Have you been harassed at work by people who aren't your work colleagues?

Changes in the law that came into force from 30th October may be able to protect you. People you come into contact with at your workplace who are; contractors, clients, customers, suppliers, pupils, parents/carers, patients, service users, or members of the public are known as 3rd parties.

From 30th October 2026 your employer has a duty to take all reasonable steps to protect you from being harassed by a 3rd party while you are at work.

You have a right to work in a harassment free workplace.
Harassment happens when you are faced with-

- unwanted conduct that is
- related to your; race, age, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment

Unwanted conduct can come in many different forms e.g.

- spoken words, even if they are passed off as banter,
- written words,
- mimicry,
- social media posts,
- graffiti,
- jokes or pranks,
- physical gestures or facial expressions
- physical violence

If the unwanted conduct makes you feel that your dignity has been violated or that it has created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for you at work you should report the incidents as soon as possible. Prevention, not just reaction. Your employer shouldn't wait until you've been harassed by a third party at work to act. They should already have safeguards in place and have taken all reasonable steps to prevent harassment in the first place.

Check what steps your employer has put in place to protect you from 3rd party harassment. You could ask your employer-

- If they have policies about unacceptable behaviour of visitors?
- Have they carried out risk assessments?
- If they have reasonable preventative measures in place?
- Is there a clear plan of action if a report is made about 3rd party harassment?
- How are 3rd parties told what behaviour is unacceptable and what action may follow?

BE: Black Equity Organisation