OWH Whistle Blower Policy

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1. Organizational Background

Established in Afghanistan in 2017, the Organization for Welfare and Humanitarian (OWH) stands as a non-governmental, non-political, non-profit, and independent entity. Founded by individuals motivated by shared concerns, OWH endeavors to address societal needs and challenges.

Registered with key Afghan regulatory bodies such as the Ministry of the Economy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Refugee and Repatriation, and Ministry of Public Health, OWH demonstrates its commitment to operating within the country's legal framework.

OWH actively engages in pivotal Health, Education, and Nutrition Clusters, significantly contributing to these sectors throughout Afghanistan. Since its inception, OWH has effectively executed diverse projects spanning Health, Training, Research, Pandemic/Disaster Management, Education, and other essential domains.

Bolstered by an experienced team, OWH prides itself on a successful track record of implementing projects supported by prominent international donors operating in Afghanistan. Its extensive experience spans across diverse regions of Afghanistan, enabling substantial contributions to a wide spectrum of developmental initiatives.

OWH holds a profound understanding of Afghanistan's regions and possesses extensive experience operating in various provinces, providing a comprehensive approach to addressing the country's diverse needs.

2. Vision Statement

"A Developed, Educated, Prosperous, and Healthy community, with equal access for all."

3. Mission Statement

"OWH provides quality services, blending ancient wisdom with modern expertise, for an accessible and proud community."

4. Preface

Employees are often the first to realize that there may be something seriously wrong within the Company. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Company. They may also fear harassment or victimization.

In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

The Organization management is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the management's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognized that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. The policy document makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimization, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. This whistle-blowing policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the Organization rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.

5. Applicability

The policy applies to all employees and those contractors working for Organization and within the Organization premises, for example, daily wage workers etc. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with Organization in their own premises.

6. Aims and Scope of this Policy

This policy aims to:

- Encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- Provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- Ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied
- Reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimization if you have a reasonable belief that you have made any disclosure in good faith.

The whistle-blowing policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- Damage to the environment

- The unauthorized use of public funds
- Possible fraud and corruption
- Sexual or physical abuse of clients, or
- Other unethical conduct

Thus, any serious concerns that you have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of officers or employees of Organization or others acting on behalf of the management can be reported under the whistle-blowing policy. This may be about something that:

- Makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards you believe Organization subscribes to; or
- Is against the Organization's Standing Orders and policies; or
- Falls below established standards of practice; or
- Amounts to improper conduct.

7. Safeguards

7.1 Harassment or Victimization

The Organization is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees.

OWH as an Organization recognize that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you are providing the service.

The management will not tolerate any harassment or victimization (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect you.

7.2 Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

7.3 Anonymous Allegations

This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation whenever possible.
Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the management.
In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern; and
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

7.4 Untrue allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

7.5 PSEA Reporting Channels and Information

At OWH, we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of safety, dignity, and respect for all individuals involved in our programs and operations. We take a zero-tolerance approach to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and are dedicated to preventing and addressing any incidents promptly and effectively.
Reporting Channels: We have established safe, accessible, and confidential reporting channels for both our staff and the communities we serve. Your voice matters, and we encourage you to report any concerns related to SEA through the following channels:
PSEA Hotline: You can call our dedicated PSEA Hotline at +93 202503130 24/7. Trained professionals will assist you in a confidential and sensitive manner.
Email Reporting: Send an email to pseafocalpoint@owh.org.af , psea2focalpoint2@owh.org.af , admin@owh.org.af to report any SEA concerns. Rest assured that your report will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Anonymous Reporting: If you wish to remain anonymous, you can use our secure online reporting platform at www.owh.org.af . Your identity will not be disclosed.

In-Person Reporting: Feel free to reach out to our designated PSEA Focal Points within our organization. They are trained to receive reports in person and will maintain confidentiality.

PSEA Information Poster: To ensure that you are aware of these reporting channels, we have created a PSEA Information Poster. You will find these posters displayed prominently in our offices, partner organizations' offices, and community centers. The posters are available in multiple languages to cater to the diverse communities we work with.

Your safety and well-being, as well as the safety of those we serve, are our top priorities. We appreciate your commitment to upholding our shared values of respect, integrity, and accountability. By reporting any concerns related to SEA, you are helping us create a safer and more secure environment for all.

Thank you for your trust in OWH, and for your dedication to making our organization a place where the rights and dignity of every individual are safeguarded.

8. How to raise a concern

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate manager/ their superior/line HR/PSEA Focal points. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Staff who wish to make a written report are invited to use the ANNEX 1.

9. OWH Response

The Organization will respond to your concerns. Do not forget that testing out your concerns is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them.

Where appropriate, the matters raised May:

- Be investigated by management, PSEA Focal Points, internal audit, or through the disciplinary process
- Be referred to the police
- Be referred to the external auditor or experts
- Form the subject of an independent inquiry.

In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it

should take. The overriding principle, which the Organization will have in mind, is the public interest.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the responsible person will write to you:

- Acknowledging that the concern has been received
- Indicating how we propose to deal with the matter
- Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- Telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made
- Supplying you with information on staff support mechanisms, and
- Telling you whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.
- If you do intend to raise the matter outside the Organization, you should ensure that you do not disclose confidential information and need to verify the same with the person responsible.

10. Responsible Officer

The Organization PSEA focal points, Management team, Internal Audit office and managers has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. They would maintain the records of concerns raised and the outcome and will report as necessary to the Management.

ANNEX 1.

- The background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates);
- The reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.
- The earlier you express the concern the easier it is to take action.
- Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for your concern.
- You may wish to consider discussing your concern with a colleague first and you may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of you who have had the same experience or concerns.

11. Message by the Management Team

OWH management team is thankful to all the employees for their effort in the finalization of the policy and for bringing the Organization to this position.

Thank you for everything you do for making OWH a successful and terrific place to work.

OWH believes that all the rules and regulation must be formed to the best interest of the Organization, the sector of its operation and to the wider population.

12. Revision of the Policy

OWH reserves the right to revise, modify any or all clauses of this policy depending upon the need of the day and after making discussion in the board meetings.

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