

BHAS HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

1. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- promote the Society's commitment to creating a working environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and free from harassment and bullying.

2. Principles

- The Society will not tolerate bullying and harassment and will take complaints seriously and challenge unacceptable behaviour.
- Allegations of bullying and harassment will be investigated by the committee.
- All matters raised under this procedure will be treated fairly, sensitively and confidentially.

3. Definition of Harassment

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.”

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act are;

Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

4. Definition of Bullying

There is not a legal definition of bullying as it is not covered in specific legislation. It nevertheless has the potential to be unlawful and it is defined in an advisory leaflet produced by ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) as follows:

“Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.”

5. Examples of harassment and bullying

People will have very different perceptions of behaviour that might be construed as harassment or bullying. It is the impact that the behaviour has on another person that is damaging to both the individual and the organisation.

Some examples include:

- Unwelcome remarks about a person's appearance, age, dress, race, marital status
- Insensitive jokes and pranks.
- Personal intrusion, spying or stalking.
- Exclusion or undermining a person.
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone.
- Shouting, threatened or actual violence.
- Cyber-bullying, such as unpleasant texts or messages on social networking sites.

Harassment or bullying can be a single isolated incident or repeated behaviour. Members and volunteers are encouraged to speak to any committee member if they have any concerns about such behaviour.

6. INFORMAL ACTION

If a member believes that they (or some one else) is being bullied or harassed it might be possible to resolve the matter informally. The individual may be unaware that their behaviour is unwelcome or unsettling and he/she should be informed of this and asked to stop. If the member being harassed, or the third party witness, feels unable to do this personally, they are encouraged to seek help from the committee as early intervention is recommended.

7. FORMAL ACTION

In the event of a member being unable to resolve a matter of harassment or bullying informally, he/she may wish to raise it formally with the committee.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation by members which are formally raised will be investigated at a committee meeting and if necessary, on a majority vote, written warning given to the member specifying the unacceptable behaviour that is to cease.

In serious or persistent cases, if agreed by the committee on a majority vote, the accused may, as a last resort, have their membership revoked.

Harassment and Bullying Policy

Approved by Committee (date)/updated (date)