

Dignity at work: including bullying and harassment

1 Contents

1	Contents	1
2	Policy	1
2.1	Our commitment.....	1
2.2	The scope of this policy.....	2
3	Promoting dignity at work.....	2
3.1	IFS responsibilities.....	2
3.2	Individual responsibilities.....	2
4	Unacceptable behaviour	4
5	Bullying and harassment.....	4
5.1	What is bullying?.....	4
5.2	What is harassment?.....	4
5.3	Victimisation.....	5
6	What should I do if I think I am being bullied or harassed?	6
6.1	Informal procedure	6
6.2	Mediation.....	6
6.3	Formal procedure.....	6
6.4	What happens if I am accused of bullying or harassment?	7
7	Policy review	8
7.1	Summary of reviews.....	8
7.2	Log of changes made.....	8

2 Policy

2.1 Our commitment

IFS is committed to creating a work environment where everyone is treated with dignity and where we respect individual differences whilst pursuing a common purpose. We are committed to having a workforce that is treated fairly, with respect, and which feels valued for the contribution that every member of staff makes. All staff are entitled to dignity and courtesy within the workplace, to a workplace which is free of harassment and bullying, and to be free from experiencing any form of discrimination. Discrimination of any form will not be tolerated.

Our commitment is to:

- ensure the dignity at work of all employees
- respect and value differences
- make full use of the talents of our workforce
- show our commitment to equal opportunities for all, promoting equality and diversity

- prevent acts of discrimination, exclusion, unfair treatment and other unacceptable behaviours
- be open and constructive in our communications
- be fair and just in our dealings
- promote positive behaviours throughout the organisation.

IFS will not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind. All allegations of bullying and harassment will be investigated and, if appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken. The organisation will also not tolerate victimisation of a person for making allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith or supporting someone to make such a complaint. Bullying, harassment and victimisation are disciplinary offences.

2.2 The scope of this policy

The policy covers dignity at work, as well as bullying and harassment in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, e.g. work-related trips and social events.

The policy applies, as far as possible, to managers, employees, research collaborators, contractors, agency staff and anyone else associated with the organisation, whether they are in a direct contractual relationship with the organisation or otherwise. In the case of complaints, if the complainant or alleged harasser is not employed by the organisation, this policy will apply with any necessary modifications such as that the organisation could not dismiss the worker but would instead stop collaborating with the person in question or make a complaint to their employer.

3 Promoting dignity at work

3.1 IFS responsibilities

IFS will provide training to all existing and new employees [and others engaged to work at the organisation] to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under this policy and what they can do to help create a working environment where dignity at work is ensured for everyone and that is free of bullying and harassment.

We will provide additional training to managers to help them to foster an environment in which all are treated respectfully and to help them to resolve more effectively incidents involving bullying and harassment. This will include discussing relevant issues during meetings with team members and as part of the annual reviews.

Should a complaint arise, IFS will go through the complaints procedure and ensure all, if any, necessary action is taken. IFS will review the outcomes of cases where complaints of bullying and harassment have been made to check that the proper procedures have been followed and to identify any points that can be learned from those cases and implement any necessary changes.

IFS will periodically monitor its success in creating a respectful workplace, for example by carrying out confidential staff surveys.

When carrying out any reviews or monitoring, the organisation will ensure that individuals' personal data are handled in accordance with its data protection policy.

3.2 Individual responsibilities

We all have a responsibility to help create and maintain a work environment where dignity and respect are accorded to everyone and which is free of bullying and harassment. All staff must do this by:

- Being aware of this policy and complying with it;
- treating your colleagues with dignity and respect;

- being polite and taking a positive, responsive and considerate approach when dealing with the colleagues and others;
- supporting and encouraging an environment which values all people and not causing embarrassment, alarm or distress to another employee nor discriminating unfairly or unlawfully on any grounds;
- being aware of how your own behaviour may affect others and changing it, if necessary - you can still cause offence even if you are "only joking";
- taking a stand if you think inappropriate jokes or comments are being made;
- making it clear to others when you find their behaviour unacceptable, unless it should be obvious in advance that this would be the case;
- intervening, if possible, to stop harassment or bullying and giving support to recipients;
- making it clear that you find harassment and bullying unacceptable;
- reporting harassment or bullying to your manager, the Director or the HR Officer and supporting the organisation in the investigation of complaints; and
- if a complaint of harassment or bullying is made, not prejudging or victimising the complainant or alleged harasser.

Senior managers and managers, as well members of the board of trustees, have a particular responsibility to:

- Set a positive example by treating others with respect and setting standards of acceptable behaviour;
- protect the dignity of all our employees and other individuals;
- provide advice, information and support that protects the dignity of staff;
- promote a working environment where harassment, bullying and abuse is unacceptable and not tolerated;
- tackle and, where possible, resolve incidents of harassment, bullying or abuse;
- treat each complaint seriously and sympathetically and with an open mind, and deal with it promptly and confidentially, giving the individual and the alleged perpetrator full support during the whole process;
- where included in their job roles, review all policies and procedures so that they are consistent with the principles of justice, fairness and respect for employees and the organisation.

Staff should disclose any instances of unacceptable behaviour, harassment or bullying of which they become aware to their manager, the HR Officer, staff reps, another senior member of staff or to the Director.

Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the HR Officer.

Guidance

4 Unacceptable behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour is any form of conduct or behaviour of a physical, verbal or non- verbal kind which has some or all of the following elements:

- is unwanted, unsolicited, unreasonable and personally offensive to the recipient(s) (irrespective of the intentions);
- creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating work environment for the recipient(s) affecting their dignity whilst at work;
- fails both to respect the rights and recognise the impact that such behaviour may have on others;
- threatens job security or disadvantages the recipient(s) in some way.

5 Bullying and harassment

Harassment and bullying can have very serious consequences for individuals and the organisation. Harassment or bullying may make people unhappy, may cause them stress and affect their health and family and social relationships, may affect their work performance and could cause them to leave their job. Severe cases of harassment and bullying can even lead to mental illness and suicide. Effects on the organisation can include loss of morale, poor work performance, increased turnover of staff, legal claims and damage to the organisation's reputation. Employees found guilty of harassment or bullying may face disciplinary penalties, up to and including dismissal, could be personally liable to pay compensation in legal claims, and may find their own family and social relationships are adversely affected. Serious harassment may be a criminal offence.

5.1 What is bullying?

Bullying is the perception of offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. It can include, for example:

- physical or psychological threats;
- overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- setting impossible deadlines;
- persistent unjustified criticism of performance;
- shouting.

Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of someone's performance or behaviour in the course of employment does not, on its own, amount to bullying.

5.2 What is harassment?

Harassment includes bullying because of a 'protected characteristic' and so is against the law.

Protected characteristics under harassment law are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment

- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Pregnancy and maternity are different from the other protected characteristics, in how the law on harassment treats them.

The law on harassment does not cover marriage and civil partnership.

For it to count as harassment, both of the following must be true:

- the person is justified in feeling harassed
- the person being harassed feels they're working in a hostile environment

Harassment can include:

- a serious one-off incident
- repeated behaviour
- spoken or written words, imagery, graffiti, gestures, mimicry, jokes, pranks, physical behaviour that affects the person

It's still against the law even if the person being harassed does not ask for it to stop.

The law on harassment also applies to:

- a person being harassed because they are thought to have a certain protected characteristic when they do not
- a person being harassed because they're linked to someone with a certain protected characteristic
- a person who witnesses harassment because of a protected characteristic and is upset by it

5.3 Victimization

Victimization is subjecting a person to a detriment because they have, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint. This would include isolating someone because they have made a complaint or giving them a heavier or more difficult workload.

Provided that you act in good faith, you have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint or doing anything in relation to a complaint of bullying or harassment and the organisation will take appropriate action to deal with any alleged victimisation, which may include disciplinary action against anyone found to have victimised you.

Making a complaint that you know to be untrue, or giving evidence that you know to be untrue, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Procedure

6 What should I do if I think I am being bullied or harassed?

6.1 Informal procedure

Consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person concerned and explain clearly to them that their behaviour is unwelcome or that it makes you feel uncomfortable. This may be appropriate if, for example, you believe that the harassment is not carried out with the intention of causing offence or distress.

If you do not feel it is appropriate to raise the matter with the person in question, you should speak to your line manager, the HR Officer, staff reps or a senior manager, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in trying to resolve the matter informally. If informal steps are not appropriate, you may wish to consider mediation. Otherwise you should follow the formal procedure set out below or invoke the Grievance Procedure.

6.2 Mediation

If both parties are willing and feel that there would be benefit, IFS will pay for mediation to take place, facilitated by an external organisation, such as ACAS. Mediation distinguishes itself from other approaches to conflict resolution, such as grievance procedures and the employment tribunal process, in a number of ways. Mediation is less formal, more flexible, confidential voluntary, and is morally binding but normally has no legal status.

6.3 Formal procedure

If you wish to make a formal complaint about bullying or harassment, you should follow IFS's grievance procedure as set out in the Conditions of Service.

It is generally up to you if you wish to progress a complaint, but the Institute has a duty to protect all staff and, in certain circumstances, we may pursue the matter independently, if we believe it is appropriate to do so.

If your complaint is about someone other than an employee (such as a collaborator, client, supplier or visitor), we will consider what action may be appropriate to protect you and anyone involved, pending the outcome of the investigation. Where appropriate and practicable, we will try to discuss the matter with the third party.

If the investigation has concluded that harassment or bullying has occurred, prompt action will be taken. If the harasser or bully is an employee, the matter will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct, which may result in summary dismissal with no notice or payment in lieu. If the harasser or bully is not an employee, we will consider what action would be appropriate.

You will not be penalised for bringing a complaint in good faith. We will not tolerate victimisation or retaliation against complainants. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action.

Any member of staff who deliberately makes a false accusation of harassment or bullying, or deliberately provides false information to the investigation or otherwise acts in bad faith may be subject to action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

6.4 What happens if I am accused of bullying or harassment?

If someone approaches you informally about your behaviour, do not dismiss the complaint out of hand because you were only joking or think the complainant is being too sensitive. Remember that different people find different things acceptable and everyone has the right to say what behaviour is acceptable to them and to have their feelings respected by others. You may have offended someone without intending to. If that is the case, the person concerned may be content with an explanation and an apology from you and an assurance that you will be careful in future not to behave in a way that you now know may cause offence.

If a formal complaint is made about your behaviour, this will be fully investigated and the organisation may bring disciplinary proceedings, if appropriate. The IFS will follow its disciplinary procedure and you will have the rights set out in that procedure. You will have the right to be informed of the allegations against you and to put your side of the story and to be accompanied to meetings by a colleague. The procedure will be implemented at the appropriate stage for the seriousness of the allegation. Complaints of bullying and harassment will often be allegations of gross misconduct that, if proved, could lead to dismissal without notice.

The organisation will treat complaints of bullying and harassment sensitively and maintain confidentiality to the maximum extent possible. Investigation of allegations and future management of risk, if complaints are upheld, will normally require limited disclosure on a "need to know" basis. For example, some details may have to be given to potential witnesses but this will be limited as far as possible, while ensuring a fair and sufficiently thorough investigation. The importance of confidentiality will be emphasised to witnesses.

Wherever possible, IFS will try to ensure that you and the complainant are not required to work together while the complaint is under investigation. If the allegation is of gross misconduct, you may be suspended on full pay during the investigation and, if a disciplinary hearing is to be called, until disciplinary proceedings have been concluded.

If the complaint against you is upheld, on a balance of probabilities, a disciplinary penalty may be imposed up to and including dismissal, having regard to the seriousness of the offence and all relevant circumstances.

If a complaint is made against you that is not upheld and the IFS has good grounds for believing that the complaint was not made in good faith, the organisation will investigate and, if appropriate, will take disciplinary action against the person making the false complaint.

You must not victimise a person who has made a complaint in good faith against you or anyone who has supported them in making the complaint or given evidence in relation to such a complaint. Disciplinary action will be taken against you if IFS has good reason to think that you may have victimised the complainant or someone else.

If the complaint against you is not upheld, the HR Officer will support you, the complainant and your manager(s) in making arrangements for you both to continue or resume working and to help repair working relationships. IFS will consider making arrangements to avoid you and the complainant having to continue to work closely together, if either of you does not wish to do so.

7 Policy review

7.1 Summary of reviews

Date	Reviewed by	Issues found	Action taken	Notes
18/10/2022	EH	N/A	N/A	Reviewed policy but no changes needed.
27/10/2023	EH	N/A	N/A	No changes needed, although related grievance procedure is under review

7.2 Log of changes made

Date	Changes made	Changes made by	Major or minor change?	Approved by (major changes only)