Code of Conduct

Policy	Date of Approval by CL board of directors and trustees	Date of next review
Code of Conduct	May 2026	May 2027
Name and contact details for Safeguarding Lead	Dee Jethwa safeguarding@choose.love	
Name and contact details of the director with safeguarding responsibilities	Geoffrey Cordell geoffrey@choose.love	

1. Introduction

Choose Love a registered charity, (number 1177927), and Choose Love Inc, USA, a 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit organisation (herein referred to as Choose Love) is a pioneering new movement providing humanitarian aid to refugees and displaced people. Choose Love does whatever it takes to provide refugees and displaced people around the world with everything from lifesaving search and rescue boats to food and legal advice. We identify the need and raise funds to close and prevent gaps in services and protections for refugees and displaced people requiring humanitarian support due to conflict, persecution and natural disasters. We elevate the voices and visibility of refugees and galvanise public support for agile community organisations providing vital support to refugees along migration routes globally. We are powered by our vision of a world that chooses love and justice every day for everyone.

Choose Love's capacity to ensure the protection of and assistance to displaced people[1] depends on the ability and commitment of the organisation to uphold and promote the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. Trustees, directors and senior managers have a particular responsibility to uphold these standards, to set a good example, and to create a safeguarding culture that supports and empowers staff. Choose Love recognises that its work may put its employees in positions of power in relation to its partners and service recipients . Employees have an obligation not to abuse this power.

Choose Love's Code of Conduct applies to its trustees, directors, employees, freelancers, interns and consultants, all volunteers[2]. The Code of Conduct is one of four policies, which, together, comprise its Safeguarding Standard 1, 'Safeguarding', the others being the Safeguarding Policy, People Policy and Whistleblowing. The other Standards are, 2, Partner Due Diligence and Grant Making, 3, Risk Management and 4, Accountability. Choose Love's key safeguarding policies are available on its website.

Where it has an overseas presence, a Choose Love country office Code of Conduct may differ in wording, for example where they refer to national law, but are consistent in their commitment to standards and ethics. Implementing partners are required to ensure the safeguarding measures in their organisations meet Choose Love's standards, and that they are expressed in their own Code of Conduct.

2. Implementation and Review

This Code of Conduct is endorsed by Choose Love's board of trustees UK and board of directors USA. It will be translated into the first language or main working language of each office, and into significant minority languages to ensure its maximum reach. Every attempt will be made to ensure that communities and service recipients have access to it and that it is presented in the appropriate language. Everyone associated with Choose Love through our work will be made aware of this Code of Conduct and expected to abide by it. The Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Lead and Human Resources Director and presented to the boards of trustees and directors for their approval via the Chief Executive Officer.

[1] Including asylum seekers and refugees

[2] Including journalists, and others who may represent Choose Love or whose presence it may validate.

3. Background

The Code of Conduct lays out Choose Love's expectations and guiding principles for appropriate behaviour in the office, field and virtual communication. By agreeing to work for or with Choose Love, team members agree to comply with its policies and procedures and to uphold the highest standards of personal and professional conduct to ensure that Choose Love's integrity and reputation shall not be jeopardized by their actions nor those it seeks to help come to any harm.

Whilst recognizing that local laws and cultures differ considerably from one country to another, Choose Love subscribes to international non-governmental organisational standards, and therefore the Code of Conduct is compliant with international and UN standards. Choose Love's trustees, directors, employees, freelancers, interns and consultants, all volunteers and associated personnel are expected to uphold local law wherever they operate, except where the Code of Conduct is more stringent, in which case the Code applies.

For employees of Choose Love, this Code is an integral part of their induction process and their conditions of employment. It is therefore an appendix to individual employment contracts and a copy will be held in the individual's personnel file. Trustees, directors, interns, volunteers, and visitors are expected to read and sign it. All those visiting the field will be briefed on the Code of Conduct prior to departure.

All Choose Love's staff are responsible for encouraging, advocating, and promoting the dissemination of the Code of Conduct. They also have a role in implementing, monitoring, and enforcing its standards.

This code of conduct must be read in conjunction with Choose Love's Safeguarding and Accountability, Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying and Social Media policies.

4. Core Values and Guiding Principles

Choose Love's staff, trustees and directors are committed to the following fundamental values and principles:

- We will ensure that our conduct is consistent with and reflects the values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations: respect for fundamental human rights, social justice and human dignity, and respect for the equal rights of each individual. We will assist Choose Love to actively promote adherence to the principles of international refugee law, international human rights law, and international humanitarian law. We will be guided by the core values of the UN system, including professionalism, integrity, and respect for diversity, and will maintain an international perspective at all times.
- Choose Love's primary commitment is to ensure the protection of and assistance to displaced people in accordance with the organisation's mandate. We are committed to supporting the fullest possible participation of displaced people – as individuals, families, and communities – in decisions that affect their lives.
- We will respect the dignity and worth of every individual, will promote and practice understanding, respect, compassion, and tolerance, and will demonstrate discretion and maintain confidentiality as required. We will aim to build constructive and respectful working relations with our humanitarian partners, will continuously seek to improve our performance, and will foster a climate that encourages learning, supports positive change, and applies the lessons learned from our experience.

- We will show respect for all persons equally without distinction whatsoever of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, national origin, immigration/citizenship status, or any other distinguishing feature. We will strive to remove all barriers to equality.
- We will respect the cultures, customs, and traditions of all peoples, and will strive to avoid behaving in ways that are not acceptable in a particular cultural context. However, when the tradition or practice is considered by Choose Love to be directly contrary to an international human rights instrument or standard, we will be guided by the applicable human rights instrument or standard.
- We have a responsibility to protect displaced people and to avoid exposing them to further harm as a result of our actions. We also have a duty of care to all our staff and volunteers. We aim to follow the UN's humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, avoiding harm, accountability, participation, and respect. In practice, that means we all need to follow this Code of Conduct:

5. Code of Conduct

I commit myself to the following:

5.1. To treat all service recipients fairly, and with respect and dignity.

- I will always seek to understand the difficult experiences that displaced people have faced and survived, as well as the disadvantaged position in which they – particularly on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, national origin, immigration/citizenship status or any other distinguishing feature – may find themselves in relation to those who hold power or influence over aspects of their lives.
- I will always seek to care for and protect the rights of children, vulnerable adults and adults at risk and act in a manner that ensures that their best interests shall be the paramount consideration.
- I will keep myself informed about Choose Love's policies, objectives, and activities and about displaced people, and will do my utmost to support Choose Love's protection and assistance work.

5.2. To uphold the integrity of Choose Love by ensuring that my personal and professional conduct is, and is seen to be, of the highest standard.

- I will demonstrate integrity, truthfulness, dedication, and honesty in my actions.
- I will be patient, respectful and courteous to all persons with whom I deal in an official capacity, including displaced people, representatives of operational and implementing partners, governments, and donors.
- I will abide by the requirements of Choose Love's Social Media and Communication policy when posting on my personal social media platforms.
- I will observe local laws, will meet all my private legal and financial obligations, and will not seek to take personal advantage that the privilege of my employment with Choose Love may confer.

5.3. To perform my official duties and conduct my private affairs in a manner that avoids conflicts of interest, thereby preserving and enhancing public confidence in Choose Love.

- My actions will be free of any consideration of personal gain, and I will resist any undue political pressure in decision-making.
- I will neither seek nor accept instructions regarding the performance of my duties from any government, including by national authorities, or from any authority external to Choose Love.
- I will neither give nor accept any honour, decoration, favour gift, remuneration, or bribe, to / from any government; nor will I give nor accept such to / from any other source external to Choose Love without prior authorisation. It is, however, allowed to give or accept small tokens of appreciation that are exchanged in accordance with local practice provided that it cannot compromise the integrity of Choose Love and recorded in the gift register.
- I will not engage in any outside occupation or employment without prior authorisation.
- I will not accept supplementary payments or subsidies from a government or any other source or participate in certain political activities such as standing for or holding public office without prior authorisation.
- I will avoid assisting private persons or companies in their undertakings with Choose Love where this might lead to actual or perceived preferential treatment.
- I will never participate in activities related to procurement of goods or services, or in human resource activities, where a conflict of interests may arise.

5.4. To contribute to building a harmonious workplace based on team spirit, mutual respect and understanding.

- I will show respect to all colleagues, regardless of status or position, and will allow all colleagues the opportunity to have their views heard, and to contribute from their knowledge and experience to team efforts.
- I will not record the content of any meetings without the express permission of attendees.
- I will not gossip about my colleagues or the organisation as a whole. Rather, I will promote positive engagement with all employees and use formal channels to raise issues of concern I may have with the organisation.
- I will respect my colleagues' privacy and avoid spreading misinformation. I will not have personal conversations at my desk or in other workplace settings which may distract others, or which may expose me to others' gossip.
- I will communicate openly and share relevant information (subject to confidentiality requirements) with other colleagues and will endeavour to respond in a timely manner to queries and emails.
- I will use internal procedures and processes to express unhappiness with issues related to the work place and Choose Love and will not use social media for such purposes.
- Though I may disagree with a colleague, or with a manager I will seek to resolve differences and solve problems when they arise, and will contribute to building constructive dialogue, guided by mutual respect and an open, positive approach, between management and staff representatives. I accept that not all the changes which I wish to promote will necessarily be adopted by the organisation.

- As a manager, I will be open to the views of all team members. I will provide timely feedback on the performance of each team member through guidance, motivation, and full recognition of their merits.

5.5. To refrain from any form of harassment, discrimination, physical or verbal abuse, intimidation, or favouritism in the workplace.

- I will not engage in or tolerate any form of harassment in the workplace, including sexual harassment, bullying or abuse of power.
- As a manager, I will not solicit favours, loans, or gifts from staff, nor will I accept unsolicited ones that are of more than a token value.
- I recognise that there is an inherent conflict of interest and potential abuse of power in having intimate and sexual relations with staff under my supervision. I am aware that Choose Love strongly discourages such relations. Should I find myself in such a relationship, I will resolve this conflict of interest without delay.
- I will not harass anyone in the workplace on the grounds of any kind of diversity/difference.
- I will not make gestures or sexual remarks about someone's body, clothing, or appearance.
- I will not ask questions about someone's sex life.
- I will refrain from making racist or sexually offensive jokes.
- I will not make sexual comments or jokes about someone's gender, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.
- I will refrain from sexting and online bullying.
- I will not make sexually suggestive remarks.
- I will not make physical contact such as unwanted touching, hugging or pinching.

5.6. To promote the safety, health, and welfare of all Choose Love staff as a necessary condition for effective and consistent performance.

- I will remain aware of and comply with all instructions designed to protect my health, welfare, and safety.
- I will always consider the safety of staff in operational decisions.
- If I have doubts regarding an instruction that I consider threatening to my safety or the safety of other persons, I will bring this immediately to the attention of my manager.
- As a manager, I will endeavour to ensure that the health and well-being of staff and their families are not subjected to undue risk. I will promote a healthy work-life balance for staff and will respect staff entitlements.

5.7. To safeguard and make responsible use of the information and resources to which I have access by reason of my employment, association with Choose Love.

- I will exercise due care in all matters of official business, and will not divulge any confidential information about partners, service recipients , colleagues, and other work-related matters in accordance with the terms of employment and current guidelines.

- I will protect, manage, and utilise Choose Love's human, financial and material resources efficiently and effectively, aware that these resources have been placed at Choose Love's disposal for the benefit of the charitable work that it funds.

5.8. To prevent, oppose and combat all exploitation and abuse of service recipients.

- I undertake not to abuse the power and influence that I have by virtue of my position over the lives and well-being of the service recipients of the work we fund.
- I will never request any service or favour from service recipients in return for protection or assistance.
- I will never engage in any exploitative relationships, emotional, financial or employment related with service recipients.
- I will not engage in sexual activity with children under the age of 18. Mistaken belief in the age of the child does not constitute a defence.
- I will not engage in sexual exploitation or abuse of service recipients , and I have a particular duty of care towards women and children.
- I will neither solicit nor engage in commercial exchange of sexual services as such relationships may undermine the credibility and the image of Choose Love**.**
- I am aware that Choose Love strongly discourages sexual relationships between its staff members and service recipients. I understand that such relationships may undermine the credibility and the integrity of Choose Love and of the staff members involved. Should I find myself in such a relationship with a service recipient that I consider non-exploitative and consensual, I will report this to my manager for appropriate guidance in the knowledge that this matter will be treated with due discretion.

5.9. To refrain from any involvement in criminal or unethical activities, activities that contravene human rights, or activities that compromise the image and interests of Choose Love.

I will neither support nor take part in any form of illegal, exploitative, or abusive activities, including, for example, child labour, and trafficking of human beings and commodities.

6. Complaints and reports

Each person who signs this code must bring to the attention of the relevant manager any potential incident, abuse, or concern that they witness, are made aware of, or suspect which appears to breach the standards contained in this Code.

Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to breach of the Code must report it immediately to the HR Director people@choose.love and the Safeguarding Lead. safeguarding@choose.love . If the individual does not feel comfortable reporting to either one of these post holders (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern), they can make a report to any other appropriate staff member or the Director of Risk and Assurance, Safeguarding trustee lead geoffrey@choose.love. Staff members receiving reports or concerns must act or refer the report immediately as per Choose Loves' Complaints and Safeguarding Policy and procedures.

"Victims/ survivors are requested to and subject(s) of concern of allegations are required to participate in any internal investigation that may ensue the making of a complaint.

The HR Director or other person assigned such duties, and the Safeguarding Lead will evaluate the complaint. An initial response will be made within twenty-four hours. Following the gathering of facts, a strategy meeting will be convened to consider next steps. Depending on the nature of the allegation an acknowledgement will be sent in 48 hours and a response will be made within ten working days.

Should the complainant wish it, complaints may be anonymized.

I _____ accept and declare that by appending my signature herein on this document, I confirm that I have read and understood the Code of Conduct and its standards. I understand that any divergence from these standards may result in disciplinary measures, up to termination of my employment contract with Choose Love, and, where an act of criminality is concerned, a referral to the appropriate legal authorities.

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____