

Toolkit

Protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment

A safeguarding toolkit

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Glossary

Beneficiaries	The individuals, groups or organisations that directly or indirectly benefit from an intervention, project or programme.
Bullying	The act of seeking to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who might be in a position of vulnerability.
Child	Any individual under the age of 18, irrespective of local country definitions of when a child reaches adulthood.
Child protection	Preventing and responding to violence, exploitation, and abuse against children, including sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices.
Code of conduct	A set of norms or standards about behaviour that staff of an organisation are obliged to adhere to.
Confidentiality	An ethical principle that restricts access to and dissemination of information to a limited number of authorised individuals to protect those involved.
Consent	The act of agreeing to do something or giving permission voluntarily, with informed consent requiring a clear understanding of the implications.
Contractors	Individuals, organisations or companies contracted to deliver specific services.
Focal point	A person or team responsible for coordinating an organisation's safeguarding efforts.
Gender-based violence (GBV)	GBV is an umbrella term for any harmful act, that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed differences between males and females (i.e. gender). It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering; threats of such acts; coercion; and other deprivations of liberty (see also gender-based violence and harassment, GBVH). Sexual exploitation and abuse are a form of GBV (see also sexual and gender-based violence, SGBV).
Gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH)	See gender-based violence (GBV).
Harm or maltreatment	Personal abuse, exploitation, violence, harassment or neglect caused by an organisation's staff, operations or programmes.
Protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH)	Measures taken to protect people from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment by staff and programmes. Sometimes used in the shorter form PSEA, which does not include sexual harassment.
Safeguarding	Safeguarding describes the measures that address abuse and harm that is caused by civil society organisation (CSO) staff, programmes and communications.
Safeguarding report-handling mechanisms	Organisational policies and procedures for receiving, handling and responding to safeguarding reports.
Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)	See gender-based violence (GBV).
Sexual abuse	Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. All sexual activity with a minor is considered as sexual abuse.

Sexual assault	Sexual activity with another person who does not consent, broader than rape as it includes coercive actions.
Sexual exploitation	Abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability for sexual purposes, including financial or social gain.
Sexual harassment	Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours or other behaviour that causes offence or intimidation.
Survivor/ victim	“Survivor” and “victim” are usually used interchangeably. “Survivor” is generally preferred in the psychological and social support sectors to a person who has experienced sexual or gender-based violence because it implies resilience. “Victim” is a term often used in the legal and medical sectors.
Victim/ survivor assistance	Assistance and support for medical, psychosocial, legal and other services to be provided to a complainant, a victim, a survivor or a child born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse.
Victim-/ survivor-centred approach	Where the rights, wishes, needs, safety, dignity and wellbeing of the victim is at the centre of all prevention and response measures concerning sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

Introduction

There is growing recognition in Sierra Leone that firms and institutions within the private sector must take proactive steps to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace. Beyond the serious harm caused to individuals, these issues carry significant legal, financial and reputational risks for businesses and investors.

Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) often arise in environments where there is an imbalance of power – between employers and employees, between service providers and clients, or between companies and the communities in which they operate. In Sierra Leone, such power imbalances are widespread, particularly along gender lines.

According to the **2019 Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey**, an estimated **62% of women aged 15–49** reported having experienced physical or sexual violence. The country's **Gender Inequality Index (GII) score in 2023** stood at **0.566**, ranking **152 out of 172** countries, reflecting major gaps in reproductive health, political and economic empowerment and labour force participation. Sierra Leone's **Human Development Index (HDI)** was **0.467** in 2023, ranking **185 out of 197** countries and territories. Deeply rooted discriminatory social norms continue to restrict women's access to resources and decision-making power, increasing their vulnerability to violence and harassment.

In response, the Government of Sierra Leone has enacted several important legal frameworks:

- The **Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, 2019**, which establishes a mandatory minimum 15-year sentence for rape and introduces measures for victim and witness protection
- The **Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Act, 2022**, that provides a legal framework to combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling
- The **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act, 2022**, which mandates employers to build respectful workplaces and implement measures to prevent and address harassment and discrimination
- The **Employment Act, 2023**, which explicitly prohibits violence and harassment in the workplace
- The **Child Rights Act, 2007**, which protects children from discrimination, abuse and violence.

Despite this progress, most safeguarding resources and interventions have focused on civil society and the humanitarian sector. As a result, private sector companies – though legally required to protect staff and stakeholders from harm – face challenges in accessing practical guidance tailored to their needs.

This toolkit has been developed to support private sector companies and institutions, particularly those who participated in Invest Salone's¹ safeguarding training, on setting up and implementing effective safeguarding systems.

¹ Invest Salone is a UK funded private sector development initiative.

This toolkit is designed to bridge the current gap in resources, and to help companies operationalise safeguarding principles within their policies, practices and workplace cultures. By doing so, businesses can create safer, more inclusive environments for all employees and stakeholders.

Understanding safeguarding

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding refers to the measures and practices put in place by organisations and businesses to protect people from harm, exploitation, abuse and harassment. In the context of the workplace, it means creating an environment where all individuals feel safe, heard, respected and supported.

Several national laws and policies have been enacted, providing a foundation for safeguarding in the workplace. Companies are expected to align their safeguarding practices with the legal requirements.

International standards on sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment

[The Inter-Agency Standing Committee \(IASC\)](#), as the highest-level humanitarian coordination forum of the United Nations system, formulates policy, sets strategic priorities and mobilises resources in response to humanitarian crises. The IASC will support scaled-up, predictable and accountable protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH) to amplify prevention and response at the community level.² The IASC has developed guidance and tools for the implementation of PSEAH including core principles, protocols and standard operating procedures and other relevant materials which are adopted by its members. A key output was the six core principles³ which form a code of conduct on minimum acceptable behaviour. These guidance and tools are useful for reference purposes and can be accessed [here](#).

[The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability \(CHS\)](#) sets out nine commitments to ensure that organisations support people and communities affected by crisis and vulnerability in ways that respect their rights and dignity. It is a voluntary and measurable standard, drawing together key elements of existing humanitarian standards and commitments. The CHS places the onus on organisations to commit to good safeguarding practices, communicate its commitments and prevent and respond to safeguarding concerns and incidents when they arise. Specifically, the CHS

² Inter-Agency Standing Committee. IASC Vision and Strategy: Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (PSEAH) (2022). <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/about-inter-agency-standing-committee/iasc-principals-endorse-iasc-vision-and-strategy-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-and-sexual>

³ Inter-Agency Standing Committee. IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2019). <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-standing-committee/iasc-six-core-principles-relating-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-2019>

addresses means of safer programming; the importance of working with communities; and ensuring that staff and volunteers understand and work to safeguarding principles.

The [Common Approach to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment \(CAPSEAH\)](#) is a guide to help people and organisations working in humanitarian, development and peace settings take action to protect people from SEAH. It was developed by an international steering committee and wider consultation, with the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) providing the secretariat for the committee, as part of its contribution to help drive accelerated progress on safeguarding against SEAH.

Common PSEAH principles

CAPSEAH's principles, summarised below, are designed to underpin and guide SEAH-related conduct of all people and organisations doing humanitarian, development or peace-related work.

- SEAH is prohibited
- Zero tolerance for inaction
- Tailor PSEAH approaches to the context and ensure the approaches are inclusive and victim/survivor centred
- Embed SEAH prevention as part of working culture
- Respond appropriately to suspicions, reports and incidents of SEAH
- Respect confidentiality and protect against retaliation.

A more detailed overview of CAPSEAH, its principles and actions can be found [here](#).

Understanding the context

Context is crucial: it can increase or exacerbate risks of abuse and harm. Therefore, an understanding of that context is vitally important. This requires awareness of the country's legal, political and socio-cultural realities as they relate to vulnerable populations and power dynamics in communities and the workplaces.

Sierra Leone continues to recover from an 11-year civil war (1991–2002) that resulted in significant destruction, high rates of gender-based violence (GBV), and widespread trauma. The country's cultural norms are largely patriarchal with gender inequality embedded in the social fabric of the country. Women, and other vulnerable populations, such as children and people with disabilities, experience frequent discrimination and face limited access to resources and justice. Child protection issues, such as child labour, sexual violence and trafficking continue to pose serious challenges especially in rural areas.

Most workers are employed within the informal sector, or within hierarchical private sector organisations, where power imbalances can lead to exploitation and abuse. Few firms have formal safeguarding procedures, and staff often lack adequate training or awareness. However, there is a growing interest in safeguarding especially due to new laws.

Examples of SEAH in the workplace

- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Requests for sexual favours
- Making offensive jokes or use of sexually explicit language
- Sexual favours in exchange for access to resources or benefits such as jobs or promotion
- Bullying, abusive or threatening behaviour
- Intimidating or unwelcome working environment.

This safeguarding toolkit

Who is this safeguarding toolkit for?

This safeguarding toolkit was developed drawing upon insights gained from Invest Salone's collaboration with private sector organisations. While informed by these specific experiences, the toolkit is intended to support all private sector entities operating in Sierra Leone.

While expertise in safeguarding is not required for the use of this resource; it has been specifically designed for individuals who hold responsibilities relating to safeguarding, including:

- Safeguarding focal points
- Operational managers
- Human resource managers
- Senior management teams.

It aims to strengthen the capacity of companies in fulfilling their responsibilities to prevent and respond to all forms of harm, abuse and exploitation. By following the guidance in this toolkit, businesses will be taking measures to protect employees, clients and communities and support **ethical, safe and sustainable business practices** in Sierra Leone.

How to use this toolkit

This toolkit is designed to be a **practical and user-friendly resource** for companies at various stages of developing safeguarding systems. It can be used in full or in part, depending on your organisation's size, sector and existing safeguarding capacity.

The toolkit can help you to:

- Understand key safeguarding principles and legal obligations in Sierra Leone
- Assess your current safeguarding policies and practices
- Develop or strengthen internal procedures for prevention, reporting and response
- Build staff awareness and capacity through training and guidance
- Engage responsibly with communities, clients and partners.

Objectives

The toolkit aims to:

- Increase awareness and understanding among companies of the importance of preventing of SEAH in the workplace
- Support companies in developing and strengthening their systems and policies on preventing and responding to SEAH
- Improve communication and coordination on safeguarding issues within the institutions and among their partners and communities in which they operate.

Structure

The toolkit is divided into four main sections:

Section 1: Prevention

- Key prevention measures

Section 2: Responding to SEAH

- How companies should respond to SEAH
- The survivor-centred approach
- Support services and monitoring needs

Section 3: Safe complaints mechanisms

- Why safe complaints mechanisms are important
- Types of complaints mechanisms
- Setting up a complaints mechanism
- Investigating and responding to SEAH concerns

Section 4: Training and awareness raising

- Staff, contractors and volunteers
- Partner organisations
- Community members

Section 5: Additional resources

- Useful links to websites, tools and guidelines for implementation of SEAH activities

Section 1: Prevention

Preventing SEAH is a core component of safeguarding especially in contexts like Sierra Leone, where gender inequality is high and discriminatory social norms are deeply entrenched. Businesses need to adopt a multi-faceted, organisation-wide approach to prevent SEAH, that involves leadership, policies and systems and people at all levels of the business. This will require conducting risk assessments or audits, developing or reviewing clear policies, providing training to staff, associates, contractors and establishing effective grievance reporting mechanisms. Finally, effective risk assessments or audits require buy-in and support from the leadership of the business.

Key prevention measures

- **Safeguarding risk assessment or audit.** Identifying and assessing the specific SEAH risks (internal and external) that your business may face. These risks may be based on the sector, location or composition of the workforce and engagement with communities, especially vulnerable groups. The risk assessment needs to be contextual and linked to your specific location and sector. It would also consider your employees' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, company culture, capacity gaps in recruitment as well as resources. [The organisational capacity assessment](#) (OCA) is a tool that can be used to review your company's systems and processes, and its capacity to implement safeguarding measures. Assessing SEAH risks will ensure businesses can target prevention efforts that are relevant and appropriate to their business and operations.
- **Leadership buy-in & commitment.** Prevention efforts can only be effective if the company leadership is fully committed. Business leaders must prioritise safeguarding in business decisions, allocate sufficient resources to support implementation and create and maintain a safe and respectful working environment where employees feel safe to report concerns. Overall responsibility and accountability for the implementation of the safeguarding measures at the corporate level lies with the head of the office.
- **Develop and implement clear policies and procedures.** Develop or update policies on SEAH, including a code of conduct, outlining definitions, stating unacceptable behaviours, procedures for reporting and response. All policies should be accessible to all staff members.
- **Provide regular training and awareness raising.** Training all staff, contractors, managers on safeguarding principles, acceptable behaviour, organisational culture and how to report concerns.
- **Safe recruitment.** Ensuring safer recruitment measures are implemented throughout the recruitment process, such as careful screening and shortlisting of applicants, proper vetting including references and background checks where feasible.
- **Establish clear and safe reporting mechanisms.** Ensuring all staff and external stakeholders, including beneficiaries and partners, know how and where to report concerns. Reporting mechanisms should be safe and accessible, confidential and survivor centred.

Prevention efforts should be integrated into existing systems and procedures and should be viewed as part of wider efforts to address gender inequality and discrimination in the workplace.

To provide protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and harassment from your own personnel, The IASC developed a set of Minimum Operating Standards for protection for SEAH. These standards can be accessed [here](#).

Section 2: Responding to SEAH

Responding to SEAH must be underpinned by some key principles to avoid doing more harm to survivors.

- Survivor-centred approach⁴
- The rights of victims/survivors are prioritised and centred at all times. It means respecting their voices and choices
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Confirming with whom survivors want to share information is very important. Information should be limited to only those who need to know. Survivors should be treated with respect and dignity, and their decisions and wishes should be respected
- Timeliness
- Reports should be acted upon promptly to address risks and support affected individuals
- Safety
- Survivors, witnesses/bystanders and those who report their concerns can be at risk of retaliation, including threatening and violent behaviour from perpetrators. This can leave those who report in a dangerous position in fear of reprisals. Confidentiality is an important part of ensuring the safety of survivors
- Fairness in the process
- Ensure a transparent and impartial process for all parties involved.

IASC principles and key actions of a survivor-centred approach

- Safety, security and wellbeing
- Confidentiality
- Dignity and respect
- Non-discrimination and inclusion
- Ask, listen and engage
- Transparent and information
- Informed consent
- Support and assistance
- Redress
- Feedback
- Provision on child victims/survivors.

How should businesses respond

Businesses should be prepared and ready to respond to reports of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. It should be led by individuals who are trained, prioritising and supporting the needs of

⁴ Safeguarding Support Hub. RSH Tip sheet: How to implement a survivor-centred approach (2023). https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/documents/RSH_Tip_sheet_How_to_implement_a_survivor-centred_approach.pdf

survivors, witnesses and whistleblowers. It is advisable for a business to assign an individual to lead the company's response.

When a report is made, companies should respond in a thoughtful and considerate manner, relying on any relevant protection and legal expertise. A poor or inappropriate response may cause further harm to all parties involved.

Reports of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment may come through formal grievance mechanisms but companies should also expect reports to come through informal channels. Informal channels can include from third parties and even through the media. Reporting procedures vary and reports can be made through dedicated email addresses or contact forms provided by the company, free hotlines and anonymous reporting should be considered. Sometimes reports may be rumours or behaviour witnessed by a bystander that made them feel uncomfortable, but they may not be sure if it is an incident of SEAH. These concerns should still be treated as potential reports that may require investigation.

Main steps in responding to SEAH

Receive the report

- Ensure the person reporting feels heard and safe
- Provide a non-judgemental space
- Do not pressure the survivor for details.

Accept and document the report

- Thank the survivor for reporting
- With consent, document what was shared
- Respect the wishes of the survivor on next steps, unless there is a legal obligation to act.

Comply with the process and report internally

- Escalate the report to the designated safeguarding focal point or responsible manager
- Follow the internal protocols for reporting, case management and risk mitigation.

Assess the immediate risk

- Consider the safety of the survivor or others
- Take steps to safeguard the survivor, such as shelter, access to services (medical or psychosocial support).

Refer the survivor or involved parties to support services

- If required, the survivor can be referred to legal, health or psychosocial support services (PSS) or even provided with a safe home
- Create or maintain a referral directory with up-to-date contact details of trusted service providers in your district.

Investigate the incident

- Initiate confidential investigation according to company policy. This would also depend on the wishes of the survivor and the severity of the reported behaviour
- Train investigators, ensuring their impartiality and sensitivity to trauma and the root causes of SEAH.

Take action

- According to the findings of the investigation, take appropriate disciplinary action if abuse or misconduct is confirmed
- Review whether there are any gaps related to systems or processes that need to be addressed.

Monitor and follow up

- Follow up with the survivor (with their consent) to ensure their needs are being addressed
- Document lessons learned and review and improve system.

Potential support services

- **Medical** – for medical examination for cases involving sexual violence, which may require specific test or treatment to be done within 72 hours, such as HIV test and post-exposure prophylaxis, emergency contraception.
- **Psychosocial support services (PSS)** – for survivors and witnesses. This may include trauma counselling for victims/ survivors of sexual violence or harassment.
- **Legal advice** – for survivors, whistleblowers, witnesses/bystanders and alleged perpetrators.
- **Financial support** – transportation to access various services, payment for treatment, child support, paid leave for survivors and witnesses.
- **Shelter** – safe, alternative temporal shelter for the protection of survivors, to keep them away from alleged perpetrators.
- **Child protection support services** – services for reports involving children.
- **Workforce reintegration support** – career or guidance counselling for survivors who may wish to change jobs, move offices.

National Referral Protocol on Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV)

[The National Referral Protocol on Sexual and Gender-based Violence](#) is a technical guidance document that defines the coordination mechanisms and national referral pathways to help all survivors of SGBV, receive prompt, coordinated and effective services from a variety of providers. It can be used as a reference document for companies to establish their own referral pathway for survivors of SEAH.

Section 3: Safe complaints mechanisms

Why safe complaints mechanisms are important

It can be difficult for individuals to report SEAH concerns, and some people do not report allegations at all, while others may take years to come forward with allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse such as rape. The reasons for the under-reporting of SEAH varies and ranges from fear of reprisals or stigma to the lack of information of how and where to safely report.

Personnel may be reluctant to report for fear of losing their jobs as they have several family members of their families who depend financially on them. Reporting systems need to be trusted by everyone and transparent – whether internal/organisational for personnel or community-based. It is important to ensure volunteers and staff are trained and have access to safe and accessible reporting mechanisms.

Types of complaints mechanisms

Safe complaints mechanisms consist of multiple reporting channels such as email, dedicated phone numbers or hotlines, suggestion boxes or in-person reporting, and are usually developed in collaboration with community members. Community collaboration ensures that the system that is developed is culturally sensitive and appropriate for the context.

- Community feedback mechanism (CFM) – a two-way communication between humanitarians for community members
- Community-based complaints mechanism – combines formal and informal structures
- Internal/organisational complaints – reporting channels created within organisations

Setting up a complaints mechanism

- Consult with the community: Find out what existing complaints mechanisms already exist in the community, and whether they are robust enough to receive complaints related to SEAH. Engage with various community members using appropriate methods to understand what the most appropriate channels that different groups can use, and identify what are the barriers to people using the mechanism.
- Plan and design the mechanism: Using the information collated from the community, identify the focal point – trusted individuals in the community for SEAH concern and consider who can access the mechanism, when and where, considering safe access for vulnerable groups.
- Conduct an awareness-raising campaign: When the mechanism is in place, community members will need to be informed about it. Therefore, an awareness campaign must be designed to reach all members of the community. The campaign should include the rights of

the community members and how they can complain, the responsibility of the company and what it can and cannot do.

- Receive the complaint: A company should also have mechanisms in place to receive a complaint and investigate it. The reputation of the company and the safety of the person with the complaint depend on the company follow up appropriately.
- Give feedback: Feedback will have to be provided to the complainant after you have followed up on it.

More information on how to set up a community-based complaints mechanism can be found [here](#).

Investigating and responding to SEAH concerns

How a report and its investigation are handled can have a significant psychological and emotional impact on a survivor's recovery. The responsibility of how SEAH concerns are handled will lie with the company.

Investigation is an internal workplace administrative procedure and should be carried out by qualified investigators who have professional training and qualifications. The procedure is to ascertain whether there has been a breach of organisational policy. Therefore, it is important that your firm has a safeguarding policy explaining what acceptable conduct for staff is, and that your staff have been trained on the policy.

If the complaint involves a child, a report will need to be made to the police. A survivor and the alleged perpetrator should be kept updated on the progress of the investigation and the conclusion. The team responding to the complaint must decide on the appropriate outcome with reference to the report and its recommendations. Disciplinary action should be guided by the company's procedures.

Survivor-centred investigations

Investigations need to be survivor centred, and it is the responsibility of the investigator to ensure that the principles of the victim/ survivor-centred approach are applied throughout every step of the investigation. According to the IASC's Investigators Manual,⁵ a victim-centred investigation places the rights, wishes, needs, safety, dignity and wellbeing of the victim at the centre of all prevention and response measures concerning SEAH.

Key principles of investigation management:⁶

- Confidential
- Timely
- Independent

⁵ Inter-Agency Standing Committee. IASC Investigator's Manual: A Victim-Centred Approach to Investigation of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Complaints (2025). <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-investigators-manual-victim-centered-approach-investigation-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse>

⁶ Safeguarding Support Hub. How-To-Note: Prepare For and Manage Safeguarding Investigations (2021). https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/How-to%20Note%20Preparing%20for%20and%20Managing%20Safeguarding%20Investigations_final_0.pdf

- Victim/ survivor-centred
- Fair
- Risk-based
- Thorough.

For survivor-centred investigations, there needs to be a mechanism or procedures for receiving and handling SEAH complaints. Mishandling of SEAH complaints or inadequate complaint mechanisms can damage trust in the system as well as cause harm to the victim and the reputation of the company.

Who can be investigated

Anyone who has a contract with your firm can be investigated, including staff, contractors, volunteers, interns, suppliers and representatives. This also includes the Managing Director and Board members. If the complaint is criminal, then it should be reported to the police.

The Investigation Qualification Training Scheme (IQTS)

The IQTS was developed by the CHS Alliance and Humentum, with support of the FCDO in 2022. The IQTS provides an accessible and affordable training offering. The scheme was primarily designed for humanitarian and development staff, persons working on safeguarding and investigators responsible for investigating SEAH allegations by aid workers. It uses a tiered approach to training and is based on professional development standards of investigating allegations of sexual misconduct.

Section 4: Training and awareness raising

Awareness-raising activities should be implemented to reduce the risks of SEAH. It is also important to build safeguarding capacity and awareness within the communities in which these businesses are located and inside the company among personnel, volunteers and community members.

Safeguarding should be part of any community engagement. In order to prevent and respond to SEAH, it is imperative that everyone in an institution and the affected communities understand the causes of SEAH, as well as their rights and obligations and how to safely report a concern.

Regular awareness raising is important to reinforce key messages. When there is a large recruitment of volunteers or staff, safeguarding training and refresher training together with producing materials to raise awareness is recommended. Awareness-raising materials can include posters and leaflets, displayed in offices and around the community. Short videos explaining key concepts can also be used as part of a training module or presentation.

It is relevant to all personnel, including drivers, security and senior management staff. Everyone has a role to play.

Staff, contractors and volunteers

Training staff on safeguarding involves raising awareness on how to prevent, report and respond to SEAH allegations in the workplace. Staff members should never conduct investigations, as this is the role of trained investigators.

Training can cover topics such as:

- Understanding SEAH concepts
- The firm's code of conduct, which explains acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- An overview of reporting systems, including internal and external reporting*
- Potential barriers to reporting
- The complaints mechanism
- An overview of the investigation process.

(*Internal reporting is a system for staff to use for reporting allegations, while external reporting is used by members of the community where the firm or business is located and with whom it has a relationship).

Firms can offer training to new staff as part of their onboarding, and refresher training annually for all staff. Separate training should be delivered for personnel in leadership positions, including the board members. The ultimate responsibility for PSEAH rests on the leadership, usually the Managing Director of the company, and one of their most important responsibilities is to create the appropriate organisational culture to ensure that all staff are empowered to prevent, report and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Partner organisations

Partner organisations should also be trained on the company's safeguarding policy, especially where there is a contractual relationship. On the other hand, if the firm has a contractual relationship with a UN agency, it will be expected to be trained on PSEAH by that agency. The firm might have to go through an assessment on SEAH to identify gaps and then develop a plan to build their capacity on preventing SEAH and responding to SEAH allegations.

Community members

Training for community members should aim to raise awareness on sexual exploitation and abuse; explain the reporting mechanism so they know where and how to report complaints; and empower them to be able to prevent, identify, report and respond to SEAH allegations. Visibility materials should be designed, developed and disseminated throughout the community. These materials should be contextualised, taking into consideration topics such as the language spoken in the community, literacy levels of community members and potentially the dominant religion of the members of the community. Through engagement with the community, this can help decide the nature of the messages to be disseminated. Another tool which is useful for communities is the use of the media (especially community radio) to disseminate appropriate messages.

Section 5: Additional resources

1. Safeguarding Support Hub. Summary brief: International Standards on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (2021).
https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/210609%20RSH%20Summary%20Brief_Global%20SEAH%20Standards_Final_0.pdf
2. Safeguarding Support Hub. Bitesize: Understanding SEAH and GBV (2021).
https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/RSH_BiteSize_Understanding%20SEAH%20and%20GBV_final.pdf
3. Safeguarding Support Hub. RSH How-to note 'How to develop your organisational safeguarding policy' for CSOs (2022).
https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/documents/How%20to%20note_How%20to%20develop%20your%20organisational%20safeguarding%20policy_Global_Final.pdf
4. CHS Alliance. How to Create an Effective Code of Conduct (2021).
https://d1h79zlgft2zs.cloudfront.net/uploads/2021/06/Code_of_Conduct-Toolkit_V2.pdf
5. Safeguarding Support Hub. RSH Tip Sheet: How to Implement a Survivor-centred approach (2023).
https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/documents/RSH_Tip_sheet_How_to_implement_a_survivor-centred_approach.pdf
6. World Bank. Good Practice Note: Addressing SEA/SH in HD Operations (2022).
<https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/0e0825d39c28f61080380c6be9c40811-0290032022/original/SEA-SH-GPN-for-HD-Operations-CESO-Issue-Version-September-26-2022.pdf>
7. Safeguarding Support Hub. RSH How-to Note: Organisational Capacity Assessment (2023).
https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/documents/RSH_How-to_note_Organisational_capacity_assessment.pdf
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