

This policy template is provided by Parish Nursing Ministries UK. It is offered as guidance to churches or Christian organisation with whom they have a current partnership agreement. If used, the template should be adapted to reflect the specific needs of the Church or organisation. This policy is yet to be ratified by PNMUK Trustees and therefore must be considered a draft.

Heath United Reformed Church Parish Nursing Dignity in the Workplace Policy

1. Aim of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Heath United Reformed Church has a culture of working relationships where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, where harassment is unacceptable, and individuals have the confidence to deal with and challenge harassment or bullying without reprisals. This includes any form of electronic communication.

2. Scope of the Policy

The policy applies to:-

- Employees
- Volunteers,
- Trustees/officials
- customers/users/suppliers (i.e anyone who attends or participates in events and activities offered by the organisation; users of any outreach services offered by the organisation such as parish nursing; those who provide the organisation with contracted goods or services).

3. Definitions

3.1 Harassment

- Harassment is unwanted conduct in working relationships affecting people's dignity. It is comments or actions that are regarded as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient or that create a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- Harassment may be verbal, non-verbal, physical, isolated or repeated and it can occur through behaviour in relation to gender, race, religion or belief, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, trade union membership, victimisation, real or suspected infection with HIV/AIDS, health status, marital status, political conviction or willingness to challenge harassment.
- Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual advances, or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This definition includes many forms of offensive behaviour and includes gender-based harassment of a person of the same sex as the harasser. This includes any form of electronic communication. The following is a partial list of sexual harassment examples: unwanted sexual advances; offering benefits in exchange for sexual favours; making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advance; visual conduct that includes leering, making sexual gestures, or displaying of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons or posters; verbal conduct that includes making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, or jokes; verbal sexual advances or propositions; verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic, electronic or verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually

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degrading words used to describe an individual, or suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations; and physical conduct that includes touching, assaulting, or impeding or blocking movements.

- Unwelcome sexual advances (either verbal or physical), requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; (2) submission or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for making employment or volunteering decisions; or, (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

3.2 Bullying

- Bullying can be defined as persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or malicious behavior or abuse of power which makes the recipient feel threatened, humiliated or vulnerable and undermines confidence. Examples include: shouting in public, persistent or unfair criticism, ostracising people, threats and instilling fear, inappropriate use of email, spreading malicious rumours, constantly undermining effort, withholding information, removing areas of responsibility or imposing inappropriate tasks.

3.3 Exclusions

It is not considered harassment, bullying discrimination or behavioral misconduct of any sort for the organisation and line managers to enforce job performance and /or compliance with policy and professional standards of conduct in a consistent manner.

3.4 Workplace Violence

- Workplace violence is defined as performing actions or using words that endanger or harm another person or result in another person having a reasonable belief that he/she is in danger. Any conduct, which makes an individual feel endangered, is in violation of this policy.
- Firearms, weapons, and other dangerous or hazardous devices or substances are prohibited from our premises without proper authorisation.
- Examples of workplace violence amounting to behavioral misconduct include but are not limited to the following; verbal or physical threats; assaults or other violence; any behavior that causes others to feel unsafe such as bullying, shouting, or name calling; belligerent, threatening or offensive comments; hitting, pushing, or other similar physical contact, including touching or threats to take such action; gestures or the display of offensive signs or pictures; conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another person at any time.

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4. Responsibilities and Actions

Everyone has a responsibility to behave in a way that is not offensive to others and acknowledge that the views and opinions held by others and decisions made by managers may not coincide with their own. With the exception of violent incidents, anyone who believes that he/she has been treated in violation of this policy should address the matter informally in the first instance, making the other person aware that their behavior is unacceptable, explaining why, and stressing that any repetition or similar incident will be escalated. Incidents of violence should be escalated immediately.

If the informal procedure has been ineffective, or the issue so serious that the informal procedure would be inappropriate, he/she should immediately report the matter to the church secretary who will then handle the issue in line with the most appropriate policy (i.e. grievance, serious incident or complaints policies).

The organisation will ensure that those covered by this policy will be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for making a complaint reporting an incident, raising a grievance or assisting in an investigation

Anyone determined to be responsible for threats of (or actual) violence or other conduct that is in violation of the policy will be subject to prompt disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or exclusion from the organisation activities and services.

The organisation will ensure incidents are dealt with seriously and as confidentially as possible. However, the organisation has a duty of care to those covered by the policy and it may be necessary to investigate and take action regarding a complaint without the consent of the complainant.

The organisation will take prompt disciplinary action in response to policy violations. If the investigation reveals that the grievance, incident or complaint is valid, prompt attention and disciplinary action may be taken to stop the harassment/bullying immediately and prevent its recurrence.

If the person violating the policy is a member of a regulated profession such as nursing or midwifery, a referral to the regulator must be considered. If it involves a parish nurse, Parish Nursing Ministries UK should be advised of the incident by the nurses line manager and they will provide the professional advice regarding handling and referral to the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

Any one who is found to have made a malicious complaint will be subject to disciplinary action or may be excluded from participating in the organisation activities and services in any way.

5. Reporting and Handling Harassment Bullying and Violence

5.1 Guidance for Employees and Volunteers

Incidents involving other employees or volunteers should be handled under the organisations **Grievance Policy**. We will not discipline employees for raising such concerns

The complainant should initially keep a record of the incident(s) e.g. what happened, when, where

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and if there were any witnesses. It would also be useful to consider how the situation could be resolved satisfactorily.

Violent incidents or incidents resulting in harm to employee or volunteer should be reported immediately to the church secretary and followed up in writing. The incident will be handled under the organisations **Serious Incident policy**
Guidance for Customers/Service Users/ Contractors

Any incidents involving customers/service users/contractors being treated in violation of this policy by an employee, volunteer or official representative of the organisation should be handled under the organisations **Complaints Policy**.

5.2 Managing Investigations

Allegations of bullying, harassment will be quickly investigated as outlined in the supporting policies. No employee who makes a good faith allegation will be subject to retaliation. Nor will any employee be retaliated against for participating in any investigation of inappropriate conduct.

Retaliation in response to reports of bullying harassment and violence will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment

6. Legal Rights

Anyone who feels that they are in danger can contact the police as harassment and violence can be handled in the criminal courts.

Under the Harassment Act 1997, people can also take action against the person in the civil courts. The Citizens Advice Bureau is a useful starting point if this path is considered necessary.

7. Review

The policy should be reviewed two yearly .

8. Monitoring

Monitoring of the policy will take place through feedback and review by Parish Nurse Leadership Group and Elders. Periodic reporting of the number of incidents and outcomes to the organisations executive with any lessons learnt and recommendations for prevention or handling

- Periodic survey of employees and volunteers to ascertain their knowledge of harassment bullying and violence, the policy, their responsibilities and the procedure reporting and handling.
- Reporting any incidents relating to the parish nursing service and NMC referrals to PNMUK and reviewing the effectiveness of processes for parish nursing at the annual quality health check.