



DCA POLICY:
**PREVENTION OF
SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION,
ABUSE &
HARASSMENT**

September 2024

0. Policy Title DanChurchAid (DCA) Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy

1. Definitions

Child or minor: A person under the age of 18 (as defined by the Convention of the Rights of the Child).

Corruption: The misuse of entrusted power for private (or organisational) gain.

Exploitation: Use of one's position of authority, influence or control over resources, to pressure, force or manipulate someone by threatening or coercing them with negative repercussions such as withholding project assistance, not giving due consideration to a staff member's work support requests, threatening to make false claims about a staff member in public, etc.

Misconduct: Any breach by staff of applicable national or international law as well as contraventions of DCA's internal rules or policies, including this policy, regulations or other instructions issued by the relevant manager or authority that include contextualised security provisions and sexual harassment policies.

Sexual abuse: The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions (United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin 2003/13, 9 October 2003; Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse).

Sexual exploitation: Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including but not limited to profiting monetarily, sexually or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This includes any exchange of money, goods or services against sexual activities and favours (United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin 2003/13, 9 October 2003; Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse).

Sexual harassment: Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. While typically involving a pattern of behaviour, it can take the form of a single incident. Sexual harassment may occur between persons of the opposite or same sex. Both males and females can be either the victims or the offenders.

Staff: Refers to but is not limited to all permanent and temporary staff, interns, consultants, observers, volunteers, and all individuals working for or representing DCA.

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Volunteer: Refers to volunteers that are under the Go Global Programme or other volunteers who under similar arrangements travel with DCA to one of its programme countries.

2. Introduction

DCA applies a Human Rights Based Approach and a Gender Equality Perspective to all its work. A core value in DCA's work is to create a positive environment with utmost respect for the human rights of rights holders, partner representatives and DCA's own staff.

It is essential that DCA staff receive clear instructions and guidelines with respect to expectations regarding their conduct and are given space to reflect positively on how to stimulate an open, respectful and non-abusive work culture.

In addition, it is essential that DCA management is equipped with adequate authority, responsibility, monitoring tools and recourse to action in the event of any misconduct. The goal is to create an environment free of sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse within DCA.

In keeping with DCA's commitment to respect human rights, this policy is based on internationally recognised human rights standards as contained in the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). DCA's policy is specifically informed by the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin 2003/13, 9 October 2003; Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse). DCA's Policy is in keeping with the ACT Code of Conduct for the Prevention of Misconduct, including corruption, fraud, exploitation and abuse, which applies to all members of the ACT Alliance and the Act Secretariat; this Code of Conduct covers sexual misconduct in general and the safeguarding of children against sexual exploitation.

DCA PSEAH Policy is one of zero tolerance, where DCA does not tolerate any form of exploitation, abuse and harassment by DCA staff, volunteers, or by implementing partners. DCA is therefore committed to the prevention, detection and investigation of all forms of exploitation, abuse and harassment, in all its offices and among its implementing partners.

3. Policy purpose

The main purpose of this policy is to promote greater accountability and outline the key responsibilities and obligations of staff. The aim is that the human rights of all staff as well as every stakeholder, and community member whom DCA seeks to assist or support should be respected and protected.

The objective of this policy is to increase awareness and prevent misconduct, including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment by providing clear guidance to address these issues.

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DCA employees are responsible for following and abiding by the rules and regulations of national and international law. Moreover, DCA employees are obliged to follow the Code of Conduct and its related policies, such as the DCA PSEAH Policy. Employees who are contracted with DCA, sign the DCA Code of Conduct (CoC). This policy adheres to the CoC and thus equally apply to all employees.

It is the responsibility of DCA to inform partner organisations and other relevant stakeholders about this policy.

4. Scope

This PSEAH Policy applies to all DCA staff, volunteers, consultants, interns, national as well as international staff, and any other individuals representing the organisation, including implementing partners, both during working and off-duty hours.

The standards in this policy are based on internationally recognised human rights standards. Where a conflict exists between the standards in this policy and national law in a given country, DCA abides by the relevant Human Rights standards, using its leverage and dialogue where necessary to manage conflicts. Any deviations must be approved by DCA Senior Management in dialogue with the relevant country management.

DCA employees, are obligated to follow this policy and any breaches of this policy shall be reported through the DanChurchAid complaints system or the whistle blower scheme (specified below).

5. Procedures and requirements

5.1 Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

DCA maintains that sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment of persons is an abuse of the human rights of these individuals. For the members of the communities DCA works in, the dependency of affected populations on humanitarian and development agencies and their staff for their basic needs creates an ethical responsibility and duty of care on the part of the DCA staff to safeguard the human rights and dignity of these individuals.

DCA believes that an effective response to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment must be informed by the context and be relevant; the response must be based on an accurate understanding of the communities in which DCA engages, the work- environment of the specific DCA office or presence, and knowledge of the relevant international human rights standards. DCA also aligns with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, 2019¹, that every humanitarian work should adhere to.

¹ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-standing-committee/iasc-six-core-principles-relating-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-2019>

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When it comes to behaviour in countries where DCA engages with humanitarian or development work, staff and managers must be aware of the following:

a) lack of economic opportunities for locals, for refugees and for displaced populations may result in commercial and exploitative sex becoming one of the few options for income generation to meet basic needs; b) the impacted community may have a culture of gender-based violence, which may continue or be exacerbated; c) the usual social protections may no longer be in place or function.

5.2 Code of Conduct to Prevent Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment:

As part of DCA's commitment to respect human rights, all DCA staff and any other individuals representing the organisation, including implementing partners, wherever they are based and whatever their position should act in the following manner within and outside working hours in keeping with the above mentioned Human Rights Standards:

1. Respect and promote fundamental, inter- nationally adopted human rights without discrimination of any kind and irrespective of social status, ethnicity, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin, political affiliation or disability and act with integrity.
2. Respect internationally recognised human rights. Where national law is not in keeping with these recognised rights, staff must respect the international standards in this DCA policy, and any deviations must be approved by DCA senior management. Never exploit the vulnerability of anyone, regardless of their sex, age or sexual orientation or allow anybody to be put in compromising situations
3. Never engage in any kind of sexual activity involving children (persons under the age of 18) as this is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of the child is no defence. This aligns with the IASC core principle #2.
4. Never expose staff or staff in implementing partner organisations to any kind of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. Never commit any act or form of harassment that could result in physical, sexual or serious psychological harm to others.
5. Never use, possess, distribute or consume child pornography.
6. Never engage in sexual exploitation or abuse of people supported by DCA - men, women, or children - regardless of their sex, age or sexual orientation. This prohibition includes exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex including sexual favours, or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to people supported by DCA. This aligns with the IASC core principle #3.
7. Never accept, solicit, or engage in "buying" or profiting from sexual services (including in countries where prostitution is not forbidden by law).
8. Never abuse a professional position by withholding humanitarian assistance nor give

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preferential treatment with the intention of soliciting sexual favours, gifts and payments of any kind.

9. Any sexual and/or romantic relationship between those providing humanitarian assistance and protection (i.e DCA staff, DCA partner staff or volunteers) and a person benefitting from such humanitarian assistance and protection (regardless of if those are DCA project participants) that involves improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships are based on inherently unequal power dynamics and can undermine the reputation, credibility and integrity of DCA's work (This aligns with the IASC core principle #4). Sexual exploitation and abuse by DCA staff constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment with DCA. This aligns with the IASC core principle #1.
10. An employee who engages in a sexual relationship with another employee or is required to inform his or her manager about the relationship. If the relationship creates work-related problems, management will decide on an appropriate measure to solve the problems. This could be either to transfer one of the persons to another unit or to terminate the contract of one of the employees involved.
11. DCA Managers are not allowed to have a sexual relationship with an employee who refers directly to them or is under their line-management. If the situation arises, it may be decided either to transfer one of the persons to another unit, to terminate the contract of the manager involved or take any other appropriate measure in response to the situation.
12. Members of the Senior Management and members of the DCA board are not allowed to have sexual relationships with any employee or volunteer in DCA. If they decide to engage sexually or romantically with a member of staff or a volunteer, they cannot retain their position in the board or the senior management.
13. Ensure that all confidential information, including reports of breaches of these standards by colleagues, obtained from people supported by DCA or colleagues are channelled correctly and handled with the utmost confidentiality through appropriate and contextualized reporting mechanisms.
14. Report immediately any knowledge, concerns or substantive suspicion of breaches to this DCA policy to management and/or to DCA's complaints system or the Whistleblower Scheme at Head Office, Copenhagen for further action. When there is substantial suspicion of breaches of national or international law, DCA management will decide whether to transfer such cases to the appropriate national authorities for further action in accordance with principals and procedures for handling sensitive complaints. Additionally, the IASC commitment regarding mandatory reporting (core principle #5) applies to concerns of SEAH whether in the same agency or not. Hence, DCA staff are obligated to report any concerns regarding SEAH by fellow workers via established agency reporting mechanisms (this includes reporting directly to the PSEAH Focal Point working in the same organisation as the perpetrator, using the IASC referral form for SEAH complaints).

5.3 Prevention and Response

Crucial elements in DCA's overall response are prevention and awareness-raising, monitoring and evaluation, and establishing a complaints system/contact person and a response mechanism. Where DCA is self-implementing, DCA will take steps to prevent exploitation and abuse within the communities it works with.

The DCA policy should be made known to all DCA staff, who are all obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents SEAH and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. DCA Managers with personnel responsibility are entrusted with authority to implement and monitor the active use of the policy (This aligns with the IASC core principle #6). Furthermore, it is recommended that DCA also raises this issue with partner organisations. Additionally, DCA recommends that the opinions of people supported on prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment are sought and incorporated by management into the respective DCA policy.

Roles and areas of responsibility are described in section 5.5 of this policy.

5.4 Awareness- Raising

DCA have a responsibility to ensure that all its employees are aware of the DCA PSEAH Policy, that they understand what it means in concrete behavioural terms and how it applies to their programme context.

DCA will raise awareness related to prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment consistently throughout the staff member's period of employment. The topic together with consequences of misconduct will be thoroughly addressed as a mandatory element during the introduction period in DCA (DCA - Code of conduct and Expected Staff Behaviour course is mandatory to be completed by all employees within the first 3 months of employment.). DCA is aware that this policy touches on personal behaviour and issues normally considered private. In the discussion on this policy it is important to thoroughly debate how to secure an open, positive non-discriminatory and non-abusive working environment in each local context.

DCA is developing an additional refresher e-learning course on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), where all DCA staff are requested to complete the refresher training on a yearly basis. The aim is to also deliver the content of this course to consultants, contractors, volunteers and implementing partners to provide information and training on DCA's standards of conduct, including on conduct prohibited under this Policy.

All staff have an individual responsibility to familiarise themselves and their dependents with the DCA Policy as well as on the Code of Conduct and its purpose.

This document automatically forms part of all contracts of employment.

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5.5 Division of Responsibilities

DCA is committed to putting in place a clearly defined management structure to ensure coordinated and consistent implementation and monitoring of this policy throughout the organization.

The Human Resources (HR) Unit at Head Office and Country Offices

The HR Unit is responsible for ensuring that each new DCA staff member signs the DCA Code of Conduct, where the PSEAH Policy is listed and that new staff understand the content of the CoC and the need to comply with it, as well as the consequences of any breach of the DCA CoC and its related policies. (This includes ensuring that the mandatory online training sessions are completed within the first three months of employment).

The HR Unit will act as a resource unit that offers support and guidance to all employees, as necessary. The HR Unit will also be responsible for sharing good practice and lessons learned within DCA.

Senior Management, Middle managers and Country Directors

DCA Senior Management, middle managers and Country Directors will take overall responsibility for prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment by ensuring that:

1. A new staff member receives a thorough introduction to the DCA policy prior to signing a contract with DCA (possibly from the HR unit). The introduction ensures that staff understand the DCA policy to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, as well as the consequences of any breach of the policy and the procedures to follow if a breach of policy is reported. (This includes ensuring that the mandatory online training sessions are completed within the first 3 months of employment)
2. Adherence to this DCA policy is monitored on a daily basis.
3. Implementing partners are also aware of the DCA policy to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.
4. Communities are informed to the highest degree possible about expected standards of staff behaviour and relevant DCA complaints channels through which they can lodge complaints.
5. Staff, partners, communities and people supported by DCA are aware of where, how and to whom they may raise complaints.
6. Allegations regarding sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment are reported in writing to the DCA complaints system at Head Office, Copenhagen (See below section on Complaints System- and Whistleblower Scheme). All DCA employees have an obligation to report incidents that seem wrong.
7. All information is treated with the utmost discretion and confidentiality to ensure that victim(s), witness(es), subject of the complaint and others involved are not victimized in any way.
8. Procedural safeguards are in place in relation to staff under investigation during the course the investigation, including suspension if appropriate. This should be done in close correspondence with and as advised by the complaints committee at DCA Head Office.

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9. When allegations of or concerns about sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment are raised, and the subject(s) of the complaint are identified, the subject(s) of the complaint should under normal circumstances be suspended from their position until investigations are finalized. This should be done in close correspondence with and as advised by the complaints committee at Head Office.
10. Appropriate disciplinary action is taken whenever sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment is adequately documented and proven.

In living up to this responsibility there might be a need for delegation of responsibility and tasks. Such delegation is again the responsibility of the Country Directors and Senior Management at Head Office.



Staff

Individual staff must take responsibility for his/her own conduct after having read and consented affirmatively to adhere to the DCA policy to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. Any allegation or concern regarding sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment should be reported, in writing, to the complaints System or the Whistleblower Scheme for further action.

Everyone

It is incumbent upon all members of DCA staff, board and Council to uphold the principles of this DCA policy and to share their knowledge and to contribute to a harassment and exploitation-free atmosphere in which prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment has the highest and continuous priority.

5.6 Reporting of Potential Misconduct and Disciplinary Procedures

Responding to suspected/alleged breaches Any substantial suspicion of breaches of this DCA policy in terms of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment can and should be reported to the DCA complaints system or the whistle blower scheme and will be handled according to procedures and processes for handling sensitive complaints.

All DCA staff act as entry-points to the DCA complaints system and are required to report any knowledge, concerns or substantial suspicions of misconduct to the DCA complaints system or the whistle blower scheme in DCA Head Office immediately and without investigation.

In cases of suspicion, hearing rumors or experiencing any doubts related to potential misconduct, staff can seek advice from the HR Unit or from the Accountability and Complaints advisor at DCA Head Office.

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The DCA Complaints system

Complaints System- and Whistleblower Scheme

DCA has zero tolerance for Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment. DCA employees are obligated to follow this policy and report any suspicion, rumors or confirmed breaches of the DCA PSEAH Policy. All SEAH incidents in DCA, partner organisations or other incidents related to DCA activities must be reported.

DCA's Board approved DCA's Whistleblower Scheme and Complaints Handling Policy in June 2022.

Whistleblower Scheme – is for reporting of sensitive complaints of all current DCA employees and former employees up till one year after termination of contract. A whistleblower report typically concerns matters of a serious nature, such as criminal offences, corruption, sexual exploitation, breaches of law, or serious violations of DCA's personnel policies.

Complaints System – is the system that external parties as people supported by DCA, partners, vendors, etc use when reporting sensitive and operational complaints. It is also used is for reporting operational complaints for current and former DCA employees. An operational complaint is typically a complaint about the quality of DCA's work.

All reports are handled confidentially and all persons reporting to DCA will be protected against retaliation. For more information on DCA's Complaints System and the reporting channels, please visit [Complaint system - DanChurchAid](#)

Non-discrimination or Retaliation

DCA does not tolerate harassment, acts of retaliation or any other type of penalty against whistleblowers and complainants who submit a report in good faith about a matter within the scope of the whistleblower scheme and Complaints System. If DCA becomes familiar with the identity of the whistleblower (via consent or legal actions) DCA will ensure that whistleblowers are not met with retaliation.

Reports must be submitted in good faith on the correctness of the report. Whistleblowers and complainants who make a report in good faith will not be subject to negative consequences even if the reported concern or suspicion proves to be unfounded. Employees of DCA who in good faith submit whistleblower reports of potential violations, will not risk discrimination or retaliation in the form of employment sanctions. This protection shall apply accordingly even if it is subsequently established that there was in fact no violation.

It is prohibited to deliberately submit false or misleading information via the Whistleblower Scheme and to make deliberate misuse of the Whistleblower Scheme. Reports submitted by DCA employees in bad faith will, depending on the circumstances, result in negative employment law consequences for the person submitting the report and can furthermore constitute a criminal

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offence.

Criminal records and former complaints

Staff must notify DCA of any criminal convictions or charges of sexual abuse, exploitation or harassment. Staff must also notify DCA of any relevant former complaints made against them concerning suspected or substantiated misconduct related to sexual abuse, exploitation or harassment.

Disciplinary measures

The complaints committee at DCA Head Office will handle the complaint according to DCA's investigation procedures, including decisions on actions and follow-up. Any upheld breach to this DCA policy will not be tolerated and may in accordance with relevant legislation lead to internal disciplinary action, including dismissal or even criminal prosecution.

6. References, Related Resources, or Appendices

- DCA's Code of Conduct
- DCA's Complaints Handling Guideline
- DCA's Whistleblower Scheme and Complaints System Policy
- DCA's Child Safeguarding Policy

7. Policy information

First approved: Approved by the DanChurchAid (DCA) Board, June 2018 **Last revised:** July 2024

Effective date: Month September, 2024

Next review required by: Month September, 2027

Policy Manager: Accountability and Complaints Advisor

Unit: Strategy and Quality Management Unit

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