CHSAlliance

HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE CODE OF CONDUCT

Everything you need to write or review an organisational Code of Conduct.

- ✔ *Checklist*
- ✔ *Resources*
- ✔ *Customisable templates for every step*
- ✔ *A five-step planning process*

CONTENTS

Welcome to the CHS Alliance Toolkit for creating an effective Code of Conduct.

WELCOME

This toolkit has been designed by CHS Alliance to assist organisations to develop, implement, and review an effective and integrated Code of Conduct (CoC) that is aligned with their organisational goals and Human Resources (HR) and people management systems. It reflects good practice and includes a user-friendly step-by-step implementation process, customisable templates, checklists, hints and tips, as well as additional resources to support you.

CHS ALLIANCE

CHS Alliance is a global network of humanitarian and development organisations committed to making aid work better for people. Together, we are a movement to strengthen accountability and to put people affected by crisis at the heart of what we do by implementing the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality & Accountability (CHS).

All CHS Alliance members are required to have a CoC that prohibits sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

CHS Alliance has issued this toolkit to advise, guide and support organisations how to be accountable to people affected by crisis, protect against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and support more effective people management.

CODE OF CONDUCT REQUIREMENTS IN THE CHS

The information contained in this toolkit supports organisations to implement the CHS, with particular reference to Commitments 3, 4 and 8, as outlined below:

- **CHS Commitment 3.6** to identify and act upon potential or actual unintended negative effects in a timely and systematic manner, including in the areas of:
  a) people's safety, security, dignity and rights;
  b) sexual exploitation and abuse by staff;
  c) culture, gender, and social and political relationships;
  d) livelihoods;
  e) the local economy; and
  f) the environment

- **CHS Commitment 4.1** to provide information to communities and people affected by crisis about the organisation, the principles it adheres to, how it expects its staff to behave, the programmes its implementing and what they intend to deliver.

- **CHS Commitment 8.7** to have a code of conduct in place that establishes, at a minimum, the obligation of staff not to exploit, abuse or otherwise discriminate against people.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

You are encouraged to tailor the information and resources in this toolkit according to your specific organisational context and needs. You can use it to support creating a new CoC, or to review an existing policy based on evolving organisational goals.

This toolkit can be used by a range of stakeholders. For example:

- Those new to developing a CoC who want to understand and follow good practice.
- Experienced HR professionals who want to review an existing CoC.
- Leaders or managers seeking to make informed decisions about their investment in CoC development and implementation to support the achievement of the organisation's strategic goals.

SYMBOLS USED IN THIS TOOLKIT

The symbols below have been developed as part of this toolkit and are available for your use:

Template
A customisable template in Microsoft Word form.

Checklist
A checklist to help track progress.

Hints and tips
A useful piece of information or advice on CoC development.

Resources
More information / further resources.

TOOLKIT STRUCTURE

The toolkit is structured into five sections, reflecting the recommended process steps for ensuring there is an effective CoC in place:

STEP 01: Plan the work

STEP 02: Consult others

STEP 03: Create, review and edit the draft

STEP 04: Obtain approval and implement

STEP 05: Evaluate and enforce

The chart (right) illustrates a CoC development or review process and associated checklists and templates.

STEP 01

PLAN THE WORK

Assess your readiness for the CoC development process

Develop shared aims for the CoC

Scope the CoC development or review project

Create a CoC development action plan

STEP 02

CONSULT OTHERS

Stakeholder Engagement

Data gathering

DEFINITIONS

What is a code of conduct?

A CoC is a formal document that establishes behavioural standards that all individuals in, or associated with, an organisation are required to uphold. It should reflect an organisation's vision, core values and culture.

What are the differences between a code of conduct and a code of ethics?

On a day-to-day basis, these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but there is a difference.

Both codes of ethics and codes of conduct are similar as they are used to encourage specific forms of behaviour. A code of ethics is typically an aspirational document, issued by the top-level management or the board of directors, containing ethical values, principles and ideals of the organisation. In contrast, a code of conduct is typically more of a directional document, containing specific practices and behaviours that are to be followed or restricted.

A code of conduct is usually supported by disciplinary procedures that will be invoked in the event of a failure to uphold the expected behaviour, so is typically more compliance focused and directive. A code of ethics may be used as a conceptual guide to inform decision making and exemplify what ethical practice looks like, rather than acting as a tool for compliance and enforcement.[1]

1 *CIPD's Ethics at work: an employer's guide*, December 2019

STEP 03

CREATE, REVIEW AND EDIT THE DRAFT

Decide what information to include

Guidelines for writing a CoC

A CoC template

STEP 04

OBTAIN APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENT

Obtain approval from leadership

Communicate and educate

STEP 05

EVALUATE AND ENFORCE

Monitor, evaluate and review

Enforce

THE BENEFITS OF AN EFFECTIVE CODE OF CONDUCT

An effective CoC has value as both an internal guideline and an external statement of the organisation's values and commitments and every organisation in the international development and humanitarian sector, regardless of size, mandate, or status, can reap benefits from having one.

An effective CoC will help to:

INTERNAL OR WORKFORCE BENEFITS

- **Clarify and strengthen an organisation's mission, values and principles**, by helping bring them to life through defining required standards of behaviour and fostering the desired organisational culture.

- **Build trust**, the process of developing or reviewing a CoC represents a great opportunity to engage your people and create a healthy dialogue within your organisation about ethical issues and concerns.

This in turn can help to build trust and commitment, as well as empower leaders, managers and your workforce more broadly to effectively handle ethical issues and dilemmas.

EXTERNAL OR REPUTATIONAL BENEFITS

- **Encourage engagement with and feedback from communities and people affected by crisis** by setting out clearly and transparently the standards of conduct your organisation is requiring its people to uphold and how and when to report in cases when these standards are breached. This is an important part of meeting the commitments of the CHS and helps to encourage community participation, engagement and feedback at every stage which are critical to aid effectiveness.

- **Align with CHS commitments** by reflecting the requirement for humanitarian organisations and their workforce to be accountable to people affected by crisis, protect against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH) and support more effective people management, while providing humanitarian assistance.

- **Build stronger relationships with suppliers, partners and other supporters** by clearly setting out what they can expect from your organisation and its people.

- **Convey an organisation's identity, culture and priorities** by setting out a clear public statement about its commitments to high standards of conduct and ethical behaviour. This is becoming increasingly important as organisations across the sector are increasingly called to articulate their positions in relation to social movements and global conversations. Some examples of these could include but not limited to Black Lives Matter, feminist leadership, de-colonisation, and strong commitments to accountability, safeguarding and PSEAH. This in turn, can help your organisation to attract and retain diverse talent at different levels.

- **Become better positioned for funding opportunities** by demonstrating to potential donors there are mechanisms in place to meet donor safeguarding standards.

- **Prevent or mitigate legal and regulatory breaches** by serving as a common guide and reference to support day-to-day decision-making, encourage reports of violations, and make clear the requirement to uphold high standards of behaviour and regulatory compliance.

- **Reduce the financial risks, other penalties and reputational damage** following a case of misconduct by demonstrating the organisation made an effort in good faith to prevent it.

WHO DOES A CODE OF CONDUCT APPLY TO?

Many organisations require individuals they directly engage or employ (e.g., staff, consultants, contractors, interns, volunteers or suppliers) to sign a Code of Conduct, at which point it forms part of the contract between the individual and the organisation. The signed copy should be retained by the organisation for its records.

There may be other people who are not directly engaged or employed by your organisation (e.g., visitors, implementing partners) who need to be made aware of your organisation's CoC and agree to uphold it as a condition of their ongoing relationship with your organisation. They may also be required to sign a CoC but in most cases, the content will need to be modified to reflect the absence of a direct contractual relationship between your organisation and this individual.

This is an important distinction because your organisation can only issue disciplinary or other penalties or sanctions (up to and including contract termination) to *individuals* whom it directly employs or engages. In a scenario where the individual found to have committed a breach of the CoC is not directly engaged or employed by your organisation, this could lead to actions being taken (e.g., a review of the contract agreement or Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] with the implementing partner). In this case, a final decision about disciplinary or other penalties against the *individual* would be the responsibility of the legal employer or contract owner.

Undertaking a review of implementing partners' CoC can be built into partner identification and selection process. If they already have a CoC, the purpose of this review will be to highlight if there are any gaps which your organisation would need to see addressed as a condition of the partnership arrangements. If the implementing partner does not have a CoC, then you can consider sharing the one adopted by your organisation for them to adjust and utilise.

💡 HINTS AND TIPS

Obtaining legal advice around the wording of these two versions of your CoC (one for your organisation and another for others associated with your organisation) is highly recommended. It is also recommended that organisations which do not have a CoC in place, prioritise the version for their contracted workforce before developing a version for others associated with the organisation.

CODE OF CONDUCT DEVELOPMENT OR REVIEW: A FIVE-STEP PROCESS

A five-step process is outlined below to guide you through a comprehensive code development or review process with measurable outcomes.

CODE OF CONDUCT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

STEP 01:   Plan the work

STEP 02:   Consult others

STEP 03:   Create, review and edit the draft

STEP 04:   Obtain approval and implement

STEP 05:   Evaluate and enforce

STEP 01 — PLAN THE WORK

An effective CoC is built on effective planning and engagement of the right people at the right time. To develop a realistic plan, consider each of these activities:

- Assess readiness to start developing a CoC
- Develop shared aims for the CoC
- Scope out the project to develop or review a CoC
- Create a CoC development action plan 📄

✓ **Annex 1: Are you ready for the CoC development / review process? Checklist**

A checklist has been developed to help you determine the level of readiness for this exercise. Answering 'no' to any particular question does not automatically mean you are not ready to start. Rather, this can act as a prompt to reflect if you need to address it or not based on your own organisational context. You can complete the checklist as part of the preparations at the start of the process.

DEVELOP SHARED AIMS FOR THE CODE OF CONDUCT

It is recommended that time is invested at the beginning of the process to ensure the purpose and intent of the new or revised CoC are clear. Leadership ownership and commitment to this are essential and will inform the focus, tone and content of the CoC. Senior managers will need to make clear choices and provide direction from the outset based on the specific needs and context of your organisation. Depending on your organisation's governance structure, you should have these discussions with the Board, Trustees or other governing body.

💡 **HINTS AND TIPS**

Examples of potential priorities include to inspire our workforce, clarify desired or prohibited behaviour, provide guidelines for decision-making, codify commitments (e.g., anti-racism and discrimination, de-colonisation, feminist leadership, safeguarding, PSEAH, or foster the desired organisational culture.

The question areas below will support the discussions with senior leaders and help ensure an effective CoC is in place at the end of the process:

i. Why?

- What is driving this internally (e.g., risks identified) and externally (e.g., linked to legislative, donor requirements, sector conversations)?
- What is the specific purpose the CoC needs to fulfil?
- What are the priorities and desired outcomes of this exercise and how will we know we have accomplished them?

ii. What?

- What priorities, risks and opportunities does the CoC need to reflect?
- What is in the scope and what is out of the scope for this exercise?
- What resources (e.g., time, financial, internal expertise) are available for this?

iii. Who?

- Who will the CoC apply to? And who will it not apply to? (See page 07)
- Who will develop or review the CoC?

iv. How?

- To what extent do we want this to be driven by leadership (top-down) and to what extent can this be a participatory approach? (Note: time is often a factor in this)?
- How do we want our organisational mission, strategy and planning process, values and desired culture to be reflected?
- Will this be developed internally, or by engaging external expertise?
- How can we ensure alignment within our existing policy framework and other organisational initiatives?
- How can the CoC help ensure compliance and manage risks?
- How can we approach this to motivate staff?
- What is non-negotiable for us and where may there be some flexibility within this exercise?

TABLE 1: BROAD SCOPE DEFINITION

In scope	Out of scope	Assumptions / Constraints	Risks
What the CoC development project must deliver	What is not included in the CoC development project	• Resources and budget • Timelines • Existing processes for collecting feedback • Existing quality systems and processes • Organisational strategic and operational plans	e.g. • Project manager under-resourced or under-skilled for the task • Senior leadership cannot sustain commitment

When leadership buy-in and direction are secured and resources have been allocated, there will normally be an assigned focal point or Project Manager who will lead and coordinate this work. It is vital that this person has had the discussions with senior leaders to develop a shared intent for the CoC and is clear on the points above from the beginning of the process.

HINTS AND TIPS

An effective CoC will be one which finds the right balance between values-driven and compliance-focused aspects. To achieve this in practice and avoid the document becoming too long, there may need to be decisions based on prioritisation of what is most important for your own particular organisation. This should form part of the discussions with leadership.

SCOPING THE CODE OF CONDUCT DEVELOPMENT OR REVIEW PROJECT

Annex 2: CoC Development or Review – Action Plan Template

One of the first tasks of the assigned focal point or Project Manager will be to develop a project plan. A simple Action Plan Template has been included in this toolkit. It is important to remember that this plan can be reviewed and updated as required as the project progresses.

This should reflect the actions required to develop or review the CoC as well as its implementation, evaluation and enforcement. Responsibility for implementing the individual actions should be agreed and allocated, with built-in reporting mechanisms, budget allocations and clear oversight of the overall plan. In particular, the senior leadership team must have clear ownership of the CoC development or review plan to ensure the required resources are available, and the right people are involved.

As part of this process, it is recommended that the following table is populated by the assigned focal point or Project Manager to capture the final decisions on the scope for the project and document the assumptions, constraints or risks identified at the beginning.

STEP 02

CONSULT OTHERS

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

It is important that the CoC meaningfully reflects the needs, issues, values and aspirations of your workforce. Ensuring the right stakeholders are engaged in the right way and at the right time will help to ensure this and a considered approach to this can be valuable.

By using a stakeholder engagement plan, the assigned focal point or Project Manager can explore different communication needs and establish with whom, how and when they communicate or obtain information.

The engagement planning model provided in this toolkit is based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum of engagement (2014)[2] adapted for use below:

TABLE 2: CODE OF CONDUCT DEVELOPMENT OR REVIEW PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

INCREASING LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT				
Inform	**Consult**	**Involve**	**Collaborate**	**Empower**
COMMITMENT				
We will keep you informed	We will listen to your ideas and concerns and provide feedback on how your input influenced the decisions	We will work with you to ensure that your ideas and concerns are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and show how your input influenced the decisions	We will work with you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions	We will actively develop mechanisms that enable you to make decisions We will implement your decisions
COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES				
• Intranet • Staff meetings • Surveys • Public commitment	• Forums • Staff • meetings • Surveys • Public • commitment	• Workshops • Data collection	• CoC Development project multidisciplinary team member • Consensus or decision making meetings	• Ballots • Delegated decisions

2   IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

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Annex 3: Stakeholder Engagement Planning Template

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There are two steps to identifying stakeholders and their level of engagement in the project:

i. *Identify all key stakeholders and define their level of influence.*

ii. *Map them to a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, with appropriate communication strategies for each.*

The Stakeholder Engagement Planning template provides more detailed information about the activities associated with these steps.

INFORMATION GATHERING

It is important to gather information to help ensure the CoC addresses the key issues, risks, opportunities and context considerations of your organisation. Consider the following:

- What information do you need?

- From whom can you get it?

- Who is gathering the information? Your organisation? An external group?

- How do you get the information (e.g., interviews, focus group discussions, surveys)?

- How will the information be synthesised and analysed?

- How will you communicate the information/ results and with whom does it need to be shared (e.g., report, presentation, and / or discussions)?

Gathering this information may be as simple as running a report from an established Human Resources Information System (HRIS). However, many NGOs, especially those that are small, may not have dedicated teams or systems to collect this data. Other sources of information that could contribute to the CoC development and review process could include:

- Culture surveys

- Staff engagement surveys

- 360° feedback / surveys on management / leadership

- Performance planning and reviews

- Grievances and disciplinary cases

- Whistleblowing policy and cases

- General reports from external reporting mechanisms and / or Employee Assistance Programmes your organisation may have in place.

- Exit interviews

- Feedback from other key stakeholders (e.g., implementing partners, people and communities your organisation works with).

- Leadership interviews (including with Board, Trustees or other governing body relevant to your organisation)

- Focus groups and informal discussions

When undertaken carefully, this data gathering can help to surface ethical issues and risks your organisation is facing and promote open dialogue about them which helps to build trust and commitment.

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Annex 4: Sample Interview and Focus Group Questions – Resource

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This sample gives you examples of questions you can customise to your organisation and use to gather information.

HINTS AND TIPS

- It is recommended that information is gathered and triangulated from as many different sources as possible, to help ensure it is robust.

- Think about those whose voices may not always be heard in your organisation and try to find ways of ensuring an inclusive and participatory process.

- Consider the sequencing of your data gathering and decide what is most logical for your context – e.g., if surveys are conducted and analysed first, the findings can help inform lines of inquiry for 1-2-1 key informant interviews, or vice versa.

STEP 03
CREATE, REVIEW AND EDIT THE DRAFT

When you have collected and analysed the available data and identified the key issues, risks, opportunities and context considerations of your organisation, you will be ready to start drafting or revising the CoC.

There are no global rules or requirements for the content of a CoC and the most important consideration are the unique needs, issues and context within your own organisation and the behaviours required from your people. It should reflect your desired organisational culture and be a source of pride for your workforce where their own ideals are reflected.

It is important that the CoC aligns with your other organisational policies and Staff Handbook. A careful assessment and analysis should be made of existing HR, Safeguarding and other relevant policies to ensure alignment and consistency across them. Typically, a CoC will be at a higher level than other more detailed policies and related policies should always be linked. A list of typical policy areas a CoC needs to align with is provided in Annex 5.

DECIDE WHAT INFORMATION TO INCLUDE

The CoC should be comprehensive and reflect all the key issues, risks, opportunities and context considerations of your organisation, as well as answer common questions that arise. This will be unique to every organisation. However, come common components include:

- **A statement of senior leadership support** – a message from the most senior leader in the organisation (e.g., Executive Director) helps to set the tone, signal leadership commitment and ensure the workforce understand the CoC's importance and purpose. A photo and a signature can help to make this message even stronger.

- **Mission statement and values** including vision, culture, core values and guiding principles that reflect the organisation's commitment to ethics and high standards of professional conduct.

- **Purpose of the CoC** as well as the organisation's policy regarding expectations surrounding it. The goal should be to get the intended audience to read, understand, and apply the CoC.

- **Scope of the CoC**. This is an important section of the policy to be clear on. Due to the nature of humanitarian and development work, including the safeguarding risks of working with vulnerable people in crisis, most organisations choose to state explicitly that their CoC applies in the workplace, all work-related functions and events, and while on leave and outside normal working hours. As stated elsewhere in this toolkit, it is also important to be clear who the CoC applies to. (See page 07)

- **Specify requirement to comply with local laws or regulations**. This could mean including a clause stating that the CoC forms part of all contracts of employment, engagement and conditions of service.

- **Outline**
  - **Unacceptable behaviour** (e.g., harassment (sexual and / or other), racism and / or discrimination, physical and / or verbal abuse, fraud, bribery, corruption).
  - **Required behaviour** (e.g., requirement to act with integrity, report concerns relating to safeguarding and comply with safeguarding mechanisms).
  - **Prohibited conduct with recipients of humanitarian / programmatic assistance** (e.g., prohibition of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, ensure safety and well-being, protection of sensitive and / or confidential information).
  - **Internal practices** (e.g., dress code, acceptable use of ICT systems, theft and / or damage of working equipment).

- **External practices** (e.g., confidentiality, conflict of interest, supplier/contractor relationships, misrepresentation of the organisation)
- **Consequences** – Clearly state that all members of the workforce covered under the scope of the CoC (e.g., staff, interns, volunteers, consultants, contractors, and individual suppliers) must comply with the CoC at all times and that all proven violations could be grounds for the organisation to take disciplinary or other penalty actions, up to and including contract termination. Organisations should also include a specific clause stating they retain the right to refer cases for criminal investigation or to other relevant authorities dependent on the nature of the case.

- **Provide clear explanations** of what constitutes desired and unacceptable behaviour to further explain risk areas. While these should reflect your organisation's realities, care must be taken to ensure examples included are general, anonymous and not attributable to a particular team or situation.
- Conclude with a list of **resources and services for obtaining guidance** (internal to the organisation or external) and clear guidance and channels for **reporting a violation** (or whistleblowing) of the CoC's provisions along with details on your enforcement policy, mechanisms, and processes.

Annex 5: Guidelines for writing a CoC – Resource

These guidelines have been provided to assist you in deciding what information to include in your CoC and highlight the importance of clear outline and to ensure it is user-friendly.

Combine these steps with our code of conduct template (annex 6) and half of your work will already be completed.

Annex 6: A Code of Conduct Template – Template

This customisable template has been provided to assist with drafting your CoC.

HINTS AND TIPS

A CoC needs to be clear and easy to understand. Avoid complicated language, technical jargon, and long sentences. Do not make it more difficult than it needs to be! Language should be short, simple and easily understood by all it applies to.

STEP 04 — OBTAIN APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENT

OBTAINING APPROVAL

- It is good practice for the CoC to be **reviewed by a multidisciplinary team**. This will help to ensure alignment with other organisational initiatives, communications and policies, create buy-in across different teams, addresses concerns, risks, opportunities and issues in different parts of your organisation, and reflects your desired organisational culture. Dependent on the size of your organisation, consider how the following functions or areas of focus could be represented: HR, Risk Management, Communications, Internal Audit, Security, Programmes (technical and implementation, where applicable), Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, Safeguarding, and Staff Representatives. Ensuring geographical representation in the different areas where your organisation works is also important.

- **Submit the CoC to leadership for review and comment**. This step calls for active leadership participation which helps to reinforce their commitment to the CoC.

- **Legal review**. The CoC should be reviewed by internal legal counsel, a qualified human resources expert or employment lawyer before final approval.

- **Update the CoC** by making revisions and adjustments as needed based on the feedback received.

- **Design the appearance**. Add images, and branding that reflect your organisation, its values and culture to make the CoC visually appealing.

- **Present** the "final" draft version of the CoC to the relevant leadership team or Board of directors, if applicable, for approval before publication and dissemination.

COMMUNICATING AND IMPLEMENTING THE COC

The action plan developed as part of Step 2 (Annex 2) should include clear actions for the individuals and teams responsible for the communication and implementation of the CoC. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Annex 3) should also be reviewed as a final check before implementation. This will remind you of who needs to be fully informed and prepared for their responsibilities under the CoC, such senior managers, HR, staff and other members of the workforce, and training providers.

Annex 2: CoC Development or Review – Action Plan Template

Annex 3: Stakeholder Engagement Planning Template

Communication strategies should planned to make sure that those to whom the CoC applies understand the importance and benefits of a CoC.

These should include two-way communications to allow your organisation to gather feedback and make adjustments as needed.

The introduction of a new or revised CoC is important, and all stakeholders need to be aware of and understand it. This should not be viewed as a one-off event but part of a continuous process.

- It might be useful to plan a launch event, or series of events dependent on the size of your organisation, to introduce the new or revised CoC. Ideally, these should be facilitated by relevant senior leaders as a signal of their commitment to it.

- Translate the CoC to other languages if needed.

- Ensure that every member of your workforce required to abide by the CoC receives a copy of it, and signs it to say they understand it and will abide by it. This can be done in hard copy or using electronic systems such as DocuSign. Some organisations embed the CoC within a mandatory online training course which requires those completing it to tick a box to acknowledge they have read and understood it and agree to abide by it.
- Include the CoC in your induction package for every new member of your workforce and ensure it is returned as part of the contracting process.
- Recirculate the document (e.g., via the Intranet, in internal newsletter articles, posters, emails) at regular and planned intervals. Other opportunities to highlight a CoC should also be identified such as social events and meetings (e.g., Town Hall or all-staff meetings, staff retreats, ethics or safeguarding training and workshops).
- Actively help your workforce understand the CoC, its benefits and requirements via ongoing communications and training sessions, which can be delivered in person or an online format.
- Training should help ensure there is clarity on what your organisation expects its people to do when faced with ethical dilemmas, if they observe a perceived violation of the CoC, or if they perceive pressure is being applied to commit misconduct. There should be increased levels of confidence at the end of the training about how to deal with these situations, report concerns where needed, and make decisions that address ethical challenges.
- Find ways to reward or recognise departments, teams and individuals that demonstrate they consistently put their CoC principles into practice.

HINTS AND TIPS

Role-playing which depicts relationships and dilemma which might arise can help engagement and deepen understanding of the CoC's practical implications.

STEP 05 EVALUATE AND ENFORCE

Maintaining a CoC to ensure it reflects your organisation's strategy and goals is a continuous activity. A CoC that is not current is not relevant; CoCs need to keep aligned with evolving business strategy and goals.

Systematic monitoring, evaluation and feedback will help inform revisions or updates to a CoC.

MONITOR, EVALUATE AND REVIEW

Your organisation should **regularly monitor and evaluate** the implementation of your CoC, paying close attention to levels of compliance and effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms. The results of these audits should be shared with your workforce as far as possible to promote transparency.

A focal point should be assigned to oversee compliance with the CoC and report to senior leadership on this. In some organisations this is the Chief Ethics Officer or a senior member of the HR team.

Monitoring the implementation of planned outputs and activities will assist you to track, identify and address emerging challenges. It is useful to revisit the work undertaken from the outset on developing a shared intent for the CoC and on your action plan and reflect on this:

- Did we do what we said we were going to do?
- Do we need to adjust our planned activities and timeframes for any reason?
- What are the effects of these adjustments on our overall goals?

HINTS AND TIPS

It is recommended that the CoC is formally reviewed at least every 2 – 3 years to ensure it remains relevant to your organisation's needs and its challenges, risks and opportunities.

Monitoring participation in CoC implementation activities (e.g., % of CoCs signed, completion of training) and feedback from key internal stakeholders will provide valuable information on your progress and where further actions may be helpful. Relevant questions for reflection may include:

• Are all internal stakeholders engaged as they need to be in this process, and if not, why not?

Gathering and analysing feedback from key internal stakeholders is important and can help identify remedial actions to be taken. This can be done by ad hoc surveys or be built into other organisational feedback mechanisms such as staff engagement or culture surveys, performance reviews, or mechanisms for reporting suspected breaches.

There can also be ongoing monitoring of metrics such as suspected breaches, related investigations and their outcomes, disciplinary or grievance cases and their outcomes, whistleblowing, feedback mechanisms from communities and other internal and external stakeholders.

Regular self-assessment using selected indicators of success will help track progress over time towards the desired outcomes. Useful questions for reflection at this stage include:

• How do we know that our new or revised CoC is making a positive difference?

• What measures will tell us that the CoC is successful?

• Who will conduct the evaluations? Internal stakeholders or an outside organisation?

• When will we review the CoC?

• How will we make adjustments to the CoC as issues and the organisation's standards for dealing with them evolve?

ENFORCE

Effective implementation of a CoC requires strong ethical leadership and support, training, continuous reinforcement and regular updates. Ongoing activities to support the administration and reinforcement of a CoC help to bring your organisation's values to life and strengthen its culture by stimulating ethical reflections and actions. A CoC also helps to encourage compliance by highlighting when staff are required to 'speak up' when they see others engaging in unethical behaviour and how to do this.

Organisations should respond quickly and consistently to all potential breaches of a CoC. A response should both consider short-term actions to deal with a particular case, as well as a further investigation into the root causes which may have contributed to a breach.

All cases related to a CoC should be thoroughly documented and tracked centrally.

CONCLUSION

Today, many organisations across all sectors have a CoC. However, the quality of them varies. A strong CoC serves many functions and offers a range of benefits for an organisation, its leaders and its people. It represents a strong statement of intent by the organisational leadership about the standards of conduct and ethical behaviour it requires and the mechanisms in place to be assured of this.

Creating an effective CoC is best approached as a managed process, reflecting the steps and considerations outlined in this toolkit. While this represents an investment of time and resources, a well-managed process offers many positive outcomes which make this worthwhile.

A CoC sets out your organisation's moral compass and may help you to attract talented people, Board members, and funding opportunities while enhancing your external reputation and supporting risk management.

Even the smallest of organisations can – and should – develop a CoC to show their commitment to creating an environment of integrity, safety, dignity and respect for all.

CHS Alliance encourage all organisations involved in humanitarian and development work to use this toolkit when developing or reviewing their own Code of Conduct. The Alliance commits to offering support to our members in their CoC development process.

FURTHER SOURCES OF ADVICE, SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

Ethics at work: an employer's guide, CIPD, December 2019 (online, assessed on 27/09/2020)

Code of conduct. Topic guide. Compiled by the Anti-Corruption helpdesk. Transparency International, April 2015.

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ANNEX 01: ASSESS YOUR READINESS FOR THE CODE OF CONDUCT DEVELOPMENT / REVIEW PROCESS?

ORGANISATIONAL PRIORITIES	YES	NO	PARTIAL
1. Do you have a code of ethics that defines integrity and outlines the behaviour it expects its leadership, employees, and other stakeholders to uphold?			
2. Do you have a clear statement of the organisation's mission and values?			
3. Do you have an up-to-date strategic and operational plan?			
4. Are your organisation's objectives and strategy in line with its standards of desired conduct?			

LEADERSHIP BUY-IN			
5. Do you have support from executive / senior management?			
6. Has leadership agreed on the benefits and purpose for the CoC development / review process?			
7. Do they practice what they preach and set a good example?			
8. Will they devote resources to getting this done and done right?			
9. Does your executive and senior management have the right skills mix to lead the organisation through the code of conduct development?			
10. Will they talk publicly about the code development and be your champions?			
11. Is your management structure well designed to support a code development process?			

MONITORING			
12. Do you have quality systems and continuous improvement processes to support the monitoring of the development / review process and ensure alignment with other policies?			

PARTICIPATION			
13. Are you actively engaged with your peers and internal stakeholders to involve them in the CoC development / review process?			
14. Do you have processes in place to collect feedback from internal stakeholders such as:			
- HRIS			
- Survey software subscription			
- Performance management system			
- Grievance and whistleblowing policy			
- Exit interviews			
- Possibility to have face-to-face (physical space like a meeting room) or virtual focus group discussions or interviews (online collaboration applications and/or video conferencing tools)			

ANNEX 02: COC DEVELOPMENT OR REVIEW – ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

AIM OF THE COC DEVELOPMENT / REVIEW PROJECT

i. Why?

- What is driving this internally (e.g., risks identified, diversity, inclusion and belonging, alignment with other organisational initiatives such as anti-racism and feminist leadership) and externally (e.g., linked to legislative or donor requirements)?

- What is the specific purpose the CoC needs to fulfil?

- What are the priorities and desired outcomes of this exercise and how will we know we have accomplished them?

> ### HINTS AND TIPS
>
> Examples of potential priorities include to inspire our workforce, clarify desired and / or prohibited behaviour, provide guidelines for decision-making, codify commitments such as anti-racism and discrimination and feminist leadership, and foster the desired organisational culture.

ii. What?

- What priorities, risks and opportunities does the CoC need to reflect?

- What is in the scope and what is out of the scope for this exercise?

- What resources (e.g., time, financial, internal expertise) are available for this?

iii. Who?

- Who will the CoC apply to? And who will it not apply to?

- Who will develop or review the CoC?

iv. How?

- To what extent do we want this to be driven by leadership (top-down) and to what extent can this be a participatory approach? (Note: time is often a factor in this)?

- How do we want our organisational mission, strategy and planning process, values and desired culture to be reflected?

- Will this be developed internally, and / or by engaging external expertise?

- How can we ensure alignment within our existing policy framework and other organisational initiatives?

- How can the CoC help ensure compliance and manage risks?

- How can we approach this to motivate staff?

- What is non-negotiable and where may there be some flexibility within this exercise?

GOVERNANCE AND ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Insert a description of the internal governance model (may include a diagram) including identification of the assigned focal point or project manager, members of the project team or working group, and reporting structure, including expectations around reporting.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
STAKEHOLDERS				
COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES				
• Intranet • Staff meetings • Surveys • Public commitment	• Forums • Staff meetings • Surveys • Public commitment	• Workshops • Data collection	• CoC Development project multidisciplinary team member • Consensus or decision-making meetings	• Ballots • Delegated decisions

ACTION PLAN

CoC Development or Review Phase	Action	Timeframe	Responsibility	Outputs
Step 1: Plan the work • Assess readiness to start developing a CoC • Develop shared aims for the CoC • Scope out the project to develop or review a CoC • Create a CoC development action plan				
Step 2: Consult others • Stakeholder engagement • Gather information				
Step 3: Create, review and edit the draft • Decide what information to include • Draft the code				
Step 4: Obtain approval and implement the code • Review the code by a multidisciplinary team and leadership • Update the code • Review the code by the legal counsel • Update the final version of the code and design the appearance • Obtain approval from leadership • Communicate and educate				
Step 5: Evaluate and enforce the code • Monitor, evaluate and review • Enforce				

ANNEX 03: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLANNING TEMPLATE

You will need: the quadrant (below) either blown up on A3 paper or transposed onto butchers paper, small post-it notes, and pens.

STEP ONE

Brainstorm all of the stakeholders who may be impacted by the development or review and implementation of the CoC. Write each stakeholder or group of stakeholders onto a post-it note (one for each person or group).
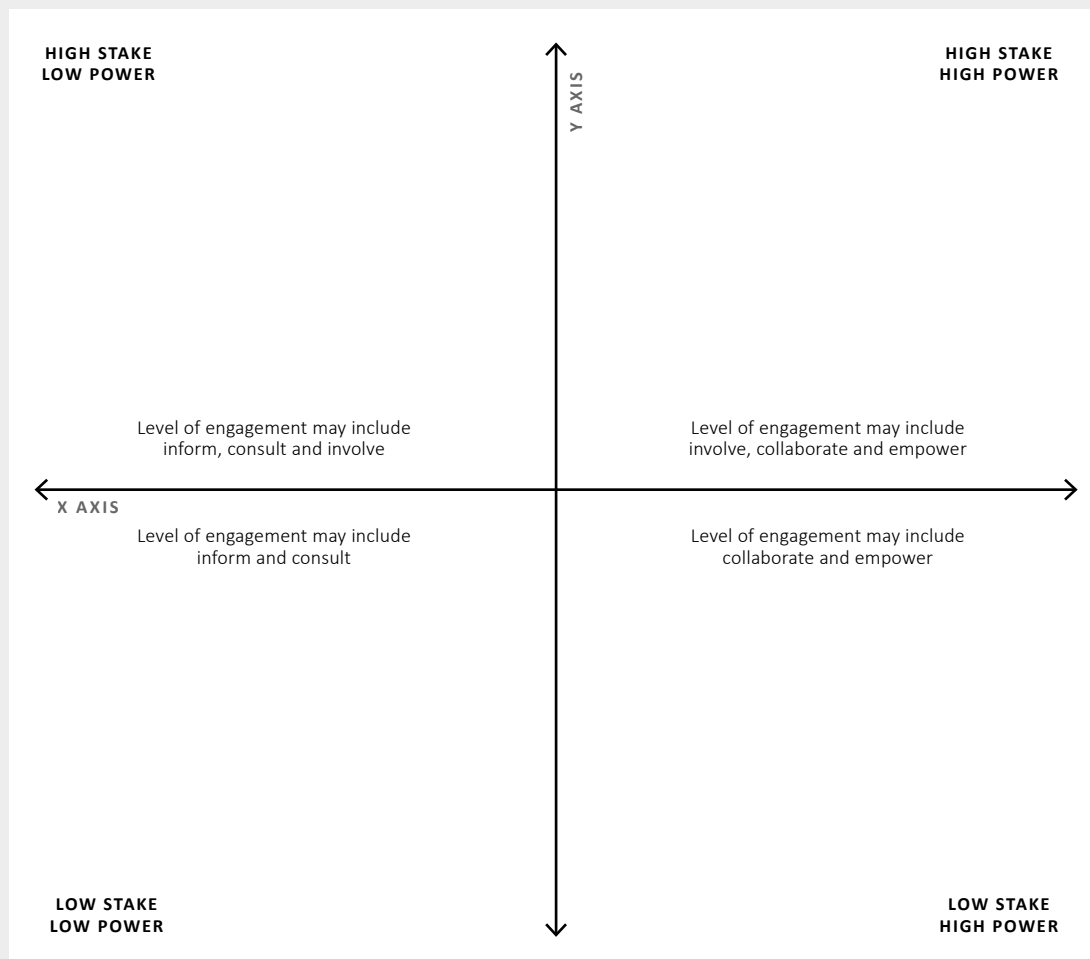
STEP TWO

Using the quadrant (below), place each stakeholder (post-it note) on the Y Axis from those with the highest stake in the outcomes of the CoC development or review at the top through to those with the lowest stake at the bottom in order of priority.

STEP THREE

Consider each stakeholder in turn and determine how much power they have in making decisions which may affect the outcomes of the CoC development or review process. Move them to the left of the Y Axis if they have no or limited decision-making impact on the outcome and to the right if they have some or a great deal of impact on decisions.

STEP FOUR

Now transpose each stakeholder into the stakeholder engagement plan and decide which level of engagement / communication strategies are appropriate for the duration of the project.

HIGH STAKE LOW POWER		HIGH STAKE HIGH POWER
Level of engagement may include inform, consult and involve	Y AXIS	Level of engagement may include involve, collaborate and empower
X AXIS		
Level of engagement may include inform and consult		Level of engagement may include collaborate and empower
LOW STAKE LOW POWER		LOW STAKE HIGH POWER

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
STAKEHOLDERS				
COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES				
• Intranet • Staff meetings • Public commitment	• Forums • Staff meetings • Surveys	• Workshops • Data collection	• CoC Development project multidisciplinary team member • Consensus or decision-making meetings	• Ballots • Delegated decisions

ANNEX 04: SAMPLE INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

UNDERSTANDING HOW YOUR WORKFORCE PERCEIVES PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN YOUR ORGANISATION

- What does professional conduct mean in your everyday work with our organisation?
- How is our organisation perceived in the community we work with?
- What values and principles are central to our organisation and in our work?
- How effectively does this organisation put its values and principles into practice?
- Where can we improve?
- Is leadership committed to high standards of ethical behavior?
- Can you give an example?
- Are there particular areas where you would like to see leadership do more?

IDENTIFYING CENTRAL PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT ISSUES AND HOW PEOPLE APPROACH THEM

- What are some of the ethical or behavioural issues (e.g. conflicts, pressures) that our workforce encounters?
- How do our people typically approach these issues?
- Are our people able to openly discuss their ethical or behavioural issues and concerns?
- Where can our people go for guidance if they have questions or concerns about professional conduct?
- How useful are these services?
- How easy are they to access?

GENERATING SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPING / REVIEWING A COC

- What are the main professional conduct principles, issues and/or concerns that you feel should be covered in our code of conduct?
- What other content would you suggest in order to make the code more useful and relevant to our organisation?
- To what extent do you feel a code of conduct can be realistically and effectively enforced within this organization?
- What would enable this and what would hinder it?
- Before we conclude, are there any topics we haven't covered that you would like to raise and discuss?

ANNEX 05: GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A CODE OF CONDUCT (COC)

OUTLINE/SECTIONS:

A code of conduct should include the following elements:

- Memorable title
- Leadership letter
- Table of contents
- Definitions
- Introduction
- Mission statement and values
- Guidelines for decision making
- Code provisions
- Information and resources
- Policy owner, date of publication and date of next review

Each of these elements is detailed in turn in the CoC template (Annex 06).

HINTS AND TIPS FOR A USER-FRIENDLY COC

- Be a reasonable length to ensure it can be understood.
- Write as simply and clearly as possible, using plain, everyday language and avoid jargon.
- Provide explanations and / or define what you mean.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of issues, topics and risk areas that could be addressed in a CoC, either under their own subject heading or as part of a broader topic:

- Anti-terrorism
- Community, supplier, contractor and vendor relationships /confidentiality (CHS requirement)
- Confidential and proprietary information (CHS requirement)
- Conflicts of interest (CHS requirement)
- Data protection
- Discrimination
- Diversity and inclusion
- Environment and social responsibility (CHS requirement)
- Family and personal relationships
- Fraud, bribery and corruption.
- Gifts, entertainment, gratuities, favours and other items of value to/from recipients of aid, contractors, suppliers, vendors, government employees
- Harassment (sexual and otherwise) and / or bullying (CHS requirement)
- Health and safety (CHS requirement)
- Incident reporting
- Outside employment and other activities
- Personal conduct (CHS requirement)
- Political contributions and activity
- Prohibition of sexual exploitation and abuse (CHS requirement)
- Professional competence and due care (CHS requirement)
- Representation and communications on behalf of the organisation
- Security (CHS requirement)
- Use of organisational resources (CHS requirement)
- Waivers of the code of conduct
- Work/life balance
- Workplace violence

ANNEX 06: A CODE OF CONDUCT (CoC) TEMPLATE

DESIGNED TO BE CUSTOMISED

This CoC template comprises example topics and sections. It is customisable based on your organisation's specific requirements – in fact the more it is tailored to your organisation's specific needs, the more authentic and effective it will be.

INCLUDE WHAT YOU MUST AND CAN COMPLY WITH

This document should be developed to align with contracts of employment or engagement, and relevant organisational procedures, policies and processes, including the Staff Handbook.

Only include the commitments you are confident you can comply with and ensure you update and review the document regularly.

To complete the template:

1. Guidance text appears throughout the document, marked by 🛈. Guidance has been added to help you complete the template and will not print on your final version.
2. Update you organisation name whenever you see: {Organisation Name}
3. Replace {items in angle brackets} with your own wording.

You can print or save either the whole pdf or separate pages or sections – just choose the page numbers in your print dialogue box. If you want to start again, there is a reset button which reset all of the data back to the original content – make sure you don't click this before you save.

"Moral authority comes from following universal and timeless principles like honesty, integrity, and treating people with respect."

STEPHEN COVEY

CHSAlliance