

Joint Agreement on Guidance for Harassment and Bullying in Employment in FE Colleges

Appendix 1: Support Available

1. Appointment of Contact Officers

The College may consider appointing contact officers in recognition of the difficulties employees may have in raising issues of harassment or bullying directly with their line manager.

Contact officers should receive special training to carry out their role. The role of the Contact Officer is to:

- provide a confidential, sympathetic ear for employees with complaints or questions about harassment and/or bullying;
- provide advice and guidance on the how to make a complaint in accordance with the College policy;
- help the employee establish the main details of the complaint;
- channel the complaint to the appropriate manager for action if the employee wishes to take the matter further; and
- advise the employee he/she may also contact his/her trade union if he/she wishes to be represented during the process of making a complaint.

In all cases, discussions with contact officers are undertaken in complete confidence.

A Contact Officer, with the agreement of the employee, may approach the alleged harasser on an informal basis to point out that his/her behaviour is considered unacceptable to the employee concerned.

2. Trade Union Representatives

Recognised trade union representatives are a source of support for their members facing bullying or harassment. The college should encourage employees who are concerned about bullying or harassment to speak to their trade union representative. The college should support activities on the part of recognised trade unions on raising awareness and tackling the issue of bullying or harassment amongst their members. If a recognised trade union identifies a representative who will be responsible for handling bullying or harassment complaints, the college should undertake to provide that individual with reasonable paid time-off to attend trade union training in this area.