

**Management's response to the Dignity at Work
Scrutiny Panel's Recommendations**

Scrutiny Panel's Recommendation	Formal Response	Recommended Decision
<p>1) Regular monitoring of the implementation of the Dignity and Respect at Work Policy and associated procedures should take place through the staff survey and at the Staff Consultation Forum.</p>	<p>Although not expressly stated in the Policy, it is proposed to assess its impact through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring incidents of bullying and harassment and reporting findings to DMTs/TMT on a regular basis • reviewing the results of the Staff Survey on the incidence of staff feeling bullied or harassed • monitoring the number of referrals to the Occupational Health Service as a result of bullying or harassment • monitoring the number of approaches made to the network of Dignity and Respect at Work Advisers • monitoring the usage of mediators • auditing the return rate and content of exit interviews/exit questionnaires to identify cases of alleged inappropriate behaviour and to report these to the appropriate Head of Service for possible further action. 	<p>Agreed to add Staff Consultation Forum to the proposed monitoring mechanisms.</p>
<p>2) Careful consideration needs to be given to how staff without access to the Wave and other electronic information sources will be informed of the policy and have access to it without recourse to their line manager.</p>	<p>We are mindful that some of our employees do not have access to the Wave. Therefore, in addition to the intranet, it is intended to raise awareness of the new policy through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Channel magazine • messages on payslips • distribution of posters within council buildings, particularly in those workplaces where employees do not have access to the council's intranet. 	<p>Agreed. We had already proposed to do this.</p>
<p>2) The time limit for reporting bullying and/or harassment should be removed.</p>	<p>We are agreeable to removing the time limit and have amended paragraph 11.6 in the procedure to read:</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>

	<p><i>“The formal complaint should be made as soon as possible after the issue(s) that have given rise to the complaint have occurred.”</i></p>	
<p>4) To ensure a cultural shift across the organisation training should be offered to all line-managers in bullying and harassment issues. Take-up of this training should be monitored.</p>	<p>It is proposed to offer training for managers to support the implementation of the new policy. Whilst such training will be available to all managers, we consider it is particularly important to identify and target those managers whose people management skills are deemed to need improvement.</p>	<p>Agreed. We had already proposed to do this and have had discussions with the Learning & Development Team to identify how best to deliver this.</p>
<p>5) The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive should publicly sign-up to the policy.</p>	<p>We feel that this would be very helpful in sending the right message to our staff – namely that the council is genuine in its commitment to developing and maintaining a workplace culture in which all staff, whatever their role or level of seniority, will be treated with dignity and respect.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
<p>a. More emphasis needs to be given to the anti-victimisation statement within the policy to ensure victims feel confident coming forward. This should be clearly communicated when the policy is launched.</p>	<p>The Policy Statement makes it clear that one of the responsibilities of senior managers, line managers and supervisors is to:</p> <p><i>“ensure that there is no retaliation or victimisation against employees making a complaint or those supporting colleagues to make a complaint”.</i></p> <p>This is also one of the fundamental principles that underpins the way in which complaints would be handled. Paragraph 3.2 of the “Procedure for raising and dealing with unacceptable behaviour” gives further reassurance to staff on this point.</p> <p>We therefore feel that there are sufficient assurances on this point this within the policy as it is currently drafted.</p>	<p>Agreed in part. We will make it clear to staff at the time the policy is launched that they will be protected from victimisation or retaliation.</p>
<p>7) A single point of</p>	<p>There are plans for HR to introduce a</p>	<p>Agree to</p>

<p>contact should be available to staff to discuss problems/report bullying.</p>	<p>dedicated phone line that will provide staff and managers with a single point of access to the service. Under this new arrangement, it would be feasible to route calls relating to bullying and harassment to an appropriate member of the HR team to log and provide initial advice.</p> <p>Whilst we are happy to explore this option, we are not sure how effective this facility would be as there will be some staff who will not wish to approach HR in the first instance as they perceive the service to be aligned with management.</p> <p>For this reason we feel it is very important to give staff as many routes as possible through which they can raise concerns. By doing so, we increase the chances of staff coming forward.</p>	<p>consider.</p>
<p>8) Whilst the use of mediation within the policy is to be supported there also needs to be a clear statement that staff still have the option to go straight to formal action.</p>	<p>A key and fundamental part of the new policy is to try to resolve issues informally in the first instance through mediation. This provides the best chance of resolving the situation and rebuilding working relationships.</p> <p>Once a complaint is raised under a formal procedure, the relationship between the parties tends to become more strained and adversarial in nature and positions are likely to become entrenched making successful resolution much less likely.</p> <p>There is nothing in the procedure that prevents an employee from raising a formal complaint in the first instance. However, if they did so, they would be strongly encouraged to participate in mediation, if appropriate given the circumstances, before proceeding with their complaint under the formal procedure.</p> <p>Given the above, we do not feel that the procedure should be revised.</p>	<p>Not agreed.</p>
<p>9) Greater reference needs</p>	<p>The draft policy and procedure are</p>	<p>Agreed in part.</p>

<p>to be given to transgender issues.</p>	<p>designed to provide a general framework within which complaints of bullying or harassment should be raised and addressed.</p> <p>However, this does not mean that specific needs/issues that may affect a particular individual or group of individuals would not be taken into account when dealing with a complaint in practice.</p> <p>Given this, we feel that it would not be appropriate to include a number of references within the policy that apply to one specific group only. However, we are agreeable to add examples of harassment on grounds of gender identity in Appendix 2 of the Policy Statement.</p>	
<p>10) Thought needs to be given as to how externally employed staff relate to the policy.</p>	<p>This is a BHCC employment policy only and as such cannot be imposed on employees of other employers who may be working alongside council employees.</p> <p>However, when out or insourcing services, the council takes into account, through the tendering process, how a prospective contractor looks after its workforce.</p> <p>The council not only satisfies itself that the other organisation it might work with meets all statutory employment obligations, including those relating to equalities, but it also asks specific questions relating to harassment in the workplace.</p> <p>The questions included on the current Pre-Qualification Questionnaire used in the tendering process are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organisation have systems in place to monitor harassment in the work place? • Does your organisation have a policy or procedure in place to deal with alleged harassment incidents? 	<p>This is already catered for in the council's tendering documents.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does your organisation have policies in place relating to equal opportunities, discrimination and harassment?• Are your staff with supervisory/managerial responsibilities required to receive training on equal opportunities, discrimination and harassment issues?	
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