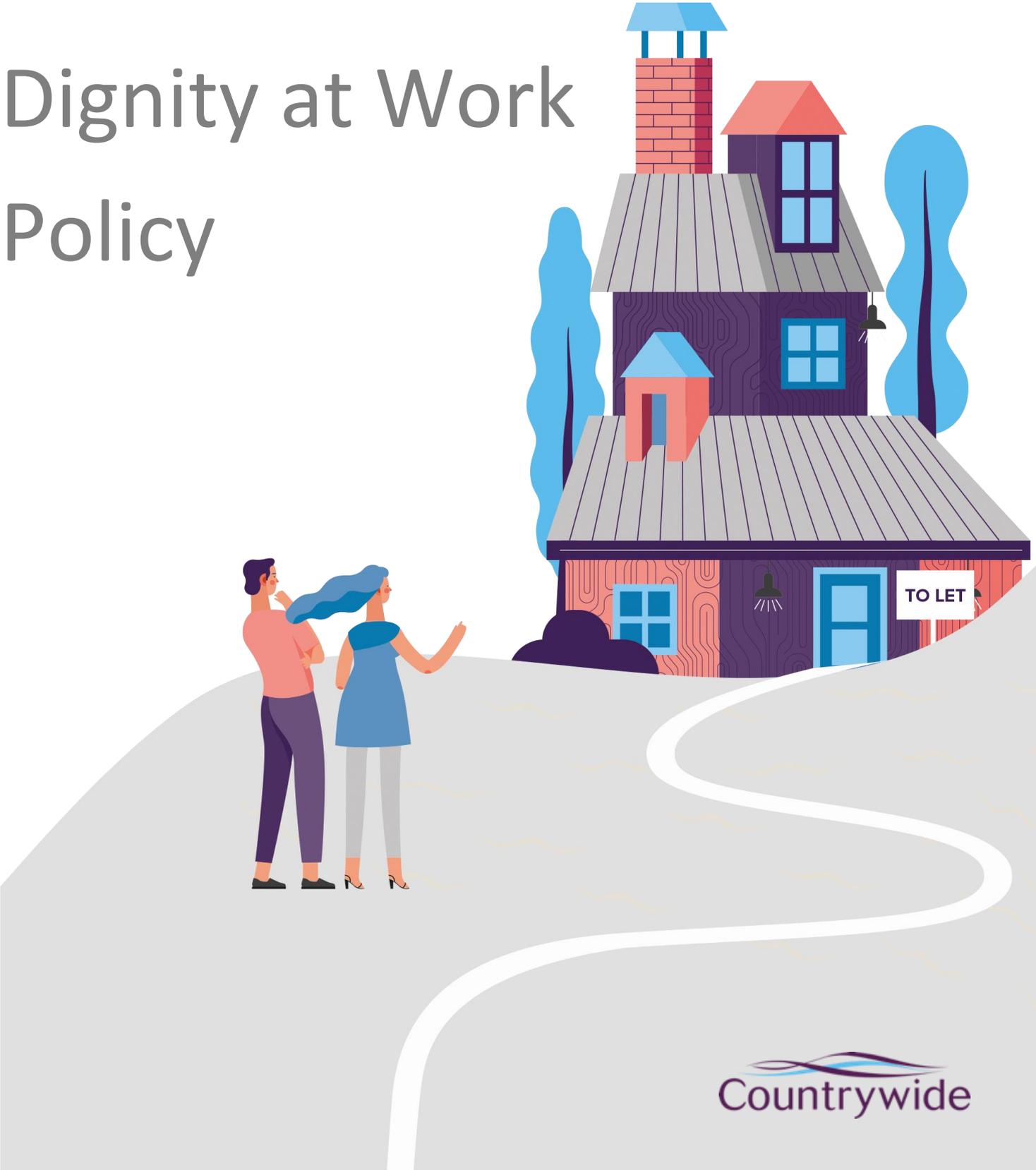


# Dignity at Work Policy





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## Introduction

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All colleagues are entitled to work in an environment where they are treated with dignity and respect. Countrywide is committed to ensure that no colleague suffers unacceptable behaviour whilst at work. This includes but is not limited to bullying, harassment or victimisation. This policy must be read in conjunction with the Grievance Policy. All colleagues are responsible for helping to ensure that individuals do not suffer unacceptable behaviour in any form.

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## Who does this apply to?

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This policy applies to all colleagues across the Countrywide Group (excluding LSH), including contractors and self-employed individuals in relation to service they provide the Company. It's a guide and doesn't form part of your contract.

## What are my responsibilities?

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All colleagues are expected to:

- Treat all other colleagues with dignity and respect
- Conduct themselves professionally
- Not behave in a manner that could be offensive to others
- Be pro-active in developing and maintaining effective working relationships
- Take appropriate action where there are difficulties in working relationships

## What is considered unacceptable behaviour?

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We recognise that something that is offensive to one person might not be offensive to another, however, most of the time you will be able to judge how you should behave. We also recognise that within teams there might be differences of opinion, and this can at times become undermining and destructive. All colleagues should be free to highlight this without fear of further action.

Unacceptable behaviour can be either a single event or a pattern of repeated behaviours, where it is repeated the behaviour might be borderline however when put together would become unacceptable.

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Normal management activity including legitimate, constructive and fair criticism of colleague performance or conduct that is carried out in a reasonable manner should not be confused with unacceptable behaviour.

Behaviour that will always be considered to be unacceptable includes: harassment, bullying or victimisation.

Colleagues can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, Countrywide for any act of unlawful discrimination. Colleagues who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against colleagues or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under Countrywide's Disciplinary Policy. Conduct of this type will often be gross misconduct which can lead to dismissal without notice.

## Definitions of unacceptable behaviour

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### Bullying

Bullying can be deemed as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and/or an abuse or misuse of power that is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end.

### Harassment

Harassment can be regarded as unwanted conduct related to relevant protected characteristics, which are sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age, that:

- has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or
- is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating their dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Examples of behaviour that may be considered bullying or harassment include:

- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour
- copying messages that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail

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- overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, asking for sexual favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected
- making threats about job security without foundation
- deliberately undermining by overloading and constant criticism
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities

Conduct may be harassment whether or not the person behaving in that way intends to offend. Something intended as a "joke" may offend another person. Everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to them and to have their feelings respected by others would be unwelcome to, or could offend, a particular person, e.g. certain "banter", flirting or asking someone for a private drink after work. In these cases, first-time conduct that unintentionally causes offence will not be harassment but it will become harassment if the conduct continues after the recipient has made it clear, by words or conduct, that such behaviour is unacceptable to them.

### Victimisation

Victimisation is when you are treated unfairly or threatened that you will be treated unfairly because you have made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act (i.e. discrimination).

Examples of this could include:

- Bullying and intimidation by colleagues
- Being denied a promotion or being moved into a position with lower responsibility
- Being dismissed

## How do I report unacceptable behaviour?

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If you think you are being subjected to unacceptable behaviour, you may be able to resolve matters informally. The person may not know that their behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting. You may feel able to approach the person yourself, or with the help of someone else. You should tell the person what behaviour you find offensive and unwelcome, and say that you would like it to stop immediately.

If an informal approach does not resolve matters, or you think the situation is too serious to be dealt with informally, you can make a formal complaint by using the Company Grievance Policy. Reports should be made to HR at [HRSupport@countrywide.co.uk](mailto:HRSupport@countrywide.co.uk).

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All complaints will be investigated promptly and, if appropriate, disciplinary proceedings will be brought. You will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative of your choice at any meeting dealing with your grievance. You will be kept informed of the general progress of the investigation; however any action taken against an individual is confidential between the Company and that individual.

Countrywide will treat complaints of bullying and harassment sensitively and maintain confidentiality to the maximum extent possible.

You have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint in good faith, even if the complaint is not upheld. However, making a complaint that you know to be untrue may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

## Change history

| Version no | Date       | Change made by | Brief details of change                              |
|------------|------------|----------------|--|
| 1.0        | 01/03/2019 | Claire Raines  | Launch of New Policy                                 |
| 1.1        | 20/11/2020 | Claire Raines  | Clarification on reporting channel and Annual Review |

## Policy sign off

| Name         | Role              | Date       |
|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| Dan Thompson | Group HR Director | 01/03/2019 |

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## Need more info?

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If there are any queries relating to this document or any of the local supporting policies or standards please contact the HR Helpdesk ([hrsupport@countrywide.co.uk](mailto:hrsupport@countrywide.co.uk) or 01908 961200)

## Ownership and Confidentiality

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