Save the Children and the Core Humanitarian Standard
March 2018

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) was formed in 2014 when HAP and People in Aid came together with the Sphere Project to harmonise humanitarian standards and principles. The CHS includes nine commitments to improve the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian response. As a member of People in Aid, Save the Children (SC) was actively involved in the development of the CHS.

External Verification
SC adopted the CHS as the organisation's global quality benchmark and is undertaking a four-year public verification process. The process involves assessing SC's global humanitarian response portfolio against the CHS and underlying indicators to determine the systematic approach and application of all aspects of the CHS across SC's operations, programmes, systems and procedures.

In 2017, SC initiated the second step of the verification process: an external audit carried out by the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative who visited SC's headquarters and five countries (Greece, Indonesia, Lebanon, Nepal and Somalia). They meet with staff, partners and other stakeholders to gain an insight into SC's humanitarian work. This builds on a self-assessment of systems, policies and procedures which was completed by SC in 2016.

Overall, the external verifiers found that SC's responses, systems, policies and procedures are compliant with CHS. The verification process is a critical measurement tool to assess if SC's compliance with the CHS and plays a vital role in ensuring that SC delivers quality programming consistently and is accountable to children, communities, partners and donors.

CHS	Key findings from the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative Assessment
Commitment 1	SC has internal systems to analyse context and needs. In addition, SC has policy and processes to conduct impartial assessment of needs and vulnerabilities and programmes are actively adapted to changing needs and context.
Commitment 2	SC systematically monitors activities to address poor performance. SC's programme commitments are generally in line with organisational capacity, and programme design considers constraints to ensure realistic and safe implementation of activities. SC has access to technical resources and the multi-sectoral approach to response intervention enables SC to respond to a range of children's needs.
Commitment 3	SC has systems to avoid negative effects of sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud, safety and security. SC has internal systems to analyse context and exit strategies are developed and implemented where practicable.
Commitment 4	SC's processes and guidance describe information-sharing and participation. Information sharing is sensitive to context, culture and various media. People affected by crisis and communities participate in project implementation, and processes are in place to collect and analyse beneficiary feedback.
Commitment 5	Organisational culture of complaints is growing and, where complaints are received, they are welcomed and accepted. Documented complaints handling processes for sexual

	exploitation and abuse and fraud are in place and are taken seriously. Referral to other agencies occurs in some complaints mechanisms.
Commitment 6	Policies and strategies demonstrate a very strong commitment to coordination with other stakeholders. This is evident, for example, through SC's membership in a range of inter-agency coordination structures and collaborative initiatives with stakeholders.
Commitment 7	SC is committed to learning. Exercises such as internal Real-Time Reviews, which are carried out in all large-scale responses are undertaken to inform learning and course correction.
Commitment 8	The Code of Conduct is applied and human resources policies and feedback processes are delivered systematically. Staff work according to agreed objectives, adhere to relevant standards and generally understand the consequences of non-adherence. As an organisation, SC has the staff capacity and capability to deliver programmatically and meet the CHS commitments. Staff generally feel supported to develop themselves through formal training and learning on the job.
Commitment 9	Programme selection and design balance quality, cost and timelines. The organisation monitors and reports on budget and takes corruption seriously, always acting upon it when discovered.

Save the Children's commitment to the CHS

During the period 2018-2021, based on weaknesses identified by the verification assessment, SC will focus on making improvements in partnerships, consultation and participation of affected populations, learning, data protection and environmental impact. In particular, SC commits to undertake the following actions:

➢ Amend contingency planning and strategic planning tools to include consideration of environmental impacts and potential mitigation approaches;
➢ Incorporate standard post-crisis rapid environmental assessments in response management procedures;
➢ Establish incentives for consultation through policies and procedures;
➢ Add stages for external stakeholder and staff input to emergency preparedness guidelines;
➢ Amend response templates and procedures to be more prescriptive in terms of external stakeholder analysis and timing of consultations;
➢ Emphasise the importance of partnerships and produce clear directions for how to do it;
➢ Clarify accountability relationship with partners and when consultations need to occur;
➢ Include stakeholder analysis in all new proposals and clearly determine the type of partnership agreed;
➢ Continue institutionalising a learning culture to better capture and disseminate learnings from staff, partners and communities, and increase investment in technology;
➢ Embed data protection skills into relevant staff job descriptions, training and performance management;
➢ Ensure evaluations are properly budgeted for and included in response planning frameworks; and
➢ Amend response management procedures and oversight systems to include consideration of environmental impact and data protection concerns.

Save the Children