

CLYDESDALE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Policy: **Dignity at Work Policy**

Date: **7 December 2022**

Lead Officer: **Management Team**

Review Date: **26/04/2025**

Standard 5 The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.

Guidance 5.1 The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity and, through the actions of the governing body and staff, upholds the good reputation of the RSL and the sector.

5.2 The RSL upholds and promotes the standards of behaviour and conduct it expects of governing body members and staff through an appropriate code of conduct. It manages governing body members' performance, ensures compliance and has a robust system to deal with any breach of the code.

5.3 The RSL pays due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and human rights, and foster good relations across the range of protected characteristics in all areas of its work, including its governance arrangements.

5.4 Governing body members and staff declare and manage openly and appropriately any conflicts of interest and ensure they do not benefit improperly from their position.

5.5 The governing body is responsible for the management, support, remuneration and appraisal of the RSL's senior officer and obtains independent, professional advice on matters where it would be inappropriate for the senior officer to provide advice.

5.6 There are clear procedures for employees and governing body members to raise concerns or whistleblow if they believe there has been fraud, corruption or other wrongdoing within the RSL.

5.7 Severance payments are only made in accordance with a clear policy which is approved by the governing body, is consistently applied and is in accordance with contractual obligations. Such payments are monitored by the governing body to ensure the payment represents value for money. The RSL has considered alternatives to severance, including redeployment.

5.8 Where a severance payment is accompanied by a settlement agreement the RSL does not use this to limit public accountability or whistleblowing. The RSL has taken professional legal advice before entering into a settlement agreement.

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1. Introduction

Clydesdale Housing Association is committed to providing a working environment which is free from harassment, bullying and intimidation of any nature. Every employee, governing body member, agency worker, contractor, and consultant of Clydesdale Housing Association has a responsibility to treat all colleagues with dignity and respect, regardless of any personal characteristic. Under legislation there are certain characteristics protected from the area of harassment, Clydesdale Housing Association will acknowledge these and also extend this protection to all within Clydesdale Housing Association. The terms bullying and harassment will be used throughout this policy to mean dignity at work.

2. Background

The definitions concerning some of the terminology used within the scope of dignity at work have changed over the years. Most recently the Equality Act 2010 provided a legal definition of harassment but there is still no current legal definition of bullying. However, ACAS provides a definition which is widely recognised as being best practice.

3. Equal Opportunities

As an employer, Clydesdale Housing Association encourages equality of opportunity. In particular the observance of equal opportunity requirements as specified in the Equality Act 2010.

We do not discriminate against any member of staff in any way either directly, indirectly or by association because of their age, disability, gender identify (reassignment), marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

4. Legal Framework

Harassment is the only term relating to this policy that is covered under legislation in the Equality Act 2010, however there are a number of legal principles contained in the following legal documents that will apply as follows:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Breach of contract - usually breach of the implied term that an employer will provide support to employees to ensure that they can carry out their job without harassment and disruption from colleagues

- The common law position to take care of the safety of workers.
- Employment Rights Act 1996 – constructive and unfair dismissal
- Personal Injury protection including the duty to take care of workers arising out of the Law of Delict.
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Trade Union and Labour Relations (consolidation) Act 1992 dealing with specific types of intimidation
- Protection for Whistleblowers under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

5. Definitions

Harassment: unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. Clydesdale Housing Association will extend this definition to include all, and will not be restricted to those identified as having a protected characteristic.

Bullying: Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Protected Characteristics: The legal grounds in which discrimination claims can be made; i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

6. Policy Principles

This Dignity at Work Policy aims to:

- Ensure integration of diversity into all aspects of Clydesdale Housing Association's business
- Ensure that all employees, governing body members, agency workers, contractors, and consultants are treated with respect and dignity from each other, and members of the public
- Ensure that all employees, governing body members, agency workers, contractors, and consultants respect the differences within the community they serve and treat customers and members of the public accordingly
- Provide a working environment where all backgrounds, cultures, values and lifestyles are respected and treated with dignity at all times.

7. Implementation of Policy

Everyone is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Clydesdale Housing Association will ensure that all new employees, governing body members, agency workers, contractors, and consultants will receive an induction on this policy. The policy will be integrated into all policies and procedures within Clydesdale Housing Association.

Copies of this policy will be issued to all employees, governing body members, agency workers, contractors, and consultants, and will be available to all who request it.

This policy applies to all employees, governing body members, agency workers, contractors, and consultants of Clydesdale Housing Association and therefore all mentioned parties, have a responsibility to abide by the principles outlined above and also to alert their line manager should any behaviours be witnessed which breach this policy.

Unacceptable behaviour and practices will not be tolerated. However, if or when a situation arises it will be dealt with immediately, as inaction is not an option. Behaviours found to be breaching this policy will be regarded as misconduct and will be dealt with appropriately and in accordance with the relevant policies, including code of conduct and disciplinary.

8. Procedure in Dealing with breaches

This procedure is complemented by Clydesdale Housing Association's Equality & Diversity and Discipline & Grievance policies

Staff

Where an employee feels that they have not been treated with dignity & respect at work, there are a number of ways in which this can be addressed.

1) Informal stage

Where possible, breaches of this policy should be dealt with informally in the first instance. In many cases inappropriate behaviours are unintentional and can easily be resolved once the behaviour has been highlighted. This is often the most efficient way to maintain positive working relations.

In managing the issue informally, employees should in the first instance alert their line manager to the behaviour, thereafter the employee should be encouraged by the line manager and with their support approach the individual and highlight what behaviour has been offensive. Should the employee be uncomfortable with this then the line manager should approach the individual and have the same discussion. A note should then be put on file of the person who has displayed the inappropriate behaviour and the individual that raised the issue.

2) Formal Stage

If the behaviour is of a more serious nature or it continues after the informal approach has been taken then the issue should be dealt with by mirroring Clydesdale Housing Association's grievance procedure.

The employee must put their concerns in writing and give this to their line manager. The line manager should then arrange a meeting with the employee who has highlighted the concerns. At this meeting the manager should establish what the concerns are, and how the employee would like things resolved. The manager should then conduct any necessary investigations. No investigation should take place prior to there being a meeting with the employee. Once the investigation has been concluded, there could be a variety of outcomes including:

- There is no evidence to uphold the complaint
- There is evidence that may involve action against another member of staff
- Action is required on an organisational basis

Where action is required against another staff member this will follow the organisation's disciplinary procedures. Where action is taken regarding a member of staff other than the person who raised the complaint, the complainant will not be informed of any action taken against other individuals.

Governing Body Members, Agency Workers, Contractors and Consultants or members of the public

Where a governing body member, agency worker, contractor, consultant and/or members of the public feel that behaviours towards them have breached the principles of this policy, they have a responsibility to inform The Chief Executive or Chairperson of this as soon as reasonably practical. The complaint will be investigated appropriately and dealt with in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures.

Individuals found to be in breach of the principles of this Policy

Where individuals are found to be in breach of this policy whether that be employees, governing body members, agency workers, contractors, and/or consultants this will be dealt with in accordance with Clydesdale Housing Association's code of conduct policy and other relevant policies. This may therefore result in termination of the individual's contract, or engagement within Clydesdale Housing Association.

Malicious Allegations

Any person found to be making fictitious or malicious allegations will be dealt with through Clydesdale Housing Association's disciplinary procedure which may result in dismissal.

9. General Data Protection Regulations

Any information that we hold regarding an individual must be treated lawfully and correctly in line with the safeguards outlined in the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR) which requires data to be:

- lawfully, fairly and transparently processed
- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which it is processed
- accurate and kept up to date
- kept no longer than the period necessary and
- kept securely against unauthorised or unlawful processing and protected against accidental loss, destruction or damage.

The processing will be carried out in a way that ensures compliance with the rights of data subjects, including:

- the right to be informed
- the right of access
- the right to rectification
- the right to erasure (so far as applicable)
- the right to restrict processing
- the right to data portability (so far as applicable)
- the right to object to processing (including profiling); and
- the right not be subject to fully automated decision-making including profiling.

Further information is available by viewing the Association's Privacy

10. Policy Review Period

We will review the Policy every three years or sooner if required by statutory, regulatory or best practice requirements.

Approved by the Committee of Management on: 7 December 2022	
Signed: Secretary/Chairperson	Signed: Staff Member