

Harassment

This factsheet explains what harassment is, what your rights are and what you can do to stop it.



The definitions of harassment are very broad and cover a number of situations, including sexual harassment and harassment in the workplace. However, the following are an indication that you may be experiencing harassment:

- violence (including the fear of violence or repeat actions) – This can range from verbal abuse, pushing and shoving to actual physical harm.
- threats – either verbal or physical
- damage – to property or possessions

There are also other, more subtle, forms of harassment. These can include things like:

- unwanted attention
- stalking
- persistent sending of unwanted gifts
- malicious spread of information in a way that is calculated to cause distress (like 'outing' someone to their family or neighbours or telling lies about them)

What can be done?

The offence must have occurred on at least two occasions in order to be considered as harassment and must cause (or be intended to cause) alarm or distress.

It is a criminal offence to harass someone and the police can take action against the person who is doing it.

Ultimately this could lead to one or more of the following outcomes for the harasser:

- a formal warning for the harasser
- obtaining an injunction against them which prevents them from continuing to harass the victim
- imprisonment
- fines or compensation to the victim

One of the most common forms of harassment is from neighbours. Sometimes those doing the harassment may be doing it to more than one person in the neighbourhood. If this is the case it may be possible for the police/Local Authority to serve them with an Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO). If you are able to, check with other neighbours to see whether they have experienced any harassment and if so, what kind.

call or text our
 helpline on
 020 7704 2040 or
 visit our website
www.galop.org.uk

What can you do?

Try to deal with the harassment as soon as it starts. The longer it goes on the more difficult it can be to address. Sometimes confronting your harasser can help but don't consider this if you think it could put you in danger. This might be verbally, either when the harassment is taking place, or later on.

If you're confronting them:

- Speak slowly and calmly and maintain eye contact
- Describe their behaviour and the effect it has on you
- Say what you want to happen: for example that you want the harassment to stop or what has happened to remain confidential
- Ignore attempts to make a joke of what you say, or to dismiss it
- Don't smile or apologise
- End the conversation when you have finished what you have to say

Do not confront the harasser if you feel that this will put you in danger.

If possible, try to have someone else with you as a witness and keep a note of the meeting.

Keep a detailed diary of events and incidents as you can use this as evidence later on if needed. If there are any witnesses to the harassment you could also ask them to keep a diary as well.

Where can you get help?

People who harass others because of their sexuality or gender identity often rely on the idea that the victim will not tell anyone because of the nature of the harassment.

If you are being harassed it is important that you remember you have legal rights. Therefore you should try and speak to someone in authority about it as soon as you can so that steps can be taken to prevent the harasser from continuing.

In the first instance it is advisable to speak to your nearest source of authority. This may be a Housing Authority or Association or your local police station.

If you decide to go to the police you should ask to speak to the LGBT Liaison Officer for your borough as they may have a better and more sympathetic understanding of the particular issues you are facing as an LGBT person.

You can also contact Galop and we can advise you of your rights in your particular situation and suggest an appropriate course of action, as well as putting you in touch with other agencies or support networks who may be able to help. If you feel that your complaint hasn't been dealt with properly by your nearest authority, Galop will liaise on your behalf with them to try and resolve the situation.

The information contained in this factsheet should only be used for guidance. While Galop has made every effort to make sure that it is correct and up-to-date, we would advise you always to seek further advice before making any decisions or taking action.

This factsheet aims to provide general advice, but you should always remember that factors, such as age, sexual orientation, sex, race, gender, religion, or disability, may make a difference to individual situations.

CRIMINAL INJURIES:
If you have experienced a violent crime you may be entitled to compensation. For further details on this you should visit the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) at <https://www.cica.gov.uk>. If you are having difficulties, Galop may be able to assist you in completing any forms necessary to make a claim.

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