

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Date: April 2025

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Presentation

Wace Chester Community Interest Company is committed to providing a work environment free from bullying and harassment. Our aim is to ensure that all staff and volunteers are treated, and others, with dignity and respect. This policy covers bullying or harassment that occurs at work and outside the workplace, including on work trips or work-related social events. This policy applies to staff at all levels including employees, managers, agency and casual hire workers, and independent contractors, as well as volunteers.

What is Harassment?

Harassment is any unpleasant behaviour that has the intention or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating a threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. One incident can be disturbing. A person can be harassed even if they weren't an intended "target." Harassment also involves treating someone less favourably because they have introduced or rejected such behaviour in the past. It is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 to harass a person because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. It also includes behaviour of a sexual nature (sexual harassment). Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories. Examples of harassment are, but are not limited to:

- unpleasant physical behaviour including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- unpleasant sexual assaults or suggestive behaviour;
- offensive emails, text messages or social media content or displaying offensive material;
- jokes, banter, ridicule, imitation or contempt of a person.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is offensive, threatening, malicious or offensive behaviour, misuse or misuse of force by means that undermine, degrade, contempt or injure the recipient. Bullying can involve the use of personal strength or force to coerce through fear or intimidation, not necessarily by someone in authority.

Bullying can be physical, verbal or non-verbal. It can include non-face-to-face behavior, including via text message, email, and social media. Examples of bullying are:

- physical or psychological threats;
- threatening and oppressive over-supervision;
- inappropriate and contemptuous comments about a person or their performance;
- shouting at staff;
- constantly choosing people in front of others or in private;
- hindering promotion and training opportunities;
- routinely ignoring or excluding staff from work activities or work-related social events;
- setting a person to failure by overloading them with work or setting impossible time limits;
- make the same person the subject of jokes on a regular basis.

Lawful and reasonable criticism of a staff member's performance or behaviour, or reasonable management instructions, does not amount to bullying.

Violation of this Policy

Bullying and harassment are not tolerated in our workplace and all staff and volunteers are required to treat each other, along with our customers, suppliers and visitors, with dignity and respect.

Violations of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. Serious cases of bullying or harassment can be serious misconduct that leads to dismissal.

Staff or volunteers who make complaints or participate in an investigation fraudulently should not suffer any form of retaliation or persecution as a result. However, making a false allegation willfully and indecently will be treated as misconduct and will be treated under our disciplinary procedure. Anyone found guilty of such retaliation or persecution will be subject to disciplinary action.

If You Think You Are Being Harassed or Bullied

If you think you are being harassed or bullied, you may want to raise the issue informally with the person responsible. Explain the situation and how it has made you feel. It can be helpful to describe the incident so that the other person is clear about your concerns. Use the opportunity to ask the person to change or stop their behavior. Alternatively, you can speak to your manager or supervisor who can provide confidential advice and support to resolve the issue formally or informally.

If you do not feel that informal action is appropriate, or has not been successful, you should formally raise the matter under our complaints procedure. All complaints will be investigated in accordance with our complaints procedure.

If we consider that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that you have been harassed or bullied, we will consider the appropriate action to take. If the accused person is an employee, this may include the implementation of our disciplinary procedure. Whether your complaint is

upheld or not, we will consider the best way to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned.