

Safeguarding Policy

BIICL's Commitment To Safeguarding

Everyone has the right to be protected from harm. This is especially important when working with those in vulnerable circumstances. "Harm" in this policy is defined as physical or mental harm or damage. "Persons in vulnerable circumstances" is used throughout this policy to describe those who might reasonably be thought to require additional protection from harm. This definition includes, but is not limited to, survivors of abuse, children below the age of majority and those with learning disabilities.

Though safeguarding concerns are not solely limited to allegations, BIICL takes all allegations of misconduct very seriously. The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Disciplinary and Grievance Policies set out additional requirements for staff. This Safeguarding Policy sets out our approach to ensuring the safety of beneficiaries, members, stakeholders and volunteers who are vulnerable.

This policy applies to all events, programmes, research, training and other activities organised by BIICL staff and volunteers in the course of the organisation's business whether online or offline. This is particularly important when conducting fieldwork, as both the health and safety of staff should be safeguarded (especially in situations of insecurity or conflict) and in relation to participants in our research. Where a BIICL staff member or volunteer is made aware of a safeguarding concern in relation to an activity not organised by BIICL, they have a duty to report that concern to a BIICL safeguarding champion.

In addition to this obligation to report safeguarding incidents in relation to activities run by external organisations in which BIICL is a participant, reportable incidents also include disclosures that do not involve BIICL staff at all. An example could include a disclosure of child sexual exploitation or modern slavery carried out by a third party. Staff should follow the procedures below should a vulnerable person disclose an external incident to them.

Researchers at BIICL should consider throughout the planning, implementation and evaluation of all projects how their work can be made more inclusive and avoid harms. In some circumstances it may be necessary to create a more granular bespoke safeguarding plan outlining the groups likely to be affected and any specific measures taken in relation to that group.

This policy will be placed on the BIICL, Modern Slavery Policy & Evidence Centre and Bingham Centre websites. These components of BIICL will adopt more specific policies to manage particular risks that are likely to arise in their given contexts.

Requirements of Staff and Volunteers

In addition to this policy, staff members and volunteers working with persons in vulnerable circumstances are required to follow the BIICL Privacy Policy. This explains the BIICL approach to data protection.

Staff and volunteers working with persons in vulnerable circumstances will be required to:

- Complete a DBS (*Enhanced*) Check,
- Read the relevant policies detailed by BIICL,
- Bring government-issued photo identification with them when working with persons in vulnerable circumstances such as a driving licence or passport,
- Attend training for their specific role, including training on the contents of this policy, and undertake any additional training where they will encounter specific or complex needs,
- Read, review and sign a copy of this Safeguarding Policy,

- Show an awareness of their responsibilities under relevant legislation such as the Prevent duty.

Reportable Incidents

Persons in vulnerable circumstances should be afforded comprehensive protection from harm, and the definition of cover a wide range of circumstances. Reportable incidents usually include conduct that would cause concern from the perspective of the reasonable observer that someone could be subject to harm. Such incidents are not limited to, but may include the following indicative allegations:

- Bullying,
- Discrimination,
- Harassment (including sexual offences),
- Otherwise causing harm,
- Committing a criminal offence.

Recording Incidents

All incidents referred from this policy will be recorded in a log of incidents. This log will be made available to the Board of Trustees and where relevant will influence changes to the BIICL risk register.

The requirement to log an incident includes all situations where members of staff feel there was a safeguarding issue that did not warrant a full investigation. These will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Champions with a commitment to updating other internal policies where needed.

Safeguarding Trustee

To ensure safeguarding is embedded in a strategic manner, the Board of Trustees will appoint a lead 'safeguarding trustee'. This trustee will receive safeguarding training in order to fulfil this role. The safeguarding trustee will flag major safeguarding incidents to the other trustees and they will be involved in maintaining the log of incidents.

BIICL Safeguarding Champions

Persons in vulnerable circumstances involved in BIICL projects are encouraged to report any concerns (about the conduct of BIICL team members or otherwise) to the safeguarding champions. The current safeguarding champions are:

- Patricia Ambrose, Governance & Research Adviser.
- Isobel Templer, MS PEC Research Operations and Communications Manager.

Safeguarding champions will typically be senior members of staff or colleagues with prior experience of safeguarding. The safeguarding champions will undergo a DBS check, receive additional training and will be able to offer advice in relation to reportable incidents. We hope that staff will feel empowered engaging with vulnerable people as they can talk through the situation with an experienced and trained team member.

Procedures

All allegations of abuse against persons in vulnerable circumstances must be taken seriously. Where concerns exist the following procedure should be followed:

- The member of staff, person in vulnerable circumstances or volunteer in receipt of the allegation should send an email outlining the nature of the allegation and any underlying facts to the BIICL safeguarding champions, within 24 hours of being notified of the

safeguarding issue. If the safeguarding champions are unavailable the report should be sent to the Institute Director.

- The safeguarding champions will inform other members of staff or relevant external bodies as appropriate (for example in the case of children or vulnerable adults there can also be a need to refer to the local authority or school).
- The allegation (subject to the final bullet point below) will be considered by the Institute Director, adopting the BIICL Disciplinary and Grievance procedure. This typically involves an investigation procedure involving an oral hearing and written evidence,
- The Institute Director will arrive at a decision within two weeks of receipt of the report,
- The staff member or volunteer who is the subject of the allegation, any vulnerable persons involved and the individual who made the report will be made aware of the outcome as soon as practicable after it has been determined,
- Trustees will be made aware of any safeguarding concerns where appropriate,
- Where appropriate the Institute Director will begin formal disciplinary proceedings where allegations of misconduct are proven.
- The Institute Director will refer allegations that constitute criminal misconduct to the relevant police force. In such circumstances an internal process under the third bullet point above may be inappropriate pending police investigation.

BIICL will take reasonable steps to ensure that any person in vulnerable circumstances who has brought a proven allegation of misconduct will be referred to an appropriate organisation specialising in mitigating the harm that they have suffered.

Annual Review

This policy and the incidents record will be reviewed by the 1st of May each year by the BIICL Management Board.