**Anti-Harassment Policy – Inspectors/Associates**

BAC is opposed to harassment in any form.  Harassment is unacceptable behaviour and leads to a stressful and potentially hostile working environment.  BAC is committed to providing a working environment that is free from harassment and in which the dignity of the individual is respected.

**What is harassment?**

People can be subject to harassment on a variety of grounds, including all those mentioned in our Equal Opportunities policy.  It can occur in many forms, including physical, verbal and sexual. Essentially, harassment is unwanted behaviour which may be based on gender, race, sexual orientation, disability etc and which is unreasonable, unwelcome or offensive.

Under the Criminal Justice Act 2003, it is an offence for a person, with intent, to harass another person, alarm or distress them by using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour or by displaying any writing, sign or other visible representation which is threatening, abusive or insulting.

***Defining harassment***
Harassment is behaviour which an individual considers to be offensive or detrimental.

Specific examples may include:

* Racial abuse
* Offensive jokes of a racial nature
* An offensive manner of communication not used with other colleagues
* Offensive remarks or jokes
* Patronising remarks
* Ostracism/exclusion

Specific examples relating to sexual harassment may include:

* Unwanted physical contact
* Unwelcome sexual advances, propositions, suggestions or pressure for social activity outside work where it has been made clear that this is not welcome
* Offensive jokes, insults or ridicule of a sexual nature
* Suggestive or over-familiar behaviour where it has been made clear that this is not welcome
* Display or circulation of sexually suggestive material
* Suggestions that sexual favours may further a career or that refusal may hinder it
* Discussions of a sexual nature in front of colleagues

These lists and examples are not exhaustive.

**What should you do if you think you are being harassed?**

If you feel you are being harassed, abused or bullied in any form, do not try to ignore it.  If you feel able to, in the first instance, make it clear to the person who is harassing you that their behaviour is unwelcome and that you want it to stop. If the behaviour continues, or if you feel unable to deal with it yourself, raise the matter with the Chief Executive. What you say will be treated in confidence and will go no further without your consent. The Chief Executive may be able to act on your behalf to resolve the complaint informally. If the Chief Executive is harassing you, contact the Chairman of Council.

**Formal complaint procedures**

In more serious cases, or where an informal approach has not stopped the behaviour, the next step should be a formal complaint.  This should be made in writing to the Chief Executive.

Initially, an investigation will be carried out by someone unconnected with the incident.  You are entitled to ask for an alternative person to carry out the investigation if you are not comfortable with the first choice. For example, in a case of sexual harassment, you may wish to request that the person carrying out the investigation be of your own gender. BAC will endeavour to meet all valid requests where practicable. As far as possible, confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation.

It is emphasised that the complainant and the accused will not be victimised in any way, however, false or malicious complaint may result in disciplinary action against the complainant.

You will be asked to explain what happened. Where possible, keep a record of incidents so that you can recall accurately what has been happening. If the same person has harassed other colleagues, they should be asked to keep records too, and will also be asked to describe their experiences. The person investigating the complaint will interview everyone involved including any witnesses. All parties involved will be reminded of the need for confidentiality and of their responsibilities for ensuring that no subsequent victimisation occurs.

All formal complaints will be investigated and if a complaint is upheld the perpetrator will be subject to disciplinary action. The nature of that action will depend on the severity of the offence. In extreme cases, the offence may be so serious as to render the offender liable to termination of contract (without previous warning or notice).

**Advice and counseling**

The Chief Executive is BAC’s designated harassment officer and is the person available to listen and give advice to anyone who feels they are being harassed or is otherwise involved in a harassment situation.  Discussion with the Chief Executive will take place in confidence and without pressure to take the complaint further. Any discussion will be totally separate from the formal procedures and will play no role in the investigation of complaints. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to the Chief Executive, the Chief Inspector or Deputy CEO will be equally willing to hear concerns.