



Safeguarding and Protection
from Sexual Exploitation
Abuse (PSEA) Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of the policy is to protect people from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with the BeChild. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated with BeChild;
- The design and implementation of INSO's programmes and activities.

The policy lays out the commitments made by BeChild and informs staff and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and PSEA.

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of international good practice in safeguarding including the IASC Minimum Operating Standards for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse for UN and nonUN Staff.

Scope of application

This policy applies equally to:

- The board of trustees.
- All staff contracted by BeChild (under any contractual mechanism).
- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to BeChild, including but not limited to: auditors, trainers, consultants; volunteers; contractors; and programme visitors including but not limited to donors, auditors, journalists, staff relatives, researchers and politicians.
- It applies during or outside working hours, every day of the year.
- Harassment or sexual misconduct between BeChild staff or associated personnel. Such cases are addressed through our Bullying and Harassment Policy and the Disciplinary and Grievance and Whistleblowing policies.

Review & approval

This policy will be reviewed, approved and endorsed by the BeChild Board of Trustees annually, or when there are changes in applicable legislation and/or regulatory guidance. This document will also be reviewed by the BeChild executive management team after any safeguarding incident is reported and/or investigated.

Policy statement

BeChild believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. BeChild has a zero tolerance approach to abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel.

BeChild commits to addressing safeguarding and PSEA throughout its work, through the four pillars of;

Awareness: Ensure that all staff and associated personnel connected to BeChild are aware of the high standards of behaviour and conduct expected of them to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are safeguarded and protected from sexual abuse and exploitation.

Prevention: Ensuring through awareness and good practice that staff who work with BeChild minimise the risks of breaches of safeguarding and any form of sexual exploitation and abuse, including, but not limited to conducting relevant vetting and background checks of staff as part of their recruitment process.

Reporting: Ensuring that all BeChild staff are aware of what steps to take when suspicions or concerns regarding safeguarding issues or allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse arise.

Responding: Ensuring that immediate action is taken to identify and address reports of breaches of safeguarding policy or sexual abuse and exploitation and ensure the safety and well-being of the person being abused or exploited.

What is safeguarding and what does it mean for BeChild?

In the NGO sector in general, we understand safeguarding to mean taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, but also emotional abuse and neglect from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

We understand our specific safeguarding risks in relation to vulnerable adults and children to include, but not be limited to:

- Sexual abuse or exploitation committed by our own staff or associated personnel of any third party.
- Reporting any disclosures of abuse or exploitation that we become aware of in the course of our work by third parties.

This document provides measures to protect against these specific risks along with more general risks common to the sector and matters of law.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

- A. Sexual exploitation is 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.
- B. Sexual abuse means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

BeChild staff and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually exploit or abuse any person.
- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18 (regardless of local legislation or customs). Mistaken belief in the age of a child is no defence.
- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sex or sexual favours. This includes, but is not limited to, using the services of sex workers, (whether or not prostitution is legal in the location) demanding sexual activity in exchange for

assistance/service that is due to beneficiaries and demanding sexual activity in exchange for employment or administrative service.

- Any sexual relationship between those providing humanitarian assistance and protection and a person benefiting from such humanitarian assistance and protection that involves improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work and create harm.
- Use a child or adult to procure sex for others.

Other responsibilities

BeChild staff and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents sexual exploitation/abuse and safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of this Safeguarding Policy.
- Report any suspicion or concern of safeguarding or PSEA issues. Any individual can raise a concern/complaint to BeChild about an incident they have experienced, witnessed, or heard about concerning a BeChild staff member or partner (suppliers, partners, contractor, etc.) without fear of retribution.

Additionally, while not prohibited unless stated so by country level policy, the following types of sexual relationships are strongly discouraged as they generally involve unequal power dynamics and may be perceived as exploitative:

- Relationships between BeChild's international and national staff members.
- Relationships between BeChild's international staff and members of the local general public.

Awareness

BeChild's Responsibilities

BeChild will:

- Ensure staff and associated personnel receive orientation on safeguarding and PSEA at a level commensurate with their role in the organisation.
- Ensure all staff and associated personnel have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy.
- Guests travelling to BeChild sites of operation will receive the policy for review and information.

Prevention

BeChild's Responsibilities

BeChild will :

- Implement appropriate safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel
- Undertake its operations in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with BeChild.
- Appoint a Designated Person to ensure that safeguarding is given a high priority within BeChild.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

Communicating BeChild's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

This policy and associated procedures are publicly available on BeChild's website and BeChild will also communicate them to staff, associated personnel, beneficiaries, donors, other stakeholders and the general public as appropriate. This will include appropriate orientation for staff and associated personnel and public information in public access areas of BeChild facilities.

Relationships with NGO Beneficiaries

Without prejudice to the preceding and understanding that BeChild's beneficiaries are the staff of other NGOs' rather than vulnerable victims of conflict or crisis, relationships between BeChild staff and other NGOs' staff, even where those staff are the registered beneficiaries of BeChild, are not prohibited. However, staff must always apply due diligence in avoiding any impropriety or conflict of interest and must take into consideration relevant factors such as conflicts of interest, cultural norms; security risks; applicable laws etc.

Safeguarding in Recruitment

BeChild is fully committed to safe recruitment selection and vetting of potential new staff, trustees and volunteers. We have adopted the following safe recruitment practices:

- A. Those responsible for recruitment and selection are properly oriented on BeChild Safeguarding Policy and procedures;
- B. All vacancy announcements will affirm BeChild's commitment to the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy;

- C. Applicant screening will pay particular attention to gaps in employment history or frequent changes of employer and address;
- D. All offers of employment will be conditional on receiving at least two professional references which will be rigorously followed up on including questions on disciplinary actions. References from family members will not be accepted;
- E. All essential qualifications and relevant professional accreditations and memberships should be verified to the satisfaction of the relevant recruitment manager;
- F. The successful candidate will be required to provide proof of identity (passport, ID card);
- G. All new hires receive comprehensive orientation in the safeguarding policy and procedures and associated documents (Code of Conduct, Child Protection etc);
- H. All new hires are required to sign and abide by the Code of Conduct as a condition of employment.

No staff member, trustee, volunteer or other representative may undertake activities in relation to BeChild that involve access to children or adults at risk without supervision unless and until an appropriate background check (which may include a criminal record check, as appropriate) has been completed with satisfactory results.

When we become aware that any current or former staff member may pose a risk to children and/or at risk adults we will comply with the legislation and relevant guidance in respect of referring that person to the relevant authorities if appropriate.

Reporting

BeChild and related personnel have a responsibility to report any suspicion or concern of safeguarding issues. Any individual can raise a concern/complaint to BeChild about an incident they have experienced, witnessed, or heard about concerning a BeChild staff member or partner (suppliers, partners, contractor, etc.) without fear of retribution.

BeChild employees and related personnel must not investigate allegations or suspicions themselves.

BeChild recognises that we have a duty to create a working environment where staff are able to raise concerns and support each other to ensure the risk of a safeguarding incident occurring is minimised.

Therefore, BeChild will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and those we come into contact with.

To enable this, BeChild has appointed the Community and Outreach Manager as the safeguarding Designated Person who is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding is given high priority within BeChild. Specific responsibilities of this role include:

- Providing an organisation wide focal point for managing and reporting incidents and allegations;
- Providing support and advice to BeChild managers and staff on all safeguarding matters;
- Carrying out referrals and reporting to the relevant authorities where sexual exploitation or abuse; abuse of a child; or abuse of an at risk adult is reported or suspected;
- Maintaining an overview of safeguarding issues and monitoring the implementation of the safeguarding policy and procedures throughout BeChild;
- Continuous development of a robust and compliant safeguarding policy for BeChild;
- Supporting the Director in regular and time-sensitive reporting on all relevant safeguarding developments to the Board of Trustees.

Ensuring that BeChild's safeguarding policy and procedures are integrated into the induction programme of all new BeChild staff. The Designated Person can also offer additional responsive supervision and guidance to any member of staff who asks for it on an individual basis and provide further safeguarding training and support to senior managers to enable them to cascade safeguarding expertise and advice to their staff if needed.

BeChild will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, service users/beneficiaries, suppliers & vendors and official bodies.

How to Report a Safeguarding or PSEA Concern

Safeguarding or PSEA concerns must be reported directly to BeChild complaint email channel complaints@BeChild.org

The Protect hotline is monitored by the Designated Person and a designated Board Member.

Response

BeChild will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations.

Sexual exploitation and abuse by BeChild employees and associates constitute acts of gross misconduct and are, therefore, grounds for termination of employment or contract/agreement. Breaches of safeguarding standards are grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. It is BeChild policy to report all crimes to the relevant law enforcement authorities unless doing so may pose a risk to anyone involved in the case.

Within its means, BeChild will offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). This could include consultation with a qualified counsellor, medical assessment or assistance or personal protection such as relocation. Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management will be shared on a need to know basis only and will be kept secure at all times.