

8 Problems at work

A Health and safety

Here are some health and safety issues for people at work.



a temperature



b passive smoking



c repetitive strain injury or RSI



d dangerous machinery



e hazardous substances



f fire hazard

All these things contribute to a **bad working environment**. The government sends officials called **health and safety inspectors** to make sure that factories and offices are safe places to work. They check what companies are doing about things like:



g heating and air-conditioning



h first aid



i fire precautions

B Bullying and harassment

If someone such as a manager **bullies** an employee, they use their position of power to hurt or threaten them, for example verbally. Someone who does this is a **bully**.

Sexual harassment is when an employee behaves sexually towards another in a way that they find unwelcome and unacceptable. The related verb is **harass**.

C Discrimination

If people are treated differently from others in an unfair way, they are **discriminated against**.

If a woman is unfairly treated just because she is a woman, she is a victim of **sex discrimination**. In many organizations, women complain about the **glass ceiling** that allows them to get to a particular level but no further.

If someone is treated unfairly because of their race, they are a victim of **racial discrimination** or **racism**. Offensive remarks about someone's race are **racist** and the person making them is a **racist**.

In the US, **affirmative action** is when help is given in education and employment to groups who were previously discriminated against. In Britain, affirmative action is known as **equal opportunities**.

Some companies have a **dignity at work policy** covering all the issues described in B and C.