

Policy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse



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1. Context

Centre for Social Change (CSC) is committed to preventing all forms of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). CSC has a zero tolerance toward sexual exploitation and abuse. The aim of this policy is to ensure that CSC takes every necessary step to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by CSC Personnel and to respond promptly and adequately to those incidents it cannot prevent.

This policy applies to all employees, consultants, independent contractors, agents, members and volunteers (“personnel”) of CSC.

2. Definitions

2.1. Sexual Exploitation means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

2.2. Sexual Abuse means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

2.3. Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) refers to policy, rules and actions intended to prevent CSC personnel from engaging in any form of sexual exploitation and abuse and to respond where it has occurred.

2.4. CSC’s Personnel refers to any person in the service of CSC, including employees, consultants, independent contractors, agents, members and volunteers.

2.5. Affected Persons refers to persons who look to or benefit from the CSC’s protection or assistance. This may include any person in a local community where the CSC is operating.

2.6. Whistleblower refers to an individual who reports a suspicion of a breach of the CSC’s Internal Rules. Whistleblowers provide information, based on a reasonably held suspicion that a wrongdoing has occurred.

3. Core Principles¹

In order to protect the vulnerable populations, particularly vulnerable women, adults and children, and to ensure the integrity of CSC's action, the following six Core Principles must be adhered to:

3.1. Sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse by CSC's personnel constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.

3.2. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of the majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of the child is not a defense.

3.3. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior by CSC's personnel is prohibited. This includes the exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.

3.4. Any sexual relationships between CSC's personnel and a person benefitting from assistance and protection that involved improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of CSC's actions.

3.5. Where a CSC's personnel develop concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in CSC or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.

3.6. CSC's personnel are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse and promotes the implementation of this Policy. CSC's manager at all levels has responsibilities to support and develop systems, which maintain this environment.

¹ The six Core Principles are from the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, 2019. They have been modified by CSC to refer to CSC's personnel.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

CSC's personnel must:

- Read and understand this policy.
- Complete mandatory PSEA training.
- Be particularly alert to suspected cases of SEA within vulnerable populations.
- Report any suspected incidents or potential signs of SEA.
- Never hesitate to report suspicions of SEA because evidence was not collected.
- Respect the dignity, wishes and rights of survivors of SEA, including their wishes on whether to report to third parties.
- Cooperate fully with those responsible for investigation.
- Seek counsel from the CSC's Human Resource department with questions about whether or how to report suspected cases.

5. Compliant and Response Mechanism

CSC's Human Resource department is responsible for ensuring that allegations of SEA are investigated in accordance with this policy. Throughout the investigation, personnel are required to cooperate with the investigation. Unless otherwise required by the Human Resource department or law enforcement, all information must be kept confidential regarding the suspected survivor(s) and suspected perpetrator(s).

CSC's Human Resource department and their investigators are responsible for conducting investigations of internal SEA reports to the extent local authorities are not involved. The Chief of Human Resource department must report aggregated incident data to the CSC's management team and to the Board of Directors bi-annually. The CSC's chief of Human Resource department is also responsible for monitoring that this policy is routinely followed.