



Review of Code of Practice on Workplace Bullying

A year ago Minister Pat Breen, whose remit includes health and safety, proposed that the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) and the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) review their Codes of Practice on Bullying in the Workplace. He asked them to consider developing a single code. The consultation process, which is being facilitated by the WRC, is reported to be progressing well and it is anticipated that the new code will be published in the latter half of 2019.

Commenting on this development the Director of the EAP Institute Maurice Quinlan said “In its work providing support services to employees with mental health problems in the workplace the Institute has seen the increased incidence of workplace bullying and the devastating impact on employee mental health. National research needs to be carried out to establish the incidence of workplace bullying, policies and procedures in place and outcomes. Having policies, procedures, training and supports will indemnify companies from personal injury claims due to workplace bullying.”

According to Quinlan “ The three codes of practice on workplace bullying which came into effect on the 1st of March 2002 did not provide an effective response to workplace bullying. The codes were cumbersome and expensive on companies to operate. The training of contact persons who provided peer assistance to targets of bullying was ineffective. Complainants were reluctant to discuss the issues with their peers. The procedures which included informal, formal and investigation were such that complainants were discouraged to engage in a lengthy process.”

Concluding Quinlan said “The new code of practice should include a strong element of prevention by promoting the concept of Dignity in the Workplace. Employees should have access to a confidential resource person skilled in the resolution of workplace bullying complaints.”

For further information

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