

# Alzheimer's Society

## Bullying and Harassment Policy

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Policy and procedure apply to:		Employees: All	Volunteers: All
		Contractors: n/a	Other: non defined
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### 1. What you need to know

Everyone deserves to feel safe, respected, and valued when they work or volunteer with us. We do not tolerate bullying, harassment, victimisation, discrimination—or racism—in any form. This applies everywhere: in our offices, online, at work-related events, and in any interaction connected to the Society.

We take all concerns seriously and will act swiftly and fairly to address them.

This policy explains:

- What bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation, and racism look like
- How to raise a concern—formally or informally
- What support is available
- What action we'll take to prevent these behaviours from happening again

Anyone found to be in breach of this policy may face disciplinary action, including dismissal. Volunteers may be subject to appropriate action in line with our volunteer guidance.

### 2. How we work here

#### What you can expect from us

We're committed to creating a culture built on dignity, trust, and respect. That means a working and volunteering environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, victimisation, or racism.

We won't accept these behaviours from or towards anyone—including employees, volunteers, service users, donors, contractors, or visitors.

When a concern is raised, we'll investigate thoroughly and take steps to prevent it from happening again.

#### What's expected of you

We expect everyone to:

- Treat others with kindness and respect
- Avoid behaviour that could cause harm or distress
- Speak up if you witness bullying, harassment, discrimination, or racism
- Support others who raise concerns

Even if it wasn't your intention, if your actions cause harm, they may still be considered bullying, harassment, or discrimination. What matters is the impact on the person affected.

### 3. Zero tolerance to racism

Racism is unacceptable. It goes against our values and the Race Equality Code we are committed to. Racism can be:

- Direct: offensive comments, slurs, or exclusion
- Indirect: rules or practices that disadvantage groups
- Microaggressions: subtle behaviours that stereotype or "other"
- Systemic: organisational norms that create unequal outcomes
- Unconscious bias: unintentional attitudes or assumptions that influence decisions and interactions

Examples include mocking accents or traditions, stereotyping abilities, ignoring contributions, or making biased snap judgments.

We expect everyone—employees, managers, and volunteers—to recognise and challenge racism, including unconscious bias, and to take responsibility for building an anti-racist culture.

### 4. What these terms mean

#### Discrimination

Treating someone unfairly because of a protected characteristic (under the Equality Act 2010).

These include:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Discrimination can happen in different ways:

- Direct: When someone is treated unfairly because of who they are (e.g. not recruiting someone because of their race).
- Indirect: When a rule or policy applies to everyone but puts certain groups at a disadvantage (e.g. requiring all staff to work Sundays, which may affect people with religious observances).
- By perception: When someone is treated unfairly because others think they have a protected characteristic—even if they don't (e.g. assuming someone is gay and excluding them).
- By association: When someone is treated unfairly because they're connected to someone with a protected characteristic (e.g. being penalised for caring for a disabled relative).

### **Bullying**

Repeated behaviour that is offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting. It undermines someone's dignity and often involves multiple incidents.

### **Harassment**

Unwanted behaviour that violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment. This includes racial and sexual harassment.

### **Victimisation**

Treating someone unfairly because they've raised a concern or supported someone else who has.

## **5. Examples of unacceptable behaviour**

- Spreading rumours or gossip
- Insulting or mocking someone
- Excluding someone from conversations or events
- Making assumptions or jokes based on race, gender, or other protected characteristics
- Unwanted physical contact or sexual advances
- Sharing offensive material or comments online or in person

Sexual harassment is any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may be verbal, non-verbal, physical, online or written—and can come from colleagues, managers, volunteers or third parties.

- Examples include:
- Unwelcome sexual advances or physical contact
- Sexual jokes, comments or gestures
- Sharing or displaying offensive material
- Speculation about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity

Under the Worker Protection Act (2024), we have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment. To support this, all employees must complete core learning on bullying, harassment and sexual harassment.

## **6. How to Raise a Concern**

If you experience or witness unacceptable behaviour, please speak up. You can raise concerns:

- With your manager
- With a People Advisor or People Business Partner
- Through our Grievance Policy (employees)
- Through our Volunteer Resolving Concerns Guidance (volunteers)
- Through our Complaints Policy (for issues involving third parties)
- Employees can also use the Speak Up Platform—a confidential and independent way to report concerns if you don't feel comfortable using other routes

We'll treat all concerns seriously and confidentially. Support is available throughout the process.

## 7. If Things Go Wrong

We aim to resolve genuine complaints fairly and transparently. If someone knowingly makes a false complaint or breaches confidentiality, this may lead to disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action may also apply if someone acts without care or sensitivity during an investigation.

## 8. Support Available

We understand that raising or being involved in a complaint can be difficult. We'll do everything we can to support you.

If you're struggling, please speak to your manager or People Advisor. You can also contact our confidential Employee Assistance Programme, you can find current contact details on Arena.

## 9. Supporting documents

[Grievance Policy](#)

[Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)

[Volunteer Resolving Concerns Guidance](#)

[Complaints Policy](#)

[Bullying and Harassment \(and Sexual Harassment\) Video](#)

[Speak up](#)

### Document details

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