

# GREEN PARTY OF ENGLAND & WALES

## ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE

May 2023

### 1. Purpose of the Policy and Procedure

This policy reflects the Philosophical Basis of the Green Party of England and Wales:

*The Green Party believes that all people are of equal value, and recognises that as individuals and groups characteristics including, but not limited to, disability, age, race, colour, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, class, faith or belief can lead to our being subjected to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression. The Green Party rejects all forms of unjustified discrimination, and recognises that entrenched beliefs and systemic practices impact on people in very different ways. We believe that discriminatory behaviour by individuals and social institutions should be actively challenged. We accept the need for laws and social institutions to protect the interests of disadvantaged individuals and groups.*

This approach guides the experience we expect all members to have, that the dignity and rights of each member are respected and all members accept their responsibility to treat one another with respect. Any behaviour that undermines this aim is unacceptable. The Party does not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment under any circumstances and expects all members to take responsibility for ensuring that neither behaviour occurs within the Party.

This is reflected in our Code of Conduct at section 9 which sets out how people should experience the Green Party, how the party should be as safe or safer than society as a whole, and every members' responsibility to take action.

All members agree to adhere to our Code of Conduct when they join the party and the party supports any members who feel they have experienced bullying or harassment to take out a formal complaint.

### 2. Scope

This policy covers bullying and harassment of members by other members.

Bullying of staff by members is dealt with under the staff Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy. Bullying and harassment of members by staff is dealt with under the staff Disciplinary Policy and should be notified to: [ceo@greenparty.org.uk](mailto:ceo@greenparty.org.uk).

The policy covers bullying and harassment at party events and in any party-related setting outside e.g. party social events. This policy also covers any online

communications on social media relating to the Green Party and should be read in conjunction with the Social Media Policy [tbc June 2023].

If you believe you are experiencing discrimination from the party as an organisation you should raise your concerns via the "Speaking Out" Policy [here: https://members.greenparty.org.uk/governance/speaking-out](https://members.greenparty.org.uk/governance/speaking-out)

### **3. Definitions**

#### Bullying

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power, which has the purpose or effect of undermining, humiliating, belittling, or intimidating the person on the receiving end.

Examples of bullying include:

- shouting or swearing at someone either in public or private
- ignoring or deliberately excluding someone
- picking on someone or setting them up to fail
- ridiculing or insulting someone either in person, or in writing, including on social media
- isolation or non-cooperation
- threatening someone in any way
- public shaming
- spreading false rumours or gossip

#### Harassment

Harassment is a form of discrimination which involves unwanted conduct related to protected characteristics as per Equality Act 2010, and as outlined in the party's Philosophical Basis at PB303, which is covered by discrimination legislation, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. This will include people who are disadvantaged by reason of resistance to discrimination.

Harassment will also occur where a member is treated less favourably because they have rejected or refused to submit to harassment including but not limited to sex based harassment, sexual harassment, or gender re-assignment harassment.

Harassment is normally characterised by more than one incident of unacceptable behaviour, particularly if it re-occurs once it has been made clear by the victim that they consider it offensive. However, one incident may constitute harassment if it is sufficiently serious. Members must recognise that what is acceptable to one member may not be acceptable to another and take steps to ensure that their behaviour is acceptable to all.

Examples of Harassment include:

- Verbal – open hostility, offensive jokes, suggestive remarks, innuendos, malicious gossip, crude language, and offensive songs;
- Non-verbal – offensive letters, e-mails, texts, and offensive objects. Wolf whistles, obscene gestures, sexually suggestive images. Pornographic material of any sort;
- Physical – Intimidating behaviour, assault, and physical coercion. Unnecessary touching, patting, pinching, or brushing against another person;
- Isolation or non-cooperation and exclusion from activities;
- Intrusion – following, pestering, spying etc.
- Coercion – pressure for sexual favours (e.g. to get put forward for political roles) and pressure to participate in other political, or religious or Trade Union groups.

### Victimisation

Victimisation is subjecting a person to a detriment because they have, in good faith, 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. This would include isolating someone because they have complained.

Provided that you act in good faith, i.e. you genuinely believe that what you are saying is true, you have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint or doing anything in relation to a complaint of bullying or harassment and the Party will take appropriate action to deal with any alleged victimisation, which may include disciplinary action against anyone found to have victimised you.

Making a complaint that you know to be untrue, or giving evidence that you know to be untrue, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you in line with the Party's disciplinary policy.

## **4. Procedure**

Everyone has a responsibility to respect the feelings and sensibilities of others in making the party a space that is safe, and to behave in a way which does not cause offence. In some instances, individuals may be genuinely unaware that their behaviour is causing offence, but it is the duty of each individual to be sensitive to the impact their conduct may have on other members.

Officers or staff of the Party may complain on behalf of others as laid out in Standing Orders for Party Discipline 1.11:

Officers and staff of the Party should be aware of their duty of care should they become aware of breaches of the Code of Conduct and associated policies. In this case, they should in the first instance signpost affected members to the complaints policy.

Members who require support in making a complaint should be signposted to and approach the Governance Administrator for reasonable support in doing so. Officers and staff will be able to make a complaint even if they have not been personally

disadvantaged, though it is good practice to obtain consent from the parties before doing so. Exceptions to this include situations where there is an immediate risk of harm to personal safety or safeguarding policy infringements (see the Safeguarding Policy and below).

Where appropriate e.g. when the person who has experienced the bullying and harassment is happy to pursue this idea, issues relating to bullying and harassment can be resolved informally, using mediation, or facilitated discussions (undertaken in a timely manner) as a means of resolution.

The Alternative Disputes Resolution Committee can help with this and they can be contacted via [coordinator@drc.greenparty.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@drc.greenparty.org.uk). ADRC have a framework for mediation within the Green Party which can be accessed here: <https://spaces.greenparty.org.uk/s/alternative-dispute-resolution-committee/home#>

If the matter can not be resolved informally then the member should raise a complaint via process here:

<https://members.greenparty.org.uk/complaints>

Complaints which fall under the definitions of bullying and/or harassment will not be referred to ADRC by Disputes and Complaints Referral Group.

If you have a requirement for reasonable adjustments to use this policy please contact [ceo@greenparty.org.uk](mailto:ceo@greenparty.org.uk) to discuss how you can be supported.

## **5. Governance**

This policy is the responsibility of the Green Party Executive Committee and will be kept under review by the Management Co-ordinator.

Updates will occur every three years, or sooner if there is a significant change in law which needs to be reflected in the document.