

WITHAM AND HUMBER DRAINAGE BOARDS

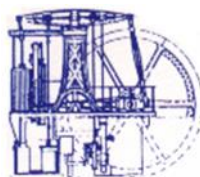
Four independent statutory Land Drainage and Flood Risk Management Authorities working in partnership.



Witham First District IDB



Upper Witham IDB



Witham Third District



North East Lindsey

www.witham3idb.gov.uk

Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

Background	<p>Harassment or victimisation on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation is unacceptable.</p> <p>Personal harassment takes many forms ranging from tasteless jokes and abusive remarks to pestering for sexual favours, threatening behaviour and actual physical abuse. For the purposes of this policy, it also includes bullying. Whatever form it takes, personal harassment is always taken seriously and is totally unacceptable.</p>
Statement	<p>The 4 Boards recognise that personal harassment can exist in the workplace, as well as outside, and that this can seriously affect employees' working lives by interfering with their job performance or by creating a stressful, intimidating and unpleasant working environment.</p> <p>The 4 Boards deplore all forms of personal harassment and seek to ensure that the working environment is sympathetic to all our employees. The aim of this policy is to inform employees of the type of behaviour that is unacceptable and provide employees who are the victims of personal harassment with a means of redress.</p>
Responsibility	<p>The 4 Boards recognise a duty to implement this policy and all employees are expected to comply with it.</p>
Equality and Diversity	<p>This policy aims to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and ensure that no employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, transgender, civil partnership/marital status, appearance, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion/belief or no religion/belief, disability, age, carer, pregnancy or maternity, social status or trade union membership.</p>
Dissemination	<p>Website</p>
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Review Date	<p>3 years from approval</p>

DIGNITY AT WORK GUIDANCE

The 4 Boards recognise the harmful effects of harassment and bullying which can include anxiety, distress, reduced job satisfaction and productivity, sickness absence, poor working relationships, high staff turnover, and is committed to implementing policies and procedures to:

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- prevent bullying and harassment at work
- promote the provisions of this procedure
- handle complaints seriously, fairly and confidentially
- ensure complainants do not suffer further treatment which could be considered to be bullying or harassment as a result of raising concerns

Any form of intimidating behaviour including harassment and bullying may be treated as a disciplinary matter. This applies not only at the workplace during working hours but at other work related activities – for example training courses, conferences and social functions.

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. In the case of harassment, it is conduct that may be related to sex, race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, or pregnancy and maternity, or any other personal characteristic.

Bullying may be described as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour or, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

In both cases, it is behaviour that the recipient finds demeaning, offensive or unacceptable. It may be persistent or an isolated incident.

Bullying and harassment are not necessarily face to face – they may be written, verbal, visual, physical or electronic.

Examples of personal harassment

Personal harassment takes many forms and employees may not always realise that their behaviour constitutes harassment. Personal harassment is unwanted behaviour by one employee 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 employees 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 employees 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 employee 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 employee 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.

Responsibilities

Employee responsibilities

The 4 Boards require their employees to behave appropriately and professional at all times during the working day, and this may extend to events outside of working hours which are classed as work-related such as social events. Employees should not engage in discriminatory, harassing or aggressive behaviour towards any other person at any time. A breach of this policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

Employer responsibilities

Witham and Humber Drainage Boards will be responsible for ensuring all members of staff, including seniors and those within management positions, understand the rules and policies relating to the prevention of harassing and bullying behaviour at work and during work-related social events. We will promote a professional and positive workplace whereby managers are alert and proactively identify areas of risk and incidents of harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.

Where an incident is witnessed, or a complaint is made under this policy, the 4 Boards will take prompt action to deal with this matter. All incidents will be deemed serious and dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.

Complaining about harassment and/or bullying

Informal method

The 4 Boards recognise that complaints of personal harassment, and particularly of sexual harassment, can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that it may not be appropriate for you to raise the issue through our normal grievance procedure. In these circumstances you are encouraged to raise such issues with a senior colleague of your choice (whether or not that person has a direct supervisory responsibility for you) as a confidential supporter.

If you are the victim of minor harassment you should make it clear to the harasser on an informal basis that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask the harasser to stop. If you feel unable to do this verbally then you should hand a written request to the harasser, and your confidential supporter can assist you in this.

Formal method

Where the informal approach fails or if the harassment is more serious, you should bring the matter to the attention of HR Manager as a formal written grievance and again your confidential supporter can assist you in this. If possible, you should keep notes of the harassment so that the written complaint can include:

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- the name of the alleged harasser
- the nature of the alleged harassment
- the dates and times when the alleged harassment occurred
- the names of any witnesses
- any action already taken by you to stop the alleged harassment.

Where it is not possible to make the formal complaint to the above named person, for example where they are the alleged harasser, we would encourage you to raise your complaint your line manager.

On receipt of a formal complaint we will take action to separate you from the alleged harasser to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place. This may involve a temporary transfer of the alleged harasser to another work area or suspension with contractual pay until the matter has been resolved.

On conclusion of the investigation a report of the findings will be submitted to the manager who will hold the grievance meeting.

You will be invited to attend a meeting, at a reasonable time and location, to discuss the matter once the person hearing the grievance has had opportunity to read the report. You have the right to be accompanied at such a meeting by a colleague and you must take all reasonable steps to attend. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence will be a disciplinary matter.

If the decision is that the allegation is well founded, the harasser will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure.

The 4 Boards are committed to ensuring employees are not discouraged from using this procedure and no employee will be victimised for having brought a complaint.

ACTION

Complaints will always be taken seriously and will be dealt with sensitively and in the strictest confidence.

Managers dealing with a complaint will consider disciplinary action against any proven perpetrator of any form of harassment or bullying who is employed by the 4 Boards.

Managers will also take positive action to prevent a re-occurrence of unacceptable behaviour by anyone who is not employed by the 4 Boards.

List of behaviours that may constitute harassment

This document contains a number of examples of some types of harassment related to the protected characteristics.

In relation to harassment, the following characteristics are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment

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- race
- religion or belief
- sex, and
- sexual orientation.

Marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity are not included as protected characteristics in relation to complaints of harassment.

Age

Harassment may constitute:

- banter relating to the age of an employee's partner, such as an older or a younger partner
- banter relating to the decline of an employee's physical/mental abilities on account of age
- being dismissive towards an employee because of their age
- comments made to (or about) an employee that are ageist
- using ageist terms to refer to somebody.

Disability

Harassment may constitute:

- banter relating to the disability of an employee, or mocking an employee with a disability
- excluding an employee either overtly or covertly, on the basis of their disability
- general banter about disabilities, even if not related to a specific person or employee
- using upsetting words about, or being offensive when describing, an employee's disability, or even when describing the employee themselves.

Religion and belief

Harassment may constitute:

- exacerbating or causing arguments over religious differences between religious groups/employees following particular faiths
- gossiping/chatting about an employee's religious views or beliefs
- isolating an employee due to their religious views or beliefs, or treating somebody differently because of their views
- making remarks about religions generally and their practices, or specifically regarding the religion that an employee follows
- religious jokes
- sectarian views, beliefs and violence
- symbolism and slogans that are offensive or could be interpreted as offensive.

Sex-related/gender-related

Harassment may constitute:

- demeaning/derogatory/sexist banter, jokes or comments about women, men or a specific employee
- exhibiting gender bias in behaviour or language
- making sexist comments about fellow employees.

Sex

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Harassment may constitute:

- jokes and gestures of a lewd/sexual nature
- language of a sexual nature, whether oral or in writing
- office gossip or detrimental speculation about private sexual activities
- sexual advances, lewd banter, graphic discussions/humour
- sexually suggestive or sexually explicit material displayed in the workplace
- touching, patting, fondling or other unwelcome physical contact.

Sexual orientation

Harassment may constitute:

- being offensive or making offensive gestures towards LGBT employees, on the basis of their sexual orientation
- excluding an employee either overtly or covertly, on the basis of their sexual orientation
- homophobic remarks or banter made to or about an employee with regard to their sexual orientation, or that of their partner, son or daughter who may be LGBT
- remarks, banter or jokes about LGBT people generally or a specific employee
- spreading perceptions/spreading rumours about somebody's sexual orientation, either actual or perceived.

Race

Harassment may constitute:

- assaults motivated by race, colour, ethnic or national origins
- excluding an employee either overtly or covertly, on the basis of their race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origins
- graphics, slogans, logos etc that have racial undertones, for instance on t-shirts, cups, etc
- using language that is offensive or derogatory on the basis of race, or making racist remarks to or about an employee.