Plan International USA

PREVENTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (PSHEA) POLICY

Policy Name: Preventing Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) Policy
Owner: Director Risk, Safeguarding & Compliance
Approved by: Executive Team
Effective Date: August 30, 2022
Version: 1.1
Applicable to: All Plan International USA Associates
Related Documents: Plan USA and Global Safeguarding Children and Young People policy; Code of Ethics & Conduct; Freedom from Harassment policy; Trafficking in Persons policy
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Preventing Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) Policy

Summary/Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all associates understand:

— the importance of preventing Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (SHEA) and their responsibility to ensure that their behavior and work does not result in sexual violence or harm against a child, young person, program participant, or Plan associate

— their role in preventing SHEA, and the consequences of breaching this policy

— their responsibility to report any concerns relating to SHEA and have access to clear guidelines on how to report suspected violations

— our commitment to upholding the highest level of personal and professional conduct amongst associates engaging in, working in or visiting programming contexts (in the US or overseas), particularly humanitarian settings where vulnerabilities are increased, ensuring zero tolerance to SHEA, or to inaction on reports of any and all forms of SHEA.

Definitions

Associate - a Plan USA employee, board member, volunteer, intern, visitor, consultant, contractor and partner organization engaged by Plan USA.

Sexual harassment - A person sexually harasses another person if the person makes an unwelcome sexual advance or an unwelcome request for sexual favors, or engages in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can take various forms. It can be obvious or indirect, physical or verbal, repeated or one-off and perpetrated by any person of any gender towards any person of any gender. Sexual harassment can be perpetrated against program participants, community members, citizens, as well as staff and personnel.

Sexual exploitation - any attempted or actual abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. It includes profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from sexual exploitation of another.

Abuse – the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or by unequal or coercive conditions. It covers sexual offenses including but not limited to: attempted rape (which includes attempts to force someone to perform oral sex); and sexual assault (which includes non-consensual kissing and touching). All sexual activity with someone under the age of consent is considered to be sexual abuse.

Policy

Plan USA is fully committed to

— creating a safe and inclusive culture that allows children, young people, program participants, and associates to thrive and feel secure while engaging with Plan

— addressing the drivers of gender inequality and unequal power relations that can lead to SHEA
— supporting and encouraging people to report any complaints, allegations and incidents of SHEA and to understand and exercise their rights
— responding in a timely, effective, safe, comprehensive and confidential manner to all complaints, allegations and incidents of SHEA
— ensuring victims’/survivors’ perspectives and voices are central to any efforts to prevent and respond to SHEA and providing necessary support to victims/survivors
— ensuring procedural fairness to all parties, including those accused of inappropriate or harmful behaviors.

Responsibilities

Plan USA Associates must:
— never participate in or support any form of SHEA while engaged in Plan USA business, including but not limited to trafficking and transactional sex
— read, understand and agree to abide by this Policy and the procedures relevant to them
— immediately report any SHEA concerns and breaches of the Policy
— immediately disclose charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offense that relates to SHEA
— respond to a victim/survivor with belief, respect, confidentiality and in accordance with applicable local office procedures and this Policy
— cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concern or allegations of SHEA
— participate in PSHEA training as relevant to their relationship with Plan USA. Employees must complete training within one week of joining Plan and thereafter every 18 months
— always treat people in a manner which is respectful of their rights, integrity and dignity, considers their best interests and does not expose them to, or place them at risk of, harm

Procedures

— All Plan USA staff, associates and visitors must report any concerns, suspicions or allegations of SHEA and/or breaches of this policy immediately (or at least within 24 hours). (Note: While Plan USA will take reasonable precautions to maintain confidentiality, we cannot guarantee it with respect to any official reporting or investigation that might result.)
— Plan USA will take all concerns and reports of SHEA seriously and we will act on these reports immediately, with the highest priority, and in accordance with the guiding principles and our procedures. Where investigations are launched, they will be carried out by experienced and qualified professionals who are trained on sensitive investigations and a victim/survivor-centred approach.
— Reports constituting criminal offenses will be referred to the relevant authorities. When doing this, we will convey to those authorities the wishes of an adult victim/survivor, the best interest assessment of a child victim/survivor, and the safety of all parties. To the extent possible, we will remain in contact with authorities regarding the well-being of the parties.
— No one will be victimized for making a complaint and Plan USA is committed to working with complainants and victims/survivors to ensure they are central to any response, are not further harmed or disempowered by any processes, and receive support throughout.

**Reporting of Violations**

Any Plan employee or associate of the organization who is the subject of, or a witness to, a suspected violation of this policy should report the violation to one of the following persons, who should consult with the Director, Risk, Safeguarding & Compliance, regarding further reporting requirements:

— Any supervisor
— Any member of the HR Team
— A member of the Executive Team
— The Director, Risk, Safeguarding & Compliance
— The USNO Safeguarding Focal Points
— The CEO
— The Chair of the Audit Committee of Plan’s Board of Directors at planboard@planusa.org
— Plan’s SafeCall hotline, by phone at 1-866-901-3295, online at www.safecall.co.uk/report, or email at plan@safecall.co.uk