



Anti-bullying Policy

Staff and Volunteers

**Market House
14 Market Street
Lerwick**

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Company Secretary Catherine Hughson
Recognised by the Inland Revenue as a Scottish Charity - No. SCO 17286

Voluntary Action Shetland

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY **FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

This procedure aims to ensure that all bullying matters are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner.

This procedure applies to Voluntary Action Shetland staff members and to activities of Shetland Befriending Scheme volunteer befrienders and any other volunteers of Voluntary Action Shetland.

Anti-bullying proceedings may be required as a result of investigations into a complaint in line with Voluntary Action Shetland (VAS) complaint/grievance procedure, or may be instigated due to an incident of gross misconduct by a volunteer or staff member.

Complaints will be taken seriously, treated confidentially and any children, young people or employees making complaints will be protected from retaliation or further attacks.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour through which an individual or groups of individuals feel threatened, abused or undermined by another individual or group of individuals.

Bullying is behaviour that can be defined as a repeated attack of a physical, psychological, social or verbal nature by those who are able to exert influence over others.

Bullying is not a specific incident but a gradual wearing down process. A person being bullied may not realise it for some time. In fact, it might have been going on for so long that the bullied individual might see it as a justifiable form of behaviour, because they are too worthless for anything else.

Bullying has a cumulative effect and is often an accumulation of many small incidents, each of which, when taken in isolation and out of context, seems too trivial for further action.

In the workplace, the focus of bullying is usually on competence (or alleged lack of it) rather than gender, race or disability. Workplace bullies usually see their target as a threat that needs to be controlled.

FORMS OF BULLYING

- Bullying can take many forms. It may include physical aggression, intimidation, threatening, extorting, pressuring, name-calling or teasing.
- Bullying can also be non-verbal such as ignoring or excluding someone, being uncooperative, displaying offensive pictures, symbols and defacing possessions.
- Cyberbullying is no different from any other forms of bullying; the behaviour is the same and the impact is no less devastating. Advances in technology are simply providing an alternative means of reaching people - where malicious messages were once written on schoolbooks or toilet walls, they can now be sent via mobile phone or the internet.
- Bullying can be prejudiced-based including racism, homophobia*, disability and sexism.
- Bullying is not always clear-cut – it often takes less obvious forms such as consistently setting unachievable deadlines or excessive criticism.

HOW DOES BULLYING AFFECT PEOPLE?

- Bullying can cause stress and can affect a person's health.
- Symptoms of bullying may include anxiety, headaches, sleepless nights, upset stomach, loss of confidence or self-esteem, depression and not wanting to go out or mix with other people.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Volunteer

Voluntary Action Shetland has a complaints policy and a disciplinary grievance procedure. Where a person wishes to bring a grievance against a volunteer, they should direct this grievance to the appropriate Project Co-ordinator.

The Project Co-ordinator will then investigate the grievance through discussions with the relevant parties and formally record.

The Project Co-ordinator at the earliest opportunity will inform the individual who is the subject of a grievance procedure of this.

*use of the term 'homophobia' also covers trans-phobia and bi-phobia

The Project Co-ordinator will then make a decision on the outcome of the grievance, which will be sent to all involved parties in writing. If the Co-ordinator cannot make a decision he/she will seek the advice from the Executive Officer of Voluntary Action Shetland.

Employee

In the event of a grievance being taken out against a member of staff, this should be addressed to the Executive Officer of Voluntary Action Shetland.

In any event either with a volunteer or staff member, Voluntary Action Shetland Disciplinary and Grievance procedure will be followed.