

Food Standards Agency: Information released under the Freedom of Information Act

Date released: 27 November 2018

Request

*My request relates to sexual harassment in the work place. If the department **does not** have offices in Wales, please could you disregard the rest of this email and respond confirming that is the case?*

*If the department **does** have offices in Wales, please answer the following questions but **please be specific to employees/former employees who are/were working in offices in Wales.***

Please provide a total figure across the financial years 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 for the following information:

1. *In total, how many accusations of sexual harassment were made by members of staff against other members of staff?*
 - *Of these in 1, how many complainants were women?*
 - *Of these in 1, how many of those accused were men?*
2. *How many members of staff were subject to disciplinary proceedings due to accusations of sexual harassment in the work place?*
3. *How many members of staff were dismissed due to sexual harassment in the work place?*
4. *How much money has the department paid out in damages/compensation or in settlement agreements to individuals as a result of sexual harassment proceedings? The answer should include cases where an out of court financial settlement was reached after a claim had been filed, even when the department does not accept the claim/liability; and it should also include cases where court proceedings were not initiated but the department paid damages/compensation or entered an agreement without itself necessarily accepting liability.*
 - *What was the largest single sum paid out for such purposes? (If finding this information would tip the request over the threshold for costs of compliance, please disregard this question)*
5. *What is the department's policy for entering non-disclosure agreements (NDAs)?*
6. *In how many cases in the years specified above has the department used NDAs to resolve sexual harassment cases? (If finding this information would tip the request over the threshold for costs of compliance, please disregard this question)*

Response

1. Zero
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. The Cabinet Office Guidance on Settlement Agreements, Special Severance Payments and Confidentiality Clauses on Termination of Employment:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/395393/Settlement Agreements Civil Service guidance_01_Feb_2015_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/395393/Settlement_Agreements_Civil_Service_guidance_01_Feb_2015_FINAL.pdf)

6. N/A

The FSA takes all allegations of harassment seriously. We have an established bullying and harassment policy and an Employee Assistance Provider who offers advice and counselling. In addition, we have a Behaviour Network which is a group of staff who act as a confidential first point of contact and whose role it is to listen and help identify the options that staff have to overcome the different situations they may face. We also work closely with our trade union colleagues to ensure all staff feel able to come to work without threat of bullying, harassment and victimisation.