

Preventing violence and harassment at work

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Trends in current thinking (Di Martino et al., 2003)

- **A shift in focus from physical to psychological violence**
- **Focus on repeated behaviour – on a sequence of relatively minor acts**
- **Focus on dignity: widening the scope of health, safety and wellbeing at work**
 - Dignity, human rights and combating discrimination
 - Amsterdam Treaty: Combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation (new article 13 of EC Treaty)

Client/customer violence: some obstacles for successful intervention

- Sensitive issue for organisations and individuals involved
 - Potential implications for business and recruitment
- “The customer is king”: Focus on customer sovereignty
 - Implications for power-balance between employee and customer
- Stigmatisation of targets: personal and professional shortcomings (responsible for managing relationships)
- “Part of the job”: normalisation of violence

Harassment and bullying: some obstacles for successful intervention

- Sensitive issue for organisations and individuals involved: intervention may indicate a problem
- Dynamics and process development essential for understanding and success of intervention
- Issues around power and control often at the centre:
 - Those for main responsibility for its prevention could be the source of the problem
- Subjective and intangible nature of phenomena making it difficult to acknowledge and rectify

Interventions: third party violence

(Taxonomy adopted from Murphy & Sauter, 2003/EASHW 2009)

	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Society	Regulation Corporate agreements	Accident investigation	Rehabilitation/compensation
Employer Organisation	Logging incidents Training Agreement/policy Action plans	Accident investigation Conflict management	Organisational recovery
Job/task	Risk assessment Reduction and control of risk	Intervening in situations Limitation and management	
Individual	Training (pre-employment testing?)	Applying protection/de-escalation	Individual recovery

Interventions: bullying & harassment

Taxonomy adopted from Murphy & Sauter, 2003

	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Society	Law/regulation Policy/code of conduct (sanctions) Collect.agreements	Court case Ind. tribunal	Provision of rehabilitation opportunities
Employer Organisation	Policy/procedure Training/awareness Org. survey	Handl. procedure Mediation Investigation	Organisational recovery
Job/task	Risk assessment Job-redesign	Monitoring/case analysis Staff survey	Group recovery
Individual	Training	Social support/ Counselling	Pers. & prof. rehabilitation Redress

Challenges ahead: getting it right



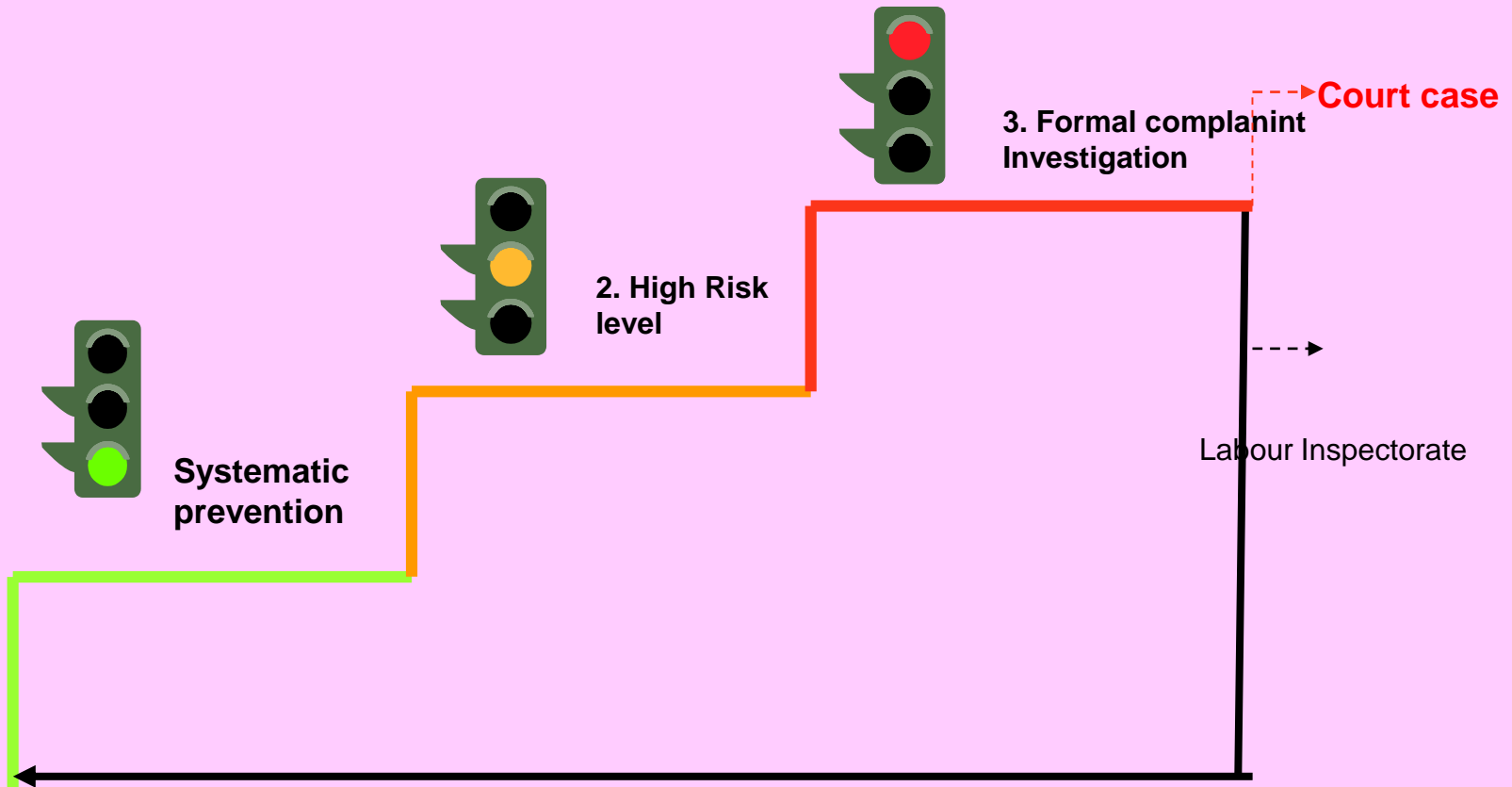
Level of society: key challenges

- Anti-bullying legislation/regulation
 - Considering need for EU-wide regulation
 - Evaluation of effectiveness of regulation (e.g. Hoel & Einarsen, 2009), e.g. role of employers, labour inspectorate etc.
 - Communication of lessons learnt
 - Clarify role of employer and enforcement authorities
- Policies/codes of conduct (e.g. framework agreement)
 - Communication of their existence and content (e.g. Vartia et al, 2009): role of social partners
 - Ensuring wide implementation
- Rehabilitation
 - Provision of tailor-made services for victims
 - Evaluation of the effectiveness of services
 - Ensuring justice and redress for victims

Organisational level: key challenges

- Develop and implement local policy
 - Employee/trade union engagement
 - Management awareness and responsibility
 - Ensure integration with other organisational processes and functional requirements
- Management training
 - conflict management
- Identification of risk-groups: understanding of differences and overlaps between harassment / bullying and discrimination
- Local investigation of complaints

Organisational level: applying the 'traffic light model' (JUM, 2007)



Harassment/bullying: factors undermining opportunity for a fair 'hearing' – 1/2

(Hoel, 2009)

- Encounters in private spaces
- Patterned acts explained as isolated events
- Events cannot be understood in isolation
- Perpetrators acting differently to others

Harassment/bullying: factors undermining opportunity for a fair 'hearing' – 2/2

- The powerful/irreplaceable likely to be believed
- Hurt and unstable victims receiving little sympathy
- When bullying is rational to achieve managerial objectives/control – managerial loyalties could/will impact on outcomes

Investigation of complaints: What?

- A formal response to a complaint of bullying/harassment
- To establish the facts and come to a decision about whether a complaint is upheld or not
- Builds on and must adhere to the organisation's bullying policy and principles for natural justice
- Carried out by trained investigators

Level of job/task: key challenges

- Risk analysis and assessment
 - Development and validation of generic risk-assessment tools (e.g. BRAT, Hoel & Giga, 2005)
- Integrate risk-analysis of violence, bullying and harassment within main stream risk assessment approaches

Level of the individual: key challenges

- Acknowledging the need for behavioural standards and rules in an increasingly diverse workplace
- Greater focus on the role and responsibility of observers
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of support and rehabilitation efforts
- Establishing fairness and justice: understanding and ensuring victim redress

Thanks for listening!

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