



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

APPROVED BY THE BOARD AT ITS MEETING ON 1 FEBRUARY 2019

1. Introduction - Statement

The CHS Alliance believes that:

- any form of abuse towards individuals is unacceptable, is an abuse of their rights and will not be tolerated.
- all people have the right to protection from abuse and exploitation, and recognises its responsibility to ensure that staff, volunteers, Board members and others working with the Alliance are clear about the standards of behaviour and practice that are required of them when in contact with individuals, and in particular those who are vulnerable.

The CHS Alliance has a **zero tolerance** approach to exploitation and abuse towards any individual. Therefore, measures are in place to prevent and minimise the risk of abuse, protect staff and safeguard the reputation of the organisation. In support of the CHS Alliance's zero tolerance, all staff are required to **report immediately** any suspected or alleged case of abuse that relate to official duties.

This Policy has been produced to ensure that staff:

- are aware of the problem of abuse
- are clear that the CHS Alliance takes a zero tolerance approach to exploitation and abuse
- safeguard individuals, with emphasis on those who are vulnerable, from abuse through good practice
- respond appropriately when abuse is discovered or suspected
- report all concerns about possible abuse.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the Alliance's headquarters and its branch office and shall be implemented and respected by all staff of the CHS Alliance. The word 'staff' includes the following:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Interns
- Board members
- Consultants
- Other people working on behalf of the CHS Alliance.



It also applies to the Alliance's members, contractors and suppliers in the sense that staff shall report any concerns involving them via the Alliance's complaints mechanism.

This policy does not cover:

- Sexual harassment in the workplace – this is dealt with under CHS Alliance's Policy on Bullying and Harassment
- Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by Alliance's staff as defined above.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions taken shall apply:

- **Vulnerable individuals:** are individuals at greater than normal risk of abuse because they may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against harm or exploitation. This may be due to their condition, circumstance or environment. They may be individuals deemed to be at risk due to their gender, age, sexual orientation, mental or physical health, disability or as a result of disasters or conflicts. Children are a specific category of vulnerable individuals.
- **Child:** In conformity with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, a child is deemed to be a person under the age of 18 years. (Age of consent is a separate issue and is defined locally).
- **Abuse:** the CHS Alliance defines abuse as any act or omission that results in harm to a vulnerable person. Abuse is generally accepted to usually fall into one of four categories: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect, but may occur in any form.
- **Physical abuse:** means any non-accidental act or behavior causing injury, trauma, or other physical suffering or bodily harm. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures. Alternative terms sometimes used include physical assault or physical violence and may also include sexual abuse. Physical abuse may involve more than one abuser, and more than one victim.
- **Emotional abuse:** is defined as behavior that causes psychological trauma or stress. It can take the form of name calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating.
- **Sexual abuse:** is any sexual act to which an adult or a child has not consented to or has been coerced into giving consent through abuse. For examples of behaviours considered as sexual exploitation and abuse by the Alliance, please refer to the Alliance's Code of Conduct.
- **Neglect:** is the failure to care for someone, the failure to provide or ignoring the need for basic necessities of life (where they are available).

4. Application

The CHS Alliance is committed to the protection of the people it works with from harm, abuse and exploitation. Whilst abuse and exploitation can occur anywhere, it is accepted that as an international humanitarian organisation beneficiaries may be particularly vulnerable in this respect.

The CHS Alliance will meet its commitment to protect vulnerable individuals from abuse through Awareness, Prevention, Reporting and Responding:

Awareness: the CHS Alliance will ensure that all staff are aware of the wider problem of abuse against vulnerable individuals through its guidance on prevention of abuse. This Policy, its standards, the reporting framework and other related policies will be shared at induction and during staff meetings. In addition, managers are responsible for explaining the Code of Conduct which includes an outline of the appropriate and expected standards of behaviour. Managers will support employees to understand and adhere to the Code of Conduct in their day-to-day activities and ensure that all staff sign to confirm their understanding of the Code of Conduct.

The CHS Alliance's Code of Conduct is supported by a number of other policies – see below under References. The Code and related policies are reinforced by a disciplinary procedure which ensures that all matters are investigated and dealt with appropriately.

Prevention: the CHS Alliance will seek to minimise the risks to vulnerable individuals in the course of its work. In annex 1 – guidelines are provided on expected standards of behaviour around vulnerable individuals.

The CHS Alliance operates rigorous recruitment and selection processes to ensure there is no known reason why a candidate shouldn't be employed. A key part of the pre-employment clearance process is the requirement of – at least two satisfactory references checks from previous employers, which include specific questions regarding a candidate's suitability to work with and represent the CHS Alliance. Further checks are made through the scrutinising of employment history for any gaps or irregularities, and the verification of professional qualifications. Successful candidates are also asked to provide proof of identity and to sign a declaration of previous criminal convictions. Once employment has commenced, staff are subject to a 3-month probationary period to further assess their suitability.

Reporting: It is mandatory for all staff to report any incidents or concerns relating to this Policy. The CHS Alliance will ensure that staff are clear on what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety or integrity of vulnerable individuals. See How to Raise Concerns – annex 2. All suspected cases of abuse by staff of the Alliance



(as understood under this policy) **must** be reported to the Executive Director. Where this is not appropriate, concerns should be raised directly with the Chair of the Board or through the Alliance's complaints mechanism.

The Board will receive notification of when an incident or concern has been raised under this policy and whether an investigation has been launched. Only the Chair will be given full details.

All cases will be reported in the quarterly report to the Board.

In addition, incidents or concerns (subject to a risk assessment) may also be reported to the relevant police force and/or child protection authority.

Responding: the CHS Alliance views breaches of this Policy, the Code of Conduct and related policies as serious matters. These policies are reinforced by the CHS Alliance Disciplinary Procedure which ensures that all matters are investigated and dealt with appropriately. Where concerns are raised over possible abuse by staff, it is mandatory for senior management to take such concerns very seriously and ensure that appropriate action is taken including a full and proper investigation, and if necessary, co-operation with relevant national and local authorities.

The consequences of any breaches of this Policy by staff may result in their dismissal from employment, volunteer/internship, contractual relationship or Board membership.

In its relations with contractors and suppliers, the Alliance shall exert due diligence and cease any relation with a contractor or supplier acting in breach of this policy.

5. Confidentiality

Allegations of abuse are extremely serious and confidentiality will be of paramount consideration. Any concerns raised will be treated with sensitivity and discretion. The identity of the person raising the matter will be kept confidential if so requested, for as long as possible provided that this is compatible with a proper investigation.

The CHS Alliance has an obligation to ensure that any member of staff who makes a disclosure will not be penalised or suffer any adverse treatment in doing so. The CHS Alliance will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect staff when they raise a concern in good faith and use the procedures available to them.

6. References

This Policy must be read in conjunction with other policies of the CHS Alliance:
Code of Conduct;



Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy;
Disciplinary and Capability Policy and Procedure;
Grievance Policy and Procedure;
Policy on Bullying and Harassment;
Recruitment Policy and Procedure;
Complaints Policy;
Whistleblowing Policy.

7. Monitoring and review

APPROVAL & DATES

This policy was approved by the Board on 1 February 2019 and is to be reviewed periodically and at the latest in 2022 or if legal changes that need to be reflected have occurred.

POLICY OWNER – Executive Director

STATEMENT OF RECEIPT:

I _____, declare that I have received, read and understood the Safeguarding Policy.

I understand that I am expected to report any incidents or concerns related to the Safeguarding Policy in line with the relevant CHS Alliance complaint mechanism.

Signature_____Place_____Date_____

Please return this page to the designated Human Resource focal person.

Annex 1

GUIDELINES: PROTECTION of VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS

It is important for all staff in contact with children and other vulnerable individuals to:

- be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these
- plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risks
- as far as possible, be visible when working with vulnerable persons
- ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised or discussed
- ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged
- talk to vulnerable persons about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns
- empower vulnerable individuals – discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

In general it is inappropriate to:

- spend excessive time alone with children and other vulnerable persons away from others
- take children or other vulnerable individuals to your home, especially where they will be alone with you.

Staff must never:

- hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse vulnerable individuals
- develop physical/sexual relationships with vulnerable individuals
- develop relationships with vulnerable individuals which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- act in ways that may be abusive or may place a vulnerable individual at risk of abuse.

Staff *must* avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example, they should never:

- use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- have a vulnerable individual with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home/ in their hotel room unsupervised
- sleep in the same room or bed as a vulnerable individual with whom they are working
- do things for vulnerable individuals of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- condone, or participate in, behaviour of vulnerable individuals which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade vulnerable individuals, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- discriminate against, show differential treatment towards, or favour particular vulnerable individual to the exclusion of others.

It is mandatory for all staff to report any concerns that they have in relation to this policy.

Annex 2**How to raise concerns**

You must report any concerns that you have about the safety of a child or other vulnerable individual

Abuse is seen or suspected

Allegation of abuse is made

Abuse is disclosed

**Discuss your concerns with the Executive Director
(or the Chair of the Board)**

Focus on:

- Nature of concerns
- Risks to vulnerable individual
- Action/next steps

Concerns must be reported within the same working day.

Detailed written records should be made of all events and what has been said

Where serious concerns exist and there is immediate risk to the child, action must be taken straight away in order to mitigate any further risk.