



DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

1.0 Aims and Scope

1.1 The Chamber aims to ensure that all its employees are treated with dignity and respect at work and are able to meet their full potential working in an environment which is free from bullying or harassment. This means that there are some types of behaviour that are unacceptable which will include the following:

- 1.1.1 being offensive, abusive, malicious, insulting or intimidating to a fellow employee
- 1.1.2 engaging in unjustifiable criticism towards a fellow employee
- 1.1.3 any form of bullying or harassment
- 1.1.4 imposing a punishment upon a fellow employee without reasonable justification; or
- 1.1.5 changing an employee's duties or responsibilities to their detriment without reasonable justification.

1.2 This policy applies to all employees, regardless of their job role. Breach of this policy will be treated as misconduct and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

2.0 Harassment and Bullying

2.1 Harassment and bullying is unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

2.2 Harassment applies to:

- 2.2.1 Actions or behaviours relating to a protected characteristic
- 2.2.2 Actions of behaviours considered to be offensive even if not directed at or applying to the person who is offended by the behaviour
- 2.2.3 Physical, verbal, written and non-verbal actions or behaviours, including the use of social networking sites.
- 2.2.4 Single or repeated incidents.



- 2.3 Bullying overlaps with harassment and may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.
- 2.4 Bullying is persistent and often unpredictable harassment that can lead to fear, anxiety, demotivation, isolation and poor concentration.
- 2.5 Bullying or harassment can be by an individual against an individual or can involve groups of people, whatever form it takes it is unwarranted and unwelcome to the individual.
- 2.6 Examples include:
 - 2.6.1 unwanted physical contact
 - 2.6.2 unwelcome remarks about a protected characteristic
 - 2.6.3 ridiculing or demeaning
 - 2.6.4 personal insults
 - 2.6.5 personal intrusion – pestering, stalking
 - 2.6.6 unwelcome sexual advances
 - 2.6.7 coercion for sexual favours
 - 2.6.8 shouting and bawling in public or in private
 - 2.6.9 posters, graffiti, obscene gestures and emblems
 - 2.6.10 persistent unwarranted and inappropriate criticism
 - 2.6.11 exclusion or victimisation
 - 2.6.12 isolation or non co-operation
 - 2.6.13 pressure to participate in political or religious groups
 - 2.6.14 failure to safeguard sensitive confidential personal information
 - 2.6.15 overbearing supervision or other misuse of power
 - 2.6.16 setting impossible deadlines
 - 2.6.17 making threats about job security without foundation
 - 2.6.18 deliberate undermining
 - 2.6.19 purposely blocking promotion or training



The above list is not exhaustive.

- 2.7 Bullying and harassment are not necessarily face to face. They may occur in written communication, visual images, e mail, telephone, etc.
- 2.8 The perception of the person subjected to the harassment or bullying is significant in determining what constitutes this behaviour.

3.0 Responsibilities

Everyone at the Chamber has a responsibility to comply with this policy. Anyone who suspects that harassment or bullying may be happening has a responsibility to act.

- 3.1 Employees
 - 3.1.1 you must ensure you understand and follow the correct course of action regarding this policy
 - 3.1.2 you must ensure that your behaviour towards colleagues and anyone you encounter on behalf of the Chamber does not cause offence and could not in any way be considered to be harassment or bullying
 - 3.1.3 you must play a part in discouraging harassment and bullying by making it clear that you find such behaviour unacceptable
 - 3.1.4 you must consistently treat all colleagues with dignity and respect
- 3.2 Managers
 - 3.2.1 you have a duty to ensure employees have a full understanding of this policy and the expected standards of conduct
 - 3.2.2 you should promote awareness of this policy within your area of responsibility
 - 3.2.3 you should set an example by always treating others with dignity and respect
 - 3.2.4 you should make every effort to ensure that harassment or bullying do not occur
 - 3.2.5 you must act promptly if you observe harassment or bullying occurring
 - 3.2.6 you must respond sensitively to an employee who makes an allegation of bullying or harassment



3.2.7 you must resolve any incidents of bullying or harassment dealing effectively with the situation

3.2.8 you should seek advice from HR when dealing with the formal stages of this policy

4.0 Procedure

4.1 Employees who feel they are being harassed and /or bullied should keep a diary of alleged incidents. Wherever possible, the employee should seek to resolve the problem informally to allow a speedy resolution to be achieved.

5.0 Informal Procedure

5.1 The employee should ask the person responsible to stop. Making it clear that his behaviour is causing offence is often enough to address the issue as the person concerned may not realise, they are causing offence.

5.2 If the employee finds this course of action too difficult, they should raise the concern with their line manager, or if the person concerned is the line manager, they should raise the concern to the next level manager. Confidential support and advice will be offered to the employee and every effort made to find a satisfactory way forward. This may involve the line manager speaking to the alleged harasser.

5.3 This informal approach is not appropriate where the complaint is about alleged serious harassment or unlawful behaviour.

6.0 Formal Procedure

6.1 The employee should outline their complaint in writing to their line manager (or if the line manager is the subject of the grievance, the next level line manager). The employee must provide details of the complaint including times, dates, places, possible witnesses and a description of the alleged behaviour.



- 6.2 The line manager will liaise with the HR Advisor about the complaint and an investigating officer will be appointed. The investigating officer will have had no prior involvement in the matter. Due to the sensitivity of the situation, the Chamber may consider taking other action whilst the investigation is carried out, including:
 - 6.2.1 Suspending the alleged harasser
 - 6.2.2 Relocating the alleged harasser for the duration of the investigation
 - 6.2.3 Reorganising work to avoid the need for contact between the complainant and the alleged harasser
 - 6.2.4 The intention of any such action is to ensure the alleged victim feels able to come to work and is not intended as a punishment for the alleged harasser.
- 6.3 The investigating officer will contact the alleged harasser within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint to arrange a meeting to discuss it. Any investigation should be carried out as quickly as possible, usually within 21 days of the complaint. However, it must be recognised that some cases will be more complex and may take longer to investigate.
- 6.4 Once the investigation is complete, the investigating officer will summarise the findings in a report for consideration by the line manager (or next level manager). The options for consideration are:
 - 6.4.1 No case to answer
 - 6.4.2 Address the complaint through an apology and/or instruction to correct behaviour
 - 6.4.3 Mediation
 - 6.4.4 Counsel the alleged harasser and the complainant
 - 6.4.5 Relocation
 - 6.4.6 Disciplinary action
- 6.5 The line manager (or next level manager) will meet with the complainant and the alleged harasser separately to discuss the findings and confirm the way forward. The outcomes will be confirmed in writing to both parties.



7.0 Appeals

- 7.1 Employees have the right of appeal against the outcome of the result of their complaint. The appeal procedure will be the same as under the disciplinary procedure.

8.0 Malicious Allegations

- 8.1 If following a thorough investigation it is found that the complaint was made maliciously, with no basis and with the intent of causing harm, the complainant will be subject to disciplinary action. It must be stressed however that this should in no way deter genuine complaints which will be dealt with sympathetically with a view to achieving a constructive outcome.