



# Wellingborough Town Council

## **BULLING AND HARRASSMENT POLICY**

In support of our value to respect others, Wellingborough Town Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment by, or of, any of their Officers, officials, councillors, contractors, visitors to the council or councillors of the public.

The council is committed to the elimination of any form of intimidation in the workplace.

This policy reflects the spirit in which the council intends to undertake all of its business and outlines the specific procedures available to all officers in order to protect them from bullying and harassment.

The council will issue this policy to all officers as part of their induction and to all councillors as part of their Welcome Pack.

The council will also display this policy on the council website.

### **1. Bullying And Harassment Policy**

**Definitions Bullying** "Bullying may be characterised as a pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour; an abuse of this use of power or authority which tends to undermine an individual or a group of individuals, gradually eroding their confidence and capability, which may cause them to suffer stress."

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This policy covers, but is not limited to, harassment on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability or age. These definitions are derived from the ACAS guidance on the topic.

Both bullying and harassment are behaviours which are unwanted by the recipient. Bullying and harassment in the workplace can lead to poor morale, low productivity and poor performance, sickness absence, lack of respect for

others, turnover, damage to the council's reputation and ultimately, Employment Tribunal or other court cases and payment of unlimited compensation.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour are as follows; (this list is not exhaustive)

- Spreading malicious rumours,
- insulting someone,
- ridiculing or demeaning someone,
- exclusion or victimisation,
- unfair treatment,
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of position or power,
- unwelcome sexual advances,
- making threats about job security,
- deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading work and/or constant criticism,
- preventing an individual's promotion or training opportunities.

Bullying and harassment may occur face -to-face, in meetings, through written communication, including e-mail, by telephone or through automatic supervision methods. It may occur on or off work premises, during work hours or non-work time.

Penalties Bullying and harassment are examples of serious misconduct. For officers this will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure at Gross Misconduct level. For bullying and harassment from councillors it will be dealt with through referral to North Northamptonshire's Monitoring Officer, as a contravention of the Councillor's Code of Conduct, which may result in penalties against the councillor concerned.

In extreme cases harassment can constitute a criminal offence and the council should take appropriate legal advice, sometimes available from the council's insurer, if such a matter arises.