

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Introduction

Children are at risk of abuse and exploitation not only by individuals in the communities in which they live, but also by aid workers and volunteers. Children in emergencies are particularly vulnerable to violence and exploitation. The non-governmental organization "Labor and Health Social initiatives" (hereinafter - LHSI) believes that:

- Children have the right to a happy, healthy and safe childhood
- Cruel treatment of children is a violation of their rights set forth in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Child abuse is never acceptable.

Children in emergencies are particularly vulnerable to violence and exploitation. Proper protection systems have been created in Ukraine, LHSI guarantees compliance with relevant laws in its activities.

2. Definition

Child: A child, as defined by the legislation of Ukraine, is any person under the age of 18. A person aged 14 to 18 is considered a minor. A person under the age of 14 is considered a minor.

Child Abuse: As defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), "child abuse" includes all forms of physical and/or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or neglect, commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or authority. Child abuse is classified into four main forms: physical, sexual, emotional and lack of care (neglect), and is a global phenomenon.

Child protection is a term that describes policies, standards, systems, programs, guidelines, and procedures designed to protect children from harm that may be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, or from any form of neglect. Harm can be caused by primary or secondary caregivers, aid workers and others who come into contact with children in the course of their work.

Signs of child abuse

Before any behavior or act is reported as child abuse, it is important to familiarize yourself with the main signs of child abuse. However, it is important to note that identifying child abuse is not easy, so you should carefully gather the facts and understand the context, and talk to the child where possible, before jumping to conclusions about what you see/hear. LHSI will spread awareness among staff about the signs of child abuse.

The list below can serve as a guideline that can be useful in identifying child abuse.

Physical violence

Physical abuse is the actual or perceived infliction of physical harm on a child, such as punching, kicking, or shaking, when there is a definite belief or reasonable suspicion that the injury has been inflicted or willfully not prevented.

Possible signs of physical violence:

- Bruises, burns, bites, cuts and sprains
- Excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Aggressive behavior towards others
- Rejection of physical contact
- Fear of returning home or telling parents
- Self-destructive tendencies
- He is afraid to go home
- Inappropriate clothing, such as long-sleeved clothing on hot days

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is damage caused by constant or severe emotional abuse or rejection, such as humiliating punishments, threats, lack of care and affection, bullying, which leads to negative consequences for the child's behavior and emotional development.

Possible signs of emotional abuse:

- Delay in physical, mental and emotional development

- Increased anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Inadequate emotional response to painful situations
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Fear of new situations
- Aggressive behavior

Neglect

Neglect occurs when basic needs such as food, warmth, and medical care are not met, or when a child is not protected from any danger that results in a serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Possible signs of neglect:

- Bad social relations
- Low self-esteem
- Frequent feeling of hunger
- Failure to attend school
- Physical problems or neglected medical needs
- Poor personal hygiene
- Theft of things

Sexual violence

Sexual abuse is any type of sexual activity involving a child, regardless of whether the child is aware of, consents to, or initiates the activity. Sexual abuse includes incest, rape, penetration and fondling. It can also include non-contact activities such as viewing pornography or online activities. Sexual abuse can involve siblings or other family members, or people outside the family.

Possible signs of sexual violence:

- Physical signs on the child's genitals
- Sexual behavior inappropriate for the child's age
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy (depending on the age of the child)
- Sleep disorders
- Serious difficulties in relationships with peers and/or adults
- Constant complaints of headache and/or abdominal pain
- Change in the level of success at school

Operation

Child exploitation refers to the use of a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labor and child prostitution. These actions harm the child's physical or mental health, education, spiritual, moral or social-emotional development.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate a commitment to protecting children from harm and to take a clear position for all on what is required to protect children. This helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and shows that the organization takes its duty of care seriously.

LHSI recognizes the need to protect children and minimize the risk of ill-treatment of them. LHSI expects the highest standards of professional conduct in all projects it works on that involve contact with children.

Thus, the policy is intended for employees, volunteers, consultants of LHSI, as well as employees of non-governmental organizations supported by LHSI, whose position leads to regular contact with children. The above individuals are expected to demonstrate commitment to the policy and adhere to established child protection policy guidelines and procedures while working with, for, or on behalf of LHSI name

The purpose of this policy, in a broad sense, is to establish minimum standards and procedures for child protection to ensure that LHSI and its partners work to create a safe environment for children.

4. Politics

The right to protection is a fundamental principle that underpins child protection policy. Using the protection of children as a basic principle, the organization seeks to ensure that measures and systems are in place at the LHSI to protect children from all forms of violence and abuse by employees and anyone associated with LHSI or from whom work may be required in LHSI.

While the primary purpose of the policy is to protect children from all forms of harm and exploitation, the policy is also expected to work as a tool to protect staff and the organization from the risk associated with contact with children.

Children deserve to be respected in their own right and to be fully heard if they raise issues related to abuse. LHSI will include the provision of information on appropriate behavior with children in the initial briefing and training of staff.

In particular, the policy aims to protect children from abuse and exploitation by encouraging good practices among employees and preventing behavior that may be cruel to children.

Prevention: LHSI will take appropriate measures to minimize risks to children through awareness and good practice, as well as taking positive measures to protect children who have become or may become the subject of any concern.

Reporting: Ensuring that all members, OSH Social Initiatives staff and partners know what steps to take if there is a child safety concern.

Responding: engaging in actions that support and protect children when there are concerns about their safety; support and protection of those who raise such issues; investigation or cooperation with any subsequent investigative process; and taking appropriate action in response.

Review: Establishing a process to discuss and resolve practical or policy issues - all issues should be escalated to HR who will log them and ensure further resolution and review.

5. Policy guidelines

Procedure for an employee with concerns

When an employee becomes aware, directly or indirectly, of a practice or incident of concern, there are two options available:

- report through normal line management
- if this has already been done and no action has been taken, or when the employee feels unable to speak to a direct manager, he/she can turn to someone outside their direct management, for example, the Director or Head of the Board of LHSI

Thus, if a person is concerned about the regular actions of an employee, he can contact the Director. If the problem concerns the Director of LHSI, the employee can contact the Head of the Board.

If a member of the Board or supervisory board has a concern, he/she must report it to the Head of the Board or Supervisory Board.

The procedure to be followed by LHSI

- The raised issue will be investigated by LHSI
- The investigation may be more appropriately conducted by a person other than the person with whom the employee concerned communicated.
- LHSI will respect the privacy of the person raising the issue as much as possible. It may not be possible to maintain confidentiality in all cases.
- LHSI will inform the employee who raised the concern of the results of the investigation and any proposed action.
- The person(s) accused of ill-treatment may be informed of the allegation and, if necessary (if the allegation is found to be well-founded), be given an opportunity to provide an explanation. If a decision is made to impose disciplinary action, the normal provisions of the disciplinary procedure, including the right to a hearing and the right to appeal, will apply.
- If the investigation results in disciplinary action, the employee who raised the concern may be asked to participate in the process. LHSI will support workers who raise concerns and take measures to protect them from reprisals and victimization. Victimizing employees for raising concerns or discouraging them from doing so is a serious disciplinary violation. If proven, it will be considered a gross violation of the rules of conduct and may lead to general dismissal.
- LHSI may consider providing independent external support to the employee if the problem is of a complex nature, or if the investigation is likely to be lengthy or highly sensitive.
- If the employee who raised the concern is himself/herself involved in the practice, the fact that he/she raised the issue will be taken into account in determining any subsequent disciplinary action.

Code of conduct

All staff of LHSI, volunteers and partners must adhere to this Code of Conduct.

Personnel and other persons are prohibited from:

- Hitting or inappropriately touching or otherwise physically assaulting or physically abusing children
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children
- Develop relationships with children that, in the opinion of LHSI, can be considered exploitative or violent
- Act in ways that may be violent or may put a child at risk of abuse
- Using language, offering suggestions or advice that is inappropriate, offensive, threatening or violent towards children
- Physical behavior that is inappropriate or sexually suggestive to children
- Leaving the child/children they work with unattended at home overnight
- Sleep in the same room or bed as the child they work with
- Helping children perform bodily functions unnecessarily when they are able to do it themselves
- Indulging or participating in child behavior that is illegal, dangerous, or violent
- Acts designed to embarrass, humiliate or devalue children or otherwise commit any form of emotional abuse
- Discrimination, showing differential treatment of certain children or favoring some children over others

Where possible and practical, LHSI staff and partners should follow the two-adult rule, whereby two or more adults supervise all activities involving children and at all times are present

Final provisions

The general principle is that staff should avoid actions or behavior that could be considered poor practice or potentially abusive. It is important for all employees and other persons who come into contact with children to:

- Be aware of situations that may pose risks and manage them;
- Plan and organize work and the workplace in such a way as to minimize risks;
- If possible, be visible when working with children;
- Ensure that there is a culture of openness to raise and discuss any issues or concerns;
- Ensure that there is a sense of responsibility among staff so that bad practices of potentially abusive behavior do not go unchallenged.

LHSI and its partners must conduct their work in such a way as not to allow themselves to be put in a compromising or vulnerable position. They need to be aware that they may find themselves in a situation of working with children who, because of the circumstances and the abuse they may have suffered, may use the relationship to get 'special attention'. Employees of LHSI are always responsible for maintaining proper relationships, even if the child behaves inappropriately.