

CI Safeguarding Policy Review 2023 – Key Changes Made

Every two years, as part of good governance and accountability, we review our core global policies to ensure they reflect best practice, and we are learning from experience. Across the Fiscal Year 2023, the CI Safeguarding/ PSHEA Focal Point Network led a review of the CI Safeguarding Policy to produce the fourth iteration of this policy since its commencement in 2006, ensuring that the policy reflects sector wide best practices, recognised standards and conventions, and meets current donor requirements. The following is a summary of the key changes made to the policy in this review and update process, which has seen a particular emphasis on broadening our understanding of abuse and improving our child safeguarding and our victim/survivor-centred approach.

- **All forms of abuse** - The scope of the policy has been expanded to encompass all forms of abuse. In addition to the existing forms- sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and child abuse - it now includes physical and emotional abuse, and neglect towards. This is to acknowledge the continuum of abuse, made up of multiple forms to which both adults and children can become victims/survivors of. CARE, and the wider sector, are now recognising that our programmes may increase the risk of harm to participants to *all* forms of abuse, be it intentional and unintentional, and therefore we must now include these as part of our prevention and response approaches. Within the CI Safeguarding Policy, Emotional Abuse is clearly defined as abuse perpetrated by CARE staff or Related Personnel towards programme participants. Staff or Related Personnel who experience emotional abuse, harassment or bullying by CARE staff must continue to refer to their HR policies.
- **Child Safeguarding** - Our Policy and Safeguarding Code of Conduct now fully address child abuse and child safeguarding, in recognition of CARE's responsibility around child safeguarding whether in contexts where we are working directly or indirectly with children. We recognise that even when our programs are not specifically designed for children, they may still be present when accompanying an adult and therefore we need to ensure we have integrated appropriate prevention and response measures. The policy now includes specific commitments to child safeguarding in our programme design, risk assessment, and feedback and accountability mechanisms.

In addition, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is now acknowledged in the footnotes of the Policy and Code of Conduct. Recognising that the UNCRC is the most complete statement of children's rights and the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history, the articles of the UNCRC provided the basis for the additional requirements relating to the prevention of child exploitation and abuse in the Policy and Safeguarding Code of Conduct. This topic has also been expanded in our definitions resource (see the [Safeguarding Hub](#) in CARE Shares).

- **Victim/Survivor** - The Policy now uses the language of victim/survivor. This recognises that people who have experienced abuse may consider themselves as victim and/or survivor, and that this might also be fluid depending on where they are at in processing and living with their experience.
- **Survivor-centred approach to investigations** - Clarification on applying a survivor-centred approach to investigations, and the procedure to follow when a victim/survivor does not consent to participating in an investigation, has now been included in the policy. Where the victim/survivor does not consent to participating in the investigation process, a decision to proceed, or not, must be assessed against the risk that the alleged perpetrator/subject of complaint may pose to others within CARE, our programme participants, and the communities where we work. The victim/survivor must be informed of any decision, and every effort made to protect their identity. All decisions must be comprehensively risk-assessed, documented, and agreed with senior management. This is based on recognised sector-wide good practice, and from guidance the CHS Foundation Paper '[Victim/survivor-centred approach to protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment](#)' (2023).
- **Policy and Code of Conduct applies at all times, in person and online** - The Policy and the Safeguarding Code of Conduct now explicitly state that they apply at all times both in-person and *online*. This is consistent with our new CI Code of Conduct and today's ways of working and connecting through online methods.
- **Guidance and Protocols** - Details about how to operationalise CARE's safeguarding commitments have been shifted into a series of guidance and protocols resources – see listing in section 6 of the policy. These resources are accessible in the [Safeguarding Hub](#) on CARE Shares and will be updated and built on as required.

- **Structural changes to the policy** - The policy history and accompanying definitions have been shifted out of the policy and can be found in the [Safeguarding Hub](#) in CARE Shares. By separating the definitions out of the policy, we have created a stand-alone resource, which can be updated when needed to ensure CARE works to best practices.
- **Definitions** – The definitions accompanying the policy have been updated to reflect changes within the policy and best practice. This includes a new definition of emotional and physical abuse towards adults and an updated definition of Grooming to include coercive control.