



Mearns Kirk Helping Hands

Dignity at Work Policy

Why Does Mearns Kirk Helping Hands Have a Dignity at Work Policy?

Harassment, bullying and victimisation are not allowed at the Mearns Kirk Helping Hands (MKHH). Harassment and bullying can have very serious consequences for individuals. It may make people unhappy, may cause them stress, and affect their health, and family and social relationships. It may also affect their work performance and could cause them to leave their paid or voluntary roles.

Harassment, bullying and victimisation are also, in the eyes of the law, forms of discrimination and as such unlawful. Serious harassment may be a criminal offence.

Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect at all times, including when carrying out duties on behalf of MKHH.

This policy explains:

- The behaviours that you are expected to demonstrate at MKHH
- What bullying, harassment and victimisation means
- What you need to do if you think you are being bullied, harassed or victimised.

You will be provided with training and guidance about the behaviours you need to demonstrate at MKHH, and why it is important to treat everyone fairly, and with dignity and respect. You will also find more information in our Equality and Diversity Policy.

Who Is Covered by this Policy?

This policy applies to all paid and voluntary staff members, agency workers, contractors, associates and anyone else engaged to work with MKHH, whether by direct contract with the organisation or otherwise.



It covers bullying and harassment in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, for example, training, work related trips and work-related social events.

What is my Responsibility?

Everyone is responsible for their own behaviour. You should:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Not bully or harass anyone.
- Not victimise or attempt to victimise anyone who has made complaints of discrimination, or provided information to support a complaint.
- Report incidents to your Group Leader or the Project Manager if you think they are inappropriate.

Group Leaders and Project Managers should make sure that anyone reporting to them is aware of this policy. The Group Leader or Project Manager must take action if they become aware that bullying, harassment or victimisation is happening.

What Is Harassment?

Harassment can be any unwanted attention or behaviour that a person finds objectionable or offensive, and which makes them feel threatened or uncomfortable, leading to a loss of dignity or self-respect. It may be persistent or an isolated incident.

Harassment can take many forms and may include the following, which is not exhaustive:

- Unnecessary and unwanted physical contact ranging from touching to serious sexual or physical assault.
- Derogatory or degrading comments relating to a person's 'protected characteristic'.
- Display, storage or circulation of offensive material (including pictures, objects, written materials or information held on computer).



- Unfair treatment, which might include deliberate exclusion from conversations or events, for reasons based on a person's equality characteristic.
- Offensive, hostile, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power which is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end.

Serious forms of harassment could be a criminal offence.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is a more general form of harassment that is not based on race, sex or any other equality characteristic. As with harassment it can be defined as words, actions or other conduct which ridicules, intimidates or threatens and affects individual dignity and well-being. It is generally behaviour that can be identified as a misuse of power.

People affected by bullying often feel the matter appears trivial or that they may have difficulty in describing it. Bullying behaviour is largely identified not so much by what has been done, but rather by the effect that it has on the recipient.

Examples of bullying could include, though this is not exhaustive:

- Persistently criticising unnecessarily, (although legitimate, constructive and fair criticism is not bullying.)
- Shouting at colleagues.
- Deliberate isolation by ignoring or excluding a person.
- Withholding information or removing areas of responsibility without justification.
- Spreading malicious rumours.
- Undermining a person's self-respect by treatment that denigrates, ridicules, intimidates, demeans or is physically abusive.

Harassment or bullying is not dependent on an intention to cause distress or hurt but is assessed by the impact the behaviour has on the recipient. As a result, it is possible that behaviour that is acceptable to some people may



cause embarrassment, distress or anxiety to others. Therefore, harassment or bullying relates essentially to the perceptions and feelings of the recipient.

What is the Impact of Bullying and Harassment?

The impact of bullying and harassment may include the following:

- Bullying and harassment may make someone feel anxious and humiliated.
- People may feel angry and frustrated.
- Some people may try to retaliate in some way.
- Others may become frightened and demotivated.
- Stress, loss of self-confidence and self-esteem caused by harassment or bullying can lead to illness, absence from duties, and even resignation.
- Almost always motivation and morale are affected and relations in the workplace suffer.

What is Victimisation?

Victimisation is treating colleagues less favourably because of action they have taken, for example making a formal complaint about someone or giving evidence against another colleague.

What Should I Do if I Think I'm Being Bullied, Harassed or Victimised?

Initially you should follow the MKHH guidelines on "Raising an Issue".

I've Tried to Manage the Situation Informally But It Hasn't Worked- What Next?

If informal ways of managing the situation haven't worked you should follow the MKHH Complaints Procedure (see Complaints Procedure and Complaints Form).

If the behaviour against you is a criminal offence, we will take the necessary action.

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