

**Dignity at Work: Eliminating Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The main purpose of this report is to present the revised Dignity at Work: Eliminating Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure to Policy and Resources Committee, for Committee's approval for implementation of this on 01 December 2016.
- 1.2 ACAS has identified an Increasing trend in Workplace Bullying in a 2015 Study. They identify increases in Bullying related grievances and the significant financial costs relating to absenteeism, turnover and lost productivity being equivalent to 1.5% productivity.

The Council's 2014 Stress Survey indicated that 17% of respondents felt they had been subject to bullying at work and 31% felt that they had been harassed at work. The 2014 Employee survey indicated 71% of respondents were aware of the Council's Policy on Bullying and Harassment.

The impact of bullying and harassment can often be stress-related absence, adversely effecting productivity, effectiveness and service delivery, and the prevalence of stress-related absence in work areas that directly relate to the Council means that there remains a clear need for an appropriate framework and guidance for managers and employees in regard to managing bullying and harassment.

The review of the Council's Policy in supporting staff through this process aims to support a culture where Bullying and Harassment is not tolerated..

- 1.3 It is recommended that: -
- Policy and Resources Committee notes the contents of this report and
  - Policy and Resources Committee approves the Dignity at Work: Eliminating Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure and recommend its approval to full Council on 24<sup>th</sup> November for implementation on 01 December 2016

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Council's Bullying and Harassment Policy has been reviewed and updated. This was undertaken in consultation with the Trade Unions and the updated Policy is attached.
- 1.2 In reviewing this Policy it was recognised that additional specific guidance was required on dealing with Contractors and members of the public.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Policy and Resources Committee notes the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Policy and Resources Committee approves the Dignity at Work: Eliminating Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure and recommend its approval to full Council on 24th November for implementation on 01 December 2016.

**3.0 DETAIL**

- 3.1 Bullying and Harassment are very difficult issues to deal with in an organisation. An effective policy is key to supporting staff and managers and developing an appropriate culture where Bullying and Harassment are not tolerated.

ACAS Research has indicated the impact of Bullying and Harassment on the workplace can be estimated based on absence, turnover and loss of productivity due to the adverse effect on morale as in the region of a 1.5% loss in productivity.

- 3.2 A review of the Council’s policy on Bullying and Harassment has been undertaken, looking at ACAS guidance as the overarching framework and taking advice from CIPD recommendations on Bullying and Harassment Policies.

The revised Bullying and harassment policy had been developed in consultation with the Trade Unions. Specific feedback was received from the Trade Union Liaison meeting highlighting good practice from NHS Highland’s policy in dealing with patients and their relatives.

- 3.3 The Council’s Policy has been revised taking cognisance of this feedback adding sections on dealing with bullying and harassment from clients, service users, members of the public, other agencies and contractors, which have been identified as issues requiring support from past experiences. The guidance has also been expanded to give clear direction that firm fair management is not bullying and harassment.
- 3.4 These additions will help support staff and managers in dealing with difficult situations that have been previously encountered and support a culture where bullying and harassment is not tolerated.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 This revised Policy sets out to make a clear statement of the Council’s position that Bullying and Harassment is not acceptable. The Policy also better supports employees in giving specific advice on bullying and harassment from clients, service users, members of the public, other agencies and contractors. The Policy also gives guidance on firm and fair management, contrasting it with bullying and harassment.

Policy and Resources Committee is therefore requested to approve adoption of the revised Dignity at Work: Eliminating Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure as recommended in section 3.

#### **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

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| 5.1 Policy    | Update to existing policy, replacing Victimisation and Harassment Policy.                |
| 5.2 Financial | No direct financial implications   |
| 5.3 Legal     | Will help prevent successful legal challenges relating to discrimination                 |
| 5.4 HR        | Failure to address bullying and harassment issues will impact on employee engagement and |

5.5 Equalities	productivity This complies with the Council's Equalities policy
5.6 Risk	High levels of bullying and harassment present risk to organisational efficiencies
5.7 Customer Service	High levels of bullying and harassment will impact on customer service

**Executive Director of Customer Services**  
**Policy Lead Dick Walsh**  
27 October 2016

**For further information contact:** Jane Fowler, Head of Improvement and HR,  
01546 604466

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1	Dignity at Work: Eliminating Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
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