

Harassment and Bullying Policy



Standing in the Gap. Registered charity no: 1174627

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Introduction

1. Harassment or victimisation on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital status, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability or age is unacceptable. This policy covers all types of harassment.
2. Personal harassment takes many forms ranging from tasteless jokes and abusive remarks to pestering for sexual favours, threatening behaviour and actual physical abuse. Whatever form it takes, personal harassment is always taken seriously and is totally unacceptable.
3. Standing in the Gap recognises that personal harassment can exist in the workplace, as well as outside, and that this can seriously affect trustees, employees' and volunteers working lives by interfering with their job performance or by creating a stressful, intimidating and unpleasant working environment.

Policy

1. Standing in the Gap deplores all forms of personal harassment and bullying and seeks to ensure that the working environment is sympathetic to all our employees.
2. We have published these procedures to inform trustees, employees and volunteers of the type of behaviour that is unacceptable and provide employees who are the victims of personal harassment with a means of redress.
3. Standing in the Gap recognises that we have a duty to implement this policy and all trustees, employees and volunteers are expected to comply with it.

Examples of Harassment

Personal harassment takes many forms and employees may not always realise that their behaviour constitutes harassment. Personal harassment is unwanted behaviour by one employee towards another and 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
- abusive, threatening or insulting words or behaviour.

These examples are not exhaustive and disciplinary action at the appropriate level will be taken against trustees, employees or volunteers committing any form of personal harassment.

Examples of Bullying

Bullying is persistent behaviour, directed against an individual or group that creates a threatening or intimidating work environment which undermines the confidence and self esteem of the recipient. Examples include:

- Verbal abuse eg. shouting, swearing at colleagues or subordinates.
- Threats or insults.
- Abuse of power or unfair sanctions.
- Practical jokes, initiation ceremonies.
- Physical abuse.
- Rifling through, hiding or damaging personal property.
- Ostracising or excluding colleagues from work or social events.

Complaining about Harassment or Bullying

1. Informal complaint

Standing in the Gap recognises that complaints of personal harassment or bullying, and particularly of sexual harassment, can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that it may not be appropriate to raise the issue through our normal complaints procedure. In these circumstances trustees / staff and volunteers are encouraged to raise such issues with a senior colleague of their choice (whether or not that person has a direct supervisory responsibility for you) as a confidential helper. This person cannot be the person who will be responsible for investigating the matter if it becomes a formal complaint.

If a trustee / staff member or volunteer is the victim of minor harassment/bullying they should make it clear to the perpetrator on an informal basis that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask the perpetrator to stop. If the trustee / staff member or volunteer feel unable to do this verbally then a written request can be submitted to the person. The confidential helper can assist in this.

2. Formal complaint

Where the informal approach fails or if the behaviour is more serious, you should bring the matter to the attention of the Clinical Director as a formal written complaint, again support can be gained from the confidential helper. If the formal complaint relates to the Clinical Director it should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees.

If possible, notes of the behaviour that you find offensive should be submitted as part of the written complaint including:-

- the name of the alleged perpetrator;
- the nature of the alleged behaviour;
- the dates and times when the alleged behaviour occurred;
- the names of any witnesses; and
- any action already taken to stop the alleged behaviour.

On receipt of a formal complaint Standing in the Gap will take action to separate the complainant and the alleged perpetrator, if it is practicable, to enable an

uninterrupted investigation to take place. This may involve a temporary transfer of the alleged perpetrator to another work area or suspension with contractual pay until the matter has been resolved.

An investigating officer will be appointed by the Chair of Trustees. The investigating officer will invite the complainant to attend a meeting, at a reasonable time and location, to discuss the matter and carry out a thorough investigation. The trustee/ staff member or volunteer who has complained has the right to be accompanied at the meeting by their confidential helper or another work colleague. All reasonable steps should be taken to attend the meeting and comply with the investigation.

The investigating officer can interview whichever trustees / staff members or volunteers they feel are appropriate to fully investigate the complaint made.

Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence will be a disciplinary matter.

On conclusion of the investigation, which will normally be within ten working days of the meeting, a draft report of the findings and of the investigator's proposed decision will be sent, in writing to both the complainant and to the alleged perpetrator.

If either the complainant or the alleged perpetrator are dissatisfied with the draft report or with the proposed decision this should be raised, in writing, with the investigator within five working days of receiving the draft.

Any points of concern will be considered by the investigator before a final report is sent, in writing, to the complainant, the alleged perpetrator and the Chair of Trustees.

The complainant and the alleged perpetrator have the right to appeal against the findings of the investigator to the Chair of Trustees, who will review the investigation. The Chair of trustees decision is final.

General Notes

1. If the investigation report concludes that the allegation is well founded, the perpetrator will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. A Trustee, employee or volunteer who receives a formal warning or who is dismissed for harassment/bullying may appeal by using Standing in the Gap's disciplinary appeal procedure.
2. A Trustee, employee or volunteer who brings a complaint of harassment/bullying 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 will be taken against the Trustee, employee or volunteer.

Victim Support

Standing in the Gap will seek to provide additional assistance to victims by contacting outside agencies who will provide specialist advice and support, with the trustee / staff member or volunteer's permission.

Standing in the Gap will provide additional support to victims of harassment, until the case is resolved. Wherever possible, Standing in the Gap will ensure that staff are

available to support victims if they so wish.

Police Involvement

Standing in the Gap will encourage and support victims to report acts of harassment to the Police. This support may include writing or telephoning the Police on behalf of the staff member, as well as attending meetings with the Police.

Standing in the Gap will report incidents of harassment to the Police where there is a clear threat to the safety of other staff or the general public.

Confidentiality

Standing in the Gap will respect and maintain the confidentiality of matters concerning the staff and volunteers and of any members of the public giving information in harassment cases.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Discipline Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy