

Harlow Shared Lives Scheme Policy & Procedure No. 39

Harassment and Bullying

The Harlow Shared Lives Scheme recognises that harassment and bullying and discrimination are unacceptable anywhere in the service, including in Shared Lives (SL) arrangements. If people in SL arrangements or SL Carers or workers experience harassment or bullying they can raise the matter and be confident that action will be taken to deal with this.

How would this happen?

Harassment and bullying can be any form of inappropriate behaviour and/or actions and/or comments and/or physical contacts that are unwanted and cause offence or intimidation. This kind of behaviour is unlawful so if a worker in the service has been responsible it will lead to disciplinary proceedings. If SL Carers have been responsible it will lead to a review of their approval. If a person in a SL arrangement has been responsible (or a member of their family) it may become necessary to end the arrangement.

If SL Carers or workers experience this kind of behaviour, they are encouraged to deal with this at an early stage by making it clear to the harasser (either verbally or in writing) that the behaviour is offensive and/or distressing and must stop. If this is difficult for them to do, they can ask a friend or colleague to speak to the harasser on their behalf.

People in Shared Lives arrangements may require support to do this. This can be provided by their SL Carer or other person that they know or by a local advocacy service.

If an informal approach does not resolve the problem, the person who is being harassed can raise the matter with their SL Worker or their Manager. If the complaint is about the SL Worker or the Manager, or if the matter is too embarrassing or difficult to talk about with them, the person can approach, Head of Community Services. The SL Worker or Manager will investigate the issue as quickly as possible, following an appropriate procedure such as for Complaints and Concerns, or Safeguarding against Abuse or Neglect, or Disciplinary Proceedings.

Anyone raising concerns about harassment or bullying will be provided with emotional and/or practical support to deal with this. This will include consideration of legal action, where necessary. They will also be protected from reprisals and

negative consequences as a result of raising the subject, provided they are doing this in good faith and are not acting maliciously.

The Harrow Shared Lives Scheme takes positive action to prevent incidents of harassment and bullying by providing SL Carers and workers with information and training about the relevant legislation and about people's rights to: -

- be valued for their individual differences;
- work and live in an environment that is free from bullying;
- harassment or discrimination;
- be supported to challenge harassment or bullying;
- complain without fear of being victimised.

SL Carers and workers are encouraged to be aware of their own behaviour and attitudes and working practices are kept up-to-date through ongoing monitoring, supervision, reviews and training.

See these other policies and procedures and documents for further information on:

- Standards of conduct and practice
- Making choices and decisions
- Communication
- Equal opportunities
- Religious and cultural customs
- Daily life and inclusion in the community
- Complaints and concerns
- Safeguarding against abuse and neglect
- Disciplinary procedure (for workers and managers in the service)
- Grievance procedure (for workers and managers in the service)
- Whistleblowing
- Statement of Purpose
- Continuous improvement in the service

- Training and development