

Safeguarding policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at-risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance (this includes people Avert may engage with for the purpose of consultation, research, or user testing) from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with Avert. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated with Avert
- The design and implementation of Avert's programmes and activities

The policy lays out the commitments made by Avert, and informs staff and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

This policy does not cover:

- Sexual harassment in the workplace – this is dealt with under Avert's Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by Avert or associated personnel

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur. In our sector, we often use this to apply to the safety and welfare of people involved in the delivery or receipt of humanitarian aid and development assistance.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary below.

Scope

- All staff contracted by Avert
- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to Avert, including but not limited to the following: consultants; volunteers; contractors; programme visitors including journalists, photographers

Policy Statement:

Avert believes that everyone we come into contact with either in person or through our digital channels, regardless of age, gender, disability or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Avert will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff

or associated personnel.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding [as appropriate]: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. These key areas of safeguarding may have different policies and procedures associated with them (see Associated Policies).

Avert is committed to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

Prevention

Avert responsibilities

Avert will:

- Ensure all staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy
- Design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with Avert either in person or through our digital channels. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated
- Ensure all staff understand and sign up to Avert's Safeguarding Code of Conduct
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process

Staff responsibilities

Child safeguarding

Avert staff and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
- Sexually abuse or exploit children
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect – either in person or on line
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking

Adult safeguarding

Avert staff and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at-risk adults
- Subject an at-risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect – either in person or on-line

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

Avert staff and associated personnel must not:

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance – either in person or on-line
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics

Additionally, Avert staff and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, both on Avert's online platforms/channels and in person
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by an Avert staff member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff member

Enabling reports

Avert will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities we work with.

Any staff reporting concerns or complaints will be protected by Avert's Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblowing) Policy.

Avert will also accept complaints from external sources such as our digital users, partners and official bodies.

How to report a safeguarding concern

Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to their line manager. If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to their line manager (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to any other appropriate staff member. For example, this could be the Board Chair.

Digital users, partners, official bodies and other external individuals can report a concern by emailing info@avert.org. This reporting information can also be found in the [Complaints Policy](#) and on the [Contacts page](#).

Response

Avert will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure (see Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns in Associated Policies).

Avert will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy.

Avert will offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff or associated personnel, regardless of

whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.

Associated policies

- Code of Conduct
- Anti Bullying and Harassment policy
- Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblower) policy
- Complaints Policy
- Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns

Other policies as appropriate.

Glossary of Terms

Beneficiary of Assistance

Someone who directly receives goods or services from Avert's programmes – this includes people we engage with online through all available channels and platforms.

Child

A person below the age of 18.

Harm

Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights.

Psychological harm

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13).

Safeguarding

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Sexual abuse

The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual exploitation

The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

Survivor

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

At-risk adult

Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, gender, sexual orientation, 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.

Last full review:

19 December 2019

Next full review:

19 December 2021