

# BUCS BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

September 2024

## 1. Introduction

BUCS is committed to providing a working environment free from bullying and harassment and ensuring all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. This includes bullying or harassment which occurs at work and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related events or social functions.

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. 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 a Protected Characteristic. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

## 2. Purpose

### 2.1 This policy aims to:

- Prevent and address bullying and harassment in the workplace.
- Ensure that all employees understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Provide a clear procedure for raising complaints of bullying or harassment.
- Protect employees from victimisation after making a complaint.

## 3. Scope

This policy covers bullying and harassment of and by all employees, volunteers, ambassadors, trustees, contractors, agency staff and anyone else engaged to work for or with BUCS. If the complainant or alleged harasser is not employed by BUCS, e.g. if the worker's contract is with someone else, this policy will apply with any necessary modifications.

The policy covers bullying and harassment in the workplace, electronic interactions, and any work-related setting outside the workplace, e.g. business trips and work-related social events.

## 4. What is bullying and harassment?

Harassment may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), for example:

- unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
- offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content;
- mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.

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.

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.

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), by way of example:

- physical or psychological threats;
- overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance;

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. Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Employer Responsibilities**

- Promoting awareness of this policy and ensuring it is available to all employees.
- Providing training to ensure all employees understand their responsibilities.
- Addressing incidents of bullying and harassment swiftly and confidentially.

### **5.2 Employee Responsibilities**

- Behave in a way that is respectful and considerate of others.
- Report any incidents of bullying or harassment promptly.
- Cooperate with any investigations into complaints.

## **6. Reporting**

Employees who experience or witness bullying or harassment should follow the below process:

### **6.1 Informal Resolution**

If you feel able to, speak directly to the person responsible for the behaviour. Explain that their actions are unwelcome and ask them to stop.

If you do not feel comfortable doing this, you may seek support from your line manager or HR.

### **6.2 Formal Complaint**

If the issue is not resolved informally, or if the behaviour is severe, a formal complaint should be made in writing to your line manager or HR, stating the following:

- The nature of the bullying or harassment.
- Dates, times, and locations of incidents.
- Names of witnesses, if any.

An investigation will be carried out in line with the company's grievance procedure.

### **6.3 Investigation**

Once a formal complaint is made, BUCS will:

- Conduct an impartial and thorough investigation.
- Interview all relevant parties, including the complainant, the alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses.
- Keep the matter confidential to the extent possible.

### **6.4 Outcome**

Following the investigation:

- If the complaint is upheld, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against the perpetrator in line with the company's disciplinary procedure, which may include dismissal.
- If the complaint is not upheld, we will still take steps to ensure that the working relationship between the parties is managed effectively.

## **7. Victimisation**

Employees who raise a genuine complaint or assist in an investigation will not be disciplined or subjected to any form of victimisation. Any revengeful behaviour will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

## **8. Disciplinary**

Bullying and harassment are treated as gross misconduct under BUCS's disciplinary procedures. If a complaint is upheld, disciplinary action may include warnings, suspension, or dismissal.

## **9. Support**

We recognise that dealing with bullying or harassment can be stressful and will provide support to employees involved in these situations, including access to counselling services and HR guidance.

## 10. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any significant legislative changes to ensure it remains compliant with employment law.