Harassment Policy

BowlsWales · BowlsCymru

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Approved by	BowlsWales Board
Owner	General Manager

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1. Understanding Harassment

1.1 Introduction

This policy applies to all staff and representatives of BowlsWales. Its overall objective is to protect the dignity of individuals and to ensure that everyone is able to work in an environment free of harassment, bullying and other inappropriate behaviour.

1.2 What is harassment?

Harassment is unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Whether an instance constitutes harassment is determined not by the intentions of the perpetrator, but by the seriousness and frequency of their actions and their impact on the recipient.

Characteristic features of harassment include:

- It always involves unwanted conduct of a discriminatory or intimidating kind.
- It frequently makes conditions in the workplace oppressive or offensive to one or more individuals.
- It frequently involves a display of power that undermines, intimidates, isolates or degrades the recipient.
- It always involves treating an individual or group detrimentally on improper grounds.

1.3 Who can be harassed?

Staff and representatives may be subjected to harassment on the basis of:

- Sexuality, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, skin colour or nationality
- Culture, religion or class
- Political beliefs or status as an ex-offender
- Age, physical height or size
- Real or suspected HIV status

This list is not exhaustive.

1.4 Who can harass?

Harassment can be perpetrated by peers, subordinates, managers or supervisors, and can occur between people of the same sex, race or other characteristic. Experience shows the risk of harassment is increased for those who are, or are perceived to be, less powerful in the workplace.

1.5 Forms of harassment

Harassment generally falls into three categories:

Verbal — statements or innuendo intended to ridicule or insult; offensive jokes; threatening or offensive language; unwanted sexual advances or lewd remarks.

Physical — physical contact ranging from touching to assault; persistent unwanted attention; intrusion by pestering, spying, following or stalking; actions intended to intimidate or degrade.

Offensive material — displaying or distributing material which degrades or offends, including posters, graffiti, or material of a sexist, racist, sexual or pornographic nature.

1.6 Effects of harassment

Sustained harassment can cause fear, anxiety and stress, which can exacerbate physical illness, reduce work performance and increase absenteeism. Unchecked, it can damage the workplace by creating tension, poor morale and higher staff turnover.

2. Dealing with Harassment

2.1 What to do if you feel you are being harassed

If you believe you are being harassed, you should:

- Tell someone about it — even if you are not sure whether it constitutes harassment.
- Keep a written record of the behaviour, including dates, times, locations and any witnesses.
- Make clear to the person harassing you that their behaviour is unwelcome and that you want it to stop.
- Ask a colleague to be present when you speak to the person.
- Speak to your line manager if the behaviour continues.
- If it is your manager who is harassing you, speak to a member of the Board.
- If you wish to make a formal complaint, do so in writing to the Board or General Manager, setting out the specific instances of harassment. Formal complaints will be fully investigated and may lead to disciplinary action.

External support is available from: Equality and Human Rights Commission; Stonewall; ACAS. This list is not exhaustive.

2.2 Responsibilities of managers

Management must create a work environment that neither condones nor supports harassment, and must ensure that all staff and representatives are aware of this policy. Where a manager becomes aware of harassment — even if the individual has not complained — they should raise it with the individual and advise them of the steps above.

Where a manager receives a formal complaint, they should: be sympathetic to the complainant; establish the nature, seriousness and impact of the alleged harassment; and determine with advice from the Board whether the matter should be dealt with formally or informally.

2.3 Guidance to staff and representatives

All staff and representatives should:

- Be aware of the forms harassment can take and the damage it can cause.
- Ensure their own conduct does not constitute harassment.
- Not be afraid to stand up against harassment or to support a colleague who is being harassed.

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