

BROADCLYST PARISH COUNCIL

PREVENTION OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT AT WORK

Statement of Policy

1. The Council is committed to encouraging and maintaining good employee relations within a working environment which fosters team working and encourages employees to give of their best. Everyone in the Council and those who have dealings with the Council has a responsibility to maintain good working relationships and not use words or deeds that may harm the wellbeing of others. In addition to the obligations placed upon both employers and employees by the Equality and Human Rights legislation, everyone has the right to be treated with consideration, fairness, dignity and respect. This contributes to a workplace environment in which individuals feel safe and can work effectively competently and confidently.
2. The Council's policy applies to all staff working within the organisation and to all employees working off the premises. It extends to include non-permanent workers such as secondees, contractors, agency, temporary staff, consultants and any other workers. The policy, in addition, covers the behaviour of staff outside working hours which may impact upon work or working relationships.
3. The Council has a "zero tolerance" policy and will investigate vigorously any allegations of bullying or harassment, regardless of whether the matter has been raised formally or informally.

Key Principles

4. The Council will provide and sustain a safe working environment in which everyone is treated fairly and with respect. Those working or dealing with the Council must not encounter harassment, intimidation or victimisation on the basis of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, trade union membership, disability, offending background or any other personal characteristic.
5. Everyone carries a personal responsibility for their own behaviour and for ensuring that their conduct is in accordance with the principles set out in this policy. In addition, each person has a responsibility to report any instance of bullying or harassment which they witness or which comes to their attention. Employees have a responsibility to act as role models, pro-actively addressing instances of bullying and harassment. Councillors should also make themselves aware of their responsibility.
6. Harassment may be defined as any conduct which is :-
 - unwanted by the recipient
 - is considered objectionable
 - causes humiliation, offence, distress or other detrimental effect.
7. Harassment may be an isolated occurrence or repetitive: it may occur against one or more individuals. Harassment may be, but is not limited to:
 - Physical contact – ranging from touching to serious assault, gestures, intimidation, aggressive behaviour.
 - Verbal – unwelcome remarks, suggestions and propositions, malicious gossip, jokes and banter, offensive language.

- Non-verbal – offensive literature or pictures, graffiti and computer imagery, isolation or non-co-operation and exclusion or isolation from social activities.

8. Bullying is unlikely to be a single or isolated instance. It is usually, but not exclusively repeated and persistent behaviour which is offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting. Bullying includes but is not limited to :

- Conduct which is intimidating, physically abusive or threatening
- Conduct that denigrates, ridicules or humiliates an individual, especially in front of colleagues
- Humiliating an individual in front of colleagues
- Picking on one person when there is a common problem
- Shouting at an individual to get things done
- Consistently undermining someone and their ability to do the job
- Setting unrealistic targets or excessive workloads
- “cyber bullying” i.e. bullying via e-mail. (This should be borne in mind where employees are working remotely and are managed by e-mail. Care and sensitivity should be practised with regard to the choice of context and language).
- Setting an individual up to fail e.g. by giving inadequate instructions or unreasonable deadlines.

Harassment and Bullying may be summarised as any behaviour that is unwanted by the person to whom it is directed. It is the impact of the behaviour rather than the intent of the perpetrator that is the determinant as to whether harassment or bullying has occurred.

9. Any employee who wishes to make a complaint of harassment or bullying is encouraged to first discuss matters informally with their line manager or with the Clerk. Should the issues not be resolved at this stage, or the employee feels unable to raise the issue informally, then a formal resolution should be sought.
10. When a complaint of Harassment or Bullying is brought to the attention of the Clerk or a Councillor, whether informally or formally, prompt action must be taken to investigate the matter. Corrective action must be taken where appropriate and this may require an investigation under the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
11. If it is considered that one of the parties concerned in a harassment or bullying case should be moved from their current workplace, then as a matter of principle the Council will normally remove the alleged perpetrator rather than the complainant. However, the final decision on who should be moved should reflect the particular circumstances of the case and advice from the Council Chairman. It should be noted and explained to those concerned that the moving of either party is not an implication of guilt or culpability and no detriment to either party will be construed as a consequence.
12. All matters relating to the investigation of complaints of harassment or bullying will be treated in strict confidence. Any breach of confidentiality in this regard may render those responsible liable to disciplinary actions. However, it will be necessary that any alleged perpetrator is made aware of the allegations against them and the name(s) of those making the allegations together with the name(s) of any witnesses.
13. No employee will be victimised or suffer detriment for making a complaint of harassment or bullying and no manager shall threaten either explicitly or implicitly that an employee's complaint will be used as the basis for decisions affecting that employee. Such conduct will be treated as a very serious disciplinary offence. Similarly, managers are required to act on any complaint of harassment or bullying. Failure to do so will be regarded as misconduct which if proven, will result in disciplinary action.
14. All complaints of harassment or bullying whether raised formally or informally must be notified by the recipient of the complaint to the Council Chairman for recording in accordance with the requirements

of the Equality and Human Rights legislation. This legislation requires such records to be maintained and the incidence of bullying and harassment to be monitored.

15. This policy and procedure will be reviewed periodically giving due consideration to legislative

Signed

C. PEPPER

Chairman of the Council

Date of Adoption of Policy

NOVEMBER 2013