

Harassment Advisers Network

Harassment Adviser role profile

Purpose

The University of Reading is committed to providing a safe working environment free from harassment and bullying, supporting the rights of all of the University community to be treated with respect. As part of that commitment, the Harassment Advisers Network of staff supporters provide a first point of contact for staff who are concerned about bullying and harassment.

Harassment Advisers are employees of the University who have volunteered their time to provide confidential support and information to staff members who are experiencing unwanted behaviour, bullying or harassment and need the support of someone to talk to but are unable to approach a colleague or line manager.

A Harassment Adviser will;

- Provide a supportive and confidential listening service outside of the formal University structure and services;
- Provide information on the various options open to people who feel they are experiencing harassment or other unwanted behaviour; and assist those seeking advice in thinking through the options, respecting the wishes of the member of staff;
- Signpost people to internal and external sources of advice and support;
- Provide similar support to those accused of harassment (although the same Adviser would not support both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator);
- Deal with all cases with the utmost confidentiality except in cases where there is an unacceptable risk to a member of staff, student or to the institution;
- Treat all colleagues with respect and dignity.

A Harassment Advisor will not:

- Make judgements or statements about the legitimacy of a complaint to the effect that particular behaviour definitely constitutes harassment that will lead to disciplinary action or to the effect that a particular behaviour is definitely not harassment;
- Provide counselling;
- approach the alleged harasser in an attempt to mediate or resolve the matter for you;
- act as an advocate, or a representative; or
- be involved in any formal stage of the process, be it in writing the formal complaint, the investigation, disciplinary or grievance procedures, except by way of giving the complainant or alleged perpetrator the support they need during this time.

Who are Harassment Advisers and how can they be contacted?

Harassment Advisers are drawn from across the University and are in a variety of different roles. They are people who are:

- Empathetic to people's problems by being good listeners;
- Able to communicate clearly and effectively;

- Non-judgemental in their approach; and
- Able to provide objective support to staff experiencing harassment.

A list of Harassment Advisers can be found on the Diversity & Inclusion web pages.

Support and training for Harassment Advisers

HR colleagues co-ordinate the Harassment Adviser network and provide, support, guidance and training as necessary. This includes a regular termly meeting to ensure consistency of approach and to monitor how the network is being used.

Anyone interested in becoming a Harassment Adviser should contact Alan Twyford, HR Partner, in the first instance

The University's separate network of Health, Advocacy, Respect and Care (HARC) Advisers Network is continuing and will run in parallel to the Harassment Adviser network.

Monitoring and data protection

- Harassment Advisers may need to meet with members of staff more than once. To avoid the need to cover ground already discussed, with the agreement of the member of staff, they may make some notes at a meeting. Notes will be kept by the Harassment Adviser and will where possible not record any personal details.
 - Any notes taken will be stored confidentially. They will be retained for a period of six months after the final meeting after which they will be destroyed.
 - For statistical purposes, information relating to complaints will be collated using a monitoring form and may be used in reports made for Diversity & Inclusion purposes and to senior management. This information is always anonymised and will not be presented or used in any way which identifies individuals.
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