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CPP037 Safeguarding and Cefas' Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) Policy within International Development

Purpose

Cefas expects the highest moral and ethical standards from those we employ, and from those we work with through our international programmes which provide support and services to people and their communities. When working overseas SEAH must be regarded as one of the most important pillars of Safeguarding to be abided by and vigilant for. Where we work with partners we will ensure, through our procurement / engagement practices, that beneficiaries and delivery partners are aware of their expectations in the Safeguarding space, and in particular to SEAH. Beneficiaries must always be put first, by Cefas and by its partners.

Policy

Safeguarding means preventing harm abuse and neglect to people and the environment. The risks of harm from a particular type of exploitation to beneficiaries of Official Development Assistance (ODA) also known as International Aid were highlighted by the Aid Sector scandal in early 2018 and has resulted in an increased focus on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH), a major subset of Safeguarding policy which is particularly important when engaging with people and communities worldwide. This Policy highlights the Cefas approach to SEAH for our international development programmes.

Cefas believes that everyone involved in programmes and projects, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic origin or any other protected characteristic has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Cefas will not tolerate abuse and/or exploitation by staff or associated personnel involved in any international programmes or projects Cefas or its commissioned partners are involved in.

It is a mandatory responsibility of delivery partners or organisations that are delivering component of a programme or projects, to have appropriate and proportionate safeguarding policies and procedures and it is the responsibility of the senior project leader within Cefas to seek assurance that these are in place.

All delivery partner/organisation's safeguarding policy should clearly set out policies that seek to prevent and address SEAH and have clear behavioural expectations of all staff and associated personnel that apply in all countries in which work is being delivered. This should include the requirement that "staff must not engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18,

CPP037

regardless of the legal age of consent in the country in which aid is being delivered.” as a minimum.

Cefas expects all partners and organisations delivering projects to commit to addressing SEAH throughout their work, through the safeguarding cycle of identify, prevent, report, respond and learn. Our zero tolerant position extends to Cefas staff / delivery partner staff who find themselves, through their work on programmes and projects, exposed to SEAH and direct these cases to our policy CP010-06 on harassment in the workplace (available upon request).

SEAH is an organisational risk and therefore measures are required to span all organisational activity where there is direct or indirect contact with people. This activity includes general operations, procurement, programmers, activities, communication, recruitment, management, policies and procedures, culture, mission and values.

Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Harassment (SEAH)

Cefas are committed to a culture of zero tolerance to sexual exploitation and abuse in all that we do.

- Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) is made of the following terms;
 - Sexual exploitation: any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. Includes profiting momentarily, socially, or politically from sexual exploitation of another. Under UN regulations it includes transactional sex, solicitation of transactional sex and exploitative relationship;
 - Sexual abuse: the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. It should cover sexual assault (attempted rape, kissing / touching, forcing someone to perform oral sex / touching) as well as rape. Under UN regulations, all sexual activity with someone under the age of 18 is considered to be sexual abuse;
 - Sexual harassment: a continuum of unacceptable and unwelcome behaviours and practices of a sexual nature that may include, but are not limited to, sexual suggestions or demands, requests for sexual favours and sexual, verbal or physical conduct or gestures, that are or might reasonably be perceived as offensive or humiliating.

There are strong links between power and safeguarding from SEAH. If a person has more power, they have more opportunity to exploit, abuse and harass others. If a person has less power, they are more likely to be targeted for exploitation, abuse, and harassment. These people tend to include children, women, and other marginalised groups, for example indigenous groups.

Application

This policy applies to all Cefas staff and our partners.

Monitoring

As UK government policy develops in this area from guidance issued by the FCDO in November 2022, this policy will be updated as required to ensure Cefas' is compliant.



I fully support this policy.

Neil Hornby
Chief Executive