

the stove network

Harassment and Bullying: Our Zero Tolerance Approach

Information for trustees, employees, freelancers, contractors, members, partners, audiences, participants and customers.

Policy created July 2024

The Stove fosters good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, celebrates diversity, challenges inequality and is committed to nurturing an inclusive and diverse community that is open to all who have the potential to benefit from membership of it, and which ensures equality of opportunity for all its members. We expect all our employees, trustees, freelancers, contractors, members, partners, audiences, participants and customers to be treated, and to treat others, with dignity and respect. We have a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment and bullying. Zero tolerance means that (i) we will take action and (ii) the action will be proportionate to the circumstances of the case (for example: barring someone from entry to Stove premises, informing the police, disciplinary action for employees, revoking a membership etc)

The Stove's charitable aims and Articles of Association commit the organisation to use the arts to promote the benefits of social welfare of the inhabitants of the Community, without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment*, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation; political, religious or other opinions

*The Stove's policies, practices and procedures specifically extend to all gender identities including trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming people.

For the purposes of this Policy Statement the term 'trans' is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. The term 'non-binary' is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity does not sit comfortably with 'woman' or 'man'. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.

Definition of Harassment

This policy defines harassment as occurring when a person engages in unwanted conduct and the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or threatening environment. Harassment may involve repeated forms of unwanted and unwarranted behaviour, but a one-off incident, if sufficiently serious, can also amount to harassment. All harassment, whether or not it relates to a protected characteristic, is covered by this policy.

When deciding whether any unwanted conduct amounts to harassment for the purposes of this policy, The Stove will consider the perception of the person raising the concern, the other circumstances of the matter and whether it is reasonable for the conduct to be considered to have the purpose or effect described. Harassment

can be in verbal, written or physical form and can cause stress, anxiety, fear or sickness on the part of the harassed person.

Differences of attitude, background or culture and the misinterpretation of social signals can mean that what is perceived as harassment by one person may not seem so to another. However, this does not make it acceptable.

Religious or other belief does not justify harassment on any other ground including gender identity and sexual orientation. Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be accepted as an excuse for harassment.

Some general examples of harassment or behaviour that falls short of expected standards might include teasing, comments about personal characteristics or appearance, unreasonable criticism, promises of reward or threats made to secure sexual favours or negative comments about someone's age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation or other characteristics to which protection is provided. Some more specific forms of harassment are detailed on the following pages.

Any act of harassment that involves the abuse of a position of authority or trust will be regarded by The Stove as very serious and could constitute gross misconduct.

Harassment Related to Sex

Harassment related to sex is: unwanted conduct of a sexual nature; or less favourable treatment as a result of the submission to or rejection of sexual harassment; or harassment related to sex in any working or social situations associated with The Stove.

The following are some examples of activities that might constitute sexual harassment:

- unnecessary and unwelcome physical contact
- sexual assault
- suggestive and unwelcome comments or gestures
- emphasising the gender of an individual or a group
- persistent unwelcome requests for social or sexual encounters and favours
- display, or electronic transmission, of pornographic, degrading or indecent images,
- threatening, abusive or unwanted comments of a sexual nature.
- non-consensual sharing of sexually explicit media.

Harassment Related to Sexual Orientation

Harassment related to sexual orientation, actual or perceived, can be:

- harassment of someone because of their actual sexual orientation
- harassment of someone because of their perceived sexual orientation
- harassment of someone because of the actual or perceived sexual orientation of those with whom they associate.

The following are some examples of activities that might constitute harassment related to sexual orientation:

- making suggestive or unwelcome comments or gestures emphasising the actual or perceived sexual orientation of an individual or group
- engaging in homophobic or biphobic behaviour

- using homophobic or biphobic language or displaying homophobic or biphobic materials
- making homophobic or biphobic insults or threats
- engaging in banter or making jokes which are degrading to a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation
- outing an individual as lesbian, gay or bisexual without their permission
- ignoring or excluding an individual from activities because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual
- spreading rumours or gossip about an individual's actual or perceived sexual orientation
- asking an individual intrusive questions about their private life
- making assumptions and judgements about someone based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation
- verbally or physically abusing or intimidating someone because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation

Harassment Related to Gender Reassignment

The Stove's policies, practices, and procedures cover all gender identities including trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming people.

A person has the characteristic of gender reassignment if that person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing the physiological or other attributes of sex. Individuals do not have to be under medical supervision to be protected by the law.

The following are some examples of activities that might constitute harassment related to gender reassignment:

- refusing to address a trans person by their preferred name and correct gender pronoun
- repeated and deliberate mis-gendering of a trans person or people
- denying a trans person or people access to the appropriate single sex facilities such as toilets or changing rooms
- engaging in banter or making transphobic comments, taunts or jokes
- outing an individual as trans without their permission or spreading rumours or gossip about their gender identity, expression and/or history
- ignoring or excluding an individual from activities because they are trans
- asking a trans person intrusive questions about their private life
- making assumptions and judgements about someone based on their gender identity, expression and/or history
- verbally or physically abusing or intimidating someone because they are trans

Harassment Related to Race

Harassment related to race includes harassment related to colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins.

The following are some examples of activities that might constitute harassment related to race:

- derogatory name-calling
- insults, threats and racist jokes
- ridicule of an individual for racial or ethnic difference
- racist graffiti, images or insignia.

- microaggressions including asking persistent questions such as where a person is really from
- making persistent comments about appearance, command of language or stereotypical assumptions based on race
- not using the individual's name or adopting a nickname.

Harassment Related to Religion or Belief

Harassment related to religion or belief of an individual or a group can be because of:

- their religion
- that they have no religion
- that they have changed or renounce their religion
- their religious or philosophical belief
- their lack of any such belief

The following are some examples of activities that might constitute harassment related to religion or belief:

- teasing or mocking someone for holding a particular religion or belief
- persistently asking an individual intrusive questions about how they choose to observe their religion or belief
- ostracising someone because of their religion or belief
- failing to respect the religion or belief of another (i.e. by persistently offering inappropriate food and drink)

Harassment Related to Disability

A person has a disability for the purposes of this policy if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Some people also meet the definition of disability without having to show that they have an impairment that has or is likely to have a substantial, adverse long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This includes people who have cancer, HIV infection, multiple sclerosis and people who are certified as blind, partially sighted, severely sight impaired or sight impaired by a consultant ophthalmologist.

The following are some examples of activities that might constitute harassment related to disability:

- direct verbal abuse or comments that make a disabled person feel uncomfortable, intimidated or degraded
- comments which fail to acknowledge the employee disability
- physical abuse
- jokes or banter relating the disabled person
- mimicking or teasing a person about their disability
- deliberately altering physical space or removing equipment required by the disabled person

Harassment Related to Age

The following are some examples of activities that might constitute harassment related to age:

- direct verbal abuse or comments about age that make a person feel uncomfortable, intimidated or degraded
- unjustified exclusion of a person because of their age
- ageist jokes

- using inappropriate language, related to age, to describe someone (e.g. 'over the hill', 'wet behind the ears')

Definition of Bullying

The Stove defines bullying as follows:

"Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and/or an abuse or misuse of power, through means that may reasonably be considered to have the effect of undermining, humiliating, denigrating or injuring the recipient or recipients (emotionally or physically)."

Examples of behaviours that may constitute bullying include:

- making someone feel frightened, less respected, made fun of or upset
- spreading a false rumour about someone
- putting someone down in meetings
- not allowing someone to go on training courses, but allowing everyone else to
- giving someone a heavier workload than everyone else
- excluding someone from team/group social events
- persistently ignoring or 'talking down' an individual
- criticising an individual in an inappropriate manner or belittling them about their work, personality or appearance
- pressuring an individual into behaviour or actions against their wishes

In certain situations, one-off actions may constitute bullying.

Harassment or Bullying via Social Media or other Electronic Means

Harassment or bullying through social networking sites and messaging apps such as Facebook or Instagram or through other electronic means such as text message or email is not acceptable. The following are some examples of what might constitute this form of harassment or bullying:

- Pages that identify and shame individuals
- Images altered to degrade individuals
- Photos or videos of physical bullying posted to shame the victim
- Sharing personal information to blackmail or harass people and
- Repeatedly targeting other people with unwanted friend requests or messages
- Derogatory/threatening/aggressive emails or other electronic messages
- Non-consensual sharing of sexually explicit photographs

Victimisation

The Stove seeks to protect any everyone involved in and/or impacted by its work from victimisation. The Stove will regard as victimisation any instance where a person is subjected to detrimental treatment because that person, in good faith, made an allegation of harassment, or:

- indicated an intention to make such an allegation, or
- assisted or supported another person in bringing forward such an allegation, or
- participated in an investigation of a complaint, or
- participated in any disciplinary hearing arising from an investigation, or is suspected of having done so.

Hate Incidents

The Stove investigates any incident which is perceived by the victim, or any other person (e.g. a witness), to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's:

- disability or perceived disability;
- race or perceived race;
- religion or perceived religion;
- sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation;
- transgender identity or perceived transgender identity.

Where, following investigation and consideration of the evidence, an incident is found to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, The Stove will consider this to be a Hate Incident and treat this as an aggravating factor in considering any appropriate action to take. Hate Incidents may also be crimes and consideration should be given to reporting such matters to the police. The incident can take many forms, and be perpetrated by either an individual or group, including:

- physical attacks, such as physical assault, damage to property, offensive graffiti, neighbour disputes and arson
- threat of attack, including offensive letters, abusive or obscene telephone calls and other intimidating behaviour verbal abuse or insults, abusive gestures
- other abuse, such as offensive leaflets and posters, unfounded and malicious complaints and bullying.

What should you do if you experience harassment or bullying?

If you feel that you are being subjected to harassment or bullying in any form in the context of The Stove do not feel that it is your fault or that you have to tolerate it. The Stove's primary concern is that the harassment stops and that there is support and assistance available when needed. If possible, you should make it clear to the person causing offence that their behaviour is unacceptable to you. You can speak to them directly but you may find it easier to do this by letter or email (you should keep a copy). This may in some instances be sufficient to stop the behaviour.

You can also ask someone else to speak to them on your behalf. You can bring your complaint to someone at The Stove (see Complaints Policy) who will take appropriate action to seek to stop any bullying or harassment.

It is important to make a note or keep a diary of the details of any relevant incidents which distress you – particularly if you feel unable to speak to the person concerned or if, having spoken to them, the behaviour persists. If the harassment has caused you to change the pattern of your work or social life or if it has had any effect on your health, you should include this information as well.

You do not have to experience harassment or bullying yourself to report it. If you observe someone else being harassed or bullied you are strongly encouraged to report it.

Making a Complaint of Harassment or Bullying

If you are an employee, worker, contractor, invitee or visitor and you want to make a complaint of harassment or bullying you should use The Stove's [Complaint's Procedure](#).

Where complaint/reports are made anonymously, The Stove is less likely to be able to take any action. Our complaints policy makes clear a process and commitment to confidentiality. We understand that often these issues are seriously challenging for individuals by their nature, but encourage people should feel confident in approaching The Stove about anything they are concerned about regarding harassment and bullying in full confidence that the issue will be treated professionally, respectfully and in absolute confidence.