



1. HARASSMENT AND BULLYING (DIGNITY AT WORK) POLICY

1.1 Harassment and Bullying (Dignity at Work) Statement

It is our policy to maintain a non-discriminatory working environment that is free from harassment or bullying. In this Policy, we refer to the 'anti-harassment protected characteristics' which are age, disability, gender reassignment, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or religious or philosophical belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Employees must not harass, bully or intimidate other employees for any reason. Where harassment or bullying relates to an anti-harassment protected characteristic this not only contravenes RUSI's policy, but it may also constitute unlawful discrimination. Any harassment or bullying will be treated as potential gross misconduct under RUSI's disciplinary procedure and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal. Employees should bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful harassment. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

All employees are responsible for conducting themselves in accordance with this policy and RUSI will not condone or tolerate any form of harassment, bullying or intimidation, whether engaged in by employees or by outside third parties who do business with RUSI, such as clients, customers, contractors and suppliers.

It is the responsibility of all employees to eliminate any harassment, bullying or intimidation of which they are aware by informing their manager of suspected cases of harassment, bullying or intimidation.

All allegations of harassment or bullying will be thoroughly and promptly investigated. Where allegations are substantiated, appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal will be taken against any person responsible. We will also take appropriate action against any third parties who are found to have committed an act of harassment against our employees.

This policy covers bullying and harassment in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, for example, business trips and work-related social events.

1.2 Harassment and Bullying

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment.

It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to the 'anti-harassment protected characteristics'. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

Harassment or bullying may be physical, written, verbal or non-verbal conduct. Examples include:

- (a) unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing, grabbing, brushing past someone, invading their personal space, and more serious forms of physical or sexual assault;
- (b) unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless), and suggestions that sexual favours may further a career or that a refusal may hinder it;
- (c) continued suggestions for social activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome;
- (d) sending or displaying material that is pornographic or that some people may find offensive (including e-mails, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet);
- (e) offensive or intimidating comments or gestures, or insensitive jokes or pranks;
- (f) mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability;
- (g) racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group or gender;
- (h) deliberately revealing or threatening to reveal someone's sexual orientation (heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual);
- (i) ignoring or shunning someone, for example, by deliberately excluding them from a conversation or a workplace social activity.
- (j) shouting at, being sarcastic towards, ridiculing or demeaning others;
- (k) physical or psychological threats;
- (l) overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- (m) inappropriate and/or derogatory remarks about someone's performance;
- (n) abuse of authority or power by those in positions of seniority;
- (o) deliberately excluding someone from meetings or communications without good reason.

These examples are not exhaustive and disciplinary action at the appropriate level will be taken against employees committing any form of harassment, bullying or intimidation.

1.3 Complainning About Harassment or Bullying

1.3.1 Informal Complaint

We recognise that complaints of harassment and bullying (particularly of any type of discriminatory related harassment) can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature, and that it may not be appropriate for you to raise the issue through the normal Grievance Procedure. In these circumstances, you are encouraged to raise such issues with a senior person of your choice (whether or not that person has a direct supervisory responsibility for you) as a Confidential Assistant, who will be responsible for investigating the matter informally in order to assist the complainants with raising their concerns with their perpetrator or others as permitted by the employee. [Appendix A](#) provides FAQ on the role of a confidential assistant.

If you are the victim of minor harassment, you should make it clear to the harasser on an informal basis that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask the harasser to stop. If you feel unable to do this verbally, then you should hand a written request to the harasser, and your Confidential Assistant can help you in this.

1.3.2 Formal Complaint

If you believe you have been subjected to harassment or bullying (whether by a fellow employee or third party), you should invoke the Grievance Procedure as set out in this Handbook.

In view of the sensitivity of this subject, you may, if preferred, approach the Human Resources Director or Director General directly rather than your immediate Line Manager. In either case, we will treat the matter as strictly confidential. However, in order to investigate an allegation effectively, we must be able to determine the scope of the investigation and the individuals who should be informed or interviewed about the allegation. For example, your identity and nature of the allegations must be revealed to the alleged harasser so that he or she is able to fairly respond to the allegations.

If possible, you should keep notes of the harassment so that the written complaint can include:

- (a) Name of the alleged harasser.
- (b) Nature of the alleged harassment.
- (c) Dates and times when the alleged harassment(s) occurred.
- (d) Name(s) of any witnesses.
- (e) Any action already taken by you to stop the alleged harassment.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, we will take action to separate you from the alleged harasser to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place. This may involve a temporary transfer of you or the alleged harasser to another work area or suspension with pay of either party until the matter has been resolved.

The person dealing with the complaint will carry out a thorough investigation in accordance with the Grievance Procedure. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence will be a disciplinary matter.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal against the decision in accordance with the Grievance Procedure.

As a general principle, the decision whether to progress a complaint is up to you. However, we have a duty to protect all staff and may pursue the matter independently if, in all the circumstances, we consider it appropriate to do so.

1.3.3 General Comments

If the report concludes that the allegation is well-founded, the harasser will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure. An employee who receives a formal warning or who is dismissed for harassment may appeal against the disciplinary action by following the Disciplinary Appeal Procedure.

Where possible, we will also take appropriate action against a third-party harasser.

If you bring a complaint of harassment, you will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However, if the report concludes that the complaint is both untrue and has been brought with malicious intent disciplinary action will be taken against you.

Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone for making a complaint or assisting in good faith with an investigation under this procedure will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

APPENDIX A

Who can be a confidential assistant?

Bullying and Harassment can be sensitive and often difficult for the person being bullied to confront/ approach the perpetrator. A confidential assistant is someone who employees can approach when they have experienced/ are experiencing workplace bullying or harassment. This can be a co-worker of the same level, a senior colleague, a mental health first aider or HR.

What does a confidential assistant do?

- Standing up and challenging disrespectful behaviour(s)
- Acting as role model by treating other people with respect
- Raising issues regarding dignity at work in order to improve the experiences of employees at RUSI
- Influencing and informing colleagues on best practice
- Listening to the complainant and with their permission sharing the information with the perpetrator, or HR
- Encouraging them to seek a redress either through informal or formal routes
- Always maintain confidentiality!

Can a confidential assistant also investigate the allegation?

With permission from the employee, it might be necessary to carry out a light touch initial investigation to ensure that you have enough evidence/ information to confront the perpetrator. This could be speaking with the employee, asking probing questions about the incident(s) and requesting for them to share any evidence that they feel is relevant to assist you with speaking to the perpetrator. You are not expected to act as the investigating officer as this is a different role and typically done at a formal stage.

What if I can't support the employee?

We understand that you may not be comfortable with approaching the perpetrator, if that was the case, please advise the employee early enough so they can find alternative. It is important that you maintain confidentiality of what they disclosed if you choose not to support them. You can also make suggestions of an alternative individual that they can approach or advise to speak to HR.

Can I assume that the perpetrator is guilty?

All employees are expected to be treated with respect and dignity. Given the sensitivity around such allegation(s), we are expected to accord the same level of respect to the perpetrator as we would to the complainant. The formal investigation procedure when carried out thoroughly and fairly will seek to address the concerns raised.