



IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

HOLYWELL TOWN COUNCIL

DIGNITY AT WORK/BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

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1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Statement

In support of our value to respect others Holywell Town Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment by, or of, any of its employees, officials, members, contractors, visitors to the council or members of the public from the community which we serve. The Council is committed to the elimination of any form of intimidation in the workplace.

The Council recognises its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010, the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. We are committed to protecting employees and others from harassment related to any protected characteristic, discrimination, and victimisation.

This policy reflects the spirit in which the council intends to undertake all of its business and outlines the specific procedures available to all employees in order to protect them from bullying and harassment. It should be read in conjunction with the council's policies on Grievance and Disciplinary handling and the Elected Members Code of Conduct.

The Council is committed to ensuring that any allegations of bullying or harassment are taken seriously, investigated promptly and confidentially, and resolved appropriately.

The Council will issue this policy to all employees as part of their induction and to all members as part of their Welcome Pack. The Council may also wish to share this policy with contractors, visitors and members of the public.

Where harassment is committed by contractors, visitors or members of the public, the Council will take all reasonable steps to protect employees, which may include issuing warnings, banning individuals from Council premises, or referring serious incidents to the police.

1.2 Definitions

Bullying

"Bullying may be characterised as a pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour; an abuse of this use of power or authority which tends to undermine an individual or a group of individuals, gradually eroding their confidence and capability, which may cause them to suffer stress."

Although bullying is often a pattern of behaviour, a single serious incident can also amount to bullying.

Harassment

"Unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment." This usually covers, but is not limited to, harassment on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability or age.

The Council recognises that harassment may also relate to gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

These definitions are derived from the ACAS guidance on the topic. Bullying and Harassment are behaviours which are unwanted by the recipient. They are generally evidenced by a pattern of conduct, rather than being related to one-off incidents.

Examples of bullying and harassment may include, but are not limited to: spreading malicious rumours, insulting someone by word or behaviour (particularly on the grounds of a protected characteristic), ridiculing or demeaning someone, exclusion or victimisation, unfair treatment, deliberate undermining by overloading work, and unwelcome sexual advances.

Bullying and harassment in the workplace can lead to poor morale, low productivity and poor performance, sickness absence, mental health issues, lack of respect for others, turnover, damage to the Council's reputation and ultimately, legal proceedings against the Council and payment of legal fees and potentially unlimited compensation.

Employees who believe they are being bullied or harassed are encouraged to raise the matter promptly. Wherever possible, issues may be resolved informally by speaking directly to the person responsible, with the support of a manager or HR if necessary. Where informal resolution is not appropriate or successful, employees have the right to raise a formal grievance under the Council's Grievance Procedure.

The Council will ensure that employees raising genuine complaints of bullying or harassment are protected from victimisation. Support, including access to occupational health and counselling services, may be offered where appropriate.

All Holywell Town Council Policies are approved by full Council and subject to an annual review.

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Town Mayor & Chair of the Council