

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Introduction

Here at HOST Bullying and harassment of any kind is unlawful, in no-one's interest and will not be tolerated whilst our learners are attending work-based learning at our centre, or at any work-related training events – even if they are away from the normal workplace. Any complaints will be taken seriously, treated confidentially, and the learner making the complaint will be protected from retaliation. A thorough and fair investigation of the claim will then place. The bully or harasser may be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal, or other actions that the management team at HOST deem to be fair.

What are bullying and harassment?

– something has happened to someone that is unwelcome, unwarranted and causes a detrimental effect. If employees complain they are being bullied or harassed, then they have a grievance which must be dealt with regardless of whether or not their complaint accords with a standard definition.

Is sexual harassment different?

Sexual harassment is one of the most common forms of harassment and is specifically outlawed by the Equality Act 2010 as is harassment of a sexual nature related to gender reassignment. It is in the interest of our organisation to take steps to make clear what sort of behaviour would be considered sexual harassment.

How can bullying and harassment be recognised?

There are many definitions of bullying and harassment. Bullying may be characterised as: offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Harassment, is 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.

Behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may be considered firm management by another. Most people will agree on extreme cases of bullying and harassment but it is sometimes the 'grey' areas that cause most problems. Here at HOST we see the following points as unacceptable behaviour in our organisation:

- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone (particularly on the grounds of age, race, sex, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief)
- copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail
- exclusion or victimisation
- unfair treatment
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials, asking for sexual favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected

- making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

Bullying and harassment are not necessarily face to face, they may be by written communications, visual images (for example pictures of a sexual nature or embarrassing photographs of colleagues), electronic email, phone, and automatic supervision methods – such as computer recording of downtime from work, or recording of telephone conversations – if these are not universally applied to all workers.

Cyber-Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment will also not be tolerated outside of the work or teaching environment. Cyber-bullying, in particular on social networking sites, has become more prevalent over recent years as their popularity and availability has increased. Hands on Skills Training will not tolerate any form of cyber-bullying or harassment, and it will be dealt with in the same manner as more conventional forms.

Procedure to be followed

Informal Approach:

In some cases it may be possible to rectify matters informally. Sometimes people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome and an informal discussion can lead to greater understanding and an agreement that the behaviour will cease. It may be that the individual will choose to do this themselves, or they may need support from personnel, a manager, an employee representative, or a counsellor.

Formal Approach:

Learners and Trainer/Assessors should make every effort to resolve a bullying and harassment matter without recourse to the formal procedure. If the learner wishes to raise the matter as a formal bullying and harassment grievance then the following procedure will be followed.

Step 1: Submitting the Bullying and Harassment Grievance - in writing within 28 days of the action taking place, to one of the named contacts.

Step 2: The meeting - A meeting will be arranged within 21 days of receiving the complaint to hear the learner's bullying and harassment grievance, and the learner must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

Step 3: The Right to Appeal - If the learner is not satisfied with the outcome of the bullying and harassment grievance they have the right to appeal. All appeals will be conducted in accordance with HOST Appeals Policy.

Named Contacts

Janet Childs – Office Manager, Garry Burnett – Lead IV, 0208 591 8500

Useful Contacts

Equality and Human rights Commission

Go to www.equalityhumanrights.com for further information.

Employee Assistance Professional Association (EAPA)

Information on Employee Assistance Programmes

Tel 0800 783 7616

Acas Equality Services

Advice and consultancy services on diversity in employment

Tel 08457 47 47 47