

Bullying at work costs firms dearly

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While many parents worry about taunts their children are subjected to at school, perhaps it is when the children start work that they should be most concerned.

A survey by the Andrea Adams Trust between May 2006 and May this year found that one in four people are bullied in the workplace, with the industry losing 18.9 million working days each year as a result.

This costs individual companies between 8 and 10 per cent of their annual profits, and they also face a real threat of expensive litigation.

To mark *National Ban Bullying at Work Day*, Royal & SunAlliance (R&SA), the UK's largest commercial insurer, is today warning businesses of the potential consequences of office bullying and the risk of damaging legal action.

Aaron Devitt, director of Professional and Financial Risks at R&SA, said: "Current discrimination legislation in the UK relating to sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion makes any act of harassment illegal. What's more, damages awarded in the courts for such behaviour are currently unlimited. This could potentially cripple the business of some unwary employers.

"With this in mind, R&SA has designed an Employment Practices Liability product which includes free value added services aimed at meeting our clients' needs.

"These offer smaller companies with less sophisticated human resources departments the guidance and draft procedures to help prevent harassment and workplace bullying taking place."

The Andrea Adams Trust, the world's first charity dedicated to tackling workplace bullying, found that 60 per cent of those bullied said it affected the quality of their work, and 51 per cent said that it had caused them to take time off.

Matt Witheridge, Operations Director of the Andrea Adams Trust, said: "Bullying really does happen in almost every employment scenario.

"Any business that has no specific formal route for an employee to tackle bullying and harassment is open to a contractual breach of the duty of care. It is good to see that R&SA offers these companies the advice and support to address these problems."



Know Bull! Day is Australia's national day designed to raise awareness of, and highlight the need for promoting safe and respectful workplaces through the eradication of bullying. Both individuals and businesses can show their support for this initiative by taking part in the 6th annual Know Bull! Day on 03 June 2014, and throughout June during Workplace Bullying Awareness Month. To find out how you can demonstrate this commitment, visit the Know Bull! website at: www.know-bull.com

Know Bull!

Photo by Chris Delgado

ANTI-BULLYING...BY DESIGN