

NORTH VIEW Housing Association

North View is a registered Scottish charity – charity registration number SC032963

POLICY

DIGNITY AT WORK

All North View policies and publications can be made available on CD/data-to-voice, in Braille, large print and community languages.

For further details please contact us on 0141 634 0555 or email us on enquiries@nvha.org.uk.

Passed:-

25/06/2025

Review Date:-

May 2028

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 North View is committed to providing a working environment and culture where its employees, committee members, agency workers, and consultants and contractors have the right to be treated with dignity and respect free from bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination and victimisation of any nature. Every employee, committee member, agency worker and consultant and contractor of North View has a responsibility to treat colleagues with dignity and respect, regardless of any protected characteristics or differences.
- 1.2 North View believes that a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion not only benefits the association but supports wellbeing and enables people to work better, be themselves and feel that they belong.

2.0 Legal Framework

- 2.1 There are a number of legal principles contained in the following legal documents that will apply as follows:

The Equality Act 2010

- 2.2 The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation based on nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Act prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimisation in various areas, including employment, public services, and the provision of goods and services.

Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023

- 2.3 The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 places a legal duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees in the workplace.

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

- 2.4 This Act protects whistleblowers from being dismissed or treated unfairly for raising their concerns.

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

- 2.5 The Act places a legal duty on employers to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees as far as reasonably practical.

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3.0 Definitions

Protected Characteristics

- 3.1 The legal grounds in which discrimination claims can be made. These include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Harassment

- 3.2 Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. North View will extend this definition to include all and will not be restricted to those identified as having a protected characteristic.
- 3.3 Harassment can occur where someone perceives another person to have a protected characteristic. Harassment can also arise by association, where someone is harassed because they are associated with someone with a protected characteristic
- 3.4 Examples of harassment could include but not limited to:
- "banter", jokes, taunts or insults that are sexist, racist, ageist, transphobic, homophobic or derogatory against any other protected characteristic;
 - Unwanted physical behaviour, for example, pushing or grabbing;
 - Excluding someone from a conversation or a social event or marginalising them from the group;
 - Unwelcome comments about someone's appearance or the way they dress that is or is not related to a protected characteristic;
 - Revealing someone's sexual orientation against their wishes or threatening to;
 - Consistently using the wrong names and pronouns following the transition of a person's gender identity;
 - Displaying images that are offensive;
 - Excluding or making derogatory comments about someone because of a perceived protected characteristic, or because they are associated with someone with a protected characteristic.

Sexual Harassment

- 3.5 Conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; and less favourable treatment related to sex or gender reassignment that occurs because of a rejection of, or submission to, sexual conduct. More information on sexual harassment is found in Appendix 1.

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Bullying

- 3.6 Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. If the bullying relates to a person's protected characteristic, it may also constitute harassment and, therefore, will be unlawful.
- 3.7 Examples of bullying could include but not limited to:
- Spreading a false rumour;
 - Consistently giving heavier workloads to one particular individual in a team;
 - Unjustly cutting off or preventing someone from reasonably expressing their views in a meeting;
 - Regularly undermining the authority of any other employees.

Victimisation

- 3.8 Treating someone less favourably and discriminating against them because they have pursued or intend to pursue their rights relating to alleged discrimination, complained about the behaviour of someone harassing them or given evidence in someone else's discrimination complaint.

Unacceptable Behaviour

- 3.9 A one-off act, if it is serious, can amount to bullying or harassment. All behaviours will be guided by and in line with North View's Code of Conduct.
- 3.10 Examples of unacceptable behaviour could include but not limited to:
- Derogatory comments, offensive language, remarks or jokes.
 - Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone;
 - Insulting behaviours or gestures;
 - Displaying offensive or suggestive literature or remarks;
 - Intrusion by pestering, spying or stalking;
 - Embarrassing, threatening, humiliating, patronising or intimidating remarks;
 - Physical or verbal assault, such as shouting;
 - Undermining a person's self-esteem, for example by constantly making unfavourable comparisons with others or belittling their status.
- 3.11 Harassment, bullying, victimisation or unacceptable behaviours may be physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. It is not necessarily face to face and can be done by email, phone calls, online or on social media. These may occur at work or outside work.
- 3.12 It is not the intention of the perpetrator (the person accused of bullying or harassment) that decides whether bullying or harassment has taken place; instead, it depends on whether the behaviour is unacceptable by reasonable normal standards and is harmful or unwelcome to the person or people on the receiving end.

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4.0 Principles of the Policy

4.1 The Policy aims to:

- Set out standards of behaviour expected for employees, committee members, agency workers and consultants and contractors of North View;
- Ensure that employees, committee members, agency workers and consultants and contractors are able to report any unacceptable behaviours, and relevant action is taken to resolve it;
- Promote proactive and preventative measures to support positive and respectful working relationships;
- Ensure integration of diversity into all aspects of North View business;
- Ensure that all employees, committee members, agency workers and consultants and contractors are treated with respect and dignity from each other;
- Set clear guidelines and standards regarding treatment of employees by third parties;
- Ensure that all employees, committee members, agency workers and consultants and contractors respect the differences within the community they serve and treat customers and members of the public accordingly;
- Provide a working environment where all backgrounds, cultures, values and lifestyles are respected and treated with dignity at all times;
- Provide a process for complaints to be properly managed.

5.0 Implementation of the Policy

5.1 The Director is responsible for the implementation and review of this policy.

5.2 North View will ensure that all employees, committee members, agency workers and consultants and contractors will receive an induction on this policy. The policy will be integrated into all policies and procedures within North View. Copies of this policy will be issued to all employees, committee members, agency workers and consultants and contractors and will be available to all on North View's website.

5.3 This policy applies to all employees, committee members, agency workers and consultants and contractors of North View and therefore, all mentioned parties, have a responsibility to abide by the principles outlined above and also to alert their line manager/Director should any behaviours be witnessed which breach this policy.

5.4 Unacceptable behaviour and practices will not be tolerated. However, if or when a situation arises it will be dealt with immediately, as inaction is not an option. Behaviours found to be breaching this policy will be regarded as misconduct and will be dealt with appropriately and in accordance with the relevant policies, including code of conduct and disciplinary. Serious cases may be regarded as gross misconduct and may result in dismissal.

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6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Organisational

- 6.1 North View is committed to providing a safe and respectful workplace and promoting a working environment based on dignity and trust, and one that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. It therefore adopts a zero-tolerance approach to instances of bullying or harassment.
- 6.2 North View is committed to taking proactive measures to prevent all forms of bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment, of its employees, committee members, agency workers and consultants and contractors.

Employees, Committee Members, Agency Workers and Consultants and Contractors

- 6.3 All employees, committee members, agency workers and consultants and contractors have a personal responsibility to act in line, observe and uphold this policy and follow North View's Code of Conduct. All employees, committee members, agency workers and consultants and contractors also have the responsibility to participate in any relevant mandatory training course.

Senior Staff

- 6.4 Anyone responsible for leading, managing or supervising people have additional responsibilities to ensure:
- They understand their own and the organisational responsibilities;
 - They are familiar with content of the Dignity at Work Policy and communicate to the relevant people;
 - Role model behaviours expected and encourage a positive workplace culture;
 - Challenge unacceptable or questionable behaviour they become aware of;
 - Ensure any breaches or complaints relating to this policy are responded to quickly, sensitively, confidentially and investigated in line with policy.

7.0 Procedure in dealing with Policy breaches

- 7.1 This policy is complemented by North View's Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Policy and the Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment.
- 7.2 Where an employee feels that they have been discriminated against, victimised or harassed by another employee, not been treated with dignity and respect at work, there are a number of ways in which this can be addressed:

Informal Stage

- 7.2.1 Where possible, breaches of this policy should be dealt with informally in the first instance. In many cases inappropriate behaviours are unintentional and can easily be resolved once the behaviour has been highlighted. This is often the most efficient way to maintain positive working relations.

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7.2.2 In managing the issue informally employees should:

- 1) In the first instance alert their line manager to the behaviour;
- 2) Thereafter the employee should be encouraged by the line manager and with their support approach the individual and highlight what behaviour has been offensive. Should the employee be uncomfortable with this then the line manager should approach the individual and have the same discussion;
- 3) A note should then be put on file of the person who has displayed the inappropriate behaviour and the individual that raised the issue.

Formal Stage

7.2.3 If the behaviour is of a more serious nature or it continues after the informal approach has been taken, then the issue should be dealt with by mirroring North View's grievance procedure, as set out in the Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment:

- 1) The employee must put their concerns in writing and give this to their line manager;
- 2) The line manager should then arrange a meeting with the employee who has highlighted the concerns. At this meeting, the line manager should establish what the concerns are, and how the employee would like things resolved;
- 3) The line manager should then conduct any necessary investigations. No investigation should take place prior to there being a meeting with the employee;
- 4) Once the investigation has been concluded, there could be a variety of outcomes including:
 - There is no evidence to uphold the complaint;
 - There is evidence that may involve action against another employee which will be managed through North View's disciplinary procedure set out in the Statement of Terms and Condition of Employment;
 - Learning is identified on an organisational basis.

7.2.4 Where action is taken regarding an employee, agency worker and consultant and contractor other than the person who raised the complaint, the complainant will not be informed of any action taken against other individuals.

Committee members, Agency Workers, Consultants and Contractors

7.3 Where a committee member, agency worker, contractor, consultant and contractor feel that behaviour towards them has breached the principles of this policy, they should inform the organisation of this as soon as reasonably practical in accordance with the relevant Complaints Procedure. The complaint will be investigated appropriately and dealt with in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures.

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8.0 Support for those affected or involved

- 8.1 North View understands that anyone affected by, or involved with, a complaint relating to a breach of this policy may feel anxious or upset and it will do what it can to offer support. The Rowan Consultancy can offer counselling to employees as part of North View's partnership with Employers in Voluntary Housing. Further information on accessing this can be found in the North View Staff Health and Safety Handbook.

The Health and Safety Executive can also advise on stress and mental health by calling 0300 003 1747.

9.0 Malicious Allegations

- 9.1 Any person found to be making fictitious or malicious allegations will be dealt with through North View's disciplinary procedure which may result in dismissal.

10.0 UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

- 10.1 North View will treat employees' personal data in line with its obligations under the current data protection regulations and its own Data Protection Policy. Information regarding how employee data will be used and the basis for processing it is provided in the Fair Processing Notice for Employees.

11.0 Policy Review

- 11.1 The policy will be reviewed at least every three years or in line with legislative changes.

End of Policy

Reviews and amendments

Policy established - 25/06/2025