

# ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out GAIN's commitment to create a working environment free from hostility in which individuals are valued for their contribution and can develop to their full potential.

GAIN expects everyone to relate to each other professionally and treat their colleagues with respect in a manner which recognises everyone's right to dignity at work. Any behaviour that undermines this is unacceptable.

GAIN does not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying under any circumstances. While implementing and upholding the policy is the duty of all managers, all employees have a responsibility to ensure that harassment and bullying do not occur in GAIN.

## 2. SCOPE

The Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy applies to all GAIN employees, Board Members, Consultants, volunteers, interns and secondees whether full time or part time, temporary or permanent and wherever they are located within GAIN's network of offices. For the purposes of this policy, the term "employees" will be used to refer to all groups.

In cases where the application of the policy conflicts with national legislation, the legislation takes precedence.

The policy has been designed to inform employees about the type of behaviour that is unacceptable and provides employees who are the victims of harassment and bullying with a means of redress.

This policy also applies to work related functions which are held outside of normal working hours, either on or off GAIN premises, such as Christmas parties, leaving celebrations, working lunches, etc.

## 3. RELATED GAIN'S POLICIES

GAIN has a workplace Gender, Equality and Diversity Policy which identifies the characteristics of employees that are protected from discrimination or harassment.

GAIN's Grievance Procedure explains how employees can raise concerns about any aspect of their employment including harassment and bullying.

## 4. HARASSMENT

### DEFINITION

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to the characteristics outlined in GAIN's Workplace Gender, Equality and Diversity policy, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment for them. The characteristics are age, gender, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity, family responsibilities, political beliefs, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Sexual harassment also occurs where an employee is treated less favourably because he or she has rejected or refused to submit to sexual advances or harassment.

Sexual harassment is defined by the UN as to include "unwelcome sexually determined behaviour as physical contact and advances, sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography and sexual demands, whether by words or actions. Such conduct can be humiliating and may constitute a health and safety problem; it is discriminatory when the woman has reasonable ground to believe that her objection would disadvantage her in connection with her employment, including recruitment or promotion, or when it creates a hostile working environment"

Harassment is normally characterized by more than one incident of unacceptable behaviour, particularly if it reoccurs once it has been made clear by the victim that he or she considers it offensive. However, a single incident may constitute harassment if it is sufficiently serious. Harassment on any grounds will not be tolerated.

### EXAMPLES OF HARASSMENT

Examples of harassment include:

- Verbal – crude language, open hostility, offensive jokes, suggestive remarks, innuendoes, rude or vulgar comments, malicious gossip and offensive songs;
- Non-verbal – wolf-whistles, obscene gestures, sexually suggestive posters/calendars, pornographic material (both paper-based and generated on a computer, including offensive screen-savers), graffiti, offensive letters, offensive e-mails, text messages on mobile phones and messages on social media;
- Physical – unnecessary touching, patting, pinching or brushing against another employee's body, intimidating behaviour, assault and physical coercion;
- Coercion – pressure or promises in return for sexual favours (e.g. to get a job or be promoted) and pressure to participate in political groups, etc.;
- Isolation or non-cooperation and exclusion from social activities;
- Intrusion – following, pestering, spying, etc.

## 5. BULLYING

### DEFINITION

Bullying is a deliberate and consistent wearing down process comprising a sustained form of psychological abuse that makes victims feel demeaned and inadequate. Bullying is defined as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power, which has the purpose, or effect, of intimidating, belittling and humiliating the recipient.

## **EXAMPLES OF BULLYING**

Workplace bullying can range from extreme forms such as violence and intimidation to less obvious forms such as psychological manipulation or isolating individuals by reference to characteristics identified in the Equality and Diversity Policy.

Examples include:

- Shouting or swearing at people in public and private;
- Persistent unjustified criticism, or criticism without offering constructive solution in case of criticism that may be justified;
- Ignoring or deliberately excluding people from professional activities for personal reasons;
- Persecution through threats and instilling fear;
- Spreading malicious rumours.

## **6. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

Gender-based violence is defined by the UN as violence directed at a woman because she is a woman, as that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering and threats.

## **7. THE IMPACT OF HARASSMENT AND BULLYING**

Harassment and bullying can lead to illness, absenteeism, an apparent lack of commitment, poor performance and resignation.

The damage, tension and conflict that harassment and bullying create should not be underestimated. The result is not just poor morale, but higher staff turnover, reduced productivity, divided teams and a poor external reputation.

## **8. ENFORCEMENT**

Any proven instance of harassment or bullying will be classed as an offence for which employees may be disciplined. Serious instances of harassment or bullying will be treated as gross misconduct for which employees may be dismissed.

All employees will be informed of GAIN's policy towards harassment and bullying at induction training and through communication and awareness programs. It will be stressed that all complaints of harassment will be treated seriously.

## **9. ADVICE**

Examples of harassment and bullying are often highly context-specific and sensitive in nature. Employees who believe they are being harassed or bullied may wish to discuss their situation before deciding what action to take. GAIN operates an open-door policy to discuss workplace problems and employees can discuss the matter with their manager on an informal basis.

GAIN recognizes however, that this may not always be appropriate. If this is the case, employees can discuss the situation with the next higher level of management or the Head of HR.

They will:

- ensure the conversation remains confidential as far as possible;
- listen sympathetically;
- help individuals consider objectively what has happened;
- discuss what outcome the individual would wish to see;
- draw attention to available procedures and options;
- help weigh up the alternatives, but without pressure to adopt any course;
- assist individuals in dealing with the situation, if they ask for help.

Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible. However, if an employee decides not to take any action to deal with the problem and the circumstances described are very serious, GAIN reserves the right to investigate the situation. It has an overall duty of care to ensure the safety of all employees who may be adversely affected by the alleged harasser's/bully's behaviour.

## **10. PROCEDURES**

It is for the individual to decide which route to take in solving any problem that has occurred. There are two types of solution available – informal and formal.

### **INFORMAL**

Where possible, employees should, in the first instance talk directly and informally to the person whom they believe is harassing or bullying them and explain clearly what aspect of their behaviour is unacceptable or is causing offence. They should state that their behaviour is unwelcome and request that it should stop. It may be that the person whose conduct is causing offence is genuinely unaware that their behaviour is unwelcome or objectionable.

If victims would find it difficult or embarrassing to raise the issue directly with the person creating the problem, support can be sought from a work colleague who can accompany the employee when speaking to the person involved.

Alternatively, if employees feel unable to approach the person whose actions or conduct is causing offence, the complaint can be raised informally with their Manager or the Head of HR who will try to assist the employee to find an informal solution to the problem. (See section on Advice, above) This could include asking a third party (e.g. a colleague or manager) to approach the person on their behalf in the first instance.

If employees feel unable to follow these steps or have already done so without success, or if the complaint is one of serious harassment, they may choose to raise a formal complaint.

### **FORMAL**

Where informal solutions fail, or serious harassment or bullying occurs, employees can bring a formal complaint in the form of a grievance using the Grievance Procedure.

Complaints will be investigated swiftly while ensuring that the rights of both the alleged victim and the alleged harasser or bully are protected. Information shared or obtained during the handling of a complaint will be treated sensitively.

The question of maintaining information in confidence will be discussed with all of those involved. Everyone involved in the investigation, including witnesses, will be required to maintain confidentiality within the context of the investigation and process – a failure to do so will be a disciplinary matter. However, it is important to recognise that certain types of information will have to be shared with individuals within GAIN to progress the investigation or to aid decision-making.

Employees and witnesses can be assured that they will not be ridiculed or victimised for making, or assisting a colleague in making a complaint, even if it is not upheld, as long as it is made in good faith.

If the employee would find it difficult to set out their complaint in writing, then he or she should contact the Head of HR who will provide assistance.

If, at the conclusion of the grievance procedure, the complaint is upheld, disciplinary proceedings will be instigated with the person who perpetrated the harassment or bullying.

### **11. CONTINUING TO WORK TOGETHER**

Whether a complaint is upheld or not, GAIN recognises that it may be difficult for the employees concerned to continue to work in close proximity to one another during the investigation or following the outcome of the proceedings. If this is the case, GAIN will consider a voluntary request from either party to transfer to another job or work location. However, a transfer cannot always be guaranteed and will depend on factors such as available work in other locations. Where the complaint is upheld but not of sufficient seriousness to merit dismissal, the employee who made the allegation will not suffer a detriment.

### **12. MONITORING**

Where harassment or bullying has been found to have occurred and the perpetrator remains in employment, regular checks will be made to ensure that harassment has stopped and that there has been no victimisation or retaliation against the victim.

### **13. MALICIOUS COMPLAINTS**

Where a complaint is blatantly untrue and has been brought out of malice, or for some other unacceptable motive, the complainant will be subject to GAIN's disciplinary procedures, as will any witnesses who have deliberately misled GAIN during its investigations.

GAIN recognises that it is in the interests of everyone to resolve issues of concern that employees may have about their employment as quickly and as fairly as possible in order to maintain good working relations.

The aim of this procedure is to provide an internal mechanism for dealing with concerns raised by employees with the aim of seeking a satisfactory solution. Where this is not possible, every effort will be made to explain the reasons for the decision.