

# The Dental Technologist Association (DTA)

## Acceptable behaviour

The DTA expects that all council members, support functions and members of DTA will conduct themselves in a professional manner when interacting with others, our network or when interacting with colleagues. All such individuals interacting with DTA should consider their own behaviour and the impact that this can have on others. We should all recognise that personalities, characters and management styles may differ but, notwithstanding these differences, as a minimum standard all those involved with DTA are expected to:

- Work co-operatively with others in order to achieve objectives
- Manage performance in an appropriate and fair manner
- Give and receive constructive feedback as part of normal day-to-day work. Such feedback should be evidence-based and delivered in an appropriate manner
- Consider other people's perspectives in order to help reach agreement
- Establish good working relationships.

## Unacceptable behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour (including bullying, harassment and victimisation), may involve actions, words or physical gestures that could reasonably be perceived to be the cause of another person's distress or discomfort. Bullying or harassment may be by an individual against an individual or involve groups of people.

The DTA defines behaviour as being unacceptable if:

- It is unwanted by the recipient.
- It has the purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity and/or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, and
- Having regard to all the circumstances, including the recipient's perception, it was reasonable for the behaviour to have that effect.

Unacceptable behaviour does not have to be face-to-face, and may take many forms such as written, telephone or e-mail communications or through social media.

If a third party who is not a member of the DTA (for example, a customer, a supplier or a visitor) behaves in an unacceptable manner, this should be reported to the Directors or a Council member who will determine an appropriate course of action to deal with the issue. If the individual to whom it has been reported is not able to resolve the issue, the complaint will be taken forward by a Director through a nominated external agent.

Some examples of unacceptable behaviour are:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour, such as shouting or personal insults
- Spreading malicious rumours or gossip, or insulting someone

- Discrimination or harassment when related to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010
- Unwanted physical contact
- Stalking
- Offensive comments / jokes or body language
- Publishing, circulating or displaying pornographic, racist, sexually suggestive or otherwise offensive material or pictures
- Isolation, deliberate exclusion and/or non co-operation at work
- Persistent and unreasonable criticism
- Unreasonable demands and impossible targets
- Coercion, such as pressure to subscribe to a particular political or religious belief

## **Bullying and Harassment**

Unacceptable behaviour may contravene equalities and/or other legislation.

Whilst bullying and harassment will always be deemed to be forms of unacceptable behaviour, the two terms have distinct and separate legal meanings.

Harassment is connected to anti-discrimination legislation. Therefore if an individual is on the receiving end of unacceptable behaviour which relates to their sex, race, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or belief or gender reassignment (collectively known as 'the protected characteristics'), this will be deemed to be harassment. Harassment may be established from a single event and a series or pattern of behaviour is not necessary in order to establish that an individual has suffered harassment.

Individuals are also protected from harassment based on someone else's protected characteristic, or based on the perception that they have a protected characteristic.

Harassment, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic 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.

Bullying is a broader concept which may generally 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 (ACAS). For bullying to be established, there will generally be a series of pattern of events in which one individual has demonstrated unacceptable behaviour towards another individual.

With regards to both harassment and bullying, the unacceptable behaviour may be overt (for example, verbal abuse/threats/physical violence) or it may be more subtle and insidious. In either case, unacceptable behaviour is a breach of the DTAs or others Dignity at Work policy and should be reported in accordance with the Dignity at Work Policy.

## **Victimisation**

Victimisation is unfavourable treatment of a person ('the victim') to a detriment because they have:

- brought discrimination (including harassment) proceedings or given evidence or information in connection with such proceedings

- done anything other thing in connection with discrimination (including harassment) proceedings
- made an allegation (whether expressly or otherwise) of discrimination or harassment
- or because it is suspected that the victim has done or intends to do any of these things.

Unfavourable treatment of a complainant or a witness in relation to a dignity at work complaint which relates to a protected characteristic is likely to be victimisation.

The DTA will not tolerate victimisation and a perpetrator will be subject to our disciplinary action which may result in action up to and including dismissal or expulsion or removal as a members of DTA from DTAs working area.

### **What does not constitute Unacceptable Behaviour?**

It is important to note that behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may be considered acceptable by another. For instance, legitimate, constructive and fair feedback on a member of a colleagues performance or behaviour at work is not bullying.

Isolated incidents of unreasonable behaviour such as abruptness, sharpness or rudeness whilst unacceptable, will generally not be considered to amount to bullying. However, individuals may want to let the other person know how their behaviour has made them feel in order to avoid a repeat of such behaviour. If the behaviour does continue over a period of time this may be considered to be bullying/harassment.

If a complaint brought under the Dignity at Work guidance is judged to be vexatious or malicious, disciplinary action may be taken against the complainant. However, please note that disciplinary action will not be taken if a complaint made in good faith is judged to be unfounded.

### **Criminal offences**

Some forms of unacceptable behaviour may be serious enough to constitute a criminal offence.

If the DTA becomes aware that an member of DTA has (or may have) committed an offence the DTA council may report its concerns to the police or other authorities, as appropriate.

Where matters are reported to the police, whether by an individual or the DTA, internal investigations and disciplinary action may still take place, whether or not the police decide to proceed. However, in some cases there may have to be a delay whilst police investigations are carried out.