

1. Statement

'Dignity at Work' underpins our statutory duty to promote equality across all protected groups – age, race, gender, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity - and our commitment to extend the spirit of that duty to all members of our organisation. The SES Group has a clear commitment to promote and deliver on this policy, including the adoption of training. Fair treatment of staff is crucial to gaining the confidence of all staff to be engaged and motivated to deliver the highest quality service. The SES Group recognises that its most important asset is its people and their fair treatment is crucial to the success of the organisation. Prejudicial behaviour based on age, race, gender, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity or any other factor has no place in this vision. Discriminatory behaviour, harassment or bullying are viewed as serious matters and may involve dismissal from the Company in cases of gross misconduct. The principles of this policy also apply to third parties, e.g. sub-contractors.

2. Introduction

The SES Group recognises that managers, supervisors, and employees must accept the principles contained in this policy if we are to achieve the confidence of our staff and the public and the highest standards of service delivery that we aim for. All employees have a positive duty to support the organisation by promoting a 'Dignity at Work' culture and maintaining professional standards. The objective of this policy is to support the elimination of any harassment, bullying or unacceptable behaviour and to ensure challenge and education where behaviour may be inappropriate to a lesser degree, or insensitive.

Eradication of unacceptable / inappropriate / insensitive behaviour can only be achieved by:

- Raising awareness of expected behavioural standards.
- Raising awareness of diversity issues so that inappropriate comments / behaviour do not arise through ignorance.
- All staff being mindful that their attitudes and behaviour have a direct impact on the people they work with.
- All employees being vigilant and aware of the behaviour of their peers.
- Supervisors and managers taking active leadership, firm management and positive supervision.
- Where appropriate, effective use of performance and discipline procedures to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
- Creation of a supportive environment in which issues can be raised in an open manner without fear of intimidation.

3. Legal Obligations:

This policy has the legal basis with the Equality Act 2010, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Employment Rights legislation, the Equal Treatment Directive.

It is important that individual managers and supervisors understand that they may be culpable for either their inappropriate actions or failure to exercise responsibility in taking remedial action to eliminate inappropriate workplace behaviour.

4. What is Unacceptable Behaviour?

Harassment

Harassment is defined in law as unwanted conduct related to a 'protected characteristic' (age, race, gender, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity) which has the purpose or effect of-

- a) violating a worker's dignity; or
- b) creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that worker.

In deciding if conduct has had that effect, the following must be taken into effect:

- Perception of the worker
- Circumstances of the case
- Whether it is reasonable for the conduct to have that effect

Treatment having this effect, if related to a protected characteristic can amount to unlawful discrimination. A person subjected to such harassment does not have to have the protected characteristic themselves but may be a victim due to their association with someone who does, or they may simply be offended because the conduct itself relates to protected characteristic issues e.g. general remarks about disabled people or Gypsies or Travellers.

Harassment may be persistent behaviour or a more serious but isolated incident and may be directed towards one or more individuals.

It is not possible to produce a definitive list of unacceptable behaviour within the workplace which could constitute harassment, but it could include:

- Unwanted physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault or threatened assaults.
- Suggestive remarks or gestures; gossip and slander.
- Derogatory or inappropriate comments regarding an individual's personal life e.g. sexuality, partners, disability, caring responsibilities, faith
- Outing' of an individual regarding sexuality, disability or transgender.
- Offensive / insensitive comments, jokes and banter; insults or ridicule.
- Verbal or other pressures on a disabled person to improve performance where Reasonable Adjustments have not (yet) been made
- Display of pin-ups, graffiti, offensive or suggestive writings (including items viewed on the Internet or sent by e-mail).
- Isolation or non-co-operation at work, exclusion from social activities.
- Coercion ranging from pressure for sexual favours to pressure to participate in religious/political/other groups or activities.
- Intrusion by pestering, spying, following, stalking and unwanted telephone calls or 'e-mails.
- Gender / sexuality / racial / disability/ age / faith stereotyping which results in employment opportunities not being afforded to an individual.

Bullying

Bullying can be perceived in both overt (obvious) and covert (discreet, subtle) forms. Unacceptable behaviour within the workplace that could constitute bullying includes:

- Offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, or humiliating behaviour that undermines an individual or group of employees and which may cause them to suffer stress.
- Constant criticism or picking on people in front of others or in private; making them appear incompetent and feel inadequate (a gradual 'wearing down' process).
- Removal of responsibilities and replacing with trivial duties instead; undermining a person's position by overturning their decisions etc., without good reason.
- Refusing to allow people to express an opinion, insisting that a certain way of doing things is always right.
- Not recommending applications for promotion, training, or development without evidenced justification.
- Treating new staff, probationers or trainees as 'servants.

- Setting unrealistic deadlines, overloading with work, giving work that the individual is not trained to do or which is outside their levels of responsibility or ability.
- Shouting at people in order to get things done.

Other unacceptable behaviour

Certain behaviour may not amount to harassment or bullying of an individual but may none the less be regarded as unprofessional or unacceptable conduct by management. An example could be a derogatory, disrespectful or distasteful comment about a person/ person(s) who is/ are not present, such as comments about Gypsies or Travellers, Black or minority ethnic people, people with disabilities or mental health conditions, comments about faith or about women.

Victimisation

Victimisation is a specific act whereby an individual suffers detrimental treatment because of having made or supported a complaint, grievance or employment tribunal claim. Victimisation will not be tolerated by the organisation.

5. What the SES Group Expects from Managers and Supervisors.

To ensure 'Dignity at Work' all managers and supervisors should be prepared to take the initiative and intervene in any situation involving inappropriate workplace behaviour. Well-considered and constructive challenges should be part of a manager's and supervisor's role and will ensure achievement of higher standards of service delivery and organisational performance.

Where individuals do not perform their duties to the required standard specialist advice on the application of this Policy are available from our HR Manager. Managers and supervisors always need to adopt a positive, interventionist and supportive approach with a view to raising levels of performance and standards. Managers will only be supported where they address in a considered manner inappropriate working practices or behaviour, or where the standard of service provided falls below that expected.

Where managers are dealing with unfamiliar situations, they are encouraged to use the available HR support. HR's role will be to support and advise the manager but not to necessarily tackle the problem on behalf of the manager.

Managers and supervisors are culpable (legally liable) for addressing problems in their area of work. There is a duty on all staff to support the Dignity at Work' policy.

6. Dealing with Unacceptable / Inappropriate / Insensitive Behaviour

Victim

The SES Group is committed to supporting individuals who promote the 'Dignity at Work' culture and positively encourages victims to come forward.

You should not be afraid to object about inappropriate, insensitive, or unacceptable treatment. You may wish to initially attempt to resolve the behaviour informally where appropriate by explaining to the individual why their behaviour is inappropriate, insensitive, or unacceptable if the above actions are not suitable or if the behaviour does not cease you have an obligation to tell a supervisor or manager (not necessarily your own supervisor or manager), giving the organisation an opportunity to take action.

Keep a record of all the inappropriate / insensitive / unacceptable behaviour that occurs - dates, times, what is said/done, who (if anyone) is present and who you have told.

Retain evidence i.e., letters, notes etc.

If the source of the behaviour is your immediate supervisor/line manager and informal attempts to resolve the issue have been unsuccessful, you should raise the issue with their line manager.

Supervisor/Manager

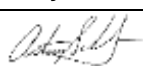
Any supervisor or manager receiving a complaint of inappropriate / insensitive / unacceptable behaviour will ensure the matter is suitably recorded and forwarded to the HR Manager at Head Office.

Where appropriate the issue should be addressed by the individual's immediate supervisor or line manager, taking account of the sensitivity of the issues involved, e.g., a female victim of harassment may prefer to speak to a female in the first instance.

All serious misconduct matters will need to be referred initially to the HR Manager who will direct actions accordingly.

7. Advice and Support

Advice and support are always available from Head Office HR Department.

Name:	Tony Ball
Signature:	
Date:	03/10/2024