Bullying & Harassment Policy

PACE is committed creating a harmonious working environment, which is free from harassment and bullying. We want to build and maintain an environment in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity, where everyone feels valued and listened to and that their views, when expressed, are considered. We aim to be an organisation where we communicate politely, help and encourage colleagues and are not judgmental.

PACE will not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment or victimisation of our staff either by other staff members or from partners we work with.

This policy exists for all job applicants, prospective employees, current staff (whether full, or part-time), and the families we provide services for. All staff are responsible for upholding and promoting this policy. Behaviour, actions or words that are not in line with this policy will be dealt with in line with the disciplinary policy.

The increased use of Social Media sites presents an alternative platform for inappropriate comment and behaviour. Bullying or harassment via any social media platforms (this includes the inappropriate use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Wikipedia, all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs) will not be tolerated and could lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- create a supportive working environment for you, free from all forms of bullying and harassment;
- prevent any harassment and victimisation of you in the workplace;
- make explicit those behaviours which will not be tolerated;
- provide practical guidance to you on how to deal with harassment and bullying;
- deal with any allegation of harassment seriously, confidentially and with the utmost discretion;
- encourage you to always behave in an appropriate manner; and
- communicate the procedures relating to harassment and ensure they are implemented.

Your responsibilities

All staff are responsible for helping to maintain a positive working environment free from harassment and bullying. This means being aware of how your behaviour or language might affect others.

We also ask you to be aware of how others are feeling, supporting them if they are experiencing harassment or bullying which could mean making it clear you find someone else's behaviour unacceptable. If you have concerns about someone else, you are encouraged to tell someone who can deal with the matter.

Harassment

Harassment is defined as unreciprocated and unwelcome comments or actions, which are considered objectionable by the recipient. The policy encompasses harassment with regard to gender, race, sexuality, disability, religion or political views. The main forms of harassment are sexual, racial, disability, religious, sexual orientation and age. This policy also encompasses harassment as defined under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. This imposes a duty on individuals not to harass others. Types of behaviour the policy seeks to prevent include:

- unwelcome remarks, jokes or verbal abuse, either face to face, via email, internet, phone, SMS or any other communication platform;
- unwanted physical contact;
- the display of pornographic pictures;
- behaviour which ridicules an individual because of characteristics such as their sexuality, gender, culture or faith;
- racially derogatory remarks or racist jokes; or
- the display of racially offensive material.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as persistent actions, criticism or personal abuse, which humiliates, intimidates or undermines the individual involved. Bullying can involve a person in authority abusing their power and bullying subordinates or an individual bullying a peer, or a group of people picking on one individual. Bullying can take varying forms including:

- severe verbal abuse;
- intimidating or aggressive behaviour;
- excessive teasing or humiliation;
- imposing unrealistic targets;
- unfair and excessive criticism, possibly in front of colleagues;
- isolating or openly ignoring someone;
- physical assault;
- taking credit for others' initiatives and achievements; or
- sending abusive or intimidating messages by email, internet, phone, SMS or any other communication platform.

As with harassment, bullying is defined largely by the impact of the behaviour on the recipient not its intention.

If you think you are being bullied, harassed or victimised

We encourage staff to try to sort out matters informally first. The person may not know that their behaviour is unwelcome, upsetting or feels disrespectful to you. An informal discussion may help them understand the effects of their behaviour and agree to change it. Please refer to the complaints process for guidance.

If you feel you cannot sort the issue out informally, you should report the incident immediately to your manager, or the COO. If the behaviour is in relation to the COO, please contact chair@paceforall.com.

If possible, avoid being alone with the person who is bullying or harassing you, and keep a note of the following:

- The time, date and place of any incidents
- What happened and the nature of the incident
- Your feelings and reactions at the time
- The response of the bully / harasser
- Any witnesses

All complaints of bullying or harassment will be dealt with promptly, fairly and sensitively. If, after an investigation has taken place, it is felt that bullying, harassment or victimisation has occurred, appropriate action will be taken under the disciplinary policy.

If you are a manager

Managers have a responsibility to ensure that the working environment is free from bullying and harassment and that all our team are treated fairly and with respect. This means being aware of work situations where there is a potential for bullying and harassment to take place and try to guard against it. This may be particularly relevant where someone is a minority in a workgroup or is working in an isolated place where there is little support.

You should examine your own behaviour, being aware that circumstances can arise where colleagues may feel bullied even if no such abuse is intended.

Our commitments

- We will deal with any complaints promptly, fairly and, where possible, in strict confidence.
- We will make sure all new staff are made aware of this policy during their induction.
- We will provide training for managers.