



SOCIAL CARE IRELAND

## **Anti-Bullying At Work** **Policy and Procedure**

Social Care Ireland recognises that it has a duty to manage and conduct work activities in such a way as to prevent any improper conduct or behaviour likely to put at risk an employee's and/or members safety, health or welfare at work or in work undertaken on behalf of the professional body. Social Care Ireland will endeavour to ensure that no incidences of bullying will go unnoticed, and that reported cases will be investigated thoroughly and without prejudice. Furthermore, Social Care Ireland will deal with all complaints in a professional and confidential manner and with fairness, sensitivity and respect. Social Care Ireland will also ensure that both parties receive whatever supports that are deemed necessary. Social Care Ireland will follow the reporting procedure as set out below and expect all employees to do so also. Social Care Ireland recognises that employees have a right to representation, should a complaint be made against them. Representatives may include another employee, member or a Trade Union Representative.

This policy was designed in conjunction with the *"Report of the Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying, 2001"* and on the principles enshrined in the [\*"Code of Practice on the Prevention and Management of Workplace Bullying, 2007"\*](#) and the *"Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work, 2007"*.



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### **What is Bullying at Work?**

Bullying at work has been defined as ‘repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual’s right to dignity at work’. **(Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying, 2001)**

Bullying puts at risk the safety, health and welfare of people at work or in the case of members, when undertaking work on behalf of the professional body. This also applies to members of SCI who may be undertaking work on behalf of the organisation i.e. Board Members and Executive Members.

An isolated incident of these behaviours may cause offence but may not be regarded as bullying in the workplace.

### **A pattern of the following behaviours are examples of types of bullying:**

- Exclusion with negative consequences
- Verbal abuse/insults
- Physical abuse from other employees/members
- Being treated less favourably than colleagues
- Intrusion – pestering, spying or stalking
- Menacing behaviour
- Intimidation
- Aggression
- Undermining behaviour
- Excessive monitoring of work
- Humiliation
- Withholding work-related information, such as reports/ appraisals. (In some circumstances it will be necessary for Social Care Ireland to withhold information from staff on the grounds of confidentiality).
- Repeatedly manipulating a person’s job content and targets
- Blame for things beyond the person’s control.
- (This list is not exhaustive.)

Bullying at work also extends beyond the work place to include social activities, team building, activities undertaken by members volunteering their time on behalf of Social Care Ireland in work related to the professional body etc.

Bullying at work does not include reasonable and essential discipline arising from the good management of the performance of an employee at work, or actions taken which can be justified as regards the safety, health and welfare of the employees.



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### **Who Bullies at Work?**

It is not possible to describe all bullies, but persons who engage in bullying at work may have certain personal characteristics such as poor communication skills, difficulty in working with others, difficulty in delegating responsibility, poor organisational skills or low self-esteem. Good job design, training and supervision can help overcome these difficulties.

Bullying is recognised as being present in other walks of life such as in schools and in the home, and bullying at work may be part of a wider cultural background.

Bullying at work can involve people in many different work situations and at all levels:

- Manager to Employee
- Employee to Manager
- Management to management
- One employee to another (or group to group)
- SCI Member to Employee
- Member to Member
- Employee to SCI Member

### **Reasons why Bullying in the Workplace Occurs**

**Factors which are known to signal a risk of bullying at work are:**

- High turnover of staff, high absenteeism or poor morale
- Employment tenure – a bully may regard new, casual or contract employees as easier targets than permanent employees;
- Hierarchies – hierarchies involving, for example, non-professional employees working with professionally qualified employees which can sometimes present higher levels of bullying;
- Changes in the workplace – workplace changes which can increase the risk include change in Director/ management, introduction of new work performance measures or internal re-organisation;
- Management of relationships in the workplace – bullying may be more likely to happen in workplaces that do not have an effective management system, which respects persons and monitors and supports work relationships;
- Personality differences – petty jealousies, personal biases, taking advantage of vulnerable or less ‘street-wise’ individuals can contribute to bullying;
- Gender/age imbalance – bullying may be more likely where there is an age or a gender imbalance in the workplace.



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## **Employees Right and Duties**

**Social Care Ireland recognises that all its employees:**

- Have rights and duties as regards safety, health and welfare at work and in activities undertaken by members on behalf of Social Care Ireland.
- Have the right to be treated with dignity and respect at work and not to have their safety, health or welfare put at risk through bullying by the employer, by other employees or other persons.
- Have a right to complain and not to be victimised for so doing.
- Have duties to behave and conduct themselves, so as to respect the right of employers and other employees to dignity, courtesy and respect at work.
- Should also cooperate by providing any relevant information, when an allegation of bullying at work is being looked into whether in an informal or formal stage.

## **Reporting Procedures**

### **Informal report:**

Employees/members should address incidences where they feel they have been bullied with the person, however if they do not feel comfortable doing this or there is a re-occurrence, they may ask another employee/manager to address this.

### **Formal Report:**

The employee/member should make a detailed written report with the designated Social Care Ireland Board member identifying any and all cases of bullying.

All reported/ suspected cases of bullying will be investigated, and complaints which are substantiated will be dealt with under Social Care Ireland's disciplinary procedure.

Any malicious reports will also be dealt with under Social Care Ireland's disciplinary procedure.