

Member Report

Dignity at Work (Harassment and Bullying) Policy



Report to:	Employment Health and Safety Committee
Report from:	Managing Director
Portfolio:	Resources
Report Date:	18 December 2024
Decision Type:	Committee
Council Priority	A Strong and Sustainable Council

HEADLINE POSITION

1.0 Summary of report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the implementation of the revised Dignity at Work (Harassment and Bullying) Policy.

2.0 Recommendation

2.0 It is recommended that the Employment Health and Safety Committee approves the revised Dignity at Work (Harassment and Bullying) Policy.

DETAILED PROPOSALS

3.0 What are the objectives of the report and how do they link to the Council's priorities

- 3.1 The current Dignity at Work (Harassment and Bullying) Policy was approved on 17 November 2021. Due to the implementation of the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Bill which has strengthened existing protection for workers against sexual harassment it has been necessary for us to review the policy to bring it up-to-date and ensure compliance with the new regulations.
- 3.2 The aim of the policy is to develop and reinforce a culture within the Council in which harassment, sexual harassment and bullying are known to be unacceptable, and employees feel confident enough to confront cases with the support of the Council without fear of ridicule or victimisation.
- 3.3 Complaints of harassment, sexual harassment and/or bullying will be taken very seriously and will be dealt with promptly and sensitively in line with the procedure set out in the policy.
- 3.4 It is proposed that the general arrangements within the policy should largely be maintained but that, subject to the views of the Committee, the following changes should be implemented to cater for the new legislation:

What is Sexual Harassment

Within section five we have information on what is sexual harassment.

Support and Advice

This section has been amended to ensure that the contact details for the Staff Support Network, Employee Assistance Programme and Trade Unions are up to date.

- 3.5 A copy of the Dignity at Work (Harassment and Bullying) Policy is attached as Appendix 1.

4.0 What options have been considered.

- 4.1 The implementation of the revised Dignity at Work (Harassment and Bullying) Policy will help to ensure that the Council is compliant with employment legislation and, as such, no other options have been considered.

5.0 Impact Assessment

5.1 Climate Emergency

There is no direct impact on the climate emergency.

5.2 Health and Safety

There is no direct impact in term of Health and Safety although, clearly, the policy is designed to address some concerns which may potentially have health and safety implications.

5.3 Social Value

There is no direct impact in term of social value.

5.4 Legal

The Dignity at Work (Harassment and Bullying) Policy will help ensure that the Council is compliant with the Worker Protection (Amendments to the Equality Act 2010) Act 2023.

5.5 Financial

The policy itself does not create any additional resource implications but having an effective procedure to deal with harassment, sexual harassment and bullying cases may potentially resolve situations which could potentially lead to litigation.

5.6 Human Resources

The Dignity at Work (Harassment and Bullying) Policy will ensure that harassment and bullying cases are handled in a fair and consistent manner.

5.7 Equality and Diversity

The policy is designed to be compliant with Equality and Diversity requirements.

6 Implementation Plan

6.1 Timetable for Implementing Decision:

If approved, the Dignity at Work (Harassment and Bullying) Policy will be implemented with effect from January 2025.

6.2 Lead Officer

Jane Garnett

6.3 Reporting Progress

N/A

6.4 Communications Plan

Arrangements will be made for this to be communicated internally via HR Insight and Building a Better Borough. A copy will also be made available on the intranet.

7.0 Consultation and Engagement

A copy of the Sexual Harassment Policy was circulated to the recognised Trade Unions. The Trade Unions no comments were received.

8.0 Appendices and Background Papers

8.1 Appendix 1 Dignity at Work (Harassment and Bullying) Policy

9.0 Contact Officer

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