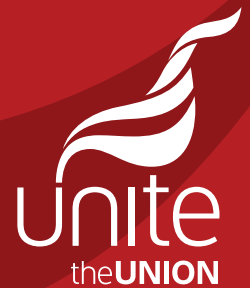


Unite Policy on harassment dignity and respect



March 2022

Unite is founded on principles of dignity and respect. Our Union is proud of its industrial and democratic structures which have been put in place to ensure our union's active members can play a full part in Unite's life. This policy on harassment sets out our commitment to ensuring the diversity of our union is respected, and that all feel welcome and able to participate fully. It also confirms the procedures and standards required to put this commitment into practice.

Standards and Procedures

All members, employees and guests attending conferences, meetings, courses, or other events organised by the Union, on Union property, or attending events on behalf of the Union are expected to respect the Union's policy against harassment and to treat others with dignity and respect. These standards apply throughout 'free time' and off event premises, as well as during formal event time to ensure that harassment at any time associated with an event does not undermine full participation or cause harm

The union is committed to seeking to create an environment free from harassment, and where all are treated with dignity and respect. If you feel that you have been harassed, please see procedures below.

If you feel that anything you have done or said may have caused offence you should be aware of the procedures below, and immediately change the way you behave and, where appropriate, apologise.

What is harassment?

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. There are different forms of harassment, including sexual harassment, racial harassment, harassment on grounds of disability, age, religion or belief/non-religion or non-belief, and homophobic bullying/harassment on grounds of sexual orientation or trans status. It may be physical (unnecessary touching, gestures or even assault), verbal (unwelcome remarks, personal questions, threats or malicious 'jokes'), or non-verbal (offensive literature or pictures, notes or texts, being ignored or excluded), and may include repeated incidents, which, if viewed in isolation may initially appear minor, or one single serious incident.

Please note that behaviour that is offensive to one person might not be to another. Also, a lack of intention to harass does not prevent conduct being harassment.

The Union's commitment

The Union endeavours to make sure that all members are aware of what harassment is and that it is a disciplinary offence for both members and employees.

Our Officers and staff are trained to assist a complainant with an informal resolution (see below) and can also assist with a complaint under the appropriate formal procedure. Our trained harassment listening support network can also provide listening support as appropriate.

If you suffer harassment at a union event

Please be assured that the union takes this very seriously, and is committed to dealing effectively and quickly with any complaints that may arise. It is your decision whether you want to take a complaint informally or formally or through both routes. It is advisable to make notes of any incident of harassment, who the perpetrator is, the nature of the harassment, where and when it happened and any witness to the harassment.

Harassment of Unite employees

While the union has a clear expectation of the standards which should be followed by all its employees, it is recognised that they themselves sometimes experience poor behaviour and abuse from others. This is clearly unacceptable for all the same reasons. On any occasions when such behaviour is demonstrated, all reasonable steps will be taken by an employee to encourage constructive and respectful dialogue. However, no employee will be expected to have to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and the union's management will support any employee who is put in this position, to the extent of pursuing appropriate action if necessary.

Informal Resolution

Often individuals are unaware that their behaviour has caused offence. If you have experienced harassment and you feel able, you can deal with the issue informally by making it clear to the harasser that the offending behaviour is unwanted, unacceptable and must stop immediately. You can do this in writing or ask a colleague or Regional Women's/Equalities Officer to accompany you as a witness if you do this in person.

If you are unsure whether to raise it with the harasser directly, you may find it helpful to talk the matter through confidentially with a Regional Women's/ Equalities Officer. Anything you raise with the Regional Women's/Equality Officer at the informal stage will be treated in strictest confidence.

Formal Complaint

You can make a formal complaint to any Officer or staff member who is responsible for organising an event. In the case of a complaint against a member or members, the formal procedure is under the Union's Rules. In the case of a complaint against an employee, the relevant staff or Officer's disciplinary procedure would apply.

Once a formal complaint is made, the Union reserves the right to investigate and take disciplinary action even if the complaint is withdrawn, whilst at all times ensuring that such action does not adversely impact on the complainant.

Both parties are entitled to representation at all stages of the formal procedure.

Every care will be taken to ensure that no one is victimised because they have made, or supported someone who has made, a complaint of harassment.

Allegations found to be made fallaciously and with malicious intent may be the subject of disciplinary action against the complainant.

In some circumstances, the union may notify a member's employer if they have breached the harassment policy. If the person accused of harassment is neither an employee nor a member of the Union – the Union will, where appropriate, expect the individual's own employer to act on the complaint and report on the outcome.