

SHANNON COURT CARE HOME LTD.	Issue Date: April 2019	Reviewed: September 2025
	Next Review: 09/28	
<u>BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY</u>		

[This policy is linked to our Dignity at Work Policy. To read this policy, click here.](#)

The Home will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying.

This policy is underpinned by the Home's legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation. All employees, residents and visitors are entitled to an environment free from harassment, bullying or discrimination, as set out in law.

The purpose of this policy is to inform employees and visitors of the type of behaviour that is totally unacceptable and to explain what solutions there are to employees who may suffer harassment or bullying.

This Home believes that all residents, staff and visitors, should be able to visit or reside in the Home without fear of humiliation, intimidation, sexual or racial harassment, oppression or any form of bullying. It is the responsibility of the staff and management that the atmosphere of the Home is caring, happy, relaxed and protective.

This policy applies to all staff, agency workers, contractors, volunteers, residents, relatives and visitors. It applies not only in the Home, but also in work-related settings outside the Home, such as training events, work trips or social occasions connected with employment.

WHAT IS HARASSMENT?

Personal harassment takes many forms. Basically, it is any behaviour which is unacceptable to the recipient and which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment – for work, study or social life. This can be particularly serious if the harasser is in a position of organisational power in relation to the person harassed.

People who are being harassed often feel isolated and stressed, and this can affect their work. It is therefore important to seek help as soon as possible, if you feel you are being harassed.

If you are not sure, ask for help anyway

Any behaviour which shows lack of respect and which creates an atmosphere in which people feel uncomfortable and unwelcome can constitute harassment.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT – could include:

- Any behaviour which patronises, intimidates or offends, e.g. 'remarks' looks, jokes or offensive language.
- Any behaviour which makes people feel viewed as sexual objects and which causes offence, even if unintended.
- Provocative suggestions, propositioning people
- The display of pornographic, semi-pornographic or suggestive material, both digital or paper
- Deliberate, potentially objectionable physical contact to which the person has not consented or had the opportunity to object to threats of academic failure, or promises of success or other rewards in exchange for sexual favours
- Although this most often involves women being harassed by men, this policy lies equally well to harassment occurring between people of the same gender, or of men by women

RACIAL HARASSMENT – could include:

- Any behaviour which causes discomfort, intimidates or offends or which incites others to do so – derogatory names, insults, racist jokes or ridiculing cultural difference

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- The display or circulation of offensive material, including racist graffiti, email, social media posts or information published through the internet
- Verbal abuse and threats of physical attack

PERSONAL HARASSMENT – could include:

- Behaviour which makes direct or indirect reference to disability or impairment – and thus causes discomfort, patronises, insults or offends people with a physical, sensory or mental disability
- Behaviour which makes direct or indirect reference to religion or culture thereby causing discomfort or offence
- Repeated gibes in reference to personal traits, appearance of sexual orientation
- Invasion of privacy or practical jokes causing physical, or psychological distress
- Pressure to become involved in antisocial or criminal behaviour
- Messages to or about a person, including emails and social media posts that are offensive, insulting or cause discomfort

Please remember the test is that the behaviour is UNWELCOME, UNINVITED AND UNRECIPROCATED.

Bullying is also difficult to define. Obvious examples are:

- Verbal and or physical intimidation – threats, shouting, derisory remarks, often in front of others
- Ostracism, or conversely, excessive supervision
- Undermining of the individual's position by changing work objectives/guidelines without consultation, taking credit for the target's work, deriding the target's work to supervisors, etc.
- Removing areas of responsibility and giving people menial or trivial tasks to do instead
- Withholding important information
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Persistent criticism
- Messages including email or social media posts/messages that are threatening, derisory or defamatory

To achieve this we will do the following:

1. Set out strategies to avoid or combat bullying.
2. Ensure that there is a procedure to follow if there is an incident of bullying, i.e. client to client.
3. Ensure that victims are given support.
4. Inform all staff and other appropriate people of the action being taken, why it is being taken and what they can do to reinforce and support that action.
5. Assign an appropriate person to whom anyone can talk to in confidence - this may be the manager.
6. Give reassurance that something will be done and that the incident will be handled in a sensitive manner.
7. Ensure that other people watch over the victim at all times, if they are at risk.
8. Encourage staff to be trained in observing for danger signs, and to pass on any worries they may have about someone.
9. Ensure everyone, especially staff, know that we will not accept bullying in any form and that they will be supported in their efforts to stop this practice.
10. Inform friends, relatives, and staff of the signs of distress to look for if someone is being bullied, although this can be difficult to spot in the Home setting due to the mixed signs that clients may present.

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Procedure

If you encounter a problem of this nature, it is vital that you make the person responsible aware that their remarks or conduct are offensive to you. This should be done in a simple, straightforward way.

It is recognised that complaints of harassment or bullying are often of a sensitive or worrying nature and that it may be difficult to speak directly to the other person involved. If this is the case, you should put your request in writing and hand it to the harasser or bully.

When or if the informal approach fails or if you believe that the harassment or bullying is of a very serious nature you must bring the matter to the attention of the Home manager. If the matter involves the Home manager, this matter can be brought to the attention of the Operations Manager or Director. If possible, you should keep notes of the harassment or bullying so that the formal complaint can be investigated, including the date, time and whereabouts of the act.

A formal complaint will be investigated thoroughly and during the investigation all possible actions will be taken to separate you from the alleged harasser or bully.

You will be informed of the findings of the investigations and will be given an opportunity to comment.

If the report concludes that the allegation is well founded, the harasser or bully will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, in accordance with our disciplinary procedure.

If you bring a complaint of harassment or bullying you will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence and only shared with those directly involved in investigating and resolving the matter. Retaliation or further harassment of anyone raising a concern will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

If, however, after a full and fair investigation, the Home has grounds to believe that the complaint was brought with malicious intent, you will be subject to disciplinary action under the Home's disciplinary procedure.

The Home's appeal procedure applies to appeals against decisions made under the equal opportunities and discrimination policy.