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Sarah Champion MP
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Dear Sarah,

Thank you for your letter of 22 October seeking further clarification around the HR policy position on sexual misconduct of staff in the FCDO and all other ODA spending Government departments.

As you have recognised, the wording in the UK Safeguarding Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH) strategy allows for the possibility that some staff who are hired in-country may be part of local communities, and so for example a local staff member's spouse could unexpectedly become a beneficiary of an aid programme. As the strategy makes clear though, the key is that any relationship should not be exploitative, based on inherently unequal power dynamics or represent an abuse of power. I have set out a response to each of your questions below.

1. *Who is included within the category of "ODA staff" referred to in the UK Strategy: Safeguarding Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment within the Aid Sector;*

"ODA staff" are staff directly employed by the relevant UK Government Department and involved in the delivery of an ODA-funded programme. For FCDO, all staff are in scope.

2. *Whether FCDO's position, as clarified by you, will apply in other ODA spending departments to ensure that sexual relationships with beneficiaries are considered unacceptable and treated as gross misconduct across all of HMG.*

Each Government department which spends ODA is responsible for its own staff terms and conditions, but all signed up to the language in the [UK Strategy: Safeguarding Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment within the Aid Sector](#) which states that sexual exploitation and abuse constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.

I hope that this clarifies the position in the FCDO and across all ODA spending departments and provides further reassurance of our commitment to tackle sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment in the aid sector.

Nigel Adams MP
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