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## **Dignity at Work Policy**

**September 2021**

### **What this policy covers**

The aim of this policy is to convey the Community Council's position to creating a workplace culture free from hostility, in which each member of staff is valued and enabled to develop to their full potential.

The Community Council will not tolerate behaviour which may have the effect of belittling another person. Examples of this behaviour includes: bullying, harassment, derogatory comments, uninvited physical contact and any other act which creates an intimidating work environment. Employees must be able to carry out their work duties without fear of any unfair treatment.

### **Your rights and responsibilities**

We expect all staff to adhere to the following:

- treat colleagues, and service users, with dignity and respect
- be aware of the effect that own behaviour and activities can impact on others
- dress appropriately for workplace
- set a positive example to all colleagues
- consider language, attitudes and culture of colleagues, service users
- think before making personal comments to or about others; and
- promote dignity and respect in the workplace.

We hope that the implementation of this policy means that no person should need to make a complaint. However, should a complaint be made, the complainant should hold the honest and genuine belief that they are being bullied or harassed.

## **The Community Council's responsibilities**

### **Promotion of policy**

This policy and procedure will be communicated to all staff, and all employees will be made aware of their responsibilities under it. Training will be given, where necessary, on its implementation.

### **Confidentiality**

Any information gathered in the handling of a complaint will be treated sensitively. However, it will be explained to those involved that some information will have to be shared as part of an effective process in order to come to a satisfactory conclusion.

## **Complaint procedure**

### **Informal approach**

The first step you are encouraged to take is to raise such issues with a senior colleague of your choice (whether or not that person has a direct supervisory responsibility for you) as a confidential helper.

If you decide you can deal with the inappropriate behaviour informally, for example, if the act concerned is relatively minor, isolated or clearly unintentional. In these situations it is possible that the matter can be resolved immediately by letting the alleged perpetrator know that the behaviour in question is unacceptable to you and should be avoided in future. If you feel unable to do this verbally, you should hand a written request to your harasser; this is something your confidential helper can assist you with.

### **Formal approach**

If you feel uncomfortable about raising the issue directly with the alleged perpetrator or if you consider the behaviour is more serious because it was deliberate, part of a persistent pattern, or serious in nature, or has been repeated despite having discussed a previous incident informally, then you should bring the matter to the attention of the Clerk or Chair as a formal written complaint and again this is something that your confidential helper can assist you with.

On receipt of a formal complaint, an investigation will take place.

### **Disciplinary action**

If the decision is that the allegation is well founded, the perpetrator will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure.

### **No action taken**

If there are no grounds to substantiate the allegation that unacceptable behaviour has taken place, this outcome will be confirmed in writing to all involved.

**Dissatisfaction with the outcome**

Recourse to the Community Council's Grievance procedure is available if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the process.

**Malicious false allegations**

Any allegations found to be both false and malicious will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

**Mediation**

Mediation may be suitable in some circumstances following an informal or formal dignity at work complaint. This may be used where the unresolved issues are of a more personal level rather than work-related, such as difficulties in communication or being able to see one another's point of view.

Mediation could be used where any work-related matters have been addressed by the Community Council, but personal issues still remain between the parties as they continue to work together.

Agreement to the process by both parties is a must: mediation will not be considered unless all parties consent to it.