



## CHS Alliance: Code of Conduct

*APPROVED BY THE BOARD AT ITS MEETING ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2018*

### 1. Introduction

In keeping with its vision and values, the CHS Alliance is committed to maintaining the highest degree of ethical conduct amongst all its staff and associated personnel. To help increase understanding, this Code of Conduct details the CHS Alliance's expectations in key areas.

All staff are representatives of the Alliance and should recognise that both professional and personal behaviour can either enhance or damage the reputation and standing of the CHS Alliance amongst members, partners, funders, authorities, suppliers and most importantly people and communities vulnerable to risk and affected by disaster, conflict or poverty.

Therefore, staff of the CHS Alliance are personally and collectively responsible for upholding and promoting the requirements as outlined in this Code of Conduct.

### 2. Scope and Purpose

This Code applies to all employees, volunteers, consultants, interns, and any other individuals working for or representing the CHS Alliance, including CHS Alliance board members. The term 'staff' throughout this document refers to the whole of this group.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to set out the conduct expected of staff whilst under contract to the organisation, and forms part of all contracts of employment. The Code is applicable at all times. Breaches of the Code of Conduct are grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Whilst recognising that local laws and cultures differ considerably from one country to another, the Code of Conduct is developed from international and UN standards and staff are expected to uphold local law wherever they operate, except where the Code of Conduct is more stringent, in which case the Code applies.

### 3. Expected behaviours

Staff are expected to:

- ◆ deal with others fairly, with respect and dignity and be responsible and accountable for words and action
- ◆ listen to others respectfully and actively and deal with disagreements professionally
- ◆ value and welcome diversity
- ◆ pay due respect to customs, habits or religious beliefs and to dress in a manner appropriate to the country they are based in or visiting
- ◆ use language appropriately and not behave in a way which may offend, alienate or patronise others
- ◆ have appropriate authority to act or commit the CHS Alliance in what is written, said or emailed to others
- ◆ dress appropriately for the office or for an external event

- ◆ declare any potential conflict of interest or bias, including but not limited to, current or former relationships with member organisations or potential member organisations
- ◆ not abuse or misuse their position, power or influence for personal benefit or to benefit another person, or cause harm to another person.
- ◆ on joining the CHS Alliance, declare past criminal convictions and notify the CHS Alliance should any proceedings occur during employment
- ◆ support colleagues in achieving organisation standards and targets
- ◆ take an active part in all team or work related meetings
- ◆ contribute towards the creation and maintenance of an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse, and fraud and corruption
- ◆ maintain open and professional relationships
- ◆ respect differences in culture, religion and politics
- ◆ follow this Code of Conduct and report any incidents or concerns

#### **4. Code of Conduct standards**

The Code of Conduct covers the following areas:

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| Uphold the integrity and reputation of the CHS Alliance  |
| Ensure the personal and professional conduct and not compromising the work of the CHS Alliance |
| Refrain from abuse of power, exploitation, bullying, harassment and discrimination             |
| Be accountable for resources   |
| Maintain the health, safety, security and welfare of employees                                 |

#### **Uphold the integrity and reputation of the CHS Alliance**

It is the responsibility of all staff of the Alliance to ensure that publications and communications bearing the CHS Alliance name should not contain material that is inaccurate or detrimental to the good reputation of the Alliance. It is important to note that disclaimers are not effective in absolving an organisation of responsibility or in protecting its reputation. In addition, all external communications shall also adhere to the CHS Alliance brand guidelines.

When producing publications or communications on behalf of the Alliance, it is the responsibility of staff to check that the procedure for 'sign-off' is consistent with this Code of Conduct.

Flagship publications must be prior approved by the Executive Director. All other public CHS Alliance materials should be reviewed and approved by the Communications team prior to publishing.



The following representational actions are prohibited:

- a) Making any public statement relating to political or military situations, including voluntarily providing evidence or information which may be known to staff by reason of their position, in any type of legal proceedings or to prosecuting authorities without prior authorisation of the Executive Director
- b) Improper use of the CHS Alliance logo
- c) Any acts or omissions that could discredit the CHS Alliance
- d) Bringing disrepute to the Alliance by failure to pay due respect to customs, habits or religious beliefs and to dress in an appropriate manner
- e) Accepting or exercising any public appointment or outside employment in conflict with their role at the Alliance without the prior agreement of the Executive Director
- f) Any intentional false and malicious statements, misrepresentation or false accusation of another staff member or third party

It is prohibited to divulge any confidential information acquired while carrying out duties with the CHS Alliance.

An employee will not, without the written consent of the Alliance (the ED), disclose, divulge or communicate to any client, member or third party any systems, methods, processes, ideas, specifications, data, know-how, drawings, facts, figures or other information of any nature which shall become known in the course of or arising out of their work for the Alliance, except:

- where this information is intended to be public or already in the public domain;
- to persons directly linked with the service to whom it is necessary to pass such information during the course of our work and who have signed a confidentiality agreement relating to the service, unless you are authorised in writing to do so by the owner of such information.

During employment with the Alliance a staff member will not obtain or seek to obtain any financial advantage (direct or indirect) from the disclosure of information acquired by you in the course of your employment with the Alliance.

If in doubt about whether any information is confidential a member of staff should discuss the matter with the appropriate manager or the Executive Director, or in the case of the Executive Director, with the Chair of the Board. Staff should also refer to the **Data Protection Policy**.

In the event that it is proven that an employee has breached this clause on confidentiality and intellectual property the Alliance may terminate employment immediately without any notice of termination.

**Ensure the highest standards of personal and professional conduct and not compromise the work of the CHS Alliance**

As representatives of the organisation, staff behaviour must be seen to be of the highest standard and in keeping with the CHS Alliance, vision, mission and aims. Therefore:

- ◆ If staff are attending conferences and evening events on Alliance business and representing the Alliance at the event they are expected to remain professional and network, represent or liaise during the whole of the event.
- ◆ All staff are expected not to be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol while at work, or on Alliance business.
- ◆ Staff are required not to possess illegal drugs at work. If they are found to be in possession, the management reserves the right to formally report them to the police. Staff should let their managers know if prescribed or non-prescribed drugs have side-effects which may impact on their work.
- ◆ If someone is found or suspected to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal (or unauthorised) drugs at work, colleagues are expected to report this immediately to the staff member's line manager or if they are not available to the Executive Director.
- ◆ Staff must inform their line manager (or alternative) if a personal relationship develops between themselves and another member of staff, and relationship in line management is discouraged.
- ◆ Staff are expected not to engage in any form of verbal, emotional or physical abuse
- ◆ Staff will not use a CHS Alliance computer to view, download, create or distribute inappropriate material that is contrary to the CHS Alliance's aims and values such as pornography or depictions of child abuse
- ◆ Use of IT equipment, software, email or personal use of social media must ensure that the CHS Alliance is not discredited or brought into ill repute. Refer to **IT Policy and Procedures**.

## **Refrain from abuse of power, exploitation, bullying, harassment and discrimination**

The Alliance is committed to creating a work environment free of harassment and bullying, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. In addition, all staff have a responsibility to create and maintain an environment that prevents abuse of power, exploitation, bullying, harassment and discrimination and promotes the implementation of the Code of Conduct. The CHS Alliance has a **zero tolerance** policy towards the abuse of power, exploitation, bullying, harassment and discrimination.

### **Abuse of power**

Abuse of power is defined as "the abuse or misuse of position or influence or failure to use proper discretion for personal benefit or to benefit another person ". This includes favouritism, nepotism, cronyism, corruption, bribery and all forms of exploitation, including sexual.

Acts that will be considered abuse of power include:

- ◆ any act which could be considered harassment, mobbing, bullying, discriminatory, racist or an illegitimate use of authority
- ◆ use of position to commit the CHS Alliance legally, financially or morally without authorisation
- ◆ stealing or misappropriation of funds, property or human resources from the Alliance

### **Sexual exploitation and abuse**

Staff must behave according to accepted international human rights standards and laws with regard to sexual conduct. Furthermore, staff must also comply with Swiss or UK law as

appropriate and local laws and prohibitions in the country in which they are travelling and/or based.

The CHS Alliance will take all appropriate measures to prevent sexual exploitation or abuse of anyone by any of its staff and especially to protect people and communities vulnerable to risk and affected by disaster, conflict or poverty. For these purposes and regardless of local laws or lack of such laws, Alliance staff shall while on duty and off duty:

- a) Understand that sexual exploitation and abuse by staff constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
- b) Never engage in any sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. The CHS Alliance has zero tolerance for child exploitation and sexual activity with children. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.
- c) Given the increased vulnerability of populations in situations of natural disasters or conflict, never engage in sexual relationships with members of crisis-affected populations since such relationships are based on inherently unequal power dynamics and undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
- d) Never accept, solicit or engage in the "buying" of or profiting from sexual services. This is applicable to CHS Alliance staff both within and outside of working hours.
- e) Never exploit the vulnerability of any target group in the context of development and humanitarian work, especially women and children, or allow any person/s to be put into compromising situations.
- f) Know that the exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
- g) Never abuse a position to withhold assistance, or give preferential treatment; in order to solicit sexual favours, gifts, payments of any kind, or advantage.
- h) When working with children or vulnerable adults, avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice and never act in ways that may place a child/person at risk of abuse.

Where an Alliance staff member develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow member of staff, he or she must report such concerns to their line manager, or via the Alliance complaints mechanism. See also Alliance's policies **on Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults**.

Any allegation regarding sexual exploitation and abuse will be systematically investigated and if substantiated, will result in disciplinary action. The management also reserves the right to refer to the police and take legal action.

#### **Bullying, harassment and discrimination**

Bullying, harassment (including sexual, gender and racial harassment) and discrimination are not tolerated, along with any unwelcome comment or behaviour that is offensive, demeaning, humiliating, derogatory, or any other inappropriate behaviour that fails to respect the dignity of an individual. The CHS Alliance will also not tolerate victimisation of a person for making allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith, or supporting someone to make such a complaint.

See the full **CHS Alliance Policy for the Prevention of Bullying and Harassment**.

### **Be accountable for resources**

The CHS Alliance is committed to promoting and maintaining the highest level of ethical standards in relation to all of its business activities. All employees are accountable for the CHS Alliance's property, money and use of the internet and email and staff should never take advantage of their position when working with communities, partners or other Alliance stakeholders.

The CHS Alliance's reputation for maintaining lawful business practices is of paramount importance and the **Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy** is designed to preserve this reputation. The CHS Alliance has a **zero tolerance** policy towards fraud and corruption, recognising that fraud is contrary to the fundamental values of integrity, transparency and accountability, and undermines organisational effectiveness.

The rules in relation to conflicts of interest and receipt of gifts are:

- ◆ business interests, directorships, board members and other employment or voluntary work must not conflict with CHS Alliance interests. The Alliance reserves the right to call for the staff member's resignation of any outside offices or employment, if it believes that continuation of employment/membership is against the best interests of Alliance or the individual involved.
- ◆ when offered a gift in relation to work carried out on behalf of the Alliance, staff must abide by the **CHS Alliance Policy on Receipt of Gifts and Giving Gifts**.

Corrupt business practices are prohibited, including failure to disclose or show full transparency of any potential conflict of interest with a supplier, any service provider or business partners (including close family relations, shareholder arrangements and the like).

### **Maintain the health, safety, security and welfare of employees**

The CHS Alliance has a duty to ensure a safe and healthy working environment for all its staff and takes the welfare, health, safety and security of its staff and its partners and other stakeholders very seriously. Therefore, all staff have a responsibility to uphold the following:

- ◆ adhere and follow Alliance security regulations, or those of a nominated security host in a country you are visiting
- ◆ adhere and follow Alliance Health and Safety requirements
- ◆ refrain from using or possessing weapons or ammunition of any kind while on duty
- ◆ to not drive a vehicle while on duty, under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance
- ◆ to not behave in a way that will present risk to the safety, health and welfare of self and others

## 5. Implementation of the Code of Conduct

This document automatically forms part of all contracts of employment and contractual conditions of service.

Managers have a responsibility to ensure that all staff, including newly recruited staff, are provided with a copy of the Code of Conduct, are provided an explanation of its provisions clearly, and ensure that the member of staff sign their agreement to its terms. Any issues from a member of staff should be raised with a manager or the Executive Director.

Breaches of the standards of the Code of Conduct will be subject to investigation and possible disciplinary action in line with CHS Alliance's Disciplinary Procedure. In some cases the matter may be so serious that the CHS Alliance may choose (and in some cases be obliged) to report to a relevant professional or legal organisation/authority. A criminal investigation that leads to prosecution may ensue as a result. Any action taken under these disciplinary procedures does not preclude further administrative, civil or penal responsibility or action.

### Reporting

Any employee who has concerns about the behaviour of another staff member should raise these immediately with the Executive Director. If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to the ED (they may report to any other appropriate staff member – e.g. another senior manager, Executive Director, HR and Admin Officer or the Chair of the Board).

In addition, staff are obligated to bring to the attention of their manager (or alternative) any potential incident, abuse or concern that they witness, are made aware of, or suspect which appears to breach the Standards contained in this Code.

Any concerns will be treated with urgency, consideration and discretion and staff reporting concerns are protected by the **CHS Alliance Whistleblowing Policy**. Reference should also be made to the **Grievance Procedure** or CHS Alliance **Complaints Procedure**.

Staff members receiving reports or concerns are obliged to action or refer the report immediately.

### Staff-on-loan and interns

In the case of substantiated claims against a staff-on-loan the Alliance may, after consultation with the individual and employer, immediately terminate the individual's loan or secondment and provide a full report to the individual's employer. In the case of substantiated claims against interns or any other representatives who have not signed an employment contract, the Alliance may, after consultation with the concerned person, immediately cancel the agreement between the Alliance and this individual.

**REFERENCES** - this Policy must be read in conjunction with other policies of the CHS Alliance: *Diversity Statement; Policy on Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults; Policy on Receipt of Gifts and Giving Gifts; Policy for the Prevention of Bullying and Harassment; Disciplinary Procedure; Grievance Procedure; Whistleblowing Procedure and Complaints Procedure; Data Protection Policy; IT Policy and Procedures.*



**APPROVAL & DATES** - this policy was approved by: the Board on 28 September 2018 and is to be reviewed in 2022.

**POLICY OWNER** – Executive Director

**Code of Conduct: September 2018**

**STATEMENT OF RECEIPT:**

I \_\_\_\_\_, declare that I have received, read and understood the CHS Alliance’s Code of Conduct and all policies noted in the Code. I understand that this Code forms an integral part of my employment contract and conditions of service with the Alliance and agree to abide by its terms and conditions.

I understand that I am expected to report any incidents or concerns relating to the Code of Conduct to a relevant manager.

Signature

Location

Date

Please return this page to the HR and Admin Officer and keep a personal copy of the Code of Conduct for yourself