

Case handling for civil society organisations (CSOs) in Nigeria



RESOURCE
& SUPPORT
HUB



A concern arises.
A report or complaint is made by staff member, representative, partner staff, programme participants or anyone who interacts with your CSO.
A report is received through: community reporting channels, internal reporting, informal discussions, suspicions, witnessing an event etc.

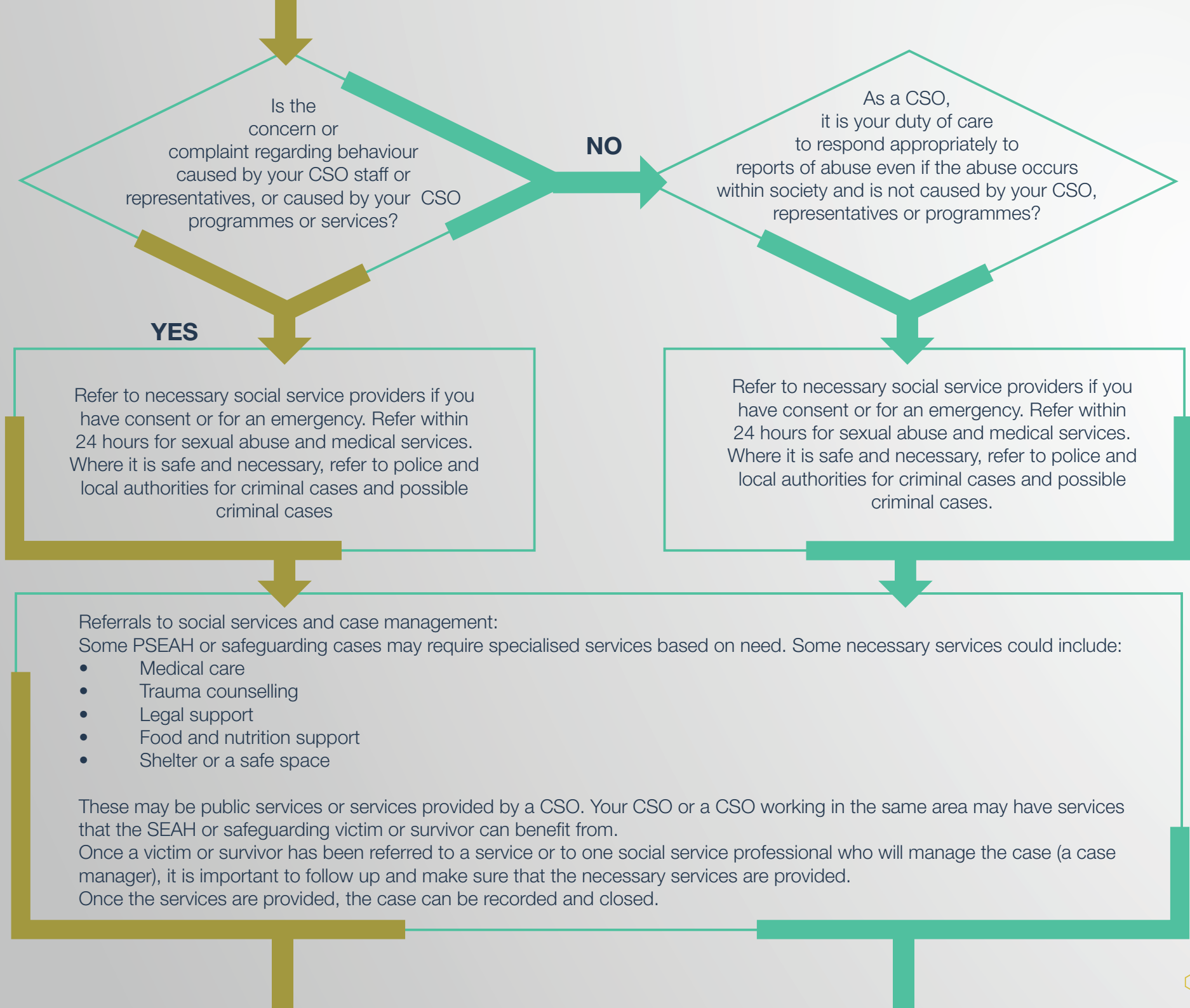
Pass the report to the designated person, e.g. your manager, Safeguarding / PSEAH focal point etc.

Does the report or complaint relate to sexual exploitation, abuse, sexual harassment (SEAH), bullying and harassment, economic exploitation, violence or other abuse of children or adults

YES

NO

Initiate other internal complaints procedures e.g. fraud or corruption (finance team), or programme complaints (programme or M&E team).



Is the concern or complaint regarding behaviour caused by your CSO staff or representatives, or caused by your CSO programmes or services?

NO

As a CSO, it is your duty of care to respond appropriately to reports of abuse even if the abuse occurs within society and is not caused by your CSO, representatives or programmes?

YES

Refer to necessary social service providers if you have consent or for an emergency. Refer within 24 hours for sexual abuse and medical services. Where it is safe and necessary, refer to police and local authorities for criminal cases and possible criminal cases

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Referrals to social services and case management:

Some PSEAH or safeguarding cases may require specialised services based on need. Some necessary services could include:

- Medical care
- Trauma counselling
- Legal support
- Food and nutrition support
- Shelter or a safe space

These may be public services or services provided by a CSO. Your CSO or a CSO working in the same area may have services that the SEAH or safeguarding victim or survivor can benefit from.

Once a victim or survivor has been referred to a service or to one social service professional who will manage the case (a case manager), it is important to follow up and make sure that the necessary services are provided.

Once the services are provided, the case can be recorded and closed.

Bring together a case team, this may include staff from: senior leadership, HR, programmes and / or security and risk.
The team should include someone who has a good relationship with the victim/survivor.

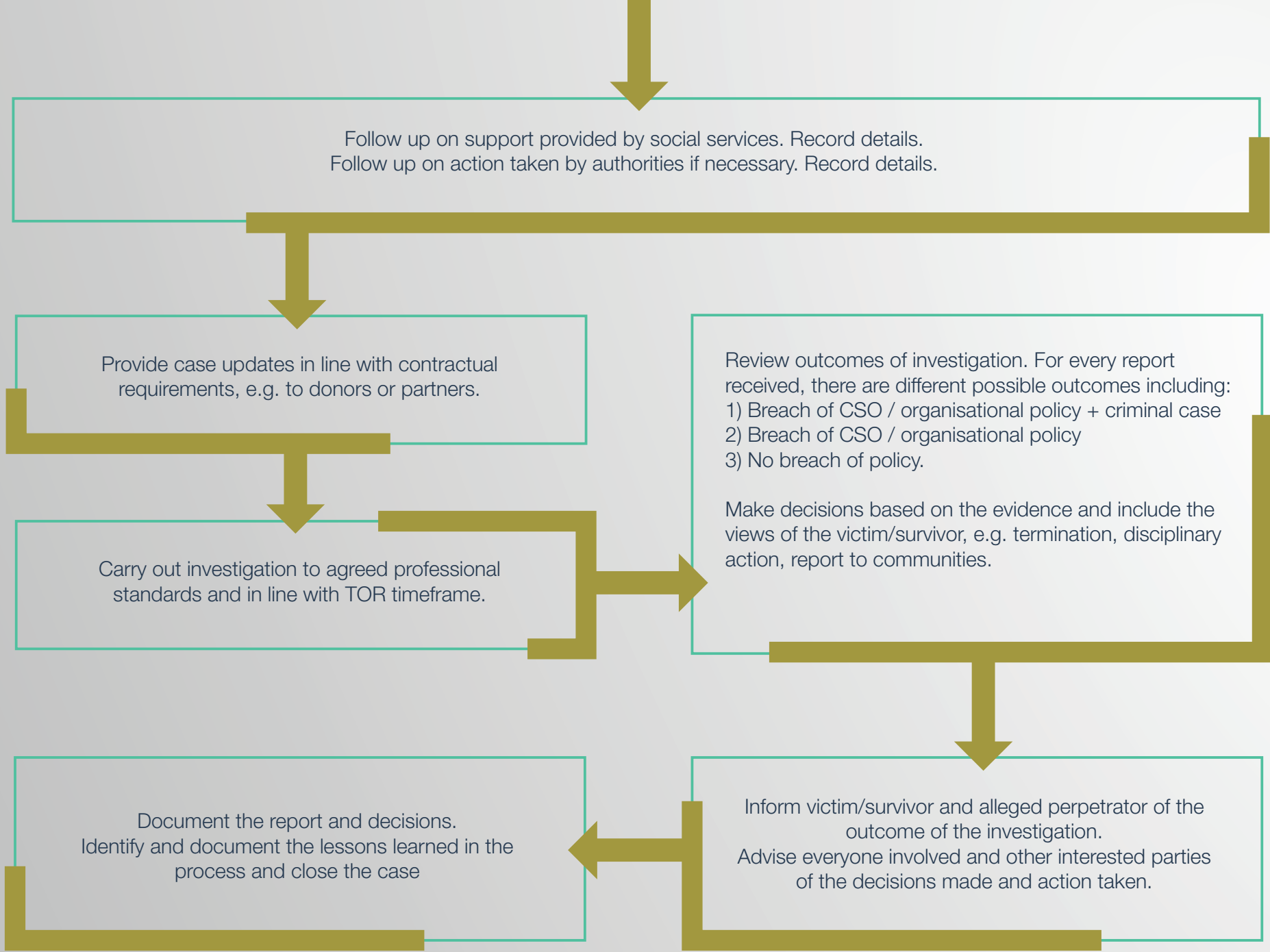
Make immediate decisions, e.g.:
How to deal with staff / alleged perpetrator?
How to support victim/survivor and include their views?
How to uphold any contractual or donor requirements?
E.g. informing donor.

Develop a plan and carry out a risk assessment for the case. Revisit immediate decisions where they present risks, e.g.:

- Assign roles within the team (victim/survivor liaison, alleged perpetrator liaison)
- Decide if an investigation needed (internal or external?). Write terms of reference (TOR), set timeframe and standards and agree investigation manager.
- If no investigation, ensure there is a clear justification to reject or close case.
- (Re)Assess if the concern needs to be reported to local authorities.
- Decide if other organisations and partners should be informed (anonymously).
- Assess the risks for the victim/survivor, your CSO, alleged perpetrator and others in your planning.
- Understand what the victim/ survivor wants throughout your planning.

Follow up on support provided by social services.
Record details.
Follow up on action taken by authorities if necessary. Record details.

Where relevant to others working in the same area, share information on changes in SEAH risk level. Never share confidential or private information.



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Follow up on action taken by authorities if necessary. Record details.

Provide case updates in line with contractual requirements, e.g. to donors or partners.

Review outcomes of investigation. For every report received, there are different possible outcomes including:
1) Breach of CSO / organisational policy + criminal case
2) Breach of CSO / organisational policy
3) No breach of policy.

Make decisions based on the evidence and include the views of the victim/survivor, e.g. termination, disciplinary action, report to communities.

Carry out investigation to agreed professional standards and in line with TOR timeframe.

Inform victim/survivor and alleged perpetrator of the outcome of the investigation.
Advise everyone involved and other interested parties of the decisions made and action taken.

Document the report and decisions.
Identify and document the lessons learned in the process and close the case