



PERSONAL HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

you don't have to put up with it

THE POLICY

Nansen Highland is committed to promoting equality, diversity and an inclusive and supportive environment for its trainees, staff and others closely associated with its work and affirms the rights of individuals to be treated fairly and with respect.

Sexual, racial and other forms of personal harassment and bullying can seriously harm working and social conditions for both trainees and staff at Nansen Highland. Any incidents of harassment will be regarded extremely seriously by Nansen Highland and can be grounds for disciplinary action which may include expulsion or dismissal.

If you believe you are being subjected to sexual, racial or other forms of harassment, including bullying, do not feel it is your fault or that you have to tolerate it.

You can seek assistance, in confidence, from your keyworker or the director who will listen, clarify, give information and, where necessary with your approval, arrange support.

Nansen Highland will take action in cases of harassment -

- when the people involved are staff, trainees, others closely associated with Nansen Highland or customers such as contractors, deliverers, providers of trainee placements, etc.
- when the behaviour causing the harassment takes place on Nansen Highland premises or elsewhere, such as at locations where Nansen Highland trainees or staff have to visit on placement or fieldwork.
- when the behaviour causing harassment takes place during normal working hours or outside these.

The action may just involve offering support and guidance to help you take action yourself to stop the harassment or may involve Nansen Highland management taking action on your behalf. In serious cases, it may involve a formal investigation through the disciplinary procedures, however, in the majority of cases a resolution will be sought by less formal routes. Any action taken will be agreed with the complainant, and you will be kept informed throughout the process. A timescale will also be agreed which will take into account the need to resolve the situation as soon as practicable, whilst taking into account the circumstances.



If you just want someone to talk to about harassment - without wanting any action to be taken, that's OK too – the director, keyworker or any member of the non-executive directors will be ready to listen!

WHAT IS HARASSMENT ?

Personal harassment takes many forms. Basically, it is any behaviour which is unacceptable to the recipient and which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment - for work, study or social life. This can be particularly serious if the harasser is in a position of organisational power in relation to the person harassed.

People who are being harassed often feel isolated and stressed, and this can affect their work or studies. It is, therefore, important to seek help as soon as possible, if you feel you are being harassed.

If you are not sure, ask for help anyway!

Any behaviour which shows lack of respect and which creates an atmosphere in which people feel uncomfortable and unwelcome can constitute harassment.

Differences of attitude and culture or misinterpretation of social signals can mean that what is perceived as harassment by one person may not seem so to another.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT – could include

- any behaviour which patronises, intimidates or offends, e.g. remarks, looks, jokes or offensive language.
- any behaviour which makes people feel viewed as sexual objects and which causes offence, even if unintended.
- provocative suggestions, propositioning people
- the display of pornographic, semi-pornographic or suggestive material, electronic or paper
- deliberate, potentially objectionable physical contact to which the person has not consented or had the opportunity to object to.
- threats of academic failure, or promises of success or other rewards in exchange for sexual favours.

Although this most often involves women being harassed by men, Nansen Highland's policy applies equally well to harassment occurring between people of the same gender, or of men by women.

RACIAL HARASSMENT – could include



- any behaviour which causes discomfort, intimidates or offends or which incites others to do so - derogatory names, insults, racist jokes or ridiculing cultural difference.
- the display or circulation of offensive material, including racist graffiti, electronic mail or information published through the Internet.
- verbal abuse and threats of physical attack.

PERSONAL HARASSMENT – could include

- behaviour which makes direct or indirect reference to disability or impairment - and thus causes discomfort, patronises, insults or offends people with a physical, sensory or mental disability
- behaviour which makes direct or indirect reference to religion or culture thereby causing discomfort or offence
- repeated gibes in reference to personal traits, appearance or sexual orientation
- invasion of privacy or practical jokes causing physical or psychological distress
- pressure to become involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- messages to or about a person, including electronic mail, that are offensive, insulting or cause discomfort

BULLYING

Bullying is the misuse of power or position to persistently criticise and condemn; to openly humiliate and undermine an individual's ability until this person becomes so fearful that their confidence crumbles and they lose belief in themselves. These attacks on the individual are normally sudden, irrational, unpredictable and usually unfair. 'Academic bullying' has been defined as: 'asserting a position of intellectual superiority in an aggressive, abusive or offensive manner, threats of academic failure, public sarcasm'. Bullying could include:

- verbal and/or physical intimidation - threats, shouting, derisory remarks, often in front of others
- excessive supervision
- undermining of the individual's position by changing work objectives/guidelines without consultation, taking credit for the target's work, deriding the target's work to supervisors, etc
- removing areas of responsibility and giving people menial or trivial tasks to do instead



- withholding information
- spreading malicious rumours
- persistent criticism
- messages, including electronic mail, that are threatening, derisory or defamatory

WHAT TO DO

if you feel you're being harassed or bullied by others

- If at all possible, make it clear to the person causing offence that such behaviour is unacceptable to you.
- If you feel unable to confront the person directly, or if talking to them has no effect
- Seek a confidential interview with anyone of the staff
- Talk the problem through with a friend and with a member of staff

If you are not sure who sent an electronic message we may be able to identify the sender and take appropriate action without compromise to your confidentiality.

HOW CONFIDENTIAL WILL IT BE?

Whatever you say to them will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be divulged without your permission.

The preferred outcome of Nansen Highland's harassment policy is that people against whom complaints are made change their behaviour to remove the cause of the harassment. There are various means of achieving this and there are many examples of complaints being resolved to the complete satisfaction of the complainants.

If you have a complaint of harassment made against you, you may feel a range of emotions - from being unjustly accused to feeling humiliated at the effect of your behaviour on others - and need someone to talk to.

Arrange an appointment with the director or management team member who will listen to you in confidence.