



BEYOND LIMITS

Beyond the limits of conventional support

Bullying and Harassment Policy

May 2023

Review May 2024

This policy clarifies our approach to bullying and harassment in the workplace for all staff.

INTRODUCTION

Beyond Limits operates a **zero-tolerance** to bullying and harassment. As such we aim to do what is required to respect and ensure the equality and diversity of all of our staff.

Please Note: This policy relates to the bullying and harassment of those people who are employed by us. Colleagues should also refer to our grievance policy. For information and guidance relating to the bullying of people we support, please refer to the Anti-Bullying policy.

Beyond Limits believes that all staff should be treated with dignity and respect, therefore bullying and harassment will not be tolerated in any form. Disciplinary action will be taken against any member of staff, of whatever seniority, who is found to have harassed or bullied another employee. Any disciplinary action may lead to dismissal.

It should also be noted that colleagues should be aware that if someone finds a behaviour offensive, they can make a complaint even if the behaviour is not directed at them.

DIGNITY AT WORK – HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

The inclusion and diversity policy underpins our view that harassment or bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. Harassment and bullying and the hurt caused can too easily be trivialised. However, it should be recognised that it can be one of the most upsetting experiences a person can suffer.

Harassment and bullying can also carry an economic cost to our organisation in terms of low morale, reduced productivity and quality of service delivery. We must all take responsibility for ensuring that our working environment is free harassment.

WHAT IS HARASSMENT?

One of the difficulties about harassment is how to define it. There are differing views about what constitutes harassment, but what matters is how the person being harassed is affected, not the harasser's intent.

Harassment can include:

- **Displaying, keeping, or circulating offensive material to colleagues or individuals.**
- **Physical threats or verbal abuse, including explicit, derogatory, or stereotyped remarks and statements, which can cause someone to feel intimidated or humiliated.**
- **Unwelcome attention, overly familiar behaviour, innuendo, mockery, or stereotype jokes.**
- **Unwanted intrusive or persistent questioning about a person's marital status, sexual interest or orientation or questions about a person's racial/ethnic origin, including their culture or religion.**
- **Suggestions that sexual favours may further a person's career, or that not granting them may adversely affect their career. This includes sexual favours for matters not related to work but involving work colleagues.**
- **Offensive behaviour such as leering and rude gestures or unnecessary bodily contact.**
- **Physical violence or bullying.**
- **Nuisance contact or attempted contact (i.e. Anonymous phone calls, social media contact, messaging etc.)**

Although harassment normally takes the form of repeated actions and incidents, one single incident can also constitute harassment if it is sufficiently serious.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is also 'harassment' and is used to describe a threatening or intimidating work environment, in which a group of people or an individual may become fearful or intimidated because of the negative or hostile behaviour of another group of people or individual.

It is usually persistent, often unpredictable and may be vindictive, cruel, or malicious. However, it can also arise even when a person is unaware of the effect their behaviour is having on someone else.

Examples of bullying are:

- Verbal abuse, such as shouting or swearing at colleagues either in public or private.
- Personal insults.
- Belittling or ridiculing a person, or his/her abilities, either in private or in front of others.
- Spreading malicious rumours about someone.
- Sudden rages or displays of temper against an individual or group, often for trivial reasons.
- Subjecting someone to unnecessary excessive or oppressive supervision, monitoring everything they do or being excessively critical of minor things.
- Persistent and unjustified criticism.
- Setting menial or demeaning tasks which are inappropriate to the job or taking away areas of work responsibilities from an individual for no justifiable reason.
- Ignoring or excluding an individual (i.e., from social events, team meetings, discussions and collective decisions or planning).
- Making threats or inappropriate comments about career prospects or job security.

***PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ABOVE LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE**

It is important to recognise that what one person may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable, and we should be mindful how humour can vary across different cultures. As a general rule, if the words or behaviour are unwelcome to the particular person who is on the receiving end, then this behaviour should stop immediately.

THE EFFECT OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT



Harassment or bullying can be one of the most upsetting or humiliating experiences a person can suffer. It can too easily be trivialised. It can lead to increased absenteeism and lack of motivation resulting in emotional stress. Therefore, it can have considerable effects on the efficiency of the work of the team, and on the health and personal wellbeing of the individual.

Colleagues are encouraged to speak with the following people as required:

- **Bullying or harassment allegations can be escalated by an individual to their line manager. They can seek to resolve the issues and they will offer support and advice. The matter must be treated as confidential, though the manager may have to report instances where there is evidence that serious offences may have been committed.**

If a manager or supervisor is causing the bullying/harassment, colleagues should speak with:

- **An individual who is not causing the problem and/or a trusted friend or colleague, who could speak on behalf of the colleague with concerns to any of the above as a first step and/or**
- **A trusted friend or colleague, who could speak on behalf of the colleague with concerns to any of the above as a first step.**
- **A Director in Beyond Limits or HR colleague.**

WHAT TO DO IF THE BULLYING AND HARASSMENT DOES NOT STOP

If an individual will not stop the behaviour which is found to be distressing or continues to harass or bully after having agreed to stop, the concern may be raised with a Director or a HR colleague.

Colleagues should be assured that any concerns raised will be taken extremely seriously.

PREVENTING HARASSMENT

As individuals, colleagues should be aware of the issue of harassment and make sure that their own behaviour does not cause offence or misunderstanding.

All managers have a responsibility to set a good example and to deal promptly and sensitively with complaints of harassment. Full consideration will be given to concerns or issues about conduct, which is either deliberately, or likely to be perceived as, offensive and in contrast to our values and expectations as an organisation.

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED OR HARASSED

If colleagues witness inappropriate or seemingly unacceptable behaviour towards another person, they are advised to speak to the individual and ask them if they find the behaviour a problem. If they do, the (witnessing) colleague should suggest that the individual makes this clear to the person directly or that they speak with a manager. The (witness) colleague may offer to accompany them if that is thought to be helpful.

FALSE ACCUSATIONS

Complaints of harassment or bullying will be assumed to have been made in good faith unless there is evidence to the contrary. However, if an accusation of harassment or bullying is shown to be deliberately false and was not a genuine mistake, senior management (in consultation with HR) will consider whether action should be taken against the complainant.

STRESS

Colleagues should not allow any undue stress to undermine work or general health.

If stress or anxiety becomes a concern, colleagues are strongly advised to speak with their line manager.

In confidence you can also speak with the Employee Assistance programme on 0800 028 0199 or via www.healthassuredeap.com

Please refer to the Mental Health and Wellbeing policy for more information.



