

acas working
for everyone

Preventing and Responding to Incidents of Racial Harassment

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Who are we?

Prevent or resolve disputes between employers and their workforce



Provide information advice and training



Settle complaints about employee rights



Encourage people to work together more effectively



Cost of Workplace Conflict



Acas research published **11 May** - developed and commissioned by Acas, carried out by the Universities of Sheffield and Westminster examines the **total cost to organisations** in handling informal, formal and legal processes, cost of sickness absences, presenteeism and resignations.

Key findings:

- Workplace conflict costs UK employers **£28.5bn a year**
- Average cost of conflict **per employee** around **£1,000**
- **9.7 million** UK employees experienced conflict in 2018-2019

Key Acas recommendations:

- Investment should be made in effective and early resolution.
- Organisations need to place much greater emphasis on repairing employment relationships.
- Having multiple channels through which employees can seek help and support is critical.
- There is a **strong argument** to redirect dispute resolution policy **away from legal compliance** and the effectiveness of the **tribunal system**, and towards the resolution of conflict within organisations and at the **earliest stage possible**.

EHRC inquiry into racial harassment in publicly funded universities in Britain

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Tackling racial harassment: Universities challenged



equalityhumanrights.com

1 in 20 students said they left their studies due to racial harassment



3 in 20 staff said racial harassment caused them to leave their jobs



What is Racial Harassment

Racial harassment is when someone experiences bullying or unwanted behaviour related to race. The most common form of racial harassment at work is racist language.

- To be harassment, the unwanted behaviour must have either:
- violated the person's dignity, whether it was intended or not
- created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person, whether it was intended or not

Why Don't People Complain?

Fear:
Wont be believed
Things will get worse
Bully may lose their job

Ashamed:
"It must be my fault"

**Feelings of isolation and
low confidence**

No witnesses

**No confidence
it will stop**

**Unsure of
the procedures**

**Others may
see as trivial**



Changing attitudes and cultures



Handling a complaint of racial harassment



Top tips when handling a complaint

The “victim”

- Assure confidentiality
- Deal with complaints promptly
- Use informal approach – if appropriate
- Consider counselling or mediation
- Ensure ongoing support

The “bully”

- Assure confidentiality
- Initially use informal approach if appropriate
- Focus on behaviour – not individual
- Talk about the effects of behaviour and explore the reasons
- Consider counselling / mediation / training
- Consider disciplinary action

Raise awareness



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