

[REDACTED]

From: Staff Message
Sent: 02 November 2017 16:52
To: DL All Exchange Users; SASA External Contacts
Subject: Sexual harassment message from the Permanent Secretary

Importance: High

Expires: 31 December 2017 17:00

Reports in the media about alleged sexual harassment in Westminster and the Scottish Parliament reinforce the need to be clear that there is no place for discrimination or harassment of any kind, including here in the Scottish Government.

I have agreed with the First Minister that we will review our policies and processes to check that they are effective. Everyone must have confidence that they can raise issues and that they will be handled with care and discretion, perhaps even through an independent mechanism. We will do this review carefully but quickly in line with our SG2020 aspirations and through an acceleration of work already underway as part of the People Plan. We will work with the trade unions given their important role both in supporting individual members and informing the policy review.

If you want to help inform consideration of our approach or share concerns about current cultures or behaviours then I would encourage you to get in contact - details are set out below along with sources of support.

Having effective, well understood policies in place is only part of the story. As you know we have been working hard through the SG2020 programme to create the kind of organisation we want and need to be. This is about culture and behaviour as much as policies and process. We all have an important part to play in creating a positive culture by making sure that we treat others with respect and dignity and by calling it out when that doesn't happen. This includes challenging unacceptable behaviour, reporting incidents and supporting colleagues, regardless of whether you think the perceived harassment, discrimination or bullying is intentional or unintentional.

The SG2020 programme has already involved [REDACTED] taking a leading role in work to shift our culture in areas such as race equality. Similarly, following responses to the 2016 People Survey on bullying and harassment, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have been leading work on building positive and inclusive teams and they will be sharing their reflections on Saltire shortly.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the People Survey which closed earlier this week. It provides important evidence which can and will shape our actions. It is important that we are able to talk sensibly and responsibly about this as an organisation and please do talk to me or any other member of the senior leadership team directly.

Contact

- Either [Head of Branch People Directorate 4] or [Head of Branch People Directorate 3]. [Head of Branch People Directorate 4] and [Head of Branch People Directorate 3] [Redacted].

Support

- The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) can provide emotional and practical support on a range of issues through trained welfare and counselling practitioners offering confidential, independent and unbiased information and guidance. Call free on [REDACTED]. The helpline is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The EAP can refer staff to 1-2-1 counselling support, this would be accessed through the member of staff calling the EAP helpline.
- We have in-house access to a Counselling and Wellbeing Officer, [REDACTED] who can be contacted on ext. [REDACTED].
- If you are a member of a trade union you can seek support from your local trade union representative.
- The Employee Assistance Programme also provides support for line managers who are dealing with sensitive or traumatic situations. This is available through the EAP Helpline on [REDACTED].