

# UNITECH INDUSTRIES GROUP ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

## 1. PURPOSE OF POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Unitech Industries Limited's workers are treated with Dignity and Respect and are free from harassment, intimidation or other forms of bullying at work.

This policy is for guidance only and does not form part of your Contract of Employment. Breach of this policy will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.

## 2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 we have a duty to provide our workers with a safe place and system of work. This includes a workplace free from harassment, intimidation and bullying. We also have responsibilities not to harass or discriminate against workers on the grounds of their sex, sexual orientation, marital status, gender reassignment, race, religion, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, HIV positive/AIDS status or age. In some situations, we may also be responsible for the actions of our workers towards each other and towards third parties. In certain circumstances harassment can amount to unlawful discrimination. This policy serves to demonstrate our commitment to identifying and wherever possible eliminating such unlawful behaviour.

## 3. PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

Unitech Industries Group Board has overall responsibility for this Policy but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for overseeing and implementing action required under it to their Line Managers and or the HR Department. Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of the policy and any recommendations for change to the policy lies with the Board and HR Department.

Managers have a specific responsibility to operate within the boundaries of this policy and to facilitate its operation by ensuring that workers understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and by identifying and acting upon behaviour that falls below these standards. All Managers will be given training on the relevant legal and operational framework and best practice.

All workers are responsible for treating their colleagues with dignity, and for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Workers should disclose any instances of harassment or bullying of which they become aware to either their Line Manager, a more Senior Manager within their Company or the HR Department. Questions about this policy should be directed to either their Line Manager, the next Senior Manager and or the HR Department.

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#### 4. WHAT IS HARASSMENT AND BULLYING?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which has the purpose or effect of, affecting a worker's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Such conduct is commonly related to sex, sexual orientation, marital status, gender reassignment, race, religion, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, HIV positive/AIDS status or age.

Harassment generally arises where a worker has made it clear that they find certain behaviour unwelcome, and that behaviour has continued unchanged. Harassment can also arise as a result of a single incident provided it is sufficiently serious. It is important to remember that even though the conduct may only be unwanted or offensive to one individual it can still amount to harassment. Employees who believe they are being subjected to harassment should not hesitate to use the procedures set out below. All staff should consider whether their actions could be offensive to others.

#### **Examples of harassment might include:**

- unwanted physical contact, ranging from touching or brushing against another employee's body to assault or coercing sexual relations.
- unwelcome sexual behaviour such as advances, propositions or pressure for sexual activity.
- continued suggestions for social activity within or outside the workplace after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome.
- offensive or intimidating comments.
- suggestions that sexual favours may further an employee's career or that refusal of sexual favours may hinder it.
- the display of pictures, objects or written materials that may be considered pornographic or offensive to particular ethnic or religious groups.
- unwanted conduct or conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment on the grounds of their sex, race, sexual orientation, disability, religion or age including abuse or insults about appearance or dress.
- insensitive jokes or pranks; and
- shunning an employee, for example, by deliberately excluding him or her from conversation.

**Bullying** means offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure a colleague. Bullying does not include legitimate and constructive criticism of your performance or behaviour, an occasionally raised voice, or an argument. Examples of bullying include ridiculing or demeaning others, particularly junior colleagues, overbearing supervision and unjustifiably excluding colleagues from meetings/communications.

This policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs both in the workplace itself and in settings outside the workplace, such as business trips, events or social functions organised for or on behalf of Unitech Industries Group and on or off our premises.

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## **5. WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE BEEN BULLIED OR HARASSED: INFORMAL PROCEDURE**

If you consider that you are being bullied or harassed, you should initially attempt to resolve the problem informally, explaining clearly to the person responsible that the behaviour in question is not welcome and that it offends you or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing for you to do on your own, you should seek support from a colleague and your line manager. Managers will provide confidential advice and assistance to workers who have been bullied or harassed and will assist in the resolution of any problems, whether through formal or informal means.

If you are in any doubt as to whether an incident or series of incidents which have occurred constitute bullying or harassment, then in the first instance you should approach your line manager confidentially, on an informal basis. They will be able to advise you as to how the matter should be dealt with.

If the conduct continues or if it is not appropriate to resolve it informally, you should follow the formal procedure set out below.

## **6. WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE BEEN BULLIED OR HARASSED: FORMAL PROCEDURE**

The Informal procedure may not be appropriate due to the nature of the harassment or bullying or because you do not feel able to talk directly to the person creating the problem. In these cases, or where the Informal procedure has been unsuccessful, you should raise your complaint in writing to the HR Department, whose role is to achieve a solution wherever possible and to respect the confidentiality of all concerned. See paragraph 6.3 for details of the information required to be included in your written complaint. If the matter concerns the HR Department you should refer it to the Unitech Industries Board.

As a general principle, the decision to progress a complaint rest with you. However, as your Employer we have a duty to protect all workers and we may pursue a complaint independently if we consider it is appropriate to do so in all the circumstances.

If you wish to make a Formal complaint, you should write to your Line Manager, a more Senior Manger within your Company or the HR Department setting out full details of the unwanted conduct. These details should include the name of the harasser or bully, the nature of the harassment.

## **7. FORMAL PROCEDURE: INVESTIGATION**

Complaints will be managed in a timely and confidential manner via an independent investigation to establish full details of what happened. Your name and the name of the alleged harasser will not be divulged other than on a "need to know" basis to those individuals involved in the investigation. At the outset, an investigative officer and with no prior involvement in the complaint will be appointed and a timetable will be set down and communicated to all parties. The investigation will be thorough, impartial and objective, and will be carried out with sensitivity and with due respect for the rights of all parties concerned.

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Consideration will be given to whether the alleged harasser or bully should be redeployed temporarily or suspended on full pay or whether reporting lines or other managerial arrangements should be altered pending the outcome of the investigation.

As part of the investigation, the nominated Investigating Person will meet with you to hear your account of the events leading to your complaint. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union official of your choice. The nominated Investigating Person will also meet with the alleged harasser or bully who may also be accompanied by a colleague or trade union official of their choice. It may also be necessary to interview witnesses to any of the incidents mentioned in your complaint. Where it is necessary to interview witnesses, the importance of confidentiality will be emphasised to them.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the nominated Investigating Person will submit a report to a Senior Manager nominated to consider the complaint. The Senior Manager will usually report their finding back to you within two weeks of your complaint first being reported. A copy of the nominated Investigating Person report together with the Senior Manager findings will be provided to you and to the alleged harasser.

If the Senior Manager finds that harassment or bullying has occurred, prompt action will be taken to stop the harassment or bullying immediately and prevent its recurrence. The findings will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Consideration will be given to whether the harasser or bully should be dismissed and, if not, whether they should remain in their current post or be transferred. Even where a complaint is not upheld, (for example, where evidence is inconclusive), consideration will be given to how the ongoing working relationship between you and the alleged harasser or bully should be managed. This may involve, for example, arranging some form of mediation or counselling or a change in the duties or reporting lines of either party.

## **8. FORMAL PROCEDURE: APPEAL**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you have the right to appeal the decision within 14 days of being notified of the outcome. You should submit your full written grounds of appeal to the nominated Senior Manager who will hear your Appeal. Where practicable this will be a Manager Senior to the Manager who originally considered the complaint. The person hearing your appeal will meet with you to discuss your appeal. You may be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union official of your choice. You will be notified of the outcome of the appeal within seven days of this meeting. This is the final stage of the Formal procedure.

## **9. PROTECTION FOR THOSE MAKING COMPLAINTS OR ASSISTING WITH AN INVESTIGATION**

Workers who, in good faith, make complaints under this policy will be protected from intimidation or victimisation in connection with their involvement. If you have been subjected to any such intimidation or victimisation you may raise a complaint in writing under this procedure or the grievance procedure. Workers who, after investigation, are found to have provided information falsely and in bad faith will however be subject to action under the disciplinary procedure.

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## **10. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is very important throughout all parts of this procedure. It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the procedure to respect the high level of confidentiality that is required. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action under our disciplinary procedure.

## **11. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY**

This policy reflects the law and Unitech Industries Group practice. The Board and the HR Department will be responsible for reviewing this policy from a legislative and operational perspective at least annually.

As with all policies, procedures and documentation implemented by the Unitech Group, the basis of this procedure has been formed on statutory law and/or legal guidance. All staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved. Any suggestions should be sent to the Group HR Manager who will liaise with the Group Board of Directors responsible for this document.

This policy is owned by Unitech Group Ltd. Its effectiveness will be monitored and may be reviewed by The Board of Directors of the Company delegate the approval of this statement on its behalf of the Managing Director of the Company.

Approved and Signed on behalf of the Unitech Industries Group

Nick Imlah

Group Managing Director

Date:

17/3/23

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