

Hortus Pink Anti Harassment & Bullying Policy

Last update: February 2024

Next update: February 2025

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all sub-contractors are treated and treat others with dignity and respect, free from harassment and bullying. All sub-contractors should take the time to ensure they understand what types of behaviour are unacceptable under this policy.
- 1.2. This policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs both in and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at events or work-related social functions. It covers bullying and harassment by staff and also by third parties such as clients, suppliers or visitors.
- 1.3. Sub-contractors must treat colleagues and others with dignity and respect, and should always consider whether their words or conduct could be offensive. Even unintentional harassment or bullying is unacceptable.
- 1.4. We will take allegations of harassment or bullying seriously and address them promptly and confidentially where possible. Harassment or bullying by an employee will be treated as misconduct. In some cases it may amount to gross misconduct leading to summary contract termination.
- 1.5. This policy does not form part of any sub-contractors contract and we may amend it at any time or depart from it where we consider appropriate.

2. WHAT THE LAW SAYS

- 2.1. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits harassment 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. For more information see our Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 2.2. The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 also makes it unlawful to pursue a course of conduct which you know or ought to know would be harassment, which includes causing someone alarm or distress.
- 2.3. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 staff are entitled to a safe place of work.
- 2.4. Individual sub-contractors may in some cases be legally liable for harassment of colleagues or third parties including clients, and may be ordered to pay compensation by a court.

3. WHO IS COVERED BY THE POLICY?

- 3.1. This policy covers all sub-contractors working for us irrespective of their status, level or grade. It therefore includes all sub-contractors, directors, consultants, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, casual and agency staff and volunteers.

4. WHAT IS HARASSMENT?

- 4.1. Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which 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.
- 4.2. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.
- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. Harassment may include, for example:
 - (a) Unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing, grabbing, brushing past someone, invading their personal space, and more serious forms of physical or sexual assault;
 - (b) unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless), and suggestions that sexual favours may further a career or that a refusal may hinder it;
 - (c) continued suggestions for social activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome;
 - (d) sending or displaying material that is pornographic or that some people may find offensive (including e-mails, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet);
 - (e) offensive or intimidating comments or gestures, or insensitive jokes or pranks;

- (f) mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability;
 - (g) racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group or gender;
 - (h) outing or threatening to out someone as gay or lesbian; or
 - (i) ignoring or shunning someone, for example, by deliberately excluding them from a conversation or a workplace social activity.
- 4.5. 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 they create an offensive environment.

5. WHAT IS BULLYING?

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include, by way of example:
- (a) shouting at, being sarcastic towards, ridiculing or demeaning others;
 - (b) physical or psychological threats;
 - (c) overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
 - (d) inappropriate and/or derogatory remarks about someone's performance;
 - (e) abuse of authority or power by those in positions of seniority; or
 - (f) deliberately excluding someone from meetings or communications without good reason.
- 5.3. Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a sub-contractors performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to sub-contractors in the course of their work, will not amount to bullying on their own.

6. INFORMAL STEPS

- 6.1. If you are being bullied or harassed, you should initially consider raising the problem informally with the person responsible, if you feel able. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, you should speak to Zoe Pink, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally.
- 6.2. If you are not certain whether an incident or series of incidents amount to bullying or harassment, you should initially contact Zoe Pink informally for confidential advice.
- 6.3. If informal steps have not been successful or are not possible or appropriate, you should follow the formal procedure set out below.

7. RAISING A FORMAL COMPLAINT

- 7.1. If you wish to make a formal complaint about bullying or harassment, you should submit it in writing to Zoe Pink, whose role is to achieve a solution wherever possible and to respect the confidentiality of all concerned.
- 7.2. 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 happening.
- 7.3. As a general principle, the decision whether to progress a complaint is up to you. However, we have a duty to protect all sub-contractors and may pursue the matter independently if we consider it appropriate to do so.

8. FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS

- 8.1. Zoe Pink will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. Individuals not involved in the complaint or the investigation should not be told about it. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the complaint. The investigation should be thorough, impartial and objective, and carried out with sensitivity and due respect for the rights of all parties concerned.
- 8.2. We will arrange a meeting with you, usually within one week of receiving your complaint, so that you can give your account of events. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union representative of your choice, who must respect the confidentiality of the investigation. You will be given a provisional timetable for the investigation. The investigator will arrange further meetings with you as appropriate throughout the investigation.
- 8.3. Where your complaint is about another sub-contractor, we may consider suspending them on working arrangements

pending the outcome of the investigation, if circumstances require. The investigator will also meet with the alleged harasser or bully who may also be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative of their choice 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.

- 8.4. Where your complaint is about someone other than a sub-contractor, such as a client, service user, supplier or visitor, we will consider what action may be appropriate to protect you and anyone involved pending the outcome of the investigation, bearing in mind the reasonable needs of the business and the rights of that person. Where appropriate, we will attempt to discuss the matter with the third party.
- 8.5. We will also seriously consider any request that you make for changes to your own working arrangements during the investigation. For example you may ask for changes to your duties or working hours so as to avoid or minimise contact with the alleged harasser or bully.
- 8.6. 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.
- 8.7. At the end of the investigation, the investigator will submit a report to the person nominated to consider the complaint. They will arrange a meeting with you, usually within a week of receiving the report, in order to discuss the outcome and what action, if any, should be taken. You have the right to bring a colleague or a trade union representative to the meeting. A copy of the report and the findings will be given to you and to the alleged harasser.

9. ACTION FOLLOWING THE INVESTIGATION

- 9.1. If it is considered that harassment or bullying has occurred, prompt action will be taken to address it. Where the harasser or bully is another sub-contractor the matter will be dealt with accordingly. For example, where the harasser or bully is a third party, appropriate action might include putting up signs setting out acceptable and unacceptable behaviour; speaking or writing to the person and/or their superior about their behaviour; or, in very serious cases, banning them from the premises or terminating a contract with them.
- 9.2. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage the ongoing working relationship between you and the alleged harasser or bully. It may be appropriate to arrange some form of mediation and/or counselling, or to change the duties, working location or reporting lines of one or both parties.
- 9.3. Any sub-contractor who deliberately provides false information or otherwise acts in bad faith as part of an investigation may be subject to contract termination.

10. PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR THOSE INVOLVED

- 10.1. Sub-contractors who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation conducted under this policy must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result.
- 10.2. If you believe you have suffered any such treatment you should inform Zoe Pink.
- 10.3. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone for making a complaint or assisting in good faith with an investigation under this procedure may be subject to contract termination.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

- 12.1. Confidentiality is an important part of the procedures provided under this policy. Everyone involved in the operation of the policy, whether making a complaint or involved in any investigation, is responsible for observing the high level of confidentiality that is required. 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.
- 12.2. Information about a complaint by or about a sub-contractor may be placed on file, 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.
- 12.3. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to contract termination.

13. RESPONSIBLE PERSON, MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

- 13.1. We will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its stated objectives.

Signed:



Name: ZOE PINK