



Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all employees are treated with dignity and respect, free from harassment or other forms of bullying at work.

Where harassment or bullying is shown to have taken place it will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedures as a form of misconduct. In some cases, it may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal of those responsible.

WHAT THE LAW REQUIRES

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, we have a duty to provide our employees with a safe place and system of work. This includes a workplace free from harassment and bullying which may, in certain circumstances, also amount to unlawful discrimination.

We are also responsible for ensuring that employees are protected from unlawful harassment, bullying or discrimination during their work on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability or age.

WHAT ARE HARASSMENT AND BULLYING?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Harassment often (but not exclusively) targets the gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability or age of the victim.

A single incident of unwanted or offensive behaviour to one individual can amount to harassment.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour which, through the abuse or misuse of power, makes the recipient feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated and threatened. Power includes both personal strength and the power to coerce others through fear or intimidation. Bullying is often a form of harassment and can undermine an individual's self-confidence, competence and self-esteem. As with harassment, bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct.

Legitimate and constructive criticism of an employee's performance or behaviour or reasonable requests made of workers during their employment will not constitute bullying.

Anyone who believes they are being subjected to harassment or that they are being bullied should not hesitate to use the procedures set out below.

INFORMAL STEPS TO RESOLVE BULLYING OR HARASSMENT

If you consider that you are being bullied or harassed, you should initially attempt to resolve the problem informally with the person responsible if you feel able and explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing to do on your own, you should seek support from your Line Manager. Line Managers will provide confidential advice and assistance to those who believe they have been bullied or harassed and will offer to assist in the resolution of any problems, whether through informal or formal means.

If informal steps have not been successful or would not be appropriate, you should follow the formal procedure set out below.

RAISING A FORMAL COMPLAINT ABOUT BULLYING OR HARASSMENT

The informal procedure may not be appropriate due to the nature of the harassment or bullying or because you do not feel able to talk directly to the person creating the problem. In these cases, or where the informal procedure has been unsuccessful, you should raise your complaint in writing with your line manager. If the matter concerns that person, you should refer it to a Director.

Your written complaint should set out full details of the conduct in question, including the name of the harasser or bully, the nature of the harassment or bullying, the date(s) and time(s) at which it occurred, the names of any witnesses and any action that has been taken so far to attempt to stop it from occurring.

As a general principle, the decision to progress a complaint rests with you. However, we have a duty to protect all employees and may decide to pursue the matter independently if, in all the circumstances, it is considered appropriate to do so.

FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS

Complaints will be investigated in a timely and confidential manner to establish full details of what happened. Your name and the name of the alleged harasser or bully will not be divulged other than on a "need to know" basis to those individuals involved in the investigation. The investigation will be thorough, impartial and objective, and will be carried out with sensitivity and with due respect for the rights of all parties concerned.

We will usually arrange a meeting with you to report the outcome within a week of the conclusion of the investigation.

If we find that harassment or bullying has occurred, prompt action will be taken to stop the harassment or bullying immediately and prevent its recurrence. The findings will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedures. Consideration will be given to whether

the harasser or bully should be dismissed and, if not, whether they should remain in their current post or be transferred.

Any worker who is, after investigation, found to have deliberately provided false information or to have acted in bad faith may be subject to action under our Disciplinary Procedures.

APPEALS

If the grievance has not been resolved to your satisfaction you may appeal in writing, stating your full grounds of appeal, within 5 working days of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.

We will hold an appeal meeting, normally within one week of receiving your written appeal. This will be dealt with impartially and you have a right to bring a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting.

We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further appeal.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is an important part of the procedures provided under this policy. Everyone involved in the operation of the policy, whether making a complaint or involved in any investigation, is responsible for observing the high level of confidentiality that is required.

Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedures.

Signed *John O' Sullivan*

Date: 23rd August 2024

Signed *Anita O' Sullivan*

Date: 23rd August 2024