

---

Ethics Committee

30 March 2023

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Not applicable

**Director approving submission of the report:**

Chief People Officer

**Ward(s) affected:**

N/A

**Title:** "Civility Matters" - Grievance and Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure

---

**Is this a key decision?**

No

---

**Executive summary:**

The report outlines how HR are introducing 'Civility Matters' into two of 'people' policies and procedures as part of the ongoing work to embed the values into the organisational culture. Civility Matters is a campaign that initially began at Coventry and Warwick Hospital that has subsequently widened within the NHS and shows the benefits to service delivery that be gained from engaging positively, using appropriate language when carrying out your role/duties. There is research that shows by adopting and reinforcing such an approach it improves performance and outcomes.

The aim is that by amending these policies in particular, it will result in better outcomes for those involved in either process and led to a change in culture through changes in language and approach. The current policies have not been reviewed for several years so a reconsidering the content and approach is appropriate.

The new policies will form part of a larger roll out with the intranet pages being updated with toolkits and guides for managers. The Employee Relations Team are also creating, training and guidance for managers to give them the knowledge and skills so they can have difficult and sensitive conversations where and when issues arise with confidence. A brief overview will also be included in Managers induction for all new managers joining the organisation.

A launch is planned for May/June 2023 and further training for managers will take place across the organisation during the summer.

**Recommendations:**

The Ethics Committee is recommended to note the revised policy and the inclusion of Civility Matters as part of the ongoing development of the organisational culture and embedding the values.

**List of Appendices included:**

Attached is an overview of Civility Matters , and the details of the NHS initiative that has shown to improve the quality of care– Appendix 1

**Background papers:**

The Councils current Grievance and Dignity at Work Procedures  
ACAS Code of Practice (Grievance)

**Other useful documents**

**Has it or will it be considered by scrutiny?**

No

**Has it or will it be considered by any other council committee, advisory panel, or other body?**

Yes, the policies will be required to be ratified at JCNC Joint Consultative Negotiating Committee (JCNC) where formal trade union agreement is recorded.

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

## **Report title: “Civility Matters” - Grievance and Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure**

### **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1. Civility Matters was an initiative first introduced within Coventry and Warwick Hospitals , to highlight how a positive culture in the workplace improves patient care. This initiative has grown across the NHS and beyond. Civility Matters encourages better and kinder communication in the workplace . It supports behaviours of politeness and respect in all interactions, as research has shown that rude and hurtful actions has a detrimental impact on everyone’s health and wellbeing but also on the services provided. Using Civility Matters provides a rationale for the approach, the benefits along with a policy framework and supporting materials.
- 1.2. HR have chosen to introduce Civility Matters as part of the ongoing introduction of the values and developing an open and transparent culture. A positive example is the revision of the Councils Grievance and Dignity at Work Policies, both of which have Civility Matters as central to the revised approach. In undertaking the review, the purpose is to ensure the two policies are accurate, fit for purpose and reinforce the organisational values. To support the introduction of the new policies a toolkit has been created with supporting documentation to provide managers with training and support to address conflict arising in the workplace and clearly outline the expectations of Civility in the workplace.

### **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1. The revision of the Policies is the only option that was considered as there was a need to update the current versions, so they are in date, reflect the Advisory Conciliation Arbitration Service (ACAS) code of practice and relevant employment legislation. These changes enabled the incorporation of Civility Matters which is part of the ongoing organisational development work on culture and values.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1. Consultation is still ongoing with trade union colleagues on the toolkit and the supporting guidance.
- 3.2. During consultation it was agreed to separate the Grievance from the Dignity at Work policy for reporting purposes.
- 3.3. The Trade Unions agreed it was a bigger piece of work and we needed to include some of the framework from Civility Matters into our toolkit
- 3.4. Once the Policies are agreed in principle, they will be shared across the staff network groups for comment.

### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1. The planned consultation is due to finish during April with ratification of the policies taking place at JCNC in May 2023
- 4.2. Launching the policies along with training will take place during June 2023 and into the summer months.

## **5. Comments from Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal Officer**

### **5.1. Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications. All implementation costs including training will be met from within existing budgets.

### **5.2. Legal Implications**

There is a need to ensure employment policies and procedures are operating in accordance with legislation.

## **6. Other implications**

N/A

### **6.1. How will this contribute to the Council Plan ([www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/))?**

Ensuring employment policies and process are reflecting legislation and the ACAS code of conduct is an integral part of the psychological contract and necessary for a committed and valued workforce to deliver the Council Plan.

### **6.2. How is risk being managed?**

There is minimal risk if the policy is agreed by trade union colleagues. If the policies are rejected, then the consultation process will be required to start again, and the status quo will remain.

### **6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?**

None

### **6.4. Equalities / EIA?**

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out once the policy is in the final stages.

### **6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?**

N/A

### **6.6. Implications for partner organisations?**

N/A

### **Report author(s):**

Nicole Powell  
Employee Relations Lead

**Service:** Human Resources

### **Tel and email contact:**

Tel: +44 24 7697 8747  
Email: [Nicole.powell@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:Nicole.powell@coventry.gov.uk)

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

<b>Contributor/approver name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Date doc sent out</b>	<b>Date response received or approved</b>
<b>Contributors: N/A</b>				
Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Co-ordinator	Law and Governance	17/3/23	18/3/23
<b>Names of approvers for submission:</b> (Officers and Members)				
Finance: Kathryn Sutherland Approved	Lead Accountant – Business Partnering People Finance	Financial Management	15/3/2023	21/3/2023
Legal: Julie Newman	Chief Legal Officer	Law and Governance	15/3/2023	22/3/23
Director: Susanna Newing	Chief People Officer	Human Resources	15/3 2023	21/3/23
Members: Cllr S Nazir	Chair of Ethics Committee		21/3/23	22/3/23

This report is published on the council's website: [www.coventry.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/meetings)

## Appendix 1

### Civility in the Workplace – Overview

Civility in the workplace is about more than just politeness, although politeness is a necessary first step. It is about disagreeing with disrespect, seeking common ground as a starting point for dialogue about differences, listening past one's preconceptions, and teaching others to do the same.

Civil work environments matter because they reduce errors, reduce stress and foster excellence.

Incivility can be anything ranging from rude or unsociable speech or behaviour.

There are many examples of incivility:

- Shouting at someone
- Swearing
- Aggression (not necessarily towards someone),
- Belittling someone,
- Sending emails while in meetings
- Talking over others
- Being difficult over the phone
- Rolling eyes or tutting at someone
- The list goes on!

This impact of incivility has a direct impact on the recipient, and this has been measured in the office place by Christine Porath[2]. She found:

- 61% reduction in cognitive ability

There were also many other impacts:

- 80% lose time worrying about the rudeness
- 78% reduced their commitment to work
- 63% lose time avoiding the offender
- 48% reduced their time at work
- 38% reduce the quality of their work
- 25% took it out on others, including customers
- 12% leave

Having a focus on the behaviours of incivility and disrespect enables employees and employers to recognise, understand and take pro-active, targeted and informal action to address the underlying behaviour. This change in focus and language therefore helps employees to.

- Better understand and explain what they are experiencing,
- Managers to better identify and address it, and more importantly

- For all employees, including witnesses, to be able to call out the unprofessional behaviour and set expected standards of behaviour with one another.

### Sample of the NHS campaign

**NHS**  
Supporting our staff  
A toolkit to promote cultures of civility and respect

**Purpose**  
The Long Term plan and NHS People plan recognise that levels of bullying and harassment in the NHS must be tackled and it is everyone's responsibility to do so. To promote a culture of civility and respect, it is important to support our workforce to adopt behaviours and demonstrate values in everyday life, that will lead to better staff experience and patient care. The toolkit will support NHS organisations with practical guidance and resources to help tackle bullying and harassment and to create civil and respectful workplaces.

**A Shift in Language**  
The change in language from bullying and harassment to civility and respect is purposeful. It brings focus on a broad range of negative workplace behaviours. It aims to give individuals the ability to understand their experiences more clearly and speak up when things are not right for them and for others. It can aid conversations in teams to identify and embed positive behaviour change.

**Promoting Professionalism**  
The pyramid demonstrates a Restorative and Just approach to enable NHS organisations to take a supportive and corrective stance. The tools are intended to support staff to bring about understanding and a change in behaviour, not to blame and punish.

**Civility and Respect Framework**  
The framework offers an evidence-based and practical overview to thinking and action. It uses the improvement approach making underlying issues easier to analyse, intervene and plan for when working towards creating civil and respectful cultures. There are four themes:  
-Theme 1: Data and analysis  
-Theme 2: Policy and process  
-Theme 3: Staff management and support  
-Theme 4: Just and restorative culture

The Analyse, Intervene and Measure (AIM) approach is used to support organisations to develop action plans aligned to the four framework themes.

- Analyse: understand the issues
- Intervene: take action to address the issues
- Measure: evaluate the impact of interventions.

Guidance on interventions will help identify and establish those which are right for the organisation:

- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary

For information the links below , give access to the Civility Matters website and the NHS toolkit

<https://www.civilitysaveslives.com/>



NHSi-Civility-and-Respect-Toolkit-v9.pptx