



BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT POLICY

<https://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment>

All employees have the right to work in an environment which is free from any form of harassment. It is the Club's policy that the harassment of any of its employees is unacceptable behaviour. Anyone found to be in breach of this policy will be liable to disciplinary action which could result in their dismissal. The Club will take specific action to prevent the harassment of its employees by third parties, i.e. customers and suppliers. Employees are encouraged to report any such incidents to their line manager or a senior colleague of their choice immediately.

Harassment - What is it?

Harassment takes many forms, occurs on a variety of different grounds and can be directed at one person or many people. An essential characteristic is that it is unwanted by the recipient and that the recipient finds the conduct offensive or unacceptable. Conduct becomes harassment if it persists once it has been made clear that it is regarded by the recipient as offensive, although a single incident may amount to harassment if sufficiently serious. It is the unwanted nature of the conduct which distinguishes harassment from friendly behaviour which is welcome and mutual. Harassment in the work place can come from a colleague or an external third party.

Harassment can be based on:

- race, ethnic origin, nationality or skin colour
- gender
- sexual orientation
- power or hierarchy
- willingness to challenge harassment (leading to victimisation)
- disabilities, sensory impairments or learning difficulties
- age
- possible links to AIDS/HIV
- status as an ex-offender
- health
- physical characteristics
- personal beliefs
- religion
- gender re-assignment

Whilst not an exhaustive list, forms of harassment include:

- physical contact
- jokes, offensive language, gossip, slander, offensive or sectarian songs and letters
- posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, emblems, flags
- offensive e-mail, screen savers etc
- isolation or non co-operation and exclusion
- coercion for sexual favours
- pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- intrusion by pestering, spying and stalking.
- harassment is unlawful in many cases and individuals may be legally held liable for their actions.

Procedure

- Due to the seriousness with which the Club views harassment, informal and formal reporting procedures have been introduced which are separate from the Grievance Procedure as a mechanism for dealing with complaints of harassment.
- All allegations of harassment will be dealt with seriously, promptly and in confidence. Employees who feel they have been subject to harassment must not hesitate in using this procedure nor fear victimisation. Retaliation against an employee who brings a complaint of harassment is a serious disciplinary offence which may constitute gross misconduct.
- The Administration Manager will provide, in confidence, advice and assistance to employees subjected to harassment and assist in the resolution of any problems, whether through informal or formal means.

Informal Procedure

- If an incident happens which you think may be harassment and you do not wish it to happen again, you may prefer initially to attempt to resolve the problem informally. In some cases it may be possible and sufficient to explain clearly to the person engaging in the unwanted conduct that the behaviour in question is not welcome, that it offends you or makes you uncomfortable and that it interferes with your work. You should make it clear that you want the behaviour to stop.
- In circumstances where this is too difficult or embarrassing for you to do on your own you should seek support from a friend or a Senior Manager.
- If you are in any doubt as to whether an incident or series of incidents which have occurred constitute harassment, then in the first instance you should approach a Senior Manager on an informal basis. He/she will be able to advise you as to whether the complaint necessitates further action, in which case the matter will be dealt with formally/informally as appropriate.
- If the conduct continues or if it is not appropriate to resolve the problem informally, it should be raised through the following formal process.

Formal Procedure

- Where informal methods fail, or serious harassment occurs, you are advised to complain formally to a Senior Manager. Consideration will be given to the immediate separation of the complainant and the alleged harasser. In serious cases the alleged harasser may be suspended.
- You will be interviewed by a Senior Manager handling the complaint to establish full details of what happened. He or she will then carry out a thorough, impartial and objective investigation as quickly as possible. Those carrying out the investigation will not be connected with the allegation in any way. An investigation will be carried out quickly, sensitively and with due respect for the rights of both you and the alleged harasser.
- The investigation will involve interviews with the person against whom you are making the complaint. The alleged harasser will be given full details of the nature of the complaint and will be given the opportunity to respond.
- You and the alleged harasser will have the right to be accompanied and/or represented by a colleague at any interviews. You will not be asked to provide details of the allegations repeatedly unless this is essential for the investigation.
- Strict confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation into the allegation. Where it is necessary to interview witnesses the importance of confidentiality will be emphasised to them.

- When the investigation has been completed you will be informed whether or not your allegation is considered to be well founded.
- If the allegation is well founded disciplinary action may be taken against a person alleged to have committed the behaviour you are complaining about and, depending on the circumstances and the seriousness of the complaint, may result in the dismissal of that person.
- If the allegation is not well founded, consideration will be given to whether it is necessary to transfer or reschedule the work of both or either party, in cases where it would not be appropriate for you to continue to work in close proximity.
- The Club takes these matters very seriously. However, malicious complaints of harassment can have a serious and detrimental effect upon a colleague. Any unwarranted allegation of harassment, made in bad faith, will be deemed potential gross misconduct. We are sure that all employees appreciate that this must be so to protect the integrity of this policy.