

## AXA: no tolerance for bullies

Bullying at work is an abuse of power or position. It is offensive discrimination through persistent, vindictive, cruel or humiliating attempts to undermine, criticise, condemn, and to hurt or humiliate an individual or group of employees. It is unacceptable and AXA UK CEO Nicolas Moreau has issued an unequivocal statement to all staff stating that bullying, harassment and victimisation **"will not be tolerated in AXA"**.



Bullying and harassment can make the lives of employees a misery, affect their performance and damage their careers. It can also have a serious impact on organisations. HSE statistics show that each year as many as 20 million working days are lost to bullying and up to a half of all stress-related illnesses are a direct result of bullying.

AXA is not exempt from bullying and the HSE Stress Audit being undertaken at various AXA sites has shown that a high number of staff feel they are subjected to workplace bullying.

To help draw up a picture of how widespread bullying and harassment could be within AXA, Amicus are issuing a *Bullying & Harassment Questionnaire* this week to coincide with *National Ban Bullying At Work Day* (7<sup>th</sup> November). Please take a few minutes to complete this.

AXA has signed up to the *Dignity At Work* initiative and is working with Amicus to create a work environment where negative behaviours such as bullying and harassment are not tolerated.

We will be raising a variety of issues with AXA that have been brought to our attention such as some managers "closing ranks" when dealing with complaints against managers, others failing to deal with problem areas when individuals are too scared to make a formal complaint and unacceptable behaviours in target driven sales areas.

Amicus are also keen to ensure that managers do not cross the line from active performance management into bullying and will ensure AXA put in place systems and training to prevent this happening.

Workplace bullying can also occur between colleagues and this is equally unacceptable.

If you have been bullied at work, or have observed such behaviours in your department, fill in the questionnaire and make sure you talk to your local union rep about it. Nothing can be done to improve matters if staff sit and suffer in silence.

AXA and Amicus are working to stop bullying – but we need your help...

### What is workplace bullying?

Usually, if you genuinely feel you are being singled out for unfair treatment by a boss or colleague, you are probably being bullied. Although there is no comprehensive list of bullying behaviours, and there is no one type of person who is likely to be a bully, the list below should give an idea of some behaviour which constitutes workplace bullying.

Bullying behaviour can include:

- competent staff being constantly criticised, having responsibilities removed or being given trivial tasks to do
- shouting at staff
- persistently picking on people in front of others or in private
- blocking promotion
- regularly and deliberately ignoring or excluding individuals from work activities
- setting a person up to fail by overloading them with work or setting impossible deadlines
- consistently attacking a member of staff in terms of their professional or personal standing
- regularly making the same person the butt of jokes

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