

FCTU Members' Guide to Harassment, Bullying and Conflict at Work



We all expect to be treated with respect and dignity whilst at work, but sometimes other people's behaviour can leave us feeling uncomfortable, intimidated, insulted or distressed.

If you believe that you might have been harassed or bullied this short guide explains how your union can help.

What is harassment and bullying?

One of the simplest definitions of harassment and bullying is *any unwarranted conduct that violates a person's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.*

Examples of this could be:

- Being shouted at by a manager or colleague,
- Being ignored or shunned by colleagues,
- Spreading malicious rumours,
- Unwanted sexual advances.

It could comprise of a single incident or a whole series of events. Even if each single incident might seem trivial, the fact that it is part of a series makes it important.

Conflict at Work

Many instances of suspected harassment or bullying start as simple conflicts with colleagues, which then escalate.

They can also start as disagreements with managers over your job description or work performance,

Quick facts about Harassment and Bullying

In the 2005 Staff Survey 16% or about 500 staff reported that they had been subject to H&B in the last 2 years.

Of those, 26% felt that the unwanted behaviour occurred four or more times.

51% of those who suffered H&B did not report it to a manager.

Of those who reported a complaint only 14% were satisfied with the outcome.

and whilst managers have a duty to address performance issues this needs to be done correctly, with support and without excessive pressure or unpleasantness.

In some of these cases it may be that even though you are a recipient of inappropriate behaviour, you might not see this as harassment or bullying.

Even so it is still worth getting some advice. Resolving the issue early on might help to avoid the situation getting worse.

First things, first...

If you believe that you have been the victim of inappropriate behaviour then the best thing to do is to speak to a union representative. Even if you don't

Time Limits

Some of the options for making a formal complaint must be made within 3 months of the last incident of harassment or bullying.

Getting advice as early as possible may improve your chances of a successful outcome.

Accused of Harassment or Bullying?

If you are accused of harassment and bullying either by another union member or a non-member, then you should also seek advice and support from your union.

want them to do anything at this time they can give you some quick advice or just a listening ear. Other important things to do are:

- Keep a written record: Even if the inappropriate behaviour is likely to be a one-off it is important that you make some notes. What happened, when and where? Did anyone else over-hear or see what what happened? How did the behaviour make you feel? Keeping notes of events is very important.
- Keep copies of any letters or emails.
- Talk to your union representative: Your union representative can give you advice on making notes of events, and on possible action that you can take.

How to contact your union

The FCTU has a network of representatives who have been specially trained to advise and assist members who are subject to inappropriate behaviour at work. These contacts will be able to provide you with confidential advice about your situation, and where appropriate can support you in taking the matter further.

You are welcome to contact any of the representatives, who will be happy to give you advice irrespective of which union you are in. Contact details for the unions' Harassment and Bullying representatives are given over the page.

Alternatively you are welcome to speak to your local representative, or contact Sue Gillingwater in the FCTU office in Silvan House on 0131 314 6294.

Other Help and information

Other sources of information which you may want to look at are:

- Chapter 5 of the Staff Handbook, which outlines the FC's policy on equality, diversity and harassment & bullying, and explains how to make a formal or informal complaint.
- Harassment and Bullying, an FC guide for staff gives more details about harassment and bullying and other support that you can get in the FC.
- Staff Notice 9 outlines the FC's grievance procedures.
- PM4 details the FC's disciplinary procedures and how cases of potential harassment and bullying are investigated following a formal complaint.

In addition you could also seek support from your line manager or head of unit, People Support or the FC's own trained and experienced Harassment Contact Officers, details of whom are available from the HR site on the intranet.

Contact Details

<i>Contact</i>	<i>Union</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Telephone</i>
Robert Beaney	TGWU	Cowal and Trossachs	Scotland	07884 062210
Edward Shephard	PCS	Silvan House	Scotland	0131 314 6409
Jim Henderson	Prospect	Silvan House	Scotland	0131 314 6360
Mary Irvine	PCS	Silvan House	Scotland	0131 314 6261
Linda McGinley	PCS	Silvan House	Scotland	0131 314 6503
Joanne McAuley	PCS	Silvan House	Scotland	0131 314 6214
Liz Stewart	PCS	Perth Conservancy	Scotland	01738 450783
Alistair Gillies	GMB	Balnacoul Workshop	Scotland	01343 820499
Andy Phillips	TGWU	Llanwrst FD	Wales	07810 756232
Antony Griffiths	PCS	Coed Y Mynydd FD	Wales	01341 422289
Shirley Stephens	PCS	Alice Holt	England	01420 22255
Julie Saunders	PCS	NW England FD	England	01229 862004