

Human Resources
Goireasan Daonna

Bullying and Harassment Guidance

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Introduction

The Highland Council Bullying and Harassment policy details the processes to follow to resolve issues both informally and formally. This Guide is intended to supplement the Policy to provide further information including examples and case studies of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour along with details of external support available.

In line with The Highland Council values we expect employees to be non-judgemental and treat everyone with dignity and respect. Please remember that the behaviour or language you personally find acceptable may not be acceptable to others. We do not tolerate bullying or harassment.

Guidance

Roles and responsibilities

Employees have a responsibility to:

- adhere to THC policies on equal opportunities, treating other individuals with dignity and respect and helping to prevent bullying and harassment at work
- become familiar with THC guidelines, toolkits and other information related to bullying and harassment and take reasonable steps to follow the advice
- report all incidents of bullying and harassment in accordance with the [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)
- raise with their manager any difficulties with their working environment as soon as possible and, where possible, identify any solutions to resolve this informally
- alert their manager, or a more senior manager, if they believe a colleague is suffering from bullying and harassment or if they witness inappropriate behaviour
- advise their line manager if experiencing any personal difficulties at work. Consider opportunities for counselling, mediation or other support when recommended and where appropriate
- consider advice and opportunities for personal and professional development and participate fully in the Employee Development Review process

Role of the line manager

Managers have a responsibility to uphold and promote the Bullying & Harassment Policy and Guidance.

Managers should:

- promote and encourage a workplace culture where people are treated fairly and with dignity and respect
- lead by example through a fair and open management style
- make sure that all employees they are responsible for are aware of the Policy and Guidance
- be aware of their team member's behaviours and take steps to address any action which may cause offence or distress
- be supportive of employees who come to them with concerns about unacceptable behaviour
- deal quickly and effectively with any complaints they receive
- line managers should understand the link between duty of care and mitigating risk. Where a manager or supervisor is aware of inappropriate behaviour, they should take reasonable action.

Role of Human Resources (HR):

- provide guidance and an advisory service, on request, regarding bullying and harassment and associated support
- promote services such as Occupational Health, counselling and mediation, if appropriate
- review bullying and harassment cases to identify any trends which may be occurring in particular areas of the workforce and to investigate their causes.
- provide advice to managers on addressing issues and handling cases
- work with line managers to proactively address issues before they result in the formal stages
- support colleagues and managers in managing bullying and harassment cases during the formal stages of the Bullying and Harassment procedure.

Role of Trade Unions:

- offer advice and guidance to staff in their membership
- where appropriate, advise members to seek informal resolution first in conjunction with the relevant manager before advising members to enter the formal process

- represent members in hearings at all stages in both informal and formal stages. In general, TUs would not represent members in agreed mediation meetings
- work with the HR team to raise any issues with the implementation of the policy and contribute to finding appropriate solutions
- raise, in negotiations with the Senior Management at the HR Sub Committee, any issues with the policy or guidance.

Role of the Nominated Bullying and Harassment Senior Officer:

- deal quickly and effectively with any formal complaints received.

Duty of care

Where a person wants something done about behaviour but is not prepared to make a complaint, the Council has a duty of care to investigate whether what is happening is appropriate.

- if the complainant does not wish to be identified, or a complaint/allegation is anonymous, then it must be made clear that as an Officer of the Council, staff have a duty of care to investigate the complaint/allegations
- direct action cannot be taken on hearsay or rumour.

Role of the Bullying and Harassment contacts:

- to listen to employees who believe they are being harassed, to clarify the options open to them and to assist them in resolving the matter informally where possible
- to provide similar support to those accused of harassment
- where requested, to support individuals throughout the resolution of their concerns. This may include discussing with the individual what they may wish to say or write to the person who they consider has harassed or bullied them; accompanying the individual to speak to the alleged harasser or accompanying the individual to seek guidance from a senior member of staff. This list is not exhaustive but includes empowering and supporting the individual. They must not, however, act as a representative of the complainant (or person being complained against). If someone wants a person to speak for them at a meeting (e.g., as part of an investigation) the complainant (or person complained against) may be accompanied by a union representative, if a member, or by a colleague of choice from within the Council
- to deal with all cases with the utmost confidentiality except in cases where there is an unacceptable risk to employee or to the Council. Examples of unacceptable risk are given below

- to support the Council to monitor Bullying and Harassment through recording (on an anonymous basis) the number of cases in which the adviser is involved and the methods by which they were resolved, where known
- to refer individuals onto another B&H adviser where necessary or to other agencies or support systems where appropriate, in line with the parameters of their role.

Definitions

First of all, let's try to eliminate what is **not** workplace bullying and/or harassment.

Effective management

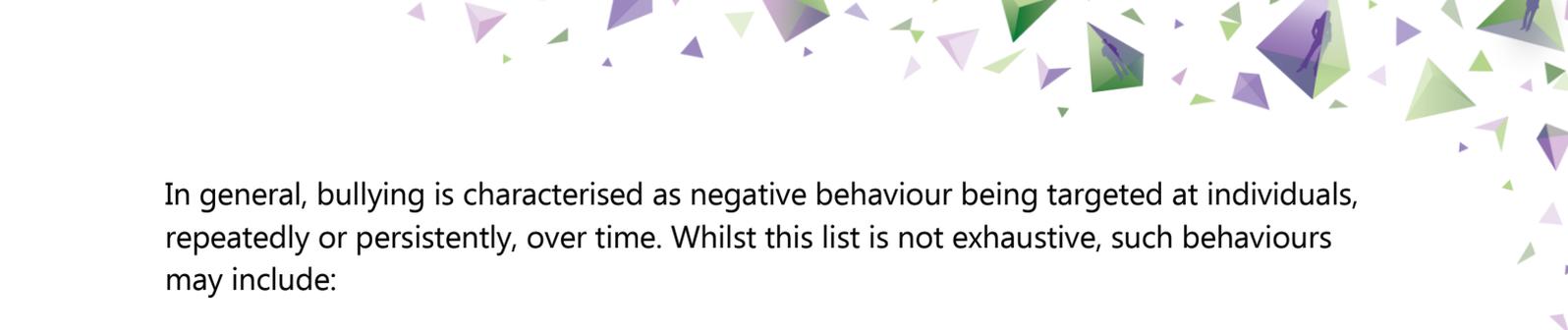
The Council expects managers to lead and manage employees. This involves agreeing performance standards as part of the [Employee Review and Development](#) process, and making sure employees understand them. It also involves dealing with employees in a respectful and constructive way if they fall below the expected standards using [Supporting Improved Work Performance Guidance](#). However, if performance standards can be objectively shown to be discriminatory, unfair or unachievable, this may constitute bullying or harassment.

Organisational change

Organisational change is both essential and inevitable. We recognise that change can at times result in employees feeling apprehensive, upset and resistant to change. Organisational change is never intended to undermine or humiliate employees but will always be aimed at improving Council Services or meeting economic challenges. In itself, organisational change does not amount to bullying or harassment. However, employees should expect to be treated fairly and with dignity through any period of organisational change. The Council's [Stress Management Guidance](#) and the Understanding and Managing Change courses on [Traineasy](#) should be referred to help all parties manage change effectively and fairly.

What is bullying?

There is no legal definition of workplace bullying. However, the Council recognises that it has a duty to all employees to protect their health, safety and wellbeing at work. With this duty in mind, we recognise that bullying, or other unacceptable behaviours, if left unchecked, may have a significant and detrimental impact upon the health and wellbeing of an individual.



In general, bullying is characterised as negative behaviour being targeted at individuals, repeatedly or persistently, over time. Whilst this list is not exhaustive, such behaviours may include:

- ignoring or excluding you
- giving you unachievable tasks or “setting you up to fail”
- spreading malicious rumours or gossip
- giving you meaningless tasks or unpleasant jobs
- making belittling personal remarks
- undermining your integrity
- withholding information deliberately
- making you look stupid in public/in front of fellow employees
- undervaluing your contribution –not giving credit where it is due
- an abuse or misuse of the power or authority through means intended to unfairly criticise or injure the recipient.

Example:

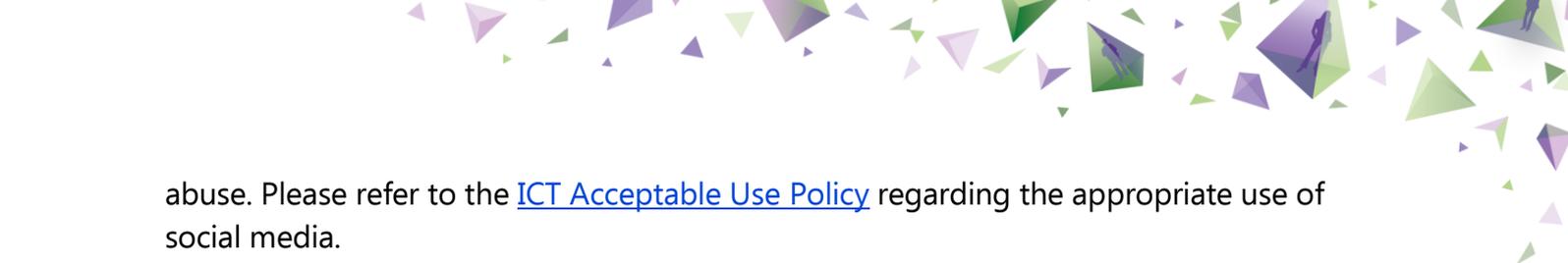
Mark and David worked in the same department for three years before David was promoted to be a supervisor in their department. Soon after, David began making criticising comments to Mark several times a day, most of which were simply degrading or belittling, rather than appropriate criticisms of Mark’s work performance. David’s hostile attitude soon spread to all of his interactions with Mark, and he always made his derogatory comments in the presence of others.

Finally, Mark realised that he had been purposely excluded from team lunch meetings, which David had rescheduled, but told Mark were cancelled.

In this example of bullying, there was no threat or actual physical harm, but the constant verbal attacks, and negative comments on his employee record, meant Mark hated coming to work. The stress gave Mark terrible headaches, made him nauseated, and raised his blood pressure. The supervisor’s behaviour was completely unacceptable. Bullying in the workplace can lead health issues, including but not limited to those described in Mark’s case.

What is cyber bullying?

Bullying and harassment is not always carried out face-to-face. It may occur through other media including text messages, emails, social networking sites and elsewhere on the internet. Victims of cyber-bullying experience the same feelings of fear, intimidation, stress and low morale as those bullied face to face. A key difference is that by using information systems to cause harm, the victim has no control over who witnesses the



abuse. Please refer to the [ICT Acceptable Use Policy](#) regarding the appropriate use of social media.

Offensive or degrading comments made through any of these media fall within the remit of the Council's Bullying and Harassment Policy and as such employees can bring complaints about such behaviour in the same way as they could with any other harassing or bullying behaviour, using the Bullying and Harassment policy.

Under the Malicious Communications Act 1998 it is an offence to send indecent, offensive or threatening letters, electronic communication or other articles to another person and under Section 43 of the Telecommunications Act 1984 it is a similar offence to send a telephone message that is indecent, offensive or threatening.

Examples of cyber bullying include:

- offensive emails
- email threats. This includes emails that appear to be inoffensive, but the implied meaning behind it constitutes bullying. For example, a manager using email to bombard an employee with more work than they can handle, and not treating other employees in the same way
- posting defamatory gossip on blogs and social networking sites. It is possible that a person does not immediately experience the bullying directly because they are unaware of what is being posted about them on sites
- threats or offensive comments by SMS text messages on mobile phones. —
- Harassment by email
- posting private and personal details about someone online.

What is gaslighting at work?

Gaslighting in the workplace is when a member of staff behaves in a way that aims to distort a colleague's view of reality. The most common indication of gaslighting in the workplace is lying.

Other gaslighting signs include denying something has been said when it has (or vice versa), using information about a person as ammunition and unjustly criticising their actions, work and words.

Gaslighting is not something that happens short term - gaslighting behaviour happens slowly and over a long period. The perpetrator wears their victim down, slowly draining their self-confidence.

Examples of gaslighting:

It can be difficult to pinpoint specific examples at work as the perpetrator can mix in occasional positive reinforcement with the negative behaviour to confuse their victim. However, some typical gaslighting behaviours are as follows:

- the individual makes a derogatory comment to the victim and then denies they said anything
- an employee tells a colleague the deadline for a project has moved and then, when questioned about it later, insist they never said it
- the individual hides the victim's belongings or moves their equipment when they're away from their desk
- the victim gets left out of important email chains "accidentally"
- gaslighters may also accuse other employees of being "irrational" or "overreacting". Not only does this deflect the gaslighter's responsibility, it also trivialises the victim's feelings.

Although individually these examples might appear trivial, that is why they can have such a negative impact over a longer period of time and, have detrimental effects on an employee's mental wellbeing. Effects of gaslighting can lead to an employee's self-doubt which in turn, can lead to depression and anxiety at the thought of coming into work.

What is harassment?

Bullying itself isn't against the law, but harassment is. This is when the unwanted behaviour is related a protected characteristics in the Equality Act.

The Equality Act 2010 defines harassment as "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual".

The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Harassment takes many forms including physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. It can include comments, actions, jokes or suggestions that may be viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient. It may be an isolated incident or repeated actions that may create a stressful working environment.

The following provides some examples of harassment. The list is in no particular order and is not exhaustive.

Sex

Examples of sexual harassment include:

- unwelcome sexual advances, propositions and demands for sexual favours, (and worsening of behaviour if a sexual advance is rejected), and unsolicited/unwanted gifts
- unwanted or derogatory comments about clothing or appearance.
- 'leering' and suggestive gestures and remarks
- displaying offensive material, such as pornographic pictures, nude pin-ups or calendars, including circulating such material in emails
- inappropriate physical contact, for example, invading someone's personal space and unnecessary touching, through to sexual assault.

Race

Examples of racial harassment include:

- refusing to work with someone or deliberately isolating them because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin
- displaying racially offensive material including graffiti
- racist jokes, banter, insinuations, gestures, insults and taunts
- unfair work allocation on the basis of someone's ethnicity
- verbal and physical abuse/attacks on individuals because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin.

Disability

Examples of harassment on the grounds of disability include:

- asking intimate questions about an individual's impairment such as how it occurred and what it is like to be disabled
- name calling, jokes, taunts, and use of offensive language
- inappropriate jokes and actions such as hiding / moving someone's impairment aid
- assuming that a person's disability means that the individual is inferior
- speaking to a disabled person's colleagues rather than the person with the disability
- creating barriers that may mean that disabled colleagues are excluded from workplace events and social activities.

Religion/Belief

Examples of harassment on the grounds of religion and belief include:

- mocking or deriding someone's religion or beliefs

- stereotyping a particular religion or belief, or making assumptions about lifestyles or interests
- arranging meetings or events that may exclude people because of religious observance, for example, arranging a team lunch when you know a team member is fasting at Ramadan
- displaying images in the workplace which may be offensive to others.
- making unwanted comments about how someone dresses in accordance with their beliefs.

Sexual orientation

Common forms of harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation include:

- homophobic or bi-phobic comments, 'jokes' and name-calling
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation
- sharing homophobic or bi-phobic materials
- making repeated references to a person's sexual orientation without any justification for doing so
- outing a person as lesbian, gay or bisexual, without their consent or spreading rumours
- excluding a person from conversation and activities, for example, excluding a same sex partner when opposite sex partners are included
- intrusive questioning about an individual's personal or sex life.

Gender reassignment

Common forms of transphobic harassment include:

- transphobic comments, jokes and name-calling
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation
- refusing to treat a person as of their new gender when they transition
- failing to address a person by their preferred name and correct gender pronouns
- denying people access to the appropriate single sex facilities
- outing a person as transgender without their consent or spreading rumours (this may also be a criminal offence), or intrusive questioning
- excluding a person from conversation and activities
- sexual harassment.

Age

Examples of harassment on the basis of age include:

- making fun of someone based on their age
- questioning someone's ability because of their age
- making assumptions about lifestyle or interests
- not providing training or development opportunities.

Further examples of harassment:

- Paul is disabled and is claiming harassment against his colleague Sandra, after she frequently teased and humiliated him about his disability at work.
- Simon is being bullied at work by his new manager because he is gay. He often uses abusive language towards Simon and tells him to 'man up'. Once he put a sticker on Simon's computer screen to remind him not speak in a 'camp' manner on the phone. He made Simon keep the sticker for a whole week. The manager is being abusive towards Simon because of his sexual orientation. The manager's behaviour is offensive and creates an intimidating work environment for Simon. This is unlawful harassment under the Equality Act.

You can also be harassed about a protected characteristic that someone knows you don't actually have. For example:

- Richard shares an office with Paul and he too is claiming harassment, even though he is not disabled, Sandra's behaviour has also created an offensive environment for him.
- At work, some of your colleagues keep making comments and jokes saying you're gay. They call you names and have on occasion left things like gay adult movies and magazines on your desk. They all know you're not actually gay. You could have claim for harassment related to sexual orientation.

Support and advice

Where possible, complaints of harassment should be dealt with informally. If the employee is unable to raise the matter directly with the harasser, the employee can raise the matter confidentially with a Bullying and Harassment contact.

Bullying and Harassment contacts

B&H Contacts are employees who have volunteered to undertake this role. The volunteers have received training in order that they can assist complainants in achieving an effective and prompt resolution of any harassment issue. A B&H contact will listen and give advice on the courses of action available and, if requested, provide assistance in resolving the matter in the informal stage of the procedure.

The B&H contact will discuss the incidents or allegations with the complainant. The discussion will be confidential (other than in specific circumstances detailed below) and further action will not normally be taken without the complainant's express permission.



The B&H contact will provide support and information and will outline options to the employee where this is appropriate. This is likely to produce solutions which are speedy, effective and minimise embarrassment and the risk of breaching confidentiality. Discussions with a B&H contact will remain confidential other than in exceptional circumstances, e.g., where it is considered there is an unacceptable risk either to the employee concerned, another person, or to the Council. In these circumstances the Bullying & Harassment Contact would consult with the employee about the approach to be adopted with the appropriate manager, including the possible involvement of the B&H contact, the objective being that the necessary managerial action will be taken. Any information provided to a manager in these circumstances will remain confidential.

The Bullying & Harassment Contact will explain the confidentiality arrangements at the first meeting following which the employee will be able to decide whether or not they wish to continue the discussion. On occasions, the B&H contact may wish to seek advice on the matter from a third party, for example from HR. However, they will obtain permission before doing so.

The B&H contact will discuss the incidents or allegations with the complainant. The discussion will be confidential (other than in specific circumstances detailed below) and further action will not normally be taken without the complainant's express permission. The B&H contact will provide support and information and will outline options to the employee where this is appropriate. This is likely to produce solutions which are speedy, effective and minimise embarrassment and the risk of breaching confidentiality.

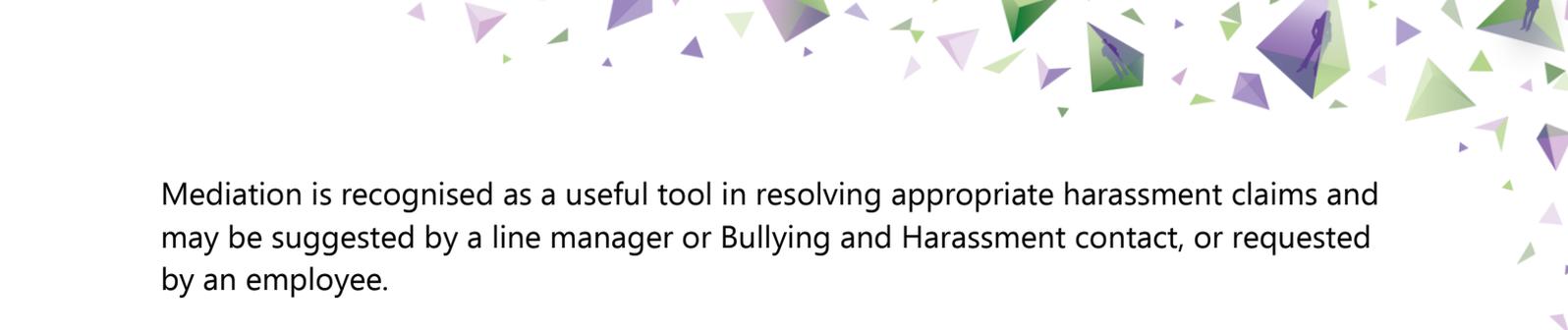
To find a Bullying and Harassment contact, please see the [Bullying and Harassment contacts list](#).

Mediation

Mediation is a voluntary process in which a trained mediator assists two or more people in a disagreement to find a solution they can all agree to. The mediator does not take sides or tell the parties what to do. Mediation is most likely to be successful if the people involved:

- understand the purpose of mediation
- enter into the process willingly, and
- want to find a solution.

Mediation is often more appropriate in dealing with misunderstandings and disagreements at work which affect working relationships. It is unlikely to be appropriate in dealing with serious and/or deliberate or malicious acts of bullying.



Mediation is recognised as a useful tool in resolving appropriate harassment claims and may be suggested by a line manager or Bullying and Harassment contact, or requested by an employee.

Requests for Mediation can be arranged via [HR](#).

Once contacted, a HR officer will discuss and agree with the employee whether mediation is appropriate.

Counselling

Counselling can play a vital role in complaints about bullying and harassment by providing:

- a confidential avenue for an informal approach
- the opportunity to resolve the complaint without need for any formal action.

Counselling can be particularly useful where investigation shows no cause for disciplinary action, or where doubt is cast on the validity of the complaint. Counselling helps support the person accused as well as the complainant. Counselling may be suggested by a line manager or B&H contact or requested by an employee. Counselling can be accessed via the Council's [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#). The Counselling Service includes online web chat and face to face support where appropriate.

Guidance for those accused of bullying or harassment

Accusations of bullying and/or harassment in the workplace will be taken seriously by the Council and such behaviour will not be tolerated. Where situations cannot be resolved informally, you should be aware that disciplinary proceedings may be used.

If you have been told that your behaviour makes someone feel uncomfortable, then you should stop and reflect on what you are doing. Even though your behaviour may seem innocent to you, it is important to consider its effect on others. Referring to someone in a derogatory way, making sexist, racist, homophobic or other offensive remarks, putting your arm around another person's shoulders etc may seem trivial to you but may well be offensive and harassing to others. If you are told that your behaviour is offensive, you should consider the following points:

- remember it is the other person's reaction to your behaviour, which is important, not your intention nor the reaction you think they should have

- listen carefully to the complaint and to the particular concerns expressed
- stop the behaviour complained of and review what you are doing. It may be you have upset other colleagues who have not complained
- if you do not understand the complaint, discuss the matter with someone you trust
- if you are found to have bullied or harassed someone after their objection to your behaviour was made known to you, the fact that you persisted will make the offence more serious if disciplinary proceedings commence.

The Council recognises its equal duty of care both to the complainant and the alleged harasser and allegations will not be presumed proved until properly investigated and may lead to disciplinary procedures.

If you are convinced that you are being unjustly accused, and/or that the complaint is malicious, you should:

- talk to your line manager or Union representative. It may be that an informal discussion between you, the person alleging ill-treatment, and a third party will solve the problem.
- if this does not occur, and it is clear that formal proceedings will ensue, ask for support from a B&H contact or your Union representative.
- gather evidence in your defence.

False accusations

If an employee makes an accusation in good faith which, after investigation, is found not to be bullying or harassment, no action will be taken against the employee making the complaint. If an employee makes a malicious complaint which doesn't have grounds, substance or evidence and was made to deliberately cause upset and distress, we may take action against the employee making the complaint, in line with our [Disciplinary Procedure](#).

General communication and behaviour

The following table is intended to provide guidance as to how we expect everyone to behave and what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour may look like. These examples do not cover every situation.

General Communication and Behaviour Table

Acceptable behaviours	Unacceptable behaviours
<p>You have regular discussions with your colleagues and manager about work priorities.</p> <p>You discuss issues early on to avoid them turning into bigger problems.</p>	<p>You unreasonably refuse to have discussions about important work issues. You only have conversations when there is an issue or problem.</p>
<p>You communicate in a positive, constructive and supportive way. You encourage input from quieter team members. You make an effort to publicly recognise the contributions, strengths and achievements of your team.</p>	<p>You consistently and unfairly challenge or criticise others. You display anger through negative body language. You constantly unfairly blame others. You are needlessly sarcastic.</p>
<p>You promote 2-way feedback, healthy challenge and debate between your colleagues. You raise issues in a balanced and fair way.</p>	<p>You only have 1-sided conversations. You do not give others a chance to speak. You are unwilling to listen to or accept healthy disagreements. You refuse to communicate or cooperate. You are unable to accept constructive criticism.</p>
<p>You respect colleagues' input, even if their ideas are not adopted. You are flexible about others' views opinions.</p>	<p>You unreasonably shut down or ignore colleagues' ideas. You are excessively critical. You point out colleagues' limitations or faults in an insensitive way. You consistently attack colleagues in terms of their professional or personal standing.</p>
<p>You regularly thank colleagues for their support. You treat other people as you like to be treated.</p>	<p>You are exclusive or cliquey. You make inappropriate comments about personality or character. You deliberately ignore people. You consistently and unreasonably exclude people from meetings, discussions, social occasions or work projects.</p>
<p>You behave professionally by maintaining confidentiality.</p>	<p>You make false allegations, spread rumours or gossip about others.</p>
<p>You are courteous to others, even if it means modifying your own behaviour.</p>	<p>You refuse to alter your behaviour even though you know you will cause offence. If you are given feedback about your unacceptable behaviour, you refuse to change it. You unreasonably use excuses like 'everyone knows that's just me'.</p>

Acceptable behaviours	Unacceptable behaviours
You demonstrate respect for colleagues by valuing diversity and personal differences e.g. cultures, values, orientation, religion or beliefs.	You are unwilling to understand or respect differences.
You use inoffensive language and behave in a calm and pleasant way towards your colleagues.	You direct offensive and inappropriate language towards individuals or knowingly use language that will cause offence. You make inappropriate jokes or banter. You are aggressive e.g. shout, bang on table, push, point fingers or storm out of a room. You are passive aggressive e.g. deliberately stubborn, inefficient or procrastinate in order to resist interaction or delivery of work with others
You are respectful of work relationship boundaries.	You make unwanted physical or other contact (e.g. touching, email, text, social media, etc.).
You apologise if you cause offence.	You are unwilling to apologise or admit to any mistakes or misunderstandings.

Reporting third party harassment

Employees who experience harassment from individuals who are not employed by The Highland Council (such as customers, clients, suppliers, contractors, members of the public or school pupils) should report the incident by completing this [online form](#).

All reported incidents will be investigated by the employee's line manager in line with organisational procedures and appropriate action will be taken. Reports will also be shared with the relevant HR Business Partner for the Service to ensure consistent support and oversight.

Additional resources

National Bullying Helpline & Website

This helpline is run by Volunteers and is open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday on 0845 2255787

www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk

TUC (Trades Union Congress)

www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/rightsviolence

ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)

ACAS has published a leaflet and handbook on harassment in the workplace which provide advice and guidance on what employers and workers should expect from each other: www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=794

HSE (Health and Safety Executive)

Information, research, case studies and access to the HSE Management Standards.
www.hse.gov.uk/violence

Direct Gov.

Directgov is the website of the UK government for its citizens, providing information and online services for the public all in one place:
<https://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment>

Stonewall

Stonewall is an organisation dedicated to supporting lesbian, gay, bi and trans people.
Info line: 08000 502020
<https://www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/>

Citizens Advice Bureau

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/

Advice can also be obtained from your trade union.

Frequently asked questions

I think I'm being bullied / harassed – what can I do?

You could firstly try to sort out matters informally. The person may not know that his or her behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting. An informal discussion or even an email may help him or her to understand the effects of his or her behaviour and agree to change it. You can talk in confidence to your manager or B&H contact to get advice on how to handle this informally. If your concerns are about your manager, you could speak to their manager, to HR, or to a B&H contact.

Bullying and harassment are often clear cut. However, sometimes people are unsure as to whether the behaviour is unacceptable. If this applies to you there are a number of things to consider, including:

- has there been a change of management or organisational style to which you just need time to adjust – perhaps because you have a new manager or work requirements?
- can you talk over your worries with your manager, B&H contact or colleague?
- can you agree with your manager changes to ways of working that will make it easier for you to cope?
- keep a log of all incidents – records of dates, times, any witnesses, your feelings, and copies of anything that you feel is relevant, for example, emails.

I've tried to handle the situation informally but this hasn't worked. What should I do?

If you have not been able to resolve matters informally, or the situation is too serious to be dealt with informally, you can raise a Bullying and Harassment grievance by submitting the [grievance submission form](#).

What happens when I raise a grievance?

The grievance policy sets out the process we will follow to ensure that your concerns are addressed fairly and consistently and as quickly as possible. You can also view the [Bullying and Harassment Process for Highland Council Employees](#).

Your concerns will be investigated. This may involve talking to you further about your grievance and to other members of staff who were witnesses, or who are involved in the grievance. Once the investigation is complete, a senior manager will meet with you to discuss your grievance and will provide you with a formal response in writing.

Where a grievance is upheld, it may result in a disciplinary process for that individual, which could lead to dismissal in serious or repeated cases.

Can I raise a concern about harassment from members of the public?

Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and Highland Council is clear that such standards should extend to relationships with customers and other contacts that staff come into contact with. If you experience racist, sexual or other offensive treatment when you are dealing with members of the public, you should report the incident by completing this [online form](#).

Quick Links

The Hyperlinks listed here will redirect you to the related guidance, letters, information, and relevant organisations mentioned in this policy.

[HR Microsite](#)

[Bullying and Harassment at Work Policy](#)

[Bullying and Harassment Contacts](#)

[Bullying and Harassment Process for Employees](#)

[Disciplinary Policy and Guidance](#)

[Employee Assistance Programme](#)

[Grievance and Resolution Policy](#)

[Grievance Submission Form](#)

[Sexual Harassment Policy](#)

[Violence at Work](#)



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