

Wholesale and convenience

DIGNITY AT WORK CHARTER

UK Convenience and Wholesale is a vibrant, thriving sector that offers positive work opportunities to hundreds of thousands of people, and many more from suppliers to it and related industries. However, the labour pool is shrinking and it is our collective responsibility to make the industry an attractive place to work in order to sustain the sector and the economy. A core component of this is to ensure the safety and dignity of our people at work.

Currently, retailers, wholesalers and suppliers safeguard their shoppers and employees through their own workplace policies. However, this duty of care can only be delivered if we have confidence that the businesses we deal with as suppliers, customers, and service providers are aware of and working to common principles. This means the sector coming together to articulate what is acceptable behaviour, define standards and provide training resources and support.

OUR COMMITMENT

- We believe that everyone has the right to a safe and respectful working environment.
- We value each other and respect each other's human rights and individual differences. We celebrate these differences and rely on them to help create an energising culture; a culture that is inclusive of all individuals and benefits from diversity of thought, skills, experience.
- There is no place for any form of harassment, discrimination, aggression or misconduct in our industry and such behaviour runs contrary to the ideals of the industry.

OUR PURPOSE

We are committed to improving the standards of behaviour during interactions between colleagues from different businesses, either in commercial dealings, or at industry events and other places where people meet, so that everyone in the industry feels positive and confident that they will be able to work and flourish in the sector.

We will do so through the following focus areas:

- Set the Dignity at Work standard for the industry
- Drive awareness across the industry through member organisations
- Encourage the development and sharing of training and support
- Share good practice on mechanisms to apply these standards



THE DIGNITY AT WORK STANDARD

- **We strive to provide a harassment free environment within our shops, depots, warehouses and offices and at industry events**
- **We will respect each other's personal space and time.**
- **We will always remember we are representing our businesses at all times**
- **We will be receptive to and take seriously reports of behaviour, from members of our own company, that contradicts this commitment.**
- **All incidents will be referred back to the relevant HR department or business owner.**
- **We will not tolerate anyone being subject to physical, sexual, racial, psychological, verbal or any other form of harassment, bullying or abuse.**



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If you are an event organiser, please adopt the process below for ensuring compliance with the values in the Charter at any events that you run.

Events process for organisers:

If you're running events (including face to face and online meetings, tours, social and business events) in wholesale, convenience and related sectors, please make sure that all attendees know about the Charter and know how they can raise issues related to standards of behaviour:

In pre-event communications include the Charter logo with a link to the Charter itself and the other supporting resources for it.

Make clear to attendees who they should raise any issues with. Ideally this should be a senior person with responsibility for the event. It needs to be clear how that person can be contacted in advance of, during and after the event.

Think beforehand about how you might handle issues related to the Charter that could arise during the event and respond to issues. As a broad framework for good practice:

- a) support complainants by making sure they are not forced to stay in close contact with individuals who are behaving inappropriately, and
- b) as soon as possible engage with complainants to commence action under the "dealing with complaints" guidance.

Include in your feedback forms an opportunity for participants to raise specific issues or to comment on the safety and standards of behaviour at the event. Suggested standard questions are:

- "Were there any incidents or examples of behaviour contrary to the Dignity at Work Charter ([link](#)) that you would like to report or raise
- Did you feel the event was safe and supportive of everyone attending, and that behaviour at the event was consistent with the standards in the Dignity at Work Charter ([link](#))?" (Maybe a four point scale: very safe, safe, acceptable, unsafe)



Complaints procedures

Making a Complaint: If someone has been treated in a way that they feel in contrary to the Charter, they should be given a variety of methods through which to raise these issues. Suggested guidance on making a complaint is below, which would need to be finessed but this is the key substance proposed:

Your wellbeing is paramount, so please use the resources available to you as you feel appropriate. There may be HR and mental health first aid available in your business, and we strongly support the Grocery Aid Helpline ([link](#)) which offers free support from trained counsellors for all issues related to your work and personal life.

The signatories to this Charter fully support you in raising issues with the perpetrators of behaviour that contradicts our values and the Charter itself. You can do this by:

- Raising the issue with the organisers of any event at which you have experienced this behaviour.
- Raising the issue direct with the relevant individuals' HR departments, contact details for which can be sourced through ACS, FWD or Women in Wholesale.
- You can raise these issues through ACS, FWD or Women in Wholesale who will approach the relevant HR department on your behalf. It is your choice as to which if any of these organisations you wish to make this representation. Your chosen organisation will work with you through to reaching a satisfactory conclusion.

Dealing with complaints: The three organisations named above, and events companies, and potentially any organisation, needs to have a clear path to follow in dealing with issues raised with them. My opening salvo on this:

You should nominate a named individual in your organisation to handle complaints, whether they relate to events and activity you are running or not.

Any complaints should be logged, and must:

- Include key details of the issues raised, the nature of the complaint, an account of the incident(s), and any witnesses
- Be treated as strictly confidential, be stored securely, not in shared files, and should only be discussed with the complainant and the your line manager in circumstances where guidance and support is required.

The complainant should be made aware of the Grocery Aid Helpline and any further resources that may be helpful to them.

You should discuss with the complainant, if necessary over more than one phone call, how they wish to approach the situation, and assist them in pursuing this course of action, which could include:

- Finding details for the relevant HR department or other contact and passing them to the complainant.
- Approaching that HR or other contact on the complainant's behalf.
- Making other representations with or on behalf of the complainant.
- Deciding how to deal with any response, and advising on options to escalate or progress the complaint if needed.

Write a report covering the details above and file this. With their agreement this may be shared with the complainant, the HR department of the person felt to have breached the Charter, and that individual.

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ADOPT AND PROMOTE THE CHARTER

Send your company logo to nikki@fwd-uk.com and we'll send you the Charter logo and add your name to the list below.

FWD, ACS and Women in Wholesale will be displaying the logo on all event communication and we encourage you to do the same.

