

An Industry-Wide Statement on The Book & Publishing Industry's Professional Values

Endorsed by the Association of Authors' Agents, Booksellers Association,
The Publishers Association and The Society of Authors.

Created and written by the Book & Publishing Industry EDI Forum, this document lays out in unambiguous terms the values and behaviours we share and seek to encourage in our professional interactions across our industry. This document is limited to professional behaviour in work environments (online and offline) though it does not cover authorship itself. Through the **ten points below**, we aim to hold ourselves and our colleagues in the industry to high standards of professional behaviour, based on mutual respect, compassion, humanity, an openness to difference and an unwavering commitment to the free exchange of ideas.

This document is intended to be top-level, aspirational, and collegiate. It is a clear statement of what we expect from ourselves and others in our professional communications, regardless of whether those behaviours take place online or in the workplace.

We are not standards bodies, but we believe that an industry commitment of this kind can support an industry-wide culture we can be proud of – one which is welcoming to all, respectful of all, and supportive of all.

1

We in the sector (booksellers, agents, authors, and publishing professionals) support and are champions of creative expression and freedom of speech. We understand the power of what is printed and published and will endeavour to protect the passion, imagination and creativity of everyone in our industry.

2

Authors, publishing professionals, agents and booksellers are colleagues and collaborators in business and we expect a high standard of professional behaviour from one another.

3

Our professional communication will be respectful to all parties. We understand that at times we may not agree with one another but understand how and what we communicate might impact others positively but also negatively.

4

We celebrate and actively promote and cultivate diversity and inclusion in all its forms, including but not limited to the nine protected characteristics cited in The Equality Act 2010 as well as socio economic status, educational background, caring responsibilities, and geographical location and we condemn abuse and the incitement of hatred of any kind.

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5 We will endeavour to ensure that everyone in our industry is treated with dignity and respect so that individuals are supported and are able to speak out. We recognise that power is situational and that we can all be in a position of greater relative power over others.

6 We support and are sensitive to the mental health of our colleagues and other industry professionals as well as those experiencing chronic illness, neurodiversity, disability and other physical challenges. We recognise that not all disabilities are visible.

7 We are working towards improving inclusion and access for everyone to our industry across all the areas mentioned in 4 above.

8 Our professional behaviour is thoughtful and anticipates consequences – and is required in every environment where people interact for work reasons, including but not limited to: offices, bookshops, parties, committees, lunch meetings, awards ceremonies, rights fairs, festivals and any other venue, formal or informal; as well as online and in all communications.

9 We have a right to personal privacy, and to feel safe and valued in the working environment.

We will support one another and take action by:

10 **Listening:** If someone tells us that they find something racist, sexist, bullying, threatening, or uncomfortable, they have a right to that feeling. We will behave with empathy, respect and understanding.

Being Allies: We will not remain silent in the face of unacceptable behaviour. We will listen to, speak up for and empower those who have experienced such behaviour. We will bear witness and support appropriate action being taken, regardless of the status or the relative status of the individuals involved.

Being Aware Of Company Policies: If you do not think there is one, ask. As industry associations, we encourage our members to promote and implement the standards of professional behaviour set out in this document and to create and endorse company policies which reflect these principles.

Useful Definitions

Harassment is defined by the Equality Act as 'unwanted conduct ... 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 defined by ACAS as 'as unwanted behaviour from a person or group that is either offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting or an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or causes physical or emotional harm to someone.'

The Equality Act 2010 is the UK's discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society. The protected characteristics covered by the legislation are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.