CARE International’s Policy on PSEA/CP (July 2017) defines CARE’s commitment to protecting adults and children from sexual exploitation and abuse by CARE employees and related personnel. To help CARE employees and related personnel better understand the policy and your responsibilities, we have developed this set of Frequently Asked Questions.

**Prevention**

**Who does the PSEA/CP policy apply to?** All CARE Employees and Related Personnel. This means the policy applies to all employees of CARE International, CARE Members, CARE Affiliates and CARE Country Offices. The policy also applies to all CARE board members, volunteers, interns, and international and local consultants, in addition to individual and corporate contractors of these entities and related personnel. This includes non-CARE entities and their employees and individuals who have entered into partnership, sub-grant or sub-recipient agreements with CARE.

**What exactly is my responsibility?** It is your responsibility to ensure nobody feels uncomfortable, threatened or unsafe because of your behaviour. You must not sexually exploit or abuse anyone. You must create an environment that is safe and respectful and prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse. It is also your responsibility to report any suspected incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse by CARE employees or related personnel or any other fellow worker outside of CARE.

**Why does CARE say I can’t have sexual relations with a person under 18 years of age if it’s legal in my country?** International conventions recognize children as being under the age of 18 years old. CARE’s policy upholds international conventions and does not allow anyone to be employed by CARE if they have sexual relations with a person under the age of 18 within or outside of marriage.

**How can I know if the person I am having sex with is over 18 or not?** That is your responsibility. Being lied to and even shown false birth certificates or identity documents, is no excuse. It is your responsibility to be sure, and if you are not sure, don’t do it. If you have sex with a person under 18 years old, it is a violation of CARE policy, and it may also be a criminal act.

**I’ve been working with CARE for a few years and I’m soon to marry my 16-year-old fiancé which is legal where we live. Does this mean I can no longer work with CARE?** You will be dismissed if found to be marrying a child under the age of 18 years. It will also be made clear to any new applicants to CARE that if they are married to a person under the age of 18 they will not be eligible for employment in CARE. CARE will only hire new staff who understand and accept our policy that prohibits child marriage.

**Why am I not allowed to pay for sex with sex workers? Isn’t it consensual sex between adults?** In the vast majority of cases, especially in humanitarian contexts and in situations of poverty, the consent is far from freely given and is out of desperation, or coercion. Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour, is prohibited in CARE. This prohibition against exchange of money for sex means CARE employees and related personnel may not pay for sex workers.

**Aren’t these rules an intrusion into my private life? Isn’t what I do outside of office hours my own business?** When you work with CARE, you are a representative of the organization during your personal time as well as during your work time. You accept this when you accept the job. You are held to a very high standard of conduct because your behaviour, both professional and personal, is always associated with CARE.

**When I am working abroad, am I expected to be celibate for the entire time I am on mission?** You are not prohibited from sex at your duty station. Any sexual relations must not be exploitative or abusive or in breach of CARE’s policies.

**I want to take pictures of children in the community where I work. Is this allowed?** You are required to obtain informed and written consent of the parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child. You must explain how the photograph or film will be, or potentially could be, used. The child must be represented in a dignified and respectful manner and be adequately clothed. You also must ensure that file labels, meta-data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child.

**Reporting**

**How do I let someone know that I’ve been sexually assaulted?** Tell your Line Manager or tell your Human Resources Manager or make a report through CARELine <http://www.care.ethicspoint.com>. If you don’t feel able to do this, tell someone else who can report the abuse on your behalf. We want to make sure you are now safe, we want to assist and support you, and we want to ensure it doesn’t happen again to you or anyone else.

**Can complaints be made anonymously?** If you make a complaint through CARELine there is an option to choose to be anonymous. Not all complainants are willing to reveal their identity. This does not have any bearing on the truth of the complaint. Anonymous complaints will be treated just as seriously as complaints where the identity is known.

**How will I know that those I report to have followed up?** CARE is working hard on improving its investigations systems. Shortly after you make a report you will be contacted with an explanation of what steps we will take to follow up on your concerns or complaint.

**Should I report a concern I have about someone’s behaviour even though I am really not sure there is misconduct going on?** You should report any concerns you have. It is for the CARE investigators, not you, to follow up, investigate and confirm those concerns or suspicions. If you report allegations that subsequently prove to be untrue, you will not face repercussions where the reports were made in good faith. Your willingness to raise a concern may mean someone is no longer exploited or abused.

**I have suspicions about the behaviour of someone in my office, but I’m worried about what would happen to me if I report it.** Your safety and the safety of everyone involved is most important. CARE will take active measures to support people who experience or report sexual misconduct, including ensuring that no person who experiences, reports, or participates in an investigation of sexual misconduct is subjected to retaliation or reprisal. CARE may be able to provide assistance with counselling, transport, and accommodation depending on the individual circumstances. Recognising that every person’s support needs are different, we will work discreetly with you to identify the best way to support your safety and the safety of everyone involved. We want everyone to feel safe in letting us know about misconduct.

**If I know a person who was sexually abusive, should I say their name?** When you make a complaint, you should name the alleged perpetrator. We recommend that you don’t reveal the person’s name publicly because of the safety of everyone involved, local laws, and due process.

**If I suspect that an employee from a peer organisation is sexually exploiting someone, should I report it and who do I report it to?** You are obliged to report concerns or suspicions regarding sexual exploitation or abuse or child abuse by anyone within or outside of CARE. You can either report it to CARE and we will follow up with the relevant agency, or if there is an interagency complaints mechanism where you work, you can report it there.

# Response

**What does zero-tolerance mean?** Zero‐tolerance means that sexual exploitation and abuse is simply not accepted. When discovered, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against the perpetrator. Sexual misconduct is grounds for dismissal.

**What will CARE do to support and assist me if I’ve been sexually exploited or abused?**  CARE ensures support and assistance is provided to people who are sexual exploited or abused by CARE employees or related personnel. CARE endeavours to tailor the type of support and assistance to the wants and needs of the individual survivor. This may include medical treatment, legal assistance and psychosocial support.

**Does anything really happen to people who violate CARE’s policy?** If a violation of the policy is substantiated, CARE takes immediate and appropriate disciplinary action, including dismissing staff. CARE will also report the alleged perpetrator to relevant authorities, if safe and appropriate to do so.

**Management and Coordination**

**I’ve just employed new team members who won’t have direct contact with CARE programme participants. Do they need to sign the employee standards that are in CARE’s PSEA/CP policy?** Yes, all employees must sign the standards. Signing the standards is the staff member’s commitment to ensuring a safe and respectful environment where nobody feels uncomfortable, threatened or unsafe due to their behaviour. This includes anyone they come into contact with (colleagues, programme participants, communities, general public) or have indirect contact with, for example, online.

**We use consultants for a lot of our work. Why should we expect these independent consultants to abide by CARE’s policy if they aren’t employees?** Because when we employ consultants or contractors, they do work on behalf of CARE. They work with our staff and programme participants and are equally obliged to abide by our commitment of zero tolerance towards sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse.

**We have a number of visitors to our office who come from other organisations, donors, and government agencies. How can we make sure that they follow this policy?**  You can ensure that visitors receive a briefing that explains CARE’s zero tolerance towards sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse and that we also expect our visitors to uphold the same level of commitment.

**Why should we have to follow CARE’s rules when the laws of the country say something different? Shouldn’t CARE respect local customs?** All CARE staff are expected to comply with CARE Policy, which shall guide staff conduct over less-strict local laws. Should applicable local law impose requirements stricter than CARE Policy, such local law should be respected. If local laws directly conflict with CARE’s requirements, employees should bring that dilemma to senior management for a decision.

**How should we work with our contractual partners on PSEA/CP?** CARE must ensure that its contractual partners and sub-grantees have in place policies that reflect similar values to CARE’s PSEA/CP policy and takes preventive, investigative and response actions against sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse. Support and training may be provided by CARE to increase capacity of partners if necessary. Where a partner does not put in place sufficient measures to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse, CARE will not partner with them.

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