

## Harassment & Bullying Policy

**Purpose:**

At Repair & Share Foyle, we are committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive, and respectful environment where everyone is treated with dignity. We believe in equal opportunities for all and will always strive to uphold the highest standards of fairness and respect in everything we do.

Harassment and bullying have no place in our organisation. We want you to feel safe, valued, and empowered in your role. That’s why we take a strong stance against any form of harassment or bullying, whether from colleagues, volunteers, partners, or third parties.

Sex	Gender reassignment
Marital or Civil partnership status	Political opinion
Racial Group	Disability
Pregnancy or maternity	Sexual orientation
Religious or similar philosophical belief	Age

**Scope:**

This policy applies to everyone involved in Repair & Share Foyle, whether you’re an employee, volunteer, sub-contractor, or partner. It covers all interactions in the workplace, at events, or anywhere Repair & Share Foyle’s activities take place.

We all share the responsibility of upholding this policy. If you ever have concerns, we encourage you to speak up. You will be listened to, supported, and protected from any form of retaliation.

Reference	Version	Date released	Approved by
RSF-003-01	1		Caroline McGuinness-Brooks
This policy is communicated and published on the Repair & Share Foyle website for all interested parties.			
This policy is communicated and published on the Repair & Share Foyle website for all interested parties. The most recent version of this policy is in the Repair & Share Foyle electronic handbook.			

## What is Harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic that violates your dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. Protected characteristics include:

### Sexual harassment

In accordance with the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 and the Equality Act 2010, along with any recent amendments from 2024, Repair Share Foyle take sexual harassment seriously and honour the obligations under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 regarding fair treatment of employees.

Sexual harassment is a specific type of harassment that involves unwanted verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. No one should feel pressured or uncomfortable in their work environment, and we are here to make sure that doesn't happen. Sexual harassment includes unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that creates a hostile or offensive environment, including in-person and online interactions.

Changes in 2024 within the UK and Northern Ireland place greater employer responsibility for harassment by third parties (e.g., customers, contractors, or suppliers). Repair Share Foyle has a clear no tolerance policy, if you feel you have experienced sexual harassment, we are here to support you.

- Employees who report harassment in good faith to the Programme Lead will be protected from retaliation, including unfair dismissal, victimisation, or workplace disadvantages.
- The Programme Lead has 5 days to investigate and respond to the allegation.
- Together with a companion of your choice, the Programme Manager will arrange a time to discuss the outcomes with you.

Repair Share Foyle are committed training staff, conducting risk assessments, and implementing preventive measures.

### Types of misconduct

Many forms of misconduct may amount to harassment; examples include:

- Physical misconduct such as assaulting a person, sexually or otherwise, or making obscene gestures
- Verbal misconduct such as making racist, sexist, sectarian or homophobic remarks; making derogatory comments about a person's age or disability; or singing songs of this nature
- Visual or written material containing racist, sexist, sectarian, homophobic or other derogatory words or pictures (e.g. in posters, graffiti, letters, emails, text messages or on social media posts)
- Isolating a person or refusing to co-operate or help them at work or by excluding them from work-related social activities
- Forcing a person to offer sexual favours, or to take part in religious or political activities, or penalising them for rejecting such requests or pressure



- Intruding on a person's private space by pestering, stalking or spying on them whether on or off the business premises

### **Locations**

This policy exists to protect you from being harassed in the course of your employment. As such, it applies to misconduct that might occur in various locations, such as, but not necessarily limited to:

- on the business premises during or outside working hours
- during work-related activities outside the business premises
- during work-related social events (e.g. Christmas parties), whether on the business premises or outside them
- on the internet or other telecommunication devices, such as social media, during or outside working hours

### **Harassment by third-parties (i.e. customers, clients, etc.)**

Although this policy and the associated grievance procedure is generally directed at protecting our employees from harassment of them by their co-workers, we recognise that you can also be exposed to the same or similar misconduct from other people who we do not employ but who our employees may encounter during the course of their work, such as customers, clients, residents or patients (or their visitors).

We will take reasonably practicable steps to protect you from such third-party harassment and bullying as well.

### **What is Bullying?**

There is no statutory definition of bullying for employment law purposes, but it is usually accepted that it is similar to harassment in the sense that it too is offensive, hostile or oppressive behaviour. The main difference is that bullying behaviour is not related to the equality grounds, but may be done for other reasons, such as jealousy or personal dislike or revenge or insecurity. It is usually repetitious and persistent.

### **Implications of Harassment & Bullying**

Harassment and bullying can damage the health, confidence, morale and performance of employees who are affected by it. Harassment is unlawful under the equality laws. Harassment and bullying may also be civil or criminal offences and may contravene health and safety law.

Quite apart from the legal implications, harassment and bullying are contrary to the standards of behaviour that we expect of you or any third-parties that you may encounter in the course of their work. Both types of behaviour are unacceptable in our workplace and are not permitted or condoned.

In the case of you committing harassment or bullying, we will treat such behaviour as misconduct which may warrant dismissal from employment, or other employment-related penalties as is appropriate.

In the case of third-parties who commit harassment or bullying, we will treat such behaviour as misconduct which may warrant appropriate penalties, such as refusal of further service.

### **Employees Rights**



You have a right to work in a good and harmonious environment that is free from harassment and bullying and to complain in good faith about such behaviour should it occur.

We have established an internal procedure to deal with such complaints and we would encourage aggrieved employees to use it. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

Our internal procedure does not replace the right of aggrieved employees to also pursue complaints. Those who wish to consider that option may obtain advice from the Equality Commission in relation to incidents of harassment (telephone: 028 90 500 600), or from the Labour Relations Agency in relation to incidents of bullying (telephone: 03300 555 300).

You may choose to make a complaint in good faith, and others who give evidence or information in connection with such complaints, will not be victimised (i.e. they will not be discriminated against, harassed or bullied in retaliation for their actions).

Victimisation is also discrimination contrary to the equality laws and this policy. We will treat it as misconduct which may warrant dismissal from employment, or other employment-related penalties as is appropriate.

### **Employees Responsibilities**

As an employee, you must comply with this policy. You must treat each other with dignity and respect. You must not commit any acts of harassment or bullying against any person, such as your co-workers, our job applicants or our customers. Such behaviour will not be permitted or condoned. We will treat it as misconduct which may warrant dismissal from employment, or other employment-related penalties as is appropriate.

All our employees should discourage harassment and bullying by making it clear that they find such behaviour unacceptable and by supporting co-workers who suffer such treatment. Any employee who is aware of any incidence of harassment or bullying should alert a manager or supervisor to enable us to deal with it.

### **Employers Responsibilities**

We will continually make good faith efforts to implement this policy. The main responsibility for this will be carried out by the Programme Lead. But, everyone has a responsibility for implementing this policy on a day-to-day basis, especially in setting a good example for other employees to follow and for intervening where necessary to protect and reassure employees.

To implement this policy, we will:

- provide all employees, line managers and supervisors with a copy of this policy.
- ensure that all complaints of harassment and bullying are dealt with promptly within 5 days of receiving them, seriously and confidentially and in accordance with our internal procedure.
- set a good example by treating employees with fairness, dignity and respect.
- be alert to unacceptable behaviour and will take appropriate action to stop it.
- monitor all incidents of harassment and bullying and review the effectiveness of this policy periodically.