

ALLEGATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect at work. The majority of allegations made within the workplace relate to issues surrounding bullying and harassment.

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Harassment in general terms is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident.

Why Take Action?

Such allegations are not only unacceptable on moral grounds but may, if unchecked or badly handled, create serious problems for an organisation including:-

- poor morale and poor employee relations
- loss of respect for managers and supervisors
- poor performance
- absence
- resignations
- damage to organisational reputation
- employment tribunal and/or other court cases and payment of compensation

It is in every employer's interests to promote a safe, healthy and fair environment in which people can work.

Legal Position:

The 1991 European Commission code 'Protection of Dignity of Men & Women at Work', highlights the need for employers to develop and implement coherent policies to prevent harassment.

The Single Equality Act 2010 replaces existing equality legislation. The new Act provides cover for the following nine Protected Characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Race
- Religion & Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Marriage & Civil Partnerships
- Pregnancy & Maternity

Further information is available from:-

- www.acas.org.uk
- www.cre.gov.uk
- www.drc-gb.org.uk
- www.eoc.org.uk
- www.dti.gov.uk/employment/index/html

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