

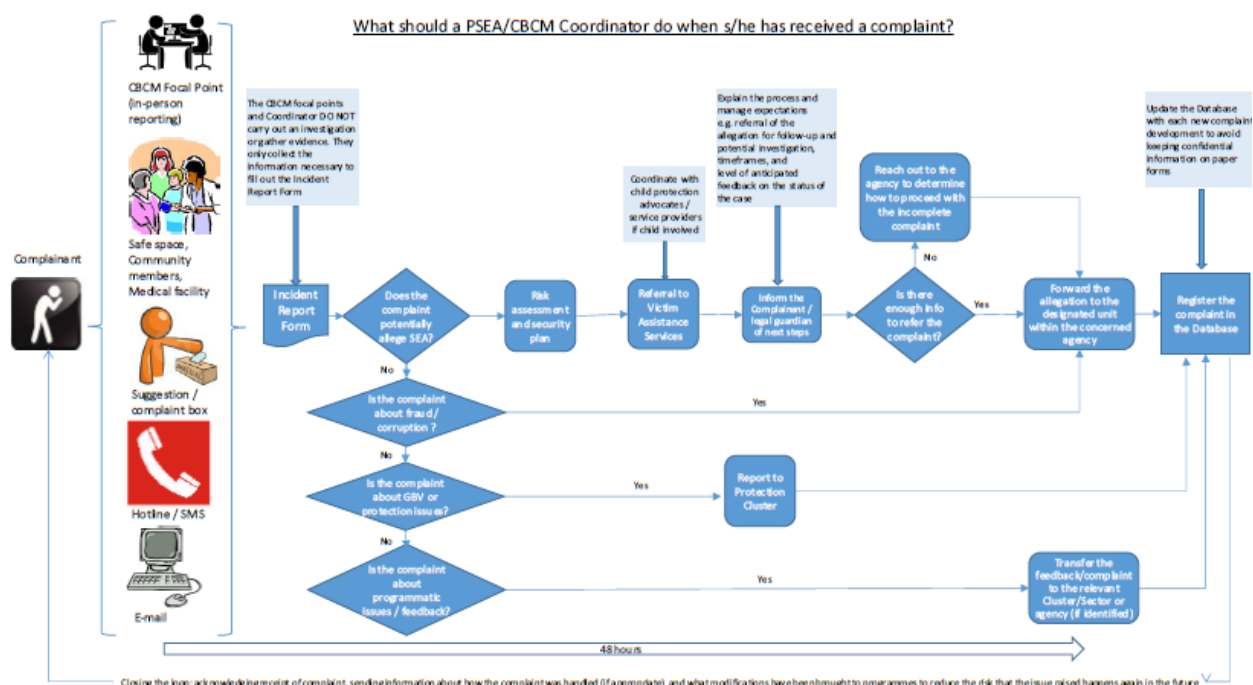
TOOLS: Ensure that sensitive complaints including those related to sexual exploitation and abuse can be handled adequately

KEY ACTION

- ✓ Ensure that sensitive complaints coming through humanitarian agency complaints and feedback mechanisms, or through private sector customer service systems are appropriately referred and dealt with sensitively.
- ✓ Have a working session with coordination bodies such as the Cash and Voucher Working Group, the Community Engagement Working Group, the network for Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and the PSEA focal points in country to agree on referral pathways.

TOOL: [The IASC Community based complaints mechanism on sexual exploitation and abuse](#)

What is in this tool?	This Best Practice Guide is operational guidance on how to set up and run an inter-agency community-based complaint mechanism to handle reports of sexual abuse and exploitation by aid workers.
How?	Look at the flow chart on page 243 and adapt it with the other coordination bodies in your context to ensure referral pathways exist between the different complaints and feedback mechanisms (agencies, partners, governments and private sector).
When?	Ideally before the cash program starts.



TOOL: [The IASC six core principles to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse \(plain English\)](#)

What is in this tool?	A plain English version of the six principles agreed to by the Inter Agency Standing Committee, and translated it into 100 languages as a one-page document that humanitarian staff and crisis-affected people around the world will understand.
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How?	You should use these principles to sensitise all parties involved in cash assistance. Distribute a copy to make sure everyone is aware of what behaviours are acceptable. Share the document widely: hang it in your offices, in community centres, distribution sites, and email it to your colleagues in their native languages.
When?	Throughout the programme lifecycle.

It is the **responsibility of humanitarian actors** to ensure that the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse are understood by staff, partners, financial service providers, traders and recipients of humanitarian assistance, and that they are mitigated during the design and implementation stages of the programme lifecycle.

In the English-dominated humanitarian sector, the benefit of a plain language version is twofold:

- It promotes understanding by non-native speakers of English, particularly those with limited English proficiency.
- It removes ambiguity and legal terminology, increasing the chances of an accurate translation into other languages.

IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Rules on sexual conduct for humanitarian workers

Humanitarian workers **can be disciplined – even fired – for unacceptable behaviour in relation to sex**. These are the rules they must comply with:

- Humanitarian workers are **not allowed to have sexual relationships with anyone under the age of 18, even if it is legal in their country**. Saying they did not know the person's true age is not a valid excuse.
- Humanitarian workers are **not allowed to pay for sex with money, employment, goods or services** – including goods and services intended as aid to people in need. They must not use promises of these things to make other people accept any kind of behaviour that humiliates or exploits them. This includes paying or offering money for sex with a prostitute.
- Humanitarian workers have influence over who receives goods and services. This places them in a position of power in relation to people who need assistance. For that reason, humanitarian organizations **strongly encourage staff not to have sexual relationships with anyone affected** by a humanitarian emergency. Such relationships make humanitarian action seem less honest and credible.
- If a humanitarian worker is **worried or suspects** that anyone in their organization or another aid organization may be breaking humanitarian rules on sexual conduct, they **must** report it, following **procedures** set up by their agency.
- Humanitarian workers **must create and maintain** a work environment which prevents unacceptable sexual behaviour and encourages staff to behave as set out in their **codes of conduct**. **All managers** are responsible for supporting and developing systems which maintain this environment.

Numerous [translations are available](#).

TOOL: [The IASC Minimum Operating Standards for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse \(MOS-PSEA\)](#)

What is in this tool?	There are eight PSEA Minimum Operating Standards with a series of key indicators to guide actions.
How?	While the MOS-PSEA have been developed for humanitarian organisation staff as the main audience, the principles also apply to partners, financial service providers, traders and cash recipients. The table below offers you a checklist to make the MOS-PSEA more relevant for these stakeholders.
When?	Throughout the programme lifecycle.

PSEA Minimum Operating Standards	Relevance to mitigating risks of abuse of power
1. Effective Policy Development and Implementation	Ensure PSEA policies in place are reflected in cash assistance operational documents and that they are adhered to.
2. Cooperative Arrangements	Ensure clauses related to PSEA are included in contracts.
3. A dedicated department/focal point is committed to PSEA	Partners, financial service providers, traders and cash recipients should be aware of who to contact within your organisation to discuss and, if needed, report PSEA issues.
4. Effective and comprehensive communication from HQ to the field on expectations regarding raising beneficiary awareness on PSEA	Ensure that agreements made with partners, financial service providers and traders on PSEA cascade down to field-based staff and stakeholders.
5. Effective community-based complaints mechanisms, including victim assistance	Well-structured and responsive multi-channel feedback and complaint systems are essential in mitigating risks of abuse of power.
6. Effective recruitment and performance management	Staff, partners, financial service providers and traders sign a code of conduct with clear sanctions in case of breach.
7. Effective and comprehensive mechanisms are established to ensure awareness raising on SEA amongst personnel	Training on appropriate behaviour including PSEA must be provided to all partners, financial service providers and traders.
8. Internal complaints and investigation procedures in place	Written procedures on handling complaints/reports received from staff members or beneficiaries are in place and are applied.