



**ROLLESTON ON DOVE  
DIGNITY AT WORK, BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY**

This policy reflects the spirit in which Rolleston on Dove Parish Council (“RPC”) intends to undertake all of its business. RPC recognises its legal duties to protect its employees and Councillors from bullying and harassment and to ensure that its employees do not bully or harass others. This policy should be read in conjunction with RPC’s Grievance Policy and Disciplinary Policy.

**1. SCOPE**

This policy covers, but is not limited to, harassment on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability or age.

This policy covers, but is not limited to, physical and verbal bullying and cyberbullying (referred to together in this policy as “bullying”).

This policy outlines the expected behaviour of all employees and Councillors and RPC’s approach to the management of concerns raised under this policy.

**2. KEY PRINCIPLES**

RPC will not tolerate bullying or harassment of its employees or its Councillors.

RPC will not tolerate bullying or harassment of its employees or Councillors by other employees or Councillors. RPC will not tolerate bullying or harassment of its employees by visitors to RPC or members of the public.

RPC will follow the ACAS guidance on the definition of bullying and harassment which are behaviours unwanted by the recipient.

**3. BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

Bullying is characterised as a pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour. It is an abuse of use of power or authority which tends to undermine an individual or group of individuals, gradually eroding their confidence and capability, which may cause them to suffer stress.

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Cyberbullying is the use of information and communication technologies, particularly mobile phones and the internet, to deliberately or repeatedly threaten, harass, humiliate, defame or impersonate (to assume the character or appearance of another person fraudulently).

From 26 October 2024 the new positive duty for Councils (Employers) to prevent Sexual Harassment in the workplace came into effect and the Council believe that they have reviewed the recommendations of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/sexual-harassment-and-harassment-work-technical-guidance>), which are summarised below:



- Harassment relates to a protected characteristic.
- Unwanted conduct covers a range of behaviour from spoken words, banter to physical gestures or behaviour.
- Any inappropriate conduct is considered on how the worker perceives it and whether it was reasonable to have that perception; intent is not a core consideration.
- The act covers all in employment, i.e. Employees and Workers. This will include job applicants and potentially agency workers.
- Councils must take steps to prevent it, which includes anticipating steps where it could occur and put steps in place to prevent it from taking place.
- The EHCR believe that Employers are unlikely to be compliant unless a risk assessment has been conducted. Following a risk assessment an action plan should then be created (and put into place).
- Councils should include taking reasonable steps to prevent harassment from third parties.
- Other steps would likely include reviewing your policies and providing training.

Where training is provided, the Council should consider including:

- a clear understanding of what harassment is
- a clear statement of required workplace behaviour – including behaviour at work-related social events and in online communications
- an understanding of what is appropriate and what isn't in 'grey' areas such as banter
- knowing what to do if they experience harassment
- knowing what to do if they witness harassment
- knowing what to do if harassment is reported to them
- knowing what the Council will do if they are found to have committed an act of harassment

#### **4. PROCEDURE**

Any employee experiencing bullying or harassment should report this to the Chairman or alternatively raise a formal grievance under RPC's Grievance Policy.

Any complaint made against an employee will be investigated under RPC's Disciplinary Policy.

The complaint will be investigated either formally or informally and the complainant will be notified of the result of the investigation in writing.

#### **5. DISCIPLINARY MATTERS**

RPC considers bullying and harassment to be examples of serious misconduct.

Any allegation which, following investigation, is upheld, will result in disciplinary procedures for employees and may result in charges of gross misconduct and summary dismissal.

Allegations of bullying and harassment of employees or the public by Councillors may result in referrals to the Standards Process as a contravention of the Members Code of Conduct.



**6. LEGAL ACTION**

Employees and Councillors may be the subject of legal action by a recipient of bullying or harassment as a result of such bullying or harassment.

**7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For further information, please contact the Clerk or the Chairman of RPC.

Adopted: 08 April 2019

Revised: 09 December 2024

**DOCUMENT HISTORY**

**Detailed History of Changes**

Rev. No.	Date	Description of Changes
1	08/04/2019	Policy adopted.
1.1	09/12/2024	Section 3: "Bullying and Harassment" Statement added regarding the new positive duty for employers to prevent Sexual Harassment in the workplace which came into effect on 26 October 2024
		Appendix A "Assessing risks relating to harassment" added.

## **APPENDIX A**

**SOURCED FROM [Sexual harassment and harassment at work: technical guidance | EHRC](#)  
([equalityhumanrights.com](http://equalityhumanrights.com))**

### **Assessing risks relating to harassment**

1. Employers should make an assessment of risks relating to harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation. Existing risk management frameworks, traditionally used in the workplace health and safety context, could be used for this process. Assessments should identify the risks and the control measures identified to minimise the risks. Factors may include, for example:
  - power imbalances
  - job insecurity, for example, use of zero hours contracts, agency staff or contractors
  - lone working and night working
  - out of hours working
  - the presence of alcohol
  - customer-facing duties
  - particular events that raise tensions locally or nationally
  - lack of diversity in the workforce, especially at a senior level
  - workers being placed on secondment
  - travel to different work locations
  - working from home
  - attendance at events outside of the usual working environment, for example, training, conferences or work related social events
  - socialising outside work
  - social media contact between workers
  - the workforce demographic, for example, the risk of sexual harassment may be higher in a predominantly male workforce
  
2. There are certain factors that may increase the risk of sexual harassment. An employer should consider these factors when thinking about how it can comply with the preventative duty. The factors include, but are not limited to:
  - a male-dominated workforce
  - a workplace culture that permits crude / sexist 'banter', or other disrespectful behaviour
  - gendered power imbalances (for example, where most junior staff are female and most senior managers / leaders are male)
  - workplaces that permit alcohol consumption
  - an expectation that workers will attend social events / conferences outside of the workplace or stay away from home overnight (particularly if alcohol is being consumed)
  - lone or isolated working
  - working alone with a third party
  - night working
  - an insecure / casual workforce
  - a failure to respond appropriately to previous reports of sexual harassment
  - no policies or procedures to prevent or respond to sexual harassment



- workers that have more than one protected characteristic, for example, disabled people, ethnic minorities and people from the LGBT community are more likely to experience sexual harassment than people who do not have these protected characteristics
  - there may be risks that only affect one job role or worker - these should still be considered and addressed
3. A risk assessment should consider working practices, including policies and procedures. Employers should ensure staff are aware of reporting mechanisms and management know what to do if a staff member raises a complaint of harassment. The working environment must also be considered. Employers should identify any particular risks that apply to the working environment and how these can be mitigated.

Communications with staff are key. Employers should ensure that policies and procedures are clearly communicated to staff. Staff should understand what harassment and sexual harassment is, know what to do if an incident happens, and what the employer will do when a complaint of harassment is made.

4. Employers should ensure they specifically assess the risk of sexual harassment in the course of employment. They should also review the risk assessment regularly and take mitigating action if they identify any new or additional risks. Employers are unlikely to be able to meet the requirement of the preventative duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their workers, if they do not carry out a risk assessment.
5. Employers should produce an action plan that sets out what preventative steps they will take to address any identified risks and how that will be monitored. Employers should consider publishing their action plan to workers and the public, for example on their website.
6. Employers may want to consider appointing a designated lead to take responsibility for implementation of the action plan and compliance with the preventative duty.

Further reading can be found on <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/employer-8-step-guide-preventing-sexual-harassment-work>