

23 Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy

23.1 We take a strict approach to breaches of this Policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

23.2 What is Harassment?

23.2.1 We are committed to providing a working environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect.

23.2.2 This Policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs at work and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related events or social functions. It covers bullying and harassment by staff (which may include consultants, contractors and agency workers) and also by third parties such as customers, suppliers or visitors to our premises.

23.2.3 Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment.

23.2.4 It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

23.2.5 Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable, even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

23.2.6 Harassment may include, for example:

- (a) unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing
- (b) unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless)
- (c) offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content
- (d) mocking, mimicking or belittling a person or the person's disability

23.2.7 A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

23.3 What is Bullying?

23.3.1 Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

- physical or psychological threats

- overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision
- inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance

23.4 **What is Dignity & Respect at Work?**

23.4.1 The Company aims to ensure that every employee experiences dignity and respect at work and enjoys a working environment that is free from inappropriate behaviour and in which all employees are treated with dignity, respect, courtesy and fairness and in which no worker feels threatened or intimidated.

23.4.2 Behaviours that are deemed unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the Company include but are not limited to:

- physical contact
- inappropriate verbal comments
- non-verbal inappropriate gestures / behaviour
- inappropriate visual displays
- threatening or intimidating behaviour including acts of aggression
- contemptuous or disrespectful behaviour
- deliberate exclusion

23.5 Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of an employee's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to employees in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying.

23.5.1 If you are being harassed or bullied or have a dignity & respect at work concern, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, you should speak to your Line Manager or a Managing Director, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally.

23.5.2 If informal steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, you should raise the matter formally under our Grievance Procedure.

23.5.3 We will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the complaint, where possible. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. We will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage any ongoing relationship between the complainant and the person accused during the investigation.

- 23.5.4 Once the investigation is complete, we will inform the complainant of the decision. If we consider that the complainant has been harassed, bullied or a lack of dignity & respect at work has been shown by an employee the matter will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct. If the concern is with a third party such as a customer or other visitor, we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the issue. Whether or not the complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between the complainant and the person accused.
- 23.5.5 Employees that have submitted complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.
- 23.5.6 Information about a complaint by or about an employee may be placed on the employee's personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process.