

**DANISH FASHION ETHICAL CHARTER**

*January 2018*



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## **PURPOSE**

Danish Fashion Ethical Charter seeks to ensure the well-being of Danish models and to contribute to the creation of relevant and appropriate information about eating disorders and about the beauty and body ideals the fashion industry is a part of creating.

Danish Fashion Ethical Charter will also help raise awareness and influence attitudes in the fashion industry as well as in the media and in society in general, which is why the charter contains a number of measures and rules signatories must adhere to.

## **BACKGROUND ON EATING DISORDERS**

Many people, especially the young, struggle to achieve unrealistically thin body ideals and the occurrence of serious eating disorders is on the rise. Approximately 75,000 Danes suffer from an eating disorder, and the same number exhibit at-risk behaviour that can easily develop into an eating disorder. Out of the 75,000 who suffer from an eating disorder, 5,000 suffer from anorexia, 30,000 from bulimia and 40,000 from overeating. To that can be added an unknown number of people suffering from orthorexia and megarexia.

Anorexia is often in focus when discussing the connection between the fashion industry and eating disorders. A serious societal issue, anorexia is a very dangerous condition and represents one of the most deadly diseases for young people. Many more people, however, suffer from bulimia, which often is not as physically apparent. As a result the charter addresses all forms of eating disorders.

## **VALUES**

Danish Fashion Ethical Charter focuses on three core values involving accountability, compassionate respect and health:

1. We respect and protect industry employees (including models) and the colleagues we work with. We wish to ensure their health and safety, and we appreciate diversity.
2. We are aware of and take responsibility for the impact the fashion industry has on body ideals, especially on young people.
3. We wish to promote and work towards healthy lifestyles as well as a healthy body ideal that reflects a healthy relationship to food, body and exercise.



## **RULES**

Danish Fashion Ethical Charter consists of four general rules:

### **1) Age limit**

Models must be at least 16 years of age in order to work.

Models who are 15 years of age can be given dispensation to work if accompanied by an adult.

Models under 15 can only work with children's and teenage clothing and likewise must be accompanied by an adult (which the agency arranges). The charter also refers to the Danish Working Environment Act.

### **2) Healthy diet**

Clients (fashion companies, photographers, magazines, ad agencies and others) commit to serving models nutritious and healthy food at jobs that last more than two hours.

### **3) Wages**

Models must receive monetary payment for their work. Dispensation from the obligation to pay wages is only possible in agreement with the model for work done for educational institutions, student projects, charities and non-commercial publications (i.e. publications without advertising revenues or sales).

Note on wages: Agreements concerning specific wages and conditions are made between the model agency/the model and the client and between the model agency and the model. Greater transparency and assurance of the individual model's rights are required in this connection.

### **4) Health check**

The steering committee of the Danish Fashion Ethical Charter introduced and finished a successful pilot project in 2017 that involves a health check focusing on eating disorders of models, which was continued according to the following system:

The health check, to be carried out by the Danish Association against Eating Disorders and Self-harm, will be conducted by professional staff and involve an approximately one and a half hour interview that will/may apply the Eating Disorder Examination (EDE), an internationally recognised semi-structured interview for diagnosing eating disorders. The assessment will determine whether and to what extent a model is at risk of or meets the criteria for an eating disorder. The following criteria will be used and have the following effect:

- No or mild concern: The model can safely continue current work and will not undergo another health check for two years (assuming the pilot project is a success)
- (Some) concern: The model is referred to a discussion/support group and/or individual therapy sessions and can continue working if he/she receives help
- Moderate to severe concern: The model is referred to further evaluation by his/her doctor and is not permitted to work again until cleared



Every time a model undergoes a health check, a record of the visit is documented that contains the results. The agency will receive notice from the Danish Association against Eating Disorders and Self-harm that the model has undergone a health check and be told the results.

In the event that the model disagrees with the assessment, a second professional assessment can of course be conducted elsewhere but at the expense of the agency. If the two assessments are contradictory, a third assessment by an impartial party is required that will be covered by pooled funding (described below under 'Funding').

### ***Who will be assessed?***

The aim of the pilot project was to assess all models who are or turn 16 in 2017. The health check project was then reviewed, with input from models, agencies, parents and the charter's steering committee.

After a successful pilot project it was decided to continue health checks using the 2017 pilot project method. Thereby following the original plan with the goal to assess models every other year until they turn 20:

- In 2017 the aim is to assess 16-year-old models
- In 2018 the aim is to assess 16 and 18-year-old models
- In 2019 and beyond the aim is to assess 16, 18 and 20-year-old models

In addition, the steering committee of the Danish Fashion Ethical Charter will recommend to agencies that a model (regardless of age) undergoes a health check if the committee deems there is sufficient reason for serious concern due to the model's behaviour or body measurements. The dialogue between the committee and the agency will take place in the strictest confidence. The recommendation is well-intentioned and not meant as a criticism or as coercion. If the agency and the model (and possibly the parents) consider the concern justified, the model can undergo a health check paid for by pooled funding to mitigate the cost burden on the model agency. If the model agency is seriously concerned about a model, it can also recommend that the model (regardless of age) undergoes a health check to be paid for by pooled funding.

### ***Funding***

The Danish healthcare system is currently unable to offer a uniform, nationwide health check focusing on eating disorders, which is why, until politicians are willing to help the industry, the steering committee, together with the major model agencies in Denmark, has developed the following private-sector solution.

The 2017 pilot project on health checks for 16-year-olds was expected to cost about DKK 200,000, including funding for discussion/support groups. If the project continues as planned in 2018 and beyond, the cost will increase concurrently with the number of models undergoing a health check. Each health check will be settled between the Danish Association against Eating Disorders and Self-harm and the model agency. To mitigate the costs model agencies incur, model agencies whose models undergo a health check will impose a "health check fee" of DKK 75.00 on all customer invoices, making the fashion industry instrumental in funding the health check.

The steering committee of the Danish Fashion Ethical Charter also encourages all signatories to contribute annually an amount of their choice. The money will be used to finance, for example, exceptional health checks of models outside the target age group, follow-up interviews and



discussion/support groups. Payment is voluntary but the website will publish who has contributed and how much.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Danish Fashion Ethical Charter recommends that a formal framework agreement be entered into concerning wages and working conditions between the associations for model agencies and models. When such an agreement has been entered into, Danish Fashion Ethical Charter will refer to it in terms of, for example wages.
- Danish Fashion Ethical Charter recommends that, based on the model agency 2PM's experience with teaching, a short educational course for models working with agencies be designed to teach models about, for example diet, nutrition and mental health. The format must allow implementation at any model agency and agencies are recommended to conduct at least one educational course yearly. The purpose is to support and strengthen models to cope with the realities of being a model and the world they are thrown into, often at a very young age.
- Danish Fashion Ethical Charter recommends greater transparency and awareness concerning retouched photos in e.g. fashion magazines.

## **COMMITMENT - SIGNATORIES**

Anyone can commit to Danish Fashion Ethical Charter by signing it. The aim is to establish broad backing from the fashion industry's relevant stakeholders and companies (such as model agencies, fashion companies, magazines, industry organisations, associations, photographers, ad agencies, PR agencies and trade fairs).

Danish Fashion Institute receives and files signed agreements. Signatories receive the Danish Fashion Ethical Charter logo pack for use on, for instance the signatories' own website, materials and campaigns, as long as the charter's rules are adhered to.

The names of signatories are listed on the website [danishfashionethicalcharter.com](http://danishfashionethicalcharter.com).

In addition fashion companies and other players (magazines, PR agencies, stores, agencies) who wish to participate with a show, an event or as a supplier during Copenhagen Fashion Week are required to sign the Danish Fashion Ethical Charter to be part of the official fashion week programme.



## **STEERING COMMITTEE, EVALUATION AND SANCTIONS**

The following organisations will establish a Danish Fashion Ethical Charter steering committee and appoint one member each:

Dansk Fashion & Textile  
Danish Fashion Institute  
Copenhagen Fashion Week  
The Danish Association against Eating Disorders and Self-harm (LMS)

There will also be a representative from one of the country's eight largest model agencies\*, a representative for Danish models\*, one designer from a fashion company\* and one editor from a Danish fashion magazine\*

\*) Appointed by Dansk Fashion & Textile and Danish Fashion Institute

The steering committee meets twice a year to evaluate the charter but must be able to assemble at other times when necessary.

The steering committee has the authority to penalise signatories who do not adhere to the charter's rules.

The options the steering committee has to enact sanctions are adjusted according to the nature and extent of the breach:

- 1) Reprimand and admonition
- 2) Warning of exclusion and statement of critique
- 3) Exclusion from Danish Fashion Ethical Charter, cf. below

When excluded the following consequences can take effect:

- Publication of violator on a black list on the Danish Fashion Ethical Charter website, as well as in a press release
- Forfeiture of the right to use the Danish Fashion Ethical Charter logo
- Forfeiture of the right to visibility in the official programmes for Copenhagen Fashion Week, including shows, events, sampling and advertising
- Forfeiture of the right to participate in Copenhagen Fashion Week casting days

The steering committee shall determine its own rules of procedure.

Follow signatories, black lists, warnings and the steering committee's work on [danishfashionethicalcharter.com](http://danishfashionethicalcharter.com).

