

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY
Approved At Full Council 22/07/2022
Reviewed F&GP 20/11/2023

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Dartmouth Town Council fully supports the right of all people to work in an environment free of harassment and bullying and adopt a policy of zero tolerance towards such behaviour.
- 1.2 Bullying and harassment in the workplace can lead to poor morale, low productivity and poor performance, sickness absence, lack of respect for others, staff turnover, damage to the Council's reputation and ultimately, legal action.
- 1.3 Dartmouth Town Council expects all staff to treat others with respect, courtesy and politeness. In return, Council staff have the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect by members of the public, contractors, visitors, hirers, traders, local organisations, commercial and residential tenants and traders.

2. DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

- 2.1 For the purpose of this policy, the term 'staff' shall apply to paid and unpaid personnel working on behalf of the Council and includes employees, contractors, volunteers and councillors.
- 2.2 *Bullying* is defined as behaviour from a person or group that's unwanted and makes you feel uncomfortable, including feeling intimidated, degraded, humiliated, insulted or offended.
- 2.3 *Harassment* is defined in law as bullying or unwanted behaviour relating to any of the 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.4 Bullying and harassment may:
 - be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident
 - happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls
 - happen in the workplace or at work social events
 - be not always be obvious or noticed by others
 - occur in face-to-face, in meetings, through written communication, by telephone, all forms of electronic communications
 - occur on or off work premises, during work hours or non-work time.
- 2.5 Out-of-scope for this Policy:
 - Bullying and/or harassment of employees by other employee(s) as this is addressed through our internal Grievance Policy and/or Disciplinary Policy.
 - The behaviour of Councillors is governed by our Code of Conduct and any breaches of this should be reported to the Monitoring Officer, as detailed in our Complaints Policy.

3. HANDLING COMPLAINTS

- 3.1 Dartmouth Town Council welcome constructive feedback shared appropriately.
- 3.2 Our procedure for handling complaints is documented in our published Complaints Policy.

4. HANDLING INSTANCES OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

- 4.1 In the event of an incident, employees have a responsibility to bring issues of harassment to the immediate attention of a manager (or colleague, if a manager is unavailable) and should do so each time they feel that a person's behaviour is unacceptable. Support will be offered to the employee concerned.

4.2 Managers who receive such complaints from a member of staff must take appropriate action. The following are actions that **could** be taken towards an individual or group who with the agreement of the Mayor and, as necessary, following legal advice, may include:

- Ask them to leave the premises
- Insist future contact shall be only in writing
- Reduce the level of interaction
- Withdraw all services, temporarily or permanently
- In the event of an employee being assaulted, abused, harassed or otherwise subjected to crime whilst undertaking their official duties, we recognise the right of staff to involve the Devon and Cornwall Police in a private action and we will fully assist with any investigation.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 This Policy will be publicised on the Dartmouth Town Council website and in our Guildhall offices. The Council undertakes to share its policy with all employees and Councillors.

5.2 This Policy will be reviewed periodically, and any necessary amendments will be undertaken by the Clerk and reported to the full Council for approval.

6. LINKS TO OTHER INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DARTMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL POLICIES

- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Employee Handbook
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Complaints Policy
- ACAS: <https://www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-bullying-and-harassment>