

Respect@Work Policy - Appendix A

We all have a part to play in establishing and maintaining a culture of respect at all levels of our organisation. This culture underpins employee wellbeing, and is crucial to a positive working environment, and an effective and productive workforce. The Respect@Work Policy defines the behaviour that is expected from everyone. Our values and behaviours also define how we treat each other. The Respect@Work policy sets out how to resolve any issues that arise, promptly and constructively. Compliance with the Respect@Work policy is a requirement of our Code of Conduct.

Our Respect@Work Pledge

As an employee I will:

- Behave professionally
- Treat others with dignity and respect at all times
- Give and receive honest feedback
- Be inclusive and not tolerate discrimination
- Raise any concerns that I have - a Respect@Work contact can support you to do this
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour that I see or flag it with an appropriate person - I will not ignore it.

As a manager I will also:

- Model respectful behaviour
- Deal promptly with issues that are raised.

We recognise that there are situations where people work across two organisations (e.g. CCC and the NHS or CCC and PCC). We expect everyone in shared teams to work in accordance with our Respect@Work pledge, including where CCC is not their employer.

DEFINITION OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

Unacceptable behaviour in the workplace is commonly referred to as bullying, harassment or discrimination. It can be described as unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated, fearful, degraded, humiliated or offended. UNISON has defined workplace bullying as persistent offensive, intimidating, humiliating behaviour, which attempts to undermine an individual or group of employees.

We have zero tolerance for bullying, harassment and discrimination at any level within our organisation. If the way that someone is behaving towards you feels wrong you should use this policy to address this.

People often describe behaviour that “sets a tone” within the work environment that is intimidating, oppressive or unpleasant. It is not always obvious or apparent to others. Unacceptable behaviour is not always intentional as people can sometimes be oblivious to the effect they have had on others. It is completely unacceptable for anyone to be made to feel unhappy or uncomfortable at work because of the behaviour of others.

Bullying, harassment or discrimination may occur between two individuals or involve groups of people. It may be persistent or could be an isolated incident. Unacceptable behaviour can take various forms and can occur in different guises, such as face to face, in written and electronic communications, by phone or text message. This type of behaviour is often associated with an abuse of power. It can also occur between colleagues working at a similar, or a more junior level.

Actions outside of work can also be considered unacceptable behaviour. This includes, sending unacceptable messages by phone, text or email or posting inappropriate content about an employee on the internet/social media.

Harassment is when someone behaves in a way which offends you or makes you feel distressed or intimidated.

Discrimination

We value diversity and are committed to being an inclusive place to work. Discrimination has no place in our organisation and will not be tolerated. It is not acceptable to bully, harass or discriminate against anyone because of their characteristics for example because of an individual's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, gender/sex or sexual orientation. It is also unacceptable to bully, harass or discriminate against a person because you think they have a particular characteristic or because of their association with a person with one of these characteristics e.g. because you think someone is gay or because they have a disabled family member.

We expect all employees to treat their colleagues and customers with respect regardless of their characteristics. Examples of unacceptable behaviour in relation to these characteristics include:

- Using offensive or abusive language
- Exclusion from work place events and conversations
- Side-lining someone, ignoring their contribution or taking away responsibilities
- Making derogatory comments or patronising remarks
- Telling or sharing stereotypical jokes or impersonations
- Nonverbal signals which are disrespectful
- Allocating work based on assumptions about a person's characteristics
- Displaying or sending offensive material
- Asking intrusive or derogatory questions
- Deliberately or repeatedly misgendering someone (i.e. referring to someone using a pronoun that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify, particularly when a person has made it clear how they should be addressed)
- Making suggestive or sexual comments
- Micro aggressions – small comments, questions or actions that communicate a negative perception of someone based on their characteristics.

If a person shares an experience of discrimination with you listen carefully to what they say and acknowledge their feelings. You may feel that minimising or excusing what has happened may make a person feel better if they are upset or angry. However this can actually make a person feel like you don't understand or don't believe them. E.g. A service user was racially offensive to a black Support Worker. When she told colleagues what had happened they said "he was probably having a bad day, I'm sure it wasn't personal, take no notice of him". The Support Worker felt like they didn't understand what had happened to her or why she was upset. This behaviour can be termed gas lighting.

Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation are defined as protected characteristics under the Equality Act. As well as being unacceptable to discriminate against a person because of these factors it is also illegal to do this.

If you have experienced racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, discrimination on the grounds of religion, marital/civil partnership status or pregnancy/maternity you should use this process to address this.

Victimisation

Victimisation means treating an individual badly because they have made a complaint, or provided evidence or information in connection with a complaint. For example a manager not shortlisting an employee for an internal vacancy because they have raised a Respect@Work concern. Victimisation will not be tolerated as it discourages people from raising and addressing concerns. Victimising a person because they have raised a concern relating to discrimination under the Equality Act is against the law.

IMPACT OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Bullying, harassment and discrimination can have a significant impact on our mental and physical health. It negatively impacts on team morale and productivity and has a detrimental impact on service delivery. For these reasons, as a Council we will not tolerate this behaviour in our workplace.

Some examples of expected and unacceptable behaviour are given below. This list is not exhaustive.

Expected behaviour	Unacceptable behaviour
Deal with colleagues in a respectful and professional manner at all times. Respect people's dignity, personal boundaries and belongings.	Violent or inappropriate physical contact, intimidation or damaging/stealing belongings. Creating an intimidating atmosphere in the workplace, whether intentional or not, by being aggressive or using inappropriate language.
Communicate in a respectful way, taking extra care when delivering challenging messages, and being mindful and respectful of other people's cultures and beliefs.	Abusive or inappropriate language, mocking, ridiculing or humiliating, spreading rumours/gossip or making threats.
Being open to feedback about your behaviour and the impact it has on others. Reflecting on how your actions and words have been perceived. Being ready to learn and improve how you interact with and treat others.	Being unwilling to change how you behave or communicate when you have been made aware that you are having a negative impact on other people.
As managers, address employment matters promptly and professionally and manage performance in a consistent and constructive way.	Unacceptable behaviour includes deliberately withholding/falsifying information, sabotaging work, marginalising someone, persistent criticism not commensurate with performance. Singling out someone for trivial/unpleasant tasks.
Respecting and valuing employees as individuals with different life experiences and perspectives. Valuing the benefits that having a diverse team brings to service delivery.	Discriminating against a person because of their characteristics. Marginalising someone. Using offensive language. Behaviour that makes someone feel uncomfortable or excluded. Asking questions about a person's characteristics where this makes them feel uncomfortable especially where they have made it clear that questions are unwelcome.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING BULLYING, HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION

In most cases raising matters early is more likely to lead to a positive outcome and you are therefore encouraged to speak up and act on concerns as they may arise.

Respect@Work Contacts

We recognise the importance of being able to talk to someone directly. We have therefore put in place a number of Respect@Work Contacts. These are people who are trained to talk with anyone who feels that they are experiencing unreasonable behaviour in the workplace. You can also speak to a Respect@Work contact if you have witnessed unreasonable behaviour.

Respect@Work contacts are currently members of the HR Advisory Team that are independent from your service area – they will not be the normal HR contact for your team or manager.

Their role is to:

- Talk through the Respect@Work Policy and answer any questions that you have about the process.
- Give you suggestions on how to initiate an informal discussion.
- Help you to consider how to express your concerns clearly.
- Signpost the support that is available.

In most circumstances we hope that you feel able to raise matters informally in the first instance, by talking to the other party. If your concerns relate to your line manager you should speak to their line manager. If the issue relates to a member of your team's management structure and you are uncomfortable raising this, you should speak to a Respect@Work Contact who will be able to provide guidance in the first instance.

This will give the individual a chance to understand what impact they have had, and to put matters right. Where the matter is very serious and you don't feel that raising it informally is the right way forward, a Respect@Work contact will be able to advise on how to access the formal resolution stage directly and explain the process that will be followed. They can give guidance on what is required to prepare a formal complaint. Their role is impartial, so they cannot give legal advice, provide ongoing emotional/practical support, attend meetings to represent an employee, or write letters on their behalf.

The following people are [Respect@Work](#) contacts and can be contacted directly on the numbers given:

- Karen Tolond, 07785 110802
- Caroline Adu-Bonsra, 07825 521324
- Anna Syson, 07917 214519
- Sarah Martins, 07771 841386
- Jenni Barnes, 07920 870319
- Tara Sutton, 07770 650540
- Stewart Gletherow, 07827 313573

These discussions will not be documented, we do not record your name or job title and anything that you say will be treated in confidence.

Where a group of employees have the same issue they may choose to raise a collective concern, the group should nominate a spokesperson/two spokespeople to take a lead in resolving the issue.

If you are raising concerns about a person employed by another organisation (e.g. NHS or PCC) you should refer to the policy that applies in that organisation. Please speak to a Respect@Work contact if you need help getting a copy of the relevant policy or understanding how to raise your concerns.

It is helpful to have feedback about your experience of speaking to a Respect@Work contact, this will help us to improve our approach. The Respect@Work contact will ask if you want to have a follow up call to let us know if your conversation has helped you. This is completely optional - you can say if you would prefer not to be called. Alternatively you can ring 01223 699666 and give any feedback or email on RespectatWork@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk. Any feedback that you provide will be anonymized and will be used to update our process.

Other Sources of Support

Trade Unions – if you are a member of a trade union you can discuss your concerns with your trade union representative. Contact details for our trade unions are available [here](#).

The Equality and Diversity Network – is a source of peer support and a safe space to talk if you have experienced unacceptable behaviour/discrimination. Network members meet throughout the year and are also active between meetings. The network can be contacted directly via Equality&Diversity@cambridgeshire.gov.uk. Speaking to people that may have insight into your experience can help you feel more able to raise your concerns using this policy. Network meeting details are advertised via Camweb.

The Employee Assistance Programme - All employees can use the Employee Assistance Programme to access unlimited practical and emotional support. A free confidential helpline is available 24 hours a day, which can be reached by calling 0800 030 5182. You can also have up to 6 sessions of structured telephone counselling or face-to-face counselling which can be requested using the same telephone number. Details are provided on Camweb of how to access the Employee Assistance Programme if you have a hearing impairment.

Support if a concern has been raised about your behaviour

In this situation you can speak to a Respect@Work contact to ask questions about the process and to talk to a neutral party about what happened. You can also speak to a Respect@Work contact if you are the subject of a Respect@Work investigation. The Respect@Work contact will not be involved in the investigation in any way but is available to answer your questions and provide you with guidance on the process that will follow.

Other Authorities

In some cases it may be appropriate to raise an issue with another organisation e.g. reporting physical violence, sexual assault, theft, repeated threats or intimidation to the police. Where there is police involvement this usually takes precedence over the internal Respect@Work process and may require the Council to pause internal investigations until the police have decided on a course of action or otherwise. A Respect@Work contact can provide you with guidance in this situation.

Witnessing Unacceptable Behaviour

If you witness a person being subjected to inappropriate behaviour, if you feel able to, you should challenge this behaviour. Alternatively, you should raise your concerns with a Respect@Work contact who will give you information on the appropriate manager to direct your concerns to. The Respect@Work contact can also talk to you about how to raise your concerns. We all have a

responsibility to our colleagues to raise unacceptable behaviour and not overlook it. It is not okay to ignore inappropriate behaviour that you see.

Recording Details of Unacceptable Behaviour

It may help to keep written notes about any incidents of unacceptable behaviour – make a written note of what happened and when. Similarly, one to one notes should record any issues that you have raised and accurately reflect the discussion with your manager. These notes will help all parties have a discussion about Respect@Work concerned that is focused on specific details.

ADDRESSING UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

There are two resolution stages to the Respect@Work Policy, and these are set out below:

Informal Resolution
<p><u>Face to Face discussion</u></p> <p>We want people to feel able to raise issues informally in the first instance. If you have experienced unacceptable behaviour you should, where they feel able to, raise it with the other party informally at the earliest opportunity. You should give specific examples of the unwanted behaviour, explain how this has made you feel, and what you would like to see change.</p> <p>The aim is for you to make it clear how their behaviour has affected you, and for you to agree a constructive way of working together in the future. An informal discussion can be particularly useful in cases where the other party is genuinely not aware of the effect of their behaviour. In many cases this direct and honest conversation is enough to resolve an issue.</p> <p><u>Facilitated discussion</u></p> <p>If you do not feel able to approach the other party you should speak to a Respect@Work contact who can arrange a facilitated discussion between both parties. In this discussion the Respect@Work contact will act in a neutral capacity - their role is to prompt both parties to discuss the issue and agree a constructive way forward. This will be a confidential discussion between those present only. The main issues and agreed outcomes will be recorded.</p> <p><u>Raising concerns in writing</u></p> <p>Where you do not feel able to speak to someone face to face you could raise your concerns in writing – in a letter or an email. The aim of your message is to be clear what your concerns are, how a person’s behaviour has affected you and how you would like to see this change going forward. This written message will be followed up with a facilitated discussion with a Respect@Work contact to allow both parties to talk about the concern and agree a way forward – you should speak to a Respect@Work contact to arrange this.</p> <p><u>Support from your trade union</u></p> <p>If you are a member of a trade union you can discuss your concerns with your trade union representative.</p>
Formal Resolution
<p>The formal resolution stage will usually be applied when either;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an informal discussion has not resolved the issue (e.g. the other party denies behaving inappropriately or does not change their behaviour), or

- the alleged behaviour is so serious that it warrants moving straight to a formal investigation (e.g. serious persistent bullying, incidents of discrimination). Please note the incidents of physical abuse would be dealt with as a conduct issue under the disciplinary procedure, rather than via the Respect@Work policy.

You should raise this with your Line Manager (either orally or in writing) outlining the alleged behaviour and its impact on you. If the Line Manager is the person that the allegations are centred on then you should raise the issue with their Line Manager, or if you feel that you cannot do this for any reason then you approach a Respect@Work contact.

An appropriately skilled manager from outside of the service (referred to as the Independent Manager) will be identified to carry out the investigation, supported by a member of the HR Advisory team. Employees are entitled to Trade Union representation during the formal resolution stage. Where a situation involves a group of employees the independent manager will speak to each of the people involved. All parties will be advised that if it transpires that there is evidence to suggest that inappropriate behaviour or conduct has occurred, the matter may be taken forward under the Council's disciplinary procedure.

Every effort will be made to complete the investigation as soon as possible after an issue has been raised.

Outcome of the investigation

The Independent Manager will meet with both parties separately to outline the findings of the investigation and to advise what action will be taken going forward. They will then write to both parties to confirm the outcome and any actions or follow up agreed. Where an investigation involves a group of people the Independent Manager will address the behaviour of each individual separately.

Evidence of inappropriate behaviour

If the Independent Manager concludes there is evidence to suggest inappropriate behaviour has occurred and that this behaviour would normally be in breach of the Council's Code of Conduct or Disciplinary Rules, they will advise both parties that the process will then be taken forward under the Disciplinary Procedure.

The Independent Manager will set out the specific allegations in writing and invite the employee to a further meeting where they have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative and will be given every opportunity to answer the allegations made. Once this process is concluded and any additional witnesses have been spoken to, the Independent Manager will take a view on whether the matter should be referred to a Disciplinary Hearing. Full details of the Disciplinary Procedure can be found here.

No evidence of inappropriate behaviour

If no evidence is found of inappropriate conduct the Independent Manager will explain this finding and the rationale for coming to this conclusion.

Inappropriate conduct requiring action short of disciplinary

If evidence of inappropriate conduct is found where the behaviour needs to change but disciplinary action is not considered to be appropriate, the Independent Manager will issue a Management Instruction setting out any expectations about anything that needs to change. This will be monitored by

	their line manager going forward to ensure that the issue does not recur. Any further incidences of inappropriate behaviour are likely to lead to disciplinary action.
Failure to commit to change of behaviour	If the individual will not agree or commit to a change of behaviour then this will automatically be taken forward under the Disciplinary Procedure.
Follow up actions	
In all cases the Independent Manager will discuss and agree actions to move forwards, which may include arranging for mediation to help restore the working relationship. The investigation may also have highlighted training needs for one or both parties. In this case a training plan will be put in place to support the employee(s) to obtain the skills that they need.	

MEDIATION

Mediation can be very effective when dealing with incidents of bullying and harassment. Mediation is undertaken voluntarily with both parties agreeing to participate. It is particularly useful where there are issues with a working relationship. A trained mediator will facilitate discussions and guide the participants to reach an agreed way forward e.g. to agree more productive and appropriate ways of working together in the future. Mediation can only be successful where both parties are genuinely willing to engage with the process. Either party may suggest that mediation is undertaken at any stage in the process. Where both parties agree to engage in mediation they should contact HR Advisory to arrange this.

APPEAL

The employee who raised a Respect@Work concern has a right to appeal the outcome of the formal investigation within 10 working days of receiving the outcome in writing. The purpose of the appeal is to determine whether the formal resolution stage was followed correctly, and whether the outcome was reasonable in all of the circumstances.

The appeal must be made in writing and be addressed to the Assistant Director, HR Services, who will appoint an appropriate person to conduct the appeal meeting. The appeal will usually be heard by a Director from another Directorate. The Director will be supported by a member of the HR Advisory Team. The appeal must clearly state the grounds for the appeal.

Both parties may be represented by a Trade Union Representative in the appeal meeting. The decision of the appeal is final.

If the Respect@Work investigation has resulted in disciplinary action being taken the employee will have the right to challenge the outcome through the disciplinary process.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

Managers have a responsibility to address issues consistently and fairly by applying the appropriate procedure e.g. the Disciplinary Procedure or the Improving Performance Procedure. You may have concerns about how another procedure is being applied. These types of concerns will generally be considered as part of the procedure being applied.

However there may be situations where you consider that another procedure is being applied to you in a targeted or inconsistent way e.g. the Disciplinary Procedure/Improving Performance Procedure is not being applied consistently to other employees in your team behaving or performing in a similar way.

You should raise your concerns with the Investigating Manager (for disciplinary issues) or Lead Manager (for performance issues). This manager will seek advice from the Head of HR Advisory or their HR

Business Partner. The manager will determine whether it would be appropriate to address concerns via the procedure being applied. Alternatively a decision may be taken to suspend a procedure and address concerns via the Respect@Work Policy.

Elected Members – The Council has a protocol on Member/Officer relations which is designed to provide a guide to good working relations between Members and officers, to define their respective roles and provide some principles governing conduct. This document can be found here: [Council Constitution - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

This sets out in section 12.2 that if an officer is unhappy with the conduct or behaviour of a Councillor they should seek to resolve the matter by appropriate discussion and involvement of their Executive Director or Director. In the event that matters remain unresolved they should inform the Monitoring Officer who will consider what action should be taken, and when necessary, the Chief Executive will arbitrate on the interpretation of this Protocol following consultation with the Monitoring Officer.

If a council employee feels that they are being unfairly treated by an Elected Member, they should speak to their line manager in the first instance to make them aware. The Line Manager will then consider whether it is a matter that they can address informally with the Elected Member, or whether this is something that needs to be referred to the relevant Director or Executive Director to address. If, following this process the employee does not feel the matter has been satisfactorily resolved they should contact the Monitoring Officer (Director of Law & Governance) or Chief Executive.

External Contacts such as the Public, Customers, Partner organisations – The employer has a responsibility to act where an employee of the council feels that they are being subjected to unacceptable behaviour or conduct from a member of the public, a customer or service user, or an employee of a partner organisation. Where an employee has experienced inappropriate conduct or behaviour they should make this known to their Line Manager who will take responsibility for action to address these concerns formally or informally, depending upon the nature of them.

If the matter relates to a serious concern of violence or aggression the procedure here should be followed: [Procedure for reporting Violence and Aggression.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

If it does not relate to violence or aggression but is more aligned with inappropriate conduct or behaviour, the Line Manager should talk to their HR Advisor for advice on specific measures to take.

Please note that the sources of support set out on Pages 4-5 above from our Respect@Work Contacts, Trade Unions, Equality & Diversity Network and the Employee Assistance Programme are available throughout these processes.

EMPLOYEES LEAVING THE ORGANISATION

An employee may raise a concern just before leaving the Council. Wherever possible we will apply this procedure in full. Where this is not possible in the time available the approach taken will be adapted to ensure we give reasonable consideration to the issue before the employee leaves our employment. An employee may raise concerns via an exit questionnaire or an exit interview. Issues that have been highlighted will be addressed even if the employee is no longer in employment where the concerns raised may have implications for other employees.

FEEDBACK AND MONITORING

If you want to give feedback on any aspect of the Respect@Work policy please email RespectatWork@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

We will use our employee survey and other sources of employee feedback to monitor whether employees in our organisation are experiencing unacceptable behaviour, bullying or harassment. We will monitor the number of informal and formal cases that occur (where they are reported to HR), and

their outcomes which will be reported annually to JMT and the Staffing and Appeals Committee. We will use monitoring data to identify any areas where unacceptable behaviour is more prevalent and to take appropriate action to address this.