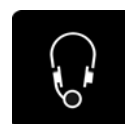


Somerset County Council

Corporate Code of Practice for Managing Complaints of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

Guidance for Managers, all staff, Council
Members, service users and members of the
public

"Working together for equality"




We can supply this document in large print, in a Total Communication version, on cassette, audio, arrange translation and provide a member of staff to discuss the details.

Please call Somerset County Council on 01823 356728

January 2006

Please note that this Code of Practice is for:

- Service Users/Customers
- Members of the Public
- Somerset County Council Employees where the perpetrator is a service user (except school teaching and non-teaching staff where a separate recording procedure should be followed)
- Councillors
- Those who are contracted to work for the Council

 **Please refer to page 12 (Section 4) for details of how to make a complaint of bullying, harassment or discrimination**

*If you are an employee experiencing bullying, harassment or discrimination from another employee, please refer to the 'Fairness & Dignity at Work' Policy or talk to someone in confidence through the Listener's Service, Care First (independent counselling service) or contact your HR Officer for further information

For further information and contacts go to:

<http://enterprise.somerset.gov.uk/personnel/personnelGroup/default.asp>

Statement from Alan Jones - Chief Executive

I am determined that Somerset County Council will be an organisation where all people are treated fairly and equally and where their concerns are taken seriously. This means that it will also be a place where all people - staff or our customers - feel supported in challenging any incidence of unfair or unequal treatment by others or by the systems and procedures of the organisation.

We will create an environment in which people feel supported in speaking up against unfair or unequal treatment and, on behalf of the Council, I am happy to go on record on these points.

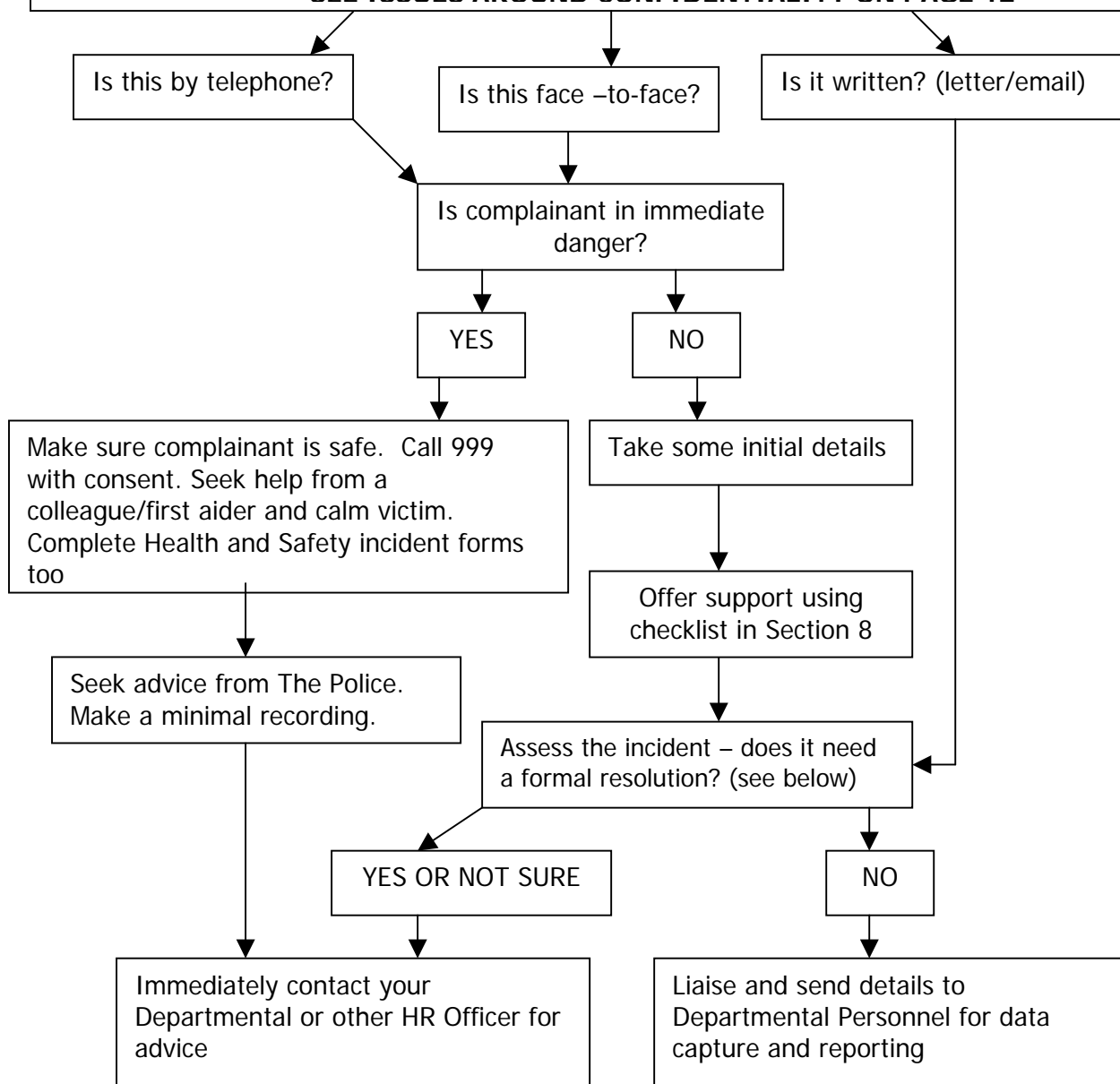
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Jones', with a stylized circular flourish at the end.

September 2005

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FLOW CHART 1 - GUIDANCE FOR ALL MANAGERS
Alleged Perpetrator = Employee
Alleged Victim/Complainant = Service User or Member of the Public

Complaint of bullying, harassment or discrimination is received or made
IF APPROPRIATE, ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE INCIDENT AT THE LOWEST POSSIBLE LEVEL
***SEE ISSUES AROUND CONFIDENTIALITY ON PAGE 12**



Departmental HR Officers will:

- Fully record incident on Recording Form in the event of formal action being taken
- Keep appropriate manager/victim informed and advise of follow-up action needed
- Check progress and instigate investigation/other proceedings
- Send quarterly returns on incidents to County HR officer
- Organise follow-up complaint satisfaction questionnaire with victim

An **Informal incident** may mean the perpetrator:

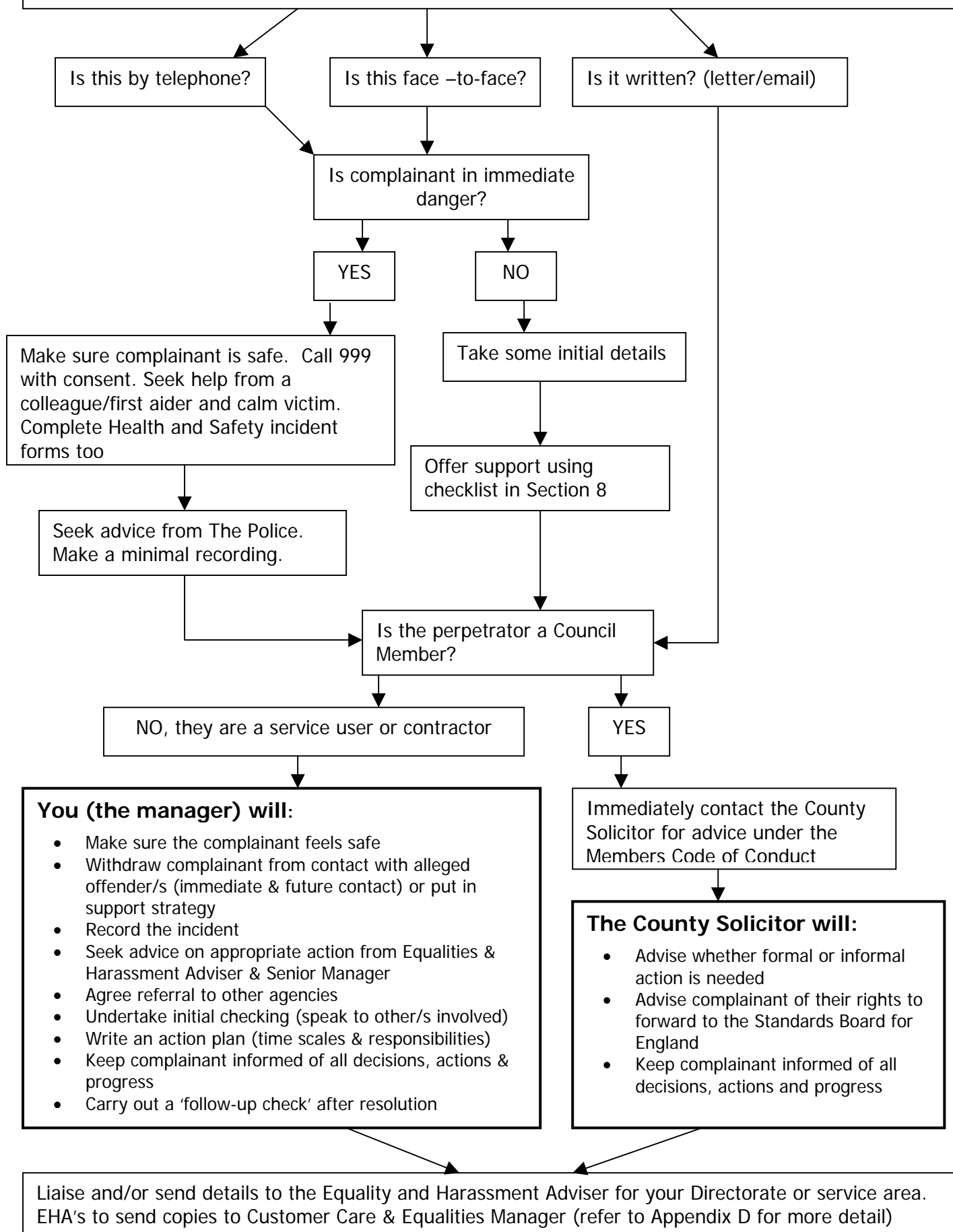
- Acknowledges their behaviour
- Doesn't understand how the behaviour is potentially discriminatory
- Hasn't realised potential outcome

A **Formal incident** may mean the perpetrator:

- Disagrees actions took place
- Gives alternative reasons and explanations
- Acknowledges their behaviour & disagrees it is discriminatory

FLOW CHART 2 - GUIDANCE FOR ALL MANAGERS
Alleged Perpetrator = Service User, Council Member or Contractor
Alleged Victim/Complainant = Service User or Employee

Complaint of bullying, harassment or discrimination is received or made
IF APPROPRIATE, ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE INCIDENT AT THE LOWEST POSSIBLE LEVEL
***SEE ISSUES AROUND CONFIDENTIALITY ON PAGE 12**



SECTION 1

Aim, Purpose and Scope of the Corporate Code of Practice:

Aim – What are we trying to achieve?:

The aim of this Code of Practice is to provide a way of consistently reporting, recording and monitoring/evaluating all incidents of bullying, harassment and discrimination to enable Somerset County Council to better its practice in investigation and successful resolution of such incidents and to identify areas which need more targeted and proactive action to tackle inequality. This is all necessary to increase our standard of customer care and works alongside our Customer Care Strategy and our Corporate Complaints Procedure.

What is the purpose of this Code?:

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to give guidance to all employees, Councillors and Contractors of Somerset County Council on how to respond to incidents of bullying, harassment and discrimination involving service users/customers or members of the public. By making this clear, this will give the guidance needed to ensure incidents are taken seriously, dealt with promptly and appropriately and communication between departments, officers and between complainant and officer is as effective and as clear as possible.

This document has also been written as a public guidance document for customers using the services of the County Council and sets out our responsibilities and timeframes for dealing with incidents made known to the Authority. The Code of Practice also makes the responsibilities of our customers clear in terms of treating others with respect and dignity. 'Others' in this sense covers other service users, learners and tutors (if in a learning environment) and employees of the County Council or those contracted by the County Council to deliver its services.

Scope – who is this Code of Practice for?:

Although this code of practice does cover employment (where a complaint is made against an employee's conduct or behaviour) and service delivery provided by the County Council, employees wishing to raise a complaint of bullying, harassment or discrimination against another employee should use the [Fairness and Dignity at Work Policy](#). Customers wishing to raise a complaint other than one based on bullying, harassment or discrimination will need to do this through [Somerset County Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure](#)

This Code of Practice applies to:

- Service Users/Customers
- Members of the Public
- Somerset County Council Employees where the perpetrator is a service user (except school teaching and non-teaching staff where a separate recording procedure should be followed). See Appendix G
- Councillors (together with the [Members Code of Conduct](#)) and those who are contracted to work for the Council (together with the [Somerset County Council Contract and Partnership Protocol](#))

SECTION 2

Somerset County Council's Fair Treatment Statement

(taken from the 'Equalities and Fairness for All' Policy Statement)

Somerset County Council's Mission

'We will provide excellent services that are accessible, responsive and sustainable to ensure Somerset is a healthy and vibrant place to live, work and visit.'

The County Council promises to investigate and seek to put right, wherever possible, any unfairness or unfair discrimination.

Service Delivery

What does this mean?

What can I expect as a user of the services?

How will I be treated?

You can expect:

- to be treated fairly, with respect, dignity, and understanding by anyone working for the County Council or working on behalf of the County Council;
- the County Council to require all those using its services to treat others with respect and dignity and to deal with discrimination when it happens;
- concerns or complaints about unfairness or discrimination to be treated seriously and sensitively

How will I be given information? (For example, through leaflets, letters, information communication technology (ICT), e-mail, one to one meetings, public meetings etc)

You can expect:

- to be able to read, see or hear all information given by the County Council in the way that you normally communicate;
- encouragement, help and support if you cannot read or find it difficult to speak formally or publicly;
- the language and images used to be positive and free from stereotypes and discrimination.

If you are new to Somerset and cannot use English and speak a language not used by most others locally, the County Council will make sure that the information is interpreted for you, on request.

Will I have access to buildings and facilities?

You can expect:

- to be able to use the services available to the public including facilities, buildings, spaces, furniture, equipment, transport etc;
- reasonable changes to be made or extra equipment used to help solve the problem, on request, if services are not accessible to you;
- to know when changes are permanent so that you do not have to ask every time you want to use the service.

The County Council promises not to discriminate unfairly against you because of your:

race, colour, ethnic or national origins, nationality or religion	where you come from or where your past family or relations came from; the colour of your skin, your culture or life style
accent, language, literacy, disability, age,	the ways in which you communicate; your ability to read and write; your impairments whether physical or mental; how old or young you are;
income or social background,	whether you have a low income or no income; are unemployed; work part-time; have multiple jobs or receive benefits;
sex, marital status, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation	whether you are a woman, a man or transgender; married, living with someone or alone; the fact that you care for young children or older people or those who need additional support; whether you are gay, lesbian or heterosexual; who you choose to live and be with;
political or trade union activity	the political parties or unions you belong to or support.

For the full equalities policy, see

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/resources/equalopportunities/policy/policystatement/index.cfm> or call 01823 356728 for a copy.

SECTION 3

Definitions and Descriptions of Bullying, Harassing or Discriminating Behaviour (Please refer to Appendix C for specific examples)

Definitions of bullying, harassment and discrimination

There is no single, simple definition of bullying, harassment or discrimination. Harassment can take many forms, occur on a variety of grounds and may be directed at an individual or a group of individuals.

Bullying may be characterized as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour; an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. The following provides examples of the most common types of bullying:

- Destructive innuendo and sarcasm.
- Aggression, including threats, shouting abuse and obscenities.
- Deliberately ignoring and excluding.
- Constant undervaluing of an employee's efforts.
- Continuous berating/reprimanding an individual in the presence of others.
- Insulting and unco-operative attitude.

Harassment, in general terms, is unwanted conduct that has the effect of violating the dignity of men and women, creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may be related to age, gender, sexuality, race, disability, religion, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient. Appendix C provides specific examples of harassment.

Discrimination is being treated differently resulting in a disadvantage or adverse impact (legally referred to as 'differential treatment')

- Direct discrimination – less favourable treatment
- Indirect discrimination consists of applying in any circumstances a requirement or condition so that a considerably smaller proportion of one gender, physical disability, marital or racial group are able to comply; it is therefore, unjustifiable and to their detriment. Examples include: an unjustifiable age limit for a job, an unjustifiable rule about clothing or uniforms which disproportionately disadvantages a racial group, higher language or qualification standards for the posts than are needed for the safe/effective performance of the jobs which disproportionately disadvantages groups, or a lack of wheelchair access which disadvantages a person with a physical disability.

The above definitions are in simple language and are not intended to be legal definitions. The definitions are covered by the following Acts:

- Sex Discrimination Act
- Race Relations Act

- Disability Discrimination Act
- The Employment Equalities (Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003

Institutional Discrimination

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation or age. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping which disadvantages these groups.

Under the Race Relations Amendment Act, Institutional Racism has legal status.

Victimisation occurs when a person treats another person less favourably than he/she would treat other people because that person has asserted their rights under the legislation.

"Burden of Proof":

In line with changes to Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination legislation the Race Directive 2002 shifts the burden of proof in any claim made by an employee to the organisation. In essence it will now be for the employer to make a case that an incident of direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation did not take place. Prior to this change the person bringing a claim before a tribunal had to prove that the alleged incidents/actions did occur and that there has been a breach of the "principle of equal treatment". It is very important to document all information gathered and the support mechanisms offered.

SECTION 4 – How do I make a complaint?

(For Service Users/Customers and Members of the Public)

How do I make a complaint of bullying, harassment or discrimination?

***A note about confidentiality:**

It is important to note that whilst confidentiality will be respected wherever possible, if you are raising a concern (either from yourself or on behalf of a friend) please be aware that confidentiality may not always be able to be maintained either because of the level of seriousness of the complaint, where it may put you or others at risk or may open the Authority to negligence or non-legal compliance if no action was taken. This will be made clear to you at the outset by a Manager or an Equality and Harassment Adviser.

You can talk to a trained Equality and Harassment Adviser or to the Manager or another officer within the Service that the incident has occurred in. You can also ask a friend, relative or colleague to raise this on your behalf.

The effects of any form of bullying, harassment or discriminatory practice or behaviour can be stressful, upsetting for the individuals involved, their families and communities and therefore we want the process to be as supportive and as easily accessible as possible. It is our priority for the bullying, harassment and/or discriminatory behaviour to stop immediately.

Because of this we have trained Equality and Harassment Advisers within different services across the County Council who can act as a first point of contact. We have also made all our staff aware of the procedures and the support available. We will always provide language interpreters (including British Sign Language, Somerset Total Communication) and any written documentation in a translated language and /or format (e.g. tape, large print etc) when needed.

- **Contact us as near to the time of the incident as possible**
You may decide to contact us in different ways, by letter or phone, face-to-face, email or through our website but it is important to contact us as near to the incident happening as possible. We can arrange for someone to talk through your experiences face to face if you feel more comfortable doing so.
- **If you can, try to immediately alert an officer from the service in which the incident occurred (e.g. Manager, another staff member)**

If you can, try and immediately alert an officer within the service that the incident has occurred in (e.g. the Manager of the service, another staff member) who will know what to do or how to contact one of the Equality and Harassment Advisers directly.

- **Alternatively, directly contact one of the Equality and Harassment Advisers if you prefer**

Use the list below


Our current Equality and Harassment Advisers (EHAs) are:			
Directorate (and service areas)	EHA Name covering any of the service areas listed	Phone Number	Email
Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Protection Scientific Services Trading Standards Planning Control Rights of Way Gypsy Services Sustainable Development IPTU Waste Services Roads and Transport Fire Service 	Jill Whitaker Roger Tyson (Disability Representative)	01823 356032 01823 356011	JCWhitaker@somerset.gov.uk GRTyson@somerset.gov.uk
Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult Primary Care Learning Disabilities Economic Development, European & External Funding Community Development Cultural/Heritage Services (incl. Libraries, Museums, Archives) Adult Learning & Leisure 	Lynne Wilmot Rachel Boyd Margaret Luck Siobhan Nunn Jamshid Ahmadi (Black & Minority Ethnic Representative)	01749 335400 01278 451201 01823 356796 01278 431111 01823 356131	LWilmot@somerset.gov.uk RBoyd@somerset.gov.uk MLuck@somerset.gov.uk Snunn@somerset.gov.uk JAhmadi@somerset.gov.uk
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Services Legal Services ICT Catering/Cleaning/Design to Print Human Resources Property Services Facilities Management 	Steve Altria Martin Walsh Richard Hockey (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Representative)	01823 355226 01823 355556 01823 355965	SRAtria@somerset.gov.uk MSWalsh@somerset.gov.uk RAHockey@somerset.gov.uk
Children and Young People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Education Authority (LEA) Children Social Care (Foster placements, Looked after Children) 	Peter Newman Karen Kral	01823 355576 01823 357865	PNewman@somerset.gov.uk KJKral@somerset.gov.uk
Customer Access & Equalities Team	Ann Copsey Jane Harris	01823 355656 01823 356959	acopsey@somerset.gov.uk jxharris@somerset.gov.uk

List current from 01.11.05-31.03.06

SECTION 5– What do I do if I receive a complaint?

(For all SCC staff)

What do I do if I receive a complaint of bullying, harassment or discrimination from a customer/service user or member of the public?

 Please refer to the flow charts on pages 5 & 6 and read the statement around confidentiality on page 12

If you are in a non-managerial role and you receive a complaint of this nature, it is important that you speak to your manager immediately

For a complaint made in person:

- **Explain who you are and what you can do to help – ask the victim what they would like you to do.** If the victim is under the age of 17, try to make contact with parents or guardians as soon as possible
- **Provide an immediate quiet and confidential space to discuss the incident with the complainant.** Check whether an interpreter is required and if so, contact Maxine Courage on 01823 355579 (office hours) or Language Line on 020 7520 1400 (out of office hours)
- **Complete a recording form** with as much detail as possible
- **Inform the victim what will happen next**

For a complaint made in writing (email or letter):

- **Try and make contact** with the person by phone (unless clearly stated otherwise)
- **Arrange a time to discuss the incident in person** if possible and check out whether an interpreter etc is needed as above within 3 working days
- **Complete a recording form** with as much detail as possible, attaching correspondence
- **Inform the victim what will happen next**

For a complaint made over the telephone:

- **Ask the complainant for some initial details of the incident and make notes including contact numbers etc.** Check that they are not in any immediate danger and offer advice accordingly
- **Arrange a time to discuss the incident in person** if possible and check out whether an interpreter etc is needed as above within 3 working days
- **Complete a recording form** with as much detail as possible
- **Inform the victim what will happen next**

Some Core Guidance for Managers:

1. From the beginning of the complaint, it is important to seek advice from an Equality and Harassment Adviser. If the complaint is being made against an employee, the advice of your Directorate HR Officer must also be sought (see <http://enterprise.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/equalopps/harassmentanddiscrimination> to find out who your Directorate HR Officer is)
2. If the perpetrator is a Council Member/Elected Official then you must inform and liaise with the County Solicitor
3. All complaints (however received) must be recorded on the Corporate Recording Form (Appendix A at the end of this document)
4. It may be possible to resolve incidents very quickly – through mediation, an apology is sought and gained immediately etc. Do some initial checking (talk to others involved, witnesses etc). However, some basic details must be captured and recorded through Appendix A
5. All complaints of bullying, harassment or discrimination must be acknowledged within 3 working days, setting out action to be taken in writing to the complainant
6. Investigations into the complaint must be started within 7 working days
7. The complainant must be kept fully informed of developments and progress at every stage
8. Inform the complainant of external community and voluntary support networks

Appropriate support is dependent on the circumstances but it is paramount that you make sure that the victim is safe, particularly if you are witnessing an incident taking place. **Call 999 if you feel that yourself or the victim is in any danger**

These are some of the things you may need to do:

1. Refer to an external agency with approval from the victim – for example, Somerset Racial Equality Council in race related incidences
2. Support a mediation process between parties

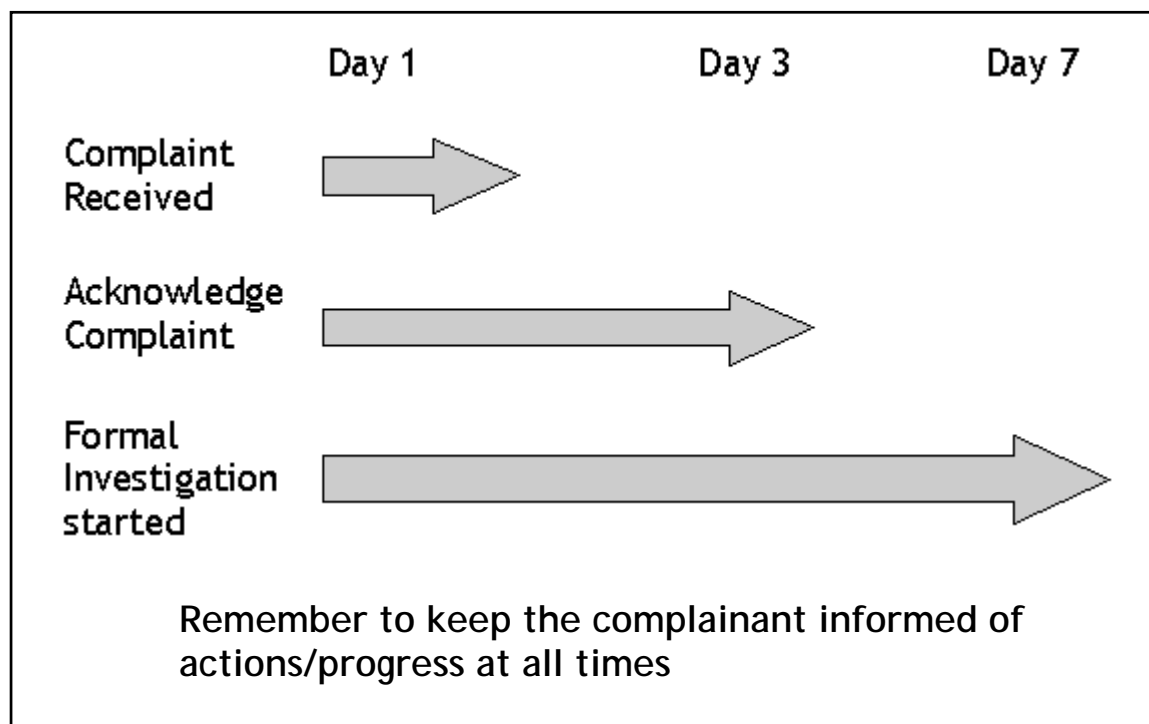
These are some of the actions you must take:

1. Withdraw the victim from contact with alleged offender if appropriate
2. Write a simple action plan with clear timescales and responsibilities

These are some of the actions you may need or have to take (if you have sufficient evidence):

1. Seek an apology from the offender
2. Action to put right anything that is creating a disadvantage
3. Write to the offender with a written warning
4. Put in place training for the offender or a team
5. Withdraw services from a service user (if they are the perpetrator) or relocate a service

Complaint Management Timescales



Who do I send the recording form onto?

The recording form is broken down into 3 'Parts' for ease of recording (you may need to photocopy the original and send copies on, but please be careful when doing so because of confidentiality and data protection):

Part 1 = for the member of staff - manager or 'receiving' officer to complete

Part 2 = for personal details (ethnicity, age, disability etc) for monitoring purposes (completed either by an officer or the complainant)

Part 3 = for the manager to record management action taken

Complainant	Alleged Perpetrator	Where does it go?
Service user or member of public	Employee	**Keep original, reference the case and forward a copy to Directorate HR Officer (Personnel) & CAT*
	Service User/Public	**Keep original, reference the case and forward a copy to your Directorate EHA & CAT*
	Council Member	Keep original, reference the case and forward copy to the County Solicitor & CAT*

*CAT = Customer Care & Equalities Manager, Jane Harris, Customer Access & Equalities Team, Chief Executive's Office, County Hall, A1, Taunton, TA1 4DY

**If you are not the manager charged with investigating the complaint, a copy may need to be forwarded to the investigating manager in addition to the officers mentioned above.

For a current list of Equality and Harassment Advisers (EHA's) please see page 14.

Referencing the recording form

It is the manager's or EHA's responsibility to create a reference number for the case. This is so that there is no 'double counting' and that cases can be referred to by their case numbers rather than using individual names. It also helps the Customer Access & Equalities Team record, monitor and track progress on cases on their central database without recording sensitive information such as complainants and perpetrator's details.

The reference number is quite simply your:

Directorate/Name initials and case number/Financial Year

For example: CEO/JH001/0506 representing...

Chief Executive's Office/Jane Harris case number 1/2005-2006

Directorate Codes: ENV= Environment, CYPD = Children & Young People, RES = Resources, COM = Community

If you receive many complaints over a financial year, it may be handy to keep a running log to ensure that recording forms are accurately referenced.

All forms (copies and originals) must be destroyed 2 years after resolution.

SECTION 6 – What happens during the complaint procedure including roles and responsibilities, timescales?

(Guidance for All)

It is important that incidences of bullying, harassment or discrimination when they happen are dealt with swiftly and are resolved as quickly as possible. Somerset County Council has set itself some challenging timescales in the management of complaints of this nature.

There will be a range of ways in dealing with complaints of bullying, harassment or discrimination depending on their level of seriousness. Sometimes complaints can be dealt with very quickly and without a formal investigation (apologies from the 'perpetrator' and satisfaction at that outcome from the complainant may be an example). However, for more serious complaints (e.g. racism, abuse by employees to service users) formal procedures and methods of investigation will be used. Those involving employees will follow a set procedure as outlined in Somerset County Council's Workplace Policy called 'Fairness and Dignity at Work'.

You (the complainant) can expect:

- **To be informed of the names of the manager and investigating officer (if different) from the outset or in the acknowledging letter sent within 3 working days**
- **Within 3 working days (or sooner) – An acknowledgment of the complaint setting out any action to be taken will be communicated to you** (this could be further investigation, immediate withdrawal of service or relocation of service, seeking apologies or redress from the perpetrator). The action will be partly guided by what you, as the complainant would want to see happen.
- **Within 7 working days (or sooner) – A formal investigation into the complaint will be started.**
- **To be kept informed at all stages of the complaint**

- **To be informed of the community and voluntary organisations that can assist with advocacy, counselling and practical help**

You may also be asked for further information during the whole process to enable clarification of events and/or course of action that needs to be taken.

Roles and Responsibilities

A first contact with Somerset County Council regarding any complaint of bullying, harassment or discrimination could be done in various ways. All staff and managers have been made aware of the procedures surrounding the management of incidents of bullying, harassment or discrimination and where to seek further advice or referral if needed. Managers and/or Equality and Harassment Advisers have the responsibility for investigating and acting as 'lead' officers in any complaint. Equality and Harassment Advisers have also received training to offer advice to officers and Members on such incidents.

The roles are set out below

All Employees of Somerset County Council:

Employees who work for (or who are contracted to work for) Somerset County Council have a responsibility under this Code of Practice when carrying out their duties to report and/or challenge incidents of bullying, harassment or discrimination if they:

- a. Witness them (this includes seeing, hearing or reading them)
- b. Have incidents reported to them by victims or witnesses
- c. Have strong suspicion or evidence of incidents occurring

Managers:

Somerset County Council is committed to creating an organisation that has a zero tolerance approach to bullying, harassment or discrimination. As a major provider of services in Somerset, the Council recognises its responsibilities to protect and support service users.

Although it is the responsibility of all employees to report and challenge incidents, managers have a specific responsibility to ensure that they do everything they can to support and protect employees and service users from intimidation and harassment. They also have a role in making sure incidents are recorded and monitored properly. If it can be shown that alleged incidents are not investigated fully, an employee or service user may have a strong case of unlawful discrimination against the employer or County Council. Managers must therefore take all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination from occurring.

This may be by:

- a. Stating clearly to members of the public or service users who harass employees that their behaviour will not be tolerated
- b. Stating that the service may be withdrawn, if necessary and appropriate in order to protect employees
- c. Supporting and advising employees who experience such incidents from service users
- d. Ensuring details of incidents are recorded and seek further advice and guidance from appropriate officers
- e. Ensuring that all complaints of bullying, harassment or discrimination are taken seriously and investigated as quickly and as effectively as possible by an appropriate officer
- f. Making employees within their teams aware of this Code of Practice and the procedures for managing incidents

Councillors:

Councillors also have a duty to use the recording and reporting procedures outlined in this Code of Practice if they witness, experience or have reported to them incidents of bullying, harassment or discrimination. Councillors can seek advice from the Leader of the Council, Group Manager Democratic Services or from the Corporate Access & Equalities Manager.

Customer Care Manager of The Customer Access & Equalities Team

The Customer Care Manager has an overall responsibility for ensuring that the Code of Practice works and is communicated effectively to all staff, Council Members and members of the public, both users of our services and non-users alike. S/he also has a key role in making sure that Equality and Harassment Advisers receive appropriate training to enable them to carry out their roles and responsibilities fully. Close links are also forged with Human Resources (Personnel) in working together around the area of bullying, harassment and discrimination. The review of the Code is also carried out by the Customer Care Manager on an annual basis involving staff and external voluntary sector colleagues representing the different areas of equality in any work needed to ensure its continued use.

Equality and Harassment Advisers (EHA's)

The role description for Equality and Harassment Advisers is set out in **Appendix D**. In summary, EHA's have been trained to offer guidance and support to service users and staff in the event of incidents. They also provide the lead in terms of recording and ensuring progress has been made and timescales are met during the process. They may provide the direct contact/link with the complainant. Their additional role as Equality Co-ordinators also ensures the feeding of information around numbers, implications and points of learning into Directorate Equality Groups to enable continuous improvement for their Directorates/Service Areas and for the County Council as a whole.

Responsibilities of Service Departments and Management Teams:

As well as the responsibility of individual employees, Service Departments and Management Teams also have a responsibility to ensure that:

- All employees are trained in the use of the County Council's procedures for reported and witnessed incidents including new staff coming into the service
- All managers within service departments feel confident in the procedures and can recognise incidents when they occur
- Have a process to review and discuss incidents within the service department and with relevant Heads of Service (e.g. regular opportunities at Departmental Management Team Meetings (DMT) to discuss incidents and their implications
- Ensure incidents are accurately recorded and passed onto relevant officers as outlined in these procedures in Section 5

SECTION 7 – Monitoring, Reviewing and Learning from Complaints of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

(Guidance For All)

It is important that Somerset County Council improves the delivery of its services to the public and this involves learning from what we have done well and what we could do better. The monitoring, reviewing and learning from the complaints we receive around bullying, harassment and discrimination is therefore very important in order for us to do this and helps us to continually improve the services we provide to the citizens of Somerset and the working environment we provide for our staff.

The Fair Treatment Group:

In order for us to review and learn effectively, we have established a Fair Treatment Group that meets six monthly. It is currently chaired by the Corporate Equalities Champion and Director of Resources, Chris Bilsland and consists of all the Equality Champions for each Directorate, the Customer Access and Equalities Team, Employee Network representatives and Equality Community and Voluntary Sector representatives to provide external scrutiny. The role of the group is to look at cases coming through (numbers and types, not individual details) and discuss actions that need to be taken corporately.

Communication with Elected County Council Members:

County Council elected Members are also notified of changes in this policy, numbers and types of cases coming through (without breaking confidentiality) and the learning points for the organisation. This is usually done once a year through an annual report although the Member Champion for Equalities is kept up to date on a more frequent basis.

Statistical Monitoring:








We provide statistical monitoring through our annual Best Value process for Indicators 174 (incidents of discrimination) and 175 (numbers 'followed up'). These are recorded for race, gender, disability and sexual orientation and can be viewed on <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/resources/equalopportunities/benchmark/>. We benchmark or compare ourselves with other Authorities.

SECTION 8 – Contacts for internal and external support including where to go if you are not satisfied with the outcome or handling of the complaint

	Internal (to Somerset County Council)	External	
Race	BMEEN (Black Minority and Ethnic Employees Network). http://enterprise.somerset.gov.uk/personnel/personnelgroup/BMEENContact.asp	SREC Rural Race Equality Project: rrep@citizensadvice.org.uk Commission for Racial Equality Black South West Network	01935 414911 01392 455619 020 7939 0000 0117 929 6645
Gender		The Rape Crisis Centre National Help Line Women's Aid Help Line Womankind (global organisation based in the UK)	020 7837 1600 0800 2000 247 08457 023 468 020 7549 5700
Sexual Orientation	4U (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Employees Network) http://enterprise.somerset.gov.uk/personnel/personnelGroup/lgbt_contact.asp	Somerset Gay Health Stonewall 'Lager' Lesbian and Gay Switchboard Lesbian helpline Gay helpline Terence Higgins Trust	01823 327078 020 7881 9440 020 7837 7324 020 7704 8066 020 7704 6066 0117 955 1000

	Internal (to Somerset County Council)	External	
Disability	<p>Network for Employees with a Disability http://enterprise.somerset.gov.uk/personnel/personnelGroup/di semp2.asp</p>	<p>Somerset Access & Inclusion Network</p> <p>Advocacy in Somerset (Mental Health)</p> <p>ABLE (South Somerset)</p> <p>DIAS (Taunton Deane, West Somerset and Sedgemoor)</p> <p>CAB, Shepton Mallet (Mendip Disability Advocate)</p> <p>Disability Rights Commission (DRC)</p> <p>MIND</p> <p>Somerset Advocacy (Learning Disabilities)</p>	<p>01823 282823</p> <p>01823 324762</p> <p>01935 433055</p> <p>01823 327453</p> <p>01749 343010</p> <p>Helpline: 08457 622633</p> <p>Helpline: 01823 334906</p>
General	<p>Care First Contact 01823 355502</p> <p>Listeners Service http://enterprise.somerset.gov.uk/personnel/personnelGroup/ListContact.asp or 01823 355508</p> <p>(Fire): Staff Supporters</p>	<p>CAB (Taunton)</p> <p>Victim Support</p> <p>Mediation Somerset</p> <p>Police</p> <p>Community Legal Services Partnership: www.justask.org.uk/about/partnershipdetail</p> <p>ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) gives independent, impartial advice and help in interpreting legislation</p> <p>Bristol Law Centre</p>	<p>01823 282235</p> <p>01460 55535</p> <p>01823 352210</p> <p>01275 818181</p> <p>08457 47 47 47</p> <p>0117 924 8661</p>

If you are not satisfied with the handling or outcome of your complaint, or you want to initially speak to someone in confidence, please contact the Customer Care & Equalities Manager, Jane Harris on 01823 356728 or email equalities@somerset.gov.uk

Appendix A	Corporate Recording Form	 Corporate Recording Form
Appendix B	Legal Background	 Legal Background
Appendix C	Specific Definitions and Examples of Harassment and Discrimination	 Specific Definitions of Harassment and Discrimination
Appendix D	Equality and Harassment Advisor Role Description	 EHA Role Description
Appendix E	The Corporate Complaints Procedure	 Corporate Complaints Procedure
Appendix F	Code of Practice for Contractors	 Code of Practice
Appendix G	Avon & Somerset Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel Common Policy & an Inter-Agency Agreement Regarding Threats to Staff	 Common Policy - Threats to Staff