



Berrick Salome Parish Council

Sexual and General Harassment Policy & Procedure

Introduction

Berrick Salome Parish Council (BSPC) recognises that harassment and victimisation is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to providing a work environment free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. This policy outlines the council's zero-tolerance approach to harassment and the procedures for reporting and addressing such behaviour.

Definition

Reference to harassment in this policy shall refer to all types of harassment including sexual and general harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination.

Scope

This policy applies to all councillors and employees, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract workers, as well as volunteers associated with BSPC.

Examples of personal harassment

Personal harassment takes many forms and individuals may not always realise that their behaviour constitutes harassment. Personal harassment is unwanted behaviour by one person towards another and examples of harassment include:

- insensitive jokes and pranks
- lewd or abusive comments
- deliberate exclusion from conversations
- displaying abusive or offensive writing or material
- abusive, threatening or insulting words or behaviour
- name-calling
- picking on someone or setting them up to fail
- exclusion or victimisation
- undermining their contribution/position
- demanding a greater work output than is reasonably feasible

- blocking promotion or other development/advancement.

These examples are not exhaustive and disciplinary action at the appropriate level will be taken against person committing any form of personal harassment.

Examples of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment can take place in many forms within the workplace and can go undetected for a period of time where individuals do not understand that particular behaviour is classed as sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour related to sex, or of a sexual nature, by one person towards another and examples of sexual harassment include:

- lewd or abusive comments of a sexual nature such as regarding an individual's appearance or body
- unwelcome touching of a sexual nature
- displaying sexually suggestive or sexually offensive writing or material
- asking questions of a sexual nature
- sexual propositions or advances, whether made in writing or verbally.

Sexual harassment can also take place where an person is treated less favourably because they have rejected, or submitted to, the unwanted conduct that is related to sex or is of a sexual nature. Whether less favourable treatment occurs as a result will be examined broadly and includes areas such as blocking promotion and refusal of training opportunities or other development opportunities.

Examples of victimisation

Victimisation takes place when a person is treated unfavourably as a direct result of raising a genuine complaint of discrimination or harassment. Furthermore, any individual who supports or assists another person to raise a complaint is also subjected to victimisation if they are treated unfavourably.

Third party harassment

BSPC operates a zero tolerance policy in relation to harassment perpetrated against one of its councillors or employees by a third party, such as a client/customer or visitor to the Organisation. All councillors and employees are encouraged to report any and all instances of harassment that involve a third party in line with our reporting procedure, as outlined below.

Responsibilities

Councillor and employee responsibilities

BSPC requires its councillors and employees to behave appropriately and professional at all times. They should not engage in discriminatory, harassing or aggressive behaviour towards any other person at any time.

Any form of harassment or victimisation may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

BSPC responsibilities

BSPC will be responsible for ensuring all councillors and staff understand the rules and policies relating to the prevention of harassing and bullying behaviour.

Reporting procedure

Any councillor or employee who believes they have experienced or witnessed harassment and/or bullying is encouraged to report it immediately. Reports can be made to:

- The Chair of the Parish Council
- The Vice Chair of the Parish Council
- The Clerk of the Parish Council

Reports can be made verbally or in writing and will be kept confidential to the extent possible. Retaliation against individuals who report harassment is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Investigation procedure

Upon receiving a report of harassment, BSPC will promptly and impartially investigate the allegations. The investigation will be conducted by the Chair or Vice Chair, who will interview the parties involved and any witnesses. All parties will be afforded due process and confidentiality to the extent possible.

Disciplinary action

If an investigation confirms that harassment has occurred, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. This may include verbal or written warnings, suspension, demotion, or termination, depending on the severity of the offense and the circumstances involved.

Compliance

All councillors and employees are expected to comply with this policy at all times. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Review and revision

This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

Conclusion

BSPC is dedicated to fostering a respectful and inclusive workplace where all employees can thrive. The council takes allegations of harassment seriously and will take prompt and appropriate action to address them.

Julian Fox
Parish Clerk
On behalf of Berrick Salome Parish Council
Last Review Date : 14/11/2024