



Safeguarding Policy

Last Updated: 20 March 2023



Purpose

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Think Pacific is committed to ensuring the health, safety, welfare and development of all participants and personnel regardless of gender, age, stage of development, disability, sexual orientation, religion, culture or ethnicity.
- 1.2. We expect participants and personnel to show respect for, and understanding of, all people's rights and to conduct themselves in a way that reflects these principles. This is a proactive policy designed to prevent harm, injury or abuse to any participants or personnel and to ensure swift, decisive action to counteract any danger. Think Pacific will: Treat all people with respect. Carefully recruit and select all personnel and participants in leadership positions. Respond to concerns and allegations appropriately. Share information about safeguarding concerns with agencies as required. Provide effective management for participants and personnel through supervision, support and training.
- 1.3. When there are concerns about the welfare of any person, all participants and personnel in our organisation are expected to share those concerns with the Lead for Safeguarding, or the Proxy for Safeguarding.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. The procedures outlined in this policy are to assist Think Pacific participants and personnel to protect all persons by identifying clear instructions in accordance with the legislative framework. They include: 1) Abuse – what it is and how to recognise the signs? 2) Procedure for preventing abuse 3) Procedure for responding to the discovery and disclosure of abuse and how to respond sensitively to persons who have been abused 4) Procedure for responding to allegations against staff
- 2.2. The Care Act 2014 has six key principles which inform the way in which all of the workforce should work with adults. They are:

- 2.2.1. Empowerment - Presumption of person led decisions and informed consent.
- 2.2.2. Prevention - It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- 2.2.3. Proportionality - Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- 2.2.4. Protection - Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- 2.2.5. Partnership - Local solutions through services working with their communities
- 2.2.6. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- 2.2.7. Accountability - Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

3. Scope of the policy

3.1. Definitions for the purpose of this policy:

- 3.1.1. **Participant:** Any person who is participating in Think Pacific programmes or activities in a volunteer capacity, regardless of role, age or nationality.
- 3.1.2. **Vulnerable Adult** Broadly defined for this policy, a vulnerable adult is any person aged over 18 years “who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation”.
- 3.1.3. **Personnel:** Any person who is recruited into a paid or unpaid position, regardless of the location of work or nationality. For the purposes of this policy this includes Trustees of the Think Pacific Foundation. In the instance an in-country staff member reports or is implicated in a safeguarding concern, this will need to be reported to local authorities as below.

3.2. This policy applies to all Think Pacific participants and personnel, in any capacity, of any age, whether in the UK or overseas.

3.3. This safeguarding policy applies equally to children (defined as persons under 18 years of age), adults who are classed as ‘vulnerable’ and those who are not.

- 3.4.** It is essential that everyone who volunteers or works for Think Pacific is aware of their responsibilities under this policy and abides by it.
- 3.5.** It is not within the scope of this policy to cover any person who is not a participant or personnel in a Think Pacific program.
- 3.6.** In the instance that a safeguarding concern is raised regarding someone who is outside the scope of this policy, concerns should be raised locally with the appropriate authorities.

4. Policy review

- 4.1.** This policy was approved by Think Pacific and by the Directors on 1 September 2018
- 4.2.** This policy It is reviewed annually by the Board of Directors

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1.** The Lead for Safeguarding (Fiji Director) is responsible for:
 - 5.1.1.** Monitoring and recording concerns.
 - 5.1.2.** Making referrals to social care services without delay.
 - 5.1.3.** Liaison with other agencies.
 - 5.1.4.** Arranging training for all staff.
 - 5.1.5.** Ensuring this policy is reviewed annually.
 - 5.1.6.** Ensure it is implemented throughout the organisation and safeguarding training given.
 - 5.1.7.** Ensure it is annually reviewed.
 - 5.1.8.** Ensure monitoring and recording procedures are implemented.
- 5.2.** The Deputy or Proxy (If the Lead or Deputy are immediately unavailable), should be available to support or cover for the nominated lead. In the instance where complaint or allegation is against the nominated lead, the matter will be referred to a member of the Senior Management Team.

5.3. The Board of Trustees have primary responsibility for safeguarding. The Fiji Ministry and Charity Commission makes it clear that trustees need to take steps to safeguard and take responsibility for the children with whom the charity works. This means:

- 5.3.1.** Acting in their best interests.
- 5.3.2.** Taking all reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them.
- 5.3.3.** Assessing and managing risk.
- 5.3.4.** Putting safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
- 5.3.5.** Undertaking ongoing monitoring, and reviewing, to ensure that safeguards are being implemented and are effective.
- 5.3.6.** Responding appropriately to allegations of abuse

6. Prevention of abuse

6.1. Protecting people is not just about policing or investigating the possibility of abuse, it is also about preventing it. Think Pacific has put in place procedures to ensure that:

- 6.1.1.** Any personnel or participants applying for jobs with Think Pacific are checked for their suitability.
- 6.1.2.** All Think Pacific personnel and participants are trained in safeguarding including in-country briefing.
- 6.1.3.** Personnel follow the information within the Staff Handbook, and participants adhere to the Participant Code of Conduct with regard to their dealings with all people.
- 6.1.4.** Policy and practice are reviewed regularly.

7. Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse

7.1. The Care and Support Statutory Guidance Issued under the Care Act 2014 provides guidance on recognising and responding to abuse. It highlights that abuse may be the result of a deliberate or accidental act, may occur through ignorance, can be carried out by someone with any relation to the victim, may occur once, or multiple times, may affect more than one person and can occur anywhere.

- 7.2.** It provides a list of possible forms of abuse: Physical, Sexual, Psychological, Exploitation, Financial or material abuse, Neglect and acts of omission, Discriminatory, Institutional.
- 7.3.** There are many indicators, both physical and behavioural, of abuse but as no person will demonstrate all signs simultaneously, and as none of the signs individually or in any combination conclusively indicate abuse, it is often difficult to detect and is seldom clear-cut.
- 7.4.** Think Pacific's personnel and participants interact with individuals over prolonged periods of time and it is important that all concerns of possible abuse, however vague, are raised with the Lead, Deputy or Proxy for Safeguarding.

8. Mental capacity

- 8.1.** Think Pacific acknowledges the five key principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 by recognising that:
 - 8.1.1.** A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that they lack capacity.
 - 8.1.2.** A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps to help them to do so have been taken without success.
 - 8.1.3.** A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because they make an unwise decision.
 - 8.1.4.** An act done, or decision made, under this Act for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done, or made, in their best interests.
 - 8.1.5.** Before the act is done, or the decision is made, regard must be had to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is less restrictive of the person's rights and freedom of action.

9. Treating all people with respect

- 9.1.** All personnel of Think Pacific and participants within its programs must endeavour to treat all people with respect, regardless of ability or culture.

- 9.2.** We ensure that all personnel read and acknowledge the Staff Handbook, and every participant reads and acknowledges Think Pacific's Code of Conduct on commencement of their working or volunteering with the organisation.

10. Recruitment

- 10.1.** Think Pacific recruits personnel and participants, and has policies in place for each of these recruitment processes.
- 10.2.** Think Pacific ensures that all recruitment is carried out in a fair and transparent manner, and the required background checks are undertaken.

11. Training

- 11.1.** All successful applicants undertake an induction process on commencement of their role with Think Pacific. This process is delivered and documented differently depending on whether the applicant is personnel or a participant.
- 11.2. Personnel:** Think Pacific has determined that there are three tiers of Safeguarding training required for personnel within our organisation, based on the amount of face-to-face interaction personnel has with participants, existing reporting structures and an individual's role within the organisation. The staff member will undertake an online training course or attend face-to-face safeguarding training within Fiji, with specific training delivered by Senior Staff.
- 11.3. Tier one - Lead, Deputy and Proxies for Safeguarding in Fiji.** Due to the nature of the level of responsibility within the organisation, this cohort of personnel requires high level training, and is also responsible for providing lower tier training. Training includes: How to recognise behavioural/physical indicators of abuse, how to respond to a disclosure of abuse and manage (not investigate) the disclosure and how to escalate concerns outside the organisation. Discussion with the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding to ensure a clear understanding of all aspects of the Safeguarding Policy and actions to follow a reported disclosure or suspicion of abuse. A register must be signed to confirm understanding of the policy and procedures

- 11.4. Tier two – Leaders, Country Project Managers, Deputy Operations Managers:** Personnel on this tier have regular or prolonged face-to-face contact with participants, and as such are likely to witness indicators of abuse. Trustees are included in this level for training purposes. Training includes: How to recognise behavioural/physical indicators of abuse and respond to a disclosure of abuse and how to escalate concerns within the organisation. A register must be signed to confirm understanding of the policy and procedures
- 11.5. Tier three – Administration Staff, All other Think Pacific staff.** Personnel on this tier have minimal face-to-face contact with participants, however it is possible that a safeguarding disclosure may be made to them. Training includes: How to respond to a disclosure of abuse and escalate concerns within the organisation. A register must be signed to confirm understanding of the policy and procedures.
- 11.6. Participants in Think Pacific Programmes:** Safeguarding is covered within the workshops during In-Country Briefing as part of induction in Fiji. Safeguarding practices are referenced in the Code of Conduct and online pre-departure portal. Participants sign to acknowledge that they have received and understand this information.

12. Confidentiality

- 12.1.** Think Pacific has guidelines surrounding confidentiality for both personnel and participants which are covered during relevant inductions. As part of this, Think Pacific recognizes the principle that the welfare of any personnel and participants overrides any obligations of confidence that may be held to others. Individual cases will only be shared or discussed on a “need to know” basis.
- 12.2.** All media enquiries will be handled by the Communications Lead (UK Director) at Think Pacific Head office or their proxy as appropriate.
- 12.3.** In cases of disclosure of abuse by any person, all Think Pacific personnel and participants are obliged to share the information with the Lead, Deputy or Proxy for Safeguarding who may have to refer any concerns to social care services, or the police in an emergency.

13. Responding to disclosures or concerns

- 13.1. Immediate Response To A Person Disclosing Abuse:** Personnel and participants to whom a disclosure is made should:
- 13.1.1.** Ensure the person is safe.
 - 13.1.2.** Stay calm.
 - 13.1.3.** Listen carefully to what is said without interrupting.
 - 13.1.4.** Allow the person to continue at her/his own pace.
 - 13.1.5.** Explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others - do not promise to keep secrets.
 - 13.1.6.** Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.
 - 13.1.7.** Ask questions for clarification only and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
 - 13.1.8.** Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared. All information, however seemingly insignificant, about any situation that gives rise for concern that a person might be suffering harm must be passed on.
 - 13.1.9.** Comprehensive notes should be made using the Incident Report Form.
 - 13.1.10.** It is important to record the details of an allegation or reported incident regardless of whether or not a referral is subsequently made to a statutory agency.
 - 13.1.11.** The report should be clear and factual since any information you have may be valuable to professionals investigating the incident and may, at some time in the future, be used as evidence in court.

14. Not in the scope of Think Pacific policy

- 14.1.** *It is not the responsibility of Think Pacific personnel or participants to investigate or to decide whether a person is being abused – merely to report discovery or suspicion of abuse to the Lead for Safeguarding or their deputy/proxy, following the guidelines given in this policy.*
- 14.2.** *It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for*

deciding whether or not abuse has occurred – this is a task for professional agencies on a referral to them of concern about the person by the Lead for Safeguarding.

- 14.3. ***It is not the responsibility of Think Pacific to keep any person who makes an allegation updated or informed with the details and outcome of any resulting investigation.***

15. Incident Report Form

- 15.1.** The Incident Report Form should be sent to the Lead for Safeguarding in the Think Pacific Head Office by the fastest possible method.
- 15.2.** If the Lead for Safeguarding is not available, contact must be made with the Deputy for Safeguarding or the Duty Manager. Prompt action is paramount.
- 15.3.** The Lead for Safeguarding will then initiate the procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse.
- 15.4.** Wherever practicable, it is up to the Lead for Safeguarding, and the Lead for Safeguarding alone, to make contact with the necessary professional services e.g. social services, police or report to Save the Children (or other in-country specialist organisation as appropriate).
- 15.5.** Think Pacific has relationships with these organisations for this specific reason and ensure a protocol of appropriate referral is in place.
- 15.6.** In an instance where the concern is related to the Lead for Safeguarding, the concern will be managed by a different Think Pacific Director.
- 15.7.** If the concern is related to a Proxy for Safeguarding, it will be managed by the Proxy's line manager in consultation with the Lead for Safeguarding.

16. Suspecting abuse

- 16.1.** A concern regarding suspected or likely abuse may become apparent by:
- 16.1.1.** First hand observations and concerns.
 - 16.1.2.** Being told by another person that they have concerns about a person.
 - 16.1.3.** A person discloses they have been abused.
 - 16.1.4.** An abuser discloses they have abused
- 16.2.** A concern may also arise because of difficulties experienced by other people, e.g.
- 16.2.1.** Domestic Violence incidents.
 - 16.2.2.** Mental Health issues.

16.2.3. Substance and Alcohol Abuse Incidents

- 16.3. Remember: Do not delay. Do not investigate. Seek advice from the Lead, Proxy or Deputy for Safeguarding. Make careful recording of anything observed or told.
- 16.4. Think Pacific ensures and emphasises that everyone in our organisation understands and knows how to share any concerns immediately with the Lead, Deputy or Proxy (if overseas) for Safeguarding. We do this by including training with briefing and inductions.

17. Lead for Safeguarding response when alerted to cases of allegation or disclosure of abuse:

- 17.1. Receive information, directly or indirectly, from any participants or personnel regarding safeguarding concerns, and maintain accurate records.
- 17.2. Assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate (***although no direct investigation with the person should take place***).
- 17.3. Consult initially with a statutory safeguarding agency such as the local social services department, Save the Children or health board, to test out any doubts or uncertainty about the concerns as soon as possible.
- 17.4. Investigate breaches of the Code of Conduct and take appropriate action.
- 17.5. Oversee any further disclosures.
- 17.6. In conjunction with fellow Trustees of Think Pacific Foundation, inform the Fiji Ministry or Charity Commission in the instance where there is an allegation or suspicion of a serious incident that poses a serious risk to the charity's work, beneficiaries or reputation.

18. Complaints against Think Pacific participant

- 18.1. If a complaint has been made against a Think Pacific personnel or participant, the situation will be reported to the Lead for Safeguarding and managed as appropriate. In the instance where the concern raised involves the Lead for Safeguarding, the matter will be managed by a nominated Trustee.
- 18.2. It is the responsibility of the Lead for Safeguarding to ensure that these procedures are rigorously adhered to. In the case that the Lead is implicated, the matter should be reported to another member of the Senior Management Team and managed as appropriate.

- 18.3.** If the investigation is regarding an overseas participant, or occurred overseas, the concern will be reported to the Lead for Safeguarding and UK Directors/ Trustees.
- 18.4.** With regards to disciplinary and grievance procedures, no steps will be taken until the concern has been fully discussed and a strategy agreed with the Lead for Safeguarding, social care services and/or the police. Any investigation will override the need to implement any such procedures.

19. Supporting staff or participants

- 19.1.** Think Pacific will:
 - 19.1.1.** Ensure that staff or volunteers reporting suspected abuse are appropriately advised and supported.
 - 19.1.2.** Provide support to staff and volunteers accused of abuse in conjunction with the relevant line manager, to assist staff and volunteers who have been victims of malicious or false child abuse claims to reintegrate into their team/voluntary activities.
 - 19.1.3.** Think Pacific will not be able to update any volunteer or staff with information following the report of abuse, other than confirmation that the case has been referred to the appropriate national body in line with due process. We are not privy to receive any information from investigations by external organisations.

20. Record keeping

- 20.1.** In any case of safeguarding being raised, all records will be securely kept in a locked cabinet/drawer in the Lead for Safeguarding's desk.
- 20.2.** Only the Lead and/or Deputy for safeguarding will have access and records will only be kept as long as necessary. Normally these records will be passed to social care services, or relevant authorities.
- 20.3.** All records will be written by the person with the concern within 24 hours, on headed paper or incident sheets, and will be factual and non-judgmental.
- 20.4.** It is helpful to record any known details of the adult involved e.g. name, address, date of birth etc. It is equally important to record the reasons for making the decision not to refer to social care services, or relevant authorities if overseas. Always sign, date and time these records.

21. Responsibilities and Contacts

- 21.1. Lead for Safeguarding: Harry Hunter, Director, harry@thinkpacific.com
00447719 303200
- 21.2. Proxy: Cam Watson - Regional Manager, +679 767 7404 (Fiji). Email:
cam@thinkpacific.com
- 21.3. Proxy: Laisa Drua - Operations Manager, +679 7449679 (Fiji). Email:
operations@thinkpacific.com