

What is bullying and harassment?

Bullying and harassment are common problems affecting many young people 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.

Your employer is responsible for creating and maintaining a safe workplace, free from bullying, intimidation and harassment. Employees are protected by a combination of employers' policies and the law.

Examples of bullying include:

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

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.

Are you being bullied?

Have you been subjected to derogatory name calling? Do colleagues ever physically hurt you on purpose? **Are you ever afraid to go to work?** Had someone else taken credit for your work? **Have you been treated in a rude or disrespectful manner?** Had others refuse your requests for assistance? **Been yelled at or shouted at in a hostile manner?** Had your contributions ignored by others? **Been subjected to mean pranks?** Been denied a raise or promotion without being given a valid reason? **Been the target of rumours or gossip?** Been excluded from work-related social gatherings? **Had attempts made to turn other employees against you?** Been subjected to negative comments about your intelligence or competence?



The health impact

Bullying can affect everyone—those who are bullied, those who bully, and those who witness bullying. Bullying is linked to many negative outcomes including impacts on mental health, substance use, and suicide.

People who are bullied can experience negative physical, and mental health issues. They are more likely to experience:

- Depression and anxiety
- Thoughts or attempts at suicide
- Increased feelings of sadness and loneliness
- Changes in sleep and eating patterns
- Loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy
- Physical health complaints
- Decreased productivity at work
- They are more likely to miss, or avoid work
- Withdrawal from social activities
- Headaches and stomach-aches
- Panic attacks



What can you do about it?

- Keep a written record or diary of all bullying incidents, including past incidents – no matter how small
- Speak to the bully (if you can): they may not have realised how distressing their actions are to you – or, ask your rep or a colleague to raise it on your behalf
- Speak to your UNISON rep
- Speak to your employer – your rep will be able to advise you on the best way of doing so and accompany you to any meetings
- Contact an occupational health service or employee assistance programme
- Become a UNISON rep to help reduce bullying and harassment in your workplace

IF YOU ARE
BEING BULLIED
OR KNOW
SOMEONE WHO
IS
CALL UNISON
DIRECT FREE
0800 0 857 857

