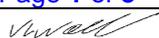


Pluss

DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

Purpose: This dignity at work policy sets out Pluss' commitment to ensuring the fair treatment of all employees and sets out the company procedures relative to harassment and/or bullying and/or victimisation.

Owner	Corporate Human Resources	
Approved	01.06.2008	
Introduction Date	01.06.2008	
Review Date	01.03.2020	
Ref	HUM08	
Change History		
Version	Date	Summary of Change
1.1	01.04.2010	Reviewed and updated
1.2	01.04.2012	Reviewed
1.3	01.04.2017	Reviewed
1.4	01.03.2019	Reviewed and updated

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1.0 Introduction

The company is committed to providing a working environment for its entire staff which respects employees' dignity and which is free from all forms of bullying, harassment and victimisation, including that by third parties.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to the conduct of all Pluss employees (irrespective of their length of service, status or number of hours worked) in the context of their work or which otherwise affects the working or social environment of Pluss and/or its reputation. This can include the way in which employees behave towards colleagues outside Pluss premises on Pluss-related social occasions. It is also inclusive of people who are not employees of Pluss, third parties, such as consultants.

2.1 External contractors/consultants and organisations:

- Pluss engages with a wide variety of individuals, organisations, contractors, consultants and suppliers. It is essential that we expect their commitment and co-operation to adhere to the Pluss Dignity at Work policy.
- We will require that external contractors and organisations conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with our values and commitment to equal opportunities.
- We will require that external contractors and organisations have a working commitment to promoting equality within their own organisations and are encouraged to use this policy.
- Pluss will draw this policy to the attention of consultants and when appropriate contractors through its' procurement and engagement processes.

2.2 Subcontractors

Services delivered by Pluss subcontractors will be subject to the same high standards and scrutiny. Our subcontracting partners are responsible for ensuring the development of a robust Dignity at Work policy and process. Pluss will ensure as far as reasonably practicable that adequate arrangements are in place through a due diligence process. This process is dependant on the contract requirements and a level of involvement with the partner.

The procedure does not form part of the employee's contract of employment.

The contents may be subject to revision at any time.

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3.0 Purpose and Aim

The purpose and aims of this policy are to:

- eliminate unfair discrimination from the workplace;
- promote a positive environment in which people are treated fairly and with respect;
- encourage all employees to play a role in creating and maintaining an environment in which harassment, bullying and victimisation are understood to be unacceptable forms of behaviour;
- provide a framework of support for employees who feel that they have been the subject of harassment, bullying or victimisation;
- ensure that allegations of harassment, bullying or victimisation are addressed fairly, with respect for the rights and dignity of all those involved; and
- identify the formal process by which complaints can be raised.

4.0 What is Harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted conduct, relating to a protected characteristic, affecting the dignity of individuals at work, creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Harassment can take many forms, occurs in a variety of ways and may be directed at one person or many people. It can occur in a face-to-face setting, by telephone or in written or electronic communications such as email/text/social media. In general terms, it can be described as unwanted behaviour, which a person finds intimidating, upsetting, embarrassing, humiliating or offensive. It is essential to remember that it is not the intention of the perpetrator that is key in deciding whether harassment has occurred, but whether the behaviour is unacceptable by normal standards. Someone is guilty of harassment if they knew or should have known that what they were doing was upsetting to the recipient.

The essential characteristics of harassment are that it is unwanted by the recipient. Examples include:

- Insults and inappropriate jokes
- Blasphemy and offensive language
- Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature
- Unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct
- Abuse of power by someone in authority

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- Any conduct based on the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) affecting the dignity of individuals at work.

This list is not exhaustive; however, the examples are indicative of behaviour that would be considered unacceptable conduct by Pluss.

5.0 What is Bullying?

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying includes persistent criticism, personal abuse and / or ridicule, either in public or in private, which humiliates and demeans the individuals, involved gradually eroding their self-confidence. Bullying is largely identified not so much by what has actually been done but rather by the effect that it has on the recipient.

Examples of bullying:

- Verbal or physical threats and intimidation instilling fear
- Persistent negative comments
- Humiliating someone in front of others
- Unjustified, persistent criticism
- Setting unattainable targets
- Constantly changing work targets in order to cause someone to fail
- Reducing someone's effectiveness by withholding information
- Ostracism
- Picking on one person for criticism when there is a common problem
- Reasonable, legitimate, constructive and fair criticism of an employee's performance or behaviour at work is not bullying.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation can take place on-line and is commonly known as Cyber-bullying. Social networking sites, messaging apps, gaming sites and chat rooms are all platforms which can provide opportunity for bullying inside and outside of work.

This list is not exhaustive; however, the examples are indicative of behaviour that would be considered unacceptable conduct by Pluss.

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6.0 What is Victimisation?

Victimisation can take many forms and consists of treating a person less favourably than others because that person has made a complaint or allegation of discrimination in connection with proceedings under the Equality Act 2010.

Examples of victimisation:

- Penalising someone for making a complaint of discrimination, harassment or bullying.
- Excluding a person from work-related activities or conversations in which they have a right or legitimate expectation to participate because they have made a complaint of discrimination, harassment or bullying.
- Creating a difficult or oppressive environment for an individual because they have made a complaint of discrimination, harassment or bullying.

This list is not exhaustive; however, the examples are indicative of behaviour that would be considered unacceptable conduct by Pluss.

7.0 What is Third party victimisation?

This is where an employee is harassed by someone who is not an employee of Pluss because of a protected characteristic.

8.0 Work-related events

Bullying, harassment and victimisation do not exclusively have to happen within the working day or within the workplace to be considered to be taking place at work. Work-related events such as office parties/outings are considered extensions of the work place and if there are occurrences of bullying, harassment and victimisation at these they may be informally or formally addressed at work.

9.0 Procedure

9.1 Informal Procedure

Wherever possible our aim is to resolve the situation on an informal basis in the first instance, with minimum disruption and embarrassment to the individual or alleged offender(s). However, where this is impossible or inappropriate, employees have the right to make a formal complaint through the company grievance procedure. The choice of route should ultimately rest with the complainant.

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Generally, before any action is taken the personal views of the individual making the complaint will be taken into account when deciding whether to follow the formal or informal procedure.

In the first instance a complaint about harassment and/or bullying and/or victimisation can be made to the line manager/senior line manager or to HR. Complaints will be viewed seriously and treated confidentially.

If possible the person who is harassing and/or bullying and/or victimising should be told by the individual who is being harassed, bullied or victimised that the behaviour is offensive, unwanted and must stop. A work colleague or trade union representative can act as witness when this statement is made. Alternative, an appropriate line manager can speak to the alleged offender.

Employees should endeavour to keep a record of any incidents of harassment and/or bullying and/or victimisation, including the date, time, nature of the incident, the name(s) of those involved and the name(s) of any witnesses.

If informal attempts are unsuccessful or the incident too serious to be resolved informally the formal procedure should be pursued.

9.2 Formal Procedure

If the alleged bullying, harassment or victimisation does not stop as a result of the member of staff pursuing the informal stage of this procedure, or if the complaint is of a more serious nature, members of staff should raise the matter formally.

All formal complaints relating to harassment, bullying or victimisation should be made through existing grievance and disciplinary procedures.

10.0 Appeal

The appeals process can be sought by referring to the grievance and/or disciplinary policy.

11.0 False Accusations

It is recognised that certain complaints may be orchestrated with mischievous or malicious intent. This would be investigated with the potential prospect of disciplinary action against the complainant.

12.0 Mediation

Independent and impartial mediation will be made available to assist in the resolution of the dispute between the person who is being harassed and/or bullied and/or victimised and the perpetrator.

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Mediation will only be considered where both parties agree to enter in to the process.

13.0 Advice, Support and Counselling available

As well as advice and support from Pluss line management, Pluss offers an Employee Assistance Programme, which can offer advice and support for those who are experiencing or observing harassment, bullying or victimisation in the workplace. It is a confidential support service for employees and their immediate family members. The service is available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day through its online portal www.healthassuredaep.com or Freephone 0800 030 5182.

There are other specific support services available and contacts/links to these are provided at the end of this policy. All parties involved in a resolution, mediation or complaints procedure (disciplinary/grievance), including the complainant(s), should act in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and will be required to keep any information in the strictest of confidence. Breaches of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action being taken.

14.0 Responsibility for Dignity at Work

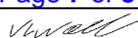
Achieving dignity and respect at work requires a collaborative effort by managers and employees.

14.1 Managers are responsible for ensuring that they:

- communicate to all their staff the behaviours expected of them, and set boundaries;
- intervene to stop unacceptable behaviour;
- provide a supportive working environment;
- report allegations of bullying and harassment to; their manager (or appropriate manager), Head of Service or an HR Advisor
- set a good example by their own behaviour.

14.2 All staff have a responsibility to help create and maintain a work environment free of bullying and harassment. Everyone has the right to assist in stopping unacceptable behaviour by:

- treating colleagues with dignity and respect;
- understanding how your own behaviour may affect others and, if necessary, changing it;
- intervening, if possible, to stop unacceptable behaviour and giving support to recipients;

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- making it clear to colleagues if you find their behaviour unacceptable and explain why;
- reporting it to your manager or HR, and supporting the investigation of the complaint.

15.0 Training and Awareness

All new Pluss employees will be made aware of this policy through the Core Induction.

As part of the Core Induction, training will be provided in relation to Dignity at Work through the mandatory Equality and Diversity training delivered.

16.0 Monitoring

Pluss seeks to eliminate unlawful discrimination and ensure that all employees have access to support and complaints procedures.

Summary details of formal grievances, disciplinaries and complaints are provided to the Head of HR on an annual basis for consideration and action.

17.0. Other Policy Links

This policy links to the following Pluss Documents:-

- Discipline Policy
- Grievance Policy

18.0 Further advice:

Equality and Human Rights Commission
www.equalityhumanrights.com

ACAS
National Helpline
Tel: 08457 47 47 47

National Bullying Helpline
Tel: 0845 2255787

Bully on Line
www.bullyonline.org

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