

## **HARASSMENT AND BULLYING AT WORK PREVENTION POLICY**

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### 1. Policy Statement

Dudley Counselling Centre wishes to provide a stimulating and supportive working environment, which will enable its staff to fulfil their personal potential and creativity. Dudley Counselling Centre accepts that such an environment cannot be created or sustained if staff are subject to harassment, intimidation, aggression or coercion.

Dudley Counselling Centre is fully committed to the principles of equal opportunities in the workplace and regards personal harassment as a discriminatory and unacceptable form or behaviour.

Accordingly, Dudley Counselling Centre will treat any incident of harassment as a serious matter, which may lead to disciplinary action according to the terms of Disciplinary Policy, up to and including dismissal, being taken against the perpetrator.

All members of Dudley Counselling Centre's staff are responsible for ensuring that personal harassment of another member of staff does not occur.

Harassment of Dudley Counselling Centre staff outside Dudley Counselling Centre premises or outside working hours may nevertheless fall within the remit of this policy and its procedures.

In addition to any penalty imposed by Dudley Counselling Centre, those responsible for harassing others may be subject to criminal and/or civil proceedings. Nothing in this policy and its procedures will prevent members of staff from exercising their legal rights.

### 2. **Policy Definition**

- 2.1 Harassment may take many forms but essentially consists of behaviour which is unacceptable to and diminishes the dignity of the recipient(s) and which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive workplace environment for that individual.
- 2.2 Harassment may involve single, sporadic or continuing acts of intimidation, coercion, bullying, verbal or physical abuse, or the creation and/or maintenance of an offensive working environment for others. Harassment relating to another's sex, sexual orientation, religion, race or disability is all included within this definition.

### 3. **Types Of Personal Harassment**

- Sexual harassment
- Racial harassment
- Bullying
- Other forms of harassment

### **3.1 Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and involves unwanted and unwelcome attention of a sexual nature. This may be physical or verbal or involve the denigration of an individual on sexual grounds or by sexual means. Some examples of sexual harassment are:

- indecent assault
- deliberate physical contact to which the individual has not consented or had the opportunity to object to
- offensive or derogatory language alluding to a person's private life or sexual behaviour or orientation by innuendo, jokes or remarks
- provocative suggestions
- pressing an individual to accept unwelcome invitations
- the display of suggestive or pornographic material
- unwelcome repeated telephone calls, letters or emails

These examples should not be seen as exhaustive: any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for the recipient may be regarded as sexual harassment.

### **3.2 Racial harassment**

Racial harassment is any behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, relating to race, colour, ethnic or national origin directed at an individual or group, which is found to be offensive or objectionable to the recipient and which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Some examples include:

- physical attack
- verbal abuse, threats, derogatory name-calling, racist insults and jokes
- ridicule of an individual on racial or cultural grounds
- exclusion from normal workplace interactions or social events
- unfair allocation of work and/or responsibilities
- racist graffiti/insignia or display of racist material
- inciting others to commit any of the above

### **3.3 Bullying**

Bullying in the workplace damages individuals' health and lives and also undermines productivity and effective work relationships. Bullying can occur when a superior uses the opportunity of position to intimidate a subordinate, in peer relationships or, in rare cases, may affect someone in a superior position. Bullying can be broadly defined as behaviour, which consistently undermines another's confidence, reducing feelings of self-esteem and self-worth. Such behaviour may be deliberate, as in a planned campaign, or may arise out of the bully's own immaturity, lack of inter-personal skills and poor self-confidence. It is generally psychological, rarely though sometimes physical, and may also be exacerbated by the bully's own susceptibility and reaction to stress. Workplace bullying consists of the abuse of power and the regular use of inappropriate behaviours at the expense of another individual. Some examples of these behaviours include:

- physical or verbal abuse, including threats
- psychological intimidation, humiliation, excessive and/or unreasonable criticism
- unjustifiable removal of areas of responsibility
- ostracism ("sent to Coventry")/exclusion
- malicious lies
- setting unreasonable and unrealistic goals/targets
- "academic bullying": Le. asserting a position of intellectual superiority in an aggressive, abusive or offensive manner; threats of academic failure; public sarcasm and humiliation

Note:

Legitimate, constructive and fair criticism of a staff member's performance or behaviour at work will not be considered to be bullying or harassment. Dudley Counselling Centre will not condone bullying under the guise of "strong management" but, conversely, regards an assertive management style as acceptable provided that staff are treated with respect and dignity.

### **3.4 Other forms of harassment**

The following are further examples of specific types of harassment but, once again, should not be considered an exhaustive list:

- homophobic harassment, ie. harassment directed at homosexual persons or groups on the grounds of their sexual orientation (applying equally to homosexual men or women)
- harassment in respect of a recipient's disability or impairment
- repeated gibes in respect of personal traits or appearance, practical jokes or invasions of privacy, any or all of which may cause physical or psychological distress