

# Picking up the pieces

How organisations  
manage the aftermath  
of harassment  
complaints

THE WAINWRIGHT TRUST

## HARASSMENT AND THE AFTERMATH – PICKING UP THE PIECES

All employment tribunal cases cause some disruption to the lives of those involved – applicants, those against whom they have made a claim and work colleagues, but sexual and racial harassment cases in particular leave a legacy of distress, resentment and hostility from which organisations, not to mention individuals, sometimes never really recover.

So what can be done to minimise the risks, to deal with the issues if a harassment claim is brought and, above all, to get back to normal afterwards and prevent costly recurrence?

*'Picking up the pieces – how organisations manage the aftermath of harassment complaints'*,\* a new report from the Wainwright Trust on what employers actually do and what they could do to prevent and deal with harassment in the workplace, fills a significant gap in existing management guidance. Based on research commissioned from Dr Jeanne Gregory, Professor of Gender Studies at Middlesex University, the report details the experiences of employers in both the private and public sectors, including the uniformed services. The lessons they have learned and been prepared to share are amplified in an invaluable 'Guidelines for employers' chapter by the long and practical experience in this field of a number of the Wainwright Trust trustees.

The report begins with some background to case law developments, other research and existing guidelines, before detailing Dr Gregory's more recent survey focusing on the management of the aftermath of harassment cases. After describing the practices she found, it then includes 11 more in-depth case studies, of which three are named organisations – the Metropolitan Police, the South Wales Fire Service and the armed forces.

Finally, the 'Guidelines for employers' suggest what organisations should do: before – to avoid harassment complaints occurring, during – if a claim is made, and afterwards – both to deal with the specific problems arising from the case and to avoid similar problems in future.

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