

New Creation

Bullying &

Harassment

Policy

Bullying and Harassment Policy

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'The Church is required by God to foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness. Abuse, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated within the Church of England. All complaints of abuse, harassment and bullying are to be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.' House of Bishops 2001.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure a working environment that supports the dignity of employees and is free from harassment, intimidation, bullying and victimisation. It should promote a climate in which employees feel confident in bringing forward complaints of harassment or bullying without fear of victimisation.
- 1.2 This policy and guidelines are based on the advice set out in the Dignity at Work booklet published by Church House Publishing – on behalf of the Ministry Division of the Archbishop's Council.
- 1.3 This policy aims to cover the types of behaviour that are unacceptable and have the effect of violating the dignity of an individual at work, and to give advice on how to deal with concerns raised by employees on both an informal and formal basis.
- 1.4 New Creation will not knowingly discriminate against anyone because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or for political or trade union activity. New Creation seeks to create a working environment which encourages high performance, understanding, trust and co-operation between individuals, teams and services.
- 1.4 Harassment and bullying takes many forms ranging from tasteless jokes and abusive remarks to pestering for sexual favours, intrusive and threatening behaviour and actual physical abuse. Whatever form it takes, harassment and bullying are always taken seriously and are totally unacceptable.
- 1.5 Harassment and bullying can seriously affect relationships and working lives by interfering with job performance; or by creating stressful, intimidating and unpleasant environments. It is offensive in itself and profoundly unacceptable in communities that profess the belief that we are all made in the image of God and all called to share the life of Christ.
- 1.6 The legal position on issues relating to bullying and harassment is covered through a number of pieces of legislation.
- 1.7 New Creation will take seriously – and investigate - any complaint made regarding bullying and harassment. Individuals should be aware that possible outcomes include: informal opportunities to seek reconciliation; the Grievance Procedure and Disciplinary Procedure for employees or the Clergy Discipline Measure being invoked.

2. Policy

- 2.1 All forms of harassment and bullying are deplored and New Creation will seek to ensure that the working environments within their sphere of control are sympathetic to all our employed staff. Bullying or harassment of staff by other members of staff, visitors, customers or clients is not acceptable or tolerated and where it occurs should be brought to the attention of your line manager.
- 2.2 This policy reinforces to all individuals the types of behaviour that are unacceptable, and provides those who are the victims of harassment and/or bullying with a means of redress through appropriate process. Employees should feel confident in bringing forward complaints of harassment or bullying without fear of victimisation.

3. Examples of harassment and bullying

- 3.1 Harassment and bullying take many forms, including mail, E-mail, telephone conversations etc., and individuals may not always realise that their behaviour constitutes harassment or bullying. Harassment is unwanted behaviour related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. Harassment may also be because of perception or association. The Equal Opportunities Policy provides further information on protected characteristics and definitions. Examples of harassment include:
- insensitive jokes and pranks
 - lewd or abusive comments about appearance
 - deliberate exclusion from conversations
 - displaying abusive or offensive writing or material
 - unwelcome touching and/or attention
 - abusive, threatening or insulting words or behaviour
- 3.2 Bullying is a form of psychological harassment. It is intimidation which serves to undermine self-esteem, confidence, competence, effectiveness and integrity. Examples of bullying include:
- continual, undeserved criticism
 - arbitrary and inconsistent demands
 - imposition of unreasonable deadlines
 - shouting, swearing and offensive language
 - displaying overbearing or intrusive behaviour
- 3.3 These examples are not exhaustive and where this behaviour is evidenced disciplinary action at the appropriate level will be taken.

4. An Informal Complaint

- 4.1 Complaints of harassment, particularly of sexual harassment, and bullying can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature and individuals may find it difficult to challenge. In these circumstances an individual is encouraged to raise such issues with a work colleague of their choice who can provide them with support. (This person may be for example a senior or other local colleague, or where appropriate their line manager.)
- 4.2 If an individual is the victim of harassment or bullying they can (on their own or with the assistance of a work colleague or line manager as above) make it clear to the harasser on an informal verbal basis that their behaviour is unwelcome and they are being asked to stop. It is possible that the individual is unaware that their behaviour is unwelcome.
- 4.3 Employees will have their concerns treated seriously, and with the appropriate level of confidentiality. The aim of any management action will be to resolve the matter as quickly and effectively as possible.
- 4.4 Through due and fair processes, New Creation will always seek to work with individuals informally in the first instance to try and achieve an informal resolution, and encourage people to meet, share feelings, and give opportunities for apologies to be given and reconciliation achieved.
- 4.5 If this is not possible - a written request to the harasser may be appropriate and their chosen work colleague can also assist with this.
- 4.6 Where an informal approach is not possible or appropriate, a formal approach may be required.

5. A Formal Complaint

- 5.1 Where the informal approach fails or the harassment or bullying is more serious, the individual should bring the matter to the attention of their line manager as soon as possible either verbally, or followed up by a formal written complaint. Written complaints will be dealt with under New Creations Grievance Procedure and should be sent to Minister.
- 5.2 If possible, it is a good idea to keep notes or a diary of the harassment or bullying so that the written complaint can include:-
- the name of the alleged harasser or bully
 - the nature of the alleged harassment or bullying
 - the dates and times when the alleged harassment or bullying occurred
 - the names of any witnesses
 - any action already taken by you to stop the alleged harassment or bullying
- 5.3 On receipt of a formal complaint or grievance the Minister themselves or another manager (where the Minister delegates) will arrange to meet with the individual, having regard to New Creations Grievance Procedure, to understand their complaint and to carry out any necessary investigation. Where no Minister is available the HR Representative may appoint an investigating officer.

6. Possible Outcomes

- 6.1 Where there is evidence that the employee's grievance amounts to a serious allegation of bullying, harassment or discrimination the manager would normally agree with the employee that the matter should be managed under New Creations Disciplinary Procedure where the perpetrator is an employee.
- 6.2 Where the allegation is less serious the manager may decide after the initial grievance hearing (and any necessary investigation) that the matter should conclude at that point and outcomes to the grievance may include support and advice for the employee and/or alleged perpetrator, this could include counselling, training and mediation. The manager investigating the complaint should consider all the circumstances before reaching a conclusion, and particularly the perception of the complainant as harassment is often felt differently by different people, consideration should be given as to whether what has taken place could reasonably be considered to have caused offence.
- 6.3 Where an investigation is undertaken both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator have the right at all times to be accompanied by a union representative or other work colleague. Both parties must take all reasonable steps to attend the arranged meetings. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence may be a disciplinary matter. No information will be provided or meetings held with the alleged perpetrator until the manager has met with the complainant.
- 6.4 Under the Grievance Procedure the complainant has the right of appeal.
- 6.5 If an individual brings a complaint of harassment/bullying they will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However, if the report concludes that the complaint is both untrue and has been brought with malicious intent; disciplinary action may be taken against them within the scope and remit of New Creations Disciplinary Procedure.