

Nottingham Financial Resilience Partnership: ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

Introduction

NFRP are committed to having a workplace which is free from harassment and bullying. Also, to make sure that all workers, volunteers, trustees, partners and others who come into contact with us in the course of our work, are treated with dignity and respect. This is without regard to gender, sexual orientation, transgender status, marital or family status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, creed, culture, religion or belief, age, or disability.

Striving to make sure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is central to ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

This policy and procedure is intended to support this commitment in practice and to provide guidance to workers, volunteers, trustees and partners on how to deal with concerns of bullying or harassment.

Policy

NFRP will not tolerate bullying or harassment in our workplace, during partnership meetings or at work-related events outside of the workplace. This is regardless of whether the conduct is a one-off act or repeated course of conduct, and whether done purposefully or not.

Neither will we tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying. Retaliation or victimisation will also constitute an offence, which may in appropriate circumstances lead to summary dismissal, termination of contract, and/or exclusion from the partnership.

You should also be aware that if a court or tribunal finds that you have bullied or harassed someone, in some circumstances the treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

We will take appropriate action if any of our workers, volunteers, trustees or partners are bullied or harassed by our stakeholders or suppliers or any of our workers, volunteers, trustees or partners.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially (see NFRP Grievance

procedure). If, after an investigation, we decide that a worker, volunteer, trustee or partner has harassed or bullied another worker, volunteer, trustee or partner, then the individual in question may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of contract and/or exclusion from the partnership.

Workers, volunteers, trustees, partners and others who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result. False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Workers, volunteers, trustees, partners and others have a responsibility not to make false allegations. False allegations made in bad faith will be dealt with under our grievance procedure.

The type of treatment that amounts to bullying or harassment

Bullying or harassment is something that has happened that is unwelcome, unwarranted and causes a detrimental effect. If workers, volunteers, trustees, or partners complain they are being bullied or harassed, then they have a grievance which must be dealt with regardless of whether or not their complaint accords with a standard definition.

It is important to recognise that conduct which one person may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable. All workers, volunteers, trustees, and partners must, therefore, treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity.

Bullying does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behaviour or proper performance management.

Reporting concerns

What you should do if you witness an incident you believe to harassment or bullying?

If you witness such behaviour, you should report the incident in confidence to your manager or an NFRP trustee. Such reports will be taken seriously and will be treated in strict confidence as far as it is possible to do so.

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a stakeholder, partner or supplier (as opposed to an NFRP colleague)?

If you are being bullied or harassed by someone with whom you come into contact at work, please raise this with your manager or an appropriate NFRP trustee. We will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you.

What you should do if you are being bullied or harassed by a colleague (fellow worker, volunteer, trustee, or partner)?

If you are being bullied or harassed by another workers, volunteer, trustee, or partner, there are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal.

Informal resolution

If you are being bullied or harassed by another worker, volunteer, trustee, or partner you may be able to resolve the situation yourself by explaining clearly to the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to our policy and must stop. Alternatively, you may wish to ask your manager or an appropriate NFRP trustee to put this on your behalf or to be with you when confronting the perpetrator(s).

If the above approach does not work or if you do not feel able to try to resolve the situation in this way, or if you are being bullied by your own manager or a trustee, you should raise the issue with the chair of the trustees. The chair of the trustees will discuss with you the option of trying to resolve the situation informally by telling the alleged perpetrator(s), without prejudging the matter, that:

- there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a fellow worker, volunteer, trustee, or partner.
- such behaviour is contrary to our policy.
- the continuation of such behaviour could amount to a serious offence and subject to a formal grievance procedure.

It may be possible for the chair of the trustees (or other trustee if the chair is the alleged perpetrator) to have this conversation with the alleged perpetrator without revealing your name, if this is what you want. They will also stress that the conversation is confidential.

In certain circumstances we may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The chair of the trustees or relevant other trustee will discuss this with you if it is appropriate.

If your complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator(s) will not usually be subject to a formal grievance procedure. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as a serious allegation of sexual or racial harassment or in cases where a problem has happened before) we may decide to investigate further and take more formal action notwithstanding that you raised the matter informally. We will consult with you before taking this step.

Raising a formal complaint

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, you can make a formal complaint about the harassment or bullying to your manager or the chair of trustees. A formal complaint may ultimately lead to a formal grievance hearing against the perpetrator(s).

The chair of trustees or another trustee if the complaint concerns the chair of trustees will first investigate the complaint. You will need to co-operate with the investigation and provide the following details (if not already provided).

- The name of the alleged perpetrator(s).
- The nature of the harassment or bullying.
- The dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred.
- The names of any witnesses.
- Any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally.

The alleged perpetrator(s) would need to be told your name and the details of your complaint in order for the issue to be investigated properly. However, we will carry out the investigation as confidentially and sensitively as possible. Where you and the alleged perpetrator(s) work in proximity to each other, we will consider whether it is appropriate to separate you whilst the matter is being investigated.

After the investigation, we will meet with you to consider the complaint and the findings of the investigation. At the meeting, you may be accompanied by a fellow worker, volunteer, trustee, partner or a trade union official of your choice.

After the meeting (and normally within five working days), we will write to you to inform you of our decision and to notify you of your right to appeal to if you are dissatisfied with the outcome (please see the NFRP Grievance Procedure). You should put your appeal in writing explaining the reasons why you are dissatisfied with our decision.

You should submit your appeal within five working days of receiving written confirmation of our decision. If you submit an appeal, you will be invited to an appeal meeting, normally within five working days, and your appeal will be heard by two other Partnership Trustees, independently from the initial grievance hearing. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague, member of the partnership or trade union representative.

After the meeting the two people who heard the appeal will give you a decision, normally within three working days. This decision is final.

Disclosure and confidentiality

We will treat personal data collected during this process in accordance with the data protection policy. Information about how workers, volunteers, trustees, and partners data is used and the basis for processing data will be fully disclosed.

Use of the grievance procedure

Harassment and bullying constitute serious misconduct. If, at any stage from the point at which a complaint is raised, we believe there is a case to answer and an offence might have been committed, we will instigate our grievance procedure. Any worker, volunteer, trustee, or partner found to have harassed or bullied a colleague will be liable to grievance action up to and including summary dismissal, termination of contract, and exclusion from the partnership.