

Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment Policy

Approved by / date	International Director / 2025-10
Document Owner	International Director
Next review due	Latest 2026-10

Table of contents

1. Purpose	2
2. Scope	2
3. Definitions	2
4. Preventions	3
5. Duty to report	3
6. Investigation	4
7. Implementation and monitoring	4

1. Purpose

Caritas Norway is committed to providing a work environment that is professional and free from intimidation, hostility, humiliation, bullying, mobbing or other offenses which might interfere with work performance or the dignity of an individual.

Harassment of any sort - verbal, physical, visual - will not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to harassment based on race, colour, religion, philosophical or political ideas, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, disability, medical condition, marital status, or any protected status defined by law.

Harassment of co-workers, counterparts, and people with whom we work are all equally prohibited.

This policy is complementary to other internal policies and codes of Caritas Norway¹

2. Scope

This policy applies to Caritas Norway's staff² and associates³, and partner staff involved in Caritas Norway's activities.

It applies to on-site and off-site work – wherever and whenever the above-mentioned groups may be as a result of their duties.

3. Definitions

Harassment can take many forms. It may be, but is not limited to, words, signs, offensive jokes, cartoons, pictures, posters, statements, pranks, intimidation, physical assaults or contact, or violence.

Harassment is not necessarily sexual in nature. It may also take the form of other verbal activity including derogatory statements not directed to the targeted individual but taking place within their hearing. Other prohibited conduct includes taking retaliatory action against an employee for discussing or making a harassment complaint. It is also against Caritas policy to download inappropriate pictures or materials from computer systems (reference to Caritas Internationalis Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and Annex II - Standards of behaviour towards children).

¹ CI Code of Ethics & Code of Conduct for Staff, CI Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy, CI Anti-Harassment Policy, CN Complaint Handling Procedure, CN Policy on Gender Equality.

² Staff refers to staff - full-time and part-time employees, interns, volunteers and board members.

³ Associates refers to consultants and contractors.

Sexual harassment is 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. It can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents. Sexual harassment may also occur outside the workplace and/or outside working hours.

While sexual harassment includes a variety of behaviours, ranging from rape and sexual assault to sexual gestures and innuendos⁴, what matters is that the sexual conduct is unwanted and unwelcome by the person against whom it is directed.

4. Preventions

All staff, and particularly managers, have a responsibility for keeping the work environment free of harassment.

Management in Caritas Norway and partner organizations are responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of their obligations under this policy.

5. Duty to report

Every member of staff, volunteers and board members in Caritas Norway and partner organizations have the duty to immediately report any behavior they perceive as harassment, and are strongly encouraged to do so in accordance with the Caritas Norway Complaint Handling Procedure or the Caritas Internationalis Complaint Handling Procedure.

When management in Caritas Norway or a partner organization becomes aware of a possible harassment, it is obligated by law to take prompt and appropriate action, whether or not the person(s) affected wants Caritas to do so.

Caritas Norway and partner organizations have a duty to report any suspicion of harassment considered as a criminal act to the relevant national authorities.

Caritas Norway will adhere to the [Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme](#)⁵.

⁴ Examples are unwanted pressure for dates, deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering, or pinching, sexual looks or gestures, sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions, hanging around a person, staring at someone or giving personal gifts.

⁵ The scheme establishes a minimum standard for humanitarian, development and other civil society organisations to share information as part of their recruitment process about people who have been found to have committed sexual harassment, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation during employment. It ensures that all organisations who sign up to it work to a common minimum exchange of relevant sensitive information, while respecting applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

6. Investigation

All reports on harassment will be promptly investigated with due regard for the privacy of everyone involved in accordance with the Caritas Norway Complaint Handling Procedure.

7. Implementation and monitoring

Caritas Norway should evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of this policy every year. The policy should be revised every four years.

Approved by Caritas Norway's Executive Board on 25. March 2019.