

Being bullied

Bullying is behaviour from a person or group that's unwanted and makes you feel uncomfortable, including feeling:

- frightened ('intimidated')
- less respected or put down ('degraded')
- you're made fun of and it makes you feel uncomfortable ('humiliated')
- upset (insulted or 'offended')

Examples of bullying in the workplace could include:

- someone has spread a false rumour about you
- someone keeps putting you down in meetings
- your boss does not let you go on training courses but they allow everyone else to
- your boss keeps giving you heavier workloads than everyone else
- your team never lets you join social events

The bullying might:

- be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident
- happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls
- happen in the workplace or at work social events
- not always be obvious or noticed by others

2. When bullying is harassment

By law, it's harassment when bullying or unwanted behaviour is about any of the following (known as 'protected characteristics'):

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Pregnancy and maternity are different from the other protected characteristics, in how the law on harassment treats them.

[Find out more about harassment.](#)

What you can do

In some cases, the person upsetting you might not realise the effect of their actions so you can try talking with them, if you feel you can.

It's a good idea to:

- explain how their behaviour makes you feel
- be firm, not aggressive
- stick to the facts

If you do not feel comfortable talking to the person face to face, you could:

- put this in an email
- ask for support from a trade union representative, if you have one

If you do not feel comfortable doing this or the bullying carries on, you should talk with someone at work you feel comfortable with.

This could be:

- your boss
- another manager
- someone in HR
- a counsellor, if your employer provides one
- your trade union or staff representative, if you have one

It's also a good idea to keep a diary or record of the bullying, including:

- how the bullying made you feel
- dates and times it happened
- any witnesses
- any evidence, for example emails or screenshots of social media posts

[See more advice on how to raise a problem at work.](#)

What your employer must do

Your workplace should have a policy on bullying that says how it should be handled.

Even if there's no policy, your employer has a legal duty of care to protect you while you're at work. This includes dealing with bullying issues.

If you have to leave your job because of severe bullying that your employer did nothing about, you might be able to make a claim to an employment tribunal for [constructive dismissal](#).

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