

# MANAGER GUIDANCE

(Additional Guidance for  
the Zero Tolerance Policy)

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**This guidance is for managers who are supporting employees within their teams or sectors, identifying with one or more of the protected characteristics:**

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- cared for & care experienced

**By law (Equality Act 2010), all employers must take steps to prevent discrimination.**

You should:

- understand what the law says about discrimination, and your rights and responsibilities
- recognise the benefits of an inclusive and diverse workforce
- put policies and procedures in place and keep them up to date
- inform and train your staff and managers
- create ways for staff to be heard
- make it clear how staff can complain if discrimination happens

Taking positive steps to prevent discrimination can:

- reduce the chance of employment tribunal claims and reputational damage
- make people happier and more productive at work

Public sector organisations have an extra-legal responsibility to stop discrimination, under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

**Managers can help create a supportive work environment by:**

- Active listening (particularly during team meetings or staff supervision)
- Engaging with wider workforce initiatives that promote & celebrate diversity
- Using EIAs to review changes in policies or procedures
- Providing an ‘open door’ approach for staff to feel able to seek support/guidance if needed
- Challenging language or behaviours that are discriminatory within their teams

**If a staff member seeks support due to experiencing discrimination, harassment or abuse, managers should:**

- Take time to fully understand and listen to what the staff member is explaining (even if you are unsure at the time how the situation can be resolved, you can let them know you will seek further advice later).
- Ensure the staff member has privacy and dignity when disclosing their concern
- Reassure the staff member that they are there to support and address the concern in a way that the staff member feels comfortable with
- Advise the staff member on the different options / next steps they can take and the support that would be offered
- Be aware that this might be very difficult for the staff member to open up emotionally and your support is potentially a key part of the process to avoid further harm
- At the end of the conversation, check with the staff member what further actions have been agreed (where appropriate), who it involves and when they are expected to happen.
- Enquire if the staff member has emotional support outside of the workplace (eg family, friends) and what they might plan to do later that day for their own well-being (eg go for a walk, ring a friend, get a cup of tea)
- Check in with the staff member as to how they are, following the conversation

**Managers should avoid:**

- Assuming how the staff member feels, instead listen as every person’s feelings or situation is unique to them despite parallels to others
- Trying to tell the staff member about themselves, other experiences or situations as the staff member needs time to talk about their own situation
- Giving the impression that the staff member must be imagining what has happened to them. Instead listen and appreciate that the staff member has been worried enough to seek your support and will benefit greatly from you hearing how the situation made them feel and what they would like to happen next (even if their preferences cannot be fully met).

**In cases involving a serious issue:**

- If an issue is raised that you feel is so serious (for example, sexual or racial harassment, or serious misconduct) then you would need to advise the employee that an informal approach is not appropriate and therefore formal action needs to be taken.
- As soon as possible after an assault or any incident involving threat, verbal abuse, harassment, anti-social behaviour etc., an Incident Report Form must be completed.
- Where there is no police action or private prosecution, or where incidents less than assault occur, the Assistant Director will determine if any action is appropriate (e.g. letter of rebuke) in consultation with the employee concerned and having regard to any possible adverse reaction.

**Hate Crime reporting**

- The hate crime reporting scheme supports people living and working in Sefton who have experienced any form of hate crime. It offers anybody who has experienced or witnessed an incident the opportunity to report in an alternative location than a police station or to report it anonymously on Sefton’s web page. Sefton Council is aware that some victims may wish to remain anonymous and respect their wishes. Fill in the online [Hate Crime Incident reporting form](#). It will be emailed automatically to the Sefton Council. The information will be stored and used only for monitoring purposes by the Sefton Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership.

**Seek advice from Human Resources even if you are unsure of how seriously, an incident should be dealt with.**



