

Conclusion

This guidance on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) outlines the key steps undertaken in the development of the Local Authorities (LAs) SEAH Policy. It guides the LAs in promoting a safe, inclusive, and gender-equal work environment that is free from gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, and discrimination. By strengthening policies, systems, and institutional capacity, local authorities are better positioned to uphold dignity, protect rights, and build public trust in public service delivery. The lessons are drawn from the 10 Local Authorities' procedures for developing the SEAH policies.

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Formulating Workplace Policies for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

Guidance for Local Government Authorities in Zambia



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Executive Summary

Local Authorities play a critical role in safeguarding the dignity, rights, and wellbeing of the communities they serve. This Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH) Guidance provides a unified checklist for preventing, identifying, and responding to sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment across all local governance systems. The Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) Policy is informed by and aligned with the requirements of the **Code Act of 2019 Employment** , which mandates every employment entity to establish and enforce a workplace harassment policy. The SEAH policy should reflect Management's commitment to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive working environment for all employees, volunteers, interns, contractors, partners, visitors, and other entities engaging with the Council.

The development of a Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) policy presents an opportunity for Local Authorities (LAs) to establish a strong framework that drives positive change and supports best practices across all LAs. This guide outlines how LAs can foster a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect, dignity, fairness, and professionalism, and where discrimination, intimidation, and abuse are not tolerated.

Therefore, this guidance will support LAs in developing their SEAH policies. It outlines key policy elements for a SEAH policy, procedural standards, leadership responsibilities, and operational mechanisms necessary to ensure safe, accountable, and gender-responsive institutions free from all forms of harassment.

Introduction

Sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment undermine public trust, violate human rights, and compromise service delivery. Local authorities, as duty bearers, have the responsibility to ensure that staff, elected officials, contractors, service providers and partners do not use their positions for sexual or personal gain.

This guidance supports LAs to:

- Strengthen institutional integrity
- Promote survivor-centred approaches-it shifts the focus from procedures and institutions to the well-being, autonomy, and healing of the survivor, while still ensuring accountability and justice.
- Reduce vulnerability linked to poverty, gender inequality, and power imbalance
- Align with national laws and international safeguarding standards

Key Actions for Developing & Implementing a PSEAH Policy

Inclusive Consultations

Engage staff, volunteers, unions, traditional leaders, and partners to ensure relevance and ownership.

Alignment with Legal & Institutional Frameworks

Reflect national laws, Local Government Service Commission guidelines, and global standards such as UNICEF policies.

Code of Ethics for Public Service and Local Authorities (2020) -emphasizes integrity, professionalism, accountability, and respectful conduct in the delivery of public services

Employment Code Act No. 3 of 2019-prohibits discrimination, harassment, and unfair labour practices and promotes safe, fair, and dignified working conditions.

Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act No. 1 of 2011-provides a legal framework for the prevention of gender-based violence and the protection of victims from abuse, exploitation, and harassment.

Local Government Act No. 2 of 2019-provides the legal framework for the governance, administration, and service delivery functions of Local Authorities

Supporting Procedures

Ensure the policy is backed by:

- Complaints handling guidelines
- Investigation procedures
- Reporting obligations
- Safe recruitment and vetting
- Partner due diligence

Leadership & Governance

Councils and management must visibly endorse PSEAH principles and allocate resources for implementation.

Communication & Capacity Building

Integrate PSEAH into:

- Induction
- Annual training
- Contractor briefings
- Community engagement and awareness

Monitoring, Evaluation & Review

Review every 2–3 years and track:

- Reporting trends-while emphasising the need to obtain consent from the survivors.
- Tracking the training uptake and assessing the effectiveness of the policies in changing staff behaviour
- Disciplinary actions
- Organisational risk levels

Core Elements of a PSEAH Policy

A robust PSEAH policy includes:



Policy Management

- Approval date
- Custodian office
- Review timeline
- Accessible versions -in local languages



Standards of Conduct

Clearly outline prohibited behaviours and mandatory reporting duties.



Reporting & Case Management Systems

Confidential, accessible, safe, and survivor-friendly by ensuring options and rights without influencing the survivor's choice



Safe Programming & Risk Management

Integrate SEAH risk analysis into planning, implementation, and monitoring.



Guiding Principles

Integrate SEAH risk analysis into planning, implementation, and monitoring.



Scope & Application

Covers staff, elected leaders, volunteers, contractors, visitors, and partners.



Guiding Principles

Covers staff, elected leaders, volunteers, contractors, visitors, and partners.





SEAH Policy & Procedures Assessment Checklist

Policy Framework

- Clear definitions of SEAH
- Zero-tolerance statement
- References to international standards
- Applies to staff, volunteers, partners

Prevention Measures

- Documented vetting and screening
- Mandatory SEAH training
- Codes of conduct aligned to SEAH principles
- Accessible awareness materials

Reporting & Complaints

- Multiple confidential channels
- Clear complaints handling process
- Anti-retaliation protections
- Anonymous reporting options

Investigation & Response

- Documented procedures
- Survivor-centred approach
- Referral pathways for support
- Case resolution timelines

Partner & Contractor Management

- SEAH clauses in contracts
- Partner vetting
- Requirement for partner SEAH policies

Communication & Accessibility

- Publicly available policy
- Translations into local languages
- Staff/partner awareness

Monitoring & Accountability

- Key Performance Indicators(KPIs) or compliance indicators
- Review cycle
- Oversight and auditing mechanisms
- Leadership accountability

