

## HOW TO.....PREVENT BULLYING AND HARASSMENT AT WORK

### Your responsibilities

Bullying isn't against the law, but harassment is, (it's covered by the Equality Act 2010).

Both are unacceptable in the workplace, and it's an employer's responsibility to ensure their workplace is free of this type of behaviour.

If you don't, you could be held vicariously liable for the actions of your employees.

In a recent ET claim a female bus driver was awarded £55,000 for sexual harassment at work when it was concluded that management knew about workplace 'banter'. Click [here](#) for the article.

### Bullying

This can include:

- Abuse
- physical violence
- verbal violence
- humiliation
- undermining someone's confidence

### Harassment

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

A single incident of unwanted or offensive behaviour to one individual can amount to harassment.

### Manager's Checklist

- ✓ Lead by example, with a zero-tolerance to prejudice, discrimination, bullying, and harassment
- ✓ Don't allow inappropriate banter in your workplace. Ask yourself how you would feel if your family and friends were being spoken to in that way
- ✓ Train your managers and supervisors to be role models
- ✓ Make sure your managers and supervisors know how to recognise and deal with bullying and harassment correctly
- ✓ Create a culture where everyone's qualities are valued
- ✓ Make sure people do not feel excluded
- ✓ Make business decisions that are fair and inclusive
- ✓ Hire and promote people on merit, competence, potential and their ability to work in your organisation
- ✓ Make sure your managers are trained in equality, diversity and inclusion
- ✓ Put rules in place that are fair and inclusive
- ✓ Make sure you comply with all relevant employment laws to ensure your employees are treated fairly
- ✓ Take responsibility for making sure that all the above is communicated and applied each day
- ✓ Take complaints of bullying and harassment seriously

## HOW TO.....PREVENT BULLYING AND HARASSMENT (CONT'D)

### Examples of harassment

#### *Sexual harassment*

- ❖ The display of sexually explicit material, EG: on computer screens, in calendars or posters
- ❖ Leering at a person in a manner that is overtly sexual
- ❖ Physically touching someone in a sexual manner where such conduct is not welcome
- ❖ Remarks, banter or jokes of a sexual nature
- ❖ Making sexual suggestions

#### *Religious harassment*

- ❖ Remarks, banter or jokes about religious beliefs or religious practices
- ❖ Negative remarks made about an item of clothing or jewellery worn by someone as a symbol of their religion.

#### *Sex-related harassment*

- ❖ Telling sexist jokes
- ❖ Making derogatory sexist remarks
- ❖ Deliberately placing tools or materials that a woman needs to do her job on a high shelf to make it harder for her to reach them

#### *Sexual orientation harassment*

- ❖ Deliberate isolation of someone on grounds of their sexuality or perceived sexuality
- ❖ Deliberately behaving in an effeminate manner in the presence of someone who is gay
- ❖ Calling someone a nickname based on their sexuality or perceived sexuality

#### *Gender reassignment harassment*

- ❖ Calling someone a nickname linked to the fact that they have undergone gender reassignment
- ❖ Inappropriate touching designed to check whether an individual has undergone reconstructive surgery
- ❖ Leaving items specifically associated with the individual's old or new gender on their desk

#### *Racial harassment*

- ❖ Calling someone a nickname linked to his or her skin colour or nationality
- ❖ Remarks, banter or jokes about people from different racial backgrounds

#### *Disability harassment*

- ❖ Using insulting terminology
- ❖ Excessive staring, for example at someone with a facial disfigurement
- ❖ Mimicking a disabled colleague's mannerisms or speech

#### *Age harassment*

- ❖ Banter and jokes that make fun of older people or demean their abilities
- ❖ Calling someone a name linked to their age
- ❖ Ignoring someone, or treating their views as worthless, just because they are younger or older than other employees

I hope you found this guide useful. Contact me at [karen@KDHRSolutions.com](mailto:karen@KDHRSolutions.com) if you would like more information.