



**Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service**

DRAFT DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

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Prepared by: **Human Resources Policy Unit**

DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Aims and Objectives
- 1.2 Policy Statement
- 1.3 Scope
- 1.4 Confidentiality and the Data Protection Act
- 1.5 Equality of Opportunity
- 1.6 Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy
- 1.7 Representative Bodies
- 1.8 Further Information and Guidance

SECTION 2 – DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

- 2.1 Types of Conduct
- 2.2 Legislation
 - 2.2.1 Anti-Discrimination Legislation
 - 2.2.2 Other Legislation
 - 2.2.3 Personal Liability
 - 2.2.4 Third party Harassment
- 2.3 Roles and Responsibilities
 - 2.3.1 Corporate and Staff Responsibility
 - 2.3.2 Line Managers
 - 2.3.3 Human Resource Department
 - 2.3.4 Confidential Adviser
 - 2.3.5 Investigating Officer
 - 2.3.6 Trade Union Representatives

SECTION 3 – DIGNITY AT WORK PROCEDURES

- 3.1 Informal Procedure
- 3.2 Formal Procedure
 - 3.2.1 Time Limit
 - 3.2.2 Stage 1: Preliminary Meeting
 - 3.2.3 Stage 2: The Formal Investigation
- 3.3 Where Complaint is upheld
- 3.4 Where Complaint is not upheld
- 3.5 Appeals
- 3.6 Consideration of Transfer
- 3.7 Other Options

SECTION 4 – ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Appendix 'A' Dignity at Work Informal (Local Resolution) Procedure (Flow Chart)
- Appendix 'B' Dignity at Work Formal Procedure (Flow Chart)
- Appendix 'C' Terminology
- Appendix 'D' Contact Details

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1.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service is committed to providing a work environment in which individuals will be treated with respect and dignity. Any form of unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct, including harassment and bullying, that may be harmful to an individual's well being or self esteem is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

NI Fire & Rescue Service will take all reasonable and practical steps to prevent the occurrence of these forms of unwanted conduct by:

- Ensuring every member of staff understands his or her right to dignity and respect at work.
- Ensuring every employee has a right to complain about unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct.
- Consulting with Trade Union Representatives on proposed action relating to the prevention of any form of unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct.
- Providing training for all Managers and supervisory staff ensuring prompt and corrective action will be taken once a complaint has been brought to the Service's attention.
- Providing confidential counselling and advisers for staff affected by unwanted and offensive conduct.
- Ensuring that all staff are fully trained to discharge their duties in relation to Dignity at Work.

1.2 POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy replaces the original NIFRS Harassment Policy and Complaints Procedure and has been designed to ensure that everybody understands their right to dignity and respect at work. Harassment in the workplace is a form of discrimination; it is unwelcome and unwanted and it affects the individual's ability to learn and work. It detracts from a productive working environment and can affect health, confidence, morale and performance. It can also be a manifestation of abuse of power, authority, or control and is coercive in nature.

Managers are responsible for taking appropriate preventive or corrective action and for putting a stop to any unwanted and unreasonable conduct they are aware of, whether or not a complaint is filed. Failure to take appropriate action may result in disciplinary measures being imposed on the Manager as well as the offending person.

Every member of staff has a duty to assist and support NIFRS to ensure that all unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct does not occur.

The abuse of one's authority or position, to intimidate or coerce commonly known as bullying is forbidden. All Managers and Supervisors are responsible for their employees' work environment.

This policy is not intended to limit or constrain the Manager's right to manage. Performance reviews, work evaluation and disciplinary measures taken by a Manager for any valid reason do not constitute harassment in the workplace.

NIFRS is not attempting to hinder good working relationships or friendly and welcome office banter, nor is it trying to standardise how people should relate to each other. Rather it is seeking to distinguish between behaviour which is acceptable and that which is unacceptable and which may disrupt a good and harmonious work environment.

1.3 SCOPE

NIFRS is fully committed to promoting a good and harmonious working environment where each individual is treated with respect and dignity.

This policy applies to all NIFRS members, including staff seconded into the Service, Agency Workers and Contractors, across all locations.

NIFRS appreciates that there is a regular and frequent interface between staff members, visitors and members of the public. Whilst the Service cannot be responsible for the behaviour of a person or persons from these groups, it is not expected that staff should suffer any detriment to their wellbeing from any source whilst they are engaged in the normal business of the Service. Therefore, NIFRS will aim to support any member or group of staff, should they desire to take steps to rectify the situation.

Staff should be aware that NIFRS expects a high standard of behaviour and conduct both inside and outside the workplace. This includes social events in places of entertainment, which have been arranged in the context of work, eg, Christmas parties. This policy will apply to all social events.

1.4 CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE DATA PROTECTION ACT

The importance of maintaining confidentiality throughout this procedure cannot be over emphasised. As far as reasonably possible the Service requires confidentiality to be maintained to ensure a fair and impartial investigation and to maintain a safe and stable workplace. A breach of confidentiality with the intent to undermine an investigation may be subject to the disciplinary procedure.

All records should be kept confidential and retained in accordance with the Dignity at Work Policy and NIFRS Data Protection Policy.

1.5 EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

NIFRS is an equal opportunity employer. This Policy and Procedure will ensure that all employees will be treated in a fair, reasonable and proportionate manner.

1.6 MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE POLICY

The Equality Unit will monitor the use of these procedures and their outcomes. This information will be gathered annually and reported in an anonymous format to the Principal Officers and Directors Group and copied to the appropriate Unions. The collected information will enable the Equality Unit to tackle any patterns of offensive conduct and to provide new strategies for preventing unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct and supporting individuals who may experience such behaviour.

NIFRS gives this Policy a high profile and welcomes feedback from staff, management and the Representative Bodies. The Human Resources Policy Unit will review this Policy and Procedure one year from the date of implementation and periodically thereafter in light of best practice and in accordance with legislative changes. Consultation will be part of any review with the appropriate stakeholders.

1.7 REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

NIFRS will consult the Representative Bodies in all matters pertaining to Dignity at Work.

1.8 FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Queries regarding any aspect of this policy and procedure should be taken up with the Human Resources Policy Unit, based at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters.

The Policy is also available on the Public Folders.

This Policy may be available in alternative formats, on request.

SECTION 2

2.1 TYPES OF CONDUCT

A variety of terms can be used to describe inappropriate behaviour or misconduct that may impact on the person's dignity at work, such as harassment, bullying and victimisation (See Appendix 'C'). This policy is deliberately broad in scope and addresses -

Unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Conduct shall be regarded as having this effect only if, having regard to all the circumstances and in particular the alleged victim's perception, it should be reasonably considered as having that effect.

On the one hand misconduct can relate to aspects of social identity as protected by existing anti discrimination legislation for example, harassment on grounds of gender, marital status, religious belief, political opinion, race, sexual orientation, disability, age, dependency.

One form of direct discrimination is where the employee has been treated less favourably on the grounds of one or more of these protected characteristics.

On the other hand, unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct may be unrelated to social identity (for example, bullying). On these occasions the anti discrimination legislation may not be relevant but the principles contained in Health and Safety legislation regarding an employer's duty of care and also the Protection from Harassment (NI) Order 1997 will apply.

To simplify this, where the misconduct relates to an aspect of social identity then it is often referred to as harassment. Where the misconduct is not based specifically on an aspect of social identity but is based on an abuse of power then it is often referred to as bullying. Both types of misconduct are addressed by this policy.

2.2 LEGISLATION

Various legal remedies are available for those who are subjected to unwanted, unreasonable and offensive behaviour at work. Should the behaviour constitute a criminal offence (eg, assault) then criminal law would apply. Otherwise the civil remedies listed below are available. The common law duty of care requires an employer to provide a safe working environment.

2.2.1 Anti-Discrimination Legislation

Unwanted conduct that is based specifically on one or more aspect of social identity or protected characteristic (ie, harassment based on gender, marital status, religious belief, political opinion, race, sexual orientation, disability, age, dependency) would be addressed under the following equality or anti-discrimination legislation:

- Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 and amendments (gender, marital status);
- Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 (religious belief; political opinion);
- Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 (race; ethnic origin; nationality);
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (specified medical conditions);
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003 (sexual orientation);
- Section 75 of Northern Ireland Act 1998 (all of the above, plus age and dependency);
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006.

The Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996 also makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of membership or non-membership of a trade union.

2.2.2 Other Legislation

Where the above legislation is not relevant (ie, where the issue is not one related to social identity) then the following may be cited:

- Protection from Harassment (NI) Order 1997;
- Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978;
- Human Rights Act 1995; and/or
- Various employment regulations.

2.2.3 Personal Liability

Where NIFRS has taken all reasonable steps to prevent these actions, and if legal proceedings are invoked then perpetrators may be held personally liable for acts of unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct. If a member of staff is considered to have been acting outside the scope of his/her duty so that NIFRS has no legal responsibility, that officer will have to arrange his/her own representation and NIFRS will not accept responsibility for compensation or damages. It is important to remember that the legislation focuses attention on the outcome of the behaviour rather than motive or intent.

2.3.4 Third Party

NIFRS will take reasonably practicable steps to protect employees from harassment from third parties (such as clients, contractors and customers). Employees have a duty to alert management as soon as possible after being subjected to harassment. NIFRS cannot be expected to take necessary measures to combat such behaviour if they are unaware of any such incidents occurring.

NIFRS is committed to ensuring, as far as is practicable that actual and potential customers and outside contractors do not subject staff to offensive and unwanted behaviour, that such behaviour will not be tolerated and that appropriate measures will be taken to eliminate it.

2.3 **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

2.3.1 Corporate and Staff Responsibility

NIFRS recognises its duty of care towards all employees both those who may experience unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct directly and those employees who witness it. It is the Service's expectation that Line Managers who witness any incidents of unacceptable behaviour will challenge the perpetrator and seek to eliminate any such behaviour from within a team or workplace.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that complaints are made in good faith. If it later becomes apparent that an accusation was deliberately false, mischievous or vexatious, and was not due to a misunderstanding or genuine mistake, then this will be treated as a serious matter and may lead to disciplinary action.

All NIFRS employees have the right to work in an environment that is free from any form of unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct. The organisation fully recognises the right of employees to complain about such conduct should it occur. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

NIFRS will make every effort to ensure that employees making complaints and others who give evidence or information in connection with the complaint will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

Each employee has a responsibility to help create and sustain a work environment free from unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct and has a duty to assist and support management in this regard.

It is the responsibility of each individual to encourage Dignity at Work by making it clear when they see unacceptable behaviour that it needs to stop. All employees need to support colleagues who are considering making a complaint.

All staff who have any knowledge of wrongdoing have a responsibility to alert their Line Manager or if appropriate the Equality Manager, or confidential adviser, of any incident of unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct should they witness it. This will enable NIFRS to deal with the matter effectively.

NIFRS will ensure that adequate resources, including training, are made available to implement the policy, achieve its objectives and operate the procedures.

2.3.2 Line Managers

All line managers must act on alleged incidents of unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct which come to his/her attention, from whatever source, by taking prompt and appropriate action to end the behaviour. This duty particularly applies in those work areas for which they hold responsibility. In doing so, managers and supervisors will be expected to encourage their staff to approach a confidential adviser when appropriate. Confidentiality must, of course, be maintained at all times. Following the resolution of a complaint, line managers will be expected to closely monitor the situation to ensure that further problems or any form of victimisation does not occur.

If inappropriate behaviour is alleged to have occurred, line managers must deal effectively with the situation as follows:

- Ensure that staff know how to raise matters relating to the policy;
- Be responsive and supportive to any member of staff who brings forward a complaint;
- Provide clear advice on the procedure to be adopted;
- Liaise with the appropriate designated staff to ensure effective resolution;
- Maintain confidentiality;
- Seek to ensure that there is no further problem or victimisation after a complaint has been resolved;
- Set a good example by treating all staff, visitors and clients with dignity and respect;
- Be alert to unacceptable behaviour and take appropriate action.

All line managers have a duty to implement this policy and to make every effort to ensure that unwanted, unreasonable and offensive behaviour does not occur. Persistent or serious failure on the part of managers to implement the Dignity at Work Policy may give rise to performance issues which may lead to disciplinary proceedings.

2.3.3 Human Resources Department –

The Human Resources Department will –

- communicate details of the policy and procedures to all staff;
- acknowledge and process complaints promptly and appropriately;
- provide appropriate guidance to make each employee aware of, and reasonably capable of, meeting his/her responsibilities;
- include the principles of Dignity at Work in all equality training;
- review use of procedures and outcomes of complaints.

The Equality Manager is not an Investigating Officer but will direct a complaint through the formal procedure if appropriate. The Equality Manager will monitor and review complaints and how they have been resolved on a regular basis in order to ensure that proper standards are being maintained and that the procedures are working effectively.

The Equality Manager, will be responsible for carrying out a preliminary meeting under Stage 1 where a formal complaint of unwanted conduct has been submitted in writing. These consultations will be used to ensure the complaint falls within the scope of the policy and, if so, to reach an agreement with the complainant as to how the matter can be best resolved either formally or informally.

The Equality Manager may exercise the right to request documentation associated with the informal procedure from the Line Manager.

Recommendations and advice will also be made available to the relevant manager normally the Area Commander/Head of Unit (PO Grade).

It may be necessary in certain circumstances for the Equality Manager to seek the assistance of another Human Resources Manager at this stage of the complaint, eg, leave, work load etc.

2.3.4 Confidential Adviser

Confidential advisers will provide guidance, support and assistance to employees who have been subjected to, or accused of unwanted conduct. They will provide advice on the options available to resolve the situation. The confidential adviser will be available to be contacted at any stage of the informal or formal process, but will not play the role of advocate or representative in the formal procedure.

A confidential adviser may, as the first course of action, approach the alleged perpetrator on behalf of the staff member. Confidential advisers will normally act under instruction from those bringing forward enquiries unless the information is judged to be so serious that action is required irrespective of the wishes of the enquirer.

No formal acknowledgement of interviews will be kept other than a confidential file note (countersigned by the enquirer) that will be retained by the confidential adviser on behalf of NIFRS, unless formal procedures follow, when it will become part of the formal investigation.

2.3.5 Investigating Officer

If the matter becomes formal an Investigating Officer will be appointed and will conduct a thorough, fair and impartial investigation. If an individual expresses concerns or difficulties with a particular Investigating Officer, this will be taken into account. It is important to stress that all Investigating Officer's will be trained to act objectively and sensitively. The Investigating Officer will consider the case and produce a report for the relevant Area Commander/Head of Unit, copying it to the Equality Manager. This will recommend whether or not the complaint is upheld based on the facts and evidence found during the investigation.

The Equality Manager will note any specific equality related concerns identified in the Investigating Officer's report and will make recommendations to the relevant Area Commander/Head of Unit. If any disciplinary action is contemplated the NIFRS Discipline Policy and Procedure must apply.

2.3.6 Trade Union Representatives

TU Representatives may raise complaints under this policy on behalf of their members but in doing so they must follow all the protocol and advise their members accordingly.

SECTION 3 – DIGNITY AT WORK PROCEDURE

3.1 INFORMAL PROCEDURE

Normally this stage is appropriate where the staff member simply wants the behaviour to stop, where the behaviour is not deemed to pose a serious threat to other staff or where it has not been repeated. Using the informal procedure does not, however, affect the individual's right to subsequently invoke the formal procedure at any stage. If this happens, any ongoing informal attempts at a resolution must be halted; the formal and informal procedures cannot run simultaneously or concurrently.

A member of staff can seek to resolve matters informally by a number of means, including:

- asking a confidential adviser to meet with the alleged perpetrator in order to move towards an informal resolution;
- approaching the alleged perpetrator with the support of a confidential adviser, a colleague or a trade union representative;

- approaching the alleged perpetrator, making it clear to the person(s) that the behaviour in question is unreasonable, offensive, is not welcome and should be stopped immediately;
- approaching the alleged perpetrator with the support of a line manager;
- mediation; this is a structured process which explores mutually acceptable solutions to problems through discussions with both parties. All mediation expenditure must have the prior approval of the Employment Policy Manager.

While confidential advisers typically operate solely in the informal process, a confidential adviser can be contacted at any stage of either the informal or formal procedures to provide support, to assist with the informal resolution of the problem and/or to provide support during formal procedures. However, the confidential adviser will not conduct formal investigations nor play a representative role in the formal procedure.

Where the alleged perpetrator accepts that his/her conduct has been or could be construed as having been unwanted, unreasonable and offensive and undertakes to modify his/her behaviour with the agreement of the complainant then the matter will end there and no further action is required. If however the alleged perpetrator denies any offence or is not prepared to modify his/her behaviour, the complainant has the option of pursuing the matter formally.

Throughout this process, the person accused of misconduct has the same rights as the complainant and he/she can approach a confidential adviser for advice and support.

Where a member of staff seeks the support of a line manager he/she will be sensitively informed that the role at the informal stage can only be of support or assistance. The employee will be advised that:

- (a) a formal investigation and possible disciplinary action can only take place if the complaint is investigated under the formal procedure;
- (b) a written record of the action taken will be made, filed and kept available for the Equality Manager should it be requested. This may assist in any formal proceedings which may arise if the unwanted behaviour does not stop. Failure to maintain such a record will not invalidate proceedings at the formal stage.

3.2 FORMAL PROCEDURE

3.2.1 Time Limit:

Any member of staff who wishes to invoke the formal procedure should submit their complaint **within three months** of the last incident. Only in exceptional circumstances will a complaint be considered outside the timescale.

Complaints should be lodged in writing, using the pro-forma Complaint Form (SCxx) setting out the particulars of the complaint and what action if any has been taken under the informal procedure. This should be forwarded to the Equality Manager.

The Equality Manager or his/her representative will acknowledge the complaint in writing **within seven working days** of receiving the SCxx. The Equality Manager will also advise the relevant manager - normally the Area Commander/Head of Unit of the complaint.

3.2.2 Stage 1: Preliminary Meeting

Once a formal complaint has been made it will be dealt with promptly, confidentially and sensitively. Initially the Equality Manager will meet the complainant to explain the procedure and to agree the most appropriate means of resolution.

This meeting will normally take place **within seven working days** of receiving the SCxx. If a formal investigation is required, then the subsequent investigation should normally be completed **within eight weeks**.

If an informal resolution is agreed as the most appropriate at that time, then this course of action will not prejudice any later return to the formal procedure, should this prove necessary.

The investigation of a complaint is likely to be a difficult experience for all concerned. Therefore, all cases will be accorded the highest degree of sensitivity and confidentiality. The parties in any complaint may seek the help and support of a work based friend, colleague, trade union representative or confidential adviser who may be present, at the employee's request, at any and all stages of the process.

3.2.3 Stage 2: The Formal Investigation

Under Stage 2 of the formal procedure, following the preliminary meeting and the clarification of the agreed means of resolution, the Equality Manager will refer the matter to the relevant manager normally the Area Commander/Head of Unit.

This Officer will then appoint an appropriate Investigating Officer (IO) who will be at a level at least two roles above that of the alleged perpetrator. The Investigating Officer will have authority to interview all persons and examine all documentation considered relevant to the complaint.

This Area Commander/Head of Unit will then write to the complainant and the alleged perpetrator to advise that an Investigating Officer has been appointed to undertake a formal investigation.

The alleged perpetrator will be provided with a copy of the complainant's written statement of complaint at this stage and will be given the opportunity to comment or answer the allegation.

The IO will also initially interview the complainant to obtain fuller details of the complaint. The complainant may be accompanied.

The IO will then contact the alleged perpetrator to arrange a formal interview. The alleged perpetrator will be informed of his/her right to be accompanied.

The alleged perpetrator will also be advised at this stage not to approach the complainant or any potential witnesses as this could be construed as victimisation.

Where gross misconduct **is** being alleged, consideration may be given to a short period of suspension, with full pay, for the alleged perpetrator. In other cases, if deemed necessary, appropriate action will be taken to avoid contact between the complainant and the alleged perpetrator. In such circumstances, the wishes of the complainant will be taken into account, especially where he/she expresses a desire to be removed from the situation.

If the alleged perpetrator admits the offence then normally there will be no need to involve witnesses. The Investigating Officer will then prepare a full report of his/her findings and submit it to the Area Commander/Head of Unit, copying it to the Equality Manager.

If the alleged perpetrator denies the offence, the IO will proceed to interview all relevant witnesses.

During all interviews, notes will be taken by a separate note taker. Interviewees will be given the opportunity to examine these notes at the time and will be asked to sign them to confirm that they are an accurate reflection of the interview.

Anyone involved in an investigation will be expected to co-operate fully with the Investigating Officer by making themselves available for interview and, where possible, by giving detailed responses when answering questions. A person who fails to co-operate with an investigation or who is found to have breached confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

If the complainant, alleged perpetrator or any witnesses are absent from work due to sickness, arrangements may be made if circumstances permit to interview such persons at home or at a suitable neutral location. This is to ensure matters can be brought to a proper conclusion within a reasonable timeframe.

Once the investigation is completed the Investigating Officer will furnish his/her report to the Area Commander/Head of Unit, copying it to the Equality Manager.

The Equality Manager will note any specific equality related concerns identified in the Investigating Officer's report and will make relevant recommendations to the Area Commander/Head of Unit.

The Area Commander/Head of Unit will then consider whether or not to uphold the complaint. Both parties to the complaint will be advised in writing of the Area Commander/Head of Unit's decision. Witnesses will also be informed in writing that the investigation has been completed.

If it is considered appropriate or useful, training, counselling or mediation may be offered to both parties at this stage. This will be provided by a trained member of staff or by an external provider as appropriate.

3.3 WHERE THE COMPLAINT IS UPHELD

If disciplinary action is contemplated the Area Commander/Head of Unit will address that or remit the case to the appropriate level for action under NIFRS Discipline Policy and Procedure. The investigation already carried out under the Dignity at Work Policy will also be used for any discipline proceedings. All parties interviewed regarding the complaint should be advised of this.

3.4 WHERE THE COMPLAINT IS NOT UPHELD

Where the complaint is not upheld, the Area Commander/Head of Unit will inform the complainant of this fact normally by means of a personal meeting giving the reasons as to why the complaint has not been upheld and explaining the appeal procedure.

In accordance with the provision at section 2.3.1 if the complaint is found to be malicious or vexatious that may result in disciplinary action against the complainant.

3.5 APPEAL

The complainant will have a right of appeal against the decision not to uphold the complaint.

3.5.1 The appeal stage should not amount to a re-hearing of existing evidence.

The Appellant must appeal to the relevant Principal Officer or Director **within seven working days** of receipt of the decision.

The person hearing the Appeal should not have been involved in the complaint.

The appellant must submit the appeal in writing, using the pro-forma Complaint Appeal Form (SCxx) detailing the grounds of appeal. They will be given not less than ten days notice of the appeal hearing.

The Appellant will be notified of the outcome seven days after any appeal meeting. The decision will be final and there will no further right of appeal

3.6 CONSIDERATION OF TRANSFER

3.6.1 Where a complaint has been upheld

Where a complaint has been upheld, the complainant may request that they avoid any further contact with the alleged perpetrator. If it is agreed that further contact between the individuals concerned would be problematic and it is practical to facilitate the request then, every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate that.

In these circumstances, consideration should be given to relocating the perpetrator in the first instance and where transfer of the complainant occurs it should not lead to any disadvantage to him/her.

3.6.2 Where a complaint has not been upheld

It may be appropriate to consider allowing either party to transfer voluntarily.

3.7 OTHER OPTIONS

With effect from 6 April 2005, any individual wanting to present a claim to a tribunal has a statutory obligation to have firstly initiated the internal complaints procedure and have allowed at least 28 days to elapse.

Please note that under existing statutory procedures strict timescales exist for submitting complaints to outside bodies, for further information contact the following:

Equality Commission

Equality House
7 - 9 Shaftesbury Square
BELFAST
BT2 7DP

Tel: 028 9050 0600
Fax: 028 9024 8687
Textphone: 028 9050 0589

E-mail: information@equalityni.org
Website: www.equalityni.org

(Complaints of discrimination on grounds of race, religious belief or political opinion, sex, sexual orientation, age and disability. A person should make a complaint normally within 3 months of the last case of a discriminatory act (multiple episodes) or after a single occurrence.)

Northern Ireland Ombudsman

The Ombudsman's Office
Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
BELFAST
BT1 6HN

Tel: 028 9023 3821
Fax: 028 9023 4912
Freephone: 0800 34 34 24

E-mail: ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk

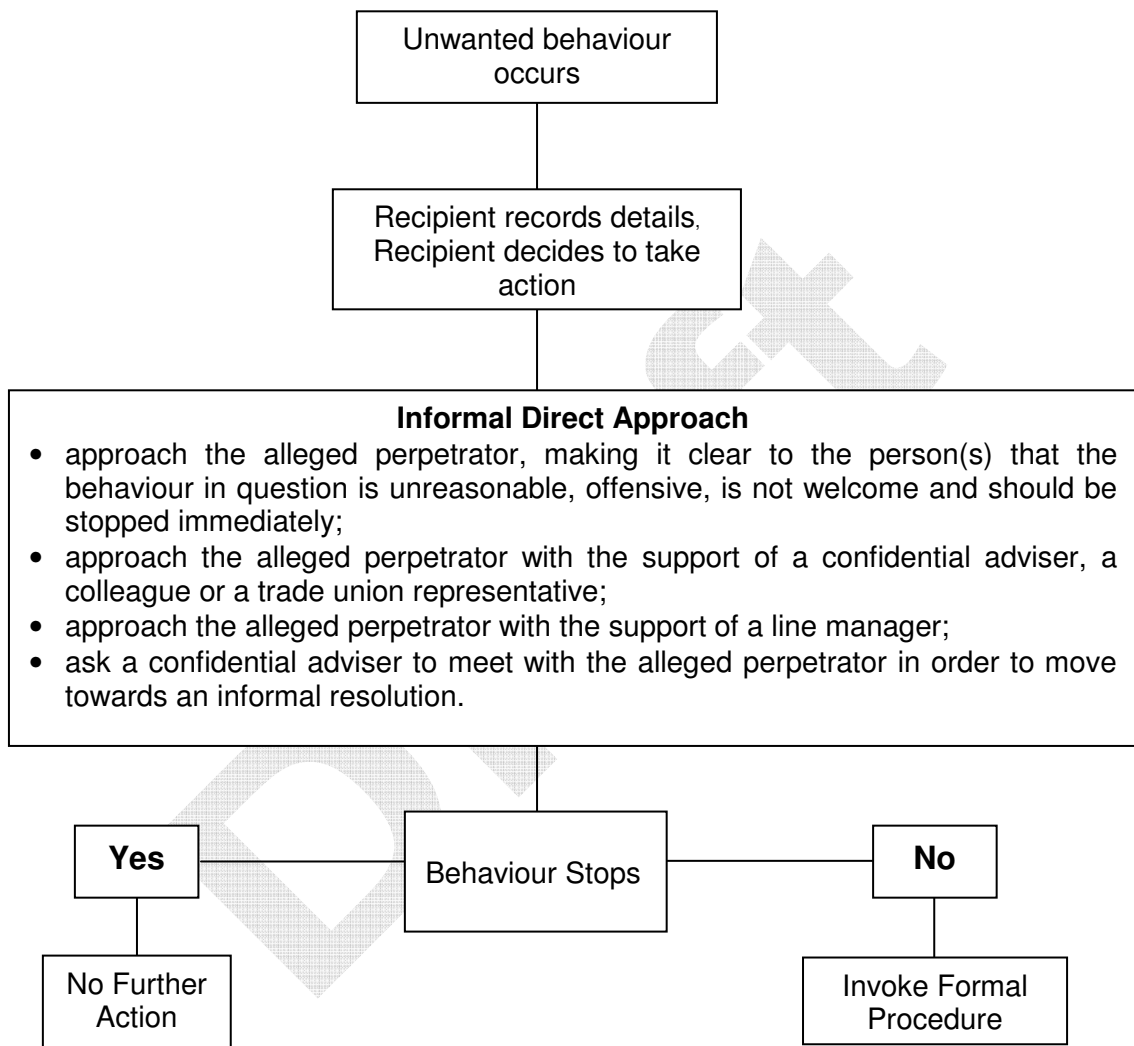
Website: www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk

(Generally within 12 months of the individual having knowledge of the incident leading to the complaint.)

Civil or Criminal Action under Northern Ireland Legislation

If a complaint is brought under the Protection from Harassment (NI) Order 1997 then the person must have been subjected to unwanted attention on at least two occasions by a "Third Party" (and thereby given an indication that the behaviour was unwanted before it was repeated) and that person is able to bring a civil or criminal action under this legislation.

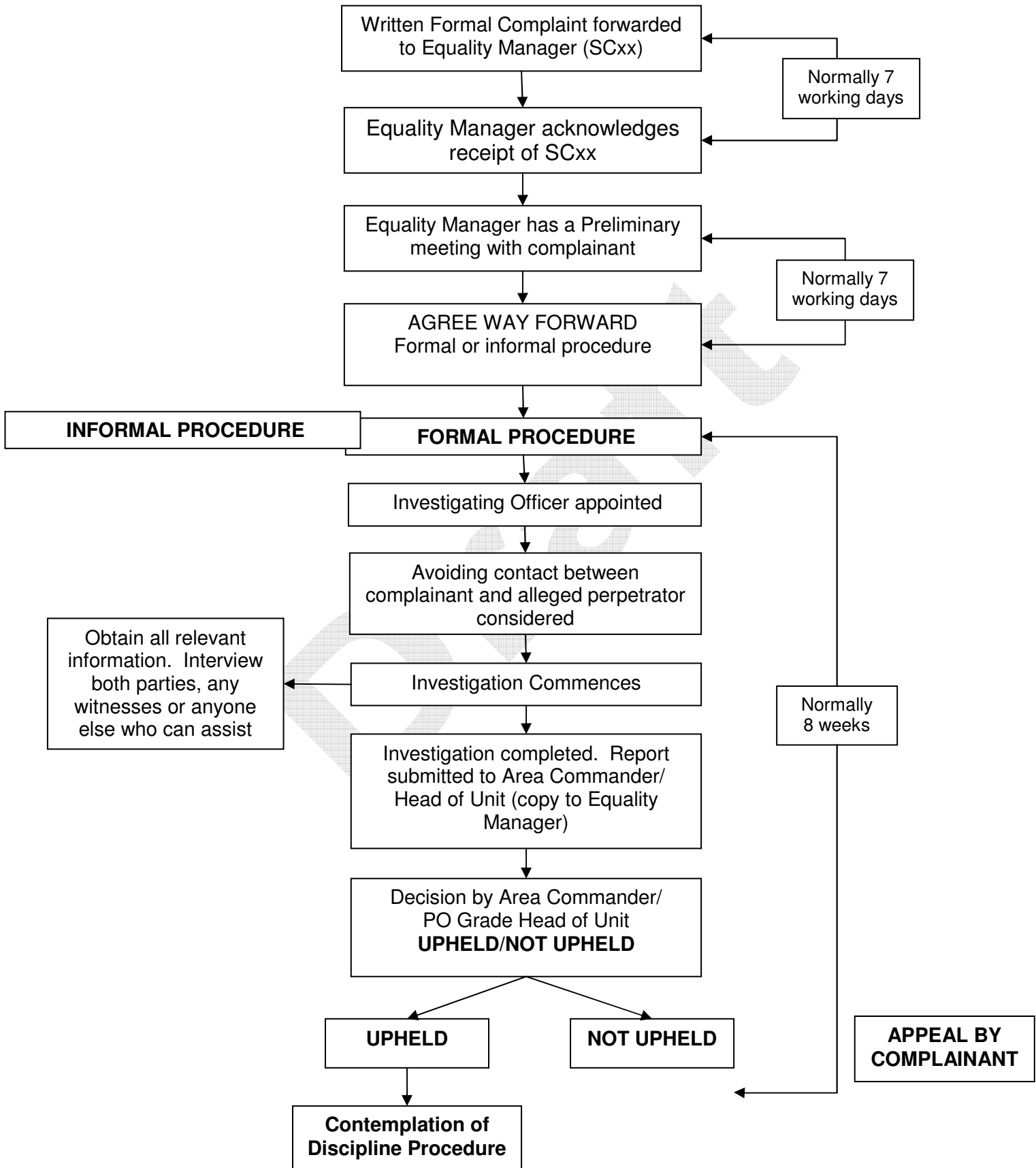
DIGNITY AT WORK
THE INFORMAL PROCEDURE



NB: The formal and informal procedures cannot run simultaneously or concurrently.

DIGNITY AT WORK PROCEDURE

THE FORMAL PROCEDURE



TERMINOLOGY

The following are examples of unwanted, unreasonable and offensive behaviour that have the potential to fall within the scope of this policy,

HARASSMENT

With regard to harassment on grounds of disability, religious belief, political opinion, sex, marital status, race/ethnic origin, sexual orientation or age, the following definition applies:

Unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Conduct shall be regarded as having this effect only if, having regard to all the circumstances and in particular the alleged victim's perception, it should be reasonably considered as having that effect.

BULLYING

A common definition is 'Persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, abuse of power or unfair penal sanctions, which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermines his/her self confidence and which may cause him/her to suffer stress'.

VICTIMISATION

Victimisation entails the less favourable treatment of a person because he/she has brought proceedings alleging discrimination, given evidence or information in a discrimination case, or taken any action in respect of a complaint. The failure to protect an employee from retaliation or unpleasantness following a complaint may itself give rise to a further act of unlawful discrimination.

MOBBING

Harmful treatment of or the putting of harmful treatment on an employee, often with the intention and effect of inducing him/her to leave. The conduct can be deliberately and consciously coordinated but is just as likely to develop spontaneously without a conscious plan but as a result of a barely conscious copy-cat atmosphere.

CONFIDENTIAL ADVISERS

Name:

Location:

Telephone No:

To be confirmed

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

TITLE:	LOCATION:	CONTACT NO:	EXT:
Equality Manager	NIFRS HQ	028 9266 4221	2301
Employment Policy Manager	NIFRS HQ	028 9266 4221	2305
Recruitment and Services Manager	NIFRS HQ	028 9266 4221	2363