Policy 29: DEALING WITH HARASSMENT AND BULLYING AT WORK

Last updated by: SH, RH

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1. Introduction

a) Age UK York (AUKY) and its Board of Trustees (the Trustees) place considerable value on their workers;

b) AUKY aims to provide a working environment that will enable all workers to fulfil their personal potential, and one in which the dignity of all individuals is respected;

c) Harassment and bullying can have a detrimental effect on the work that we do and the services that we provide into the local community;

c) AUKY intends to promote an atmosphere free from any form of harassment and bullying.

2. Legislation

a) AUKY acknowledges and adheres to the relevant UK legislation including but not restricted to the Protection from Harassment Act, 1997 and the Equality Act, 2010;

b) Where this or any AUKY policy differs from current UK legislation as it applies to England, the legislation will be followed;

3. Definitions

a) Harassment occurs when an individual behaves in such a way as to offend, cause distress or create feelings of intimidation;

b) Bullying is the use of coercion, force or threat, to abuse, aggressively dominate or intimidate;

c) Harassment and bullying may be carried out physically or verbally and by a range of mechanisms. 'Trolling', also known as cyber-bullying, is carried out via the internet and is intended to threaten or intimidate individuals and cause distress. It targets individuals but does so by spreading information or disinformation about them;

d) As well as being illegal, harassment, bullying and trolling are all contrary to the ethos of AUKY;

e) The intention of the aggressor may be to emphasise their authority over the individual, restrict their career progress, extract vengeance for a perceived wrong or for some other reason. In all instances the behaviour is unwanted and unwelcome by the recipient, and would be regarded as harassment or bullying by any reasonable person;

f) Examples of harassment and bullying include sexual, racial and disability comments and actions. Bullying may include violence

4. Responsibility

a) The Trustees are responsible for the overall good management and service provision of AUKY and have devolved day to day responsibility on the Chief Officer (CO);

b) All AUKY workers have a duty to refrain from harassment, bullying and trolling;

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c) All AUKY workers becoming aware of these activities will seek to support the victim and seek advice from their line manager or supervisor. If the line manager or supervisor is the perpetrator, any AUKY workers must seek advice from another line manager or the CO. The situation should not be discussed with anyone else.

5. Action to be take in the event of harassment, bullying or trolling

a) It is occasionally the case that the perpetrator of what may be construed as sexual harassment is doing so in the belief that the actions are acceptable. On the first occasion of such an action the victim should make their views known to the perpetrator and inform them clearly that their behaviour is unacceptable and ask them to desist;

b) The request to desist can be in writing by letter, not by text or e-mail. The victim should keep a copy of the letter;

c) A victim who speaks directly to the perpetrator should in any event make a note of the date, time, action and any workers who were around at the time and witnessed the action;

d) A victim of any incident of harassment, bullying or trolling should immediately speak to their line manager or CO;

e) If the action continues, the victim should make a formal complaint in accordance with the complaints policy (Policy 8).

f) Victims making formal complaints, as well as witnesses, are protected against retaliation. Any allegation of victimisation will be treated as serious misconduct and will be dealt with under the organization’s Disciplinary Procedure, up to and including dismissal.

g) Any complaint made in bad faith with mischievous or malicious intent will be regarded as a serious issue of misconduct. Any individual making such a false complaint will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.