



For better
mental health

Telford Mind Policy on Harassment

Harassment can be difficult to define but essentially consists of behaviour which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive atmosphere that diminishes the dignity of the recipient. Telford Mind believes that harassment within the organisation, by any individual, is unacceptable and must be challenged.

Some examples of harassment are given below. It is important to note that harassment is not necessarily limited to just these types of behaviours – for example mental health service users may be vulnerable to some forms of harassment simply because they have a diagnosed mental health problem.

Sexual harassment

This can involve suggestive remarks or innuendoes, inappropriate jokes, derogatory language alluding to a person's private life, sexual behaviour or sexual orientation, unwanted physical contact, the display of suggestive or pornographic material.

Racial harassment

This can involve derogatory name-calling, insults, racist jokes and graffiti, verbal abuse, threats, ridicule of individuals for cultural differences, offensive acts or expressions aimed at the racial or ethnic origins of the recipient.

Bullying

This can involve behaviour which consistently undermines another person's confidence and reduces their feelings of self-esteem and self-worth. It may involve psychological intimidation, humiliation, excessive or unreasonable criticism, unjustifiable removal of areas of responsibility, ostracising or excluding an individual, telling malicious lies, setting unreasonable and unrealistic goals or targets.

Employees of Telford Mind must abide by the policy on staff conduct and will be subject to disciplinary action if it is clear they are harassing another individual.

If employees of Telford Mind witness harassment taking place – whether by paid or unpaid staff, service user, or any other individual - they have a duty and a responsibility to take appropriate action in response. (See attached procedure). Where any individual (be it service user or staff member) has been subject to harassment then Telford Mind will ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to offer support to that individual. The precise nature of this support will be flexible and is dependent on individual circumstances.

Note that in situations where harassment is taking place Telford Mind's policies on complaints, grievances and whistleblowing may also apply.

Telford Mind Procedure for Dealing with Harassment

1. When a *service user* feels they are the victim of harassment:

If a service user feels they are being harassed by another service user or by an employee of Telford Mind they should be encouraged and supported to use Telford Mind's complaints procedure (unless it is obvious that the matter can be very quickly and easily resolved).

The matter will then be investigated and dealt with formally. Suitable measures to address the situation will be put in place as required.

If a service user feels they are being harassed by an individual outside of Telford Mind's direct sphere of influence (perhaps by a family member, a member of the general public, another professional and so on) employees of Telford Mind are expected to support the user to deal with the situation in the most appropriate way. This may involve acting as an advocate or representative for the user, complaining to outside agencies, reporting the matter to statutory services etc. Employees should take advice from their line manager as to how to approach the situation.

2. For *employees of Telford Mind* the following guidelines apply:

If you believe that you are being harassed by another employee of Telford Mind:

- Act quickly if you can. Don't wait until your working conditions become intolerable or your personal well-being is seriously affected.
- If you can, speak up at the time and tell the person to stop. Be direct. Wherever possible, say explicitly that you feel you are being harassed and make clear why the behaviour is objectionable to you.
- If you don't feel entirely comfortable raising the matter face to face you could ask a friend or colleague to help you, or you could ask them to raise the issue on your behalf.
- You can also ask your line manager for help - but if you want the matter dealt with informally at this stage then you should make that clear.
- If informal methods haven't succeeded in dealing with the harassment, you may decide to raise a grievance. Follow the grievance procedure and include full details of your complaint of harassment, including descriptions of the incident(s), dates, times and the names of any witnesses.
- Remember that you are under no obligation to pursue the matter informally first, and you may raise a grievance at any stage.

If you believe that one employee of Telford Mind is harassing another employee:

- If you feel one staff member is being harassed by another you should encourage the person who is being harassed to follow the steps outlined above.
- If the person is reluctant to deal with the matter, even when offered appropriate support, you will need to make a judgement on how to proceed. You will of course have to take account the person's wishes but if you have serious doubts about the conduct of the other staff member you have a duty to (and are expected to) inform your line manager anyway. Refer to the staff conduct policy to inform your decision on this matter.

- Your line manager will assess the seriousness of the situation. They will decide whether it is appropriate to use disciplinary procedures, or whether the matter should be dealt with in some other way.
- All employees have the option of putting in a complaint or grievance about the behaviour of another employee at any time, should they feel they have grounds to do so.

If you believe that an employee of Telford Mind is harassing a service user:

- If you feel that a vulnerable adult (ie a service user) is being harassed you have a duty to act on their behalf. You must point out to the other employee that their actions or behaviours are inappropriate and you must inform your line manager.
- Your line manager will assess the seriousness of the situation. They will decide whether it is appropriate to use disciplinary or adult protection procedures, or whether the matter should be dealt with in some other way.
- If you feel that your line manager's approach to the situation is inappropriate you should say so. You should take the matter up with the chair.
- All employees have the option of putting in a formal complaint or grievance about the behaviour of another employee at any time, should they feel they have grounds to do so.

If you feel that a service user is harassing another individual (including yourself):

- You should point out to the service user that their actions are unacceptable. Explain clearly why you feel their actions or behaviours are unacceptable, and what you feel needs to alter.
- If the problem is not quickly resolved in this way you should discuss the matter with your line manager. It may also be necessary to involve other members of the staff team, statutory keyworkers etc. The aim is to agree and implement a consistent response to the situation.
- If another service user is the subject of the harassment it may be necessary to follow adult protection procedures - your line manager will advise on this matter

Signed:

Date: / / 08