

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Employment and Appeals Committee

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WARDS: All

PART I **FOR DECISION**

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – DIGNITY AT WORK CODE OF CONDUCT AND MANAGING STRESS AND WELLBEING CODE OF PRACTICE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with an overview of the updated Dignity at Work Code of Conduct and Managing Stress and Wellbeing Code of Practice. Both the updated documents are attached as Appendix A and B.

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to review and approve the updated codes.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

- (a) The codes support employee health and wellbeing and promote an inclusive work environment, which in turn supports the Joint Wellbeing Strategy and JSNA.

(b) Five Year Plan Outcomes

Maintaining a committed, talented and inclusive workforce is central to delivering the Five-Year Plan Outcomes.

4. Other Implications

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications of the proposed action in terms of allocated budgets.

(b) Risk Management

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
<p>Review and Approve <i>Dignity at Work</i> and <i>Managing Stress and Wellbeing Codes</i></p>	<p>Tolerance of discriminatory behaviour risks challenge under the Equality Act (2010). Failure to pay due regard to the health and wellbeing of staff risks challenge under the Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999); Toleration of poor standards of behaviour in the workplace raises the risk of employment tribunal claims and other costly employee relations cases, poor working relationships and staff morale. Staff absence due to stress in the workplace and associated costs thereof.</p> <p>Perceived Inequality/poor behaviours in the</p>	<p>Codes restate “zero tolerance approach” to inappropriate behaviour. Emphasis on early and informal resolution aims to reduce formal procedures and associated costs; however, clear escalation process for serious and unresolved cases. Emphasis on employee welfare, holistic approach to stress management and practical advice</p>	<p>6</p> <p>9</p>	<p>Review and monitor through regular Employee Relations Case Review and Management</p> <p>Regular review of legislation changes and code is updated.</p> <p>Ensure code is widely communicated and both management and staff are educated on the code purpose and aims</p> <p>Regular review of Employee Relations Cases and reporting at Directorate Management</p>

	workforce can negatively affect recruitment and retention of staff			Meetings where there is a rise in cases.
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(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The council has a duty as an employer to protect staff from discrimination, bullying and harassment in the workplace (Equality Act 2010) and promote good relations between people of different protected characteristics. Under the Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999), the council has a duty to employees with regard to assessing the risk of stress-related ill health that may arise at work.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

Employees of the council comprise all equality groups: both codes aim to promote positive work outcomes for all staff with a clear “zero tolerance” environment for inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour and a clear emphasis on employee well-being. However, it is recognised that some groups may be more likely to experience incidents in the workplace that are related to dignity at work and an EIA will monitor the policy in terms of staff making claims and outcomes.

(e) Workforce

The council is committed to being an inclusive employer, attracting and retaining a talented and committed workforce from all backgrounds. Also to promote a working environment that is free from discrimination where there is a culture of dignity and respect.

5. Supporting Information

5.1 The council is committed to promoting a working environment where the highest standards of behaviour are exhibited by all employees. The two codes presented in this report provide frameworks for this to take place. The council recognises its legal obligations under the Equality Act (2010) to ensure that no employee is subject to discrimination, harassment or bullying based on a protected equality characteristic and clear processes are in place to escalate any concerns.

5.2 The *Dignity at Work Code of Conduct* has been updated to include clear definitions and examples of inappropriate behaviour, with details of both the informal and formal processes open to employees to resolve any concerns and issues they may have.

5.2 The council has a legal duty to ensure the health and safety of all employees at work. The *Managing Stress and Wellbeing Code of Practice* is principally

concerned with stress arising from or affecting the individual in the working environment. It appreciates that a holistic approach is often required to support staff who may also be experiencing stress outside of work. The code outlines the key responsibilities of the organisation in identifying and supporting staff that are experiencing stress at work. In particular, the code highlights the roles of both managers and employees in promoting wellbeing, placing important emphasis on spotting early signs, and making early interventions. Furthermore, it outlines the wide range of practical support available to all staff, including the confidential Employee Assistance Programme.

6. Summary of key points:

6.1 The summary below of both codes provides the areas that have been updated and or strengthened.

Dignity at Work Code of Conduct:

- Clear statement of “zero tolerance” approach to bullying, harassment, discrimination, and inappropriate behaviour
- Clear and comprehensive sections on responsibilities and expectations of both managers and employees
- Key legislation explained in respect of discrimination and the Equality Act
- Detailed definitions and practical examples of unacceptable behaviour, updated to include cyber-bullying
- Clear examples of what does and does not constitute the above.
- Detailed information on how to make a complaint, including information on Whistleblowing procedures, access to mediation, other informal processes, and formal procedures

6.2 *Managing Stress and Wellbeing Code of Practice*

- Defining stress and recognising the importance of employee wellbeing in the workplace
- Outlining key legal obligations, including the Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) regarding assessing the risk of stress-related ill health that may arise at work.
- Identifying the potential causes of and key signs of employees under stress
- Practical advice on conducting stress risk assessment, managing stress and links to further support

7. Consultation Process

7.1 Consultation in respect of the revised codes has taken place with Trade Union colleagues, Employee Engagement Forum, SBC Women’s Network, SBC Employees with Disabilities Forum and Corporate Consultative Forum. Following the consultation comments that were made were considered and further revisions made. This report presents the final agreed codes following the above consultation with the various groups.

8. Implementation Process

8.1 When the codes are approved the codes will be communicated to the wider organisation. The implementation process will include various methods of communication including.

- Newsround articles
- Update information on SBC insite
- Programme of events and sessions to Directorates on the two codes to ensure the codes are fully understood.

9. Appendices

Appendix A – SBC Dignity of Work Code of Conduct

Appendix B - SBC Managing Stress and Wellbeing Code of Practice

10. Background Papers

None