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|  | Third Party Abuse and Harassment Policy |

Document Overview

PCC/PARISH LOGO

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| **Purpose** | The purpose of this policy is to ensure that staff are not subject to abuse, harassment, sexual harassment bullying and hate crimes from third party service users and providers and that where this occurs, provides detail on how this will be dealt with. This policy applies to all third-party service users and service providers of the PCC/PARISH. (For staff who experience internal abuse or harassment, they should refer to the Equal Opportunity Policy and Positive Working Environment Policy). |
| **Confidentiality** | This document is not confidential. |
| **Document owner** |  |
| **Status note** | Draft |
| **Distribution** | All PCC/PARISH staff, Diocesan website |
| **Required action** |  |
| **Proposed next step** |  |

Version History

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| **Version** | **Date** | **Status Note** |
| 1.0 | 10.01.2024 | Draft |
| 1.1 | 19.02.2025 | Insertion of sexual harassment sections |
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1. Introduction
   1. We have a zero-tolerance approach to any incident involving harassment, sexual harassment or abuse against our staff. Any form of harassment or abuse is unacceptable, and the PCC/PARISH is committed to taking the strongest possible action to tackle any incidents and protect staff. The PCC/PARISH has a responsibility to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all staff, in line with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law (Equality Act 2010). We are responsible for ensuring that the working environment for staff is one in which all staff are treated with respect, and any abuse, harassment or sexual harassment by third parties is not tolerated.
   2. ‘Third party’ means someone that workers interact with as part of their role but who are not employed by the PCC/PARISH, for example service users, contractors, Parish representatives and anyone else we are connected to or do business with.
   3. Third party abuse, harassment and sexual harassment can have a severe impact on staff and can lead to feelings of anxiety or fear in the workplace as well as undermine an individual’s self-confidence. This in turn can lead to a wide range of issues including physical and/or mental health problems, and in some cases result in staff leaving the PCC/PARISH. Whilst Managers have a responsibility to take action to prevent abusive incidents, harassment and sexual harassment, this policy is victim centred to ensure that victims have a high degree of control over what type of actions are taken to protect them in their role.
   4. We will ensure the safety, protection and welfare of our staff at all times by:
      1. Reducing the risk of harassment and sexual harassment by ensuring all third-parties are aware of our commitment to this policy, and that they understand what sexual harassment is, by providing them a fact sheet in conjunction with a written agreement to abide by our rules.
      2. Ensuring that posters which warn against Sexual Harassment are visible and, on all noticeboards, where the third parties will either be working, or will pass by.
      3. Taking appropriate action against a third party who perpetrates harassment, sexual harassment or abuse.
      4. Providing appropriate support to staff following an abusive, harassment or sexual harassment incident.
      5. Making sure staff who have experienced or witnessed incidents feel able to report them and be confident that we will treat the matter seriously and deal with it effectively.
2. About This Policy
   1. The purpose of this policy is to outline the PCC/PARISH’s approach to tackling incidents of third-party abuse against workers, including harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and hate crime.
   2. This policy covers any kind of unwanted behaviour from third parties that humiliates, victimises or threatens any of our staff, for example:
      1. Using aggressive, abusive, offensive or derogatory language (Whether by telephone, email, letter, social media or face-to-face),
      2. Physical abuse.
      3. Racial slurs.
      4. Violence.
      5. Intimidation or threats of violence.
      6. Discrimination treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic.
      7. Bullying is repeated inappropriate, offensive behaviour, which is often an abuse of power or position, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual’s right to dignity at work.
      8. Harassment and other unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
      9. Sexual Harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. It also covers treating someone less favourably because they have submitted to, or refused to submit to, unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.
   3. Abuse, harassment or sexual harassment can take place online, face to face, by email or over the phone. This list is not exhaustive. Abuse, harassment or sexual harassment by a third party can be just as devastating for a worker as incident(s) perpetrated by a colleague.
3. Dealing with incident(s) of abuse, sexual harassment or harassment
   1. Any member of staff who directly experiences any type of abuse, sexual harassment or harassment has the authority to deal immediately with the behaviour in the following way:
      1. **Sexual Harassment**
         1. Where the incident relates to sexual harassment, physical assault, or threats of violence, regardless of whether it is done in person, over the phone or by digital means, the employee should cease contact with that person immediately and report the issue to another colleague, their line manager or the HR Manager.
         2. The member of staff can also report this to the police. The member of staff should make a note of the incident for their line manager and for the police. Where members of staff report incidents to the police, we will support them in their complaint and provide counselling should they want it.
         3. The employees line manager will take over the communication with the person if it is absolutely necessary that the third party needs to be communicated with over outstanding issues e.g. Safeguarding issues. However, the following may also be deemed appropriate, and the line manager will make this decision alongside the HR Manager:
            * Banning the third party from sending emails and limiting them to only one form of communication such as letters.
            * Banning a third party from the premises or from communicating with the staff member.
            * Cancelling a service agreement with regard to building works or services due to them breaching their signed agreement not to engage in sexual harassment.
            * Requiring that any personal contact is always done in the presence of a witness, or restricting access to the workplace during office hours, for example building contractors who still have to complete outstanding work.
            * Where contact with any of our staff members is banned, then insisting that all contact is made through a third party such as a solicitor/friend.
            * Where the issue is so extreme or it threatens the immediate safety of a member of staff, the line manager will consider other options such as reporting them to the Police or taking legal action.
            * Notify other service users of the person’s behaviour in case this behaviour is used across multiple teams in the Diocesan Office and other normal workplaces.
            * This is not an exhaustive list.
         4. The line manager or HR Manager will write to the third party to explain the following:
            * What action is being taken, including if the incident has been reported to the police.
            * Why they have taken that decision.
            * The duration of the action.
            * What acceptable forms of communication will be including communicating through a solicitor or another third party.
            * The right to appeal to the Named Person if they feel that the decision is unfair.
      2. **Other forms of abuse or harassment**
         1. Where the abuse, or harassment is over the telephone or face-to-face, the member of staff should initially seek to de-escalate the behaviour by remaining calm and explaining to the third party that their behaviour is unacceptable and that if they do not cease their behaviour then they will refuse to communicate any further with them. If the behaviour does not stop, then the member of staff will tell the third party that they will not communicate any further with them and that they will report the incident to their line manager for further action. The member of staff should keep a written note about the incident including the date and time, and forward this to their line manager.
         2. If the abuse or harassment is in the form of an email, letter or via social media channels, then the member of staff should write back to the third party with a copy of this policy and explain that their written behaviour is unacceptable and that should they wish for their issue to be dealt with then they need to amend the wording of their document to remove all abusive or harassing content. If the third-party refuses to do this then the staff member should notify them that they have made a complaint about this to their line manager, who will be in touch directly with them. As above the staff member should make a note about the incident and send this to the line manager for action.
         3. If the third party still does not cease their offensive behaviour, then the member of staff should report this to their line manager who may take the following actions:
            * Place a time limit on telephone conversations and personal contact with the third party.
            * Banning the third party from sending emails and limiting them to only one form of communication such as letters.
            * Requiring that any personal contact is always done in the presence of a witness, or restricting access to the workplace during office hours, for example building contractors who still have to complete outstanding work.
            * Cancelling a service agreement with regard to building works or services.
            * Banning a third party from the premises or from communicating with the staff member.
            * Insisting that all contact is made through a third party such as a solicitor/friend.
            * Where the issue is so extreme or it threatens the immediate safety of a member of staff, the line manager will consider other options such as reporting them to the Police or taking legal action.
            * Notify other service users of the person’s behaviour in case this behaviour is used across multiple teams in the Diocesan Office and other normal workplaces.
            * This is not an exhaustive list.
         4. The line manager will write to the third party to explain the following:
            * What action is being taken, including if the incident has been reported to the police.
            * Why they have taken that decision.
            * The duration of the action.
            * What acceptable forms of communication will be including communicating through a solicitor or another third party.
            * The right to appeal to the Diocesan Secretary if they feel that the decision is unfair.
   2. Personal details about the third party will be managed and stored appropriately in line with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
4. Support for Staff who have experienced abuse, harassment or sexual harassment at work.
   1. Following the staff member reporting an incident of abuse, harassment or sexual harassment, the line manager should have a debrief meeting with them to check on their welfare and understand fully the details of the complaint.
   2. The line manager should speak to the HR Manager and send written details of the complaint so that this can be kept centrally in the event that other staff members have contact with the abuser/harasser.
   3. The staff member should be notified of the options to speak to one of the Mental Health Supporters, the Diocesan Counsellor or the Employment Assistance Programme. The line manager should be led by the staff member’s feedback on what support they need.
   4. In the event that ongoing communication with the third-party abuser/harasser can still proceed, the line manager should look at moving the contact with the third party to be dealt with by themselves or another member of staff.
   5. In the event that ongoing communication is not acceptable, then the line manager should make all team members aware of the communication ban, and the HR Manager will make a decision about whether this ban needs to be communicated to other members of staff who may have contact with this third party in the future.