

Positive Working Environment Policy.

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Positive Working Environment Policy.

1. Purpose.

This policy aims to set out eEnergy's policy on creating and maintaining a Positive Working Environment where employees of the company are treated with respect and dignity and feel valued.

2. Policy Statement.

The Company is committed to creating a harmonious and safe working environment, which is free from harassment and bullying and in which every employee is treated with respect and dignity. The Company strives to ensure that the different experiences, abilities and skills of each individual are valued by others. Inappropriate behaviour should be challenged. It is the Company's intention to encourage everyone to behave in a proper manner at all times.

Harassment or bullying causes stress, anxiety and unhappiness to individuals, creates an unpleasant environment in which to work and may be unlawful. This can reduce efficiency and may ultimately have an impact on the way in which services are delivered to our customers. For these reasons it is important that the Company, as an employer, and individual employees strive to achieve a working environment which is free from this type of behaviour.

3. Definitions.

Harassment is unwanted conduct, related to a relevant characteristic set out in the Equality Act 2010, that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. The protected characteristics are race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership and age.

Harassment may take many forms. It can range from extreme forms such as violence to less obvious actions such as persistently ignoring someone. The following, though not an exhaustive list, may constitute harassment:

- physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault;
- verbal and written harassment (including via email) through jokes, teasing or banter, offensive language, gossip and slander, or letters;
- sharing inappropriate images or videos;
- using racist slang, phrases or nicknames;
- isolation or non-cooperation, or exclusion from social activities;
- intrusion by pestering, spying, following etc.

Employees may also be subject to harassment from third parties such as clients, suppliers, the general public etc. where interaction with those third parties is a part of their role.

Bullying is repeated inappropriate, offensive behaviour, which is often an abuse of power or position. It can be direct or indirect, either verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work.

The following examples may constitute bullying:

- threats, abuse, teasing, gossip or practical jokes;

- humiliation and ridicule either in private, at meetings or in front of clients;
- name calling, banter, insults, devaluing with reference to age or physical appearance;
- setting impossible deadlines;
- imposing excessive workloads;
- making unjustified criticisms;
- excessive monitoring;
- removing responsibilities;
- allocating menial or pointless tasks;
- withholding information;
- refusing requests for leave, holiday or training;

It should be noted that it is the impact of the behaviour which is relevant and not the motive or intent behind it.

4. Scope.

This policy covers all eEnergy staff, regardless of their role or employment status, including temporary, fixed-term, permanent, consultants, contractors, trainees, seconded staff, home workers, casual workers, agency staff, volunteers, apprentices, and those on work experience.

5. Responsibilities.

Employees' Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to help create and maintain a working environment that respects the dignity of employees. Colleagues should be aware of the serious and genuine problems which harassment and bullying can cause, and ensure that their behaviour is beyond question and could not be considered in any way to be harassment or bullying. No one should practise or encourage such behaviour and should make it clear to all concerned that they find it unacceptable. Staff should also support colleagues if they are experiencing harassment or bullying and are considering making a complaint. They should alert a Manager or Supervisor to any incidents to enable the Company to deal with the matter.

Managerial Responsibility

Managers and supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that harassment or bullying does not occur in work areas for which they are responsible. They are committed to the elimination of bullying and harassment and must be vigilant in preventing acts wherever possible.

Managers and supervisors also have a particular duty to set a proper example by treating everyone with dignity and respect and ensuring that their behaviour is beyond question.

Managers also have a responsibility to explain the Company's policy to their staff and take steps to promote it positively. They will be responsive and supportive to any member of staff who makes a complaint, provide full and clear advice on the procedure to be adopted, maintain confidentiality in all cases and ensure that there are no further problems or any victimisation after a complaint has been raised or resolved.

The Company will provide training to ensure that all managers, supervisors and other staff are fully aware of this policy and the procedures for dealing with harassment and bullying

6. Who to Contact.

Procedure for dealing with alleged harassment or bullying

Complaints can be made both formally and informally. Whichever route is taken, colleagues will be offered guidance and assistance at every stage to help them resolve the problem as soon as possible and to stop the harassment.

If our team members are comfortable doing so, in the first instance, they should ask the person responsible to stop the behaviour, explaining that they feel uncomfortable in the way they are acting towards them. Speaking directly to the person at an early stage will often be sufficient to stop the behaviour.

If employees feel unable to do this, you may be able to ask your Line Manager or a colleague to do this on your behalf.

If colleagues decide to make a formal complaint they should do so through the Company's grievance procedure as soon as possible after the incident has occurred. All complaints will be handled in a timely and confidential manner. The complainant will be guaranteed a fair and impartial hearing and the matter will be investigated thoroughly. If the investigation reveals that the complaint is valid, prompt attention and action will be taken, designed to stop the behaviour immediately and prevent its recurrence. In such circumstances, if relocation proves necessary, every effort will be made to relocate the harasser or bully rather than the victim, however, the Company will endeavour to relocate the victim if this is their preference.

Colleagues will be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation. Retaliating against an employee for complaining about harassment or bullying is a disciplinary offence.

Whilst this procedure is designed to assist genuine victims of harassment or bullying, it should be known that if complaints are raised which are proven to be deliberately vexatious, the complainant may become subject to proceedings under the disciplinary procedure.

Procedure for dealing with alleged harassment or bullying from a third party

Any form of harassment towards eEnergy staff from third parties will not be tolerated by the Company.

The Company appreciates that a decision to report harassment from a third party may be difficult, particularly if the third party is a valuable client/customer or has a long-standing business relationship with the eEnergy. However, we encourage the reporting of any instance of harassment from a third party so that the Company can take appropriate action.

The procedures set out above should be followed if our staff experience harassment from a third party, after which a meeting with the complainant will be arranged and an investigation undertaken.

Our action, where a complaint is substantiated, will depend on the circumstances of the case and may include:

- speaking with the harasser and warning them that any future occurrence of harassment will result in the Company withdrawing provision of its services to the harasser; contacting the business for whom the harasser works and making a complaint against them. We will explicitly ask for this conduct to stop and we may require that the harasser is removed from our account;
- refusing to continue to provide our services to the harasser;
- reassigning the provision of the Company's services to harasser to another employee.

7. Policy Review.

Policy Version	Last reviewed date/by		Next review date
01	October 2023	Louisa Gregory	September 2024