



## P01 - ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Howarth Litchfield (HL) reaffirms its commitment to providing equal opportunities in employment practice. The implementation of this policy will not discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of gender, ethnic or national origin, race, disability, age, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status or caring responsibility.

HL is committed to removing bullying from the workplace and to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all employees.

### DEFINITION

Bullying is defined by HL as: -

*"Persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, which amounts to an abuse of power and makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable. Bullying undermines a victim's self-confidence and may cause them to suffer stress."*

Bullying is a gradual wearing down process, an abusive pattern of behaviour using either physical or psychological methods to undermine people.

The following are examples of possible effects of bullying on individuals: stress and depression; low self-confidence; reduced performance; poor relationships with working colleagues, etc.

Some of the possible effects on the organisation include increased absenteeism; high turnover; unhealthy working climate; reduced team performance, etc.

### EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The following are examples of behaviour that constitute bullying. The list is not exhaustive:

**Physical conduct:** intimidatory, threatening behaviour, shouting and uncontrolled anger, abuse and humiliation in public or in private, blocking promotion possibilities.

**Verbal conduct:** 'nit-picking' at an individual's work; persistent criticism and/or sarcasm; refusal of reasonable work requests.

**Non-verbal conduct:** exclusion from work information; setting of impossible targets and deadlines; taking credit for ideas and work; ignoring or isolation from work discussions and normal conversations.

HL regards bullying as a disciplinary offence.

### RESPONSIBILITIES TO ENSURE THAT BULLYING DOES NOT OCCUR

#### Individual responsibilities

Every employee has a personal responsibility to:

Ensure they understand the nature of harassment and bullying;

Be aware of how their behaviour may affect others, and to uphold the standards of behaviour set within HL;

Work within the policy guidelines;

Be aware of bullying and challenge unacceptable behaviour where appropriate.



### **Management responsibilities**

Directors have a particular responsibility to ensure that bullying does not occur and, if it does, to deal with it swiftly and sensitively.

As the Directors create the climate that exists for their teams to work in, they have an additional responsibility to be exemplars of acceptable behaviour and maintain an environment free from bullying.

Directors are also responsible for ensuring that team members perform to an acceptable standard. It is important therefore that legitimate concerns or criticisms about an employee's behaviour or performance are conducted in an appropriate manner, in order to prevent complaints of bullying being made.

### **PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING ISSUES AND COMPLAINTS OF BULLYING**

Complaints of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Confidentiality (as far as possible) will be adhered to and victimisation as a result of making a complaint, or witnessing an incident, will not be tolerated. An individual wishing to make formal complaints of bullying should do so through the grievance procedure.

An individual wishing to seek confidential advice and support prior to or instead of making a formal complaint should contact one of the Directors who will listen to the complaint, if appropriate offer advice on challenging the bully; explain the system for making a formal complaint, etc.

### **AWARENESS AND TRAINING**

Awareness of this policy will be raised during new-starter inductions for all employees.

Signed

on behalf of Howarth Litchfield

Issue Date: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026

Review Date: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2027

Drafted by EB / Checked by JY