



Complaints of Bullying and Harassment

26th January 2021

COMPLAINTS OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Harassment is unwanted conduct which reasonably can be considered, taking into account the perception of the complainant, to have the purpose or effect of violating another person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

The Authority considers that harassment or bullying of one employee by another employee or by a third party e.g. service users, contractor's staff, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

If any employee feels that they are being harassed or bullied often the quickest and most effective way to handle such situations is to talk to the person concerned making it clear that their behaviour is unwelcome and must stop. Where the employee feels unable to do this themselves, they may wish to approach a colleague, line manager or a trade union representative to assist them. If the behaviour does not change following such an approach then the employee should raise the issue with their line manager who will deal with it in accordance with this Code.

Where an employee has made a complaint of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation the line manager should contact the Executive Officer for advice. If, after investigating the issues, the line manager considers the allegations are substantiated, their report may include the following recommendations to the relevant manager; that the alleged perpetrator should receive a formal letter instructing them to stop the incidents or behaviour and/or receive formal training and/or that a formal disciplinary investigation should be instigated against the alleged perpetrator under the Disciplinary Code.

Examples of bullying and harassment

This is not an exhaustive list but is designed to illustrate the types of behaviour which may constitute harassment on the grounds of sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age; or bullying on any other basis.

- (a) unwanted sexual advances (whether verbal, written or by conduct), or sexually explicit derogatory statements or comments;
- (b) unnecessary and uninvited physical contact, touching, patting, etc;

- (c) requests for social or sexual encounters and favours, which the person making them might reasonably believe to be unwelcome conversations, jokes, gestures which are likely to cause offence;
- (d) the display of pornographic, racist or other offensive materials, pictures, computer imagery in the workplace;
- (e) questioning, bantering, lewd or derogatory comments or innuendo about aspects of a person's personal life, personal appearance, or that person's partner(s) or similar discussion about a third party;
- (f) graffiti, letters or other written material containing elements of the above;
- (g) derogatory name calling or insults;
- (h) refusal to co-operate with or ridicule of an individual for cultural differences e.g. food, dress, music;
- (i) exclusion from normal workplace conversation or social events;
- (j) abuse of power by, for example a line manager, such as setting unrealistic targets, refusing to consider reasonable requests or unfair allocation of work and responsibilities; inconsistent or overbearing implementation of rules and/or procedures which may have a damaging or detrimental effect on an individual;
- (k) oral or written abuse, threats;
- (l) physical assault;
- (m) victimisation, for raising a legitimate complaint;
- (n) repeated criticism without justification;
- (o) action designed to annoy or upset;
- (p) nuisance – i.e. action designed to annoy or upset an individual;
- (q) constant put down by colleagues; and
- (r) deliberate lack of communication or mis-communication to colleagues, which may result in errors or less favourable treatment.