



GoPI3Ks: Guidance on Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure

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Purpose of This Guide

This guide outlines our charity's policy and procedures relating to bullying and harassment. It applies to:

- All charity workers and volunteers
- Service users
- Any engagement we witness in person or via our online and social media platforms

We are committed to fostering a respectful and inclusive environment. This guide ensures everyone knows how to raise concerns safely and without fear of retaliation.

Our Values and Expectations

At GoPI3Ks, we aim to create a culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We ask all involved—whether working, volunteering, or accessing our services—to uphold the following values:

For Staff and Volunteers:

- Treat everyone with respect, empathy, and dignity
- Deliver a fair, open, and accessible service
- Listen and understand without judgment

For Service Users:

- Interact with our team with respect, empathy, and courtesy
- Communicate in a way that enables the charity to operate effectively and efficiently

Understanding Bullying and Harassment

Definitions

- **Bullying:** Repeated behaviour intended to intimidate, offend, degrade, or humiliate.
- **Harassment:** Unwanted behaviour that violates someone's dignity or creates a hostile environment—unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 if related to a protected characteristic.

Examples of Bullying

- Singling out or treating someone less favourably without reason
- Shouting, humiliating, or threatening
- Gossip intended to damage reputation
- Trivial fault-finding
- Ignoring or dismissing achievements or contributions

Examples of Harassment

- Victimisation or exclusion
- Unfair treatment based on a protected characteristic
- Abuse of power or position
- Unwelcome sexual advances or comments
- Threats based on personal circumstances (e.g., health, finances)

It Can Occur Via

- Face-to-face interactions
- Phone calls
- Emails or letters
- Social media

Legal Framework

Harassment is illegal under the Equality Act 2010 if it relates to:

- Age
- Sex
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

Impact on Health

Bullying and harassment can affect mental and physical health, including:

- Low confidence, depression, anxiety
- Isolation, irritability, withdrawal
- Difficulty concentrating or sleeping
- Frequent illness, digestive issues, skin flare-ups
- Physical symptoms: tearfulness, headaches, panic attacks

Raising a Complaint

We encourage you to raise concerns as early as possible—but understand it may take time to recognise patterns of bullying or harassment.

Keep a Record

- What happened
- When and where
- Who was involved
- Witnesses
- How it made you feel
- Any steps taken to resolve it

Informal Complaint Procedure

You may wish to try to resolve matters informally first.

Step 1: Contact Us

- Email: gopi3ks@yahoo.com to explain what happened.

Step 2: Explore Options

- Direct approach: Arrange a conversation with the person, either in person or online (with or without a support person) explaining how their behaviour has affected you and asking them to stop.
- Indirect approach: Write to the person involved or have someone speak on your behalf

Formal Complaint Procedure

If the informal route fails or the situation is serious:

1. Submit a written complaint to the Chairperson at:
gopi3ks@yahoo.com
2. If the complaint involves the Chairperson, contact another trustee via:
www.gopi3ks.com/meet-your-gopi3ks-team
3. Include:
 - Full details of the incident(s)
 - Names of individuals involved
 - Evidence (emails, messages, witness accounts)
 - Previous actions taken (if any)
4. A record will be created and confirmed with your signature.
5. If you chose to withdraw your complaint you must inform us immediately.

Investigation Procedure (For Trustees)

- Appoint a neutral investigator
- Discuss with both parties in a timely and sensitive manner
- Allow both complainant and accused to bring a support person
- Avoid assumptions or gossip
- Be sensitive in cases of sexual harassment (consider gender of investigator)
- Focus on whether the recipient found the behaviour unacceptable, not the intent

- Be aware that some typical responses to any allegations may make investigating difficult: denial, refusing to answer, retaliation, claiming to be the victim.

Key Steps:

- Take detailed notes and record counterclaims with dates
- Prepare a report with:
 - Whether the complaint is substantiated
 - Next steps, timeframes, and appeal routes
 - Monitoring recommendations

Tips for Conducting Interviews

- Introduce all parties; explain it's an investigatory meeting
- Meeting should be private
- Supporters should not answer on behalf of the interviewee
- Maintain confidentiality
- Use open, non-leading questions
- Seek clarity and allow for fact-checking
- Confirm whether statements may be shared

After the Investigation

- Determine if further interviews are needed
- Assess if there is a case to answer
- Prepare a report including:
 - Dates, names, evidence, and findings
 - Summary of facts and conclusions
 - Recommendations or referrals (e.g., police if needed)

Post-investigation:

- Communicate outcomes to both parties (without breaching confidentiality)
- Provide access to support (internal or external)
- Be prepared to explain findings at subsequent hearings

Appeals Procedure

- Appeals must be made within 5 days of receiving the outcome
- Must include clear grounds for appeal
- A different person (where possible) should handle the appeal
- Arrange an appeal hearing (support allowed)
- Decision options:
 - Uphold original decision
 - Overturn the decision
 - Re-investigate
- Communicate appeal outcome within 5 days of the hearing

Final Notes

We are committed to ensuring complaints are dealt with fairly, transparently, and without fear of reprisals. Your wellbeing, dignity, and safety are of utmost importance.

For any concerns, contact us directly:

✉ gopi3ks@yahoo.com

🌐 www.gopi3ks.com