

# BULLYING AND HARASSMENT PROCEDURE

## Policy Document

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**FEBRUARY 2005**

**For all employees of Royal Mail Group plc**

**(Amends the previous Policy Document dated APRIL 2004)**

# **Bullying and Harassment Procedure**

## **For all employees of Royal Mail Group plc**

### **~~NK~~ Purpose and Scope.**

The procedure is designed to enable individuals to raise issues or complaints they have in connection with their treatment at work, specifically in respect of harassment, bullying and victimisation, definitions of which are shown in **Appendix A**.

This procedure cannot be used as an alternative to other procedures (**Appendix B**), which have in built appeals. Nor does it replace the grievance procedure – which should be used for complaints not related to harassment, bullying or victimisation. It cannot be used where employees are asked to work in line with their contract of employment (see paragraph 4, employee rights). This procedure applies to all types of employees, as well as casuals, self-employed contract workers, and agency contract workers (except Sub-Postmasters).

Specifically the procedure aims to:

- i. Enable individuals to raise issues of concern specifically in connection with harassment, bullying and victimisation
- ii. Clarify for all involved how those complaints will be handled.
- iii. Reflect best practice and statutory rights.
- iv. Provide an approach that is fair, consistent and which treats individual's issues or complaints in a non-discriminatory and timely way.

### **~~OK~~ Employer's Obligations and Guiding Principles.**

- i. Complaints made under this procedure are assumed to have been made in good faith.
- ii. Royal Mail Group plc is committed to making equality of opportunity and fair treatment a reality whereby an individual can seek, obtain and continue employment without unfair and/or unlawful discrimination.
- iii. Complaints should normally be managed in the line, without unnecessary escalation, at first line manager level wherever appropriate.
- iv. Harassment and bullying, unfair treatment and victimisation are not acceptable in RMG.
- vi. All complaints will be treated seriously.

- vii. All policies and procedures should be applied correctly and fairly. (The joint Policy Statement for Bullying and Harassment is shown in **Appendix C**)
- viii. Policy and procedure documents will be made easily accessible.
- ix. Ideally, complaints and/or allegations of bullying or harassment should be resolved informally in the first instance.
- x. Cases will be handled as speedily as possible, aiming to have the investigation completed within 28 days. Where there is delay, both the Complainant and the Respondent will be notified of the reason and anticipated date of conclusion. Cases will be handled sensitively and wherever practicable in confidence.
- xi. All employees will be treated in line with the Dignity and Respect at Work policy and with business values.
- xii. Both the Complainant and Respondent will receive a written summary of the investigating manager's conclusions at the completion of the process.
- xiii. The key principle of the procedure is to take timely corrective action and ensure that there is no reoccurrence of the issue complained of. It is therefore the responsibility of the line manager to take action and check whether this has been achieved. It is the responsibility of the Regional Case Manager (RCM) to monitor such actions.

### **PK**Employee Obligations.

- i. Complaints raised under this process must be made in good faith.
- ii. All employees are to treat each other with dignity and respect.
- iii. All employees are to behave in a way, which reflects the published Code of Business Standards.
- iv. All employees are expected to fully co-operate during the course of an investigation and should behave appropriately throughout, including maintaining confidentiality throughout the process and after its conclusion.
- v. Employees who witness unacceptable behaviour should challenge it in a way, which is consistent with our business values.
- vi. Complaints should normally be raised informally with the aim of resolving the issue at the earliest opportunity. It is recognised that this may not always be possible or appropriate in cases of serious bullying or harassment, in which case proceed directly to the formal stage.

- vii. Employees should raise their complaints as soon as they arise or as soon as they feel able to do so. However, there may be occasions when an individual wishes to raise a complaint after the event.

## **OK** Employee Rights

- i. Employees have the right to work in an environment where they are treated fairly and are free from bullying, harassment or victimisation.
- ii. Employees have the right to be addressed reasonably, particularly when asked to carry out work in the course of their duties, taking account of their role, skills, abilities and the prevailing work demands at the time. Employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and may seek redress if this is not the case. Where a complaint relates to a person's behaviour, the bullying and harassment procedure should be used. Where a complaint relates to the application of a work policy or direction, the grievance procedure should be used.
- iii. At all stages of this procedure, individuals have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or by a work colleague from within Royal Mail Group plc.

## **RM** Informal approach.

- i.) Before entering the process the complainant should try to deal with the issue informally if they feel able to. In cases of serious bullying or harassment it may not be possible or appropriate to try to resolve the matter informally, in which case it should be taken straight into the formal process.
- ii.) The Complainant can try to resolve the matter informally themselves or they can do so by asking their manager, union representative, or colleague to assist them.
- iii.) If the complaint is made against a union representative, the appropriate Senior Field Official will be informed of the nature of the complaint by the Regional Service Manager (RSM) after Step 4 of the complaints process and prior to Step 5. The purpose of this discussion will be to determine whether the complaint can be informally resolved. For bullying and harassment cases, this replaces Point 2 of Appendix 4 of the Conduct Code.
- iv.) Informal discussions with the relevant parties should usually cover the following:
  - a. The nature of the problem.
  - b. Why it is unacceptable.
  - c. A remedy, which is acceptable to the parties.

- v.) Discussion can often resolve an issue or complaint effectively. The informal approach may include conciliation, at the request of the Complainant. If the issue remains unresolved or reoccurs it is important to raise it formally as soon as possible.
- vi.) Where conciliation is used, it is important that the Complainant's line manager periodically checks to ensure that the remedy has worked, that no reoccurrence of the causal behaviour has arisen, and that no victimisation has resulted. It is therefore the responsibility of the line manager to take action and check whether this has been achieved. It is the responsibility of the Regional Case Manager (RCM) to monitor such actions.

## **6. Formal Approach**

- i.) Timescales for making complaints under the formal process will vary based on the informal approach taken and the success of this in resolving the issue. However, where an individual believes that it is necessary to use the formal approach this should be done as soon as is reasonably practicable (e.g. usually within 3 months of an episode of bullying or harassment, unless there is good reason not to) to enable a full investigation to take place. Where there is a continuing effect it is still preferable for an early complaint to be registered.
- ii.) Once management is aware of alleged harassment, bullying or victimisation taking place, action must be taken. Where a third party (e.g. a colleague, customer or relative) brings a case to the attention of management, then a manager (normally the line manager of the person who is the complainant) should still investigate the allegation in line with this procedure. However, there may be occasions when an alternative manager may be appropriate, particularly where there is reason to believe that the line manager is the subject of the complaint. This could mean that the Complainant will need to be seen by someone from outside his or her area.

## **7. Making a complaint.**

- i.) A complaint is regarded as formal when an individual either fills out a Harassment complaint form, or submits a complaint in writing. The forms are available in the workplace, from People and Organisational Services, the Royal Mail Bullying and Harassment Helpline, and in some instances, from the Trade Unions. (see **Appendix D** for a list of Helpline numbers and terms of reference)

- ii.) The Complainant will then either;
  - a. Discuss the issue with their line manager, and forward a copy to **FREEPOST, ER Operations Team, Royal Mail, Coton House, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV23 0AA**, retaining a copy for both themselves and the line manager.
  - b. If they do not wish to involve the line manager (for example if the line manager is the subject of the complaint) they can forward a copy to the second line manager, and one to **People & Organisational Services**, retaining a copy themselves, and indicating why they have not involved the line manager.
  - c. Exceptionally, the Complainant may bypass line management and send two copies to **People & Organisational Services**. This may be in instances where line managers are the subjects of the complaint or there is a specific and appropriate reason why the Complainant does not want to involve line managers at this stage. In such circumstances the reason should be made clear on the form.
- iii.) On receipt of a formal complaint at People & Organisational Services, an RCM will be appointed. The RCM will follow the steps as set out in Section 8. Ideally, any counter complaints will be dealt with simultaneously under one integrated investigation.
- iv.) In any case where completion of the investigation within the 28-day target is not possible, due to the complexity of the investigation, the Complainant and Respondent will be advised accordingly.
- v.) Any new incidents of bullying, harassment or victimisation, arising after conclusion of a case can be taken up as a fresh complaint.
- vi.) Employee Health Services (EHS) are able to provide a range of services (see Appendix E) for any individual who may require extra support. Additional support is also available from appropriate external organisations, on which the EHS can advise.

## 8. Bullying and Harassment Process

### Step 1

Before entering the bullying and harassment process the Complainant should try to deal with the issue informally if they feel able to. **In all cases, and before making a formal complaint, the Complainant should consider the following:**

- i.) If possible, has the matter been raised with the Respondent? Very often, the person causing offence may not be aware they have done so.
- ii.) Has the matter been brought to the attention of a line manager? The involvement of a third party can sometimes help in finding a quick and satisfactory resolution.
- iii.) If practicable, have any attempts been made to resolve this matter other than by making a formal complaint?
- iv.) Has any contact been made with the Bullying & Harassment Helpline? (0800 58 74 777)

### Step 2

Complaints sent to: **FREEPOST, ER Operations Team, Royal Mail, Coton House, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV23 0AA** will be received at the National Gateway. Within one working day of receipt, the complaint forms will be scanned, a letter of acknowledgment will be sent to the Complainant, and copies of the forms will be sent electronically to the relevant RCM.

NB: 28-Day target for completion of the investigation starts on receipt of complaint at the National Gateway.

### Step 3

- i.) Within a maximum of one working day of receiving notice of the complaint, the RCM will make contact (normally by telephone) with the Complainant, to discuss the case. At this stage, the RCM will seek to verify the nature and substance of the complaint and discuss, if appropriate, the opportunity for Informal Resolution (See Section 5).
- ii.) As a result of the discussion with the RCM, the Complainant will need to decide how they wish the matter to be progressed. If the Complainant decides to continue with a formal Complaint, then the RCM will select a suitable Investigating Manager. If, after discussion with the RCM, the Complainant wishes to resolve the matter informally, then the RCM will help the Complainant identify the most appropriate course of action.

## Step 4

Where a formal complaint is continued, and within one working day of Step 3, the appointed Investigating Manager will write to the Complainant, inviting them for interview. The interview should, as far as reasonably practicable, take place within 3 working days of the invitation (subject to statutory time limits). A trade union representative or work colleague from within Royal Mail Group plc may accompany the Complainant. The work colleague must not be geographically remote to the individual concerned. During this interview, there may be a further opportunity for Informal Resolution.

**NB** If employee is disabled it may be a reasonable adjustment to allow a support worker, lip reader or other individual to accompany them as appropriate, in addition to their representative.

## Step 5

Where a complaint is made under this procedure the aim is to minimise any risk of inappropriate behaviour and ensure the investigation can be completed without any interference. As soon as reasonably practicable, following the interview of the Complainant, the investigator will need to consider the need for, and decide on, any Precautionary Action<sup>1</sup>. This will entail noting any Impact Factors<sup>2</sup> affecting the Complainant and the Respondent. Where Precautionary Action is being considered, all reasonable steps should be taken to avoid unnecessary loss or hardship. Advice can be sought from the RCM at this stage. The investigator will record their decision, and reasons.

## Step 6

As soon as reasonably practicable after Step 4 and Step 5, the Respondent should normally be seen by their Line Manager (any delay to be notified to RCM). Subject to availability, a trade union representative or work colleague from within Royal Mail Group plc may accompany the Respondent. The work colleague must not be geographically remote to the individual concerned. However, there may be occasions when the appointment of an alternative investigating manager may be appropriate, particularly

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<sup>1</sup> **Precautionary Action** could include a requirement to: Work at an alternative location, on different duties or shifts, (normally applied to the Respondent), or remain at home on Precautionary Suspension. The purpose here is to ensure there is a separation of Witnesses, the Complainant and the Respondent.

Precautionary Suspension is a serious step requiring a high level of justification and evidence, to support such a decision.

**NB: Precautionary Action in itself does not imply guilt but may be necessary to ensure the integrity of the investigation and reduction of further risk to the complainant.**

<sup>2</sup> **Impact Factors** could include: Likelihood of further harassment/victimisation of Complainant, proximity of Respondent to Complainant, and likelihood of interference with witnesses/integrity of the investigation.

where there is reason to believe that there may be a risk of bias, collusion etc. This could mean that the Respondent will need to be seen by someone from outside his or her area.

In every case, the Respondent is to be:

- i.) Given details of complaint in writing,
- ii.) Given notification of any decision on Precautionary Action (Subject to an initial 48 hour review and every 48 hours thereafter if Precautionary Action is applied),
- iii.) Invited to interview in writing (to include a statement setting out their right to be accompanied) - minimum of 48 hours notice to be given.

**NB: This Step is not part of the interview process.**

## **Step 7**

Following a minimum of 48 hours notice in writing as described in Step 6 (iii) above, the Investigating Manager will interview the Respondent and will revisit any decision on Precautionary Action. The Respondent has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague from within Royal Mail Group plc. The work colleague must not be geographically remote to the individual concerned.

**NB** If employee is disabled it may be a reasonable adjustment to allow a support worker, lip reader or other individual to accompany them as appropriate, in addition to their representative.

## **Step 8**

At this stage, the Investigator will make an assessment of the case and decide what further action is most appropriate. The investigator will determine whether there is:

- i.) An opportunity to resolve the matter informally with the agreement of the Complainant. If so, the Investigator must obtain the Complainant's agreement in writing and briefly describe why this decision has been made. The papers should then be returned to the RCM for filing.
- ii.) A need to investigate further by interviewing relevant witnesses for both the Complainant and Respondent, if so proceed to Step 9 or
- iii.) That it is possible to immediately proceed to the decision making stage in which case Step 11 applies.

## **Step 9**

The Investigator will, as far as reasonably practicable, identify, contact and interview all relevant witnesses for both the Complainant and Respondent within a maximum of 14 days of Step 8. Relevant material arising during the course of the investigation, which

affects the decision, will be disclosed. In such cases, it may be necessary to remove some personal details from statements so that, as far as reasonably practicable, individuals remain anonymous. (Refer to Section 11 for further guidance).

**NB** If employee is disabled it may be a reasonable adjustment to allow a support worker, lip reader or other individual to accompany them as appropriate, in addition to their representative.

### **Step 10**

At the conclusion of Step 9, being in possession of all relevant witness accounts and information, the investigator should be in a position to begin the decision-making process. The Investigator should also carefully consider the need to re-interview the Complainant, Respondent, and/or Witnesses to clear up any ambiguities or to discuss any new evidence upon which a decision is being made.

**NB:** The investigator must ensure that both Complainant and Respondent are kept fully informed in writing.

### **Step 11**

The investigator will now need to begin the decision-making process, considering the facts, based on reasonable belief, and to determine whether the complaint is substantiated in part or in whole. If the complaint is considered not to have been made in good faith, the steps set out in Section 12, Part (vi) will apply. In their report the investigator will set out any recommendations made and explain the reasons for their decision.

### **Step 12**

Within a maximum of 7 days of the decision being made (Step 11), the investigator will communicate their decision, to the Complainant, Respondent, RCM and the relevant Line Manager.. The decision will be in writing, giving summary reasons, relevant to the individual(s) concerned. All parties must treat this information in the strictest confidence.

## **9. Communicating the Outcome and Remedies**

- i.) The investigating manager will remain responsible for communicating with the Complainant and the Respondent throughout and at the end of the investigation. Complaints should always be handled with sensitivity and the reasons for reaching a particular decision should be explained carefully. This may be done in a confidential meeting, particularly if complaints are not upheld. All parties are

expected to fully co-operate and should treat whatever information they receive in the strictest confidence.

- ii.) If there is a proven case of harassment, bullying or victimisation, then the recommendations from the investigation must be implemented.
- iii.) Remedies include timely, relevant, informal corrective action, conciliation, or joint training to address the situation in the workplace. It is imperative that remedies are implemented as soon as practicable so that the behaviour complained of is recognised and stopped. In such cases, the Complainant may be informed that a particular course of action or remedy is to be followed, however the details will remain in strictest confidence.
- iv.) Where disciplinary action is considered necessary, upon conclusion of an investigation under the bullying and harassment procedure, the principles of the Conduct Code will apply. The case will be handed over to a new manager, who will be responsible for dealing with the conduct code case, and the evidence gathered under the bullying and harassment procedure may be used to substitute the fact-finding stage under the Conduct Code. The outcome of any conduct case will not be communicated to the Complainant (in line with the principles of confidentiality contained within the Conduct Code).
- v.) Any Precautionary Action as detailed in Section 7, Step 5 will be considered if it is felt that there could be a likelihood of further harassment, bullying or victimisation. This may apply until the case is finally concluded and the outcome implemented.
- vi.) The RCM will record the outcome of an investigation, including any recommendations and/or remedies, and monitor this accordingly.

## **10. Appeals.**

- i. The right to an Appeal.**
  - a. The Complainant will have the right to an appeal against the decision if their complaint is not upheld.
  - b. The appeal will need to be set out in writing and sent to the RCM. Individuals may seek help in the preparation of their appeal but the individual retains responsibility for submitting it to the RCM within ten working days of receipt of the conclusions of the investigation. The appeal will be monitored by the RCM to safeguard the integrity and impartiality of the appeal process.

## ii. **The Appeal Process**

- a. The purpose of the appeal will be to consider:
  - i.) Whether the correct process and procedure has been followed,
  - ii.) Whether any new evidence has come to light which would have materially affected the outcome, and
  - iii.) Whether there is any way in which the decision could be found to be inherently unfair.
- b. The RCM will notify the respondent that an appeal has been requested by the complainant, and will appoint a more senior Manager than dealt with the original investigation, unless this not reasonably practicable. The Manager so appointed must not have previously been involved in the investigation. The Manager will examine the evidence and conduct any further investigation required.
- c. A face-to-face meeting with the Complainant must be offered. Employees will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague from within Royal Mail Group plc.

**NB:** If an employee is disabled it may be a reasonable adjustment to allow a support worker, lip reader or other individual to accompany them as appropriate.

- d. The Manager will provide a final decision (which is not subject to further appeal) and will have the authority to either uphold or overturn the decision of the original investigator.
- e. The Manager will communicate the decision in writing to both the Complainant and Respondent. The communication will include a statement on whether the appeal has been upheld and will outline any remedies required within 21 days of receipt of the appeal. Where this cannot be achieved the Manager will write to advise the relevant parties accordingly.

## **11. Confidentiality**

- i.) Subject to the requirements of this process, everything said, or referred to, during investigation interviews should be treated in confidence. All parties will not discuss, or share, information from such interviews with any other party as this could prejudice the investigation.
- ii.) To thoroughly investigate the complaint, information from interviews might be put to others as part of the investigation. Information from interviews might also be disclosed to others (e.g. Employment Tribunals, external legal bodies, etc).

- iii.) Complainants, and Respondents will have access to all relevant information affecting their case, subject to the consideration by the Investigating Manager of the removal of personal details that may lead to the identification of any individual from statements in response to any requests by the Complainant or Witnesses for anonymity.
- iv.) The Complainant and Respondent will be made aware in writing that if they have any concerns or questions regarding confidentiality they should contact the investigator.
- v.) Any breach of confidentiality may result in Conduct Code action. Where an investigating manager becomes aware of a breach in confidentiality, they should contact the RCM.

## 12. General Points

- i.) Any new incidents of harassment, bullying or victimisation, arising after conclusion of a case can be taken up as a fresh complaint.
- ii.) It is not appropriate to use the Harassment and Bullying procedure again as a form of appeal against the outcome, as an appeal is already built into the process.
- iii.) The outcome of a Bullying and Harassment investigation may lead to action under the Conduct Code. The Bullying and Harassment investigation forms the fact-finding stage of the Conduct Code in cases where action under the Code is required. It is at the discretion of the manager responsible for the Conduct Code case as to whether further investigation is required.
- iv.) In some instances, it is likely to be more appropriate to deal with cases directly via the Conduct Code, where there is a clear incident of serious misconduct such as violent or inappropriate behaviour.
- v.) If the complaint is made against a union representative and the conclusion of the investigation is that Conduct Code action is necessary, this will be dealt with under Appendix 4 of the Conduct Code, commencing at Point 3.
- vi.) **Complaints not made in good faith.**
  - a. **Complaints that are not made in good faith undermine the validity of the whole process and damage the basis of good working relationships.** While a guiding principle of the Bullying and Harassment procedure is that managers will treat all complaints seriously, there is an obligation upon all employees that complaints must be made in good faith.
  - b. On completion of an investigation, where an investigating manager believes there is evidence to suggest that a complaint was not made in good faith, s/he must decide whether the complaint was so made. For a complaint to be

deemed as not made in good faith there must be reasonable grounds for belief with supporting evidence. For example; where a complaint is brought that is untrue and/or aims to annoy, irritate, distress, damage or otherwise harm the reputation and/or integrity of the person against whom it has been made.

- c. If it is found that a complaint has not been brought in good faith, appropriate action may be taken under the Conduct Code, which may include dismissal.
- d. Where it is believed that the complaint was not made in good faith, the investigator will:
  - a) Compile a summary of supporting evidence, clearly stating why they believe that the complaint was so made,
  - b) Inform the Complainant of the outcome of the harassment investigation and that s/he believes there is evidence to suggest that the complaint was not made in good faith, and
  - c) Forward the summary and the original case papers to the relevant RCM.
- e. The RCM will use the summary only to decide whether the case should be dealt with under the Conduct Code.

**NB:** The original Investigating Manager will not undertake the investigation of the Conduct case.

### **Bullying and Harassment Definitions**

#### **Grievance**

A grievance is a complaint raised by an employee about an issue relating to their work for which there is no separate appeal mechanism.

#### **Harassment**

Harassment is any inappropriate and unwanted behaviour that could reasonably be perceived by the recipient or any other person, as affecting their dignity.

Harassment may include suggestive remarks or gestures, pin-ups, graffiti, offensive comments, jokes and banter based on any of these. Such behaviour may focus on age, creed, disability, nationality, race, sex, sexual orientation, family status, religion or any other personal characteristic, and may affect the dignity of any individual or group of individuals at work. Harassment could be a one off event or a series of events and may be perpetrated by an individual or group of people.

#### **Bullying**

Bullying is intimidation on a regular and persistent basis or as a one off which serves to undermine the competence, effectiveness, confidence and integrity of the person on the receiving end. A bully misuses his or her power, position or knowledge to criticise, humiliate and destroy a subordinate, a colleague or their manager.

#### **Victimisation**

Victimisation is the unfair and selective punishment of, or discrimination against, an individual. The detrimental treatment, of an individual who has brought a complaint of bullying or harassment, includes; any form of behaviour which results in the individual being disadvantaged in some way and might include bullying, threats, lack of co-operation from colleagues, being excluded or malicious gossip.

#### **Complainant**

Any person who makes a complaint under the provisions of this procedure.

## **Respondent**

Any person against whom a complaint has been made under the provisions of this procedure.

## **Direct Discrimination**

This occurs whenever a person is treated less favourably than others on the grounds of:

- Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin,
- Gender or marital status,
- Gender re-assignment
- Disability
- Sexual orientation,
- Religion or belief.

## **Indirect Discrimination**

This occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied or would be applied

- which puts or would put persons of the affected group at a particular disadvantage when compared with other persons,
- which puts them at a disadvantage and
- which the employer cannot show to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

**NB:** Direct and indirect discrimination do not apply to disability discrimination. Instead the legislation refers to less favourable treatment and the duty to make reasonable adjustments. Both these are subject to the defence of justification.

## **Regional Case Manager (RCM)**

One of nine managers who have responsibility for:

- Acknowledging all complaints received
- Identifying an appropriate investigating manager
- Taking ownership of every case and monitoring their progress
- Supporting the Investigators by providing advice and guidance on the policy and procedure
- Providing higher management with information on cases progressing within their area of control

- Using a database to record and track case progress
- Processing appeal requests
- Following up the investigating manager recommendations and seeking updates on progress 8 weeks after case conclusion.

### **Regional Service Manager (RSM)**

Senior Managers who have line responsibility for RCM's.

**Other procedures, which have in built appeals.**

Conduct Code

Attendance Procedure

Grievance Procedure

## Bullying and harassment

### Joint Royal Mail/CWU/CMA statement

1. Royal Mail Group is committed to being a Business in which equality of opportunity is a reality and in which every individual can seek, obtain and continue employment without unfair discrimination. This is supported by the unions recognised by Royal Mail
2. Royal Mail Group and the Unions are working together to create an environment where bullying and harassment is not acceptable and where all employees support the rights of their colleagues to be treated with dignity and respect
3. Harassment is: *INAPPROPRIATE and UNWANTED* behaviour that could reasonably be perceived by the recipient or any other person, as affecting their dignity. This behaviour may focus on a person's age, creed, disability, nationality, race, sex, sexual orientation, family status, religion or any other personal characteristic, that may affect the dignity of any individual or group of individuals at work.
4. Bullying is intimidation on a regular and persistent basis or as a one off which serves to undermine the competence, effectiveness, confidence and integrity of the person on the receiving end. A bully misuses his or her power, position or knowledge to criticise, humiliate and destroy a subordinate, a colleague or their manager.
5. Harassment includes suggestive remarks or gestures, pin-ups, graffiti, offensive comments, jokes and banter based on any of the above. None of these is part of a culture in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect.
6. Bullying and harassment are not acceptable in Royal Mail Group. Every effort will be made to deal with allegations on an informal basis in the first instance. Any employee, regardless of grade or position responsible for inciting, perpetrating or condoning bullying or harassment may be disciplined, and can be held personally liable if the person who has been harassed undertakes legal proceedings. Some types of harassment are classed as criminal offences that could lead to prosecution.
7. Any employee who believes him or her self to have been harassed or bullied should, if possible, ask the respondent to stop. If this is not possible, or if it continues following the request to stop, he/she has the right to complain and should complete a Harassment and Complaint report form (H1). This should be sent to **FREEPOST, ER Operations Team, Royal Mail, Coton House, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV23 0AA**. The matter will be dealt with quickly and in confidence. Anyone complaining about bullying and harassment has a right to be supported at every stage by his or her union.
8. The Respondent may be transferred to another work area during the investigation process, or precautionary suspended. If investigation shows that the complaint is well

founded, Royal Mail Group's primary aim will be to prevent recurrence of the behaviour. If necessary, disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, may be taken. If it is necessary to separate the people concerned, every effort will be made to move the Respondent and not the Complainant, unless it is the stated wish of the latter to move.

9. All Royal Mail Group managers and leaders are responsible for ensuring that bullying or harassment is prevented. Where bullying and harassment occurs, managers and leaders are expected to deal with it whether or not it is brought formally to their attention.

10. Royal Mail Group will not tolerate intimidation, victimisation or unfair discrimination against any employee who makes a complaint of or who assists in an investigation of alleged bullying or harassment. Retaliation against an employee who complains of bullying or harassment can be expected to lead to disciplinary action and may be a criminal offence resulting in prosecution.

## **Bullying & Harassment Helpline Contact Details**

### **Royal Mail Bullying & Harassment Helpline 0800 58 74 777 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)**

Operated by independent company – Care First – the free helpline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and staffed by fully qualified and impartial counsellors. Counsellors can provide general and confidential advice around how to deal with bullying and harassment and if necessary they can help people initiate a harassment complaint. The helpline is there to provide an additional support for victims of bullying and harassment – it is not designed to take the responsibility of dealing with a complaint away from the line manager and personnel.

## **Other helplines**

### **Connect Employee Assistance Helpdesk 0845 799 4400 (8am-7pm Monday-Friday)**

They can route your call to the most appropriate person to deal with specific enquiries. Most contacts also have an email address, which can be requested at the same time.

Immediate welfare needs (including Out of Normal Hours) are best dealt with via the emergency services, a GP or NHS resources.

However, if advice is needed in an emergency then either Steve Boorman (Chief Medical Officer) or Dr Su Wang (Principal Medical Adviser) can be contacted via CPC, postline 5785 2999, (STD 020 7016 2999) or by fax on postline 5872 2977 (STD 020 7016 2977).

## **Disability Helpline**

The Disability Helpline, staffed by a team specifically trained in disability within HR Helpline at Sheffield, provide a focal point for disability related issues within the organisation. It offers a fully confidential service.

Telephone: 0114 2414731

Fax: 0114 241 4534

Email: [dac@royalmail.com](mailto:dac@royalmail.com)