

**Dignity at Work Policy and Key Procedures**

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| Aims of the Policy |  | The purpose of this policy is to ensure a culture of working relationships where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, where harassment is unacceptable, and individuals have the confidence to deal with and challenge harassment or bullying without reprisals.  Queensferry Community Council is committed to tackling behaviour that is deemed inappropriate in working relationships. In many instances, the issues can be resolved informally. However, any complaint will be dealt with seriously and investigated quickly. |
| **Scope of the policy** |  | The policy and procedure applies to all Employees & Councillors. |
| Definitions |  | Harassment is unwanted conduct in working relationships affecting people’s dignity. It is comments or actions that are regarded as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient, or that create a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment.  Harassment may be verbal, non-verbal, physical, isolated or repeated and it can occur through behaviour in relation to gender, race, religion or belief, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, trade union membership, victimisation, real or suspected infection with HIV/AIDS, health status, marital status, political conviction or willingness to challenge harassment.  Bullying can be defined as persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or malicious behaviour or abuse of power which makes the recipient feel threatened, humiliated or vulnerable and undermines confidence. Examples include:  Shouting in public, persistent or unfair criticism, ostracising people, threats and instilling fear, inappropriate use of email, spreading malicious rumours, constantly undermining effort, withholding information, removing areas of responsibility or imposing inappropriate tasks.  Certain actions may be acceptable to one person but not another. |
| **Responsibilities** |  | Everyone has a responsibility to behave in a way that is not offensive to others and acknowledge that the views and opinions held by others and decisions made by managers may not coincide with their own.  Employees or Councillors should report any actions which breach this policy to the Clerk and Chairperson/Vice Chairperson  Employees and Councilors will be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for making a complaint or assisting in an investigation. |
| **Complaints** |  | All complaints will be dealt with as confidentially as possible. However, the organisation 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. |
| **Informal complaint procedure** |  | If the employee 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. |
| **Formal complaint procedure** |  | Stage 1 – Attempted resolution by frontline staff.  Stage 2 – Attempted resolution by the Clerk.  Stage 3 – The complaint is considered by a panel of Councillors (or possibly full Council).  Note: In Council’s where the Clerk is the sole employee, Stage 1 is redundant. In cases where the Clerk is the complainant, Stage 2 is redundant. |
| **Monitoring and review** |  | The policy should be reviewed Annually to ensure the effectiveness of the policy.  Monitoring of the policy will take place through the following means: This will take the form of analysing the number of complaints or number of issues raised. Some organisations have a staff survey which allows staff to comment on this aspect. Exit interviews (when a person is leaving the organisation) are also a useful way of gaining a perspective on the success of the policy. Through monitoring, an organisation may be able to identify trends of unacceptable behaviour in a particular area of the organisation and develop an action plan to address it. |