



Bullying and Harassment Manager FAQ's

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1. What is Co-op view on Bullying and Harassment?

At the Co-op we take a zero approach to Bullying and Harassment. This means we take every case seriously and we commit to taking action when things aren't right. We celebrate the fact that everyone is different and want to make sure that we promote a culture where every colleague is treated with dignity and respect. All colleagues should feel valued and able to call out, speak up and challenge unwanted behaviour.

What does zero tolerance mean?

It means we won't tolerate certain behaviours which are unacceptable and that if witnessed or reported we will deal with them seriously. Colleagues should know the potential consequences of such behaviour at the Co-op.

What is my role as a manager?

As a leader we expect you to role model our Co-op behaviours. Leading by example and taking action to sort out problems as they arise supports our zero-tolerance approach. You may be able to deal with things informally by helping others understand the impact their behaviour is having on others. On other occasions a more formal approach will be needed so seek advice from ER Services.

2. What is Bullying?

Bullying is usually behaviour from a person or a group that is unwanted and makes someone feel uncomfortable, frightened, belittled or upset. The effect of bullying can be far reaching affecting colleagues mental health and well-being and, in some cases, can cause colleagues to go off sick or leave.

What does bullying look like at work?

Bullying can take many forms - sometimes it is blatant and other times it is not so obvious – here are some examples of both:

- Spreading false rumours or making accusations that are untrue about colleagues.
- Unwanted banter or jokes at other people's expense
- Belittling another or being disrespectful to someone on purpose
- Unwanted physical touching
- Not allowing a colleague to attend a training day but allowing the rest of the team
- Unfairly giving a colleague a heavier workload than others
- Aggressive and intimidating behaviour
- Deliberately missing a colleague out of a social event but inviting everyone else

How can bullying happen?

Bullying can happen in many ways in and out of work. It can come from one person or by a group of people - some examples are:

- Face to face, via email or phone
- On social media platforms including direct messages
- During meetings or social gatherings such as work-related gatherings
- Repeated behaviour regardless of whether they person has been told to stop or not
- A serious one-off incident
- Spoken or written words, images, graffiti, jokes or physical behaviour that affects another person

These can be one off event's or become a regular pattern of behaviour by another. Sometimes this is done in a subtle way and may not be obvious to the colleague but is noticed by others.

3. What is Harassment?

Harassment is against the law and a person could be prosecuted for it. Harassment is when bullying or unwanted behaviour is related to a "Protected characteristic". These characteristics are as follows: -

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Religion of belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

What does Harassment look like at work?

Some examples of harassment are:-

- A group of colleagues name calling and making fun about a person's disability which makes them feel humiliated and fearful of coming to work
- A colleague draws a rude picture that represents someone else in a derogatory way
- A colleague constantly invades another personal space and touches them or makes sexual comments towards them

4. What is Victimisation?

Victimisation is when a person is treated unfairly because they made or supported a complaint to do with one of the protected characteristics listed above. An example of this would be when a colleague is treated unfairly by their manager because they complained that one of their team was being made fun of because he was gay.

What do we mean by banter?

Banter can be described as a "playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks". It could be teasing someone about how they look or speak for example. Having a bit of banter work can be a good thing providing it is not causing offence. Knowing where to draw the line in the right place can sometimes be difficult and what can be harmless fun to one person may not be to another so we need to be aware of how it can make others feel.

When is banter not acceptable?

When banter makes another person feel uncomfortable or upset or if it continues even when a colleague has asked for it to stop, as manager you will need to act. Setting boundaries about what is and isn't acceptable from the start will help all colleagues to be respectful of others. Here are some typical examples of banter:

- colleagues making remarks about a person's appearance or clothes and implying they are gay when they are not.
- Making personal comments about the only female in the team
- Having nicknames for team colleagues that someone finds offensive

5. How do colleagues raise issues of bullying and harassment?

What does a colleague need to do to raise an issue?

Colleagues can raise their concerns in a variety of ways and this often happens informally. The colleague may speak directly to you as their manager during conversation or they may prefer to speak with another manager or colleague. Here are the other formal routes:-

- A formal grievance
- Whistleblowing
- Via HR Services
- Via a family member or friend
- Harassment and bullying line

What do I do if a colleague raises an issue?

What should be my first step?

Find out as much as you can as soon as possible about the colleague's concerns, when and how things happened, what was said or done and who was involved. It's best to have somewhere private to do this so the colleague feels comfortable, and you maintain confidentiality. Where possible it is always best to try and resolve things informally, but there will always be times when a more formal approach is needed, and you will need to refer to the Grievance Procedure. Call ER Services for advice.

Here are some example questions that can help you in your discussion's: -

- Tell me in your own words what happened...
- How did this make you feel?
- Who was present when it happened?
- What did they see or do?
- What do you think was meant by their words/actions/gestures?
- Why do you think they said/did this?
- What did you do/say/think?
- Has this happened before, if so tell me about this?
- Who else have you spoken to about this?
- Have you spoken to the person directly about how this made you feel?
- Can you still work with this colleague (s)
- How can I support you with resolving this?

Scenarios

Scenario	
<p>Bev complains that her line manager always gives her extra tasks an hour before she is due to leave. Bev notices that others around her don't ever get these extra tasks and are having a chat while she is being told to finish the extra work before she goes home as she needs to be a "team player".</p>	<p>This could be a form of bullying if Bev's manager is only ever asking her to do the extra tasks and no one else. The manager is mis-using their power.</p>
<p>Jon has been posting captions and cartoons on social media and is describing a colleague at work who looks like the person in the picture and he is making rude remarks about them being gay. Billy thinks these pictures are aimed at him as Jon has told others in the team who in turn tell Billy. Billy is not gay and is really offended by these.</p>	<p>Making someone feel uncomfortable about sexual orientation can be harassment. Even though Billy is not gay he is still affected by this behaviour.</p>
<p>The team arrange to meet up straight after work for a picnic and they don't invite Asha. When colleagues all talk about what a great time they had, Asha feels really hurt and left out.</p>	<p>Deliberately excluding someone from an event or keeping information from them is a form of bullying.</p>
<p>Chloe feels that Johan is always finding reasons to work the same shifts as her and she often finds him staring in her direction which makes her feel uncomfortable. Johan squeezes past Chloe on the way to toilet and placed his hands on her waist which she thinks he did on purpose.</p>	<p>This is unwanted behaviour and could be deemed as sexual harassment towards Chloe. Whether it was intentional or not, Chloe has found Johan touching her uncalled for and it's made her feel uncomfortable.</p>
<p>Aaron gives a witness statement about a Naomi smoking on the premises and she is dismissed. The manager is great friends with Naomi and he feels angry towards Aaron so he ignores him and doesn't respond when he asks for help</p>	<p>This is victimisation – Aaron is being made to feel bad and is being ignored because he gave a statement and stood up for what he believed was the right thing to do.</p>
<p>Julie is the manager and she likes to call everyone babe. She also has nicknames for every colleague in the team. Harri recently joined the team and does not like being referred to as "Dirty Harri".</p>	<p>Banter has to have boundaries - what is funny and harmless to one person might cause offence to another. It is up to you as a role model to make sure your teams know what is acceptable.</p>