes and projects that contribute daily progress to meet the tactical and strategic plans.

The following governance structure image shows the different governance and advisory groups in place across these levels of governance, and their reporting lines:



5 Recording and reporting

Every Childlight forum should have a clear agenda to structure the meeting and discussion points, prepared and shared to attendees in advance. Notes should be taken and recorded as minutes, shared with attendees and logged centrally as the formal record of the meeting.

Any actions or decisions arising from the meeting should also be recorded on the relevant actions and decisions log for that forum, and progress against actions reviewed at each meeting.

Any formal reports or papers for meetings should also be logged centrally as a record of items and content covered.

An example agenda, minutes, actions and decisions template can be found in Appendix 1.

6 Governance forums overview

Name	Role
Childlight Steering Board	The Steering Board provides overall strategic oversight of Childlight, ensuring the organisation remains aligned with its mission and vision. Working in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, it sets Childlight's strategic direction, monitors performance and use of resources, and reviews key reports such as financial statements, the Balanced Scorecard, and performance updates before publication or submission to funders. The Board also manages governance functions such as approving change control requests, monitoring the organisational risk register, and supporting Childlight's communications, fundraising, and revenue generation activities where appropriate.
Index Technical Sub-Committee	The Index Technical Sub-Committee [Index TSC] provides expert advice and guidance on the development and refinement of the Childlight Global CSEA Index. Its role is to ensure the Index reflects meaningful aspects of CSEA, drawing on current debates in research, policy, and practice. The TSC safeguards methodological rigour by promoting the use of robust and reliable measures, the best available data sources, and analytical approaches appropriate to the field. It also upholds quality standards by prioritising transparency, replicability, and clarity in the data and methods underpinning each indicator.
Partnership Committee	The Partnership Committee strengthens oversight and governance between the University, College, School, and Childlight. It facilitates information sharing on strategic, operational, financial, and risk matters, and works to proactively mitigate risks and resolve issues that require action by the School or College before escalation to the Steering Board. The Committee ensures clear reporting lines for Childlight's operational management and progress, periodically reviews contractual requirements and risks, and provides resilience across both Childlight and the University by maintaining a record of decisions and discussions.

Name	Role
Funding & Investment Committee	The Funding & Investment Committee advises Childlight on how best to secure, manage, and grow its funding and investment portfolio. It connects Childlight to funding networks, reviews the organisation's strategic and financial plans, and recommends actions to strengthen long-term sustainability. The Committee monitors performance against financial and performance measures, makes recommendations to mitigate risks and strengthen opportunities, oversees investment principles and endowments, and ensures that the contributions of funders and donors are appropriately recognised. It reports regularly to the Steering Board on progress, risks, and opportunities.
Childlight East Asia & Pacific Hub [CEAPH] Strategic Board	The CEAPH Strategic Board provides overall strategic oversight of Childlight's regional hub, ensuring its activities remain aligned with the mission and vision. In consultation with the Director, the Board sets strategic direction, monitors performance and resources, and reviews and approves key financial and performance reports before submission to the sponsor. It also approves change control requests, monitors the risk register, and supports the hub's communications, fundraising, and revenue generation activities where appropriate.
Impact & Communications Working Groups	Each region within the Global Index has its own Impact & Communications Working Group. These groups ensure that the Index draws on the best types and sources of available country- and region-level data, builds on and adds value to national and regional initiatives to prevent and respond to CSEA, and supports efforts to strengthen data foundations in the field of CSEA. They also draw on local expertise to validate findings and ensure that results are shared in a sensitive, accessible, and impactful way at national and regional levels.
Research Project Advisory Groups	Research Project Advisory Groups offer guidance on the conduct and progress of specific research projects. They advise on research questions, methods, findings, and outputs; offer oversight on data quality and ethics issues;

Name	Role
	and serve as a forum for exchanging ideas and information, while maintaining confidentiality over research and discussions.
Childlight Research Ethics Sub-Committee	The Childlight Research Ethics Sub-Committee evaluates and approves Research Ethics applications for research conducted by Childlight staff and students. It supports continuous improvement by offering expert interdisciplinary perspectives on the ethics forms reviewed. This group supports and advises the Chair to facilitate ongoing improvement in the ethical review processes and identifying development needs for reviewers. The Group also monitors broader developments in research ethics and integrity, liaises with relevant University committees, and promotes best practice across Childlight's research portfolio.
MHSES Childlight Operations Meeting	The MHSES Childlight Operations Meeting reviews day-to-day operations and the support provided within MHSES. It escalates risks or issues requiring operational intervention, informs MHSES operations and Research, Knowledge Exchange and Impact (RKEI) of Childlight's annual strategic planning processes, and validates formal reports and submissions to funders, such as quarterly and annual reports.
Senior Leadership Team	The Senior Leadership Team meets monthly to review Childlight's priorities and tactical plans to deliver the strategy. The SLT ensure alignment across Childlight's pillars of activities, reducing duplication of effort or differing direction. The SLT consider early opportunities for impact before formal progression through Tasking & Coordination governance, as well as addressing any immediate risks or issues that need mitigation or resolution outside of the monthly Risk Review process.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Agenda and Minutes Template

Agenda and Minutes

Meeting Title
Date, time

Attendees

Name, role (initials)
Name, role (initials)
Name, role (initials)

Optional

Name, role (initials)
Apologies
Name, role (initials)

Agenda Item	Discussion	Decisions	Actions	Assigned To
1. Item				
2. Item				
3. Item				
Minutes taken by: Name, role Meeting closed at hh:mm				

Decision Logging Role Assigned to: Name, role
Updates added to [Decision Tracking Log](#): yes/no