

## VULNERABLE ADULTS PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that ITF upholds and supports the highest standards of conduct with regard to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and does not engage in or support any activity that involves the maltreatment of vulnerable adults.
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## 1. THIS POLICY DRAWS UPON:

- ITF's Child Protection Policy (2017) and the associated policies consulted.
- [Safeguarding Adults: A National Framework of Standards for good practice and outcomes in adult protection work, 2005](#)
- [Department of Health: No Secrets, Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse, 2000](#)

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

As an environmental organisation that works directly or indirectly with vulnerable adults, International Tree Foundation is committed to promote the welfare of vulnerable adults who are involved with our projects and to safeguard them from harm.

## 3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that ITF upholds and supports the highest standards of conduct with regard to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and does not engage in or support any activity that involves the maltreatment or abuse of vulnerable adults.

## 4. SCOPE

ITF's Vulnerable Adults Protection policy will apply to all members, trustees, staff, volunteers, partners, grantees and contractors.

ITF requires a Vulnerable Adults Protection policy because:

- a) ITF supports tree planting and environmental projects which sometimes engage vulnerable adults in practical and educational activities.
- b) ITF supports specific environmental education programmes such as Fruit-full Communities which engage with vulnerable adults
- c) ITF works in countries where poverty may increase vulnerability to sexual exploitation, maltreatment or abuse
- d) From time to time, ITF may organise or take part in other activities involving Vulnerable adults.

ITF staff, contractors and volunteers may work directly or indirectly with vulnerable adults in any of the above settings. For example they may meet vulnerable adults, join in their activities, and take photographs or videos, while carrying out monitoring visits to projects that ITF supports. In programmes such as Fruit-Full Communities, ITF staff, contractors and volunteers directly train or organise activities for vulnerable adults. ITF has a responsibility to ensure that this is done in a way that supports vulnerable adults' welfare and keeps them safe.

## 5. DEFINITIONS AND REFERENCES:

*Definition of vulnerable adults:* In the U.K., a vulnerable adult is a person over the age of 18 “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” (Department of Health, “No Secrets” - Section 2.3.). Vulnerability may arise from many circumstances such as poverty, homelessness, displacement (by war, famine etc), refugee status, mental health issues, mental or physical disability, unemployment, or alcohol/substance misuse.

*Definition of Safeguarding:* Safeguarding is a term which is broader than protection and relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of vulnerable adults and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.

*Definition of abuse:* Abuse is maltreatment that can cause damage to a person and violates a person’s human and civil rights. The abuse can vary, from treating someone with disrespect in a way that significantly affects the person’s quality of life, to causing actual physical or mental suffering. It can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetrated by anyone

## 6. CODE OF CONDUCT

International Tree Foundation have a duty of care to the vulnerable adults with whom they work and with whom their representatives work. We and our partners have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for vulnerable adults in our programmes. These standards include specifically:

- The welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount
- No vulnerable adult or group of vulnerable adults must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs
- All vulnerable adults without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs
- Vulnerable adults and partner organisations will be informed of the policy and procedures as appropriate
- All concerns, and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by trustees, staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately – e.g. through a referral to vulnerable adults’ social care services or in emergencies, the police.

ITF will:

- Comply with the UK government inter-agency statutory guidance [Safeguarding policy: protecting vulnerable adults](#)
- Review this Policy, and have it approved and endorsed by the Trustees, annually or when legislation changes
- Identify ITF projects that engage or may engage vulnerable adults in their activities

- Ask grantees to identify and describe any involvement of vulnerable adults in their projects
- Work with and through partner institutions such as YMCAs that are legally registered to work with vulnerable adults
- Report any instance of sexual exploitation, maltreatment or abuse of vulnerable adults by ITF trustees, staff, volunteers, partners, grantees and contractors to the police or appropriate authority including the Charity Commission. Such behaviour will result in dismissal and disciplinary action.
- Not provide favourable references for a person who is found to have committed such acts.

In 2017 ITF will review its policy and procedure with regard to the privacy and protection of vulnerable adults online, and our use of photographs and videos of vulnerable adults. In the meantime, we will inform our partners and staff that they must obtain consent from the photographed individual adult before sending any photograph or video. We will not publish such photographs or videos without confirmation of consent.

### **The Safeguarding Officer**

The Programmes Manager (Paul Laird) will have responsibility for ensuring that ITF's Vulnerable Adults Protection Policies and Procedures are adhered to. In his absence the Finance and Facilities Manager (Marika Haseldine) will deputise.

### *Responsibilities of the Safeguarding Officer:*

- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected
- To support, and where possible secure, the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability.

### *Support for those who report abuse:*

All those reporting abuse or expressing concern (whether they are staff, a volunteer, trainee or member of the general public) should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will be treated confidentially with the exception of passing on reports to the appropriate authorities.

### *The vulnerable adult has the right:*

- To independence and to have their privacy protected
- To be made aware of this policy
- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
- To be involved in any process as appropriate
- To receive information about the outcome.

## *Recruitment and induction of Staff:*

- All UK-based staff, contractors and volunteers who may work unsupervised with vulnerable adults in their role, must have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check carried out before they begin work with International Tree Foundation.
- All staff based in other countries who may work with vulnerable adults in their role will adhere to equivalent national legislation.
- Any person with convictions that may signify a potential hazard to vulnerable adults will not be allowed to work or work unsupervised.
- All staff and volunteers will receive a copy of this policy as soon as they start work at International Tree Foundation.
- All staff and volunteer staff must read the policy and reflect on any potential specific interaction with vulnerable adults through working with ITF. They must agree with their line manager the specific responsibilities and actions they will take in line with the policy to ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.