

Bullying and harassment policy and procedures

What is 'bullying'?

Bullying is unwanted behaviour from a person or group that is one of the following:

- Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting.
- An abuse / misuse of power or unfair treatment that undermines, humiliates or causes physical or emotional harm or
- Unfair treatment that is meant to or has the effect of humiliating, intimidating or in any way causing distress or discomfort. It can be subtle or overt.

Bullying can take many different forms. Examples of bullying behaviour include:

- Spreading malicious rumours about someone
- Consistently putting someone down and undermining them
- Deliberately giving someone a heavier workload than everyone else
- Excluding someone from events

What is 'harassment'?

When bullying or unwanted behaviour is about certain protected characteristics under discrimination law, then we refer to it as 'harassment'. The protected characteristics which apply are:

- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment
- Age
- Disability

(Note - Marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity are not protected under the harassment provisions.)

The Trustees have a duty of care for all our volunteers working on site. We will make it our priority to support you if you experience problems with bullying or harassment and this policy is designed to help us do that. If a volunteer has a problem with bullying or harassment, we encourage you to contact a trustee and we will try to resolve it as early as possible. We will investigate any complaint that you bring to our attention in a fair, independent and

confidential way and, after considering all the facts, we will take prompt and appropriate action.

We will not tolerate bullying, harassment and or victimisation by anyone volunteering for us and we expect everyone to treat people with respect and dignity in all communications. Our volunteers policy sets out the responsibilities and behaviour that we expect from all our volunteers, and we would request that all volunteers read that policy.

If a volunteer believes that they are being bullied or harassed, then they should first consider whether it would be appropriate to discuss the matter informally with the person who is bullying or harassing them. Sometimes, people do not realise how their actions are impacting others, and it might be that an informal discussion can resolve the issue and reset behaviours. If they do not feel comfortable approaching the person themselves, or a direct approach has not worked, then they should tell a trustee in all instances.

We will never victimise, unfairly treat, discipline or blacklist anybody who makes a genuine formal or informal complaint about bullying and harassment. We will respect and maintain your confidentiality and will speak to anybody involved about their responsibility to maintain confidentiality on the issue.

How do I make a complaint about bullying and harassment?

Anyone with a complaint regarding bullying and harassment can choose to pursue it via either a formal or informal process.

a. The informal process

b. The formal process

a. Using informal processes

If you have a complaint about bullying and harassment, please contact a Trustee and we will try to resolve problems informally where possible and appropriate before using the formal process. It is important to remember that the other person may be unaware of their behaviour and the impact it has on you, and your informal feedback may give the person a better understanding and opportunity to change or stop their behaviour.

The Trustees will try to resolve your complaint as early as possible, to reduce stress and worry for you and possibly the other person involved.

To address the complaint informally, the Trustee will speak to anyone involved in the situation about how their behaviour is affecting you. It can be helpful to describe particular instances of this behaviour, including times, places, events or conversations in order to clearly illustrate your point. You should use the opportunity to ask the person to change or stop their behaviour.

b. Using the formal process

The Trustees will ask you to put your formal complaint in writing and give it to a Trustee. If your complaint is against a Trustee please give it to a different Trustee. It should include full details of your complaint including a detailed account of the incident, the date it took place,

who was involved including any witnesses, and any action taken. This will provide the best opportunity to fairly and reasonably investigate your complaint while details of what took place can readily be remembered by anyone involved.

Once a formal complaint has been submitted the Trustees will send you written acknowledgement of the complaint.

The procedure for investigating a formal complaint is:

- arrange a meeting with you to discuss the problem
- we may need to speak to other witnesses
- the decision about the complaint will be made and communicated to you including any associated recommendations or appropriate action
- if you are unhappy with the result, you will have the right to appeal

NEWT will monitor the treatment and outcomes of any formal complaints of harassment or victimisation we receive to make sure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised and repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, which may include requests for the offender to no longer attend NEWT events.

What to do if you witness bullying or harassment

We understand you may feel worried about getting involved in a situation that does not directly affect you. The trustees will support you in raising your concerns in an informal or formal way, so the bullying or harassment can stop. We will not victimise, unfairly treat or discipline you for raising a genuine concern.