

## E CODE OF CONDUCT TEARFUND NETHERLANDS

<b>Responsible</b>	HR Manager
<b>Version</b>	Final (January 2025)
<b>Approved by</b>	Executive Team and Works Council
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# 1 Introduction

A code of conduct is an explicit description of the norms and values for the conduct or specific states of affairs of employees of an organisation. A code of conduct deals with far more specific issues than a professional code; it contains rules for behaviour ranging from positive behaviour to unacceptable behaviour, to gross misconduct.

Wherever this policy mentions employees, all employees, people seconded to Tearfund, consultants, self-employed professionals, interns, volunteers, and members of the Supervisory Board are meant.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to ensure that all employees conduct themselves in the course of their work for Tearfund in such a way that their behaviour:

- Reflects honesty and integrity
- Promotes mutual trust and respect between employees and those we work with, both in the Netherlands and abroad
- Does not discriminate against anyone and ensures respect for others and dignity at work
- Supports the values and mission of the organisation, and
- Protects Tearfund's Christian reputation as an organisation.

Tearfund considers it unacceptable for employees to behave in a way that could lead to a breach of trust, makes them unsuitable for the type of work they are doing, affects their performance or the performance of others, and that harms themselves, others or the reputation of Tearfund. An employee's behaviour outside working hours may be unacceptable to the same extent if it leads to any of the outcomes mentioned in this paragraph.

By signing the employment agreement with Tearfund, the employee accepts the rules of the conduct as described in this code of conduct. Employees also sign the rules of conduct separately. Additionally, employees sign the code of conduct every time they sign a travel plan. This code of conduct is updated every three years. This English version is a translation of the Dutch version.

In case employees have any questions about compliance with this code of conduct or the working conditions required from them in the performance of their duties, they can turn to the HR manager who can provide the necessary clarification.

Tearfund is a signatory of the Red Cross Code of Conduct. A Tearfund employee is therefore also a representative of the values expressed in this Code of Conduct, including the four principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

- Humanity: that we want to alleviate the suffering of people, with particular attention to vulnerable groups while respecting the value of all victims.
- Neutrality: that we do not take sides in armed conflicts.
- Impartiality: that we provide assistance exclusively on the basis of need, without any form of discrimination.
- Independence: that we work independent of the political, economic, military or whatever agenda of other actors.

Employee awareness of these principles is important in general, but especially so when travelling on behalf of Tearfund to other countries.

Tearfund works in a sector where integrity is paramount. Therefore, Tearfund requests that in the event that a staff member is convicted in a criminal offence in relation to safeguarding, or an offence that affects the lawful and effective performance of their work duties and responsibilities and/or which might damage Tearfund's reputation, they declare the conviction to their line manager. Their line manager will declare this to the HR manager.

## 2 Behavioural guidelines

### 2.1 Positive behaviour that is encouraged

- 2.1.1 Tearfund encourages employees to demonstrate an attitude of humility and compassion in all activities and to be respectful, calm, patient, forgiving, tolerant, and helpful to others.
- 2.1.2 Employees should avoid destructive criticism, they should resolve personal conflicts as far as possible, and they should aim to work with integrity and transparency.
- 2.1.3 Employees strive for a personal walk with God as part of their lives, they have healthy relationships in their network, they see each other as God looks at people. Employees must adhere to the norms and values, vision, mission and beliefs of Tearfund, as outlined in the General Provisions on Employment Conditions (i.e. articles 5 and 6 and appendix A; as well as article 2 of the statutes). Employees are expected to put God at the centre of their work through prayer, to participate in the weekly devotions, and we encourage them to participate in the congregational life of a church.
- 2.1.4 Tearfund aims to transform communities through restored relationships. Employees are expected to promote good relationships with everyone they work with and to recognise the value of each person as a creature of God, regardless of gender, age, disability, nationality, religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity.

### 2.2 Rules of conduct requiring sensitivity

- 2.2.1 Respecting local culture – Employees working for Tearfund away from their home situation should be aware of local customs and standards and should give up certain ways of doing things in favour of the prevailing culture, even if their own culture does allow for that freedom.

2.2.2 Examples of what it means to respect culture are given below. This list provides the minimum requirements for all employees but is not exhaustive.

- Clothing: Standards for clothing vary from country to country and are therefore subject to local guidelines. Employees must dress in a manner that is appropriate to the country's culture and the type of work we do.
- Alcohol: Employees are expected to exercise restraint when consuming alcohol. Employees must refrain from possessing or consuming alcohol where local practice or regulations so require. The use of alcohol is unacceptable in some cultures and employees must respect this to avoid damage to the relationship between Tearfund and local churches, organisations, and colleagues. The country leads are responsible for deciding whether the use of alcohol is acceptable in the context, and they communicate this to the employees.
- Smoking and vaping: Employees should be respectful towards colleagues, other employees, local partner organisations, and the Christian community and communities with other religions. They need to be sensitive about when and where to smoke or vape, especially when this is dictated by local practice and regulations. Employees are not allowed to smoke or vape in Tearfund buildings or vehicles, at home or abroad.
- Communication and relationships: All employees should be aware of their body language and use of language. Some culturally determined physical and verbal communication can be perceived as 'abnormal' by the recipient. Good judgement is needed to ensure a recipient does not feel uncomfortable and to avoid the risk of a well-intended action being construed as inappropriate behaviour or even as sexual harassment. Tearfund employees are expected to seek advice from a local staff member if there is any doubt about what is culturally appropriate or inappropriate. Employees must take great care where the cultural norms and values for dealing with members of the other gender, the elderly and dignitaries are concerned.
- Religion and cultural considerations: All employees must take great care to respect the cultural norms and values of the place where they reside and work. For example: being sensitive to appropriate or inappropriate foods for cooks to prepare food with, being respectful of individual prayer routines, being aware of different cultural eating habits, using discretion in reading and sharing Western magazines, music, videos, and messages on social media.

2.2.3 Sharing accommodation: Under no circumstances should someone travelling for Tearfund sleep in the same room as someone of the other gender, unless they are married or in a civil partnership. Individual bedrooms should be provided in most circumstances with the potential exception of emergency situations where employees of the same gender are asked to share a room. The provision of individual bedrooms also applies to circumstances where Tearfund staff is travelling with partner staff or employees of other organisations.

## 2.3 Sexual behaviour

The sexual behaviour of employees is unacceptable to Tearfund if this could harm the reputation of Tearfund or if this interferes with the effective performance of their duties. Sexual exploitation is unacceptable under all circumstances, as described in paragraph 2.5.10.

2.3.1 Close personal relationships: Where there are close personal relationships between employees, and in particular between employees who have a direct or indirect

working relationship, it is important that the individuals exercise discretion and good conscience at all times when it comes to behaviour and action. Tearfund will be concerned where there is any negative impact on effectiveness, working relationships and/or where there is a potential conflict of interest. Tearfund expects employees to disclose personal relationships with colleagues to their line manager so that any impact on the organisation can be managed.

- 2.3.2 Conflict of interest: If an employee identifies a potential conflict of interest involving themselves or a colleague that could have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the organisation, on colleagues or on work in general, the employee is expected to discuss it within the organisation so that any consequences can be properly managed. For more information see the Conflict of Interest Policy.
- 2.3.3 Use of social media: When employees use social media (during working hours or in their own time), they do so with common sense, by adhering to Tearfund's values at all times, and by acting in accordance with Tearfund's policies and procedures.

Comments made in social media may lead to legal liability for the employee and for Tearfund. Each employee is personally responsible for the content they publish, both during working hours and in their own time.

Employees are expected to behave in a positive and respectful manner when using social media. They must not breach confidentiality by sharing information that is for internal or limited use only, or breach the criteria mentioned at the beginning of this Code of Conduct. Unacceptable behaviour can be any online activity that:

- Damages the mutual trust and respect between employees and the people we work with at home and abroad
- Amounts to discrimination, bullying, harassment, victimisation or which seriously undermines respect for the dignity of others
- Prevents staff from performing their duties effectively
- Places staff and those we work with at risk
- Damages Tearfund's reputation as a Christian organisation
- Criticises or undermines fellow colleagues or Tearfund.

## 2.4 Unacceptable behaviour

Behaviour that is considered unacceptable, as described in the non-exhaustive list below, may lead to a sanction as mentioned in Article 23 of the General Provisions on Employment Conditions, with termination of employment as the ultimate consequence.

- 2.4.1 Aggressive behaviour: Employees must refrain from aggressive or violent behaviour, they must not harass, bully or verbally or physically abuse other individuals and/or employees.
- 2.4.2 Favouritism: Employees should not show improper preference or allow improper factors to influence decisions involving transactions with third parties, including suppliers, vendors, contractors and employees.
- 2.4.3 Hiring relatives, friends, or members of one's own ethnic group, leading to the exclusion of other qualified persons and/or without following established Tearfund policies and procedures.

- 2.4.4 Disrespectful conduct: Employees should not show rude, impolite, inappropriate and unprofessional behaviour that undermines the dignity of others or displays a lack of respect for authority.

Unauthorised and inappropriate use of Tearfund resources: Employees should not use Tearfund resources inappropriately. This includes, but is not limited to, unreasonable personal use of phones, internet, postal system, laptops or other Tearfund property or resources.

## 2.5 Gross misconduct

The behaviours listed below are considered gross misconduct which, if supported by evidence, will normally result in dismissal. This list is not exhaustive.

- 2.5.1 Theft and fraud: Employees must not be found in possession of property belonging to Tearfund or another employee without the prior consent and approval of Tearfund and/or the other employee. Employees must not commit fraud or participate in fraudulent activities, and they must adhere to Tearfund's guidelines on financial matters and use of materials. More information about fraud can be found in the Fraud, Loss & Bribery Policy, which can be found [here](#).
- 2.5.2 Bribery and corruption: Employees may not give, take, receive or solicit any gifts, favours or goods that could be perceived as a bribe and/or participate in corrupt activities. More information about bribery and corruption can be found in the Fraud, Loss & Bribery Policy, which can be found [here](#).
- 2.5.3 Falsification of records: Employees must not provide false or incorrect information, with the intention to knowingly mislead or misrepresent information for personal gain.
- 2.5.4 Bullying or harassment:
- Bullying is characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, belittle or injure the individual. This may take the form of physical, verbal or emotional behaviour. It is a deliberate action of hostility towards the individual.
  - Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct or behaviour which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Staff should be sensitive to the feelings of others and avoid speaking or acting in a way that might cause harm or offence. They must take care to avoid behaving in a way which may amount to harassment.

In situations where bullying or harassment is alleged, it is important to consider the context, the nature of the relationship and whether the alleged behaviour is in line with the definitions above or not. For example, in the case of bullying, there are likely to be different views on what amounts to bullying. Some aspects of management, such as allocating work, managing change, managing performance or conduct may be difficult for an employee to accept but do not in themselves amount to bullying.

- 2.5.5 Possession at work of dangerous or unauthorised materials, such as explosives or firearms.
- 2.5.6 Alcohol: Employees are expected to exercise restraint in the consumption of alcohol and not to get into a situation of alcohol abuse. Under no circumstances should staff drink and drive or be drunk whilst on Tearfund business.
- 2.5.7 Drugs: Under no circumstances shall any employee be in possession of, or use, any form of hallucinogenic or other narcotic substance that is illegal.
- 2.5.8 Safety: Employees should follow the Safety & Security Policy & Plan (to be found [here](#)). Ignorance or compromising is not accepted. Employees must always act in the best interests of the safety of all Tearfund employees, partners and partner staff, and project participants.
- 2.5.9 Deliberate disobedience or negligence: Employees are expected to follow all Tearfund policies and not to ignore lawful and reasonable instructions from their Team Leader or Project Leader. The principle of confidentiality must under no circumstances be compromised in the event that an employee is in possession of confidential information. Employees must not deliberately misuse Tearfund's property, materials and/or vehicles under any circumstances.
- 2.5.10 Forced conversions: Employees must not use any form of coercion when speaking about their faith, and they must not speak or act in a way that is inappropriate in the context. Tearfund rejects any form of coercion in speaking about the faith or in ensuring that people remain followers of a particular faith. We support the principle of freedom of religion and tolerance between different faiths.
- 2.5.11 Sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse:
- Tearfund recognises that both men and women may be harassers or victims of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse.
  - Employees must not make unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favours. They must not engage in verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature that is unwanted and has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone else, for example by making jokes that may cause offence, by making inappropriate comments on personal appearance or by asking questions about personal life. Additionally, more explicit statements, such as sexual invitations and/or behaviour, are not accepted.
  - As set out in the Safeguarding Policy, to be found [here](#), all employees have responsibility to create and maintain an environment that upholds the dignity of and respect for others. There should be a safe environment for those we work alongside. Tearfund adheres to the international standards on safeguarding. Related to safeguarding, there are the following rules of conduct:
    - Under no circumstances should an employee enter into a sexual relationship with a project participant since there are inherently unequal power dynamics. Employees should not sexually exploit or abuse project participants.
    - Employees should not engage in any sexual activity with a child (person under 18), regardless of the locally accepted age of consent. In such a case, the wrong assumption of the child's age can never be invoked as a defence.



- Employees must not exchange money, employment, goods or services for sex (including sexual favours or other forms of degrading, abusive or exploitative behaviour). This also applies to the exchange of aid that is already given to the project participants.
  - Employees must not use their position within Tearfund to solicit sexual favours and/or sexually harass or intimidate other employees.
- Where an employee develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual exploitation or abuse by a Tearfund colleague or a staff member of another organisation, this should immediately be reported in line with the [Safeguarding Policy and/or Whistleblowing Policy](#).
- Employees are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promote the implementation of this Code of Conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support this.

#### 2.5.12 Human trafficking:

- Tearfund endorses the dignity and respect of every individual. Therefore, under no circumstances should a Tearfund employee be involved in or facilitate human trafficking.
- Human trafficking occurs when a person arranges or facilitates the recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring or receipt of another person for the purpose of exploitation. This may involve the use of force, threats of violence or other forms of coercion.
- Coercion also includes abduction, deception, abuse of a position of power or a vulnerable position.
- Human trafficking can mean taking someone to another country, but it can also take place within the country where the person comes.
- The victim's consent does not apply in the case where coercion has been used.
- Exploitation includes, but is not limited to:
  - Forced labour
  - Debt bondage
  - Domestic slavery
  - Enforcing services of children or vulnerable adults
  - Forced child labour
  - Forced sex work by adults or children
  - Other forms of sexual exploitation and the recruitment or use of child soldiers.
- If you know, or should know, that as a result of your actions another person is most likely to be exploited in some way as described above, then you may well be involved in human trafficking.
- You must take steps, if necessary, to ensure that other parties with whom Tearfund works (including consultants, contractors, suppliers, partner organisations and volunteers) are not involved in any form of human trafficking. If you suspect anything at all, you should report it as described in the whistleblowers' scheme.
- Check these [Guidelines](#) for more understanding on what to look out for or which might give an indication that human trafficking is taking place.

#### 2.5.13 Discrimination: Employees should not discriminate in any manner, including on the bases listed in the Dutch Constitution, which are: religion, belief, political opinion, race, sex, disability, and sexual orientation.

#### 2.5.14 Abuse of email or internet: Employees are not allowed, as set out in the user agreement for laptops and in the information security policy, to use Tearfund

laptops for any activities that conflict with organisational goals or that can damage Tearfund's reputation. This includes deliberately accessing, watching, or downloading files from websites containing pornographic, offensive, illegal or obscene material.

### 3 How will Tearfund respond to personal misconduct?

Each employee receives the General Provisions on Employment Conditions and all guidelines and procedures at the start of their employment. Employees should read these guidelines and procedures and be aware that if their personal conduct does not meet the minimum standards and expectations laid down in this policy, they may be subject to the procedure set out in the General Provisions on Employment Conditions. In the event of a breach of this Code of Conduct, Article 23 of the General Provisions on Employment Conditions will be leading in determining and applying any sanction.

For all those who are not covered by the General Provisions on Employment Conditions, Tearfund will make an assessment on a case-by-case basis, using the principle of hearing both sides of the argument between the person concerned and the person primarily responsible at Tearfund. The CEO will ultimately decide on the continuation of the cooperation. In case the CEO itself is part of the case, the Supervisory Board will take over this role and make the decision. More information about the steps taken in case of misconduct can be found in the [Wrongdoing Reporting & Investigation Flowchart](#).

Where line managers have concerns relating to the implementation of this code of conduct, they can discuss this with their HR contact person before taking any action. Tearfund will protect employees and project participants from abusive, harmful or inappropriate conduct and take prompt, fair and proportionate disciplinary action whenever and wherever wrongdoing is found among its employees.

**Signed for approval:**

**Name of employee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_