

Health Partnership Safeguarding Protocol guidance

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. At THET we understand it to mean: protecting people globally, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programmes, taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, if harm does occur.

Description

This Safeguarding Protocol template is a tool to help Health Partnerships (HPs): embed safeguarding into their projects; develop guidance on steps to take in case a safeguarding concern is reported; and identify organisational and individual roles and responsibilities.

Please note that each country's legislation differs with regards to age of consent, labour laws, laws relating to commercial sex work, and homosexuality. Generally, the national laws of the intervention site take precedence, unless they contravene a UN treaty. If in doubt, HPs should check which treaties each country is a signatory to and make explicit which laws and/or treaties the policies comply with. **Please note that if a country is a signatory to any of the international or global conventions, then these take precedence over the country's own laws in relation to Safeguarding terms and definitions (e.g. age of consent).**

Whereas institutional Safeguarding Policies are key, a clear protocol on how HPs will co-investigate and report safeguarding concerns is vital. It can often be confusing for partnerships to understand who is responsible for each of these processes, particularly because each institution will have their own safeguarding policies in place. If one of the organisations within the HP does NOT have a Safeguarding Policy, a policy should be developed with guidance of the other partner.

For additional guidance, have a look at the THET [Safeguarding Toolkit for Health Partnerships - THET](#) and the THET [Safeguarding Policy](#).

The Safeguarding Toolkit for Health Partnerships was produced to support Health Partnerships strengthen their approach to safeguarding and includes more guidance on producing a Safeguarding Protocol.

A Safeguarding Protocol template is provided in Annex 1.

Key questions to consider when developing a HP Safeguarding Protocol:

- Who do health partnership representatives report an incident to in each country?
- Who do patients and/or local communities report an incident to?
- Who do visiting professionals report an incident to?
- Who should be involved in investigating the incident in-country?
- Who should be involved in communicating about the incident to the donors?
- Which authorities and other parties need to be informed (please note that it is important to carry out a risk assessment before informing other external parties although being mindful that incidences should be reported to the police, if a criminal offence has taken place)?

- How often will you review and reflect on the risk you identified?
- Who will be responsible for arranging appropriate support for the victim/survivor (if applicable)?
- What referral mechanism(s) exist in each country? Are there any organisations you can call upon for support should a victim/survivor report an incident?
- Through which (clear) mechanisms do we communicate the reporting and investigation processes to staff, health partnership representatives and project target groups?
- How can we ensure confidentiality and convey this adequately to staff, health partnership representatives, and patients?

Annex 1. Health Partnership Safeguarding Protocol Template

Health Partnership Safeguarding Protocol

Project Name:

Project Timeframe:

Project Partners:

Date:

Definition

(Short sentence on how you, as a HP, define safeguarding)

Purpose

(Short outline on the purpose of the Safeguarding Protocol)

Commitment

(Show commitment to the Safeguarding Protocol, including your individual Safeguarding Policies. Please also outline any additional national/international policies, legislations etc. you committing to.)

Preventive Action

(What will you as a HP put in place to ensure you prevent safeguarding incidences, e.g. risk registers, training, the policies, the protocol)

Enabling Report

(Outline the resources and tools you have in place as a HP to enable safeguarding concerns to be reported)



How to Report

(Outline the reporting mechanism, including organisational and individual's roles and responsibilities. Please don't forget that all safeguarding concerns will have to be reported to the donor).

Confidentiality

(Describe how you will ensure the confidentiality of the person reporting a safeguarding concern, and the investigation of such a concern).