



POLICY:	Bullying and Harassment
APPLICABLE TO:	All Members
VALIDATORS:	Trustees
APPROVAL DATE:	January 2024
REVIEW:	January 2026

1. Statement of Commitment

Bullying and Harassment of any kind are in no-one's interest and will not be tolerated within our charity.

We are committed that Bullying and Harassment will not happen within our charity and will seek to deter it through reconciliation and discussion. When necessary, further action will be taken, and the Trustees may require the person responsible to leave our charity.

We are committed to protecting Trustees, Committee members and volunteers from all types of external bullying and harassment including online abuse. Trustees have a responsibility to try to resolve issues of this type in a professional manner.

2. Principles

Even though all Members of our charity are volunteers, the same principles apply to Bullying and Harassment as in the workplace.

For practical purposes those making a complaint usually define what they mean by Bullying or Harassment - something has happened to them that is unwelcome, unwarranted and causes a detrimental effect. If someone complains they are being bullied or harassed, then they have a grievance which must be dealt with regardless of whether or not their complaint accords within a standard definition.

Bullying and Harassment can happen due to age, sexual orientation, religious belief, sex, disability, ethnicity and a wide range of other reasons. This Policy covers all eventualities, and the complainant should refer to our charity's Complaints and Grievance Procedures.

Bullying and Harassment can take place in person, online and on social media platforms.

Much of this document has been developed in line with recommendations from ACAS, Bullying and harassment at Work, 2013.



3. Types and Examples of Bullying and Harassment

Bullying may be characterised as behaviour which is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient

Harassment as defined in the Equality Act 2010 as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Bullying and Harassment actions can range from a lack of awareness or an unintentional misunderstanding through to deliberate and malicious acts. However, Bullying and Harassment incidents usually involve ongoing behaviour, or actions.

It's possible someone might not know their behaviour is bullying. It can still be bullying even if they do not realise it or do not intend to bully someone. People being bullied or harassed may sometimes appear to overreact to something that seems relatively trivial, but which may be the 'last straw' following a series of incidents.

Symptoms may be hard to recognise and may not be obvious to others, but examples of Bullying and Harassment may still be insidious.

For further guidance see: www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment

Overt aggressive examples include:

- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour
- copying memos that are critical to others who do not need to know
- ridiculing or demeaning someone - picking on them or setting them up to fail
- excluding someone from discussion and participation
- overbearing behaviour or other misuse of position
- making unwelcome sexual advances - touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials, asking for sexual favours
- deliberately undermining someone by constant verbal criticism
- making threats or comments without foundation

Passive aggressive examples include:

- deliberately undermining someone by constant criticism through gestures and body language
- preventing individuals from doing their job by constant questioning and disagreement without giving reasons



- not doing what has been agreed, causing frustration and unnecessary work for others
- complaining about things without evidence
- making vague threats or suggestions that unnamed third parties feel bullied or harassed
- talking and undermining someone to others behind their back or spreading rumours and gossip
- Writing slanderous, inaccurate and unfounded comments on social media

4. Solutions to Bullying and Harassment

There are various approaches that can be taken including:

Informal Approaches

In some cases, it may be possible to rectify matters informally. Sometimes people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome, and an informal discussion can lead to greater understanding and an agreement that the behaviour will cease. It may be that the individual will choose to do this themselves, or they may need support.

Counselling

Counselling can play a vital role in resolving complaints about Bullying and Harassment by providing a confidential avenue for an informal approach and perhaps the opportunity to resolve the complaint without need for any further or formal action.

This can be particularly useful where doubt is cast on the validity of the complaint and may resolve the issue or help support the person accused as well as the complainant.

Mediation

An independent third person or mediator can sometimes help resolve the issues and can be a good way of dealing with bullying, discrimination or harassment situations depending upon the nature of any allegations.

Mediation is a voluntary process where the mediator helps two (or more) people in dispute to find a solution to the issue that they can both agree to. The mediator does not take sides or tell those in dispute what to do. Mediation is most likely to be successful if both parties-

- understand what mediation involves
- enter into the process voluntarily
- are seeking to repair the working relationship



Legal advice

If Trustees, Committee members and volunteers find themselves subject to online bullying or harassment the Trustees should seek legal advice and agree next steps in order to find a resolution.

The police should be contacted if Trustees, Committee members or volunteers are made to feel unsafe.

Further Action

Where an informal resolution is not possible or appropriate, the Trustees may consider the allegations require further action and will carry out an investigation.

5. Investigating Bullying and Harassment

We will follow our Complaints and Grievance Procedures and will also follow our Confidentiality Policy. There are principles that we will follow:

- We will investigate the complaint promptly and objectively and take the complaint seriously.
- The investigation must be seen to be objective and independent and consider all the circumstances. Decisions can then be made as to what action needs to be taken
- Having gathered all the evidence we should ask “Could what has taken place be reasonably considered to have caused offence?”

We will ensure that there is fairness to both the complainant and the person accused, but it might result in a vote of no confidence, or the exclusion of a person from membership of our charity.

Under the Charity Commission’s serious incident reporting arrangements, charities should report the most serious actual or alleged incidents of bullying or harassment promptly for the regulator to assess. Workers and volunteers can also make reports to the Commission.

6. Policy Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Trustees to review formally the operation of this Policy annually and to ensure that it is in accordance with principles of other Blackpool Pride Festival Policies.