



Cabinet Office

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BY EMAIL ONLY

3 November 2017

Dear [Redacted],

CIVIL SERVICE RESPONSE TO MISCONDUCT OR MISBEHAVIOUR

Extensive media coverage continues of allegations of sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour in several industries and sectors, particularly in respect of those in powerful positions over others. In the light of this coverage, I am writing to remind colleagues of the arrangements we have in place for employees across the Civil Service, and to ask you to satisfy yourselves that they are working well in practice in your departments and agencies.

As we have consistently made clear, employees across the Civil Service should expect to be treated with dignity and respect in all that they do and at all times. That is fundamental to ensuring we create and protect the inclusive culture we have recommitted to through our new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and applies to staff interactions not only with each other but with Ministers, special advisers and the full range of customers, stakeholders and suppliers.

It is essential that staff have the support and safe channels to raise concerns where they feel they have not been treated properly. It is also essential that staff feel safe to speak up, and that they are confident their concerns will be listened to and dealt with appropriately. Where necessary, that should include appropriate investigation and action to address any misconduct or misbehaviours.

This is something that as a Civil Service we continue to act on, both through our HR function and in departments. Departments have several routes available to create a "safe to challenge" environment, including confidential hotlines and email addresses, and many



have used the new healthcheck document to sense check how well those are working. We are providing support and training to Nominated Officers, so that they in turn can provide support and advice to individuals in raising their concerns. Staff can also turn to our Employee Assistance Programmes. In all departments, this will be backed by specific departmental policies on conduct and behaviour, and processes for investigating concerns where they have been raised.

Given the high profile cases outside the Civil Service, it would be timely for all departments to check that their arrangements are both working and well known by staff. I would therefore be grateful if you and colleagues could work with your HR Directors, staff networks and others to satisfy yourselves rapidly that

- information on conduct and on how to raise a concern is clear and easily accessible for all staff;
- channels for raising a concern are well publicised and easy to use, and that staff feel positively encouraged to speak up; and
- processes for investigating concerns and, where relevant, taking follow up action, are working well and ensure timely resolution.

Given the importance we all attach to this area, I have also asked [Redacted] to review the current cross-departmental arrangements and advise the Civil Service Board and me on whether any further action is needed to strengthen our current processes and practices.

I am copying this letter to Wednesday Morning Colleagues, HR Directors and [Redacted]



JEREMY HEYWOOD

