

INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Safe Passage International

Vision

At Safe Passage International, our vision is a world in where the people who need it most have safe passage to a place of safety, welcome and hope.

As an organisation committed to ethically and radically champion of refugees' rights to journey to a place of safety, welcome and hope, we believe every person has the right to be safe: safe with their family, rebuild their lives and be safe from all forms of harm and abuse.

Safeguarding Principles

- We are committed to always putting the **safety and welfare of children and people in vulnerable situations first**. We promote and practice a **proactive response** to keeping children and people in vulnerable situations safe.
- We believe **that those most affected should be involved in decisions that impact them** and this belief is at the heart of our safeguarding work. As such we seek to encourage the active participation of children and people in vulnerable situations in keeping themselves and others safe, and in developing our safeguarding policies and practices.
- We aim to develop a **trusting and respectful** relationship with those we work with, and in doing so to **provide them with a safe environment** so that they know they will be safe, listened to and supported.
- **No-one should be discriminated against** through being a child, or on grounds of gender, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or culture. All safeguarding decisions should be considered on the risk level and specific situation of the individual, but personal characteristics will not determine the level and nature of our response.
- **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility** throughout Safe Passage and does not just sit with one individual.

Safe Passage recognises the guiding principles for organisations working to protect children and people in vulnerable situations internationally as outlined in the [Minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action](#).

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of people and protect them from harm¹. It is about realising safety for everyone.

This includes:

- Protecting people from abuse and maltreatment.
- Preventing harm to health and development.
- Effectively responding to situations of harm and abuse.
- The overall promotion of people's welfare and best interests.

¹ NSPCC, 2022. What is safeguarding?. Available at: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection>. Adapted to refer to all people, not only children.

Safeguarding involves embedding policy, procedure and practice to achieve those aims above. It is *not only* about preventing people from being harmed by Safe Passage, its staff or volunteers.

Implementation of Safeguarding Principles

Safe Passage International ensures that:

- **Appropriate and robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation**, that adhere to safeguarding legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.
- **Staff and volunteers are safely recruited** to prevent the employment or deployment of unsuitable individuals. This includes the use of DBS (criminal records disclosure checks where appropriate), references and other appropriate forms of safer recruitment good practices.
- **Everyone understands their roles and responsibilities** in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and adults in vulnerable situations.
- Anyone representing Safe Passage is expected to adhere at all times to the **highest standards of behaviour** towards children, people in vulnerable situations, their families and one another.
- **Appropriate action is taken** in the event of concerns of harm and abuse, and support provided to the individual concerned.
- **Confidential, detailed and accurate records** of all safeguarding concerns and responses are maintained and securely stored. Our Trustees have direct and regular oversight of this area and we have a central reporting system.
- Our **partners abide by our organisation's policy** and share their policies with us.

Safe Passage has zero tolerance policy towards abusive or harmful behaviour, or inaction in relation to any form of abuse, harassment or harm.

Below provides an overview of our safeguarding structures within Safe Passage International, with more information available in our [Safeguarding Internal Operating Procedures](#).

1. Prevention of harm and abuse to anyone who comes into contact with Safe Passage

Safe Passage's first safeguarding priority is to ensure that no one comes to harm because of their interaction with Safe Passage. We do this through:

Safer Recruitment

We ensure we meet best practices for safer recruitment. This includes full application, shortlisting, and interview processes that must include relevant safeguarding questions. Successful candidates are only offered jobs with Safe Passage subject to receipt of satisfactory references and, where relevant, criminal record checks. Safe Passage is also a member of the [Interagency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme](#) which ensures additional layer of scrutiny beyond criminal record checks and references.

Safer working policies and practices

Every Safe Passage staff member or volunteer must read, understand sign and adhere to our [Code of Behaviour](#) at all times. All staff have a responsibility to report any behaviour inconsistent with the code of behaviour to Safe Passage's International Safeguarding and Protection Manager.

Safe Passage has ongoing safeguarding training and we aim to foster an open culture of learning within Safe Passage, which means we are constantly improving our practices to prevent and respond to safeguarding concerns.

Safer programming

Safe Passage aims for safeguarding to be at the heart of all our programme design- we ensure risks are assessed and the way we work with children, families and communities is as safe as possible through program design. This also includes connecting with safeguarding networks in our countries of operation and legal safeguarding mapping in that country to ensure compliance with local law but to understand the impact of those laws on victims/ survivors of harm and abuse.

2. Our protection response: Responding to safeguarding concerns in the wider community

Safe Passage works with children and people in vulnerable situations from some of the world's most hostile environments, where safeguarding systems are not in place and human rights are routinely breached. We are proud of the difference we make to our programme participant's lives, but the reality of our work is harm and abuse by others will occur to those we work with. If we encounter individual cases of harm, abuse and other safeguarding issues, Safe Passage will report these concerns to the International Safeguarding and Protection Manager. The staff member and International Safeguarding and Protection Manager will then discuss the situation to assess risk, consider our intervention and continue to work with those who are affected. Safe Passage Staff members working directly with programme participants will engage in monthly safeguarding meetings with the International Safeguarding and Protection Manager to ensure concerns are reported, monitored and responded to.

Safeguarding Reporting Procedures

Safe Passage representatives (staff, partners and volunteers) have a responsibility to protect children and people in vulnerable situations from harm. It is not the responsibility of any Safe Passage representative to decide whether or not an individual has been abused. It is however everyone's responsibility to report concerns and comply with this policy.

Safe Passage's Safeguarding Leads

Safe Passage's Designated Safeguarding Lead (all countries): Phil Spencer, International Safeguarding and Protection Manager.

Contact: phil@safepassage.org.uk; +447761740598

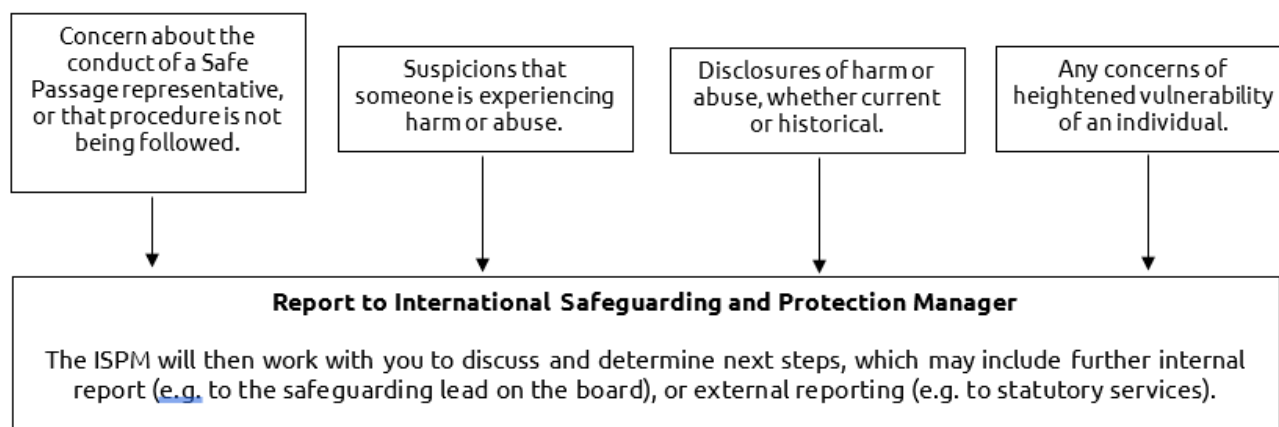
Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Jasmin Bukic, Head of Operations and People.

Contact: jasmin@safepassage.org.uk

Trustee Safeguarding Lead: Atiqullah Sayed

Contact: atiqullah@safepassage.org.uk

Reporting of safeguarding concerns



Other reporting mechanisms

- If the ISPM is not available, then the above concerns should be reported to Deputy Designated Safeguarding lead.
- If the concern is in relation to the International Safeguarding and Protection Manager, then this must be reported to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, or Trustee Safeguarding Lead.
- If there is an emergency (where you feel the situation is life threatening or someone is at risk of imminent and serious harm), then emergency services in the country of the individual should be contacted immediately without waiting to report to the ISPM first. More information on procedures in an emergency can be found in the safeguarding Internal Operating Procedures. Following this, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be contacted as soon as possible to make them aware of the situation.

Timescales

The necessary timescales for reporting safeguarding concerns would depend on the context and the risk level, however generally all concerns should be reported as soon as possible, but within one working day.

External reporting

If the concern is of a nature which warrants a referral to a statutory agency for safeguarding, then the referral will be made without delay. SPI will then cooperate with any investigation in accordance with that statutory agency's safeguarding policies and procedures. SPI will refer to other agencies as required, these include:

- UK Charity Commission
- The Disclosure and Barring Service
- Interagency Safeguarding Misconduct Scheme

Reporting safeguarding concerns (for young people, families and members of the public)

If any member of the public should see or suspect any wrongdoing by a member of staff, volunteer or individual connected with the charity, we encourage them to contact Safe Passage's International Safeguarding and Protection Manager where the report will be responded to in line with our investigation procedure and treated with strict confidence. People can report concerns by emailing donoharm@safepassage.org.uk or can report in multiple languages [here](#) on our website. Young person friendly information on this reporting mechanism in multiple languages can be found [here](#) on our website.

All safeguarding concerns, disclosures and responses will be recorded on Safe Passage's safeguarding case management system.

Roles and responsibilities

All Safe Passage representatives have the responsibility to follow safeguarding policies, procedures, be alert to safeguarding concerns and report these concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The following roles have specific safeguarding responsibilities within the organisation.

All staff are responsible for adhering to the code of behaviour at all times and ensure they are familiar with Safe Passage's Safeguarding policy and safeguarding internal operating procedures. They are responsible for engaging with safeguarding training and meetings as required, being aware of safeguarding concerns and reporting these concerns to the International Safeguarding and Protection Manager. They are then required to work with the safeguarding manager to respond to the concern, where possible.

The **International Safeguarding and Protection Manager** takes the lead responsibility for safeguarding in Safe Passage. Their main role is to provide advice, guidance and training to staff in safeguarding concerns. They will monitor and provide oversight of case management of safeguarding concerns, including investigating allegations or concerns about Safe Passage representatives. All safeguarding concerns must be reported to the International Safeguarding and Protection Manager (unless the concern is in relation to them, then it must be reported to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead).

Trustees have overall responsibility for ensuring effective safeguarding throughout the organisation, which is compliant with current legislation. They are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with, Safe Passage are not harmed in any way through contact with it. They do this by annually reviewing the policy and any associated safeguarding guidelines and reports.

Line Managers are responsible for ensuring all safeguarding concerns in their team are reported to the International Safeguarding and Protection Manager and can provide additional support on safeguarding matters. They are responsible for reviewing the safety of their programme through risk assessments and ensuring safeguarding is considered in the development of new work. They are responsible for escalating concerns to the International Safeguarding and Protection Manager as required.

The Leadership Team are responsible for the implementation of the safeguarding policy and its accompanying procedures and guidelines across their areas of responsibility. They must ensure a clear framework for the management and accountability of safeguarding is in place and make sure that sufficient resources are allocated to ensure that policy can be effectively implemented.

This policy was last reviewed and amended in December 2023. All amendments were signed off by the Board of Trustees. This safeguarding policy is enhanced by Safe Passage's [Internal Operating Procedures](#) which provides more information and detail on our safeguarding practices and procedures. For more information about our safeguarding commitment, policy and procedures please contact: DONOHARM@safepassage.org.uk.