



Dignity at Work Policy

effective from April 2007

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the procedure to be followed by LDCVS staff in resolving matters related to the harassment and bullying of all individuals involved in the organization.

It applies to all paid staff, including those on temporary contracts and applies in the workplace and at work-related settings such as business trips and work-related social events. It does not apply to volunteers, who should, in the first instance, discuss any concerns with their line manager and, failing resolution, the Chief Officer. Members of the Executive Committee should raise any concerns with the Chair. Everyone in the organisation has the right to be treated with dignity and to be protected from harassment and bullying.

This policy does not apply to members of the public who should use the complaints procedure.

2. Aim of the policy

The aim of the policy is:

- 2.1 To provide a working environment that is free from all forms of harassment and bullying and maintains the rights of individuals to be treated with dignity at work.

and in doing so -
- 2.2 To set out a clear, fair and accessible process that allows for the resolution of issues as rapidly, effectively and confidentially as possible.
- 2.3 The policy should be read in conjunction with the separate guidelines that define what is meant by harassment and bullying.

3. Statement of intent

LDCVS is committed to the promotion of fairness and equality in the working environment.

All individuals in the workplace have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and harassment and bullying are recognised as forms of discrimination and will not be tolerated. It is everyone's responsibility to challenge all forms of harassment and bullying and it is everyone's responsibility to protect the right of individuals to be treated with respect.



As an employer, the Executive Committee seeks to develop an environment that supports individuals facing, or challenging, unacceptable behaviour and it will not tolerate the victimization of a person for making a complaint of harassment or bullying.

4. Responsibilities

Anyone who is responsible for managing other staff must understand the policy and accept responsibility for implementing it. (See guidelines)

5. Operating Procedure

- 5.1 The aim of the procedure is to resolve complaints as quickly, effectively and fairly as possible and maintain a positive working environment. With this in mind, the informal stage of the procedure should be used wherever possible. The objective of the informal stage is to encourage and facilitate communication between the complainant and the respondent and, where appropriate, to allow for the matter to be resolved by the line manager.
- 5.2 If informal resolution fails, or if it is not appropriate, the complainant or their line manager may then begin the formal stage of the procedure.

6. Informal Stage

- 6.1 The complainant should first raise the matter with their line manager. If this is the individual about whom they have a complaint they should approach the Chief Officer or if the complaint is against the Chief Officer they should approach the Executive Committee Chair.
- 6.2 The manager (see 6.1 above) will approach the respondent making it clear that their behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting and ask them to stop. A record will be made that includes dates and details of the matter and the action taken and placed on the employees personal file, remaining live for a maximum of six months.
- 6.3 If the manager concludes that the matter is resolved at this stage it should be agreed between all parties and confirmed in writing to them. If the complaint is judged to be unjustified, the manager will also decide whether the claim was malicious or vexatious in nature and decide upon appropriate action.
- 6.4 Any party may activate the formal stage of the procedure if the matter remains unresolved.



7. FORMAL PROCEDURE

- 7.1 This stage can be initiated where the complaint has not been resolved at the informal stage, or if the manager decides that the nature of the complaint is too serious to be dealt with informally.
- 7.2 The complainant must first submit a formal written complaint to their manager (see 6.1).
- 7.3 Written complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days. The respondent will also be notified of the complaint by the same date. Both the complainant and the respondent will be advised of the procedure to be followed by the manager concerned.

The Investigation

- 7.4 The manager receiving the complaint (see 6.1 above) will be responsible for ensuring the complaint is investigated. The principles to be followed will be the same as for investigation of other serious incidents in the working environment. The target time for completion of the investigation is 20 working days. The time scale for receipt of written responses to requests for statements or other information from the complainant or respondent will be 5 working days. If the investigation is more complex than first envisaged and further time is required, this will be communicated in writing to both parties with an indication of the revised time scale.
- 7.5 Both the complainant and the respondent will be required to submit written statements and be interviewed. They will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague. Any witnesses to the alleged event(s) will also be identified and interviewed and/or may be required to provide a written statement
- 7.6 Formal, confidential records will be kept of all proceedings. The investigator will collect and examine the evidence available and prepare a written report detailing the supporting evidence, the conclusions drawn and any recommendations made as a result.

Outcome of the investigation

- 7.7 The investigator's report will be submitted to the manager responsible for requesting the investigation, who should then decide the appropriate action to be taken. The options are:
- evidence of inappropriate behaviour is found, but a course of action other than disciplinary action is identified
 - evidence of inappropriate behaviour is found and disciplinary action is appropriate. In this case, formal disciplinary proceedings will be initiated



- no case to answer, in which case the process is at an end. If the investigator(s) find any malicious or vexatious intent on the part of the complainant they will recommend an appropriate course of action that may include the initiation of formal disciplinary proceedings.

7.8 If at any point in the procedure there is evidence of wilful misuse of the policy by any party, action up to and including disciplinary action may be taken.

7.9 At the end of the procedure an assessment will be made of:

- appropriate working arrangements for staff that are working together.
- any action necessary to prevent a recurrence of the complaint or behaviour.

8. Appeals

8.1 Where the complainant or respondent is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation then they may submit an appeal. The grounds for an appeal are:

- The procedure has been applied unfairly
- There are factual inaccuracies in the information supplied to the investigation

8.2 Where disciplinary action is recommended then the respondent will have a right of appeal against the outcome of this procedure through the normal disciplinary process and not through this process.

8.3 The Executive Committee will provide an appeals panel consisting of at least two trustees who have not previously been involved in the complaint or investigation.

Appendix A

HARASSMENT OF LDCVS STAFF BY INDIVIDUALS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS OR BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Employees of LDCVS who are treated in an abusive manner by staff of other agencies or members of the public will receive support from the organisation to tackle such behaviour. For these purposes, abusive behaviour includes but is not limited to: verbal and/or physical abuse, intimidating/harassing or discriminatory behaviour and/or comments. (See the guidelines for appropriate advice on what employees should do)

If staff consider that their manager does not deal with the complaint appropriately, they may raise a grievance against her/him under the Grievance Procedure.