

## **Anti-Harassment And Bullying Policy**

**For**

**Society of Agriculture**

<b>Policy date</b>	01.01.26
<b>Date to be reviewed</b>	Annually

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy applies to Society of Agriculture, a charitable incorporated organisation registered in England and Wales with Charity Commission number: 1212403 (**Charity**).

1.2 The charitable objects of the Charity are:

To advance the education of the public in the subject of Agricultural Management and Operation by such charitable means as the trustees in their discretion think fit, particularly but not exclusively by:

- (a) Maintaining and improving the standards and practice of Agricultural Management and Operation;
- (b) Promoting all aspects of Agricultural Management and Operation, especially in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
- (c) Encouraging the study of Agricultural Management and Operation;

“Agricultural Management and Operation” includes but is not limited to all aspects of the science, production, conservation, amenity, economics and art of managing, marketing, consulting about and otherwise supporting the management and operation of agriculture and related rural businesses, their products and services. (**Objects**).

1.3 The Charity is governed by the charity trustees of the Charity (**Charity Trustees**) who have a duty, acting at all times in the best interests of the Charity, to apply the Charity’s assets to advance the Objects and have ultimate responsibility for all grant-making decisions.

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 We, the Charity, is committed to providing a working, volunteering and service environment free from harassment and bullying, and ensuring everyone is treated, and treats others, with dignity and respect. We recognise that harassment or bullying can occur both in and outside the workplace, such as on Charity related trips or at Charity events or social functions.

2.2 Harassment, bullying or victimisation of any individual connected to the Charity may be unlawful and will not be tolerated. We will take active steps to help prevent harassment, bullying and victimisation where we can. Anyone who is a victim of, or witness to, harassment of any kind, bullying or victimisation is encouraged to report it in accordance

with this policy. This will enable us to take appropriate action and provide support. Harassment, bullying and victimisation can result in legal liability for the Charity (and the perpetrator) and disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, and/or expulsion from the Charity, will be considered where appropriate.

### **3. ABOUT THIS POLICY**

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out a framework to deal with any harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation that is committed by individuals connected with the Charity (which may include employees, Charity Trustees, volunteers, consultants, members, contractors and agency workers) and also by third parties such as customers, suppliers, beneficiaries, stakeholders or visitors to our premises.
- 3.2 This policy does not form part of any contract of employment, volunteer agreement, terms of membership or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.
- 3.3 This policy applies to all Charity Trustees, members, employees, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, apprentices, volunteers and interns. Our obligations and your duties under this policy also extend to job applicants and former employees. It covers all areas of the charity including overseas sites, subject to any applicable local laws.

### **4. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS POLICY?**

- 4.1 The board of trustees (**Board**) has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but has delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the Director. Suggestions for change should be reported to the Director.
- 4.2 The has day-to-day responsibility for this policy and you should refer any questions about this policy to them in the first instance.
- 4.3 This policy is reviewed annually by the Director. We will monitor its effectiveness.

### **5. WHAT IS HARASSMENT?**

- 5.1 Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment.

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- 5.2 It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.
- 5.3 Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.
- 5.4 Harassment may include, for example:
- (a) racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group, religion or belief, or gender;
  - (b) disclosing or threatening to disclose someone's sexual orientation or gender identity against their wishes;
  - (c) offensive emails, text messages or social media content; or
  - (d) mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.
- 5.5 A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended “target”. For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.
- 5.6 Sexual harassment specifically may include, for example:
- (a) unwanted physical conduct or “horseplay”, including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
  - (b) continued suggestions for sexual activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome;
  - (c) sending or displaying material that is pornographic or that some people may find offensive (including emails, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet);
  - (d) unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless); or
  - (e) offensive emails, text messages or social media content.

- 5.7 Victimization includes subjecting a person to a detriment because they have done, or are suspected of doing or intending to do, any of the following protected acts:
- (a) Bringing proceedings under the Equality Act 2010.
  - (b) Giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Equality Act 2010.
  - (c) Doing any other thing for the purposes of or in connection with the Equality Act 2010.
  - (d) Alleging that a person has contravened the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.8 Victimization may include, for example:
- (a) Denying someone an opportunity because it is suspected that they intend to make a complaint about harassment.
  - (b) Excluding someone because they have raised a grievance about harassment.
  - (c) Failing to promote someone because they accompanied another individual to a grievance meeting.
  - (d) Dismissing someone because they gave evidence on behalf of another staff member at an employment tribunal hearing.
- 5.9 Harassment and victimization are unlawful and will not be tolerated. If you subject an individual to harassment or victimization this may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or expulsion from the Charity.
- 5.10 We will take into account any aggravating factors as required, such as abuse of power over a more junior colleague, when deciding the appropriate action to take.
- 5.11 If any harassment or victimization occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include updating relevant policies, providing further training, taking disciplinary action against the perpetrator or expelling the perpetrator from the Charity.
- 5.12 Third-party harassment may occur if a person is harassed by someone who does not work for, and who is not an agent of, the Charity. Third-party harassment could include, for example, derogatory comments about a person's age, disability, pregnancy, colour, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, from a customer, beneficiary, stakeholder or supplier

visiting the Charity's premises, or where a person is visiting a customer, beneficiary, stakeholder or supplier's premises or other location.

- 5.13 Third-party harassment can result in legal liability and will not be tolerated. The law requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment by third parties in the course of employment.
- 5.14 All Charity Trustees, members, employees, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, apprentices, volunteers and interns are encouraged to report any third-party harassment they are a victim of, or witness, in accordance with this policy.
- 5.15 Any harassment against a third-party may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or expulsion from the Charity.
- 5.16 We will take active steps to try to prevent third-party harassment of any kind, including harassment of a sexual nature. These steps include:
- Training on what constitutes harassment and what to do if staff witness or experience harassment.
  - Regularly reviewing this anti-harassment and bullying policy.
  - Supporting staff effectively who make a complaint.
  - Encouraging the reporting of third-party harassment and ensuring these are dealt with appropriately.
- 5.17 If any third-party harassment occurs, we will take appropriate steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include warning the harasser about their behaviour, banning them from our premises and reporting any criminal acts to the police.

## **6. WHAT IS BULLYING?**

- 6.1 Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or

threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

- 6.2 Bullying may include overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision or inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance. However, legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of performance or behaviour, or, for example, reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

## **7. IF YOU ARE BEING HARASSED OR BULLIED: INFORMAL STEPS**

- 7.1 If you are being harassed or bullied, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult, or inappropriate in the circumstances, you should speak to the Director, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally. If you feel unable to speak to the Director because the complaint concerns them, you should speak informally to the Chair. If this does not resolve the issue, you should follow the formal procedure below.
- 7.2 If you are not certain whether an incident or series of incidents amounts to bullying or harassment, you should initially contact the Director informally for confidential advice.
- 7.3 If informal steps are not appropriate, or have been unsuccessful, you should follow the formal procedure set out below.

## **8. RAISING A FORMAL COMPLAINT**

- 8.1 If you wish to make a formal complaint about bullying or harassment, you should submit it in writing to the Director. If the matter concerns the Director, you should submit it to the Chair.
- 8.2 Your written complaint should set out full details of the conduct in question, including the name of the harasser or bully, the nature of the harassment or bullying, the date(s) and time(s) at which it occurred, the names of any witnesses and any action that has been taken so far to attempt to stop it from occurring.
- 8.3 If you wish to make a formal complaint about victimisation, you should submit it in writing to the Director.

- 8.4 Your written complaint should set out full details of the conduct in question, including the name of the person or persons you believe have victimised you, the reason you believe you have been victimised, the nature of the victimisation, the date(s) and time(s) at which it occurred, the names of any witnesses and any action that has been taken so far to attempt to stop it from occurring.
- 8.5 As a general principle, the decision whether to progress a complaint is up to you. However, we have a duty to protect you and others and may pursue the matter independently if, in all the circumstances, we consider it appropriate to do so.

## **9. IF YOU WITNESS HARASSMENT OR VICTIMISATION**

- 9.1 If you witness harassment or victimisation you are encouraged to take appropriate steps to address it. Depending on the circumstances, this could include:
- (a) Intervening where you feel able to do so.
  - (b) Supporting the victim to report it or reporting it on their behalf.
  - (c) Reporting the incident where you feel there may be a continuing risk if you do not report it.
  - (d) Cooperating in any investigation into the incident.
  - (e) Trustees have a duty of care to staff, Trustees and members to report incidents of harassment and bullying as per point (c)
- 9.2 All witnesses will be provided with appropriate support and will be protected from victimisation.

## **10. FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS**

- 10.1 We will investigate complaints in a timely, respectful and confidential manner. Individuals not involved in the complaint or the investigation should not be told about it.
- 10.2 We will arrange a meeting with you, usually within two weeks of receiving your complaint, so that you can give your account of events.
- 10.3 Where your complaint is about an employee, we may consider suspending them on full pay or making other temporary changes to working arrangements pending the outcome of the investigation, if circumstances require. We will also consider what additional action may be



appropriate to protect you and others pending the outcome of the investigation. The investigator will also meet with the alleged harasser or bully to hear their account of events. They have a right to be told the details of the allegations against them, so that they can respond.

- 10.4 Where your complaint is about someone other than an employee, such as a customer, beneficiary, stakeholder, supplier or visitor, we will consider what action may be appropriate to protect you and others pending the outcome of the investigation, bearing in mind the reasonable needs of the Charity and the rights of that person. Where appropriate, we will attempt to discuss the matter with the third party.
- 10.5 It may be necessary to interview witnesses to any of the incidents mentioned in your complaint. If so, the importance of confidentiality will be emphasised to them.
- 10.6 At the end of the investigation, the investigator will submit a report to the Chair, who will arrange a meeting with you, in order to discuss the outcome and what action, if any, should be taken. A copy of the report and the findings will usually be given to you and to the alleged harasser.

## **11. ACTION FOLLOWING THE INVESTIGATION**

- 11.1 If the Chair considers that there is a case to answer and the harasser or bully is an employee, we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem and prevent a reoccurrence. We will also consider what additional measures need to be taken to prevent future harassment or bullying.
- 11.2 If the harasser or bully is not an employee, such as a customer, stakeholder, member, volunteer or other visitor, we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem and prevent a reoccurrence.
- 11.3 Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage the ongoing relationship between you and the person concerned. It may be appropriate for example to arrange some form of mediation and/or counselling, or to change the duties of one or both parties.
- 11.4 Any individual who deliberately provides false information or otherwise acts in bad faith as part of an investigation may be subject to action deemed appropriate by the Charity.

However, you will not be disciplined or treated detrimentally because your complaint has not been upheld.

## **12. APPEALS**

- 12.1 If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the Charity's decision, you may appeal in writing to the Director stating your full grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.
- 12.2 We will hold an appeal meeting, normally within two weeks of receiving your written appeal. Where practicable, the appeal hearing will be conducted by a Charity Trustee who has not been previously involved in the case. They may ask anyone previously involved to be present.
- 12.3 We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within three weeks of the appeal hearing. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further appeal.

## **13. PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR THOSE INVOLVED**

- 13.1 Individuals who make complaints, report that they have witnessed wrongdoing, or who participate in good faith in any investigation, must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action.
- 13.2 If you believe you have suffered any such treatment you should inform the Director. If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally using this procedure if appropriate.
- 13.3 We will monitor the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of harassment or victimisation we receive to ensure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, cultural clashes are identified and resolved and training is targeted where needed.
- 13.4 Support and guidance can also be obtained from the Director and the following external services:
  - (a) The Equality Advisory and Support Service ([www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)).
  - (b) Protect ([www.protect-advice.org.uk](http://www.protect-advice.org.uk)).

(c) Victim support ([www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)).

## **14. REPORTING OUTCOMES, CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORD-KEEPING**

- 14.1 Confidentiality is an important part of the procedures provided under this policy. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action.
- 14.2 Where appropriate and possible, where a complaint is upheld, we will advise the complainant of the action that has been taken to address their specific complaint and any measures put in place to prevent a similar event happening again.
- 14.3 Information about a complaint may be documented, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

## **15. REVIEWING AND AMENDING THIS POLICY**

- 15.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Charity Trustees at least annually, although the Charity Trustees will monitor this policy throughout the year as part of the normal monitoring and reporting processes.
- 15.2 The Charity Trustees may vary the terms of this policy from time to time.

This policy has been approved by the board of Charity Trustees:

Signature.....(Chair)

Name.....

Date.....

Review date: Annually

