



## (WSP) Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedures

WSP provides a working environment that allows all staff, members and volunteers to work effectively and competently, where there is respect for the dignity of each individual person and which is free from harassment, discrimination and intimidation.

### **Definitions**

The legal definition of **harassment** is that harassment occurs where a person is subjected to unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating their dignity or creating a intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

**Bullying** overlaps to some extent, and is usually identified as intimidating, hostile or humiliating treatment by one or more individuals.

*One minor incident will not constitute bullying or harassment. However, a series of such incidents will do so, particularly where an employee or member has expressed a dislike of such behaviour and/or has asked for it to stop.*

### **Introduction**

WSP believes that all staff, members and volunteers have the right to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect whilst at work and that early resolution of problems is essential to good working relations.

Harassment & bullying not only has a severe effect on the physical and mental health of the individual, but can impact on staff, members and volunteers who witness harassment may suffer stress, loss of morale and reduced effectiveness. Where harassment occurs, disciplinary action will be taken against the perpetrator and may include dismissal (for staff) or their membership withdrawn for serious offences. Malicious complaints or victimization of complainants will be dealt with similarly.

It is the duty of all staff, members, trustees and volunteers to comply with this policy and to ensure appropriate action is taken where they become aware of possible harassment.

### **The Law**

Sexual, racial, age, gender reassignment and disability harassment at work may constitute unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 allowing a complaint of discrimination to go before an employment tribunal.

### **WSP Policies & Procedures 2019**

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There is no specific law relating to bullying in the workplace but employers have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees as far as is reasonably practical under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Under the Health and Safety Regulations 1993 employers have a responsibility to assess the nature and scale of risks to employees and take appropriate action to reduce/eliminate the risks.

If a person resigns because of harassment in the workplace or they are dismissed because they complain of harassment, they may be able to bring a complaint of unfair dismissal to an employment tribunal.

## Procedure

- If you feel you are being harassed it is important to take action as early as possible to try to stop the harassment. At all stages you should also keep notes of the incidents of harassment that occur, noting time, date, location, people involved, details of what was said and done and the manner in which it was done/said.
- In the first instance you should try to approach the person who you feel is harassing you and ask them to stop. You should explain to them the nature of the behaviour that you want to stop and how their behaviour makes you feel. If you do not feel that you can approach the person on your own you might ask a colleague or WSP member to accompany you when you meet the person(s) allegedly harassing you or you might wish to ask another person to speak to the alleged harasser on your behalf. You may prefer to ask this person to facilitate the discussion with the alleged harasser.
- If you do not feel that the harassment has ceased after speaking with the person or if you do not wish to speak with them you can consider making a formal complaint by implementing the **Disciplinary and Grievance Policy** in order that the situation can be satisfactorily resolved. Individuals are assured that should you raise such a grievance; the matter will be dealt with promptly in a discreet and caring manner.

## Possible outcomes:

- Commitment that action will not be repeated
- Resolution e.g. through mediation
- Formal disciplinary resolution (serious bullying and harassment will be treated as gross misconduct)
- Misunderstandings clarified and resolved

Policy Approved:	Review Date:	WSP Director Responsible for Action:

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