



**Telepsychiatry Research  
and Innovation Network**

# **Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy**

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Telepsychiatry Research and Innovation Network Ltd. (TRIN) is working in the mental health and research with the view to ensure community mental health. We follow international standards including ethical adherence to service implementations, safeguarding rights to all and producing responsive care. It is an important shared priority of many public facing services.

Safeguarding describes protecting certain people who may be in vulnerable circumstances. These people may be at risk of abuse or neglect due to the actions (or inactions) of another person/organization.

Following the international standards of organizations, we aim to make sure that our staff, operations and programs do no harm (Keeping Children Safe, 2014), that we do not expose them to any risk and maltreatment (risk of discrimination, neglect, harm and abuse) and that any concerns the organization has about the safety of vulnerable people within the communities in which they work, are dealt with and reported to the appropriate authorities. It is also the responsibility that we have for protecting our employees and volunteers when they are vulnerable.

TRIN has a Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy that is implemented throughout the organization, across all programs.

### **The Safeguarding Vulnerable Group Act:**

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (UKPGA, 2006) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (UNCRC) define a “child” as a person under the age of 18 years old. For the purposes of this policy and the associated code of conduct, the terms:

- “child” and “children” will therefore be used to describe all children and young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday.
- “vulnerable adult” – is a person aged 18 years or older who may need health and/or care services because of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be, unable

to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation (NHS England, 2017). For TRIN, this may include members of staff, students, research participants, beneficiaries, patients and other community members who we have direct and indirect contact with through our work.

- “staff” will be used to describe employees, volunteers, contractors and representatives including those employed under consultancy arrangements.

### **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD):**

For the purpose of this policy and associated code of conduct, the following terms from Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) shall be taken into account:

- Legislative, administrative, social, educational, and other measures taken to protect persons with disabilities, both within and outside the home, from all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse, including the gender and child-based aspects
- Social protection measures to assist and support persons with disabilities, including their families and caregivers, and to prevent, recognize and report instances of exploitation, violence, and abuse, including the gender- and child-based aspects
- Legislation and policies, including women and child focused legislation and policies, to ensure that instances of exploitation, violence and abuse against persons with disabilities are identified, investigated and, where appropriate, prosecuted.
- States Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children.

### **The Labor Law of Bangladesh (2006):**

TRIN follows The Labor Law of Bangladesh (2006) enlists labor laws for children and women, for the purposes of this policy and the associated code of conduct, the terms:

- No child shall be employed or allowed to work in any profession or institution

- No parent or guardian of a child may enter into any contract with anyone by allowing the child to be employed in any work.
- No teenager may be employed or allowed to work in any profession or organization, unless-
  - The certificate of competency issued to him by a registered physician in the form prescribed by the rules remains in the custody of the owner.
  - While on duty, he carried a token with a reference to the certificate
- No employer may consciously employ a woman in her organization within eight weeks of the immediate delivery of her child.
- Every female worker shall be entitled to receive maternity benefits from her employer for eight weeks immediately before the probable date of delivery and for the next eight weeks immediately after delivery, and her employer shall be obliged to grant her this benefit. Provided, however, that no woman shall receive such benefit unless she has worked under her employer for at least six months immediately before the delivery of her child.
- No woman shall be entitled to such a benefit if she has two or more surviving children at the time of childbirth, if she is entitled to any leave in the meantime.

**Women and Child Abuse Prevention Act (2000):**

For the purpose of this policy and associated code of conduct, the following terms from Women and Child Abuse Prevention Act (2000) shall be taken into account:

- If a man rapes a woman or a child, he will be punishable by [death penalty or life imprisonment] and an additional fine.
- If a person unlawfully touches or molests a woman or a child or any other part of his body with any part of his body or any object for the purpose of satisfying his sexual desire, then his act shall be sexual harassment and the person shall not exceed ten. Will be punishable by one year but not less than three years rigorous imprisonment and will be punishable by an additional fine.

## **The Safeguarding Policy**

- Explains the scope and purpose of this Policy and who must adhere to it
- Explains the framework and the definitions used in this Policy
- Sets TRIN's commitments to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults with whom we comes into contact
- Provides necessary related information

## **Telepsychiatry Research and Innovation Network's Commitment**

### **We believe that:**

- Children, young people, and vulnerable adults should never experience harm, discomfort or abuse of any kind
- It is our responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that provides them protection.

### **We recognize that:**

- The welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is vital
- All children and vulnerable adults have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse

- Working in partnership with children, vulnerable adults, their guardian and carer and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare

## **Purpose of policy**

### **The purpose of this policy is to:**

- Providing children and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of TRIN
- Allow and helping all staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child and vulnerable adults protection issues.
  - Ensure that systems and processes are in place to guide and support staff in their role to safeguard and protect beneficiaries, research participants, patients, members of the public and any individuals who come into contact with TRIN and any of our representatives.
  - Ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected from all types of abuse, exploitation or intentional and/or unintentional actions and failings that place them at risk of injury and/or any other harm.
  - Ensure that the organization has systems in place to deal well with any allegations, complaints and cases of all types of abuse and exploitation by its own personnel, through effective implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures.

Any breach of this policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter, which may result in immediate termination of employment or contract, withdrawal of volunteer status, and reporting to the police, relevant regulatory authority or other body.

## Policy Statement

The Policy will be implemented by adhering to the policy guidelines and will be communicated and promoted widely throughout the Organization. All staff must comply with this policy. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may result in disciplinary action.

- Everyone has an equal right to protection from abuse and exploitation regardless their age, culture, birth place, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- The rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and their families are respected and listened to.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- The best interests of the vulnerable person are paramount and shall be the primary consideration in decision making.

### **As part of our safeguarding policy TRIN will:**

- Promote and prioritize the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognize, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure that employees and volunteers are inducted in our Safeguarding Standards.
- Ensure that all partners are informed and in compliance with our Safeguarding Standards.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.



- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals.
- Ensure operational procedures and safeguarding arrangements are in place.
- Take responsibility to meet obligations regarding duty of care towards vulnerable people, and take action where we believe that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at risk or is actually harmed.
- When working with or through partners or sub contracted agencies, TRIN ensures that their safeguarding procedures are consistent and in line with the principles and approaches set out in this policy.
- Recognizes that an element of risk exists, and while we may never be able to totally remove this, we need to do all we can to reduce it or limit its impact.
- Respects confidentiality and has a responsibility to protect sensitive personal data. Information should only be shared and handled on a need to know basis, that is, access to the information must be necessary for the conduct of one's official duties. Only individuals who have legitimate reasons to access the information are allowed to receive it.
- Commits to monitoring the implementation of the safeguarding policy.

**Implementation with research and Clinical Care partners:**

- Consideration of safeguarding risks of vulnerable groups should start early in research program design, and our research ethics process incorporates sections where investigators are asked to consider potential safeguarding issues and how children and vulnerable adults be protected.
- All research and clinical care contracts which involve working with partner organizations, must go through our due diligence process. Part of this process concerns establishing what systems, policies and procedures the partner organization has in place

relating to safeguarding and the protection of children and vulnerable adults, including whether they have a staff code of conduct.

- Partner organizations that do not have a local safeguarding/child protection policy and/or do not have a code of conduct required to adhere to our Safeguarding Policy (Partner Organizations).

## **Recognizing Signs of Harm and Abuse**

Recognizing the occurrence or risk of harm is challenging. It is our responsibility to look out for signs of abuse and act if there are any concerns.

The risks of harm/abuse include:

- Physical abuse: including any sort of physical actions with intent of harm
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission: including withholding the necessities of life
- Self-neglect
- Discrimination and related abusive acts
- Extremism and radicalization
- Forced marriage
- Child trafficking
- Female genital mutilation
- Commercial exploitation
- Bullying or harassment.

Abuse may be carried out intentionally or unknowingly. Abuse can occur once, or it can be recurring.

It may not always be easy and apparent to identify signs of abuse, but the following are some notable ones to be aware of:

- Unexplained bruising or injuries
- Sudden changes in behavior and/or sudden tendency to act out.
- Sexually explicit language or behavior, inappropriate to age or development.
- Comments made by the individual.
- Appearing withdrawn/isolated.
- A noticeable physical change.

### Monitoring, Reporting and Taking Actions:

To dealing with suspicions or allegations of harm or abuse, there will be a team including a Child Protection officer has been assigned by the board of directors to dealing the allegation.

In dealing with suspicions or allegations of abuse staff members should follow The FOUR Rs:

1. **Recognize**- the ability to recognize behaviors that may indicate abuse.

These includes signs of abuse of children and vulnerable adults

- o Physical
  - o emotional/psychological
  - o Sexual
  - o Neglect
2. **Respond** - how to respond to someone making a disclosure/allegation of the types of abuse and neglect
    - o *Listen carefully*- A clinical protection officer listen carefully. If someone approaches and discloses a safeguarding issue, make sure it is listen carefully.
    - o *Open to hear*- Be calm and reassuring and make it clear that you are glad that the person has told you
    - o *Be non-judgmental*- Show that you are taking the person seriously and that you understand and believe them. Always show acceptance of what you are

being told, whatever your personal opinion might be. It takes a lot of courage to disclose any type of abuse, so the discloser will need to feel believed

- o *Do not interrogate the individual-* Keep questions to a minimum; if you have to ask questions keep them open and not leading (in order to clarify). You may wish to repeat back the words that the person has used (particularly if it's a child disclosing)
  - o *Maintain confidentiality-* TRIN maintain confidentiality of the shared information, not making any promise on how information will have to be passed on and what action you will be taking in this regard
  - o *record the information-* TRIN use the safeguarding incident disclosure form to record the information about the incident.
  - o *Ensure the persons safety-* Keep calm and reassure the person that they aren't to blame for what has happened to them (survivors of abuse frequently feel that they are)
  - o *Seek required support-* Seek confidential advice from the Line Manager/Principal Investigator and the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Director of HR. The recipient of information should not investigate.
3. **Report** - Make sure you know how to record and report a safeguarding concern. If you are worried that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused in any way you should raise a concern. In doubt, immediately report.
- o Report an incident or a concern using the paper based safeguarding incident disclosure form.
  - o Any report should be made as soon as possible. Records should be signed and dated. Refer to the safeguarding incident disclosure form as a guide to the information that should be recorded. This should be done immediately and certainly within 24 hours.
- All records should be treated as confidential. They should be passed only to the person(s) specified in the reporting model.

4. **Refer-** if there is danger to a child or vulnerable adult then the matter must be referred to the Principal Investigator and a designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible. If the situation is an emergency, then TRIN refers to the relevant authority.

### **Incidents that must be reported/recorded**

If any of the following occur this should be reported immediately to the appropriate officer and record the incident. It also should also need to ensure that the local partner staff and parents are informed:

- If any employee(including you) accidentally hurt a child or vulnerable adult
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- If a child, vulnerable adult or any other person appears to be sexually aroused by any employee actions
- If a child, vulnerable adult or any other person misunderstands or misinterprets something any employee have done.

### **Reporting concerns about suspected abuse**

Any suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused by either a member of staff or a participant should be reported to the Child Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child or vulnerable adult in question and any other person who may be at risk.

- All suspicions, allegations and incidents should be recorded.
- If after consideration, the Child Protection Officer is concerned, they will refer the allegation to the local appropriate social services department.
- If the Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Director.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff or participant, there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

### **Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a **need to know** basis only. This includes the following people:

- the Child Protection Officers
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- social services/police
- the Director

All the process will be reported and any employee who have been or has seen any incidents should report any issue immediately. Any actions taken after careful consideration should also be reported and acknowledged.

### **Responsibilities in Safeguarding**

Those working with TRIN:

- To understand the Safeguarding Policy and follow them
- To immediately inform the authority of any potential safeguarding issue, and no

one else unless permission is given to do so.

- To keep a written record of the safeguarding concern with date and time
- To ensure that information is kept confidential and only shared on a professional, “need to know” basis
- To follow any policy, procedure and rules by TRIN