

CA England and Wales

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Policy Owner: Chair, Charity Trustees Committee, CA England and Wales

Policy Published: March 2025

Preface

It should be noted that CA England & Wales is the charitable and trading name of the fellowship known as CAUK. The policy is to be used by all members of the fellowship at Group, District and Area level. For ease of reference the name “CAUK” is used throughout this document.

Introduction

Bullying and harassment is unlawful and should not be tolerated within the fellowship of CAUK. No one involved in CAUK should suffer discrimination and instances of bullying and harassment. In extreme circumstances, result in the member being asked to leave that meeting at the discretion of the committee.

CA's traditions and spiritual principles are designed to ensure group meetings, committee meetings and events are free from harassment and bullying and ensure that everyone who comes into contact with CAUK is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, transgender status, marital or family status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, creed, culture, religion or belief, age or disability. Striving to ensure that CA meetings, committee meetings and events are free of harassment and bullying is central to upholding CA's values, traditions, principles, concepts and ethos.

The policy is intended to support this commitment in practice by providing information for group members and committee members on how to recognise and handle concerns of bullying or harassment.

This policy is intended to provide information only and is not intended as prescribed actions. The policy should be read in conjunction with CAUK's ratified document “When Trust is Lost”; CA's World Service Manual; and CAUK's Policy on Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults at Risk plus the CAUK documents; The Area Service Manual, Our Common Welfare & The Code of Conduct.

How to understand bullying and harassment

Bullying may be characterised as:

- Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate, or injure the recipient.

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as:

- Unwanted conduct related to age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation, 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.

Behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may be considered being firm, open and honest by another. Most people will agree on extreme cases of bullying and harassment, but it is sometimes the 'grey' areas that cause most problems.

Some examples of this include:

- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour, including via social media
- insensitive jokes and pranks
- lewd or abusive comments about appearance
- 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
- exclusion or victimisation
- unfair treatment
- overbearing sponsorship style or other misuse of power or position
- unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials, asking for sexual favours, making decisions because of sexual advances being accepted or rejected.
- making threats
- deliberately undermining by constant criticism

CAUK's policy on bullying and harassment

We do not tolerate bullying or harassment in our group meetings, committee meetings or events, whether the conduct is a one-off act or a repeated course of conduct, and whether done purposefully or not. Neither shall we tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying.

We should take appropriate action if any of our members are bullied or harassed by people they come into contact with while undertaking CA meetings or service, as outlined in the CAUK ratified document "When Trust is Lost"

It is suggested the emphasis should be on trying to restore unity to the group, rather

than punishment of the individual, as this reflects CA's traditions and principles

Allegations of bullying and harassment should be treated seriously. The facts need to be established quickly, fairly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially.

A process for the resolution of such issues is outlined in the CAUK ratified document, "When Trust is Lost"

Support for victims

We should always try to support victims of bullying or harassment who in extreme cases may consider contacting outside agencies to provide specialist advice and support.

Anyone who makes allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith should not be treated less favourably as a result. However false accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals, so we all have a responsibility not to make false allegations.

Police Involvement

Members should always report incidents of harassment to the Police where there is a clear threat to the safety of other people within the Fellowship or the general public. None of us are above the law, if the issue is within the law then our traditions apply and if the issue is outside the law then contact outside agencies.

Policy Review and Update

The policy has been approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees (CAUK's Charity Trustees Committee), and by CAUK's Area Service Committee (by Group Conscience).

The policy will be reviewed annually, or as and when CAUK becomes aware of changes in best practice or legislation.

Approved by the CAUK Board of Trustees on September 2024