



Dignity and Respect at Work Policy

IMS-POL-20

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Responsible individual/team: HR Manager

Company Proprietary Information

The electronic version of this procedure is the latest revision. It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure that any paper material is the current revision. The printed version of this manual is uncontrolled, except when provided with a document reference number and revision in the field below:

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Frequently Asked Questions

The FAQs below act as a guide, all staff are required to read the full policy for their own benefit.

What is the purpose of this policy?

This policy sets out what dignity and respect means and what is considered as inappropriate behaviour. It provides the mechanism to report concerns of any breaches to this policy and gives reassurance that employees will not be subjected to unfavourable treatment or victimisation because of making a complaint in good faith.

Does the policy apply to me?

Yes, it applies to all staff, contractors, casual and agency workers. However, agency workers are also expected to raise any concerns of inappropriate behaviour with their agency.

What are my responsibilities in relation to this policy?

In essence, all employees have a responsibility to demonstrate respect and dignity in their working relations with individuals and groups. You should feel able to identify and challenge unacceptable behaviour when it occurs; while addressing and resolving matters, where reasonably possible, in a positive and constructive way.

What can I do if I believe I have been subjected to inappropriate behaviour?

A process for dealing with and resolving inappropriate behaviour has been set out under the Dignity and Respect at Work procedure (appendix A).

What might happen to my employment if I am found to be in breach of this policy?

All employees are expected to behave and treat one another with respect and dignity. If you fail to act in this way, then you will be under investigation if an informal resolution cannot be reached. Ultimately, serious breaches of this policy can lead to termination of employment.

I believe I was subject to unacceptable behaviour via a Teams meeting. Can I still raise my concern under this policy?

Yes, unacceptable behaviour does not just have to be experienced in person and it can occur virtually, such as via Teams or by email.

Why does this policy cover social events?

A work social event is an extension of the workplace and therefore employees are still expected to adhere to the standards set by the company, and any behaviour which is in breach of this policy during social events, will be dealt with accordingly.

I do not feel safe to raise concerns of inappropriate behaviour.

The company is committed to promoting an inclusive and supportive environment, so employees do feel safe in raising concerns. It is important that individuals experiencing any inappropriate behaviour come forward themselves to ensure the integrity of the information. There are different avenues of resolution, and the company will treat all concerns seriously and with discretion. No assumption of guilt will be made, and all concerns will be investigated.

1. Purpose Statement

1.1 The Company is committed to promoting an inclusive and supportive environment where employees are treated with dignity and respect, free from inappropriate behaviour such as bullying, harassment, discrimination, or abuse and aligned with the Company's Mission Statement.

1.2 The Mission Statement is set out below:

Reinforcing the foundations of our communities by inspiring loyalty through the commitment of our trusted co-owners.

1.3 Dignity is a personal sense of worth, value, respect, or esteem that is derived from one's humanity and in relation to others; as well as being treated respectfully by others.

1.4 Respect is the feeling of regarding someone well for their qualities or traits, but respect can also be the action of treating people with appreciation and dignity.

1.5 For Lemon employee's behaviours associated with being respectful and dignified include politeness, kindness, openness and honesty, showing empathy, thoughtfulness, showing appreciation, integrity and loyalty.

1.6 For Lemon employee's behaviours that demonstrate a lack of respect and dignity include bullying, rudeness, bad manners, lying, ignorance, ridiculing, stereotyping and being offensive.

1.7 This policy sets out the responsibilities and arrangements which will allow the Company to mitigate the risks which may arise from circumstances where an employee's behaviour has fallen short of the expected standards.

1.8 Expected standards are determined through this policy, contracts of employment, job descriptions, staff handbook, behavioural framework, other relevant organisational policies, procedures, and guidance and through reasonable expectations set by the manager.

1.9 This policy provides the mechanism to report concerns of unacceptable behaviour if they occur and gives reassurance that employees will not be subjected to unfavourable treatment or victimisation because of raising a concern in good faith.

1.10 Unacceptable behaviour can be experienced in person or virtually, such as in a Teams meeting. The company deems work social events as an extension of the workplace in relation to this policy.

1.11 This policy should not be used to deal with issues which fall under the Whistleblowing Policy or where there is a disagreement with a managerial decision, which would come under the grievance procedure. In situations where there is uncertainty, clarity on how to proceed should be sought from the HR Manager.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 This policy applies to all staff, contractors, casual and agency workers. However, agency workers are also expected to raise any concerns of inappropriate behaviour with their agency.

2.2 Individuals

All employees have a responsibility to

- Demonstrate respect and dignity in their working relations with individuals and groups.
- Work collaboratively and effectively in teams across the company.
- Identify and challenge unacceptable behaviour when it occurs, even if not directed at themselves.
- Address and resolves matters, where reasonably possible, in a positive and constructive way.
- Raise more serious concerns through the relevant channels.
- Be reflective when they become aware that their behaviour has been unacceptable in relation to this policy and modify accordingly.

2.3 Managers

In addition to their individual responsibility, managers of staff and others with similar duties have

- A responsibility to lead in promoting a culture of dignity and respect, and
- A duty to take timely, appropriate, and relevant action to resolve concerns.

2.4 Lemon Groundwork Solutions

Expectations of the Company as an employer will be to ensure

- It treats all employees with dignity and respect as defined by the employees.
- That employees are valued, developed and rewarded.
- It nurtures a positive culture where it is safe to discuss what is not working and is solution focused.
- It deals with inappropriate behaviour in a timely manner.
- That it safeguards the wellbeing and dignity of all its staff and client through its policies and practices.
- It welcomes diversity and is inclusive.
- Complaints of harassment, bullying and discrimination are treated seriously and with discretion and that no assumption of guilt will be made.
- It recognises its legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to prevent discrimination in relation to protected characteristics.
- It recognises its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 for the workplace to be free from discrimination and harassment.

3. Definitions

3.1 Protected characteristics

Under the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics are defined as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

3.2 Unacceptable/Inappropriate behaviour

This type of behaviour includes any form of conduct or behaviour of a physical, verbal or non-verbal kind which;

- Is unwanted, unsolicited, unreasonable and personally offensive to the recipient(s) irrespective of the intentions.
- Creates an uncomfortable, intimidating, hostile or humiliating work environment for the recipient(s) affecting their dignity whilst at work.
- Fails to respect the rights and recognise the impact that such behaviour may have on the recipient(s) or other employees.

Examples of unacceptable behaviours in the workplace can include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome physical contact ranging from unnecessary touching to serious assault.
- Intimidating or threatening behaviour, or language (including swearing when used in this manner).
- Unwelcome attention or advances of a sexual nature.
- Disparaging, ridiculing or insulting behaviour, language or gestures.
- Inappropriate communication or visual display of offensive material.
- Isolation, non-cooperation, or deliberate exclusion of an individual from a work situation.
- Undermining of an individual through unfair work allocation or persistent unjustified.
- Manipulating a situation or making personal gain, through lying or falsifying documents.

Examples of misconduct and gross misconduct are set out under the Company's Disciplinary policy.

3.3 Harassment

Harassment is defined under the Equality Act 2010 as unwanted conduct in relation to a relevant protected characteristic or on other grounds, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating intimidating, hostile, regrading humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

3.4 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any kind of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that makes an individual feel humiliated or intimidated, or that creates a hostile environment. Under the Equality Act 2010 it defined as behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated or offended, related to their sex. Further guidance on the Company's position on sexual harassment can be found within the Company's Sexual Harassment Statement and should be read in conjunction with this policy.

3.4 Bullying

Bullying is defined by ACAS as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviours, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

3.5 Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as actions which result in an individual being treated less favourably (either directly or indirectly) because of a protected characteristic(s) under the Equalities Act 2010.

3.6 Victimisation

Victimisation is defined as treating someone unfairly because they made or supported a complaint in relation to a protected characteristic, or someone thinks they did or may do so.

3.7 Cyber Bullying

Cyber Bullying can be defined as bullying, harassment and other unacceptable behaviour conducted online through for example, social media sites, messaging apps, blogs, email or forums.

3.8 Banter

Office banter can be defined as the casual, light-hearted chat that happens between colleagues, helping to build rapport and create a relaxed atmosphere in the workplace. When used correctly, it can promote camaraderie and boost morale. However, like with all humour, it's essential to keep it appropriate and inclusive. What is funny to one person might not be to another. Friendly banter should make everyone feel included, not alienated and there is a fine line between banter and bullying behaviour.

Typically, banter is mutual, whereas bullying is one-sided and harmful. If a joke starts to feel personal or if the recipient is disengaged, then it is the responsibility of the individual initiating the banter to step back and reassess whether it's still banter, as it may have crossed into bullying territory.

3.9 Managerial Supervision

When an individual is being monitored or managed because of work performance that is seen as below standard there can often be allegations of bullying. It is perfectly legitimate for an employer to bring performance failings to the attention of an employee (and arguably it has a duty to do so), but performance management should:

- be aimed at improving the performance.
- be supportive and constructive.
- take into account any underlying health or wellbeing issues.
- be done in a private environment.
- be focused on the specific aspects or work areas that require improvement.
- be based on realistic timescales and targets for improvement.

And managers should not:

- be personally critical of the individual.
- pick up mistakes or errors that would not be mentioned to others.
- micro-manage the individual.
- create unrealistic timescales and targets.
- raise issues in front of others unless there is a justifiable reason to do so.

4. Resolution

Employees are encouraged where possible, to resolve any concerns informally. They may wish to seek advice and support from a manager, HR Manager or a Trade Union representative.

4.1 Options for employees

Where an employee identifies a potential breach of this policy, there are a number of options in way of resolution they may wish to consider.

4.1.1 Individual Action

Where an employee believes they are being subjected to treatment which in breach of this policy, they should seek to address this at the earliest stage. In doing so the employees must not display any behaviours which would make them in breach of this policy.

If they feel able to, the employee should speak with the individual causing the offence that such behaviour is unacceptable to them. This must be done in a composed and respectful manner. In most instances, this can be sufficient to bring the unwanted behaviour to an end.

4.1.2 Informal Assistance

If the employee does not feel able to resolve the matter themselves at an early stage, they may wish to seek advice and support from a manager, HR Manager or Trade Union representative. All disclosures of breaches to this policy will be treated in confidence in this instance.

At the informal stage every effort should be made by all parties involved, including the employee who raised the concern, to resolve these matters without recourse to the formal procedures. However, the company recognises that this may sometimes be difficult in harassment and bullying cases and therefore an employee may proceed directly to the formal stage of the procedure if they believe there are good reasons why it is not possible or appropriate to raise their concerns informally.

4.1.3 Mediation

Mediation can provide a constructive way of resolving disputes and difficult situations. However, in order to work successfully it requires agreement from both parties involved before the mediation process can begin.

Mediation will generally be carried out by a suitable, trained mediator if available. The process is flexible to meet individual needs but will usually involve discussions with the individuals with the aim of bringing both parties together to talk the matter through.

Mediation is most appropriate when both parties:

- are genuinely willing to communicate and agree a course of action;
- feel able to communicate openly and without fear of victimisation or reprisal;
- are prepared to focus on the future;
- are prepared to seek a constructive solution and do not wish for a punitive outcome.

4.1.4 Raising a formal complaint

If the concern has not been resolved by informal means, or the employee feels it cannot be resolved this way, then they may submit a formal complaint.

Any complaint should be submitted as a grievance in line with the Company's Grievance policy and procedure.

Where, during the course of an investigation of a complaint, it is determined that disciplinary

investigation is required then this will be undertaken in accordance with the Company's Disciplinary policy and procedure.

4.2 Reporting concerns to the police

Where an employee believes that a breach of this policy constitutes as a criminal offence or is an immediate threat to safety, they should report the matter to the police. If not already aware, employees should inform the Company through the relevant manager or HR Manager so that steps can be taken to provide support.

5. Housekeeping and Maintenance

5.1 The policy will be monitored annually by the HR Manager and Directors, and any necessary updates will be proposed to employees where required, following agreed consultation arrangements. The policy will be updated automatically and without consultation when there are changes in the law or employment regulation.

Amendment Record

Page No.	Context	Revision	Date
All	Consultation process started with employee voice group	001	14/08/2023
All	New issue – Replaces section 18 Equality and Diversity Policy from Staff Handbook	001	29/08/2023
Front	Update to style and layout	002	13/10/2023
All	Replaces: Equalities and Diversity Policy IMS-POL-06	002	13/10/2023
Page 5	Addition: 2.4 (Human Rights Act reference)	003	16/10/2023
Page 4	Update: 1.2 Company mission statement	004	08/08/2024
Page 6	Update: 3.4 reference to Sexual Harassment Statement	005	08/04/2025
Page 7	Addition: 3.8 banter definition	005	08/04/2025

Appendix A: Overview of the Dignity and Respect at Work procedure

Employee believes they are being subjected to treatment, which is in breach of this policy, they should seek to address this at the earliest stage.	
Individual Action If they feel able to employees should;	Speak with the individual causing the offence and explain that the behaviour is unacceptable to them. This should be done in a respectful manner and the employee should not display any behaviours that would make them in breach on the policy.
Informal Assistance If the employee does not feel able to take individual action, they can;	Seek advice and support from • a manager • HR Manager • Trade Union representative. All disclosures of breaches to this policy will be treated in confidence in this instance.
If the concern has not been resolved by informal means, or the employee feels it cannot be resolved this way, then they may submit a formal complaint via the Company's grievance procedure.	
Raising a formal complaint The employee must;	Submit a grievance in writing to their Line Manager (or appropriate manager) containing a brief description of the breach to this policy, including key details (name, dates, times)
The Manager must;	Confirm receipt of grievance and appointment, in conjunction with HR, a suitable Investigation Officer.
The Investigation Officer must;	Carry out a thorough, but timely, investigation. They may need to interview the complainant and any witnesses. They may require written statements dependent on the complaint. Once the investigation is concluded, in conjunction with HR, they must arrange a suitable grievance hearing and assign an appropriate Chairperson.
The employee has the right;	To appeal the outcome should it not be resolved to their satisfaction.
Where an employee identifies a breach of this policy which constitutes as a criminal offence or immediate threat to safety , they should report the matter to the police . If not already aware, employees should inform the Company through the relevant manager or HR Manager so that steps can be taken to provide support.	