

14. Bullying and Harassment Policy

14.1 Introduction

City of Sanctuary UK:-

- Will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any kind in the workplace.
- Fully supports the rights and opportunities of all people to seek, obtain and hold employment without discrimination.
- Seeks to provide a working environment that is free of all forms of harassment and intimidation.

It is the responsibility of all employees, volunteers and trustees, working on behalf of City of Sanctuary to comply with this procedure. It is the particular responsibility of Managers to ensure the policy is carried out, with a view to developing and maintaining a working environment in which harassment and bullying are understood by all to be unacceptable.

City of Sanctuary UK will not tolerate bullying or harassment in our workplace or at work-related events outside of the workplace, irrespective of the seniority of the perpetrator and whether the conduct is a one-off act or a repeated course of conduct, and whether done purposefully or not. Neither will the organisation tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in the bringing of a complaint of harassment or bullying. Everyone should also be aware that if a court or tribunal finds that you have bullied or harassed someone you could be liable to compensate the victim. In some circumstances the treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. Employees, volunteers and trustees, working on behalf of City of Sanctuary UK who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result.

False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. You have a responsibility not to make false allegations. Any allegation found to be false may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

This procedure outlines the types of behaviour that are unacceptable and provides employees with a fair procedure should they be a victim of harassment and bullying. Appropriate disciplinary action, including dismissal for serious offences will be taken against any employee who violates this policy.

14.2 What type of treatment amounts to Harassment and Bullying?

Behaviour can constitute bullying or harassment where there is treatment from one person (or a group of people) to another that is unwanted and that has the effect of violating that person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for that person.

Individual or accumulative acts can seriously undermine the dignity, confidence and work satisfaction to such an extent that it has an effect on job performance and general happiness both inside and outside work.

Bullying and Harassment can be in a variety of ways including:

- Verbal abuse or offensive comments, jokes or pranks related to age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (protected characteristics).
- Lewd or suggestive comments;
- Display of 'pin-ups', pornography, inflammatory or abusive literature or graffiti;
- Deliberate exclusion from conversations or work activities;
- Withholding information a person needs in order to do their job;
- Practical jokes, initiation ceremonies or inappropriate birthday rituals;
- Physical abuse such as hitting, pushing or jostling;
- Rifling through, hiding or damaging other peoples personal property;
- Subjecting a person to humiliation or ridicule, belittling their efforts, often in front of others;

Please note that this list is not exhaustive

Bullying does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behaviour or proper performance management. It is important to recognise that conduct which one person may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable. All employees must, therefore, treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity.

14.3 Responding to claims of Harassment and Bullying

If you are being bullied or harassed by a member of a network, partner organisation or someone else with whom you come into contact at work, please raise this with your immediate Manager. We will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you.

If you are being bullied or harassed by another employee, there are two possible avenues, informal or formal approach.

14.4 Informal Approaches

In some cases it may be possible to rectify matters informally. If an employee feels that they have been subjected to harassment, they will need to discuss this in the first instance with their Manager. People may not be aware that their behaviour is causing an offence to another, therefore the recipient of harassment should, if possible, raise the problem with the perpetrator pointing out the behaviour. Should an employee find this difficult then they may request support from their Manager or employee representative.

14.5 Formal Complaint Procedure

Following this, if the matter is unresolved or should the employee wish to make a formal complaint then they may raise a formal grievance (please refer to the grievance procedure for details).

Any allegations of harassment and bullying will be reviewed promptly, seriously and confidentially. Individuals who raise a grievance will be protected from victimisation for making a complaint. Complaints should be made in writing, and where possible, state:

- The name of the harasser.
- The nature of the harassment.
- Dates and times when the harassment occurred.
- Names of witnesses to any incidents of harassment.
- Any action already taken by the complainant to stop the harassment.

14.6 Discipline

Failure to observe City of Sanctuary UK's Harassment and Bullying Policy by harassing an employee on the grounds of gender, sexuality, marital status, age, race, ethnic origin, religious belief, nationality or disability etc will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

All complaints will be investigated thoroughly and all parties will have the opportunity to state their cases. In serious cases, such behaviour will be deemed as gross misconduct, which may in the absence of mitigating circumstances, lead to dismissal. Victimisation of an employee who has made a complaint is also a disciplinary offence, disciplinary action will also be taken against the employee if a complaint is found to be untrue or has been brought in bad faith.

The right to appeal against any grievance or disciplinary action applies.