

IPPF Policy 1.15

SAFEGUARDING (CHILDREN & VULNERABLE ADULTS)

Introduction

1. IPPF believes that everyone we come into contact with has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation, regardless of their age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, partnership status, pregnancy or parental status, disability, health or any other status. IPPF will not tolerate abuse or exploitation by volunteers, trustees, staff¹ or anyone associated with IPPF.
2. IPPF recognises that the right to be free from abuse, exploitation and harassment is enshrined in international human rights law namely ICERD, ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CAT, CRC, CRPD.² IPPF additionally recognises that the sexual exploitation and abuse are a form of gender based violence.
3. IPPF's commitment to ensuring sexual rights for all includes a commitment to freedom and protection from harm. The focus on youth lays at the core of IPPF's work.
4. IPPF believes that creating a safe environment for all children, young people and vulnerable adults requires the cooperation of all volunteers, trustees, and staff. It is the responsibility of all to raise any safeguarding concerns they have or that are reported to them.
5. IPPF commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through prevention, reporting and response.

Purpose and Scope

6. The purpose of this policy is to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and exploitation that may be caused due to their coming into contact with IPPF through
 - a. The conduct of volunteers, trustees, staff of the Secretariat and Member Associations, collaborative partners, other partners and anyone associated with IPPF;
 - b. The design and implementation of IPPF's programmes and activities.
7. The policy lays out the commitments made by IPPF, and applies to all volunteers, trustees and staff of IPPF Secretariat, its Member Associations and collaborative partners including members of the Governing Council, Audit Committee, and

¹ Staff refers to all paid staff: permanent, fixed term and temporary staff; it includes employees, agency workers, consultants, interns and contractors.

² International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, inhuman or Degrading treatment or Punishment, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Regional Executive Committees, and governing bodies of Member Associations and collaborative and other partners.

8. This policy does not cover:
 - a. Bullying or (sexual) harassment in the workplace between adult co-workers, as this is addressed through IPPF's Respect at Work Policy and associated procedures;
 - b. Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not caused by IPPF or anyone associated with IPPF.
9. Where a concern is about a volunteer who is over 18 and under 25, who has no additional vulnerabilities, the Senior Safeguarding Adviser will make a decision in consultation with the volunteer themselves, as to whether the concern would be best addressed with under Safeguarding Policies and procedures or the Respect at Work Policy and procedures.
10. IPPF will only engage with other organizations that come in contact with children and vulnerable adults if they agree with and meet the standards and principles of IPPF's Safeguarding Policy and procedures.

Definition

11. In this policy, safeguarding refers to IPPF's commitments to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm arising from coming into contact with IPPF.
12. This policy also applies to IPPF's beneficiaries³ due to a recognition that beneficiaries can be exposed to abuse of authority and as such can be considered vulnerable. This does not imply any negative connotation on the beneficiaries themselves but rather ensures that IPPF is comprehensive in its safeguarding duties.
13. Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary below.

Guiding Principles

14. Empowerment – decisions will be survivor (victim) led, with the aim to seek informed consent⁴ when the survivor is an adult, and obtaining and respecting survivor's views when they are a child or an adult unable to give informed consent. IPPF will endeavour to ensure its communication is in an appropriate language and format.
15. Prevention – It is better to take action before harm occurs. IPPF recognises the key role that prevention has in safeguarding and will ensure it develops and provides safe services which keep people safe from abuse and exploitation. This includes applying a safeguarding lens to promotional communications and fundraising activities and providing training and support in recognising abuse.

³ An IPPF beneficiary is someone who receives a service from IPPF or takes part in IPPF activities

⁴ IPPF understands that the rights and protections guaranteed to people under the age of 18, as a matter of international and national law, sometimes differ from the rights of adults. These differences relate to all aspects of human rights but require particular approaches in regard to sexual rights. IPPF begins from the premise that persons under the age of 18 are rights holders, and that at different points within the spectrum of infancy, childhood, and adolescence, certain rights and protections will have greater or lesser relevance

16. *Protection* – Abusive behaviour in any environment is never accepted. IPPF Secretariat, Member Associations, collaborative partners and other partners will provide services in a manner that does not diminish their safeguarding responsibilities. IPPF will have clear channels to enable reporting in a confidential and anonymous (if required) basis. IPPF will respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns and provide support and representation to survivors (victims).
17. *Partnership* – IPPF delivers its services through locally-owned Member Associations and collaborative partners and recognises that local communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. In the spirit of ensuring safeguarding competency throughout all of IPPF, IPPF will monitor that Member Associations, collaborative partners and other partners adhere to safeguarding standards and may need to intervene where these fall below an acceptable standard.
18. *Proportionality* – IPPF recognises that life is not risk free. IPPF will support activities across its Member Associations, collaborative partners and other partners that identify risks, and mitigate against them, but are not unduly risk averse. IPPF will ensure its responses are proportionate to the circumstances of any incident and the wishes of the survivor (victim), and constitute the least intrusive response appropriate.
19. *Accountability* – IPPF will act with integrity, follow due process and be transparent and accountable. IPPF will include anonymous safeguarding data in its annual reporting. IPPF acknowledges that, whilst everyone has responsibility for safeguarding, the Governing Council and Director-General are ultimately accountable for ensuring a safeguarding culture exists at IPPF.

Implementation

20. It shall be the responsibility of the Governing Council, Director-General, Regional Executive Committees, Regional Directors, Member Associations' boards and Executive Directors to ensure that policies that meet the abovementioned minimum standards are in place, and are implemented, monitored and reviewed accordingly. The Secretariat shall develop and keep updated the Safeguarding Manual which contains detailed guidance including the Safeguarding Incident Reporting Procedure.
21. IPPF Secretariat, including Safeguarding, Gender and Youth teams shall be available to advise and support this work.
22. IPPF Member Associations, collaborative partners and Secretariat will:
 - a. Be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding children, vulnerable adults and beneficiaries.
 - b. Be up to date on local child protection and safeguarding vulnerable adults legislation and responsibilities.
 - c. Adopt and implement safeguarding policies and procedures based on the above principles and the implementation points below, whilst reflecting local legislation and requirements.
 - d. Ensure adherence with the IPPF Safeguarding Incident Reporting Procedure.

- e. Ensure all breaches of the Safeguarding Policy are dealt with appropriately and recorded and stored securely with restricted access.
- f. Make available evidence of all of the above to the IPPF Director General at request.

Prevention

23. IPPF Member Associations, collaborative partners and Secretariat will:

- a. Ensure all staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this Policy.
- b. Ensure all staff have read, understood and adhere to the Code of Conduct and further safeguarding guidance within the Safeguarding Manual.
- c. Design and undertake all its programs and activities in a way that protects children, vulnerable adults and beneficiaries, from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with IPPF. This includes the way in which information about individuals in programmes is gathered and communicated, and using risk assessments.
- d. Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel.⁵
- e. Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization but that at a minimum to ensure that all volunteers, trustees and staff are aware that abuse is not tolerated, and that all concerns will be recorded and heard.
- f. IPPF managers are accountable for ensuring that the safeguarding policy and procedures are fully embedded within their areas of responsibility.
- g. Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of this Policy.
- h. Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by an IPPF staff member or associated personnel to IPPF's Global Incident Reporting Unit.

Reporting

24. IPPF Member Associations, collaborative partners and the Secretariat will:

- a. Ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available and promoted to staff and the communities we work with. This is through IPPF SafeReport, the external incident reporting service.
- b. Ensure all supervisors and senior staff are aware of how to complete an incident reporting form when concerns are raised outside of IPPF SafeReport, which must be passed to the relevant incident reporting unit to log.
- c. Ensure all are aware of additional measures required where a concern is about a child or vulnerable adult.
- d. Provide protection to any volunteer, trustee and staff reporting concerns or complaints in line with whistleblowing principles contained in the Raising a Concern Policy.
- e. Ensure IPPF's Global Incident Reporting Unit are informed as soon as possible to enable Charity Commission and donors to be alerted as per requirements.

⁵ See Annex 1 – Safe Recruitment Checklist of Safeguarding (Children & Vulnerable Adults) Policy 1.15 and Safeguarding Manual.

Response

25. IPPF Member Associations, collaborative partners and Secretariat will:
- a. Follow up on safeguarding reports and concerns promptly and according to IPPF's Safeguarding (Children & Vulnerable Adults) Policy and procedures, and local legal and statutory obligations.
 - b. Apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of either the Safeguarding (Children & Vulnerable Adults) Policy or the Code of Conduct.
 - c. Ensure that responses are survivor focused, keeping the needs of the survivor at the forefront of any investigation process.
 - d. Offer support to survivors (victims) of harm caused by staff or anyone associated with IPPF, regardless of whether a formal investigation is carried out. An up to date list of local organisations and contacts offering support must be available. This list should include but is not limited to information about legal, counselling, medical and psychosocial support. Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor (victim).
 - e. Ensure that appropriate confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the incident and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times, in line with IPPF's Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy. Confidentiality should prioritise the survivor rather than the alleged perpetrator and should not be used as an excuse for not responding to a concern.
 - f. f. Ensure quarterly safeguarding updates are given to the Global Incident Reporting Unit and boards where applicable.
 - g. g. Ensure regular review and learning from safeguarding incidents.
26. Additionally, Member Associations and collaborative partners that provide sexual and reproductive health services to children, young people and vulnerable adults should have a policy in place to ensure that service delivery points are safe environments that, at a minimum, have guidance for health professionals on their legal, professional and ethical obligations to report suspected abuse or exploitation of a vulnerable client, to respect their right to privacy and to obtain their informed consent.
27. This policy replaces IPPF Policy 4.17 Protecting Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults.
28. This policy shall be reviewed every year.

Associated policies

- Code of Conduct
- Raising a Concern Policy
- Respect at Work Policy
- Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy

Glossary (local glossaries should contain definitions of abuse as per local legislation)

Safeguarding

For IPPF Safeguarding in general means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. It means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people in contact with IPPF, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

This definition draws from IPPF values and principles and shapes IPPF culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults (SCVA)

For IPPF SCVA specifically applies to the prevention of all forms of abuse and exploitation of children and vulnerable adults. It includes the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all we do.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across IPPF programmes, partners and staff. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centred and also give appropriate protection to those accused until any guilt is established.

Vulnerable Adult (At risk adult)

Sometimes also referred to as at risk adult, is generally someone who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or exploitation. They may be more at risk of abuse and exploitation due to factors such as, for example, gender, mental health issues, learning or physical disabilities, age, sexual orientation, or as a result of the impact of natural disasters and conflicts.

For the purpose of IPPF's policies and procedures for vulnerable adults, IPPF includes IPPF beneficiaries⁶ as vulnerable adults. This is due to a recognition that misuse of power can also apply to IPPF beneficiaries. This does not imply any negative connotation on IPPF beneficiaries but rather ensures that IPPF is comprehensive in its safeguarding duties.

Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) affords special rights and protections to all those under the age of 18. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'children' is used to refer to those under the age of 18.

⁶ An IPPF beneficiary is someone who receives a service from IPPF or takes part in IPPF activities

Young Person

For the purposes of its own programmatic work and data collection, IPPF, in line with the UN, defines young people as everyone aged 10 to 24.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is protecting information from unauthorised disclosure. Confidential means information which is not common knowledge and is of value. This includes personally identifiable information as well as sensitive documents. Confidential information should only be shared on a need to know basis, i.e. it is shared only where there is a justification that the person needs to know in order to perform their role.

Child abuse and neglect

Sometimes also referred to as child maltreatment, is defined as all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. Within the broad definition of child maltreatment, five subtypes are distinguished – these are physical abuse; sexual abuse; neglect and negligent treatment; emotional abuse and exploitation. (WHO 1999/2002)

Harm Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights.

Psychological harm Emotional or psychological abuse, including, but not limited to, humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

Refers to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13).

Sexual abuse

Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual exploitation

Actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

Survivor

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term survivor is often used in preference to victim as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

Annex 1

Safe Recruitment Checklist

IPPF is committed to following agreed best practice in safe recruitment as part of its commitment to its safeguarding duties. IPPF Member Associations, collaborative partners and partner organisations are also required to follow this checklist as a minimum.

Job Adverts

Should, as a minimum, include:

“IPPF is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all employees, volunteers, contractors and partners to share this commitment’

Job description

Should, as a minimum, include:

- **Statement:** As above
- **Role:** Adhere to the safeguarding reporting and monitoring requirements of this role.
- **Person specification:** Demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to safeguarding in local and international context.
- **Person specification:** Demonstrate a willingness to sign and adhere to IPPF’s Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy.

Self-Disclosure

Applicants are required to sign a self-disclosure form which acknowledges that IPPF will disclose any misconduct in references.

Investigate Gaps in Employment History

Gaps in career history must always be followed up, with the candidate or with a referee, and, if felt needed, a request for supporting evidence should be made.

Carry Out a Criminal Records Check

IPPF acknowledges its responsibility not to knowingly allow a barred person to work with vulnerable groups (including children). IPPF will inform appropriate local regulators if an individual is removed from post because they have harmed, or because they pose a risk of harm to vulnerable groups (including children).

Verification of qualifications and experience and suitability

- A minimum of 2 written references are required that explicitly cover questions around suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults.
- Talking to referees
- Robust interviews that also cover safeguarding, equality, and diversity

Contract detail

Employment contracts should include reference to the IPPF Code of Conduct Individual contractor’s contract should include: “By signing the below, I, the Individual Contractor, acknowledge and agree that I have read and accept the terms of this Contract and that I have read and understood and agree to abide by the IPPF code of conduct.”

Mandatory safeguarding induction and yearly safeguarding training

Giving references

IPPF will disclose in written references when someone has been dismissed for serious misconduct or left before an investigation was completed. References should only be sent from Human Resources and state that they are from Human Resources so that it is clear they have been checked and verified.

Human Resource files containing safeguarding concerns and investigations

These files should be retained past the data protection guidelines to ensure that should an individual request a reference at a later date IPPF still have the information to do so.

*As adopted by Governing Council, May 2005
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