

GREATER **LONDON** AUTHORITY

[REDACTED]
(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA150321-8315

25 March 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for a copy of the Greater London Authority's Dignity at Work Policy, which the GLA received on 13 March 2021. Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please find attached the information we hold within the scope of your request.

The Greater London Authority's Dignity at Work Policy is attached.

All of the GLA's HR policies and procedures are available to staff on the GLA's intranet. We do not publish all of these HR policies and procedures on the external London.gov web site.

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference MGLA150321-8315.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Information Governance Officer

If you are unhappy with the way the GLA has handled your request, you may complain using the GLA's FOI complaints and internal review procedure, available at:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information>

Dignity at work Policy

1 A commitment to tackling bullying, harassment and victimisation

- 1.1 The Greater London Authority (GLA) respects the dignity of all employees and values the contribution they make in the workplace. The GLA has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of bullying, harassment (discrimination) and victimisation, and is committed to providing a working environment that is open, inclusive and in which everyone is treated with respect.
- 1.2 The GLA deplores any kind of bullying, harassment or victimisation. This behaviour causes offence, degrades people and creates an intimidatory working environment. It can affect people's health, wellbeing, safety and welfare, and prevent effective working.
- 1.3 The GLA will not tolerate this type of behaviour and will deal with any complaints of bullying, harassment and victimisation promptly, fairly and sensitively. If, after investigation, it is found that bullying, harassment or victimisation has occurred, the GLA will take action under the disciplinary procedure.
- 1.4 This policy has the full support of the Mayor and Assembly, the Head of Paid Service, the senior management team and Unison and Staff Networks (who have assisted in the development of the policy).
- 1.5 This policy applies to all employees of the GLA, Mayoral appointees, outward and inward secondees, agency workers and consultants working in the GLA.

2 What is bullying, harassment and victimisation?

- 2.1 **Bullying** can be defined as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power which undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures the person on the receiving end. Bullying can be by one person against another or can involve groups of people. Bullying may be overt or subtle. Whatever form it takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome to the person on the receiving end of it.
- 2.2 'Mobbing' is where bullying is committed by a group on a targeted individual and can be described as 'being ganged up on'. Sometimes, but not always, it can take the form of upward bullying i.e. a manager, or managers, are bullied by a number of less senior staff.
- 2.3 **Harassment** is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, and/or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual. It may be persistent or an isolated incident. If a person is treated less favourably, due to having rejected unwanted conduct, this is also considered harassment. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to other people.

2.4 **Victimisation** refers to the less favourable treatment of someone compared to their peers because they have complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint, or given evidence in relation to a complaint. It includes situations where a complaint has not yet been made but someone feels they are being subject to different treatment because it is suspected they might make one.

2.5 A complaint made in good faith, is not considered malicious or vexatious regardless of whether the complaint is upheld or dismissed. However, an employee will not be protected from the possibility of disciplinary action if a malicious or vexatious complaint is made or supported, or if they give false evidence.

3 Perception of bullying, harassment and victimisation

3.1 For the purpose of this policy, the GLA will investigate any complaint of bullying, harassment or victimisation which is *perceived* as such by the person on the receiving end of it, taking into account all the circumstances, to establish whether it can reasonably be considered that bullying, harassment or victimisation has taken place.

3.2 What an employee determines as offensive is a key issue in determining whether bullying, harassment or victimisation has occurred. However, there is also an element of whether, on the balance of probability, a reasonable person would view the behaviour as offensive if they were in the same circumstances as the individual finding the behaviour offensive.

4 Recognising bullying, harassment and victimisation

4.1 Bullying, harassment and victimisation can be:

- face to face
- written
- by e-mail
- by text (including WhatsApp and instant messaging)
- on social media (including 'trolling')
- by phone

4.2 As sometimes bullying, harassment and victimisation is subtle, this may make someone doubt what is happening to them. It can happen off-site, or outside of work hours i.e. at social events with colleagues.

4.3 For fear of victimisation colleagues may be reluctant to come forward as witnesses as they may also fear the consequences for themselves. They may be so relieved that they are not being bullied or harassed themselves that they go along with the bully/harasser as a way of avoiding attention themselves.

4.4 Whatever the situation, the GLA is committed to taking action on allegations of bullying, harassment and victimisation.

5 The effects of bullying, harassment and victimisation

5.1 Bullying, harassment and victimisation can affect physical and mental health as well as job performance. It can impact people in different ways, and it is important to understand the possible effect of these behaviours, which can often include*:

- low self-confidence and low self-esteem
- demotivation
- stress
- anxiety and depression
- ill health
- absence from work
- working with increased isolation from others
- humiliation
- anger and frustration
- not feeling able to cope
- job insecurity
- issues in relationships both inside and outside work
- changes in behaviour, mood or interaction with colleagues
- changes in work output levels and focus
- struggling to make decisions, to get organised or to prioritise effectively
- losing interest in activities and tasks previously enjoyed
- changes in eating habits, appetite and increased smoking and drinking

* these behaviours are indicative

6 Managers' responsibilities

- 6.1 Managers have a particular responsibility to be aware of the different kinds of bullying, harassment, and victimisation, and ensure that the working environment is open and inclusive. They must ensure that all employees are treated fairly, equally and with respect. They should examine their own behaviour to ensure that they are not bullying, harassing or victimising any members of their team. In particular, they should be aware that circumstances can arise where employees may feel this way even if no such abuse is intended.
- 6.2 Managers also have a responsibility to tackle bullying, harassment and victimisation in the workplace (as well as ensuring their own approach does not constitute such behaviours). One of the simplest ways that managers can do this is to ensure that they model appropriate work-place behaviour when carrying out their own roles and in their daily contact with team members, GLA colleagues, stakeholders and partners.
- 6.3 It is also important that managers feel confident to challenge inappropriate behaviour if they witness it, and to ensure that employees are aware of the support and procedures available to them if they feel that they are being bullied, harassed or victimised.

- 6.4 Managers should also be aware of work situations where there is a potential for bullying, harassment and victimisation to take place and try to guard against it. For example, by being mindful when an employee is:
- in a minority in a workgroup, or is working in an isolated role, where there is little support; or
 - liaising with someone but you know they feel uncomfortable doing so (this includes people from third party organisations)

7 Support and awareness

- 7.1 It is important for managers to support employees experiencing bullying, harassment and victimisation and to understand the anxiety that they may be feeling. Managers should understand that employees may find it easier to talk to a colleague about what is happening rather than their manager. Resolution Champions, Unison representatives and Staff Networks are also an additional source of support.
- 7.2 However, no matter how managers become aware of bullying, harassment or victimisation they should take immediate action to deal with it. All incidents or complaints should be treated seriously. Managers should avoid making any judgements concerning the complaint until it has been fully investigated.
- 7.3 The GLA believes that, where possible, informal resolution to issues is in the best interest of all parties. Submitting a formal request for resolution should be the last resort for an employee who feels they have suffered bullying, harassment and victimisation. There is a requirement on managers to ensure that they have appropriately considered all possible informal approaches to tackling any issues which have been brought to their attention.
- 7.4 Managers should be having regular 1:1 discussions with their direct reports to discuss performance and development, and the GLA advises managers to use these conversations to also talk about wellbeing issues at work. Having open conversations with employees about the way they are feeling if they have an issue with the behaviour of another employee is vital to try to avoid the situation escalating unnecessarily. If an employee raises a complaint of bullying, harassment or victimisation, the manager should seek advice from their HR Adviser.
- 7.5 The manager's role in dealing with incidents is to take action to ensure that complaints are handled promptly in the appropriate manner, and that the bullying, harassment or victimisation does not continue or recur. They should ensure that effective working relationships are resumed as soon as possible and that the work of the team is not unduly affected.
- 7.6 Managers should be aware of how management action, such as addressing poor performance, can cross over or be perceived by the member of staff to be bullying behaviour. Therefore, managers need to ensure that disciplinary, capability and sickness absence policies are consistently and fairly applied.

8 Employer responsibilities

- 8.1 **Training-** The GLA will ensure that all managers are properly trained so that they know their responsibilities and the appropriate standards expected, both in terms of their own behaviour and that of their staff. All staff (managers and non-managers) are required to attend, '[Dignity and Inclusion within the GLA](#)', within their first 6 months. This face to face interactive workshop aims to enable attendees to achieve positive outcomes by promoting inclusive behaviours within the workplace.
- 8.2 **Confidentiality-** Repeating accusations of bullying, harassment or victimisation prior to the outcome of an informal or formal investigation itself can constitute bullying, harassment or victimisation. The need to observe an appropriate level of confidentiality will not prevent anyone involved in the procedure from seeking the advice from the Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR & OD) Unit, Unison or a Staff Network.
- 8.3 It will not however be possible for a manager, or HR, to deal with anonymous complaints. Although every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality, managers may not be able to offer unconditional confidentiality because they have a duty to take appropriate action when they receive a complaint of bullying, harassment or victimisation. As managers are expected to both prevent and deal with potential workplace conflicts, if a manager, having liaised with HR, decides to progress a complaint they have received either formally or informally, they may do so with the employee's knowledge but without needing their permission.
- 8.4 **Policies-** On behalf of the GLA, HR is responsible for regularly reviewing the relevant policies to ensure they are in line with legislation and best practice. HR welcomes feedback from employees and managers on how these policies can be made easier to use.

9 Agency workers, consultants and those on secondment out of or into the GLA

- 9.1 The right to be treated with dignity at work applies to all workers who have the same legal protection from discrimination and harassment as all other GLA staff. Line managers should seek to ensure that agency workers, consultants, and those on secondment into the GLA are not unlawfully discriminated against or harassed while carrying out work at the GLA. Line managers should also ensure that all agency workers, contractors and inward secondees are made aware of the Dignity at Work Policy and their obligations under this policy with regards to treating others in a non-discriminatory manner and with dignity, courtesy and respect.
- 9.2 If an agency worker, consultant or inward seconded has an issue or complaint in relation to bullying, harassment or victimisation while working at the GLA they should raise it under the Grievance Procedure of the Agency or parent employer in the first instance. The agency, consultancy, or secondees' employer should then liaise with the GLA about investigating and resolving the complaint.

10 Further information

- 10.1 This policy will be issued to all staff and will be available on the intranet.

10.2 This Policy should be read in conjunction with other GLA Policies and Procedures such as:

- [Code of Ethics and Standards for staff](#)
- [Code of Conduct for Elected Members](#)
- [Resolution Policy and Guidance](#)
- [Disciplinary Procedure](#)
- [Anti-Fraud and Corruption \(Whistle-blowing Policy\)](#)
- [Advice on use of social media](#)
- [Trans and Gender Identity Policy](#)
- [Stress Management Policy and Guidance](#)
- [Wellbeing Framework](#)
- [Domestic and gender based violence and abuse](#)

11 Review and monitoring

11.1 This policy will be kept under review by management and Unison.

11.2 Statistical details of all requests for resolution, including those relating to bullying, harassment or victimisation will be reported to the Oversight Committee and the Diversity and Inclusion Management Board on a regular basis.

Appendix 1

Dignity at Work Guidance

1 Purpose of the guidance

- 1.1 This guidance been designed to offer further advice to staff about how they can help meet their responsibilities in creating an open and inclusive working environment in the GLA including on:
- Nature of bullying, harassment and victimisation
 - Guidance to staff experiencing bullying, harassment and victimisation
 - Guidance to managers on both challenging – and responding to allegations of – bullying harassment and victimisation
- 1.2 The Dignity at Work Policy states that the GLA has a zero tolerance of bullying, harassment and victimisation. To give more clarification to what types of behaviour could be viewed in these terms, this guidance offers clear examples under each of these headings.

2 Barriers to employees reporting bullying, harassment and victimisation

- 2.1 Someone who is being bullied, harassed or victimised may think “this is normal behaviour in this organisation”. They may be anxious that others will think they are weak, or not up to the job, if they are intimidated by the actions of their manager or a work colleague. They may worry that they won’t be believed or will be accused of “overreacting”. They may feel that they will get into trouble if they complain or that it will make the situation worse.
- 2.2 Workplace culture: if ‘banter’ and jokes are the norm at work and are not challenged, employees are unlikely to feel confident that a complaint about bullying and harassment will be taken seriously or dealt with effectively.
- 2.3 Career prospects: employees can perceive that making a complaint will have a negative impact on their career development.
- 2.4 Reluctance to raise the issue with a line manager or HR: employees may not trust that confidentiality will be maintained
- 2.5 Concern that colleagues will view them differently: once a complaint is made and others become involved in an investigation of alleged bullying, harassment or victimisation it may be that an employee is worried their colleagues feel ‘dragged’ into the situation. It is the responsibility of all GLA employees to be mindful of dignity and inclusion and to help address it where there might be an issue.

3 Bullying

- 3.1 Examples of bullying can include:
- making offensive jokes, remarks, derogatory or lewd comments or name-calling

- ridiculing or humiliating someone, including picking on someone or setting them up to fail
- overbearing supervision or misusing power or your position, including displaying contempt
- persistently making threats or comments about job security, including persistent undue pressure to work beyond contracted hours
- deliberately undermining a competent employee, by overloading them or by constant criticism
- preventing someone from making progress by deliberately, and without good reason, limiting career or training opportunities
- unwelcome remarks or 'banter' about physical appearance, mental health or other personal remarks
- subjecting, or threatening to subject someone to any detriment, or unfair treatment, for either making or supporting a complaint made in good faith
- deliberately making false, malicious or vexatious accusations against an employee, and/or encouraging others to do so
- incitement of others to do any of the above.

4 Social media & cyber bullying

4.1 With the increased use of social media, care should be taken by employees to behave appropriately on social media sites, and not to participate in behaviour that may be construed as bullying, harassment or victimisation under the Dignity at Work Policy.

4.2 Examples of this can include:

- emails which are considered offensive, for example this could include, the tone of the email, and also the content of the email, both words and images
- email threats, including emails which appear inoffensive, but the implied meaning behind it constitutes bullying; e.g. a manager using email to bombard an employee with more work than they can handle, and not treating other employees in the same way
- posting defamatory comments on blogs and/or social media sites
- offensive comments or threats by SMS text messages
- posting private and personal details about someone online.

5 Overt and subtle signs of bullying:

Obvious Signs	Less Obvious Signs
Open aggression, threats, abuse and obscenities, shouting and uncontrolled anger triggered by trivial situations.	Excessive supervision and monitoring and being excessively critical about minor things with malicious intent.
Humiliating, ridiculing or belittling in front of others, persistent criticism or sarcasm.	Taking the credit for the other person's work but never the blame when things go wrong.

Personal insults and name-calling, spreading malicious rumours.	Overruling an individual's authority or position without warning or proper discussion.
Freezing out, ignoring, excluding to isolate victim.	Setting impossible objectives or changing targets without telling person. Or not sharing all information available about a decision/workstream with all those involved.
Never listening to other person's point of view, always cutting across people.	Purposefully ignoring, avoiding, or not paying attention to someone; "forgetting" to invite someone to a meeting; selectively greeting or interacting with others besides a victim.
Aggressively forcing or persuading someone to say or do things against their will or better judgment.	Constantly changing expectations, guidelines, and scope of assignments; constant inconsistency of word and action (e.g. not following through on things said) with intent to undermine.

6 Harassment

- 6.1 It is worth being aware that someone does not have to have been subject to harassment themselves; comments don't have to be aimed at them or about them for those behaviours to be deemed unacceptable. A member of staff could overhear comments, or be offended by any made about a colleague, and could still claim harassment and challenge it.

7 Protected Characteristics and examples of unacceptable behaviour:

- age
- disability
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- race
- religion or belief
- marriage and civil partnership*
- pregnancy and maternity*

* Marriage and civil partnership/pregnancy and maternity: these characteristics are not included in the standard definition of harassment provided by the Equality Act 2010. However, harassing someone because they are pregnant or on maternity leave is likely to constitute direct discrimination.

8 Behaviours that could constitute harassment

- 8.1 Here are some examples that could be considered harassment linked to protected characteristics; this list is illustrative, not exhaustive:

8.2 Age

- Ageist remarks made to or about an employee
- Referring to someone using ageist terminology
- Treating a young colleague's ideas or suggestions as inferior because of their youth
- Teasing directed at an employee because they have a much older or much younger partner
- Leaving, for example, forms regarding pension arrangements on an older person's desk without legitimate reason
- Cracking jokes or making demeaning remarks suggesting that an older person's physical or mental faculties may be declining on account of their age

8.3 **Disability**

- Pranks played against a disabled employee
- Jokes or banter based on disability generally, about a particular type of disability, or about a particular person with a disability
- Offensive terminology when describing a disabled person
- Mimicking someone with a disability
- Deliberate isolation of someone at work or non-cooperation on the grounds of their disability
- Arranging events which prevents people with disabilities from attending

8.4 **Gender-based**

- Jokes, banter or remarks based on gender identity or expression, which are demeaning or derogatory
- Sexist remarks made to or about an employee
- Calling someone by a name with a gender-bias

8.5 **Sexual harassment**

- Threatened or actual sexual assault
- Unwelcome or persistent sexual advances
- Language of a sexual nature, whether verbal or in writing
- Office gossip or detrimental speculation about an employee's private sexual activities
- Jokes or banter of a sexual nature
- Coarse or vulgar humour
- Sexually suggestive gestures
- Leering or whistling at someone
- The displaying or sharing of pictures or photographs of naked individuals regardless of gender identity or expression
- Sexually explicit material displayed on computer screens

8.6 **Sexual orientation**

- Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic remarks or banter made to or about an employee about their sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation

- Jokes about gender identity or expression, or a person's sexuality
- Comments implying sexual orientation, or making assumptions and judgements about a colleague based on their sexual orientation
- Offensive terminology used to or about a gay, lesbian or bisexual employee
- Deliberate isolation of someone at work or non-cooperation on the grounds of the person's sexual orientation
- Teasing, speculation or gossip directed at an employee because of their sexual orientation or a family member who is gay, lesbian or bisexual
- Gestures or phrases which are derogatory, demeaning or making stereotypical assumptions towards gay, lesbian or bisexual people
- Outing an individual without their permission
- Using religious or cultural belief to justify anti-LGBT+ bullying and harassment
- Making assumptions about a person's sexual orientation

8.7 **Gender Reassignment**

- Invasive or persistent questions or comments about possible reassignment surgeries
- Suggestive remarks
- Unwanted comments on dress and appearance
- Verbal threats
- Swapping toilet signs over when someone declares their intention to undergo treatment
- Jokes or banter of a sexual nature.
- Deliberate isolation of someone at work or non-cooperation on the grounds of the person's gender identity
- Purposefully ignoring an employee's preferred pronoun or deliberately mis-gendering them
- Referring to an employee's trans history without their consent

8.8 **Race**

- Use of racial stereotypes or making stereotypical assumptions
- Threatened or actual physical assault motivated by race, colour, ethnic or national origins
- Language that is racially offensive or derogatory, whether oral or in writing
- Racist remarks made to or about an employee
- Racist remarks made about a particular race but not to anyone from that race
- Calling someone by a name based on race, colour, ethnic or national origins or nationality
- Deliberate isolation of someone at work or non-cooperation on the grounds of race
- Racist material displayed on computer screens
- The conspicuous display of a tattoo or the wearing of a shirt or badge that displays a racist or racially offensive slogan

8.9 **Religion or belief**

(references to religion and belief include a lack of religion and belief)

- Threatened or actual physical assault motivated by religious differences

- Derogatory remarks made about a particular religion or about a person on the grounds that they observe a particular religion or have a particular belief
- Jokes or banter based on religion
- Office gossip or detrimental speculation about an employee's religion or religious practice
- Deliberate isolation of someone at work or non-cooperation on the grounds of their religion or religious practices
- Teasing someone on the subject of religious convictions or religious practices
- The conspicuous display of a tattoo or the wearing of a shirt or badge that displays a slogan that is offensive to people of a particular religion
- The wearing of clothing displaying slogans that have a sectarian significance

9 Victimisation

9.1 Examples of victimisation can include:

- Penalising someone for making a complaint of discrimination, harassment or bullying
- Excluding a person from work-related activities or conversations in which they have a right or legitimate expectation to participate because they have made a complaint of discrimination, harassment or bullying
- Creating a difficult or oppressive environment for an individual because they have made a complaint – whether informal or formal – of discrimination, harassment or bullying

10 What should you do if you think you are being bullied, harassed or victimised?

- 10.1 It may be difficult for you to raise the issue of bullying, harassment or victimisation, especially if you are not sure whether or not the way you are being treated is acceptable.
- 10.2 If you feel that you are being bullied, harassed or victimised, as far as possible you should try to sort matters out informally with the person concerned as soon as the incident occurs. It is possible that they simply do not realise that their behaviour is upsetting you and an informal discussion may help them understand the effects of their behaviour and agree to change it. You may choose to do this yourself or you may want advice from a Resolution Champion, your manager, your manager's manager, a colleague or a Unison representative, or a member of one of the Staff Networks. You can also contact the HR Business Partner team by making a Request for Resolution, via resolution@london.gov.uk and speak to a Resolution Assessor. The Dignity at Work training course advises some techniques on how to challenge unwanted behaviours, so please book yourself a place on the next course if you would like to attend a session.
- 10.3 If possible, try to avoid being alone with the person who you feel is bullying, harassing or victimising you.
- 10.4 Keep a note of the following:
- the time, date and place of any incidents
 - what happened and the nature of the incident

- your feelings and reactions at the time
- the response of the bully/harasser/victimiser
- any witnesses.

- 10.5 We have a number of informal routes of resolution including Early Resolution Meeting, Facilitated Conversation and Mediation. Depending on the nature of the issue and the desired outcome, you may want to consider one of these routes to resolution. The Resolution Champions and Assessors can explain the processes in more detail and Assessors will help you decide what informal route, if any, is appropriate for you. Please note that both parties must be willing to engage in facilitated meetings or mediation, and the purpose of it is not to blame the behaviour of others but to reach an agreement on the working relationship going forward.
- 10.6 The GLA recognises that occasionally it may not be possible, or appropriate, to informally resolve the issue. If this is the case, you can use the Resolution Policy to make a formal complaint. You will find a copy of the Resolution Policy and Guidance on the intranet.
- 10.7 Any formal complaints of bullying, harassment or victimisation will be dealt with promptly, fairly and sensitively. If, after an investigation has taken place, it is found that bullying, harassment or victimisation has occurred, appropriate action will be taken under the disciplinary procedure.
- 10.8 If, after an investigation has taken place, the complaint is deemed to be vexatious then appropriate action will be taken under the disciplinary procedure.
- 10.9 As a general principle, the decision whether to progress a complaint is up to you. However, the GLA has a duty to protect all staff and may pursue the matter independently if, given all the circumstances, it is considered appropriate to do so.

11 Making use of Staff Networks

- 11.1 You may wish to contact [Unison or one of the Staff Networks](#), who can support you to share information with the HR Unit in confidence.

Seeking advice and counselling

If you are reluctant or don't feel able to make a complaint, please discuss the issue with a Resolution Champion, a peer, manager, Unison or Staff Network colleague. All employees also have access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which offers free, confidential, independent advice and short-term counselling on a range of subjects (including bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination). The service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You will find the freephone number and other details [here](#).

Other sources of advice include:

[Equality Advisory and Support Service](#)

[ACAS](#)

[Bullyonline](#)

[Stonewall](#)

Advice for managers: what to do if you suspect a colleague has been subjected to bullying, harassment and victimisation/what to do if you receive a complaint of bullying, harassment or victimisation

Sometimes people being bullied, harassed or victimised may appear to overreact to something fairly trivial but which may be the “last straw” following a series of incidents.

As a manager, you could have a private conversation with someone about whom you are concerned. It is easy to worry about how to approach a conversation but there are no special skills needed – just the ones you use every day like common sense, empathy, being approachable and listening. When you do this, you should:

- 1 Choose an appropriate place to meet; make sure it is quiet and that you will not be interrupted.
- 2 Ensure confidentiality as far as possible: the information they tell you is likely to be sensitive and should be shared with as few people as possible. Discuss with them what information should be shared with whom. Please remember that neither you, nor HR, can deal with anonymous complaints and that managers have a duty to take appropriate action if they receive a complaint of bullying, harassment or victimisation.
- 3 Have an open conversation: ask simple, open and non-judgemental questions and let your colleague explain in their own terms what might be happening, by whom and how it is making them feel.
- 4 Not make any assumptions: don't try to guess at what is happening (in case you have misunderstood the situation)
- 5 Listen carefully and respond sensitively and flexibly to what they say. Make no promises, just ask them how you can help them.
- 6 Agree actions: discuss what, if anything, they would like you to do. Before agreeing to anything, make sure you're not being asked to do something that you can't or shouldn't do.
- 7 Encourage them to seek further advice: there are alternative options available for further advice if they are feeling bullied, harassed or victimised (further information is contained in the Policy).
- 8 Offer reassurance: if they have not felt able to speak openly at that time, let them know your door is always open and that, as far as possible, you'll help them get the advice and support they need.
- 9 Seek advice for yourself: if it is appropriate to speak to your manager about the situation, you should do so. Alternatively, please contact the HR Unit Resolution Assessors via resolution@london.gov.uk who will be able to help.

The differences between a manager using the GLA processes to tackle poor performance levels (capability), poor behaviour (disciplinary) and high sick absence levels and bullying, harassing and victimisation.

Managers are entitled to manage their staff to try to improve their performance, competencies, conduct, and absence levels. This will often involve difficult conversations and invoking the relevant GLA processes to deal with any of these issues, does not in itself constitute bullying, harassment or victimisation. Managers, when raising any issues with their staff, should be mindful

of their responsibilities to do so to try to avoid making the employee feel belittled or undermined. Managers are encouraged to seek advice from their HR Advisers about how to approach a difficult conversation to use a GLA procedure to address any issues with a member of staff.

Acceptable	Unacceptable
Ensuring regular 1:1s take place to discuss workload, performance and development and creating a reasonable note of what was agreed	Insisting on 1:1s more than weekly, which are very long, or overly thorough, in order to put undue pressure on a member of staff
Having private informal discussions relating to capability, conduct & discipline and sick absence levels, and, if things don't improve, invoking the relevant formal GLA procedure.	Not following the GLA procedures fairly and proportionately in relation to the concern they have. Making comments in public (i.e. outside the relevant line management chain and HR) about someone's' capability, conduct & discipline and sick absence levels.
Expecting staff to be flexible in their approach to their work in the short term if the volume of work is higher than normal, or cover is required for a colleague who is temporarily absent.	Forcing staff to do tasks which are not reasonably in their job descriptions (i.e. covering work for a long period of time despite no absence, or doing much more menial tasks)
Only invite staff to meetings when it is appropriate for them to attend.	Purposefully not inviting a member of staff to a meeting at which they would be expected by others to contribute, given it is their area of expertise.
Asking a member of staff to draft a presentation/briefing paper but not getting them to present it, if it is not appropriate they do so (given audience/context).	Presenting work and ideas as their own, with the intent to take full credit for it, when it is not appropriate.

What should you do if you are being accused of bullying, harassment or victimisation?

If someone has raised informal concerns with you that they feel your behaviour has constituted bullying, harassment or victimisation, and it is appropriate to do so, please try to engage in an informal conversation with them to try to understand why they think this might be the case. Please also be prepared to discuss some informal resolutions as to how you can work together to resolve the issues raised. It could be that there has been a genuine misunderstanding and it is quite easy to resolve the matter between you. However, the GLA recognises this may be a challenging conversation to have, so if you would like further guidance on the processes available or some coaching on how to approach the conversation, please contact the Resolution Assessors via resolution@london.gov.uk and a member of the HR Unit will contact you.

If someone has submitted a formal Request for Resolution, a Resolution Assessor will be in contact with you to outline the formal process, what will be expected of you, and what rights you have under the formal Resolution process.

Updated: November 2019 and March 2021