

Dignity at Work Procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure provides a framework to address concerns relating to bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation at the British Red Cross (BRC).

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Dignity at Work Policy, Dignity at Work: Policy and Procedure Guidance, and associated documents including those stated in Section 5.

2. Scope

This policy applies to staff and volunteers (our people) engaged in work-related activities.

This policy does not cover grievances. Refer to the Grievance Resolution Policy, Grievance Resolution Procedure, Volunteer Complaints, Issues and Concerns Policy and Volunteer Complaints, Issues and Concerns Procedure for conduct issues.

3. Procedure Statement

It is recognised that there may be circumstances where behaviour or differences in opinions can lead to conflict in the workplace. This is common in any work environment but what matters most is how we address the issues.

3.1. Early Intervention

- 3.1.1.** It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of our people to use a formal process to deal with these matters. We encourage a work environment where managers and employees can discuss and resolve working issues early in a fair, trusting, respectful and constructive atmosphere.
- 3.1.2.** We encourage you to raise any issue(s) you have as soon as possible, so managers can support in resolving matters quickly and appropriately, preventing problems from getting worse.
- 3.1.3.** Managers have a responsibility to take proactive steps to prevent issues and concerns arising and must create a trusting environment where all employees feel able to raise concerns without fear of any detrimental treatment. This includes:
 - i. fairness and consistency in how all concerns are handled;
 - ii. support and guidance to help you resolve issues constructively;
 - iii. a focus on early resolution, so things don't escalate unnecessarily;
 - iv. a safe space to raise concerns and be heard.

- 3.1.4.** Where early intervention has not been successful, the next step is to raise a dignity at work concern.

3.2. Setting out the process

3.2.1. Step 1: Completion of a Dignity at Work Resolution Form

- 3.2.1.1.** The individual raising a concern must complete a Dignity at Work Resolution Form and attach all relevant evidence.
- 3.2.1.2.** The form and all evidence must be submitted to the Advice and Casework Team at HR@redcross.org.uk
- 3.2.1.3.** The Advice and Casework Team must oversee the process and provide advice and support to managers as needed.

3.2.2. Step 2: Resolution Triage Assessment

- 3.2.2.1.** Upon receipt, a member of the Advice and Casework Team and a nominated impartial manager from across the organisation who will be the triage panel, must conduct a Resolution Triage Assessment to determine the most suitable route to resolution and assess the nature and seriousness of the concerns raised.
- 3.2.2.2.** Emphasis will be placed on early resolution and supportive dialogue.
- 3.2.2.3.** The Advice and Casework Team must inform relevant managers and offer support services as required.

3.2.3. Step 3: Confirmation of Outcome

- 3.2.3.1.** Within seven calendar days, the Triage Panel must confirm in writing the outcome of their assessment.
- 3.2.3.2.** Where additional information is required, this may be requested by email or a remote meeting may be arranged between the individual raising the concern and the Triage Panel.
- 3.2.3.3.** The individual will have a right to appeal the Triage Panel decision.

3.3. Resolution Methods

- 3.3.1.** The Triage Panel will recommend one of four (4) resolution methods in the process:

- i. early resolution meeting. A structured, informal discussion held with a manager, normally the line manager, and staff/volunteer at an early stage of a workplace concern. The goal is to resolve concerns quickly, fairly and collaboratively.

For further detail please refer to Dignity at Work: Early Resolution Meeting Guidance.

- ii. supported conversation. A structured discussion between two or more parties guided by an impartial manager and member of the Advice & Casework Team, called facilitators, to help resolve conflict, improve communication or reach mutual understanding. For further detail please refer to Dignity at Work: Supported Conversation Guidance.
- iii. Mediation. A structured, voluntary and confidential process in which an impartial party – a mediator – helps individuals to communicate effectively, understand each other's perspective and work towards a mutually acceptable resolution. For further detail please refer to Dignity at Work: Mediation Guidance.
- iv. formal investigation, where this is deemed appropriate. Full details are outlined in section 3.4.

3.3.2. In cases of sexual harassment, individuals are not expected to pursue informal discussion/ resolution. Formal investigation is available and encouraged to ensure appropriate handling.

3.3.3. While individuals cannot bring standalone claims for third-party harassment, such incidents may be legally actionable when raised as part of broader complaints.

3.3.4. At all stages, reasonable adjustments will be explored for any individuals who may need them.

3.4. Formal Investigation

3.4.1. If an individual is unable to resolve their concerns through other forms of resolution, or the Resolution Triage Assessment considers the matter sufficiently serious from the outset, the formal procedure must be instigated.

3.4.2. In accordance with the Worker Protection Act 2023, the BRC has a legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and other forms of unlawful behaviour. During the formal investigation, the organisation must demonstrate that it has acted promptly, fairly, and thoroughly in response to any concerns raised.

3.4.3. The BRC must ensure that investigators are appropriately trained, all parties are treated with dignity and respect, and that safeguarding principles are upheld throughout. Failure to meet these obligations may result in legal liability.

- 3.4.4.** Prior to beginning a formal investigation, the manager must consult a member of the Advice and Casework Team to ensure that all other avenues have been adequately explored.

3.4.4.1. Investigation Panel

An Investigation Panel must be formed and:

- i. include at least two individuals, supported by a member of the Advice and Casework Team;
- ii. include a composition that will consider relevant equality factors and will recognise intersectional experiences that may influence how harm is experienced or reported;
- iii. will be appointed from outside of the direct management chain of both the individual reporting the concern and subject of the concern;
- iv. a note taker may also be in attendance.

Investigators and senior managers should be trained in trauma-informed practice, especially for sensitive cases.

3.4.4.2. Investigation Procedure

A formal investigation must involve the following actions by the Panel:

- i. Conducting interviews
 - interview of the individual reporting the concern, subject of the concern, and any witnesses.
 - preparation of written statements and arrangement for these to be signed as accurate.
 - confidentiality, impartiality, and a safe environment for all parties must be ensured.
- ii. Evidence gathering
 - collection of emails, messages, closed-circuit television footage, policies, and other relevant documentation.
 - maintenance of a clear audit trail of all evidence.

iii. Analysis and findings

- assessment of the credibility of accounts and consistency of evidence.
- determination of whether there is sufficient evidence that the Dignity at Work Policy was breached.

iv. Timescales

- investigations should normally be completed within 90 calendar days, depending on the complexity and sensitivity of the case.
- at the outset, both parties will be informed of:
 - the expected duration of the investigation;
 - the names of the Panel members.
- if the timescale cannot be met, the lead investigator of the Panel must provide a revised completion date with reasons, where appropriate.

v. Reporting and decision

- when the investigation is complete, the final report (drafted by the Panel) must be submitted to a nominated senior manager.
- the senior manager must review the report and relevant evidence and determine whether the investigation outcome is:
 - upheld;
 - not upheld;
 - upheld in part.
- both parties (the reporting individual and the subject(s) of the concern) will be notified of the decision within 14 calendar days of the report's submission to the manager.
- if this timescale is unattainable, the senior manager must provide a revised completion date.
- the Advice and Casework Team must support the implementation of any recommendations made in the report.

vi. Confidentiality and fairness

- all concerns must be handled with the highest level of confidentiality.
- information must only be shared on a need-to-know basis, and all parties are expected to uphold this confidentiality.
- breaches may result in disciplinary action.
- all individuals involved in a dignity at work concern must be treated fairly and with respect.
- the process must be transparent, timely, and impartial, with appropriate support offered to all parties.

vii. Outcome

- if the concern is upheld, action may be taken against the subject of the concern which may include disciplinary measures up to and including dismissal.
- due to data protection legislation, the specific nature of any action taken is confidential and will not be disclosed to the individual reporting the concern.
- any subsequent action will depend on the circumstances of the case and the individuals involved. An objective decision must be made on whether harassment, bullying discrimination or victimisation has taken place.
- it is not always possible to provide a definitive course of action in each case. In cases where the allegations are upheld or upheld in part, as a general guide, the senior manager should consider one or more of the following potential outcomes:
 - issue of an informal caution and provide counselling/ training as needed;
 - consideration of transfer of the subject of the concern to another workplace within their service area and/ or redeployment to another area and provide counselling/ training as needed;

- review of the existing working practices to minimise contact between both individuals and provide counselling/ training as needed; or
- initiate the Disciplinary Policy and Disciplinary Procedure.
- in some cases, if it is deemed to be in their best interest, it may also be appropriate to transfer the individual reporting the concern to an alternative workplace/service area but they must also agree to this approach.

3.4.4.3. Appeal

- If the individual reporting the concern is unhappy with the decision of the senior manager not to uphold a formal concern, or uphold it only in part, they will have the opportunity to appeal the decision once.
- An independent Appeal Manager will be appointed to manage any appeal received.
- To appeal, the individual reporting the concern should write to the Appeal Manager in the outcome letter within seven days of receiving their outcome letter, clearly detailing the reasons/ grounds of their appeal. In general an appeal will be considered where the individual reporting the concern:
 - i. has not received enough information regarding the findings of the investigation;
 - ii. disagrees with the findings of the investigation. The individual reporting the concern must provide clear reasons, e.g. the decision was unfair/ disproportionate or based on insufficient evidence. Simply disagreeing with the outcome is not grounds for appeal.
 - iii. feels there were procedural errors in the investigation. Full details of any perceived procedural errors must be included in the appeal.
- The Appeal Manager will acknowledge receipt of the appeal letter, in writing, within seven days of receipt.
- The Appeal Manager will also inform the Investigation Panel and the senior manager that an

appeal has been received and that an independent, desk-based review of the findings will be carried out. This review will normally take place within 21 calendar days and must be supported by a member of the Advice and Casework Team.

- The appeal process will not re-investigate the original reported concern – it will look at whether the original investigation was carried out in a comprehensive and thorough manner, and that the outcome given was logical and based on all available evidence. The appeal will consider:
 1. were the findings appropriate and based on evidence?
 2. was any evidence missed?
 3. did the outcome include sufficient information to allow the individual to fully understand it?

The Appeal Manager will issue a written outcome to the appellant within seven calendar days and will also confirm that there is no further right of appeal.

3.5. Manager Initiated Investigations

- 3.5.1.** If allegations raised are deemed to be a direct breach of BRC policies and procedures, a manager may initiate an investigation under the Disciplinary Policy and Disciplinary Procedure, even if the individual reporting the concern has not raised their concern via this procedure.

3.6. Anonymous Reporting

- 3.6.1.** If an individual wishes to raise any concern regarding their work or volunteer experience anonymously, they can report this externally to Safecall.

3.7. Malicious or Vexatious Complaints

- 3.7.1.** If a reported concern is found to be maliciously or knowingly false following the investigation, the individual reporting the concern may be subject to disciplinary action.

3.8. Right to be accompanied

- 3.8.1.** You have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague (including a volunteer), an accredited trade union representative, or a Staff Association representative at any meeting which forms part of the of this procedure.

- 3.8.2.** The name and details of the companion should be shared with the Investigation Panel, or the Advice and Casework Team at least 24 hours prior to any meeting.
- 3.8.3.** If your chosen companion is unavailable at the time a meeting is scheduled and will not be available for more than seven calendar days afterwards, you may be asked to choose someone else.
- 3.8.4.** Acting as a companion is voluntary and colleagues are under no obligation to do so. If they agree, they will be allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion.
- 3.8.5.** At the discretion of the Investigation Panel, you may be allowed to bring a companion outside of the above categories, for example, a family member, if this would be considered a reasonable adjustment to support with a disability, or if English is not your first language.
- 3.8.6.** Your companion should be allowed to address the meeting to sum up your case, respond on your behalf to any views expressed at the meeting and confer privately with you during the meeting. Your companion does not, however, have the right to answer questions on your behalf or address the meeting if you don't want them to.

3.9. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

- 3.9.1.** Dignity at work matters will be addressed sensitively with respect for the privacy of individuals involved.
- 3.9.2.** Information shared with all parties must remain confidential. Breach of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action.
- 3.9.3.** This obligation applies throughout the investigation and continues after the process concludes, to protect the dignity and privacy of all parties involved.
- 3.9.4.** Information regarding disciplinary action will be placed on an employee's file along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other relevant documents compiled during the procedure. This information will be retained in accordance with BRC's Retention Schedule.

3.10. Lessons Learned from Procedure Evaluation

Action arising, lessons learned and/ or improvement made to the procedure in response to feedback/ evaluation from internal and external stakeholders utilising the procedure on an operational level should be succinctly stated here. If a new procedure document, this heading may be omitted.

4. Responsibilities

The Chief Operating Officer together with the Senior Director of People are responsible for oversight of this procedure.

The Senior Director of People ensures implementation and compliance with this procedure.

The Owner (Chief Operating Officer) oversees the development or review of the procedure document and provides support to the Lead (Head of People Advisory).

The Lead undertakes the procedure review (as necessary) under the guidance, and with the support, of the Owner.

The People Services Team provide advice and support for the implementation of this procedure.

All our people are responsible for complying with, and adhering to, this procedure

5. Governance

Associated policy document/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HR Policy Framework• Grievance Resolution Policy• Safeguarding Policy• Data Protection Policy• Information Governance Policy• Confidentiality Policy• Code of Conduct• Raising a Concern Policy• Disciplinary Policy• Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy• Volunteer Complaints, Issues and Concerns Policy• Records Management Policy
Supporting procedure document/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grievance Resolution Procedure• Safeguarding Adult Procedure• Raising a Concern Procedure• Disciplinary Procedure• Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Procedure• Volunteer Complaints, Issues and Concerns Procedure• Closed-Circuit Television Procedure
Procedure/s superseded	N/A
Legislation/ regulatory requirements and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equality Act 2010• Worker Protection Act 2023
Endorsing Authority; Endorsement date	Head of People Advisory; 10 2025
Approval Authority; Approval date	Head of People Advisory; 10 2025
Procedure Owner	Chief Operating Officer
Procedure Lead	Head of People Advisory

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Revision history	Version	Summary of change (s)
	1.0	Original procedure document.
	2.0	Compliance with the Policy and Procedure Framework; expanded the definition of sexual harassment and provided more relevant examples to be compliance with the new amendment of the Equality Act 2010. Added a trigger warning to be in line with BRC's trauma informed approach.

Appendix: Definitions

Anonymous: Refers to a process or communication where the identity of the individual is not disclosed.

Appeal: A formal request to review and potentially change a decision which has been made.

Companion: Someone an individual chooses to accompany them to a workplace meeting.

Grievance: A complaint raised by an employee about a workplace issue that they feel is unfair or has negatively affected them. Examples are health and safety or pay related issues.

Malicious: A type of behaviour or actions that are intended to cause harm, distress or disruption, especially when done deliberately and without justification.

Reasonable adjustments: Changes or modifications made to remove or reduce disadvantages experienced by individuals with disabilities or health conditions ensuring that they can fully participate in work and other settings.

Sexual Harassment: Any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, written or physical, that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation. Sexual harassment may include unwelcome sexual advances, unsolicited requests for sexual favours, or any other conduct of a sexual nature that offends, intimidates, or humiliates another individual

Third-party Harassment: Harassment of an employee or volunteer by someone outside of the organisation, such as clients, customers, contractors, suppliers, visitors or members of the public.

Trauma-informed approach: An approach which seeks to understand and respond to the impact of trauma on people's lives.

Triage Process: Triage is the process of assessing and prioritising concerns raised to ensure timely and appropriate action is taken to address concerns. It involves evaluating the severity, impact, and urgency of each concern raised to determine the best course of action, whether it's informal resolution, investigation, or some other appropriate means of intervention.

Vexatious: Actions or complaints that are deliberately disruptive or without genuine substance often repeated in bad faith.