



**HEAR US CROYDON**

Croydon's Mental Health Service Users Group

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# Hear Us

## QUALITY MANUAL



## SECTION D: People Management

### D.1.5 Dignity at Work

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**Hear Us**

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Registered in England No. 6891337

Charity No.1135535



## Hear Us

To promote, educate, communicate and empower, for the benefit and interest of people affected by mental health issues

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### **Our commitment**

Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect in their working or volunteering environment, and we are committed to creating and fostering a culture that promotes respect for each other and values individual differences. In achieving this we will provide equal opportunities to job applicants and everyone working and volunteering for Hear Us irrespective of their background.

We will not condone, tolerate or ignore any form of discrimination or unacceptable behaviour (including harassment, bullying or victimisation), in our recruitment, employment or volunteering practices. All decisions are based on merit and judged against the charities justifiable business needs.

Our principles of non-discrimination, equality of opportunity, and treating people with dignity and respect also apply to the way in which everyone who works and volunteers for Hear Us treats anyone who we come into contact with.

This policy applies in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, which could include attending conferences or meetings, or work-related social events.

### **How we do this**

We will:

- Treat you on merit, fairly, with respect and dignity,
- Provide you with access to the applicable policies, procedures and guidelines for your job or volunteering role,
- Recognise you as an individual and value you for the contribution you make,
- Outline the standards and behaviours expected of you,
- Ensure our managers promote and implement the inherent principles of this policy.

We expect you to:

- Be accountable for the impact of your own behaviour, which must be respectful to others,



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- Familiarise yourself with and ensure you understand any applicable policies, procedures and guidelines for your job or volunteering role,
- Ask for clarification if you are unsure of the standards or behaviours expected of you,
- Maintain your professional and personal integrity, by treating everyone with respect and dignity.

### Who this applies to

This policy applies to anyone who carries out any work or volunteering within Hear Us.

### Our values and behaviours

We all have an important part to play in transforming the landscape of Mental Health forever. To help us achieve this, express who we are and what we can expect of each other, and our behavioural framework guides us in putting these values into action. Our values and behaviours are reflected in each of our people policies.

### Roles and responsibilities

**You:** will always aim to uphold and champion the principles in this policy. If you feel that you, a colleague, or anyone who comes into contact with Hear Us has been treated in a way that is inconsistent with this policy, we ask you to raise your concerns as quickly as possible. If you are an employee or volunteer please contact your line manager or speak to the Deputy CEO.

**Your manager** (if you are an employee) / **your role manager** (if you are a volunteer): is responsible for upholding, implementing and championing this policy. He or she will respond appropriately and quickly to any issues raised, and will take any necessary action in accordance with our Employee Handbook and associated policies.

**Human Resources (HR):** can provide information and guidance to you if you are an employee, and also to managers and role managers.

**Volunteering Officer:** in your local area, can provide information and guidance to you if you are a volunteer. You can also contact 020 8681 6888 or email [info@hear-us.org](mailto:info@hear-us.org) for further guidance or support.



### Some of our terms explained

**Discrimination:** could be characterised as being treated less favourably than someone else because of a protected characteristic (see below). The Equality Act 2010 protects employees from discrimination at work; however, in some circumstances it can be acceptable to have specific rules or arrangements in place as long as they can be justified. Discrimination can take place in different ways, and some are explained in 'Forms of discrimination' within this policy.

**Protected characteristics:** are defined by the Equality Act 2010 and consist of age, disability, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or having a child, race, religion or belief / lack of religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

**Harassment:** is unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect (even if it is unintentional) of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

**Bullying:** could be characterised as unwanted offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power. This behaviour undermines, humiliates, degrades or injures the person being treated in this way.

**Victimisation:** is when someone is treated less favourably because they have, in good faith, made a complaint of discrimination, harassment or bullying, supported someone else with a complaint of this type, or given information or evidence relating to such a complaint.

### Forms of discrimination

#### Direct discrimination

This generally occurs if you are treated less favourably because of:

- a protected characteristic,
- someone else believing you have a particular protected characteristic (this is known as discrimination by perception),
- being connected to, or associating with someone who has a particular protected characteristic (this is known as discrimination by association).



An example could be that you are not offered the same opportunities as a colleague because you have a disability; or because someone thinks you have a disability; or because you care for someone who has a disability.

### **Indirect discrimination**

This usually occurs if practices, policies or procedures are applied equally to everyone, but, in reality, those who share a protected characteristic (such as people who follow a particular religion) are placed at a disadvantage as a result.

An example could be banning the wearing of headscarves in the workplace unless it can be shown that there are genuine reasons for the rule, such as to keep you safe when using manual equipment.

### **Discrimination linked to harassment**

If someone experiences harassment because of a protected characteristic, for example because of their age or disability, this could be a type of discrimination. An example could be not inviting someone to work-related social events because of their age.

### **Discrimination linked to victimisation**

If someone is victimised because they are taking action under the Equality Act (such as making a complaint about discrimination), or if they are supporting someone else who is doing so, this could be a form of discrimination.

### **Harassment and bullying**

Harassment and bullying are harmful behaviours that are unwelcome, unwarranted and have a detrimental effect on the people involved and upon the workplace. Both involve conduct which intimidates, threatens, undermines, offends or humiliates, and could be carried out by an individual against an individual, or may involve groups of people. These behaviours can take a variety of forms and can be written, verbal, non-verbal, or through electronic communication (such as email or social media).



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Harassment can occur whether the reason for the behaviour is deliberate or unintended, and can include conduct that is intended to be funny or friendly. A person could also feel harassed or offended even if the inappropriate behaviour or comment is not made towards or about them personally.

Bullying can take place in many different situations and does not always come from a manager. It usually involves one person or a group of people taking offensive action against another, although it is not always obvious to others and so may be hard to detect.

Harassment and bullying could include unwanted behaviour carried out by someone who does not work or volunteer for Hear Us, such as an external supplier or a service user.

### **Examples of behaviour that could potentially be characterised as harassment or bullying include (not an exhaustive list):**

- Spreading malicious rumours
- Insulting someone through words or behaviour
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone
- Excluding someone, such as from conversations or events
- Unfair treatment
- Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- Deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading with work or constant criticism
- Preventing progression by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

### **The difference between harassment and bullying**

Harassment and bullying have similar characteristics although harassment is linked to the Equality Act 2010. This means that if harmful behaviour at work is linked to any of the protected characteristics it is likely to be harassment. This could involve a single incident or a series of incidents.

Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour by one or more people, which undermines an individual's right to dignity. It usually involves a number of incidents.





## **Victimisation**

Victimisation can have a damaging effect upon the individuals involved and the working environment. Treating people unfairly because they have made a complaint relating to dignity at work or because they have supported someone else to do so, can lead to others feeling reluctant to report their concerns in relation to discrimination, harassment or bullying.

Examples of behaviour that could potentially be characterised as victimisation include (not an exhaustive list):

- Labelling someone a 'troublemaker'
- Refusing to work with an individual
- Denying or preventing opportunities to progress
- Refusal to provide a reference
- Treating someone less favourably as a result of their actions

Victimisation is unacceptable, even if the original complaint is not upheld (providing that it was made in good faith) and whether the matter was dealt with formally or informally.

## **Resolving dignity at work issues**

If you feel that you, a colleague, or anyone who comes into contact with Hear Us has been subjected to unacceptable behaviour, we ask you to raise your concerns as quickly as possible.

We always aim to resolve issues informally although if you feel that the informal process has been unsuccessful or that it is not appropriate because of the seriousness of the complaint, you should follow the formal process.

If you are an employee, you may wish to contact a member of your line manager. They will be able to provide you with guidance on potential next steps and how to access support such as through your manager, HR, or a trained Employee Companion.

Your manager / role manager will respond appropriately to any allegations or complaints. This will depend on the situation and may include escalating the matter to their line manager, or seeking guidance from Peninsular HR (Bright



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HR). An investigation will be carried out and if appropriate, action will be taken in line with our Disciplinary policy.

### **Appropriate and responsible use of this policy**

This policy provides advice on how to find fair and transparent resolution to genuine complaints. Making a complaint that you know to be untrue, or giving evidence that you know to be untrue, may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

### **Further support and information**

If you need more information about this policy or need support in using it, please contact the Chief Executive Officer.

If you are an employee, you may also wish to contact our free, confidential, professional and independent 24-hour Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), provided by Peninsular HR (BrightHR), which provides support to employees. They can be contacted on 0800 051 3685.





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### Version control

Version #	Author	Date	Version Notes
HU-V8	T Oldham	19/20/2022	Reviewed and Minor Changes Made
HU-RV1	T Oldham	14/04/2023	New Revision