

## **Dignity at Work Policy**

**March 2017**

Dignity at Work is the term used to describe a positive approach to conducting workplace relationships based on a commitment to curb all forms of unacceptable behaviour, including bullying and harassment, and to treat all employees with respect.

*'Bullying can take many forms. It is generally accepted as unwanted behaviour that offends, persecutes or excludes someone. It includes treating individuals in a demeaning and unacceptable way and can be intimidating, malicious or insulting, or a misuse of power to undermine, humiliate, threaten or cause injury. Harassment is usually seen as constant interference or intimidation that violates people's dignity or creates a hostile or degrading environment.'*

The purpose of this policy is to ensure 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.

St Luke's Healthcare for the Clergy is committed to tackling behaviour that is deemed inappropriate in working relationships. In many instances, the issues can be resolved informally. However any complaint will be dealt with seriously and investigated quickly.

### **Definition of harassment and bullying behaviour**

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 working 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.

Bullying can be defined as persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or malicious behaviour 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.

Certain actions may be acceptable to one person but not another.

### **Responsibilities**

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. Employees or volunteers should report any actions which

breach this policy to the CEO. Employees and volunteers will be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for making a complaint or assisting in an investigation.

## Complaints

All complaints will be dealt with as confidentially as possible. However, the organisation has a duty of care to all employees, and it may be necessary to investigate and take action regarding a complaint without the consent of the complainant.

### A. Informal complaints

If the employee feels able to, then often the quickest and most effective means of dealing with an issue is for the recipient to raise the matter informally, make their colleague aware that their behaviour is unacceptable and explain why.

### B. Formal complaints procedure

If the informal procedure has been ineffective, or the complaint is so serious that the informal procedure would be inappropriate, then the grievance procedure will be followed. The complainant should keep a record of the incidents e.g. what happened, when and if there were any witnesses. It would also be useful to consider how the situation could be resolved.

If the investigation reveals that the complaint is valid, prompt attention and disciplinary action may be taken to stop the harassment/bullying immediately and prevent its recurrence. An employee who is found to have made a malicious complaint is likely to be subject to the disciplinary procedure.

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Trustees.

Approved by the Trustees

Signed Edward Markham ..... Dated 20th March 2017 .....  
Chairman

Noted by the Board

Dated 20th March 2017 Reference Minute 10