



## Headway North West London Bullying and Harassment Policy

### 1. Policy Statement

Bullying and Harassment pollute the working environment and can have a devastating effect on the health, confidence, morale and performance of those affected by them. They may also have a damaging effect on other staff, or volunteers who are not themselves the object of unwanted behaviour but who are witness to it or have a knowledge of the behaviour. All are entitled to a working environment which respects their personal dignity and which is free from such objectionable conduct. Harassment and bullying are disciplinary offences and incidents will be treated as gross misconduct under the disciplinary procedure.

#### What behaviour is covered by this Policy?

Unwanted conduct, on the grounds of gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religious or philosophical belief, which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the person at whom it is aimed or creating an intimidatory, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Any form of verbal or non-verbal conduct, which could be regarded as bullying or intimidatory behaviour.

A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently grave.

Examples of harassment or bullying include ageist, sexual or racial banter; the display of material with ageist, sexual or racial overtones (even if not directed at the complainant); sarcastic personal remarks about colleagues, especially those reporting to you; over-demanding requirements.

### 2. Related Headway policies:

Disciplinary Policy and Procedure  
Grievance Policy and Procedure  
Safeguarding Adults Policy– relating to service users  
Sexuality and Relationships Policy

### 3. Staff Responsibilities

#### 3.1 Co-ordinator / senior person assuming everyday responsibility

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To ensure that all staff, volunteers and service users have access to and are aware of this policy

To ensure that safeguards are in place to protect the interests of all.

### **3.2 All staff / volunteers**

To adhere to this policy and seek the guidance/ advice from their line manager.

### **4. Audit Plan**

The Co-ordinator/ senior person will monitor adherence of the policy and report findings to the Trustees.

### **5. Scope**

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, or Trustees.

### **6. Headway Staff / volunteer training**

All staff and volunteers to be made aware of and read this policy

### **7. References**

Policy document to be read, signed and dated by recipient and witnessed then stored by the Co-ordinator

### **8. Prevention of bullying and harassment [Groups only]**

#### Informal Stage

In the first instance, a recipient of unwanted conduct amounting to bullying/ harassment may prefer to try to resolve the problem by explaining to the individual concerned that the behaviour is not welcome, that it offends or makes the recipient uncomfortable and that it interferes with their work. If you prefer, where you find it too difficult or embarrassing to take up the matter yourself, you should ask a colleague who will participate in an informal meeting between you and the individual concerned or will, at your request, approach the individual on your behalf.

The informal stage will not result in any formal internal investigation or disciplinary action but is intended to enable you to resolve the matter yourself without it going any further in the organisation.

If you consider that you may have been subjected to conduct amounting to a criminal offence (such as a sexual assault), you may seek the assistance of your Manager to accompany you to make a formal complaint to a police officer or to provide you with any other assistance you may require. Your Co-ordinator will inform the Trustees of the outline circumstances of the case.

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### Formal Stage

Where informal resolution is not appropriate, is not requested or where the outcome has been unsatisfactory, you may raise the matter as a grievance using the statutory grievance procedure set out in paragraph 6.2 of this Handbook. It is recognised that this type of grievance may be sensitive and difficult to formulate and you may seek assistance from a work colleague or a trade union representative to help you to prepare your grievance.

### Investigations

We will appoint someone unconnected with the allegations to investigate them in an independent and objective manner. Wherever possible we will complete investigations within 4 weeks of date of the complaint.

Investigations will be carried out with sensitivity and with due respect for the rights of both the complainant and the alleged harasser. All those interviewed will be permitted to bring a friend, colleague or representative of their trade union or professional organisation for support.

All those interviewed will be informed that the interview is confidential and that they must not discuss the complaint with colleagues or friends. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action.

The investigation will focus on the facts of the complaint. Notes will be kept of all stages of the investigation and those interviewed will receive notes of the interview to agree. Parties will not be required to repeat distressing or embarrassing details any more than is necessary.

Wherever possible, consideration will be given to ensuring that the complainant and the alleged harasser are not required to work together whilst the complaint is under investigation.

### The Sanctions

Where a grievance is upheld, we will consider the wishes of the complainant as to what should be done.

This may involve:

- moving the harasser to another post.
- moving the complainant to a different place or post, if the complainant wishes. (We will not require the complainant to move if this is not acceptable.)
- offering the complainant counselling and leave to enable him or her to recover from the effect of the harassment.
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However, the question of disciplinary action against the harasser is a separate matter and we will respect the rights of the harasser as to the confidentiality of any disciplinary sanction.

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### General rules

We will seek to ensure that the complainant is not penalised whether directly or indirectly for bringing a complaint and the situation will be monitored to ensure that the harassment has stopped.

Any complaint that is unfounded and not made in good faith, for example a malicious complaint, will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

The Co-ordinator will collate details of all formal complaints of harassment with a view to ensuring that every effective step has been taken to prevent harassment at work and to monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure..

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