



Committee Approver	<i>Ops Committee</i>
Stakeholder Consultation	<i>Executive Team, JCC, Leadership Team, Care Home Managers and Team Leaders</i>
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Classification	Policy
Title	Dignity @ Work Policy
Revision Date	October 2027
Revised by	HR Manager
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Related Documents	Equalities Policy Sexual Harassment Line Manager Guidance Sexual Harassment Employee Guidance Disciplinary Policy & Procedure Grievance Policy & Procedure Code of Conduct
Location of Electronic Copy	F:\Live Policies\HR

1. VIEWPOINT'S VALUES

1.1 Viewpoint is here to help people enjoy their later years. Everything we do is about realising this vision, which is supported by the following straightforward set of values:

- Inspire with positive smiles and words;
- Say 'yes I can, and I will;'
- Celebrate age, experience, and wisdom;
- Do according to our customers' wishes and ambitions;
- Treat people (everyone is a VIP) as we would a "loved one;"
- Work hard, have fun and laugh;
- Stay courageous, creative, and ahead of the game; and
- Work with those that share our values.

1.2 These promises shape us. They are a commitment to our tenants, residents, staff, and suppliers. They are fundamental to every single plan, decision, and project we embark on.

1.3 Ensuring that we have systems and processes in place will support us to deliver those plans, decisions, and projects, in accordance with our vision and values. This policy outlines our approach to Dignity at Work

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 Viewpoint Housing Association (VHA) is committed to ensuring a workplace where all individuals are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. VHA will not condone or tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or unacceptable behaviour, including sexual harassment.

2.2 This policy incorporates the latest UK legislation on sexual harassment and has the following objectives:

- Promote a workplace environment where all employees are treated with respect and dignity.
- Ensure employees understand what constitutes harassment, including sexual harassment, and the consequences of such behaviour.
- Clearly communicate that harassment, bullying, and sexual harassment are unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action.
- Foster a culture where employees feel confident in reporting harassment or bullying without fear of victimisation.
- Ensure swift, fair, and confidential handling of all complaints of harassment, bullying, or sexual misconduct.
- Provide procedures that respect the sensitivity of the issues raised and protect the rights of all those involved.

3.0. AIM

3.1 The aim of this policy is to:

- Create and promote a working environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect.
- Establish zero tolerance for harassment, bullying, sexual harassment, or victimisation across the Association.
- Reinforce VHA's commitment to addressing complaints of discrimination, including sexual harassment, promptly and appropriately.

3.2 This policy applies to all VHA staff, contractors, agency workers, Board Members, and stakeholders, as well as interactions with visitors, clients, suppliers, and former staff members.

3.3 Allegations of discrimination or harassment will be handled in accordance with this policy and its associated procedures. Any mischievous or malicious complaints found to be unfounded or unsubstantiated will be treated seriously and may lead to disciplinary action.

4.0. WHAT IS BULLYING OR HARASSMENT?

4.1 **Harassment** as defined in the Equality Act 2010 is:

- Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic (such as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, sex, sexual orientation, etc.) that has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

4.2 **Sexual Harassment**, in accordance with UK legislation, refers to any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that affects the dignity of an individual. This can involve physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct, and its intention or perceived effect is to create a hostile or offensive environment.

Under current legislation, employers are required to take **proactive steps** to prevent sexual harassment and ensure employees feel safe in reporting such incidents.

4.3 **Bullying** involves offensive, intimidating, or insulting behaviour that undermines or humiliates a person. It can be conducted by individuals or groups and may be either overt or subtle.

4.4 Harassment and bullying can occur face-to-face, in writing, or through digital platforms such as emails, social media, or messaging services.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER SEXUAL HARASSMENT LEGISLATION

5.1 Recent updates in UK law stress the **employer's duty** to prevent sexual harassment. VHA is required to:

- **Prevent sexual harassment** by fostering a culture of respect and dignity in the workplace.
- Implement **clear procedures** for reporting and addressing complaints of sexual harassment.
- Ensure **confidentiality** for individuals reporting harassment and protect them from victimisation.
- Provide **training** to all employees on recognising and preventing sexual harassment.
- Act **promptly** to investigate complaints and ensure fair outcomes.

6.0 FIRM MANAGEMENT VS. BULLYING/HARASSMENT

6.1 It is essential to distinguish between firm but fair management and bullying or harassment. Managers have the right to address performance and conduct issues as part of their role. Constructive and fair criticism of an employee's work or behaviour is not considered bullying.

7.0 LEGISLATION AND RELATED POLICIES

7.1 This policy is guided by the following UK legislation:

- **Equality Act 2010**, which covers discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment.
- **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**.
- **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**, which protects whistleblowers from retaliation.

7.2 Related VHA policies include the **Equalities Policy**, **Disciplinary Policy**, **Grievance Policy**, and **Code of Conduct**, which should be read alongside this policy.

8.0 ACTIONS

8.1 VHA is committed to supporting any employee who feels they are a victim of harassment, bullying, or sexual harassment. Employees are encouraged to refer to the **Dignity at Work Procedure** or seek advice from Human Resources.

9.0 VICTIMISATION

9.1 **Victimisation** occurs when someone is treated less favourably because they have made a complaint of harassment or discrimination, or have

supported someone in making a complaint. Victimisation is unlawful and will be addressed under VHA's disciplinary procedures.

10.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1 Employee Responsibilities:

- Treat all colleagues, clients, and stakeholders with respect and dignity.
- Refrain from engaging in any behaviour that could be considered harassment or bullying, including sexual harassment.
- Report any instances of discrimination, harassment or bullying, including sexual harassment witnessed or experienced in the workplace.
- treating any allegations or complaints of harassment, bullying, or sexual harassment with appropriate confidentiality.
- Not victimise any individuals who have raised concerns or acted as a witness in relation to any breach of this policy.

10.2 Manager Responsibilities:

- Lead by example, treating all staff with respect and dignity.
- Prevent harassment, bullying, or sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Ensure that all employees understand the seriousness of breaches of this policy and support them in complying with the policy.
- promote awareness of the avenues for advice and the complaints procedures with respect to harassment or bullying, including sexual harassment as set out in this Policy.
- treat complaints and behaviour which may constitute harassment or bullying, including sexual harassment seriously and taking immediate action.
- treat complaints of harassment or bullying, including sexual harassment with appropriate sensitivity and confidentiality.
- Ensure that a person is not victimised for making, or being involved in, a complaint of harassment or bullying, including sexual harassment.

10.3 Human Resources / Health & Safety Team

- Ensuring that there are clear processes in place for raising complaints.
- Promoting positive working relationships in Viewpoint, clearly communicating and promoting these processes amongst employees.
- Identifying potential risk factors and taking prompt, reasonable action to minimise those risks.
- Ensuring information and training to support the effective implementation of this policy is accessible.
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy.
- Offer guidance to employees and managers on the interpretation of this policy and guidance.

11.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 11.1 VHA will ensure that this policy is applied equally and fairly to all employees, and that no one is disadvantaged on the basis of any protected characteristic. Support will be provided to employees requiring assistance to fully understand and engage with the policy.

12.0 PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (PIA)

- 12.1 VHA will protect personal data related to complaints of harassment, bullying, or sexual misconduct in line with the **Data Protection Policy**.

13.0 REVIEW

- 13.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if there are significant changes in legislation or organisational needs. All revisions will reflect the latest UK legal requirements, particularly in relation to sexual harassment.