



## Executive Summary

### Situation Analysis Study on Child Safeguarding Policy

#### (Study with Sports Organisations in Hong Kong)

July 2020

Child Safeguarding is a new boarder approach to preventing child maltreatment. The issue of child abuse has all along been of great concern to the Hong Kong society, yet the discussion very much rests on handling child abuse within the familial context.

While child-related organisations have frequent contact with children in their daily operation, we believe holding these organisations accountable, upholding the primary principal of safeguarding children's best interest, is important in creating a safe and enabling environment for children's wellness and development. In recognition of this, there has been a global trend for sports organisations to set up an organisational child safeguarding policy to protect children within the organisation.

Governed by the 'do-no-harm' principle, Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP) is a set of clear standards and guidelines that minimises harm to children whom the organisation contact, by governing the behavior of staff and associates of the organisation, and embedding procedures to ensure concerns over a child's welfare are swiftly responded to.

Plan International Hong Kong has conducted the first-ever landscape research on child safeguarding situation in sports sector in Hong Kong. With 20 proposed child safeguarding policy standards developed with comprehensive literature review, this study attempts to benchmark the implementation of child safeguarding policy in local sports organisations against the global standards. It also aims at analysing the factors influencing the level of CSP implementation, including the understanding on child abuse, attitudes towards CSP and if any barriers exist which affect the level of CSP implementation.

Here are some of the highlights of research findings:

1. **Positive attitude towards CSP:** 80% of sports organisations thought that the CSP allowed staff to differentiate appropriate and inappropriate behavior towards children and minimise harm to children.
2. **Limited capacity in implementing CSP:** 62% of the sports organisations thought they did not have or were not sure if they had sufficient knowledge to implement CSP.
3. **CSP is not prevalent among sports organisations:** Nearly half (46%) of the sports organisations implemented less than half of the child safeguarding policy standards we



proposed. 17% implemented no formal child safeguarding measures to protect children's safety in the institution.

We advise the government and the sports sector jointly create an enabling environment for sports organisations to adopt child safeguarding measures in their institution by the following measures:

1. Establish a set of minimum child safeguarding standards in the sports sector
  - Funding bodies like Leisure and Cultural Services Department and The Hong Kong Jockey Club should incorporate child safeguarding standards into its funding requirements in funding for sports institutions
  - Service buyers like schools should also incorporate child safeguarding requirements into their requirements of outsourcing for any sports education activities.
  - Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong China and National Sports Associations should facilitate sports organisations to establish their own Child Safeguarding Policy by setting up 'safeguarding procedural guidelines' for coaches of different types of sports.
  
2. Provide training to practitioners to foster a long-term practice change in organisations
  - Child safeguarding training should be incorporated into the curriculum of sport and physical education in university programmes to enhance the capacity of coaches in protecting children in their daily work.
  
3. Provide education to children and parents to enhance self-protection awareness and strategies to any potential risk and harm

The above is only an excerpt. Please refer to the research summary for more details.

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