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## Shropshire Disability Network Harassment and Bullying Policy

### 1. Policy Statement

Shropshire Disability Network (SDN) wishes to provide a stimulating and supportive environment which will enable its members to fulfil their personal potential and creativity. Such an environment cannot exist where any member is subjected to harassment, intimidation, aggression or coercion.

SDN is fully committed to the principles of Inclusion and Diversity in the workplace and regards harassment as a form of discrimination. As such SDN will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment.

### 2. Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may be on the grounds of:

- sex,
- marital status, race, disability, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation, age or gender reassignment.

- For the purposes of this policy this list should be considered non exhaustive, and harassment or bullying on any grounds will not be tolerated by SDN.

Harassment may be persistent or an isolated incident, obvious or subtle, face-to-face or indirect. It may even be through unequal or unfair application of monitoring systems.

Examples of behaviour which may constitute harassment or bullying include (but are not limited to):

- spreading malicious rumours;
- professional or social exclusion;
- insulting behaviour;
- unwelcome sexual advances or physical contact;
- unfounded threats relating to job security;
- calculated undermining of a volunteer's competence, for example through a consistently unreasonable or unfair workload, overbearing supervision or unnecessary circulation of critical emails;
- physical assault;
- verbal abuse, threats, derogatory name-calling, ridicule, insults and offensive or embarrassing jokes;

- offensive emails, texts or visual images;
- derogatory graffiti/insignia or display of derogatory or offensive material; and
- inciting others to commit any of the above.

### **3. Unlawful Grounds of Harassment and Bullying**

SDN wishes to reiterate that it will not tolerate any instance of harassment or bullying regardless of the grounds. This policy will equally apply to volunteer- related events wherever they take place. The following are expressly unlawful grounds by which a person may experience harassment or bullying:

#### **3.1 Sex**

Harassment or bullying on the grounds of a person's sex, pregnancy, maternity leave etc. This can apply even where the complainant was not the volunteer or member to whom the harassment was directed.

#### **3.2 Marital Status**

Harassment or bullying on the grounds of a person's marital status.

#### **3.3 Gender Reassignment**

Harassment or bullying on the grounds that a person intends to undergo gender reassignment, is currently undergoing gender reassignment or has already undergone gender reassignment.

### **3.4 Sexual Harassment**

This is distinct from sex harassment, as it is physical, visual, verbal or non-verbal conduct that is sexual in nature.

### **3.5 Race**

Harassment or bullying on the grounds of race, colour, ethnicity or nationality.

### **3.6 Disability**

Bullying or harassment on the grounds of a person's disability.

### **3.7 Sexual Orientation**

Bullying or harassment on the grounds of a person's sexual orientation, applying equally to "same sex" orientation, "opposite sex" orientation and "both sexes" orientation

### **3.8 Religion or Belief (or non-belief)**

Harassment or bullying on the grounds of a person's religion or beliefs.

### **3.9 Age**

Harassment on the grounds of a person's age, applying equally to all people regardless of age.

### **3.10 Grievance**

Harassment or bullying because of a person raising a grievance.

## **4. Procedure for Complaints**

Any member who feels that they have been subjected to harassment or bullying by any other volunteer or member, or a third party (see below), should raise the matter as soon as reasonably practicable.

Members can raise a complaint informally and/or formally. They should contact the chair of SDN or another Management Committee member in the absence of the Chair or where their complaint is against that specific person.

### **4.1 Informal Procedure**

If the person affected feels able, they should speak up at the time when they feel harassed or bullied. It is important to be direct and for that person to state explicitly that they feel they are being harassed and that the behaviour is unacceptable to them. The person can also discuss the matter with another member and ask them to speak to the harasser on their behalf.

Alternatively, if the person feels unable to speak to the harasser directly, they could write a letter to them which clearly identifies the offending behaviour and requests that it stops immediately. The person should sign and date any such letter and ensure that a copy is kept for any possible future formal complaint. It is also advisable that an 'incident diary' of any offending behaviour is kept.

Where the informal procedure has not resolved a complaint, a formal grievance can be raised.

## 4.2 Formal Procedure

Any member who feels that they have been subjected to harassment or bullying may at any time decide to deal with the issue through formal procedures, regardless of whether informal steps have been taken or not.

Where a member wishes to deal with any issue of harassment formally, they must do so according to SDN Grievance Procedure. Where a member is not happy with the outcome of the formal grievance procedure, they can appeal this decision internally.

The Management Committee will investigate any informal or formal complaint thoroughly and fairly.

## 5. Consequences of Breach

Harassment is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with according to SDN's Disciplinary Procedure. Bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination may constitute gross misconduct, punishable by removal of membership.

Members should bear in mind that harassment or bullying may also constitute a criminal offence punishable by a fine and / or imprisonment.

## 6. Third Party Harassment

Third party harassment refers to harassment of a member by any person who is not a volunteer or member of SDN. Third party harassers may include:

- Members of other charities;
- suppliers of SDN; and
- independent contractors.

Any member who believes that they have been the victim of third-party harassment should immediately inform the Chair of SDN of the incident.

Where a member has been harassed on more than one occasion, SDN will take such steps as are reasonably practicable to prevent any recurrence.

For the purposes of third-party harassment, it is immaterial whether the third-party harasser is a different person in each instance of harassment.

## **7. Responsibilities of Members and Volunteers**

All members are responsible for their own behaviour and should ensure that they comply with this policy always.

The Management Committee is responsible for implementing this policy and bringing it to the attention of members.

Any complaints under this policy brought to the attention of the Management Committee must be dealt with promptly, confidentially, fairly and consistently.

## **8. Confidentiality**

SDN will treat any complaint received under this policy confidentially.



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All members involved with an investigation are required to respect the need for confidentiality.

Any breaches in confidentiality will be subject to disciplinary action.

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<b>Review Author</b>	Ann Shaw, Honorary Secretary, SDN