



The workplace is an increasingly stressful environment. It is important that you do not suffer in silence. UNISON aims to support all of its members experiencing discrimination.

**ZERO TOLERANCE
TO
DISCRIMINATION**

For further information contact the branch

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New Employment Tribunal protocol

From 29 July 2013 new Employment Tribunal rules came into force. The new rules encourage Employment Judges to scrutinise claims so that weak claims will be dismissed at an early stage. Fees will have to be paid where an Employment Tribunal claim is made on or after 29 July 2013.

UNISON is committed to providing access to legal advice and assistance for our members.

UNISON will NOT require members to pay a fee upfront if UNISON takes on the case.

Disability Discrimination

Employers cannot discriminate on grounds on disability. You might not think this is applicable to you but conditions or impairment such as diabetes and asthma are included as disabilities under the Equalities Act 2010

Employers should count disability related absence as separate from sickness absence. You may have triggered the sickness/capability code unjustly if absences related to a condition or impairment has been counted.

You may be working under conditions that could reasonably be adjusted to alleviate difficulties caused by your condition. Your employer has a duty to make these changes.

If you think that you may have been discriminated on grounds of disability please contact the Branch office.

Stress: an introduction

Stress is one of the biggest causes of health problems in the workplace. In general terms, stress is a reaction to pressure or harassment at work.

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) definition of stress is: "The reaction people have to excessive demands or pressures, arising when people try to cope with tasks, responsibilities or other types of pressure connected with their job, but find difficulty, strain or worry in doing so." Stress can be difficult to identify in an organisation as employees may not admit to feeling stressed.

What causes stress?

Stress can be caused by a number of factors including:

- long hours and shift work;
- lack of control or insecurity;
- lack of job satisfaction, boredom or isolation;
- fear of violence, bullying or harassment;
- bad relations with other work colleagues;
- problems with the working environment (such as noise, temperature, overcrowding and poor facilities);
- low pay.

How should your employer deal with stress in the workplace?

Every employer should conduct a risk assessment in the workplace. The risk assessment should include stress as a potential hazard. If stress is identified as a hazard then appropriate control measures may need to be introduced.

Next steps for UNISON reps

UNISON can help change the culture at work to encourage people to talk about stress. If you think that you may be experiencing stress at work please contact the Branch office.

Bullying and Harassment in the workplace

Bullying and harassment are common problems affecting many members at work. But both bullying and harassment are unacceptable, and the law makes it clear that all employees have the right to work in a safe environment.

If you or someone you know is affected by bullying and harassment, contact your UNISON representative or the branch office for advice

What is bullying?

Bullying includes:

- offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behaviour;
- abuse of authority which violates the dignity of an individual or a group of people;
- creating a hostile environment against an individual;
- the undermining, humiliation or injury of an individual.

The bullying does not need to relate to a protected characteristic (discussed below) but unless it does, or is of a sexual nature, it is not prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.

What is harassment?

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of people in the workplace or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

To be protected under the Equality Act it must be related to gender reassignment, disability, age, sex (or be of a sexual nature), sexual orientation, race, religion or belief or nationality. It may be an isolated incident or come up again and again.

Harassment includes bullying if it relates to one of the protected characteristics listed above.

What can you do about bullying and harassment?

There are a few simple steps you can take if you are affected by bullying at work:

- keep a written record or diary of all bullying incidents, including past incidents – no matter how small they appear;
- Speak to your local UNISON representative or Branch office
- If you are not a member of UNISON join
- Contact an Occupational Health Service or Employee Assistance Programme
- Become a UNISON Steward to help reduce bullying and harassment in your workplace.