

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOR

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

TABLE OF CONTENT

1. CBS' APPROACH TOWARDS OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR	2
2. INTRODUCTION	2
Clarification of concepts	2
Formal definitions	3
A continuum.....	5
Can everything potentially be offensive behaviour?	6
The effect of the behaviour precedes its intention	6
CBS' OBLIGATION TO RESPOND.....	7
UNCONSCIOUS BIAS.....	7
3. PREVENTING OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR	7
The leader takes the initiative – everyone is responsible	7
Examples of precautionary measures	8
4. RESPONSE	8
The employee's options	9
The leader response.....	9
Leader's handling of second-hand information and sign of problems	11
HR & Legal's role	11
Anonymity and confidentiality	11
Duty to act	11
Work injury and occupational illness	12
5. IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION WHEN AN INQUIRY RESULTS IN A COMPLAINT	12
6. FOLLOW-UP AND ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING	13
Rebuilding of collaboration and the psychological working environment.....	13
APPENDIX	14
APPENDIX 1. EXAMPLES OF SEXISM/SEXUAL HARASSMENT	14
.....	14
APPENDIX 2. THE EMPLOYEE TAKES THE INITIATIVE	15
APPENDIX 3. WHEN A REPRESENTATIVE TAKES THE INITIATIVE	16
APPENDIX 4. COMPLAINT TRACK	17

1. CBS' APPROACH TOWARDS OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Everybody should feel welcome at CBS and be provided the framework to use their talents and do their job. Everyone has the right to go to work and feel safe without having to worry about – or watch others – being subjected to bullying, sexual harassment and/or other offensive behaviour.

It must always be taken seriously, when an employee feels harassed or violated and chooses to come forward. The employee's experience of the behaviour they have been subjected to must always be the point of departure, and the response should be in accordance with CBS's guidelines (see the following sections).

Not only do we aim for a working environment free of offensive behaviour; we also need to identify and address the underlying cultural factors, structures, collegial patterns etc., which cause offensive behaviour to take place without us paying attention to it at all.

#MeToo stories from workplaces and educational institutions in Denmark, along with insights brought forward by movements such as #BlackLivesMatter, have been a wake-up call for many people. This has led to an expansion of efforts to address racist, sexist and other offensive behaviour in society as well as internally at CBS.

Understanding this is the first step towards solving the problem. The next step is that we – employees and leaders jointly – are attentive, object to offensive behaviour and contribute to a working culture characterised by good manners, well-being and mutual trust.

2. INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are targeted at everyone at CBS, employees as well as leaders. It starts with a clarification of concepts followed by four chapters:

1. Prevention
2. Response
3. Complaints procedure step by step
4. Follow-up and organisational learning

Appendices that visualise the processes mentioned in chapters 2 and 3 can be found at the end of the guidelines.

Guidelines specifically addressing sexual harassment and sexism were developed by CBS/HR and discussed in AMO and HSU in 2022. As of early 2024, the original guidelines on sexism and sexual harassment have been incorporated into the broader concept of offensive behaviour, as indicated below. The Occupational Health & Safety Organisation (AMO) and the General Consultation Committee (HSU) have received the revised guidelines for orientation.

HR & Legal, May 2024

Clarification of concepts

There are several concepts that can be seen as falling under an 'umbrella' related to offensive behaviour. Common to these concepts is that they concern behaviour that poses a risk to individual expression, safety and health.

This chapter will list some formal definitions and then offer a continuum to concretise how e.g. sexism/sexual harassment can be expressed in daily life.

Formal definitions

OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR: "When one or more individuals in the organisation severely or repeatedly subject others to bullying, sexual harassment or other degrading behaviour at work. This can involve both active behaviour and failure to react. The behaviour must be perceived as degrading by the employee or employees."¹

Offensive behaviour in relation to work can include but is not limited to:

- Withholding necessary information
- Hurtful remarks
- Unjustified deprivation or reduction of responsibilities and tasks
- Slander or exclusion from social and professional communities
- Attacks on or criticism of employees' privacy
- Being shouted at or ridiculed
- Physical abuse or threats thereof
- Hostility or silence in response to questions or attempts at conversation
- Undermining employees' jobs, work efforts or competence
- Offensive phone calls
- Offensive written messages, text messages, images, and videos, including on social media
- Unpleasant teasing
- Diminishing someone based on age, gender, gender identity (see more about sexism below), sexual orientation, ethnicity or religious beliefs
- Exploitation in the workplace, such as using employees for personal errands

For the sake of clarity, it should be emphasised that ordinary management practice, collegial feedback and similar actions are not offensive behaviour.

BULLYING: "When one or more individuals in the organisation regularly and over a longer period of time – or repeatedly and rudely – violate(s) one or more individuals in the organisation." The behaviour must be perceived as degrading by the employee or employees. However, the behaviour only becomes bullying when the person or persons they are directed at are unable to defend themselves effectively against them."²

Bullying differs from other forms of offensive behaviour by:

- always involving the same individual or individuals who are systematically subjected to the offensive behaviour.
- often involving the same individual or individuals who exercise the offensive behaviour.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: "Any kind of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour with sexual undertones with the purpose or the effect to violate the dignity of an individual, especially by fostering a threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or uncomfortable working climate" ([The Danish Act on Equal Treatment](#)³) (...) "The behaviour must be perceived as degrading by the violated party" ([Guide](#) (link in Danish)).

¹ AT-guideline 4.3.1-1, published on February 26, 2019, updated November 2020

² AT-guideline 4.3.1-1, published on February 26, 2019, updated November 2020

³ All translations of Danish law are indicative, not official.

Sexual harassment can include but is not limited to:

- Unwanted touching or unwanted verbal invitations for sexual intercourse
- Obscene jokes and comments
- Irrelevant queries related to sex
- Showing of pornographic material

SEXISM: “Any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice or behaviour based upon the idea that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex/gender, which occurs in the public or private sphere, whether online or offline, with the purpose or effect of:

- Violating the inherent dignity or rights of a person or a group of persons; or
- Resulting in physical, sexual, psychological or socio-economic harm or suffering to a person or a group of persons; or
- Creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; or
- Constituting a barrier to the autonomy and full realisation of human rights by a person or a group of persons; or
- Maintaining and reinforcing gender stereotypes⁴ ([Ministers of the Council of Europe](#))

OTHER WAYS IN WHICH OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR CAN OCCUR:

- Offensive behaviour exercised by one or more individuals who take turns offending different people. In this case, it is the same person or people who offend different individuals in an unpredictable pattern
- Offensive behaviour that occurs without a systematic pattern regarding who is offender and who is subjected to these offensive actions
- Offensive behaviour that takes place in conflicts where individuals mutually offend each other.
- Isolated offensive behaviour

Note that the list is not exhaustive.

OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR COMMITTED BY NON-EMPLOYEES

Offensive behaviour, including bullying and sexual harassment, committed by individuals who are not employees or employers in the organisation, e.g. citizens and customers, is considered work-related violence, which is regulated by AT guidelines D4.3.

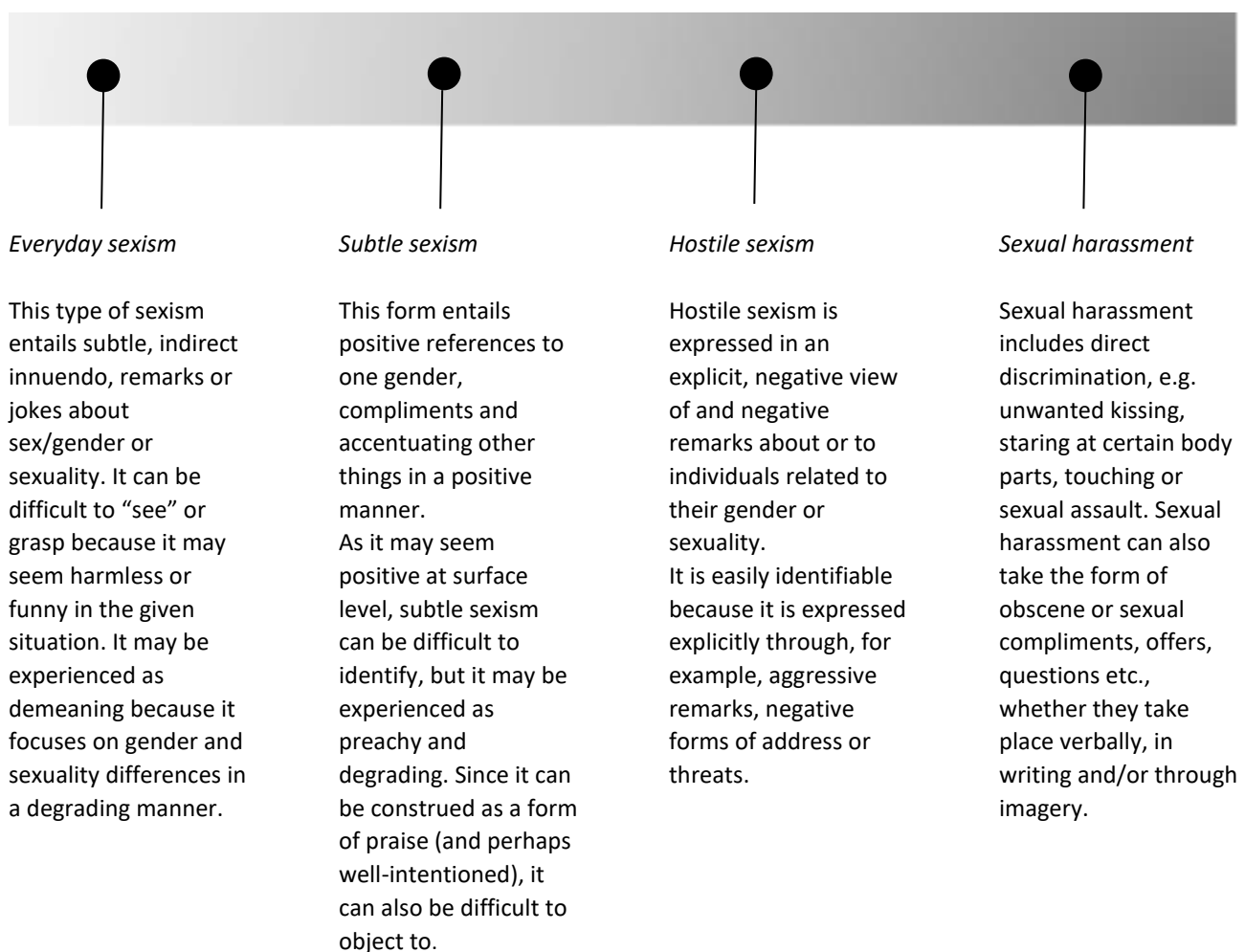
⁴ Gender stereotypes or biases about men and women based on attributing specific characteristics, traits or roles to their gender (European Institute for Gender Equality).

A continuum

Offensive behaviour including bullying and sexual harassment is a complex issue. They may be *direct* and obvious to colleagues but may also – and this is when things often become complex – be *indirect*, e.g. disguised as a joke, manifested through a tradition in the unit or department or be structural or a CBS-specific phenomena. The indirect and more subtle kind of sexism – which often comes in the form of micro-behaviour – is usually hard to detect and document, and for this reason it is also hard to get a grasp of and address between colleagues and by leaders.

To avoid offensive behaviour at CBS and be able to handle issues when they arise, we need to have a common CBS understanding of the many ways in which offensive behaviour may be expressed.

Therefore, CBS has developed this continuum with sliding scales of grey between the examples. The continuum indicates a range of behaviors; however, the continuum is not exhaustive.



See examples⁵ in appendix 1.

⁵ Inspired by the range of formal definitions and the circular continuum in 'Sexism in Danish Higher Education and Research' by Anna Franciska Einersen et al (2021).

Can everything potentially be offensive behaviour?

In a workplace context, offensive behaviour that organisations should prevent and respond to are behaviour that pose a risk to health deterioration. However, not everything falls within the organisation's duty to respond. These guidelines primarily focus on the formal response to violations. If a different type of violation occurs, it should be addressed in other ways, perhaps with assistance from employees specialising in areas like DEI.

Three aspects are crucial in assessing the potential health impact on the affected individual:

- Severity: How severe is the behaviour to which the individual is exposed? What is their nature and form?
- Duration: For how long is the individual subjected to this behaviour?
- Frequency: How often does the individual experience this behaviour?

The severity, duration and frequency of exposure to offensive behaviour significantly increase the risk of detrimental effects on the health of an individual (also referred to in the literature as the stress triangle).

The effect of the behaviour precedes its intention

People are different and have different boundaries as to what they perceive as being degrading and offensive. It depends on the personal boundaries of the individual, the context and the norms and customs of sexual communication that apply at the workplace and society at large.

Sometimes in the public debate you hear things like "just say no" or even that violated people who do not object are an accessory to the offense. But it is not always easy to object or say no! And history shows that objecting could have consequences for your career and/or personal life. As colleagues we must be aware of each other's boundaries and integrity, and as a workplace we must use the offended party's *experience* of what they have been subjected to as our point of departure.⁶

Whether behaviour can be characterised as offensive depends on whether the person(s) subjected to it perceive it as demeaning. This means that the subjective perception of the affected party is central rather than the intentions of the party performing the action.

Sexual harassment is often characterised by the offender not being adequately attentive to the situation, signals, integrity etc. of the offended colleague or the offender not taking the offended colleague's rejection or objection to the unwanted behaviour seriously.

To avoid conflict, the offended colleague may choose to object to the behaviour in a playful or disarming manner. If the offender is able to exert formal/informal power, including over the career, employment situation or personal life of the offended colleague, this person may find it hard to object to the behaviour.

In this context, it is important to be aware that the subjective experience of the affected individual is merely a gateway to seeking assistance from the organisation but not a verdict in itself. Before sanctions can be imposed based on the subjective experience, it is necessary to uncover what has occurred so that accused parties can expect a fair handling of the accusation.

"Is flirting not allowed anymore?"

Yes. A personal tone or flirting at the workplace is possible – as long as it is mutually accepted. However, it is important to always be aware of your own position of power, and to understand that as the superior in any given power relation, you have an increased responsibility for the other party to not feel uncomfortable or violated because power imbalances influence how easy and how risky it is for an individual to set boundaries and speak up.

⁶ (In Danish) [The Danish Working Environment Authority's guidance: Offensive Actions, including bullying and sexual harassment](#) (2020).

CBS' OBLIGATION TO RESPOND

CBS does not tolerate offensive behaviour in the workplace as it is incompatible with the culture that should prevail at CBS. Assuming the offensive behaviour poses a risk of detrimental health effects, CBS is *legally obliged* to respond.

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

The concept of unconscious bias covers situations where decisions are made based on previous experience and stereotypical notions that we are not consciously aware of. Consequently, unconscious bias exists and is created outside our control. Other biases are more conscious but have been normalised by society and thus may be hard to detect.

In situations where we need to make a quick decision, the brain will draw from previous experience and culturally defined stereotypes to speed up the thought process. Consequently, there is a risk of judging people too quickly. Instead of considering the person as an individual, our thoughts about and behaviour towards this person are controlled by stereotypes about gender, ethnicity, religion and many other factors. Therefore, the (un)conscious bias can make us inclined to uncritically continue behaviour that is inappropriate and can be offensive.

Types of biases include but is not limited to:

- When we allow a single positive characteristic to influence our perception of a person entirely. For instance, seeing someone as very friendly might lead us to overlook the possibility that they could engage in harmful behaviour (known as the Halo effect).
- The tendency to seek and remember information that confirms our existing beliefs or expectations can cause us to quickly and unquestioningly accept an assertion that someone has harmed another person. We often disregard information that challenges our viewpoints. This can impact our decisions and assessments (known as confirmation bias).
- Sometimes, we attribute other people's behaviour to their personal characteristics rather than considering situational factors. For example, if a colleague doesn't object to offensive behaviour, we might assume they are irresponsible without considering potential external factors.

3. PREVENTING OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR

As an employer, CBS is obligated to ensure an environment in every way completely safe and healthy in the short as well as the long term.⁷ This also includes preventing offensive behaviour.

The leader takes the initiative – everyone is responsible

The leader has a particular responsibility for securing a psychologically healthy working environment and to take initiatives to improve it. The leader cannot do this alone but is obliged to take the initiative. Clearly, HR & Legal can be consulted for help and advice.

All employees are responsible for contributing to a healthy working environment and to act and speak up if they experience or observe any harmful behaviour or structures.



⁷ Cf. the Working Environment Act and Executive Order on Mental Working Environment

Examples of precautionary measures

Many myths exist about bullying and harassment and therefore thorough information about these issues must be provided. The best precautionary measure is always to combine information and dialogue.

The following initiatives can contribute to preventing offensive behaviour⁸:

- Create awareness of the nature of offensive behaviour including bullying and sexual harassment and why it must not take place at work, how it is expressed, and why it can be difficult to object (e.g. the 'bystander' effect).
- Make targeted efforts to ensure psychological safety⁹ in the team/department/organisation, so it is possible to address difficult issues and create a constructive feedback culture, nipping conflicts in the bud.
- Start developing a language for talking about boundaries and micro-behaviour and make time and room for these conversations.
- Establish common and well-known norms and values for the behaviour you expect of your employee¹⁰ and leaders.¹¹
- Observe the jargon and tone and react if it is getting out of control or becoming hostile.
- Inform colleagues about the reporting of and procedures for offensive behaviour, including the complaints procedure, the whistle-blower scheme and options for psychological and/or legal assistance.

Preventive efforts must be made regularly and can take place informally on a daily basis and at seminars, staff meetings, annual performance reviews, e-mail/newsletters, through physical artefacts (posters, signs, etc.) or the like.

Centrally organised educational initiatives can be initiated per request to ensure that leaders and other significant stakeholders such as health and safety representatives have the competences to prevent sexism and sexual harassment.

4. RESPONSE¹²

As a workplace, CBS handles cases of sexism and sexual harassment.

Setting standards for which behaviour is acceptable and which is not is difficult, as what may be acceptable to one individual may be considered offensive by another. Offensive behaviour may assume different forms in different work culture settings, so therefore the individual experience of the behaviour a person has been subjected to or witnessed must always be used as a point of departure.

The employee's different options are described below, followed by the procedure handled by the leader or HR & Legal. Appendices 2-3 illustrate the procedures visually.



⁸ AT-guideline 4.3.1-1, February 24, 2018, section 8

⁹ Previous efforts at CBS regarding [Psychological Security](#)

¹⁰ Relating to. establishing a proactive witness culture; Crossing boundaries in organizations, Sarah Ambs-Thomsen

¹¹ Relating to. the leader as culture creator; Crossing boundaries in organizations, Sarah Ambs-Thomsen

¹² AT-Guideline 4.3.1-1, February 24, 2018

The employee's options

If you, as an employee, experience any offensive behaviour you have the following options:

SPEAK UP IN THE SITUATION OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER

Everyone who is subjected to transgressive or directly offensive behaviour is always entitled to object. Colleagues who witness transgressive or offensive behaviour are also encouraged to object and to care for and support the violated party. As already mentioned, it may be difficult to object for numerous reasons – perhaps you need to discuss the episode with someone first.

TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT IT

Anyone experiencing transgressive or offensive remarks or behaviour, whether firsthand or as a witness, is encouraged to discuss the experience with someone. For example, they can reach out to:

- Their leader (see also below)
- A close colleague who may be able to help by virtue of their knowledge of the team/department/organisation.
- The union representative or health and safety representative for support and guidance
- The union which is often competent within the field
- CBS' psychological counselling scheme via Prescriba (please see [Share](#) for more information)

CONTACT YOUR LEADER OR YOUR LEADER'S LEADER

Employees can contact their leader or their leader's leader if it is not possible for the parties to reach a solution in the first instance. The leader is not able to guarantee the anonymity of the employee due to the leader's duty to act (please see below). If employees feel uncomfortable contacting management themselves, they can talk to:

- A health and safety or union representative
- HR & Legal, including Legal Advisory or People & Culture, where there are specialists within Diversity & Inclusion (note that these, like the leader, often have a duty to act and that a desire for anonymity may be challenged, cf. below).

USE CBS' WHISTLEBLOWER SCHEME (SEE [SHARE HERE](#))

Everyone who is subjected to or witness offensive behaviour can report to this scheme. It is possible to be anonymous, but please be aware that anonymity may impede an investigation and thus initiatives to change the situation. Anonymity is and should be possible.

IN PRACTICE, A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT OPTION IS OFTEN CHOSEN

In practice, another option is often chosen; and that is **not doing anything** – and people may do so for many reasons. Please note that there may be negative (and perhaps a few positive) aspects of this option. As CBS wishes to be a safe workplace for everyone, we strongly encourage everyone to come forward and talk about their experience so it can be addressed; however, even if you choose not to inform CBS, we recommend that you in any circumstance talk to somebody. Transgressive or offensive behaviour may have significantly negative consequences for your general well-being.

The leader response

All leaders *must* take these inquiries seriously and *must* address them as soon as possible. How the inquiry is handled depends on the specific case, including severity, duration and frequency. The leader should contact HR & Legal for guidance before, during and after the process. The leader has the following tasks:

1. **INITIATE DIALOGUE:** The leader should promptly initiate a preliminary dialogue upon receiving information about offensive behaviour. The leader should prepare within the framework of these guidelines to effectively address the situation during the meeting with the employee. During this meeting, they should uncover and agree on the specific needs of the employee (such as potential psychological first aid) and determine the leader's subsequent actions to help 'stop the harm' or improve the situation as swiftly and effectively as possible. Typically, a follow-up conversation is necessary after a period of reflection.
2. **TAKE PRELIMINARY STEPS:** Based on the dialogue and the affected employee's wishes and needs, counselling services such as Prescriba may be initiated, along with general leadership communication to the team or organisation regarding behaviour and workplace culture. However, a more thorough investigation may be necessary beforehand.
3. **INVESTIGATE THE SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES:** Regardless of how the leader is informed of the violation, the leader must start by assessing the situation, its severity, how long it has been going on and how frequent. An important element in this process is to find out whether the behaviour has been reprehensible or there has been an actual breach of the employment contract. It is important to listen to the version of *all* parties and witnesses, if any, and include evidence, if any. The leader must ensure that *all* parties are treated with care and respect.
4. **DECIDE ON THE NEXT STEP:** As mentioned above, violations cover a range of offences, and the leader will decide how to address the specific inquiry:
 - i. The leader (or the leader's leader if involved) will close the case after having spoken to one or more parties
 - ii. The leader will mediate between the parties, and the case will be solved through dialogue/conflict mediation over a short or long period (HR & Legal/ People & Culture or a neutral third party may assist in the mediation)
 - iii. The leader will address the offence as a breach of the employment contract and involve HR & Legal. The leader/HR is allowed to inform the offended party that the case has been handled with HR & Legal but is *not* allowed to talk about the outcome of the case for the offender (cf. HR case confidentiality). Pursuant to the law, HR is under the duty of confidentiality. Cases are often processed in two tracks: related to employment law and mediation.
5. **INFORM ABOUT THE CLOSING OF THE CASE:** The leaders must inform the employee who approached them and other involved parties that the case has been closed. Due to fundamental administrative considerations and rules, the leaders cannot disclose any potential consequences to the parties or department, although in some cases, this information could provide relief to the affected individual or department. Note that there is often a specific consideration regarding communication to the team involved, which must be done at an appropriate level that maintains confidentiality. HR & Legal can provide guidance on this matter.

The term 'leader' refers to both the immediate leader of the offended party and the leader's leader in cases where the direct leader is the offender.

Leader's handling of second-hand information and sign of problems

Organisations occasionally exhibit signs of problems beyond direct employee reports. These signs may emerge through job satisfaction surveys, workplace assessments (APV) or external information regarding inappropriate behaviour within the organisation. In such cases, it becomes necessary to gain more specific insights. This can be achieved through conversations with stakeholders, encouraging employees to come forward or conducting thorough assessments. For instance, anonymous interviews conducted by external consultants or internal consultants from HR & Legal through People & Culture may be required. Regardless, HR & Legal through People & Culture can provide guidance on how to manage the process.

HR & Legal's role

When an inquiry reaches the attention of a leader and/or HR & Legal, it will be treated seriously, and prompt action will be prioritised. Generally, the leader should always be involved unless the matter specifically pertains to them.

Within HR & Legal, we have a team of specialists, including legal experts, management consultants, and CBS' DEI lead, who can address these inquiries. Each case is handled by the relevant expertise, often in collaboration across different disciplines.

The primary role of HR & Legal is to guide leaders through the process (or their leader if the case involves the leader) regarding their responsibilities in handling specific situations. This includes employment assessments and managing disciplinary matters. Additionally, we provide guidance on preventing future incidents and rebuilding working relationships and team dynamics after a specific incident.

HR & Legal can offer advice to both the affected employee and the alleged offender (although ongoing communication with the parties is primarily the leader's responsibility, in consultation with HR Legal). In many cases, involving the employee representative or occupational health and safety representative is the most effective approach for advising employees.

Anonymity and confidentiality

An employee who feels violated can inquire anonymously with their health and safety or union representative who can offer support and guidance.

It is not possible for an employee to be anonymous if the leader/HR is to handle the case – which is a must if the case falls under the employer's duty to act (please see below). To ensure due process, the alleged offender is entitled to be informed of the complaint, the content of the complaint, witnesses, if any, and who has/have lodged the complaint.

When it comes to anonymous reports submitted through the whistleblower system, strict adherence to certain requirements may not always be feasible. Consequently, such reports may not necessarily lead to specific cases but can still provide insights into issues within a department or related to an individual. However, if an anonymous report includes sufficient documentation, it is consistent with the system's principles to treat it as a potential case. For further details on the whistleblower system, please refer to [this link](#).

Duty to act

The leader, HR & Legal and Senior Management is under the duty to act if the violation is of such severity, duration or repetitive character that it has endangered the health and safety of the employees. This is based on a specific legal assessment by HR.

The health and safety and union representatives are not under the duty to act if an employee enquires about an incident. However, if the employee informs HR & Legal or the leader of the incident, HR/the leader – depending on the nature of the case – is under the duty to act to ensure due process for the alleged offender and under the duty to care for the violated party.

Work injury and occupational illness

Offensive behaviour which has resulted in either physical or psychological damage and absence in addition to the day it took place must be reported as a work injury. The leader, the health and safety representative and HR & legal will provide guidance and handle the official incident report.

Offensive behaviour may also lead to occupational illness, which is typically reported by one’s own physician.

5. IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION WHEN AN INQUIRY RESULTS IN A COMPLAINT

Employees who have experienced harassment from another employee (including a leader) or a student can file a complaint regarding offensive behavior, regardless of whether it has been fully or partially addressed. HR & Legal can provide information about the process, confidentiality and guidance specific to the case.

It is important to note that this step should not be confused with the initial dialogue conducted by management with the affected party. At this stage the duty to act is triggered, as described above, and involves all relevant parties. All complaints must be directed at HR & Legal, who will initiate a formal complaints procedure. HR & legal must be contacted if a leader receives a complaint.



The following outlines the reporting process, complemented by a visual representation in attachment 3:

1. The employee, the health and safety or union representative or the leader (or the leader’s leader) must contact HR & Legal, who will initiate a formal complaints procedure.
2. HR & legal will present the alleged offender with the complaint.
3. In collaboration with all involved parties, HR & Legal thoroughly examines the specific circumstances surrounding the complaint.
4. The leader’s leader and HR & Legal discuss the case and determine the appropriate course of action.
5. HR & Legal informs all relevant parties about the conclusion of the case.

Please note that HR & Legal’s ‘handling’ refers to case management, including thoroughly informing and assessing the case prior to each of the 5 steps.

Before an investigation is initiated, it is essential to ensure that it is the right course of action. For example, the accused party may have apologised for the incident in a way that the aggrieved party de facto does not wish to pursue the matter further. It could also be that management wants an investigation while the aggrieved party is not inclined to participate. Whenever possible, this should be respected.

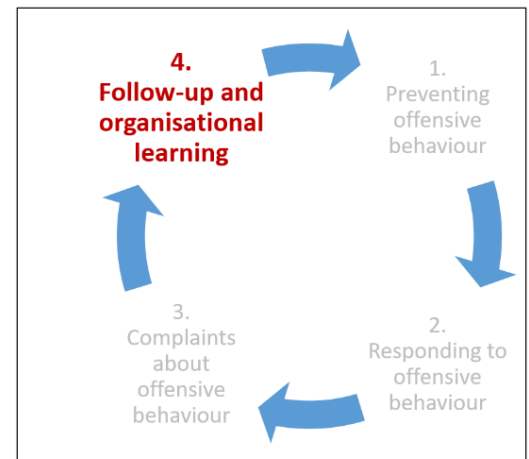
The following questions may help illuminate whether an investigation is the right course of action:

- Is the content of the complaint indicative of behaviour that contradicts expected conduct within the organisation?
- Does the affected party desire a formal investigation? And does the risk of harm from the investigation outweigh its potential benefits? If so, how can this be mitigated?
- Is this a case of bullying that pertains to an entire work community and is therefore too diffuse for this method to be applicable?
- Are the parties still employed within the organisation?
- Has the accused party acknowledged their actions and offered an apology? Have the actions ceased?

6. FOLLOW-UP AND ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

When someone experiences offensive behaviour and/or the job satisfaction survey shows signs of bullying and sexual harassment, management and employees/the health and safety organisation must discuss concrete measures to rebuild collaboration and the psychosocial working environment.

The leader is not “only” obligated to handle a given case; the leader must ensure that similar harassment do not happen again. The relevant employees and the health and safety organisation must also learn from the events to make sure it does not happen again. This requires an evaluation of the well-being, cooperation, structures and perhaps also observations and analysis of tendencies and patterns. Such an evaluation must be adapted to the specific conditions in the department/unit.



It is the responsibility of the leader to initiate this. HR & Legal advises and contributes as appropriate. The leader is not allowed to discuss the specific incident or specific people, cf. the duty of confidentiality, so the leader must speak about problems in general terms. Leaders and employees must be informed about planned and decided measures.

Rebuilding of collaboration and the psychological working environment

Rebuilding of collaboration and the psychosocial working environment can take place through:

1. Oral/written communication from management expressing clear positions as to offensive behaviour/a healthy psychosocial working environment
2. Workshops/meetings and the like, where culture, offensive actions, psychological safety explicitly are addressed
3. Individual 1:1 conversation
4. Follow-up meeting(s) with the involved parties
5. Annual performance and development interviews and team-building activities
6. Staff meetings and/or seminars with presentations and group discussions (use dialogue cards, games, cases)

These initiatives must match the character and actual context of the case. Preferably, they can focus on enhancing a positive workplace tone, collaboration and psychological safety in the department/unit, including boundaries, danger signals and the bystander effect.¹³ The leader can turn to the *People & Culture office* for sparring related to the process and specific initiatives.

¹³ The bystander effect refers to the phenomenon that states that individuals are less likely to offer help to a victim when there are other people present.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1. EXAMPLES OF SEXISM/SEXUAL HARASSMENT



Everyday sexism

Examples of everyday sexism

- When (traditionally) masculine traits are assigned more value than (traditionally) feminine traits
- When masculinity is attributed to men and femininity to women
- “You’re very talented for a female researcher!” followed by laughter and a twinkle in the eye
- When men in an assembly are expected to move heavy tables around
- “Take it like a man”
- A male professor refers to a younger female associate professor as “my secretary”
- Jokes about gender and sexual orientation, especially when they are stereotypical

Subtle sexism

Examples of subtle sexism

- When a man, for instance, refers positively to a female colleague as “savvy Sue”
- Talking about male colleagues as particularly competitive
- When TAP (who are de facto women) are expected to handle filling and emptying the dishwasher (even when it’s not part of their duties), while VIPs (predominantly men) do not
- “Boys will be boys”
- “Shielding” a female employee from a (career-enhancing) task to allow her time for family obligations (and/or not providing a male employee with the same consideration)
- When a female employee asks her leader about her options to advance to senior advisor/associate professor, and the leader, perhaps because he wants to save her the hassle, responds “I’m not sure whether it’ll be too much for you”

Hostile sexism

Examples of hostile sexism

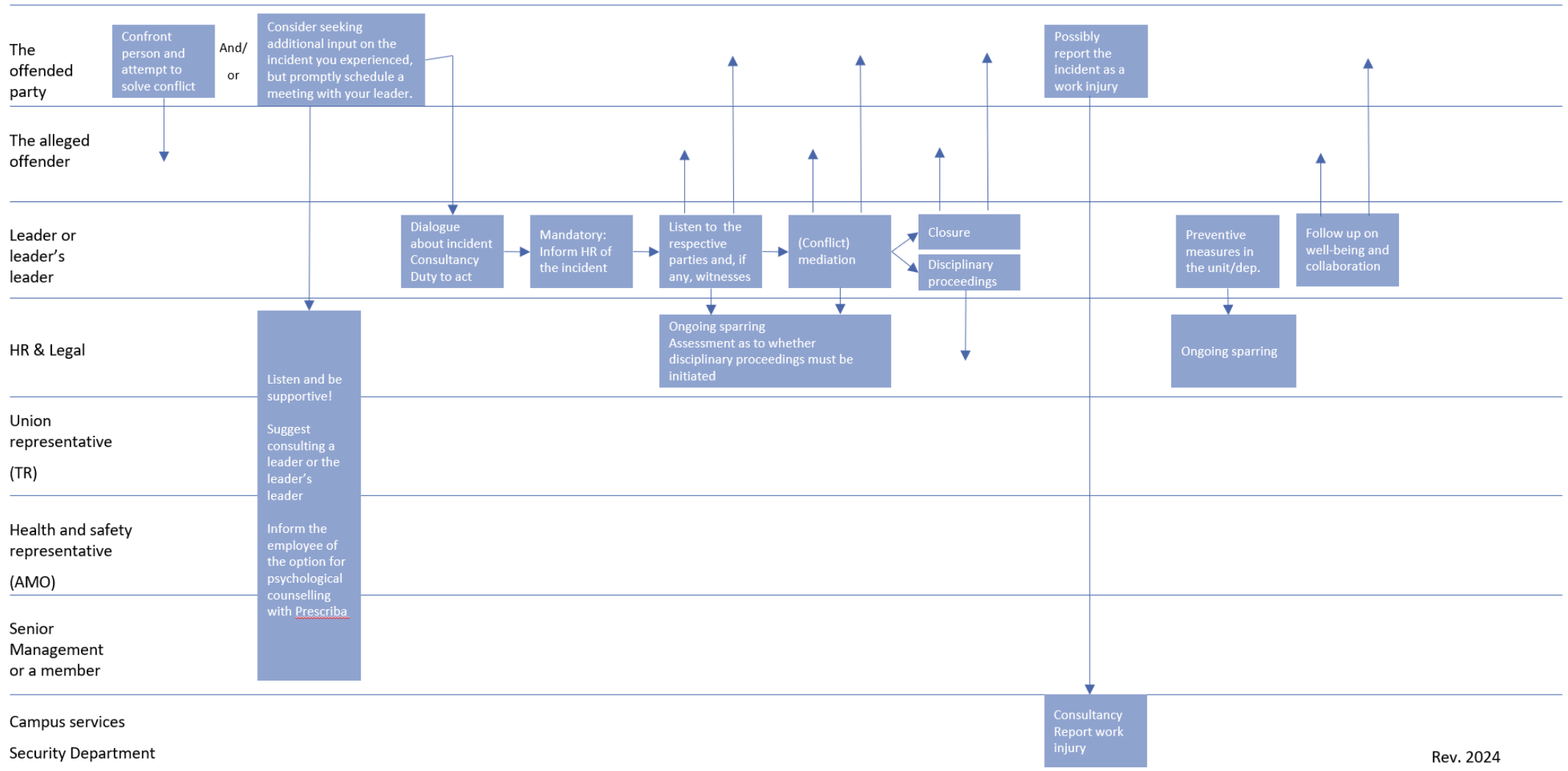
- When a man/father, who prioritizes his family or desires an extended paternity leave, is referred to as “a henpecked”
- Mocking women showing classic masculinity or who strive for traditionally masculine tasks/positions
- When men who come forward to share experiences of abuse or sexual harassment are laughed at, mocked, or met with comments like, “Imagine such a big man being afraid of such a little girl”
- A gay man dedicated to his administrative work is told, “Get yourself a wife and some children so you have something to focus on.”
- Ridicule of men who dress their children in mismatched socks.
- Insinuations that women in leadership or powerful positions have “slept their way to the top.”

Sexual harassment

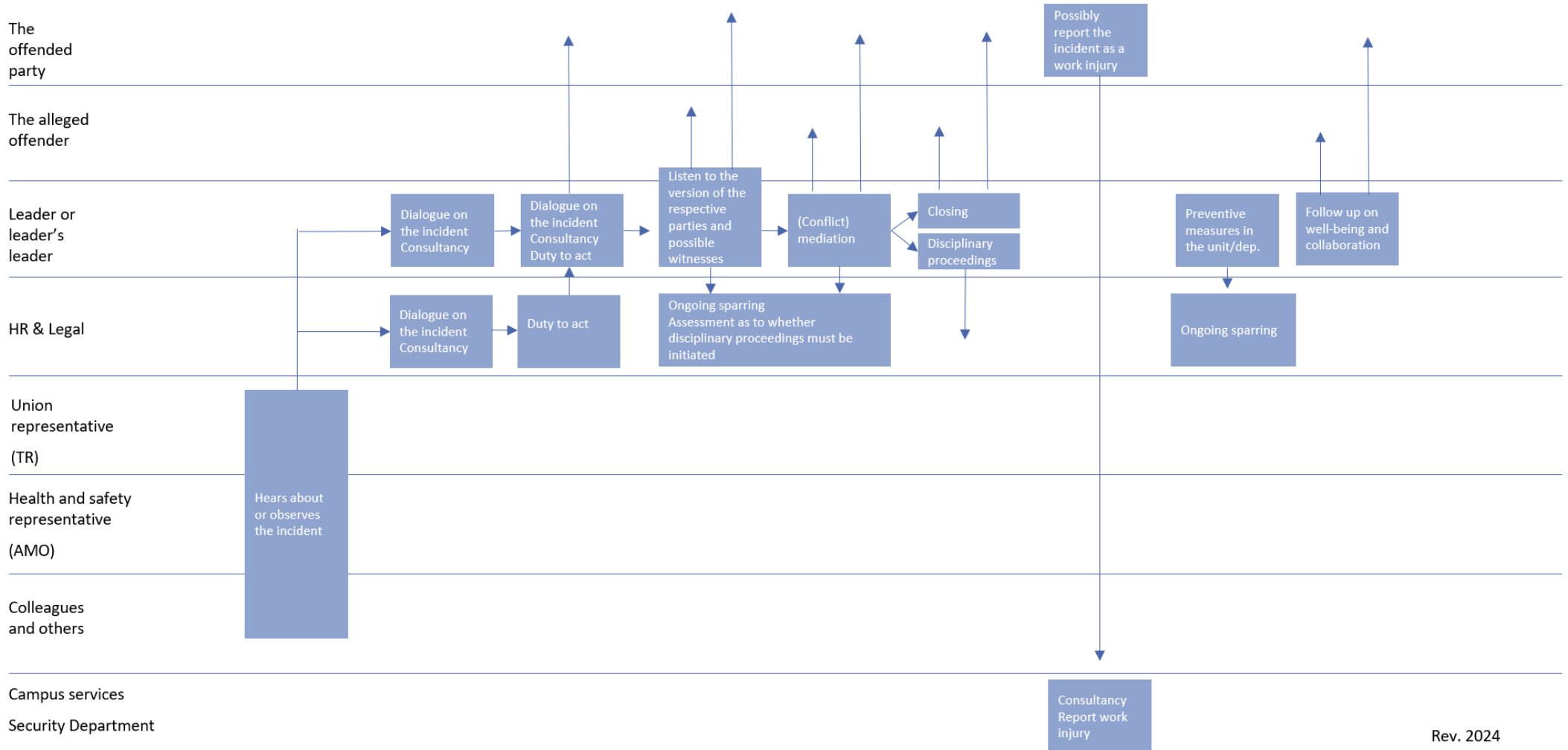
Examples of sexual harassment

- Persistent leering and staring at certain body parts.
- Unwanted kissing or touching, etc.
- Sexual assault
- Is also expressed through explicit, obscene, or sexual compliments, offers or questions, whether they take place orally, in writing or through material artefacts like a photo.

APPENDIX 2. THE EMPLOYEE TAKES THE INITIATIVE



APPENDIX 3. WHEN A REPRESENTATIVE TAKES THE INITIATIVE



APPENDIX 4. COMPLAINT TRACK

