

Appendix A - Examples of bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment

While most people agree on extreme cases of bullying and harassment, it is often harder to identify the grey areas. Below are some examples of bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment behaviour. Whilst this list is not exhaustive it gives a clear indication of the sorts of actions that constitute bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment.

Bullying and harassment can take many forms in the workplace, from verbal communication to physical acts or written words. [Examples of these types of behaviour include:](#)

General behaviours:	Manipulative or undermining tactics:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Malicious gossip or spreading critical feedback to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Copying critical emails to irrelevant parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insulting, ridiculing, or undermining colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using emails, messages, anonymous letters, or social media to insult or criticise
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managers demeaning junior staff or misusing power or position	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assigning new tasks without adequate training or support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persistent unfair treatment or setting out to make someone appear incompetent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alternating bullying with charm to confuse and deter action
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliberate exclusion, isolation, or ignoring of a colleague	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistently attacking someone's personal or professional standing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blocking progression, promotion, or training without justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making false accusations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removing responsibilities without discussion or notice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Withholding or providing incorrect information deliberately	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overloading with work, reducing deadlines, or micromanaging	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public humiliation, belittling comments, or personal insults	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unwarranted threats or negative references to job security	

Aggressive or intimidating actions:	Sexual or offensive conduct:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shouting, swearing, or using threatening language (in person or by phone) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggressive gestures (e.g., pointing in someone's face, pushing, or shoving) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display of offensive materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intimidating body language or physical contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spreading malicious rumours, especially related to protected characteristics (e.g. age, race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sabotaging someone's work or efforts. 	

It **becomes harassment** when unwanted conduct relates to a protected characteristic as defined in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation).

Sexual harassment can be a one-off incident or an ongoing pattern of behaviour. It can happen in person and also online for example in meetings, email social media and messaging tools. [Examples include, but are not limited to:](#)

- sexual comments or jokes¹
- telling sexually offensive jokes
- making sexual comments or jokes about someone's sexual orientation or gender reassignment
- displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photographs
- suggestive looks, staring or leering
- propositions and sexual advances
- making promises in return for sexual favours
- sexual gestures
- intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life
- sexual posts or contact on social media
- spreading sexual rumours about a person
- sending sexually explicit emails or text messages
- unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing
- sexual (physical) assault, including rape.

¹ What some people may perceive as joking, 'banter' or part of their workplace culture can still constitute sexual harassment.