

PORLOCK PARISH COUNCIL DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY



Porlock Parish Council is committed to tackling behaviour that is deemed inappropriate in working relationships, and wishes to foster an environment of tolerance and respect. The purpose of this policy is to ensure a culture of working relationships where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, where bullying and harassment are unacceptable and individuals have the confidence to deal with and challenge harassment or bullying without reprisals.

Bullying

- Intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient
- An abuse or misuse of power

Harassment

- Unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace
- May be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, nationality, sexual orientation or any personal characteristic of the individual
- May be persistent or an isolated incident
- Actions or comments viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient
- Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour

Examples of unacceptable behaviour (especially on discriminatory grounds):

- Physical conduct ranging from unwelcome touching to serious assault
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- The offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances e.g. promotion, access to training
- Threats for rejecting sexual advances
- Demeaning comments about a person's appearance
- Verbal abuse or offensive comments, including jokes or pranks related to age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Unwanted nicknames, especially related to a person's age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone
- Lewd or suggestive comments or gestures
- Deliberate exclusion from conversations, work activities or social activities.
- Withholding information a person needs in order to do their job
- Practical jokes, initiation ceremonies or inappropriate birthday rituals
- Physical abuse such as hitting, pushing or jostling
- Rifling through, hiding or damaging personal property
- Display of pictures or objects with sexual or racial overtones, even if not directed at any particular person
- Isolation or non-cooperation at work
- Subjecting a person to humiliation or ridicule, belittling their efforts, whether directly and / or in front of others
- The use of obscene gestures
- Abusing a position of power

Certain actions may be acceptable to one person but not another, and the fact that the recipient takes part in a conversation or interaction is not a defence. Everyone has a responsibility to behave in a way that is not offensive to others and acknowledge that the views and opinions held, or decisions made by others may not coincide with their own.

Although discrimination is not a necessary element, it is often an aggravating factor. Discrimination on the following grounds is unlawful: sex; gender reassignment; being married or in a civil partnership; being pregnant or on maternity leave; race (including ethnic or national origin, nationality and colour); disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief, and age.

It is important to recognise that bullying does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behaviour or effective, robust performance management. Constructive and fair feedback about your behaviour or performance from your manager or colleagues/Councillors is not bullying. It is part of normal employment and management routines, and should not be interpreted as anything different.

This policy and procedure applies to all council staff and councillors. If the individual feels able to, then often the quickest and most effective means of dealing with an issue is for the recipient to raise the matter informally, make their colleague aware that their behaviour is unacceptable and explain why.

If this is not felt to be possible or an informal approach has been ineffective, or the behaviour is so serious that the informal procedure would be inappropriate, then it should be reported in the first instance to the Parish Clerk or the Council's Chair. In the case that the Clerk or the Chair is involved in the inappropriate behaviour, it should be reported to the Council's Vice Chair. Inappropriate behaviour may be reported by the recipient or anyone who witnesses it. More information on how to report inappropriate behaviour can be found in the Council's Grievance Procedure.

Any complainant will be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for making a complaint or assisting in an investigation. All complaints will be dealt with as confidentially as possible, however the Council has a duty of care to all employees and it may be necessary to investigate and take action regarding a complaint without the consent of the complainant.

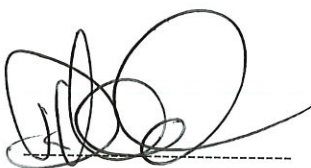
The complainant should keep a record of the incidents e.g. what happened, when and if there were any witnesses. It would also be useful to consider how the situation could be resolved.

If the investigation reveals that the complaint is valid, prompt attention and disciplinary action may be taken to stop the harassment/bullying immediately and prevent its recurrence.

An employee who is found to have made a malicious or vexatious complaint the person raising the complaint may be subject to action under the council's disciplinary procedure.

This policy will be reviewed in line the Councils' Policy & Procedures Review Cycle to ensure the effectiveness of the policy. Monitoring of the policy will take place through regular 1-2-1s, the annual appraisal process.

Approved by the Council on:



Duncan McCanlis
Chair

Dated: 15th January 2025



Johnathan Jones
Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer