

Dignity at Work Policy

The aim of this policy is to protect our employees, volunteers and trustees from bullying, harassment, victimisation and any other type of unwanted behaviour, which leads them to feel upset, intimidated, degraded, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable in any way.

It is effective at all times while you are on Charity business, be it your normal place of work, attending any external training programmes or at social events.

Harassment or bullying can cause fear, stress or anxiety and can, therefore, affect job satisfaction and an individual's morale. We are committed to providing a working environment that ensures that all individuals are treated fairly, equally and decently. We believe that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Any form of harassment and bullying is regarded as totally unacceptable behaviour. It will not be permitted or condoned in any form. All complaints will be treated seriously and dealt with in accordance with this policy.

Harassment can involve a single serious incident or may be continuous and spread over a period of time. It is the impact of the behaviour on the individual that is relevant, not the motive or intention that was behind the alleged harassment.

When and where appropriate, every effort will be made to resolve the situation informally. Some incidents, however, by virtue of their serious nature will need to be dealt with immediately under the formal procedure.

What is unacceptable behaviour?

Unacceptable behaviour takes many forms, which include harassment, bullying and victimisation. The essential characteristic is that it is unwelcome, offensive and unwanted by either the recipient and/or a witness to the conduct.

What is important is whether the person directly on the receiving end or witnessing the activity feels offended, regardless of whether not the alleged harasser intended to cause offence to that person. For example, it is possible for someone to be offended about disability related jokes, whether or not they are disabled themselves.

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as behaviour that is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting. It can be an abuse or misuse of power or authority that attempts to undermine, humiliate, denigrate, or injure an individual or group of employees. The following list of examples is not exhaustive but bullying behaviour can include:

- Verbal or physical threats & intimidation, such as shouting, use of foul language and personal abuse
- Persistent negative comments
- Humiliating or criticising someone in front of others
- Offensive or abusive personal remarks
- Belittling someone's opinion
- Making false allegations
- Spreading malicious rumours

Bullying is normally of a persistent nature, wearing down the individual concerned and it may cause them to suffer stress.

Firm management is not necessarily bullying, and a manager's criticism of unsatisfactory work performance should not be confused with bullying. Managers are entitled to set standards and make clear any aspects of performance which are unacceptable, providing they are consistent throughout the team.

Harassment

An individual's perception of harassment will vary. The 'legal' definition of harassment is "unwanted conduct that violates an individual's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for an individual".

The following are some examples of harassment;

- Unwanted physical contact or intimidation
- Threats or physical (including sexual) assault
- Verbal or written suggestive or offensive remarks, jokes, innuendo or insults
- Visual display or circulation of offensive or suggestive material such as graffiti, emblems, posters or material transmitted electronically.
- Sexual propositions /compromising invitations
- Derogatory name-calling or ridicule
- Gossip or slander
- Exclusion

This list is just an example and is not exhaustive. It can happen to anyone, but in many instances it may involve a person's;

- Race, ethnic origin, nationality or skin colour
- Gender, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation or gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Age

It is illegal to discriminate against any individual on the grounds listed above.

Victimisation

Victimisation is discrimination against an individual on the grounds that they are known to have, or are suspected to have, made a complaint about discrimination or harassment or given evidence of discrimination or harassment. It can take various forms and can include:

- Isolation or non-co-operation & exclusion from social activities
- Unjustified or persistent criticism
- Ostracism
- Imposing unfair sanctions

Responsibilities

Everyone has a personal responsibility for their own behaviour and a duty of care to treat each other with dignity and respect. This includes being aware of the appropriateness of your conduct, making

sure that your own behaviour does not cause offence or misunderstanding, taking time to think before you send an e-mail or make a personal remark.

Furthermore if you are a witness to conduct which goes against the Dignity policy it is your responsibility to report this to the Practice Manager or if that is not appropriate to the Board of Trustees.

All forms of harassment, which includes bullying are unacceptable behaviour.

Harassment is not only against our policy but is unlawful direct discrimination.

Certain acts of harassment may render the perpetrator liable to criminal prosecution or damages through the civil court.

Any individual who believes they have suffered any form of harassment is expected to raise the matter through the Grievance procedure.

Allegations of harassment, including complaints relating to service users or other third parties will be taken seriously.

Should any individual bring about a malicious complaint they will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.