

BUXTED PARISH COUNCIL

BULLYING AND HARRASMENT (EXTERNAL) POLICY

PURPOSE

Buxted Parish Council considers bullying and harassment unacceptable and will take all necessary steps to eliminate such behaviour. The Council has a legal duty to ensure that you are not exposed to any unnecessary risks associated with this behaviour.

From 6th April 2008, changes to the Sex Discrimination Act mean that the Council is duty bound to protect employees from sexual harassment from customers or the public. Employees will be able to claim damages if the Council fails to take reasonable steps to protect them, and is aware of at least two incidents that have already taken place.

Council has a duty of care towards all staff and liability under common law arising out of the Employment Rights Acts 1996 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

PROCEDURES

You may experience bullying and harassment by members of the public.

This behaviour can be either:

verbal

- via the telephone
- face to face with the member/s of the public
- written correspondence, letters etc. or
- email or cyberstalking

or

physical

- assaults or violence towards you, or the threat of assault or violence towards you
- damage to your property (e.g. car)
- inappropriate sexual behaviour

In the first instance ALL incidents must be reported to your chairman and comprehensive notes should be made. This should include:

- date,
- time,
- content, and
- if possible the person's name and the name of any witnesses to the incident.

If it is possible that the incident was caught on CCTV. Where the bullying is done by email, do not respond to the emails and keep the emails as evidence.

Appropriate managers in conjunction with the Parish Clerk should determine if the incident/s are severe enough to report to the Police. In the case of physical assaults or violence, all incidents will be reported to the Police.

All such incidents will be reported to the Council for appropriate action including reporting to the Police if appropriate.

SANCTIONS:

Where it is proven beyond all reasonable doubt that a member of the public has bullied a member of staff, the Council reserves the right to impose sanctions against that person or persons, including:

- Blocking their email address and not accepting further emails
- Reporting the incidents to the senders Internet Provider service
- Banning the person or persons from Council owned buildings or facilities.