



ANGUILLA PUBLIC SERVICE

ADVISORY LEAFLET

Reducing/Eradicating/Preventing Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment in the APS

Department of Public Administration Ref:

Date: Updated 2019

In 2016, of those who completed the Civil Service Survey, 20% said that they had experienced discrimination and 15% bullying or harassment during the past 12 months. In 2018, of those who completed the Civil Service Survey, 15 % said they had experienced discrimination and 14% bullying and harassment during the past 12 months. There have been minimal decreases in these results, therefore, the APS needs to continue to focus on these issues over the weeks and months ahead. Public Administration reiterates that as a service, we must have zero tolerance for any kind of discrimination or harassment or bullying at any level in the organization. A work environment free from discrimination, harassment and bullying is the right of every employee. All senior leaders must assume responsibility for eradicating discrimination, harassment and bullying by taking immediate and appropriate action.

Consequently, Public Administration has updated the Advisory Leaflet as a continued clear statement and intervention strategy to address these important issues. Public officers are again reminded that this leaflet does not interfere with the disciplinary or grievance processes established in General Orders. Rather, it aims to make all employees aware of, accountable for and responsive to inappropriate and unacceptable behavior.

Discrimination

This can be defined as the unfair or unequal treatment or consideration of an individual (or group) based on certain characteristics rather than merit, including:-

- Race
- Place of origin
- Religion or belief
- Social or educational background
- Main spoken/written language or language ability
- Grade or responsibility level
- Working location
- Working patterns
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Marital status, pregnancy or breastfeeding
- Caring responsibilities
- Political opinions
- Age

To reduce/eradicate/prevent employee discrimination senior leaders should ensure that the following takes place with respect to all officers:-

- ✓ Officers should talk with their supervisors about the perceived discrimination or speak with the next level manager or Human Resource Manager if the discussions do not provide a reasonable explanation.

- ✓ Performance appraisals of employees should be conducted without prejudice. Managers/supervisors have a responsibility to inform employees of performance deficits and to agree to corrective measures with employees. Discussions on performance issues should be documented.
- ✓ Individual and team achievement should be recognized appropriately.
- ✓ All officers should be provided with training and development opportunities to enhance their work performance.
- ✓ Line managers/supervisors should strive to provide effective, fair management practices irrespective of social, familial, religious or other affiliations of the employees. Inclusive language and practices should be used and stereotyping avoided.
- ✓ Line managers/supervisors should listen to and value the views of employees.
- ✓ As far as reasonable and practical, consideration should be given to employees who for religious reasons prefer not to work on certain days or require alternative work patterns.
- ✓ Public Administration should develop policies to ensure equal opportunity and diversity in the workplace.

Harassment

Harassment is the unwelcomed advances of one person to another. It refers to behavior which is offensive and intrusive. It may take a variety of forms. Most common forms are:-

- Sexual
- Racial
- Verbal
- Physical
- Electronic/cyber – ie via telephone, email and or text messaging.

Harassment may also include but is not limited to:-

- Exclusion of a person from a group/activity that they would have been included in.
- Excessive observation of an employee's performance without reasonable justification.

- Crude/degrading remarks about a person's physical appearance, gender, accent etc.
- Provoking someone
- Unfair evaluations

To reduce/eradicate/prevent employee harassment the following should take place:-

- ✓ The officer being harassed should directly inform the officer who is doing the harassing (the harasser) that the advances, whatever the nature, are unwelcomed and must stop. If the harasser refuses to stop the officer should report the matter to the supervisor or utilize the steps outlined by General Orders to address the matter.
- ✓ The line manager/supervisor should look at the allegation of harassment on a case by case basis taking into consideration the nature of the harassment and the context in which the alleged incident occurred. A determination of the case should be based on fact only.
- ✓ Supervisors must clearly state that harassment will not be tolerated and take immediate and appropriate action when an officer complains.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as repeated abusive behavior towards someone who is less powerful, driven by a need to control and with a view to bringing that person under submission. It seeks to publicly humiliate the person and results in the person being fearful and compromised. It often results from an abuse of power and authority.

The workplace bully tends to be insecure, have poor interpersonal skills, little empathy and subjects targets to unfair or excessive criticism and trivial fault finding.

Some examples of bullying behaviours in the workplace include:-

- Withholding of resources or information to get a job done
- Setting impossible/pointless tasks, unreasonable changes in priorities or work plans or deadlines, unfair allocation of work, removing responsibility etc
- Deliberate changing of work hours or schedule to make it difficult for the person
- Continually questioning an individual's competence, belittling of opinions, accusations of lack of effort
- Physical or social exclusion, preventing fair access to opportunities etc
- Intimidation, insults, malicious gossip, name calling or making derogatory remarks about a person
- Shunning someone or stereotyping someone based on a disability

- Invasive personal questions
- Hitting, pushing or grabbing

To reduce/eradicate/prevent bullying the following should take place:-

- ✓ Officers should report instances of bullying at once
- ✓ Managers/Supervisors should address bullying behaviours immediately
- ✓ Managers/supervisors should encourage meaningful management and staff interaction
- ✓ All officers should model and support ethical, respectful behaviour



Remember:-

- ✚ **Each officer must subject himself or herself to scrutiny and take every precaution to ensure that their behaviours are not deemed to be harassing, bullying or discriminatory. We all have a moral responsibility to help create a positive, safe workplace.**
- ✚ **All incidents of harassment – no matter how large or small or who is involved – require managers/supervisors to respond quickly and appropriately. If issues are left unaddressed, a hostile working environment can develop.**
- ✚ **All formal complaints of discrimination, harassment and bullying should be dealt with using the disciplinary or grievance procedures established in General Orders.**
- ✚ **Legitimate comment and advice, including relevant feedback, from managers and supervisors on the work performance or work-related behaviour of an individual or group should not be confused with bullying, harassment or discrimination.**
- ✚ **Managers/supervisors have the right and responsibility to manage, which includes making decisions that employees may not always agree with. However, such decisions should be fair to all employees and not unfairly exclude a person or one group or another.**

For additional information on discrimination, harassment and bullying in the workplace please utilize the learning and development available via Civil Service Learning (CSL).

**Make Reducing/Eradicating/Preventing Discrimination,
Bullying and Harassment in the APS your moral
responsibility today!**

We welcome your feedback, comments and suggestions.

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.....We are listening!