



Dignity at work policy

What This Policy Covers

This policy sets out the Company's commitment to create a working environment free from hostility in which individuals are valued for their contribution and can develop to their full potential.

Unacceptable behaviour in the workplace may typically involve bullying or derogatory statements, unwanted spoken or physical advances, and personal treatment which is unfair and interferes with the employee's/volunteers performance, undermines job security, or creates an intimidating work environment.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

The Company expects everyone to relate to each other professionally, in a manner which recognises everyone's right to dignity at work. Bullying or harassment in the workplace will not be tolerated.

All employees/volunteers are required to conform to acceptable standards of behaviour towards fellow workers, irrespective of status.

It is important that those making complaints do so in the honest and genuine belief that they are being bullied or harassed.

The Company's Responsibilities

The Company will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote respect and dignity in the workplace and to deal effectively with complaints of harassment and bullying. This policy and procedure will be communicated effectively to all employees, and the Company will ensure that all employees are aware of their responsibilities. Appropriate training, where necessary, will be provided.

Information shared or obtained during the handling of a complaint will be treated sensitively. The question of maintaining information in confidence will be discussed with all of those involved, but it is important to recognise that certain types of information will have to be shared with individuals as necessary within the Company in order to help the decision-making or remedy for the person making the complaint, or during any appropriate disciplinary action taken against the person responding.

Procedure

Informal Approach

Any employee/volunteer who feels that they are being bullied or harassed should make a personal approach to the offending person, clearly stating their objections and the effects the behaviour has on them.

If an employee/volunteer feels they are not confident to make this approach alone, they may want to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.

If the personal approach is too upsetting for the employee, he/she may ask a third party (colleague, manager or trade union representative) to approach the person on their behalf in the first instance.

Formal Approach

Where the informal approach proves to be unsuccessful, the complainant should report the matter to their Manager (or if necessary the Manager [Director] at the next level). The complaint can be made orally, but must be confirmed in writing.

Where the allegations involve harassment by a third party, e.g. a supplier, the letter of complaint should go directly to the Senior Partner.

A full and fair investigation will be undertaken; ensuring matters are handled sensitively and confidentially at all times.

Disciplinary Action

If after investigation it is clear that unacceptable behaviour has occurred, the perpetrator will be required to attend a Disciplinary Hearing in accordance with the Company's disciplinary procedures. The complainant/s will also be notified in writing.

No Action Taken

Where it has been found that unacceptable behaviour has not occurred, this outcome will be confirmed in writing to all parties.

Dissatisfaction with the Outcome

If the complainant remains dissatisfied he/she must submit a detailed formal complaint to the Senior Partner as detailed in the Company's Grievance Procedure.

Malicious false allegations

The Company will treat malicious false allegations very seriously and this may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Mediation

Mediation may be suitable in some types of cases following an informal or formal Dignity at Work complaint e.g. where the unresolved issues are related to difficulties with communication and/or understanding.

Mediation could be invoked where the work-related issues have been dealt with by the Company, but personal issues still remain between the parties as they continue to work together.

Mediation is a voluntary process and both parties must agree to engage in the process.