



The Time Out Group

ANTI-HARRASSMENT POLICY

Work-related harassment is defined as unwarranted and unacceptable conduct directed against one person who is an employee, volunteer or Trustee by another who is an employee, volunteer or Trustee and which is unreasonable and offensive to the recipient. Harassment can take many forms and, whatever the intent, it has a disturbing effect on the person being harassed.

People should be free from intimidation, humiliation, patronising or insulting behaviour in the workplace and The Time Out Group will not tolerate harassment in any form. It will view such acts seriously and will regard proven acts of harassment against individuals as a serious breach of its aims and objectives. Some forms of harassment can also be a breach of the law, which may result in legal proceedings in which an employee carrying out the harassment can be held personally liable.

Any employee or volunteer who considers he or she is being subjected to harassment should make it clear to the 'harasser' that the behaviour complained of is not acceptable with a request that it stop. If the person feels unable to do this personally he or she should seek the help of a friend, colleague, or other representative.

The Time Out Group will take steps to protect any employee or volunteer who makes a *bona fide* complaint of harassment, or who provides evidence of harassment, from victimisation.

Harassment on grounds of personal characteristics

The styles of harassment will vary and can take the form of abuse, intimidation, explicit derogatory statements or language, offensive jokes, graffiti, display of offensive material or pictures, discriminatory remarks, remarks about appearance, embarrassing jokes, a dismissive manner, isolation by deprivation of communication or creation of a poor or hostile working environment, or oral, written or physical abuse aimed at any individual and occasioned by reason of that individual's race, sex, disability, health, physical characteristics, personal beliefs and numerous other factors.



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Harassment can occur between people of the same or opposite gender. People can be subject to harassment for a wide variety of reasons including their willingness to challenge harassment, leading to victimisation; their membership, or non-membership of a trade union; their gender or sexual orientation; their religious or political convictions; their status as ex-offenders; their age (or youth) or their real or suspected infection with AIDS/HIV. This list is not exhaustive.

Bullying

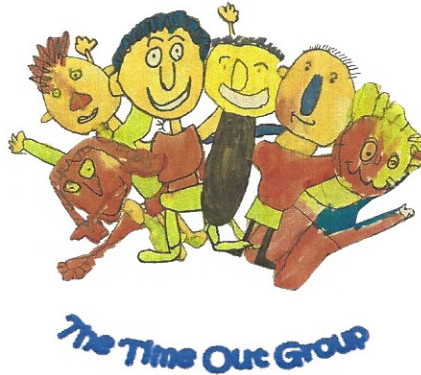
This can take the form of shouting at a colleague, making persistently negative attacks on a colleague's personal or professional performance, criticising a colleague in front of others, persistently setting objectives with impossible deadlines or unachievable tasks, excessive monitoring of a colleague's performance, or withholding information with the intent of deliberately affecting a colleague's performance.

Policy Statement on Harassment

The Time Out Group will regard as a serious offence, actions by an employee, volunteer or Trustee that amount to work-related harassment, bullying, discrimination against or victimization of any employee, volunteer, Trustee or member of the public. Such offences could result in disciplinary action against the offender including dismissal in appropriate circumstances.

If an employee or volunteer considers that he or she has grounds to complain against a third party not connected to The Time Out Group, then the matter should be raised with the Group Leader who will advise what action should be taken.

Work-related harassment may occur during or outside normal working hours, at work or away from work location. When or wherever it occurs, work-related personal harassment is covered by this policy.



Disciplinary Action

The *Anti-Harassment Policy* provides for an individual to be able to resolve an issue without the need to lodge a formal complaint but recognizes that some circumstances are serious enough to warrant a formal complaint being made.

It is the responsibility of the Group Leader to ensure that the principles contained in the *Anti-Harassment Policy* become a normal part of the custom and practice of daily working life. It is the responsibility of every employee and volunteer (including Trustees) to avoid behaviour which harasses another person and also to discourage such behavior in other employees and volunteers (including Trustees).

Each employee and volunteer can support the policy and discourage harassment by making it clear to all concerned that such behavior is unacceptable and not collude in any way when it occurs. Support should be offered to colleagues who are subjected to any form of harassment, including where appropriate encouraging them to make a complaint.

Making a Complaint

Any complaint in relation to work-related harassment should be in accordance with this policy. With a specific complaint of harassment, which may be repeated over a period of time, the subject of a proven complaint can expect to be asked what steps he or she has taken to stop the unacceptable behaviour or practice.

The person making the allegation may be asked to provide evidence to substantiate the allegations and to keep detailed records of any further incidents.

This policy provides general outlines regarding a complaint made by one staff member or volunteer against another. Where the complaint relates to harassment, the following process will apply.

This policy is non-contractual and will be regularly reviewed by the Management Committee with any changes advised as appropriate.



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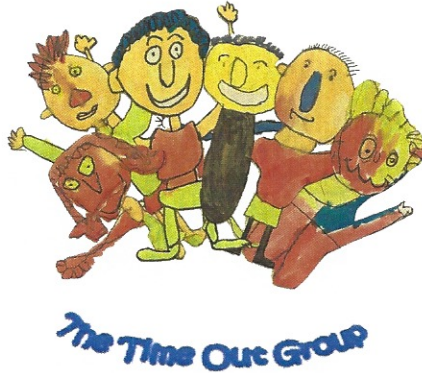
A complaint under harassment presents a particularly sensitive problem for those responsible for investigating the allegations. They are required to protect the rights of the alleged harasser as well as those of the individual making the allegations. In accordance with the principles of Common Law, all parties are entitled to a full and fair opportunity to put their version of events.

The complainant must expect to be interviewed and give, in confidence, full details of the alleged harassment. A detailed record of the interview will be prepared in duplicate with a request for signature. The record will reflect the content of the interview but will not necessarily be a verbatim report. The complainant may be accompanied at the interview if desired by a friend, relative, colleague, or other appropriate representative.

The employee or volunteer against whom the complaint is made should be requested in writing to attend an investigatory interview, which may lead to a disciplinary procedure. At least five working days' notice will be given of the time and date for the interview and at least two responsible people from the Group will be present at the interview (e.g. Group Leader, Trustee or Management Committee member).

The person against whom the complaint is made is allowed to postpone an investigatory interview if a chosen representative is unavailable and can request a reasonable alternative date within five working days of receiving the letter to attend for interview.

The investigatory interview shall be postponed for a reasonable period if the person against whom the complaint is made is sick, or for five working days of receiving notification of the letter if the person against whom the complaint is made is unable to attend the interview for any other satisfactory reason. If the person against whom the complaint is made does not give a suitable reason and fails to attend, a second date will be set and if again he or she does not attend, the investigation will commence in his or her absence. A copy of the *Anti-Harassment Policy* will be attached to the letter requiring the person against whom the complaint is made to attend the interview.



Persons subject to an investigatory interview are entitled to know the evidence that has given rise to the investigatory review. Any documentary evidence, including any witness statements to be used, will be attached to the letter requiring the person against whom the complaint is made to attend the interview. In some situations it may not be appropriate to release complete documents but an extract or synopsis may be sufficient.

It is the responsibility of the person subject to an investigatory interview to copy documentation that will be introduced into the proceedings. Witness statements to be used by that person should include full name(s) and contact details. This information should be sent to the person (or persons) conducting the interview as soon as possible before the interview.

The person (or persons) conducting the interview will meet and interview individually the nominated witnesses, who may be accompanied by a friend, colleague, or other appropriate representative. The interviewer may need to meet with the complainant more than once if on reflection there are points from the interview(s) that are still unclear.

A detailed record of the interview will be prepared in duplicate with a request for signature of agreement, or if this is not practicable, sent as soon as possible to the parties to the matter. The record will reflect the content of the interview but will not necessarily be a verbatim report. If any party is dissatisfied with the record of the interview, the reasons for the dissatisfaction shall be considered and, unless satisfactorily resolved shall be separately recorded.

The interviewer will report to the Chair of Trustees within ten working days of the final interview and respond to the complainant within a further five working days. If the Chairman feels that further information or investigations are needed, he or she may refer the matter back. In this event, an extension of the time limits may be necessary.

In some cases, there will not be any witnesses and it will be one person's word against another's. In these instances, the interviewer will consider whether, on the balance of probabilities, the incidents/actions occurred.

On receiving the report and any recommendations they may have made, the Chair has various options available depending on the circumstances: -



1. No further action because the complainant cannot be substantiated or because the complainant is anxious that the matter ends there.
2. Take action by one of the following:
 - monitor the situation;
 - arrange training or counselling where appropriate for either the complainant or the alleged harasser or both;
 - make arrangements for the complainant and alleged harasser to work as separately as possible within the same workplace;
 - recommend redeployment of one or both parties, either on a temporary or permanent basis; or
 - initiate the Time Out Group disciplinary procedure

Where a complaint of harassment is found proven, either the Group Leader or, if the Group Leader is the alleged harasser, another nominated officer, will be expected to offer support and counselling in assisting the complainant to carry on with normal working arrangements.

Where a complaint of harassment is not proven, either the Group Leader or, if the Group leader is the alleged harasser, another nominated officer, will be expected to provide support to the alleged harasser to reintegrate into the workplace and to regain or maintain credibility. The Group Leader or other nominated officer will also take steps to rebuild the necessary working relationships between all the parties concerned

If a complaint of harassment is made and acted on that is subsequently found, during the course of the investigation procedure, to have been made falsely or maliciously then the person conducting the interview may recommend appropriate action regarding the complainant, depending on the circumstances. Such action could include referring the complainant for counseling or training; permanent or temporary redeployment of the complainant; or initiation of the [Time Out Group disciplinary procedure] against the complainant.



This policy was first adopted by the committee on 11 September 2018 and was last updated on 31 January 2022

Signed.....*H Bradley*..... Chair *4/2/22*..... Date