

## **Moreton & Partners Limited**

### **Bullying and Harassment Policy**

Harassment and bullying damages the working environment and can have a devastating effect on the health, confidence, morale, and performance of those affected by it. It may also have a damaging effect on other staff, not themselves the object of unwanted behaviour, who are witness to it or who have knowledge of the behaviour. All staff are entitled to a working environment which respects their personal dignity.

Moreton & Partners is committed to providing a working environment which is free from harassment, prejudice, bullying, and all type of unacceptable behaviour and supports the right of all staff to be always treated with respect and dignity at work. The Practice will continue to promote a safe, supportive, and constructive working environment for all persons and will not tolerate any behaviour by individuals or groups which in any way causes offence, embarrassment, or threatens others. Any form of harassment constitutes a disciplinary offence and incidents will be dealt with under the Company's formal disciplinary procedure.

#### **What is Harassment?**

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to the equality grounds which damages, or which is done with the aim of damaging, a person's dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

Many forms of misbehaviour may amount to harassment; examples include:

- Physical conduct such as assaulting a person or making obscene gestures.
- Verbal conduct such as making racist, sexist, sectarian or homophobic remarks; making derogatory comments about a person's age or disability; or singing songs of this nature.
- Visual or written material containing racist, sexist, sectarian, homophobic or other derogatory words or pictures (e.g. in posters, graffiti, letters or emails).
- Isolating a person (e.g. "sending them to Coventry") or refusing to co-operate or help them at work or by excluding them from work-related social activities.
- Forcing a person to offer sexual favours or to take part in religious or political activities.

#### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is similar to harassment in the sense that it too is offensive, hostile or oppressive behaviour. The main difference is that bullying behaviour need not be related to the equality grounds, but may be done for other reasons, such as jealousy or personal dislike or revenge or insecurity.

## **Implications of Harassment & Bullying**

Harassment and bullying can damage the health, confidence, morale and performance of employees who are affected by it. Harassment is unlawful under equality laws. Harassment and bullying may also be civil or criminal offences and may contravene health and safety law.

Quite apart from the legal implications, both harassment and bullying are contrary to the standards of behaviour that we expect of our employees. Both types of behaviour are unacceptable in our workplace and are not permitted or condoned. We will treat such behaviour as misconduct which may warrant dismissal from employment.

## **Employees' Rights**

Our employees have a right to work in a good and harmonious environment that is free from harassment and bullying and to complain about such behaviour should it occur.

We have established an internal grievance procedure to deal with such complaints and we would encourage aggrieved employees to use it. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly, and confidentially.

Our internal grievance procedure does not replace the right of aggrieved employees to also pursue complaints to industrial tribunals or to the courts.

Employees who make complaints, and others who give evidence or information in connection with such complaints, will not be victimised (i.e. they will not be discriminated against, harassed or bullied in retaliation for their actions). Victimisation is also discrimination contrary to legislation and this policy. We will treat it as misconduct which may warrant dismissal from employment.

The Practice is committed to ensuring that all our employees have a clear understanding of the process and procedures for voicing and reporting any concerns they have without the potential of being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged. Our separate Whistleblowing Policy sets out the framework for dealing with allegations of improper conduct.

## **Employees' Responsibilities**

All employees of Moreton & Partners, including the Senior Management Team, must comply with this policy. They must treat each other with dignity and respect. They must not themselves commit any acts of harassment or bullying against any person, such as their co-workers, job applicants, members of the public, or our clients. Such behaviour will not be permitted or condoned and will be treated as misconduct which may warrant dismissal from employment.

All employees should discourage harassment and bullying by making it clear that they find such behaviour unacceptable and by supporting co-workers who suffer such treatment. Any employee who is aware of an incidence of harassment or bullying should alert their manager or Marie Moreton immediately.

## **Employer's responsibilities**

We will continually make good faith efforts to implement this policy. The main responsibility for this will be carried out by Marie Moreton, Practice Manager. Line managers also have a special responsibility for enforcing this policy on a day-to-day basis, especially in setting a good example for other employees to follow and for intervening where necessary to protect and reassure employees.

To implement this policy, we will:

- provide all staff including managers and consultants with a copy of this policy.

- provide appropriate training to management team.
- ensure that all complaints of harassment and bullying are taken seriously and are dealt with promptly and confidentially in accordance with our internal grievance procedure.
- set a good example by treating employees with fairness, dignity, and respect.
- be alert to unacceptable behaviour and take appropriate action to stop it.
- monitor all incidents of harassment and bullying and review the effectiveness of this policy periodically.

## **Prevention of Harassment**

Anyone that has been subjected to harassing or bullying behaviour may seek confidential assistance through their immediate manager or Marie Moreton, Practice Manager.

### **Informal Stage**

If you are the recipient of harassment, you may, if you prefer, try to resolve the problem informally by explaining to the individual concerned the effect and impact of their behaviour.

You may choose to approach your manager or Marie Moreton for confidential advice on dealing with the matter informally, which will not be taken any further without your consent. If you feel that you are unable to talk to the individual directly, the chosen manager may offer to talk to the individual on your behalf in an attempt to resolve the situation informally.

The informal stage will not result in any formal internal investigation or disciplinary action but is intended to enable you to resolve the matter yourself without it going any further in the Company.

If you consider that you may have been subjected to conduct amounting to a criminal offence (such as sexual assault), Marie Moreton will arrange for you to be assisted to make a formal complaint to a police officer or to provide you with any other assistance that you may require. Compassionate leave may be granted at the discretion of the Company.

### **Formal Stage**

Where informal resolution is not appropriate or has resulted in an unsatisfactory outcome, then you may bring a formal complaint to a Company Director.

All complaints will be thoroughly investigated. All investigations will be carried out in an independent and objective manner by someone unconnected to the allegations and wherever possible of equal grade to the harasser. Wherever possible investigations will be completed within two weeks of the complaint being made.

Investigations will be carried out with sensitivity and with due respect for the rights of both the complainant and the alleged harasser. All those interviewed may be accompanied by a friend, colleague or an official of a professional organisation.

The investigation will focus on the facts of the complaint. Notes will be kept of all stages of the investigation and those interviewed will receive notes of the interview to agree. Parties will not be required to repeat distressing or embarrassing details any more than is necessary.

The importance of confidentiality will be stressed to all those interviewed, and everyone will be strictly required not to discuss the complaint with colleagues or friends. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action.

Wherever possible, consideration will be given to ensuring that the complainant and the alleged harasser are not required to work together whilst the complaint is under investigation. Where it is not practicable to offer alternative duties to one or other party, the complainant will be given the option of remaining at home if so desired.

The complainant will be kept informed of the general progress of the investigation and will be informed whether or not the complaint has been upheld.

Where a complaint is upheld, the matter will be treated as a disciplinary issue, and the formal disciplinary procedure will be invoked. Serious acts of harassment may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal.

The Company will seek to ensure that the complainant is not in any way penalised whether directly or indirectly for bringing a complaint and the situation will be monitored to ensure that the harassment has ceased.

Where a complaint is not upheld, for example where the evidence is inconclusive, consideration will be given to effecting arrangements which will enable the parties not to continue to work together against the wishes of either party.

Any complaint that is unfounded and not made in good faith, for example a malicious complaint, will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

**Review**

We will monitor and review this policy, regularly considering its suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness. Any improvements identified will be made as soon as possible. M&P may request associated parties to confirm compliance with this policy on an annual basis.

**Questions**

If you have any other queries relating to this policy, please feel free to discuss with Marie Moreton, Practice Manager.

Matthew Moreton, Director in Charge.....

Marie Moreton, Practice Manager.....

12<sup>th</sup> April 2024