

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PLUS AREAS CODE OF CONDUCT

All members of the National Federation of Plus Areas have a right to enjoy their membership free from discrimination and in-appropriate behaviour. This Federation will promote an inclusive culture where members are encouraged to participate in events and on committees and are supported in taking committee positions, by being friendly, particularly to new members, and by challenging behaviour that in-appropriate (examples below). This Code of Conduct is not exhaustive but is a guide on what, as members, we all should not do and what to do if any member is breaching this Code. Our behaviour reflects onto our Group, Area and the Federation as a whole, we should all aim to reflect positive and welcoming behaviour.

Equality – All members should be treated equally with respect and consideration. No member should be made to feel uncomfortable by another member. The Federation's Equality Statement is included in the Constitution.

1. All Members shall behave in an appropriate manner to all other Members of the National Federation of Plus Area's, including:

Treating all members with dignity and respect.

Treating all members in a fair and equitable manner.

2. In particular, Members agree not to;

Make remarks that are or behave in a manner that is,

- 2.1.1 Racist; or
- 2.1.2 Sexist; or
- 2.1.3 Discriminating; or
- 2.1.4 Offensive or
- 2.1.5 Derogatory or demeaning; or
- 2.1.6 Harassing; or,
- 2.1.7 Intimidating or threatening;

- 2.2 Behave in an inappropriate way, including but not restricted to:

- 2.2.1 Inappropriate touching
- 2.2.2 Stalking
- 2.2.3 Harassment
- 2.2.4 Bullying
- 2.2.5 Causing distress
- 2.2.6 Intimidation
- 2.2.7 Abusive Behaviour
- 2.2.8 Sexual harassment
- 2.2.9 Inappropriate sexual behaviour
- 2.2.10 Inappropriate abuse of position

- 2.3 Otherwise speak or behave in a manner which brings the Federation into disrepute.

- 3 By signing your Membership Form, all Members are agreeing to abide by this Code of Conduct for the duration of their Membership.
- 4 Any Member who is found to be in breach of this Code of Conduct will be subject to investigation and sanctions by their Area Committee or the NEC, this can include expulsion from your Member Area.
- 5 Any member who feels that they have been a victim of any aspect of this Code of Conduct can report this to their Area Committee.

DEFINITION OF HARRASSMENTS:

1. SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

Conduct of a sexual nature which is unwelcome to the recipient. It is not sexual flirtation which is based upon mutual consent. It is usually an abuse of power which is intended to intimidate, coerce, embarrass or degrade another individual. It emphasises sexual status over status as an individual member. Examples can include:

- suggestive remarks and gestures.
- displaying sexually suggestive pictures and literature.
- unwanted demands for sex and unwanted physical contact.
- offensive language.
- threats of failure, or promises of success, or other rewards in exchange for sexual favours.

2. RACIAL HARASSMENT:

Unwanted conduct of a racist nature or other conduct based on race which affects the dignity of people of a different racial group. Such behaviour can include the following:

- verbal abuse.
- offensive jokes or remarks.
- physical violence.
- racist graffiti and display of racially offensive material.
- excluding someone from conversation or social events because of their race.

The definition of a ‘racist incident’ set out in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report is ‘any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person’. Within the context of the criminal justice system this definition exists to ensure that all complaints are properly investigated and recorded in the early stages.

3. PERSONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL HARASSMENT:

Uninvited and unwanted behaviour by one person or group against others which may cause offence and / or embarrassment which creates fear, stress and tension. Examples of such behaviour can include:

- abuse of power or authority.
- systematic coercion.
- verbal and / or physical intimidation, eg threats, shouting or derisory remarks.
- persistent unjustified criticism and public humiliation; copying e-mails or memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know.
- the setting of impossible deadlines or intolerable workload burdens.

4. DISABILITY HARASSMENT:

Disability harassment can be regarded as any unwanted act directed at a person who has a disability, which is evident by physical or behavioural difficulties. This form of harassment can include:

- jokes about disability and disabled people.
- deliberate and malicious exclusion from conversation or social activities.
- patronising or belittling behaviour.

It is important to remember that exclusion, whether it is deliberate or unintentional, may be upsetting for the individual concerned.

5. THE GROUNDS FOR HARASSMENT ARE MANY AND VARIED. IN ADDITION TO THE FOREGOING CATEGORIES, OTHER EXAMPLES INCLUDE HARASSMENT IN RELATION TO:

- age
- nationality
- sexual orientation
- religious or political beliefs
- status as an ex-offender
- health
- physical characteristics

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

If an individual feels that they are being subjected to harassment, they may wish to attempt to address the issue informally in the first instance by one or more of the following ways which are not intended to be a sequential process:

INFORMAL STEPS:

- Following any alleged incident(s) of harassment, make a note of what happened, what was said by all involved, and the relevant dates. This may be required as evidence should alleged incidents of harassment or victimisation continue or subsequently recur.
- Discuss the issue with a person whom you trust i.e. your Group Chairman.
- Approach the person causing the perceived harassment, and make it clear that their behaviour is offensive, unacceptable, and that it should stop.

The above procedure may be sufficient to stop the alleged harassment, especially if the individual(s) involved was / were not aware that their behaviour was causing distress.

FORMAL STEPS:

- If the steps outlined above have not been successful, or are not appropriate or possible, the complainant can follow the procedure as laid out in the National Constitution and in the first instance address the matter to their Area Chairman. If the Complainant does not feel comfortable with this action, or if the Area Chairman is part of the complaint then the Complainant can address this to the National Chairman and Honorary General Secretary.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This Federation will respect the sensitive nature of harassment and the need for confidentiality. Consequently, the Federation will treat all complaints, associated records / correspondence and interviews, in strict confidence. Once an outcome of a complaint has been agreed, any action or revoked membership of a member will be reported at the next NEC meeting within an in-camera session and will not be recorded within the minutes of the meeting.

FALSE ACCUSATIONS

Because the Federation considers harassment to be a serious issue, mischievous or malicious complaints of harassment will result in appropriate disciplinary action being initiated against the complainant.

THREATENED AND ACTUAL PHYSICAL ASSAULT

Physical assaults will not be tolerated. If an individual is attacked, a complaint to the police may be appropriate. It is not practicable to address such cases using the informal steps outlined above. Formal action should be initiated against the attacker if the investigation required as part of the process leads the National / Area / Group Chairman to believe that the alleged incident occurred and warrants formal action and if warrants, approach the Police.