How aid organisations can protect people from sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment during COVID-19

Easy read booklet of RSH Guidance Note 1
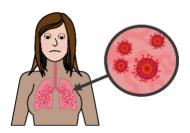
What is in this report?

Who are we?

We are the Resource and Support Hub (RSH). RSH help the **aid sector** protect people better.

People around the world work for the **aid sector** to help poorer communities.

The Resource and Support Hub gives free information online.

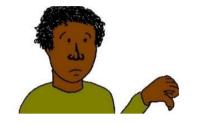RSH has offices in countries in Europe and Africa.

This booklet summarises the 1st Resource and Support Hub Guidance Note .
Please look at the full Guidance Note if you need links to documents or for more information.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means doing our best to make sure that people are not sexually abused and are kept safe from harm.

Here are some examples of harm that can happen:

- **Sexual exploitation** is using a position of power to pressure someone to have sex, like offering money or favours.
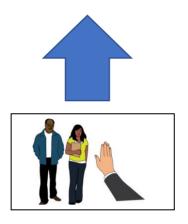
- **Sexual abuse** is forcing people to have sex.

- **Sexual harassment** is touching or making sexual comments when this is not wanted.

Who is at risk of safeguarding abuses during COVID-19?

The COVID-19 response may increase the risk of people working in the aid sector **perpetrating** abuses against the communities they work with and against their colleagues.

Aid workers must make sure that people are **protected** from harm during the COVID-19 response.

People who are already **discriminated against** in communities are most at risk of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. This includes:

- Women and girls
- People with disabilities
- People who are lesbian, gay, bi- or transsexual
- Migrants
- Children

People who are discriminated against for **many reasons** are most at risk of harm. For example:
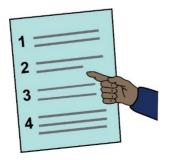
- Adolescent girls with disabilities

- Boys living in refugee camps

- Transsexual women

Research gaps:

People from **minority groups** often have less power in communities. There is not very much evidence about whether people from minority groups are at higher risk of harm.

There has been very little research about safeguarding abuses against men.

Please look at the full evidence digest for details of specific evidence.

Preventing safeguarding abuses during COVID-19

Follow international safeguarding standards during the COVID-19 response.

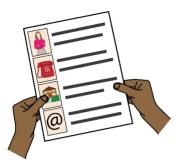Support women and other minority groups to help lead the COVID-19 response in your organisation.

Consider new risks caused by COVID-19 – for example, that it is hard to report abuse. Protect people from any new risks.

Work with communities to change projects so that they protect people from safeguarding abuses.

Work with other organisations that are trying to protect people from harm.

Update your list of support services for adult and child survivors of abuse.

Tell communities, households and individuals about how they can access safeguarding support services.

Provide guidance to your staff on how to identify and mitigate risk of safeguarding abuses while **working remotely or online** during COVID-19.

Use language that is respectful to survivors of abuse. Fight discrimination against survivors of abuse.

Encouraging reporting of safeguarding abuses during COVID-19

Make sure staff are safe during lockdowns and ask them what they need. Make sure they have the support they say they need.

Support staff who are stressed because of COVID-19. Stress may stop people from reporting abuses.

If needed, change reporting tools so that they can be used during COVID-19.

Take action when you receive a report of SEAH.

Contact us

If you want to talk to us send an email to this address **info@rshub.org.uk**
or call us on **+44 (0)1355 843 747**

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The full version of this document is called

Safeguarding Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH) for aid organisations delivering programmes to assist countries affected by COVID-1
Guidance Note 1, May 2020