

# ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

## PURPOSE OF POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all those who work for the Reflect Recruitment Group Limited (“**the Company**”) are treated with dignity and respect and are free from harassment, intimidation or other forms of bullying at work.

This policy is for guidance only and does not form part of your contract of employment.

Breach of this policy will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.

## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Company has a duty to provide workers with a safe place and system of work. This includes a workplace free from harassment, intimidation and bullying. The Company also has responsibilities not to harass or discriminate against workers on the grounds of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. In some situations, the Company may also be responsible for the actions of its’ workers towards each other and towards third parties. In certain circumstances harassment can amount to unlawful discrimination. This policy serves to demonstrate the Company’s commitment to identifying and wherever possible eliminating such unlawful behaviour.

## PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

The Company’s Directors have overall responsibility for this policy but have delegated day-to-day responsibility for overseeing and implementing action required under it to the Office Managers. Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of the policy and any recommendations for change to the policy lies with the Directors.

Managers have a specific responsibility to operate within the boundaries of this policy and to facilitate its operation by ensuring that workers understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and by identifying and acting upon behaviour that falls below these standards. Managers will be given training on the relevant legal and operational framework and best practice.

All workers are responsible for treating their colleagues with dignity, and for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Workers should disclose any instances of harassment or bullying of which they become aware to a Director. Questions about this policy should be directed to a Director.

## WHO IS COVERED BY THE POLICY?

This policy covers all individuals working for the Company at all levels and grades, including senior managers, officers, directors, employees, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, part-time or fixed-term employees, and agency staff (collectively known as workers in this policy).

## **WHAT ARE HARASSMENT AND BULLYING?**

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which has the purpose or effect of, affecting a worker's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Such conduct is commonly related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment generally arises where a worker has made it clear that they find certain behaviour unwelcome and that behaviour has continued unchanged. Harassment can also arise as a result of a single incident provided it is sufficiently serious. It is important to remember that even though the conduct may only be unwanted or offensive to one individual it can still amount to harassment. Employees who believe they are being subjected to harassment should not hesitate to use the procedures set out below. All staff should consider whether their actions could be offensive to others. Examples of bullying and harassment might include:

- a) unwanted physical contact, ranging from touching or brushing against another employee's body to assault or coercing sexual relations;
- b) unwelcome sexual behaviour such as advances, slurs, propositions or pressure for sexual activity;
- c) continued suggestions for social activity within or outside the workplace after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome;
- d) offensive or intimidating comments;
- e) suggestions that sexual favours may further an employee's career or that refusal of sexual favours may hinder it;
- f) the display of pictures, objects or written materials that may be considered pornographic or offensive to anyone or to any particular ethnic or religious groups;
- g) unwanted conduct or conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating an individuals' dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment on the grounds of their sex, race, sexual orientation, disability, religion or age including abuse or insults about appearance or dress;
- h) insensitive jokes or pranks, 'picking on' or regularly undermining someone;
- i) spreading of malicious rumours about an employee;
- j) shunning an employee, for example, by deliberately excluding them from conversation;
- k) abusing or misusing one's power in order to undermine, humiliate, ridicule, demean, denigrate or injure a colleague;
- l) supervising an employee in an overbearing manner;
- m) unjustifiably excluding an employee from meetings/communications; and
- n) generally unfairly or unjustly treating an employee;

The list is not exhaustive and other behaviour many constitute harassment. Bullying and harassment can happen face-to-face, by letter, by email or by phone.

Bullying does not include legitimate and constructive criticism of your performance or behaviour, an occasionally raised voice, or an argument.

This policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs both in the workplace itself and in settings outside the workplace, such as business trips, events or social functions organised for or on behalf of the Company and on or off premises.

## **BULLYING & HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE BEEN BULLIED OR HARASSED: INFORMAL PROCEDURE**

If you consider that you are being bullied or harassed, you should initially attempt to resolve the problem informally, explaining clearly to the person responsible that the behaviour in question is not welcome and that it offends you or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing for you to do on your own, you should seek support from a colleague, your line manager or a Director. Managers will provide confidential advice and assistance to workers who have been bullied or harassed and will assist in the resolution of any problems, whether through formal or informal means.

If you are in any doubt as to whether an incident or series of incidents which have occurred constitute bullying or harassment, then in the first instance you should approach your line manager or a Director confidentially, on an informal basis. They will be able to advise you as to how the matter should be dealt with.

If the conduct continues or if it is not appropriate to resolve it informally, you should follow the formal procedure set out below.

### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE BEEN BULLIED OR HARASSED: FORMAL PROCEDURE**

The informal procedure may not be appropriate due to the nature of the harassment or bullying or because you do not feel able to talk directly to the person creating the problem. In these cases or where the informal procedure has been unsuccessful, you should raise your complaint in writing with a Director whose role is to achieve a solution wherever possible and to respect the confidentiality of all concerned. See below for details of the information required to be included in your written complaint.

As a general principle, the decision to progress a complaint rests with you. However, as your employer we have a duty to protect all workers and we may pursue a complaint independently if we consider it is appropriate to do so in all the circumstances.

If you wish to make a formal complaint, you should write to the Director setting out full details of the unwanted conduct. These details should include:

- The date, time and location of the incident
- What happened during the incident
- Who was involved
- Any witnesses

- Your response
- How the harassment made you feel
- Any evidence (emails, messages)

### **FORMAL PROCEDURE: INVESTIGATION**

Complaints will be managed in a timely and confidential manner via an independent investigation to establish full details of what happened. Your name and the name of the alleged harasser will not be divulged other than on a "need to know" basis to those individuals involved in the investigation. At the outset, an investigative officer(s) with suitable experience and with no prior involvement in the complaint will be appointed and a timetable will be set down and communicated to all parties. The investigation will be thorough, impartial and objective, and will be carried out with sensitivity and with due respect for the rights of all parties concerned.

Consideration will be given to whether the alleged harasser or bully should be redeployed temporarily, or suspended on full pay or whether reporting lines or other managerial arrangements should be altered pending the outcome of the investigation.

As part of the investigation, the investigative officer will meet with you to hear your account of the events leading to your complaint. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union official of your choice. The investigative officer will also meet with the alleged harasser or bully who may also be accompanied by a colleague or trade union official of their choice. It may also be necessary to interview witnesses to any of the incidents mentioned in your complaint. Where it is necessary to interview witnesses, the importance of confidentiality will be emphasised to them.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigative officer will submit a report to a Director nominated to consider the complaint. The Director will usually report their finding back to you within two weeks of your complaint first being reported. A copy of the investigative officer's report together with the Director's findings will be provided to you and to the alleged harasser.

If the Director finds that harassment or bullying has occurred, prompt action will be taken to stop the harassment or bullying immediately and prevent its recurrence. The findings will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Consideration will be given to whether the harasser or bully should be dismissed and, if not, whether they should remain in their current post or be transferred. Even where a complaint is not upheld, (for example, where evidence is inconclusive), consideration will be given to how the ongoing working relationship between you and the alleged harasser or bully should be managed. This may involve, for example, arranging some form of mediation or counselling or a change in the duties or reporting lines of either party.

### **FORMAL PROCEDURE: APPEAL**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you have the right to appeal the decision within 14 days of being notified of the outcome. You should submit your full written grounds of appeal to the Managing Director. The Managing Director may nominate another Officer to hear your appeal. Where practicable this will be a

manager senior to the manager who originally considered the complaint. The person hearing your appeal will meet with you to discuss your appeal. You may be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union official of your choice. You will be notified of the outcome of the appeal within seven days of this meeting. This is the final stage of the formal procedure.

### **PROTECTION FOR THOSE MAKING COMPLAINTS OR ASSISTING WITH AN INVESTIGATION**

Workers who, in good faith, make complaints under this policy will be protected from intimidation or victimisation in connection with their involvement. If you have been subjected to any such intimidation or victimisation you may raise a complaint in writing under this procedure or the grievance procedure. Workers who, after investigation, are found to have provided information falsely and in bad faith will however be subject to action under the disciplinary procedure.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is very important throughout all parts of this procedure. It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the procedure to respect the high level of confidentiality that is required. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action under our disciplinary procedure.

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY**

This policy reflects the law and the Company's practice as at the time of writing. The Board of Directors will be responsible for reviewing this policy from a legislative and operational perspective at least annually.

The Managing Director has responsibility for ensuring that any personnel who may be involved with investigations or administrative tasks carried out under this policy receives regular and appropriate training to assist them with these duties.

Workers are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the Director or Training & Compliance Manager.