



# YOUNG BRISTOL ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

Our thanks to Burges Salmon for their help and guidance in producing these Policies



**CONTENTS**

<b>Clause</b>	<b>Heading</b>	<b>Page</b>
1	ABOUT THIS POLICY .....	1
2	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS POLICY? .....	1
3	WHAT IS HARASSMENT? .....	1
4	WHAT IS BULLYING? .....	2
5	INFORMAL STEPS .....	3
6	RAISING A FORMAL COMPLAINT .....	3
7	FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS .....	4
8	ACTION FOLLOWING THE INVESTIGATION .....	5
9	APPEALS .....	5
10	PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR THOSE INVOLVED .....	6
11	CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORD-KEEPING .....	6

## **1 ABOUT THIS POLICY**

- 1.1 Young Bristol is committed to providing a working environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect.
- 1.2 This policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs at work and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related events or social functions. It covers bullying and harassment carried out by staff (which may include consultants, contractors and agency workers) and also by third parties that you encounter while doing your job, such as customers, suppliers or visitors to our premises.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all employees, trustees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers and agency workers.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

## **2 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS POLICY?**

- 2.1 The Chief Executive of Young Bristol has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
- 2.2 All employees have a specific responsibility to operate within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that they understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and to take action when behaviour falls below its requirements.
- 2.3 Staff have a responsibility to build a working environment in which the dignity of everyone is respected and to behave in a way that does not give rise to harassment and/or bullying.
- 2.4 Staff should disclose any instances of harassment or bullying of which they become aware to their line manager.
- 2.5 Questions about this policy and requests for training or information on dealing with bullying or harassment should be directed to the Chief Executive of Young Bristol.
- 2.6 Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the Chief Executive of Young Bristol.

## **3 WHAT IS HARASSMENT?**

- 3.1 Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that 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.

- 3.2 It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.
- 3.3 Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.
- 3.4 For example, harassment may include, but is not limited to:
- (a) unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
  - (b) continued suggestions for social activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome;
  - (c) 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);
  - (d) unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
  - (e) inappropriate personal contact, including spying, stalking and pestering;
  - (f) racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group or gender;
  - (g) outing or threatening to out someone as gay or lesbian;
  - (h) offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content; or
  - (i) mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.
- 3.5 A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

#### **4 WHAT IS BULLYING?**

- 4.1 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.

- 4.2 Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. By way of example, bullying may include, but is not limited to:
- (a) physical or psychological threats;
  - (b) overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
  - (c) actions designed to isolate someone (for example excluding employees from meetings, events or communications without good cause); and
  - (d) inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance.
- 4.3 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.

## **5 INFORMAL STEPS**

- 5.1 You have the right to work in an environment that is free from harassment and bullying. If you consider that you are being harassed or bullied, you should initially attempt to resolve the problem informally with the person responsible, if you are able to, and explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, you should speak to your line manager or, where the allegations relate to your line manager, the Chief Executive of Young Bristol or an appropriate member of the board of trustees, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally.
- 5.2 If you are in doubt as to whether an incident or series of incidents amounts to bullying or harassment, you should initially contact your line manager (or, where the allegations relate to your line manager, the Chief Executive of Young Bristol or an appropriate member of the board of trustees) informally for confidential advice.
- 5.3 If informal steps have not been successful, or would not be appropriate, you should follow the formal procedure set out below.

## **6 RAISING A FORMAL COMPLAINT**

- 6.1 The informal procedure may not be appropriate due to the nature of the harassment or bullying or because you do not feel able to talk directly to the person creating the problem. In these cases, or where the informal procedure has been unsuccessful, you should raise your complaint in writing with the Chief Executive of Young Bristol or an appropriate member of the Board of Trustees, whose role is to achieve a solution wherever possible and to respect the confidentiality of all concerned. If the matter concerns your line manager you should refer your complaint to their line manager, or

where the complaint involves or relates to the Chief Executive, you should refer your complaint to an appropriate member of the Board of Trustees.

- 6.2 Your written complaint should set out full details of the conduct in question, including the name of the harasser or bully, the nature of the harassment or bullying, the date(s) and time(s) at which it occurred, the names of any witnesses and any action that has been taken so far to attempt to stop it from occurring.
- 6.3 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 we may pursue the matter independently if, in all the circumstances, we consider it appropriate to do so.

## **7 FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS**

- 7.1 We will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. Individuals not involved in the complaint or the investigation should not be told about it. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and, where possible, no prior involvement in the complaint. The investigation should be thorough, impartial and objective, and carried out with sensitivity and due respect for the rights of all parties concerned.
- 7.2 We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as reasonably practicable after receiving your complaint, so that you can give your account of events. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union representative of your choice, who must respect the confidentiality of the investigation. You will be given a provisional timetable for the investigation. The investigator will arrange further meetings with you as appropriate throughout the investigation.
- 7.3 Where your complaint is about an employee, we may consider suspending them on full pay or making other temporary changes to working arrangements pending the outcome of the investigation, if circumstances require. The investigator will also meet with the alleged harasser or bully to hear their account of events. They have a right to be told the details of the allegations against them, so that they can respond.
- 7.4 Where your complaint is about someone other than an employee, such as a customer, supplier or visitor, we will consider what action may be appropriate to protect you and anyone involved pending the outcome of the investigation, bearing in mind the reasonable needs of the business and the rights of that person. Where appropriate, we will attempt to discuss the matter with the third party.
- 7.5 It may be necessary to interview witnesses to any of the incidents mentioned in your complaint. If so, the importance of confidentiality will be emphasised to them.

- 7.6 At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator will submit a report to the person nominated to consider the complaint. That person will usually arrange a meeting with you to report the outcome of the investigation as soon as reasonably practicable following the conclusion of the investigation. A copy of the report and the findings will be given to you and to the alleged harasser.
- 7.7 For the avoidance of doubt the need for confidentiality may prevent Young Bristol giving you the details of any disciplinary action or the outcome of any disciplinary outcome taken as a result of the investigation.

## **8 ACTION FOLLOWING THE INVESTIGATION**

- 8.1 If the manager considers that harassment or bullying has occurred, prompt action will be taken to address it.
- 8.2 Where the harasser or bully is an employee the matter will be dealt with as a case of misconduct or possible gross misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure. If the harasser or bully is a third party, such as a customer or other visitor, we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem.
- 8.3 Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned. It may be appropriate to arrange some form of mediation and/or counselling, or to change the duties, working location or reporting lines of one or both parties.
- 8.4 Any staff member who deliberately provides false information or otherwise acts in bad faith as part of an investigation may be subject to action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

## **9 APPEALS**

- 9.1 If you are not satisfied with the outcome you may appeal in writing to the Chief Executive of Young Bristol or another nominated representative, stating your full grounds of appeal, within 5 working days of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.
- 9.2 We will hold an appeal meeting as soon as a reasonably practicable after receiving your written appeal. This will be dealt with impartially by a manager or a member of the Board of Trustees or another nominated representative who has not previously been involved in the case (although they may ask anyone previously involved to be present). You may bring a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting.
- 9.3 We will confirm our final decision in writing as soon as reasonably practicable after the appeal hearing. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further appeal.

## **10 PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR THOSE INVOLVED**

- 10.1 Staff who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation should not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.
- 10.2 If you believe you have suffered any such treatment you should inform your line manager. If, having done so, the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.

## **11 CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORD-KEEPING**

- 11.1 Confidentiality is an important part of the procedures provided under this policy. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.
- 11.2 Information about a complaint by or about an employee may be placed on the employee's personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

Date: November 2016

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