

Top Ten Tips on dealing with harassment, discrimination and victimisation at work because of your sexual orientation



1. **Everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect.**

Harassment, discrimination and victimisation at work can take many forms including:

- offensive language, jokes, banter, insults and taunts
- excluding people because of their sexual orientation or that of their friends or family
- unfair work allocation – being given worst jobs or overloaded compared to others or being denied training or promotion
- unfair complaints
- physical attacks
- being sacked or singled out for redundancy

2. **You can be harassed by anyone** – your boss, your colleagues, customers, clients and service users. All such incidents are now illegal. There are no excuses.

3. **Take action immediately.** If you feel able, tell the person to stop, Or write to them and explain that their behaviour is upsetting you and ask them to stop. Let them know you will take the matter further if they carry on. Keep a copy.

4. **Keep a diary** and record every incident in detail with time and dates.

5. **Ask any witnesses** to note down what they saw and heard.

6. **Get advice** from Inverness CAB.

7. **Report the harassment to your employer**, either yourself or through your union rep. A good employer will have an equal opportunities policy in place at work. There should be internal procedures for lodging a grievance or a complaint as a first formal step to registering the fact that there is a problem.

8. **Whoever you report to** must make certain that your complaint is investigated and that something is done about it.

9. **Make a record of the date you complained about the harassment**, who you spoke to about it, what was said and what action was agreed on. This will be important later if you decide to go to an employment tribunal. You and any witnesses have a right not be victimised for complaining or following up a grievance.

10. **Don't give up – get support and good advice.** If matters cannot be resolved internally you may need to take your case to an employment tribunal. Remember the burden of proof lies with the employer – they have to prove they have not broken the law, Act quickly – remember there are strict time limits within which to make a claim.

You do not have to live in Inverness to be able to access this project. If you believe you have suffered discrimination in the workplace contact:

Inverness CAB on 01463 237664 or
discrimination@invernesscab.casonline.org.uk

