

Annual Statement on Bullying and Harassment

1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024

Section 1: Key contact information

1A. Name of organisation	The Institute of Cancer Research
1B. Type of organisation	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by Executive Board	12 March 2024
1D. Web address of organisation's bullying and harassment page (if applicable)	https://www.icr.ac.uk/about-us/strategy-2022-27/equality-and-diversity (see Support for staff and students/Bullying and harassment)
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee matters relating to workplace bullying and harassment	Name: Carol Ford, Chief People Officer
	Email address: carol.ford@icr.ac.uk
1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters relating to workplace bullying and harassment	Name: Jacqui Bailie, Deputy Director, HR Operations
	Email address: jacqui.bailie@icr.ac.uk

Section 2: Promoting a zero tolerance of bullying and harassment in the workplace and encouraging reporting of inappropriate/unacceptable behaviour. Description of actions and activities undertaken.

2A. Description of current systems and culture

Culture and leadership

Creating an inclusive culture where all our staff and students feel supported to reach their potential is essential to the ICR's mission to make the discoveries to defeat cancer.

We believe that an open and supportive working and learning environment that values everyone and is free of intimidation, bullying and harassment is essential for our work to defeat cancer. We do not tolerate bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct of any kind and will always take any such allegations extremely seriously.

Whilst there is no specific requirement for the ICR to have a Named Person responsible for handling matters relating to allegations of bullying and harassment, it is expected by the senior leadership of the ICR that they be vigilant with regard to inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour in the workplace, and that they raise concerns with an appropriate person promptly so that issues can be dealt with in a timely manner, whether formally or informally, and investigated thoroughly and fairly in the case of formal complaints.

CRUK ([Policy on Dignity at Work in Research](#)), Wellcome ([Bullying, Harassment, Abuse and Harm Policy](#)) and UKRI ([Preventing harm \(safeguarding\) in innovation and research policy](#)) all have published policies outlining the conditions that must be met by anyone involved in their research activities and their Host Institutions (HIs) when applying for funding or having been awarded funding:

- HIs must disclose if the Principal Investigator or any employee named on the application has an active formal disciplinary sanction for bullying or harassment against them.
- When an allegation of bullying or harassment is made against any participant, HIs must notify the funder of any decision to formally investigate and the outcome of the investigation.
- Where a finding of bullying or harassment is upheld against a participant, the funder may apply their own sanctions against the participant, or to the HI itself if it is believed that there has been an institutional failure, including removal of the grant-holder/sponsor from the grant, or withdrawing funding.
- The HI is expected to have policies in place to prevent and address bullying, harassment, abuse and harm.

The Chief People Officer is the ICR's Anti-Bullying Lead and Human Resources are the policy owners of the Challenging Bullying and Harassment Policy. The Equality, Diversity, Culture and Inclusion Manager is responsible for relevant training in this area.

Training and development

All new members of staff and students must participate in relevant mandatory training within their first six months at the ICR. The objectives of the training, "A Supportive Workplace", introduced in 2022, are to provide:

- An understanding of the inclusive workplace culture that the ICR promotes
- An understanding of participants' personal rights and responsibilities with regards to this
- An awareness of key ICR initiatives and networks to support equality
- An overview of UK employment law relating to equality and diversity, and bullying and harassment
- An awareness of techniques and resources to support participants and their teams in maintaining an inclusive and supportive workplace
- An understanding of when and how to be an active bystander

One to one and refresher training sessions for teams are offered upon request.

A Supportive Workplace ran twelve times in the year to 31 May 2024 and 288 participants attended. Eight sessions, attended by 103 employees including managers, were run for specific areas of the business where hot spots were identified.

Policies and systems

The ICR's Challenging Bullying and Harassment Policy was reviewed and updated in March 2022. The language was revised to engender a more positive attitude towards raising concerns and a feeling of confidence that matters will be taken seriously. The requirement of external funders upon funding recipients to report allegations made against grant holders, and the outcome of subsequent proceedings, has been included in the revised policy for transparency. The policy was updated to reflect the requirements of the Office for Students in relation to the steps universities should take to deter and deal with harassment and sexual misconduct, and the policies for staff and for students have been amalgamated.

Significant additional guidance and information was added, including:

- Information for those involved in cases of bullying and harassment
- Registry contact details
- Reference to the ICR Values and the ACAS Code of Practice
- Guidance on treatment of complaints after someone has left the ICR
- Taking notice of and taking action on concerns
- Treatment of anonymous concerns
- Informing HR/Registry if a complaint is made
- Encouraging early and informal resolution where possible
- Definitions of sexual misconduct and anti-Semitism
- Potential requirement to inform funders of complaints received about grant holders.

Whistleblowing Policy

Whistleblowing refers to when a worker makes a disclosure of information which they reasonably believe shows wrongdoing or someone covering up wrongdoing. Workers who blow the whistle are entitled to protections, which were introduced through the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA).

Wellbeing Champions

We currently have twenty-four Wellbeing Champions across our three sites, supported by our Wellbeing and Occupational Health Adviser, all of whom receive certified Mental Health Awareness training, and who are key in promoting our wellbeing initiatives available to staff and students. The

aim of this voluntary role is to provide a signposting service to sources of support for staff and students in relation to wellbeing, and a confidential means through which to raise concerns.

Employee and Student Assistance Programme

Our Employee and Student Assistance Programme can be contacted 24/7, 365 days a year. It provides free, completely confidential support on a wide range of topics, including emotional support, to staff and students. Qualified counsellors can be contacted by phone, email or WhatsApp.

Report + Support

Staff, students and visitors can report concerns regarding bullying, harassment or other inappropriate or unacceptable workplace behaviour via our online platform, Report + Support. Those reporting can do so anonymously or provide their name, as the target of or as a witness to such behaviour. Where the reporter provides their name, the matter is assigned to a member of Registry or Human Resources to contact the individual and discuss what action they wish to take.

Whilst the actions we can take to address complaints that are raised anonymously, we can still use this data to identify trends in behaviour or hot spots. Currently we cannot respond to those who report anonymously or contact them to seek further information or clarification.

Monitoring and reporting

Data regarding reports of bullying and harassment are gathered from the following sources:

- Informal and formal complaints brought to Human Resources
- Exit interviews completed by staff and students leaving the organisation
- Reports made via Report + Support (since March 2023)
- Staff Attitude Survey
- Student Surveys

Communications and engagement

Report + Support was promoted again on the ICR's intranet, on our digital noticeboards, and as part of our Supportive Workplace training. It was also promoted at this year's ICR Conference.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Activities and actions undertaken during the period 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024 to encourage a positive research environment free from inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour include the following:

- The Whistleblowing Policy was updated in November 2023.
- Guidance on Nexus regarding Whistleblowing was updated in December 2023.
- The remit for the voluntary role of Wellbeing Champion was revised to reflect the emphasis on promoting and signposting to wellbeing initiatives rather than giving advice.

The following actions were also undertaken as proactive measures to improve understanding of unacceptable behaviour in the workplace, how to recognise such behaviour and how to tackle it:

- Staff involved in monitoring the Report + Support platform were reminded to flag to the Deputy Director, HR Operations where two or more reports of the same or similar behaviour are received in relation to the same business area.
- "At a glance" guidance for managers on [tackling inappropriate behaviour](#) was published on Nexus in March 2024.
- Guidance was added to Nexus to explain [the definition of bullying and harassment, and micro-aggressions](#).
- "Early warning meetings" reinstated between the Chief Research and Academic Officer, Deputy Dean, Chief People Officer and Deputy Director, HR Operations, to triangulate concerns and agree actions to be taken.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

This year has seen a significant increase in the number of concerns being reported via Report + Support. We are also seeing a slight increase in the number of staff who are approaching members of the HR team to raise concerns.

Workshops/informal training sessions implemented as a result of hotspots being identified or complaints being made have been well-received.

Plans for future development include:

- Consideration of how the ICR's approach to all types of inappropriate behaviour, not just sexual misconduct, could be more proactive.
- Review of training, guidance and support offered to managers on identifying and tackling inappropriate behaviour.
- Review of information and guidance to staff and students on how to report or seek help if a target of or witness to inappropriate behaviour.
- Follow up with complainants one month (or within a longer appropriate timeframe) after their concerns have been raised to explore whether actions suggested/taken have been implemented and if so, how effective they have been and if further action is required.
- An update to the Exit Questionnaire to give leavers the opportunity to provide more information on concerns relating to inappropriate behaviour, whether they reported it and what action was taken to address their concerns.
- Proactively contacting leavers citing bullying and harassment or other inappropriate behaviour at work as a reason for leaving to participate in an interview to discuss their concerns further.
- Written reminders to grant holders of the need to raise with HR/Registry any allegations of bullying and harassment, whether formal or informal.
- Reminders to HR colleagues to contact Academic Services where allegations are made against grant-holders or named persons on their grants.
- Consider making failure by grant holders to report formal or informal allegations of bullying and harassment a specific disciplinary offence.
- A review of the training currently provided to Wellbeing Champions to ensure that they are best equipped to fulfil their role.
- A poster promoting the Report + Support platform is currently being designed and once completed, will form the foundation of our promotion campaign to raise awareness of this and other means of reporting concerns about inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour in the workplace.
- Clearer information to staff and students of the limitations in relation to actions that can be taken to address anonymous complaints (although we do not wish to discourage such complaints if this is the only way that staff and students feel able to report).
- We will continue to work with the Academic Dean's Team, the Union and our Wellbeing Champions to promote the options for raising concerns.
- A change to the question on Report + Support to make it easier to identify in which Division or Directorate the behaviour has arisen (currently it is not clear whether the business area is where the target/witness works, or where the behaviour is happening.)

Section 3: Addressing inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour in the workplace

3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of bullying and harassment

Early action and informal resolution are encouraged, including the use of mediation where appropriate. The Challenging Bullying and Harassment Policy sets out the process for making and handling complaints in section L, including investigations. More detailed information is provided in appendices 8 and 9 of the Policy. The Policy applies to both staff and students.

3B. Information on investigations into allegations of bullying and harassment that have been undertaken

Number of complaints relating to bullying and harassment/reported via/complainant type 23-24			
Report + Support	Academic Dean's Team	Human Resources	Exit questionnaire
26 (5)	0 (2)	5 (0)	9 (8)
24 staff, 1 student, 1 preferred not to say	Students	Staff	Staff

Figures in brackets above show the number of reports made in the previous year's reporting timeframe.

It should be noted that where reports are made anonymously, it is not possible to say whether these were raised by the same person or by different complainants.

Of the 26 concerns raised via Report + Support, 20 were reported anonymously and 4 were named (this indicates that at least one person raised a complaint covering more than one subject).

Of the five formal cases reported to HR, one complaint was not upheld following an investigation and hearing. One resulted in the dismissal of the subject of the complaint. Three resulted in no formal action but ongoing monitoring.

Of the 9 reporting via the Exit Questionnaire, one advised that they did not report the issue during their employment.

Of those advising that they raised their concerns whilst still employed:

- four respondents were not satisfied with the outcome.
- One respondent said the situation improved slightly.
- One advised that they had raised their concerns but did not receive a response.
- One respondent advised that they had reported their concern anonymously during their employment but had not received a response.
- One respondent felt that their complaint had been taken seriously and that they had been given good advice and support.

3C. Staff and student attitude survey

An interim attitude survey was undertaken by ICR staff and students, between 16 March and 4 April 2023 with a completion rate of 65%.

9% of respondents reported that they had experienced bullying and/or harassment themselves at the ICR in the past 12 months (7% in 2021). Five Divisions/Directorates had zero reports of bullying and/or harassment in the past 12 months.