



## **SAXON WEALD**

### **DIGNITY AT WORK PROCEDURE**

**First Approved: October 2024    Author: Sarah Thomas**

**Last Revision: NEW PROCEDURE    Next Review: October 2027**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Saxon Weald is committed to supporting and sustaining a positive working environment where all colleagues, workers and contractors are treated with dignity and respect. We will not tolerate bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, or victimisation of any kind at work or in any work-related setting.
- 1.2 The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy should be referred to in conjunction with this procedure.

#### **2.0 Scope of procedure**

- 2.1 This procedure sets out how any individual, covered under its provisions, is able to raise (either informally or formally) concerns arising in the workplace or in a work-related setting which involve bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, or victimisation. In addition, the procedure signposts support available.
- 2.2 However, some individual instances of sexual harassment or repeated sexual harassment automatically break criminal law in England and Wales, as well as employment law, and are therefore considered crimes. In these cases, matters may be reported to the police. Saxon Weald will fully co-operate with any external investigations or requests for information from officials.
- 2.3 Board and Committee members, employees (full and part-time), and temporary staff employed by Saxon Weald are covered under this procedure. Additionally, workers hired through agencies, suppliers and contractors engaged in specific projects or services fall within the scope of the procedure.

- 2.4 This inclusive approach aims to provide a fair and consistent way to raise concerns to ensure they are listened to, taken seriously and appropriate action taken at the right time.

### **3.0 Definitions**

- 3.1 Section 7.0 of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy explains in detail what behaviours may constitute bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation. A summary is also provided at appendices A & B of this procedure.

### **4.0 Informal procedure – all employees/workers/contractors**

- 4.1 If you feel you are being bullied or harassed, you may be able to resolve matters informally. The person may not know that their behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting. An informal discussion may help them to understand the effect of their behaviour and agree to change it.
- 4.2 If you prefer not to approach the person directly or need support, you can speak to your manager (or another manager if the concerns you are raising are about your line manager) or a member of the People team.
- 4.3 The initial approach could be that you are provided with coaching and support to feedback your concerns to the individual. Alternatively, the manager could accompany you to facilitate the discussion between you and the individual.
- 4.4 Keep a file note of the conversation and the date this took place. You should also keep a record of any occasions/incidents that occur, noting the dates, times, circumstances, and names of any witnesses. This will be useful if the person's behaviour continues, and you wish to make a formal complaint.
- 4.5 If you feel that you have been bullied or harassed by a customer, please report this to your manager who will take appropriate action and advise the relevant People Partner.

### **5.0 Formal procedure – complaint raised by Saxon Weald colleague or Board/Committee member**

- 5.1 If an informal approach does not resolve matters or you think the situation is too serious do be dealt with informally, please make a formal complaint by using the internal [grievance procedure](#), which can be found in the Procedures folder on SharePoint.
- 5.2 The grievance procedure can be used to raise any concerns regarding bullying and harassment, sexual harassment, or victimisation, whether

the complaint being raised is about a Saxon Weald Board member, manager or colleague, external contractor, supplier, or agency worker.

- 5.3 You will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at any formal meeting dealing with the allegation.
- 5.4 You will be kept informed of the progress and process of the investigation, whilst respecting confidentiality due to the alleged harasser.
- 5.5 At any stage in the process, informal or formal, mediation could be considered as an option if this might resolve the situation. The People team can advise on this.

#### **6.0 Formal procedure – complaint raised by agency worker or internal contractor/consultant about a Saxon Weald colleague/worker**

- 6.1 If the informal approach has failed to rectify the situation, you are requested to raise your concerns in the first instance with the People team. They will then identify an appropriate manager within the business who will arrange to meet with you, prior to commencing an investigation.

#### **7.0 Formal procedure – complaint raised by an external contractor or supplier about a Saxon Weald colleague/worker**

- 7.1 If the informal approach has been unsuccessful or is not appropriate, the external contractor or supplier must make a complaint in writing to their manager/HR team.
- 7.2 The manager or HR representative from the external contractor/supplier should formally advise Saxon Weald in writing, of the details of the complaint plus the contact details of the person who will be handling the complaint. The complaint should be sent to [people@saxonweald.com](mailto:people@saxonweald.com)
- 7.3 Saxon Weald will appoint a manager to investigate the complaint raised who will respond in writing to the concerns usually within 10 working days unless an extension is agreed. The external contractor may be informed of progress made with the investigation and process but will not be advised of the specific details or if any subsequent disciplinary action is taken, to ensure confidentiality.

#### **8.0 Formal procedure – complaint raised by Saxon Weald colleague about an external contractor or supplier**

- 8.1 If the informal approach has been unsuccessful or is not appropriate, the Saxon Weald colleague will utilise the internal grievance procedure to raise their concerns.

- 8.2 The colleague's line manager will communicate with the principal contact at the external contractor or supplier to ascertain the most appropriate person to investigate the complaint. The formal complaint will then be provided in writing to the named person for them to address in line with their internal bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment procedures.
- 8.3 Saxon Weald would expect the external contractor to update the colleague's line manager, normally within 10 working days, on the progress of the complaint but understands that specific details or subsequent disciplinary action taken will not be disclosed.
- 8.4 The manager will ensure the People Partner is updated, for monitoring purposes.

## **9.0 Outcome of formal complaints**

- 9.1 If a complaint is upheld and the person who committed the harassment is still employed/engaged by Saxon Weald, we will support both parties to re-establish positive working relationships.
- 9.2 If they find it difficult to continue working alongside each other or within the same team, we will make every effort to find a solution that suits both parties and will discuss the options.

## **10.0 What happens if you are accused of bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment?**

- 10.1 If someone approaches you informally about your behaviour, do not dismiss the complaint out of hand because you were "only joking", it was "banter" or think the complainant is being too sensitive. It is important to remember that different people find different things unacceptable, and everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to them and to have their feelings respected by others.
- 10.2 You may have offended someone without intending to. If that is the case, the person concerned may be content with an explanation and an apology from you and an assurance that you will be careful in future not to behave in a way that you now know may cause offence. Provided that you do not repeat the behaviour which has caused offence that may be the end of the matter.
- 10.3 If a formal complaint is made about your behaviour, this will be fully investigated. In the case of a Saxon Weald employee, this may mean the disciplinary procedure being instigated. If the person accused of the inappropriate behaviour is a third party (agency worker, contractor, supplier), Saxon Weald would expect their employer to have appropriate procedures in place.

- 10.4 If a complaint is made against a contractor/worker/supplier by a Saxon Weald colleague that is not upheld, and was not made in good faith, where appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken against the colleague making the false complaint.
- 10.5 Nobody should be victimised for bringing a complaint in good faith nor should anyone who has supported them in making the complaint or given evidence. This may result in formal action being taken.

**11.0 Support available**

- 11.1 Saxon Weald has a duty of care to all colleagues involved in any complaints or allegations. A balanced and objective approach will be taken offering support to all concerned, including any alleged harassers.
- 11.2 Confidential support is available to anyone involved in the process through our employee assistance programme. Information is available on the [Wellbeing Hub](#) on SharePoint or from the People team.
- 11.3 The People Partner will assist the manager(s) involved throughout the process and can offer confidential support to all parties involved. They will not be able to give out any information supplied to the manager(s) as part of the investigation. If you give them information relevant to the investigation, they may inform you of the need to pass this onto the investigating manager.
- 11.4 Saxon Weald endeavours to ensure complaints and investigations remain confidential. We understand that you may have family members or close friends that you wish to confide in for support. It is important that you ensure they maintain confidentiality.
- 11.5 In some cases, external services may be of help to you. The People team can provide you with specific signposting to support groups.

**12.0 Review**

- 12.1 This procedure will be reviewed at least every three years to ensure it reflects good practice and any changes to legislation or regulation.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.0	NEW PROCEDURE	Sarah Thomas	Oct 2024

### Examples of bullying behaviour

Note: This is not an exhaustive list but intended to give some examples.

- Persistently criticising someone unnecessarily.
- Shouting at colleagues in public or private.
- Deliberately isolating someone by ignoring or excluding them.
- Withholding information or removing areas of responsibility without valid reason.
- Spreading malicious rumours or gossip.
- Blocking leave or training requests without a sound business reason.
- Deliberately setting objectives with impossible deadlines.
- Undermining a person's self-respect by treatment that denigrates, ridicules, intimidates, demeans or is physically abusive.
- Making threats or comments about someone's job security without valid reason.
- Demeaning comments about a person's appearance.
- Insulting someone.
- Picking on someone or setting them up to fail.
- Ridiculing someone.

**Forms of harassment including sexual harassment**

Note: These examples are not intended to be an exhaustive list, but to act as a guide.

<b>Example: verbal</b>	<b>Example: non-verbal</b>	<b>Example: physical</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate use of affectionate names.</li> <li>• Personal questions/comments.</li> <li>• Innuendoes or teasing.</li> <li>• Comments which exclude because of gender.</li> <li>• Sexual/explicit jokes.</li> <li>• Suggestive, explicit language.</li> <li>• Stereotyping such as about the ability to work by one or other gender.</li> <li>• Commenting on someone’s body appearance or what they’re wearing.</li> <li>• Making sexual comments or noises including ‘catcalling’ and ‘wolf-whistling’.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display of pin-ups or pornographic pictures.</li> <li>• Offensive publications or objects.</li> <li>• Offensive letters / memos / emails / texts / messages including ‘sexts’ or ‘dick pics’.</li> <li>• Unsolicited/unwanted gifts.</li> <li>• Gestures</li> <li>• Staring/leering.</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space.</li> <li>• Unwelcome remarks about a person’s dress or appearance.</li> <li>• The worsening of conditions after a rejection.</li> <li>• Sexual posts or contact on sexual media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unnecessary touching including brushing up against someone, hugging, kissing, or massaging.</li> <li>• Indecent exposure.</li> <li>• Deliberate body contact, unwanted sexual advances or flirting.</li> <li>• Taking a photo or video under another person’s clothing including ‘upskirting’.</li> </ul>

