



Safeguarding Policy

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1. Safeguarding Policy Statement

Turning Point Foundation is a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) in Bangladesh, working on major two areas: Capacity Building and Advocacy to promote human rights of marginalised people i.e. persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged people and promote 'Inclusion' as an inbuilt mechanism in all programs and activities. TurningPoint envisions 'an inclusive society where everyone, irrespective of age, gender, disability, ethnicity or other identities, will have equal rights, opportunities and participation to grow to their full potentials and contribute their utmost for humanity and environment'.

TurningPoint has a zero tolerance to all kinds of abuse, harassment and exploitation and will not tolerate such at the workplace or related to any aspect of its work. In practice, this means that all necessary efforts must be made to comply with the Policy, irrespective of cost implications or operational inconvenience. For the purpose of this policy, any form of child or adult abuse, including sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, and bullying will be referred to as "abuse".

TurningPoint recognises that abuse comes about as a result of an imbalance of power. We recognise that such imbalance could happen between work colleagues and acknowledge our relative position of power in our working relationships with grassroots partners and with the beneficiaries of those partners. We also recognise that grassroots partners and beneficiaries in the country may be at greater risk of abuse because there may not be sufficient legal or policy frameworks for safeguarding all individuals, and particularly those at greatest risk.

In our work, we meet many children and adults, who are potentially at risk for a variety of reasons. We aim to create a safe environment in which no child or adult will experience harm or exploitation during their contact with us.

We will, where reasonably practicable, both follow relevant international laws and standards, as well as ensure Bangladesh's legal compliance.

2. Purpose

To ensure that TurningPoint exercises its duty of care to safeguard children and adults. We need to safeguard the interests of all our stakeholders, ensuring we comply with the humanitarian imperative to "do no harm" through our actions in all our work. We should never abuse the trust and power placed in us to benefit ourselves or others, including our family. This policy outlines the rules and principles we apply to do this.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide all employees, partners and relevant stakeholders with the overarching principles and procedures that direct our approach to safeguarding,
- Make every possible effort to protect children and adults who come into contact with TurningPoint in the course of our work, and
- Raise awareness of responsibilities for identifying and reporting actual or suspected abuse.

3. TurningPoint's Commitment

Turning Point Foundation is committed to keep children and adults at risk safe by:



- Valuing, respecting, and listening to children and adults, maintaining confidentiality, and acting proportionately.
- Adopting safeguarding practices through policies and procedures.
- Ensuring that our partner organisations have appropriate safeguarding processes in place.
- Maintaining strong protection systems, procedures and minimising and managing situations where abuse could occur, through planning, risk assessment and safeguarding systems.
- Sharing safeguarding information and good practices with staff, partners and relevant stakeholders.
- Actively investigating suspected abuse and managing safeguarding cases efficiently and effectively.
- Challenging harmful traditions, laws, customs and practices as part of our work, including those which constrain the opportunities of particular groups.

Turning Point Foundation requires all staff to immediately report safeguarding concerns to an appropriate Manager, Safeguarding Focal Point or another person named in the Raising Concerns and Whistleblowing Policy.

We require all staff to ensure their behaviour is consistent with this policy. We also require that clients, customers, partners and suppliers are made aware of this policy and operate within it.

We will provide adequate and appropriate resources to implement this policy and will ensure it is communicated throughout the organisation and understood by all staff.

This policy is in line with our values, forms part of our Code of Conduct and is referred to within both to support compliance and risk management.

TurningPoint will review this policy annually to reflect new legal and regulatory developments and to ensure good practice learning.

4. Scope

All staff of TurningPoint are expected to comply with this policy.

The policy covers partners, contractors and suppliers. It is also relevant for those with whom we engage for example children, parents and communities, to act in accordance with this policy.

In cases where we are not the lead partner (i.e. we are not supporting), then it is expected that we will encourage and advocate for our partners to either follow TurningPoint's Safeguarding Policy or develop their own.

This policy can be shared with partners/government and beneficiaries to share good practices on what we expect from our staff, and their staff when they interact with Turning Point Foundation.

TurningPoint is not, and cannot be, responsible for the individual safeguarding of those who work for, or are beneficiaries of, our partners and their downstream partners other than from abuse by our employees. Our responsibility lies in ensuring the partner has

effective policies and processes in place to safeguard their own staff and beneficiaries. If they do not, partnerships with them could be withdrawn, suspended or terminated.

This policy is mandatory and must be applied in all situations where TurningPoint, or our partners, work.

5. Principles

This policy is based on the following principles¹:

- Everyone has responsibility for safeguarding,
- We do no harm,
- We have a safeguarding duty of care to beneficiaries, staff and volunteers and in relation to our partners. This includes children and adults at risk in the community who are not direct beneficiaries but may be at greater risk of abuse,
- We act with integrity, are transparent and accountable,
- All our operations are in the best interests of the child/adult at risk as the welfare of children and adults is paramount,
- TurningPoint, through our due diligence framework, ensures grantees/grant-holders have effective safeguarding frameworks, including beneficiaries being informed of their rights,
- A child is defined as someone under the age of 18 regardless of the age of majority/consent in-country,
- All children and adults shall be treated equally, irrespective of race, gender, religion/or none, sexual orientation, and/or disability,
- Organisations that work with children and vulnerable adults/groups should apply a safeguarding lens to their activities,
- Safeguarding and promoting well-being and welfare means protecting the rights of children and adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect,
- We recognise the particular vulnerability of children and adults who are deemed to be at risk.
- We recognise that all people, regardless of age, ability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, culture or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse and no person or group of people should be treated less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs,
- We recognise that some children and adults are at greater risk of abuse than others because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues,
- We will take all concerns, and allegations of abuse seriously and respond to them appropriately,

¹ Based on the principles of the TurningPoint and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), UK

- We have a commitment to safer recruitment, selection and vetting that includes relevant and proportionate checks, including the Disclosure and Barring Service checks if and when appropriate, into the eligibility and the suitability of all staff,
- We have procedures in place, which are open and well publicised ways, where anyone can voice concerns about unacceptable and/or abusive behaviour towards children or adults, and
- We discourage employees and associated parties having intimate relationships with beneficiaries, since those relationships are based on inherently unequal power balances. Any such relationship is best discussed with the line manager.

In addition, employees and associated parties must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18,
- Exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sexual favours when travelling on behalf of TurningPoint as we believe this is an abuse of power contrary to our policies and values,
- Sexually abuse or exploit children or adults at risk,
- Knowingly engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children or adults at risk, including child labour or trafficking,
- Physically assault a child or adult, and
- Emotionally or psychologically abuse a child or adult.

6. TurningPoint's safeguarding responsibilities

We will do everything in our power to ensure children and adults, who come into contact with TurningPoint, in any capacity, are safeguarded. We are responsible for the actions of our staff and any individual we work with, or who works on our behalf. We use the term "employee" and "partners" to refer to those working for and with us.

The responsibility of our designated Safeguarding Focal will be to act on all safeguarding concerns in line with our commitment and responsibility to:

- Respond to the concern as soon as it raised, and within 24 hours of the concern being made,
- Take all details of the concern raised and determine the best course of action. The first priority is to ascertain whether the child or adult in question is still potentially at risk of harm and take action on that issue. The second is to decide what form of investigation or other course of action is relevant,
- Take advice from relevant authorities in the country
- Ensure the investigation is carried out as fairly, thoroughly and promptly as possible,
- Act on the investigation, including any further action to protect the child or adult in question from harm, and any disciplinary action that may be needed,
- Inform the person who raised the concern of the investigation findings and actions, as appropriate,

- Update the safeguarding incident log and company risk register, and
- Reflect on the report and investigation as part of regular Management Team meeting to ensure lessons are learnt and procedures strengthened, if needed.

TurningPoint is responsible for carrying out safeguarding due diligence, of the organisations that we provide sub-grants. We review the partners safeguarding policies and processes in respect of their own staff and beneficiaries. We also discuss issues that may arise based on work to be undertaken and apply appropriate measures to manage the identified risks.

7. Understanding, recognising and preventing abuse

The categories of abuse for children and adults at risk are different. What you should do to safeguard children and adults at risk:

- Always work in a professional manner following TurningPoint's Code of Ethics,
- Always be aware of the imbalance of power in working relationships,
- Always be aware of situations which may present risks to children and adults,
- Assess, plan and organise your work so as to minimise these risks,
- Always be visible to others when working with children. There should never be a situation in which anyone employed by, representing, or working with TurningPoint in any capacity is alone with a child. You must be accompanied at all times by an appropriate individual (e.g. a project worker, relative, carer or teacher),
- Where possible, avoid one-on-one meetings with adults when visiting projects, if unavoidable be aware of the situation and of each of your potential vulnerability,
- Be clear that confidentiality can never be guaranteed if it is suspected that a child or an adult deemed to be at risk is being abused,
- Adhere to the safeguarding policy, as a requirement of your contract.
- The key to safeguarding is abuse prevention. It is widely recognised that organisational awareness and good practice can promote positive staff actions, reduce opportunities for offending and enable earlier detection and response to safeguarding concerns. Design, development and delivery of programmes and projects that have not appropriately and proactively assessed safeguarding risk can negatively impact children and adults who may directly or indirectly be harmed as a result of our activities.

8. Definitions

For ease of reading the Policy, and to prevent having to repeat lengthy definitions throughout, the following terms are used:

Safeguarding²: Safeguarding broadly means avoiding harm to people or the environment. Since early 2018, it has been focused on safeguarding against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH) in the international aid sector.

At the TurningPoint we also use the UN definitions for SEAH:

Sexual exploitation: any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. Includes profiting momentarily, socially, or politically from sexual exploitation of another. Under UN regulations it includes transactional sex, solicitation of transactional sex and exploitative relationship.

Sexual abuse: the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. It should cover sexual assault (attempted rape, kissing / touching, forcing someone to perform oral sex/touching) as well as rape. Under UN regulations, all sexual activity with someone under the age of 18 is considered to be sexual abuse.

Sexual harassment: a continuum of unacceptable and unwelcome behaviours and practices of a sexual nature that may include, but are not limited to, sexual suggestions or demands, requests for sexual favours and sexual, verbal or physical conduct or gestures, that are or might reasonably be perceived as offensive or humiliating.

Safeguarding concerns: The following concerns to be considered safeguarding matters (NB: these are examples, this is not an exhaustive list):

- Child abuse (sexual, physical, emotional abuse and neglect), forced marriage, female genital mutilation or child labour
- Sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse (SEAH)
- Violence, physical abuse or any other form of exploitation – including financial
- Human trafficking or modern slavery, including forced labour
- Discrimination, including on the grounds of gender, race and disability

Child: In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989, under the Policy a child is defined as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. Although the national laws in countries that we work in may have different ages at which a child is considered an adult, or at which a child can give consent or is responsible, we use the definition of a child according to international law as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Adult: An adult at risk is defined as: any person aged 18 years or over; who identifies themselves as unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against significant harm, exploitation or neglect; or are understood to be at risk, which may be due to frailty, homelessness, mental or physical health problems, learning or physical impairments, and/or impacted by disasters or conflicts.

² This definition of safeguarding is based on FCDO's [Guidance on Safeguarding against sexual exploitation and abuse and harassment \(SEAH\) in the aid sector](#)



Child Abuse: TurningPoint uses the definition of abuse endorsed by the World Health Organisation: 'Child abuse' or 'maltreatment' constitutes all forms of physical and/or 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'.

Adult Safeguarding: Safeguarding adults means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to both prevent and responding to risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure the adult's wellbeing is promoted, including where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding any action. Safeguarding adults at risk involves reducing or preventing the risk of significant harm in relation to neglect or abuse, while also supporting people to maintain control of their own lives.

Staff: The term staff applies to all those working in an individual capacity with TurningPoint, irrespective of the contract used. This includes paid and unpaid staff and volunteers engaged on a one-off, short- or long-term basis. It also covers consultants and contracted temporary personnel. Staff applies equally to national, international personnel.

Partners, Suppliers & Contractors: The terms 'partners, suppliers and contractors' relate to all those who we have a contract or agreement with to provide goods, services or collaboration. There may be a financial or alternative benefit, but this is not essential. It includes implementing partners who carry out work on our behalf and other stakeholders with whom TurningPoint may establish a working relationship, such as Ministries and Donors/Funders.

9. Cultural Sensitivity

TurningPoint aims to work in ways which are culturally sensitive and respect the diverse nature of the people and locations in which we work. We recognise that there are many ways of taking care of and protecting children and adults, and we will seek to safeguard them in ways, which are culturally sensitive and appropriate to the context.

However, we believe that everyone matters everywhere in the world and that culture must never be used as a reason or excuse to abuse children or adults.

It is acknowledged that protecting children and adults within the legal framework required of TurningPoint as a national organisation in Bangladesh, and as articulated in this Policy, while being culturally sensitive can be a difficult balancing act, as understandings of what is harmful may differ.

10. How to report safeguarding concerns

All concerns should be reported to the Safeguarding Investigations Team at **RaiseConcerns@turningpointbd.org / +88-01886100906**.

The RaiseConcerns mailbox is managed by the specially trained investigators, who treat the information provided in the strictest confidence.

If you are not sure, it is better to contact RaiseConcerns at TurningPoint rather than leave something unreported. Reporting Concerns can advise you whether this is something we need to be aware of.

11. Investigation

TurningPoint does throughout the investigation protect the person raising the safeguarding concern, but we are also aware that such serious accusations may have substantial risks for the accused person, should the allegations prove to be unsubstantiated and/or of malicious content.

We strive towards fairness in the entire investigative process with the accused person being provided anonymity and the right to be heard throughout the process. However, we also recognise that the power relations will be of such a character that the accused will not be invited to give witness until such time the seriousness of the matter has been affirmed. Please refer to the following to this respect.

12. Information Sharing & Confidentiality

You can never guarantee confidentiality to a child or adult. Information should always be shared if you think a child or adult is suffering, or likely to suffer, abuse.

As set out in law, the protection of children and adults must take precedence over other legal rights. Please be assured that as long as information is shared following the process set out in this safeguarding policy and in good faith that you believe a child or adult is being abused, the law will protect you. You should ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared as per this policy, is accurate and shared promptly.

13. Safer Recruitment

TurningPoint is committed to fair and robust recruitment processes including safer recruitment checks of all employees. We have different levels of security and recruitment checks relative to the safeguarding requirements of our different roles, and the relevant authorities in the in countries where we work. Please refer to the various Human Resources policies for more information if needed.

Training: TurningPoint provides mandatory safeguarding training at induction, and then regularly to all levels of staff at an appropriate level, at least annually.

14. Safeguarding incident log and risk register

The designated safeguarding lead maintains a safeguarding incident log that is updated to reflect all safeguarding cases. This is stored in a private space using our online document storage system, and only the three staff with responsibilities for safeguarding have access to it.

This safeguarding incident log feeds into the company risk register that is held by the safeguarding lead. The risk register is reviewed regularly at Management Team meetings which occur monthly and is used to reflect on vulnerabilities and mitigation of those, to reflect and learn from safeguarding incidents, and also to notify outside authorities where necessary.

15. Modern slavery/Child labour

- Do not commit any acts which contribute to exploitative practice (e.g. modern slavery/child labour). This includes failing to report concerns or suspicions regarding an act by another member of staff or staff from a partner or supplier.
- TurningPoint has zero tolerance of staff contributing to exploitation including modern slavery or child labour. We consider this to constitute gross misconduct, and therefore grounds for termination of employment. Other action may also be taken, e.g. reporting criminality where applicable.
- If you witness, or suspect that any supplier or partner is using child labour or engaging in modern slavery this must be reported immediately through the Whistleblowing reporting concerns email if you do not you may be considered complicit in the act.

16. Accountability, Monitoring and Evaluation

Accountability: Accountability for the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy rests with the Executive Director. Ultimate accountability for Safeguarding within TurningPoint globally rests with the Executive Committee. All breaches of the Safeguarding Policy will be considered as serious and action taken.

Other Monitoring Mechanisms: The Executive Director and Safeguarding focal point may be required to provide information regarding the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy through other reporting and monitoring mechanisms established by TurningPoint – such as Internal Audit, Risk reporting and Business Continuity plans.

In addition to internal monitoring mechanisms, the implementation of this Policy is also subject to external monitoring and reporting to relevant bodies.

17. Review of Safeguarding Policy

Responsibility for reviewing and updating the Safeguarding Policy lies with the Global Safeguarding Team. This Policy will be reviewed annually, to ensure it continues to meet legislative, and regulatory requirements and best practices.