

Safeguarding Policy

Adopted by BRATISLAVA POLICY INSTITUTE (BPI)
board on 1. September 2022 in Bratislava, Slovakia

Glossary

The following document was created in full alignment with “UNHCR master glossary of terms” (e.g.: definition of “child”, “sexual harassment” ...). Unless explicitly stated otherwise, the definitions outlined by the UNHCR apply. Should the situation arise that a definition in national law conflict or are not as encompassing as the UNHCR term, BPI will defer to the international standard set out by the UNHCR in order to ensure the highest level of protection and compliance.

“Staff” refers to personal employed or hired by BPI as well as those are allowed to speak in its name, be it on voluntary or paid basis.

“Contractors” refers to any external person/legal person working for BPI, no matter whether on voluntary or paid basis.

Purpose

The purpose of this BPI Safeguarding Policy (“Policy”) is to protect people, particularly children, particularly vulnerable adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm and discrimination that may be caused due to their coming into contact with BRATISLAVA POLICY INSTITUTE (“BPI”). This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated with BPI,
- The design and implementation of BPI’s programmes and activities.

The Policy lays out the commitments made by BPI and informs staff and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to minimizing the risk of harm, particularly sexual violence including exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

Scope

- All BPI staff

- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to BPI, including but not limited to the following: consultants; volunteers; contractors; programme visitors including journalists, celebrities and politicians.

Legal framework

- In accordance with national laws.
- The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The European Social Charter
- The European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights
- The Convention on the International Protection of Adults
- The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- EU Directive 95/46/EC - GDPR Directive

Policy Statement

BPI believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender, socioeconomic background, disability or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. BPI will not witness abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel.

The Policy will address the following areas of safeguarding: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

BPI commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

Prevention

BPI will:

- conduct a background check on each staff member/contractor hired to perform work in the name of BPI, no matter whether on a voluntary or paid basis. In addition, a clean criminal record will be required when performing activities under the BPI name, whether kids or adults are involved. The extent of the background check will depend on the resources BPI has at its disposal, as the organization cannot ensure the same vetting procedure as in the case of public administration or international cooperations.
- Ensure all staff/contractors have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within the Policy. The Policy will be accessible on the organisation's website (www.bpi.sk).
- Staff/contractors for BPI will be familiarized with this document on their first working day. Furthermore, BPI will ensure that the staff/contractors will be promptly informed about any changes to this document and their implications for the staff/contractor's conduct.

- Design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with BPI. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated.
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing, and deploying staff and associated personnel.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process. This also includes potential changes to this document.
- Ensure that all participants in BPI activities, staff members or contractors respect GDPR guidelines as defined on the organization's website, which are in compliance with international standards. This applies also to the implementation of this Policy.

Child safeguarding

BPI staff and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit children.
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking.

Adult safeguarding

BPI staff and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit adults.
- Subject adults to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

BPI staff and associated personnel must not:

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance.
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.³

Additionally, BPI staff and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by BPI staff member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff member.

Enabling reports

BPI will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities we work with. BPI will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

How to report a safeguarding concern

Staff members or contractors who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to their direct superior and HR representative. If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to their either of these, (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to any other appropriate staff member or the Executive Director.

Response

BPI will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to internal rules outlined in our strategic documents. BPI will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy. BPI will offer support to those who experienced harm caused by staff or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need-to-know basis only and should be always kept secure.



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Legal Representative

BRATISLAVA POLICY INSTITUTE