HOW TO GUIDE

How to develop a Safeguarding and Protection from SEAH Policy

This guide has been developed to complement the Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs) Safeguarding and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) Policy Template. All projects funded through the BCFs are required to adopt a Safeguarding Policy that covers protection from SEAH. This straightforward guide can help your organisation develop an effective policy or enhance current ones. Defra expects all policies to be implemented with downstream partners, with specific project risks identified and mitigated accordingly. The provided Safeguarding and Protection from SEAH Policy Template outlines the minimum standards your project or organisation's policy should meet.

Introduction

The purpose of this How to Guide is to help your project and organisation create a suitable Safeguarding and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) Policy. It is a simple guide to use in conjunction with your own policies and procedures. A BCFs SEAH Policy Template has been developed and other additional templates referenced to provide an outline to work from. This is available on the Safeguarding page of all BCFs websites.

The Biodiversity Challenge Funds require organisations to have a safeguarding policy; projects will need to identify specific SEAH risks and mitigations and ensure downstream partners can adequately ensure protection from SEAH in their activities.

A policy is a live, dynamic document that is meant to be followed and adapted as needed. A Safeguarding and Protection from SEAH policy works in partnership with your organisation's Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing and any other policy that may describe acceptable conduct of staff, volunteers, trustees, or other representatives of your organisation.

Credit: Andrew Harvey

See Bond's helpful resource
Developing and modelling a positive safeguarding culture: A tool for leaders

Step-by-Step Intructions

Step 1: Preparation

• Why? Why does your organisation need a safeguarding and Protection from SEAH policy? How will having this policy help you to provide services or aid in a way that keeps people safe from harm?

If you work with people, you need a safeguarding and protection from SEAH policy! Pay attention to the most vulnerable such as children and marginalised groups, but remember staff also deserve protection from SEAH and to work in a respectful environment.

• Who? Who needs to be part of this process? Ensure that your leadership and Human Resource services are part of the process for creating and maintaining the policy.

Step 2: Initial setup

• Templates can be helpful to ensure you are following recognised best practice. We have provided a bespoke template for BCFs but you can also review other templates for more examples.

• **Warning: be sure to not just copy and paste a policy without adapting to your context! All policies need to be in line with local laws. Ensure you understand the policy and can effectively implement among all stakeholders.**

Reviewing policies from other organisations or engaging with your local networks is a great way to learn from each other. The Safeguarding Resource & Support Hub is a great source to learn from other organisations and share your own learnings.

• Policies should be unique to your organisation and systems – however, we suggest you include the following as a minimum:

☐ **A zero tolerance to inaction statement.** This means: zero tolerance for acts of SEAH; zero tolerance for inaction to prevent, report or respond to SEAH; and zero tolerance for retaliation against victim-survivors or whistleblowers. It does not mean having zero cases of SEAH being reported. Reporting is strongly encouraged and should not be penalised[1].

As part of Biodiversity Challenge Fund terms and conditions you must report allegations of SEAH immediately to oda.safeguarding@defra.gov.uk

☐ **Scope** – who is this policy for? nsure you clearly state who the policy covers. Does it apply to all employed staff only, or also others associated with the organisation such as volunteers, trustees and other stakeholders. N.B. The latter is preferred by BCFs; detail how you ensure compliance from everyone covered by your policy.

[1]Taken from **CAPSEAH Common SEAH Principles**

☐ **Contact details to report concerns** – we suggest this is a position within your organisation or project rather than a named person. Multiple channels of reporting also allows people to report in a way that feels comfortable to them.

☐ **Notification** that violation of the Safeguarding/Protection from SEAH policy can result in disciplinary measures up to and including dismissal / termination of contract or agreement.

☐ **Principles:** Protection from SEAH work is guided by various principles developed for various humanitarian, development and peacekeeping entities.

☐ **Clear guidance on expectations around behaviour** including what is and is not acceptable.

☐ **Glossary of terms**. You may find this **glossary** useful in translating Protection from SEAH terms into local languages.

> Our template policy outlines the principles from the **CAPSEAH**, but your organisation may choose to follow others such as **IASC 6 Principles**, relevant **standards of the CHS** or **Keeping Children Safe**.

Step 3: Review and implementation

• Review your new policy through your organisation's standards and procedures.

• Is your policy easy to read? Remember that your policy may be the first place a victim-survivor may go to understand how to report a concern: is it easy to find this information?

• Do other policies need to be reviewed to ensure consistent language on SEAH?

• Accessible: can people with varying needs access your policy? For example, do you have a version in local languages? How would someone with poor literacy skills access your policy? Are alternative versions available such as large print or braille?

• Implementation: how will your staff learn about your new policy? Will training take place to ensure they understand the importance and implications of the policy? How will communities you work with know the policy and understand their right be protected from SEAH? Is training repeated regularly and takes place before any work with communities takes place?

• How can stakeholders access your policy? Will this be available on your website or through internal communication channels?

Step 4: Go beyond the basics

Remember a policy is just one part of ensuring the protection of everyone from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. Safeguarding people is the responsibility of everyone and affects all aspects of an organisation.

Anticipate concerns being raised. Even with the best protections in place SEAH can occur in any organisation. You can strengthen your organisation's procedures by implementing the following best practices:

1. Safer Recruitment – what processes does your organisation have in place to ensure appropriate vetting of staff is done? Could these measures be improved by joining the **Misconduct Disclosure Scheme**?

2. Maintaining an active log of all concerns.

3. Survivor Centred Approach - Embed and prioritise the rights, safety, needs, wellbeing, and dignity of victim-survivors and their communities. This **Capacity Building Training** manual has information on understanding survivor-centred response.

Credit: Emily Garthwaite

4. Leadership – Leaders are the heart of any organisation. This **Safeguarding Leadership Tool** will support your leadership in 6 key areas of creating a culture that prevents and responds to acts of SEAH.

5. Robust investigation process that is SEAH specific – Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance has created a **toolkit** that includes templates and an investigation guide in multiple languages. The **Investigator Qualification Training Scheme** provides training on how to conduct robust and high-quality victim / survivor-centred investigations into allegations of SEAH.

6. Collection of safeguarding data – ensure your processes are safe and take into consideration Data Protection as standard.

7. Community-led initiatives and reporting mechanisms – ensure your project understands local protection mechanisms in place within communities and incorporate these into your complaints and feedback response mechanisms.

8. Peer networking to share learning with other local organisations can deepen your understanding of local safeguarding risks and local referral services available to support victim-survivors.

9. Upskilling staff in safeguarding and SEAH investigations. For in depth safeguarding training see **Safeguarding in the International Aid Sector** suite. **Investigator Qualification Training Scheme** is a highly recognised training course in conducting victim-survivor centred SEAH investigations.

For more information and resources please see below:

•   In-depth how to note: **How to develop your organisational safeguarding policy For civil society organisations (CSOs)**.

•   **Protection from SEAH Handbook Additional Resources**: a handy list of resources from the Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance that covers specific aspects of implementing Protection from SEAH in your organisation.

Credit: Jeff Wilson

Credit: Everland

Credit: Sergio Borrero