

Support and referral services for apprentices and trainees

Purpose

To provide support and referral services to apprentices and trainees experiencing difficulties.

Overview

This procedure relates to counselling services and/or referral options available to apprentices and trainees who may be experiencing stress/anxiety/trauma due to a critical or non-critical incident during their training contract term.

This procedure includes referrals to:

- the contracted fee-for-service provider,
- government or community agencies,
- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, Office of Industrial Relations, and
- Fair Work Commission.

There is no cost to the apprentice/trainee for this service (i.e., the fee-for-service provider costs are paid by the Department).

Process

Regional Office:

- Make contact with the apprentice or trainee, and employer (if applicable), when aware of a situation involving a critical incident or non-critical incident.
 - If a complaint of work-related bullying and/or harassment is received, refer to the below section titled [Allegations of work-related bullying and/or harassment](#) for additional actions that must be taken.
- Make an assessment of the issue/situation.
- Determine the degree of risk to the apprentice or trainee (refer to the [definitions](#) of critical and non-critical incidents).
- Take the necessary actions below based on the risk assessment (refer [Critical incidents](#) or [Non-critical incidents](#)).
- Refer to [Attachment 1](#) for further information to consider when assisting apprentices and trainees experiencing difficulties.
- In instances where the regional officer is experiencing difficulties, discuss the issue with the Regional Management Team to determine the best course of action.

Note – If the apprentice or trainee is under 16, and you have a reasonable belief that the apprentice/trainee has experienced sexual abuse or is at risk of sexual abuse, you **must** report it (refer to [Laws targeting sexual offences against children](#) for direction). If the apprentice or trainee is aged 16 or 17 years and you have a reason to suspect they are experiencing, or at risk of, sexual abuse, speak with your Regional Management Team for advice.

Critical incidents (immediate intervention is required) – On becoming aware of a critical incident:

- If in the company of the apprentice/trainee, immediately instigate the initial contact with the contracted fee-for-service provider, TELUS Health, on behalf of the apprentice or trainee, ensuring to advise:
 - the client is an apprentice/trainee;
 - the name of the apprentice/trainee; and
 - the applicable region.

OR

- If not in the company of the apprentice/trainee:
 - advise the apprentice/trainee of the contact details for TELUS Health for them to make an appointment for counselling, ensuring to stress that when booking they **must** identify they are an apprentice/trainee and the applicable region; and/or
 - contact TELUS Health and provide the apprentice/trainee's details and request TELUS Health contact the apprentice/trainee as a matter of urgency.
- Complete the [Support and Referral Form](#) and email a copy to the Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Office (QATO) at OPRA@desbt.qld.gov.au for monitoring/statistical purposes.
 - Add information in CEDRIC against the training contract.
- Maintain a list of community-based/government agencies available for referrals and provide the details of these community-based/government agencies to the apprentice/trainee as an additional option for the apprentice/trainee to seek support.
- Follow-up with the apprentice/trainee to confirm that the apprentice/trainee has commenced (or is booked in to attend) fee-for-service counselling sessions.
 - Continue regular follow ups with the apprentice/trainee until such time as the apprentice/trainee confirms they no longer require the region's support/involvement.
 - Add information in CEDRIC against the training contract each time follow up occurs.
- Monitor the progress of the issue/situation.

Note – TELUS Health is the contracted fee-for-service provider and can be contacted 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on telephone 1800 816 152 or SMS 0480 032 310.

Non-critical incidents – On becoming aware of a non-critical incident:

- If the apprentice/trainee is not already receiving assistance through other avenues (e.g. community based organisations, mentoring support through their Apprentice Connect Australia Provider):
 - Advise the apprentice/trainee of the contact details of TELUS Health for them to make an appointment for counselling, ensuring to stress that when booking they **must** identify they are an apprentice/trainee and the applicable region.
 - Complete the [Support and Referral Form](#) and email a copy to the Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Office (QATO) at OPRA@desbt.qld.gov.au for monitoring/statistical purposes.
 - Add information in CEDRIC against the training contract.
- Include and involve other parties (including the supervising registered training organisation) where necessary and applicable, to reach a resolution, being considerate of privacy issues and the sensitivity of the incident.
- Make use of the educational material and practical resources available to assist in developing a safe, supportive and productive workplace.
- Maintain a list of community-based/government agencies available for referrals and provide the details of these community-based/government agencies to the apprentice/trainee as an additional option for the apprentice/trainee to seek support.
- Follow up with the apprentice/trainee to confirm if the apprentice/trainee has commenced (or is booked in to attend) fee-for-service counselling sessions.
 - Continue regular follow ups with the apprentice/trainee until such time as the apprentice/trainee confirms they no longer require the region's support/involvement.
 - Add information in CEDRIC against the training contract each time follow up occurs.
- Monitor the progress of the issue/situation.

Allegations of work-related bullying and/or harassment:

Important – the Department has no authority to determine whether the alleged behaviour substantiates work-related bullying and/or harassment and whether or not it has occurred.

- If a complaint of work-related bullying and/or harassment is received, advise the complainant about the role of the Department (e.g. a regional officer can assist by visiting the workplace and attempting to resolve their concerns).
- Ask the party making the complaint if they have raised their concerns with the alleged harasser.
 - If the complaint is made by the apprentice/trainee, and they don't feel comfortable raising their concerns with the alleged harasser, they can ask for assistance from their supervisor, colleague, guardian, or union throughout this process.
 - If the employer is making the complaint about an apprentice or trainee, the employer should raise the issue with the apprentice/trainee prior to the Department's involvement.

- If the party making the complaint does not want to advise the alleged harasser of their contact with the Department, or does not want the Department's involvement or to participate in any formal process, advise the party of their options, which may include:
 - An informal resolution process for the workplace as per standard regional protocols, and/or
 - Referral to support services as per the process for [critical](#) and [non-critical](#) incidents above.
- If the party making the complaint does request assistance from the Department, and is prepared to advise the alleged harasser of their contact with the Department and participate in the process:
 - Offer the party referral to support services as per the process for [critical](#) and [non-critical](#) incidents above.
 - Schedule a visit to the workplace.
 - Be mindful that there may be other apprentices and/or trainees in the workplace, and their well-being may also require safeguarding.
 - Visit the [Safe Work Australia](#) website for information to assist with responding to bullying allegations.
 - Visit the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) website for additional information on [bullying](#) and [harassment](#) (including sexual harassment), and [managing psychosocial hazards and risks at work](#).
- During the workplace visit, attempt to resolve the issues between the parties as per regional protocols.
 - **Note** – This process should be focused on 'where to from here' rather than examining the harassing behaviour.
 - Utilise the Department's referral guide, education material and practical resources to assist the parties to generate options for improvement and develop some form of written or verbal agreement (e.g. Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy and a Code of Conduct).

As part of this process:

- Consider the information included in [The role of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland in work-related bullying complaints](#), and whether the information gathered to date indicates that the behaviours are consistent with definitions of work-related bullying and/or harassment.
- If the behaviours appear to be consistent with the definition, the apprentice/trainee should be provided with a copy of this document and be advised that further action to resolve the complaint includes:
 - Where appropriate, and with the consent of the apprentice/trainee, the Department may refer the complaint to the Office of Industrial Relations (OIR). Refer to the below section titled [Referring an Apprentice/Trainee complaint to OIR](#) for further information on this process.
 - If the alleged work-related bullying and/or harassment continues, the party making the complaint can contact the WHSQ Advisory Services on 1300 362 128 to explore further options including submitting a formal complaint to OIR.
 - The apprentice/trainee preferring to seek their own independent legal or other professional advice, which may include contacting the police.
 - The apprentice/trainee applying to the Fair Work Commission (FWC) for an [order to stop bullying at work](#) (note – a FWC application fee may apply).
- If the party raises training related issues, continue to deal with these issues as per standard regional protocols.
- Assess whether there are any ongoing issues for the engagement of apprentices/trainees at the workplace.
 - Consider the addition of an ad hoc risk identifier (if one has not already been applied).
- Continue regular follow ups with the apprentice/trainee until such time as the apprentice/trainee confirms the situation has been resolved and they no longer require the region's support/involvement.
- Record detailed information in CEDRIC against the training contract of all discussions, meetings, assistance, etc.

Referring an Apprentice/Trainee complaint to the Office of Industrial Relations (OIR):

- Important** – OIR will only accept and investigate an apprentice/trainee complaint of work-related bullying and/or harassment from the Department, via the Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Office (QATO), if the issues cannot be resolved by the Department.
- Complete the [Referral to OIR - Part B - Apprentice/Trainee complaint of work-related bullying and/or harassment](#) with the apprentice/trainee, and have the apprentice/trainee sign the form where required.
 - Ensure copies of suitable supporting documentation to assist OIR with making an initial assessment of the apprentice/trainee complaint is attached.

- **Note** – Only copies of suitable supporting documentation should be attached to the form. Original documents **MUST** be retained by the party supplying the document.
- Refer to [Attachment 1](#) for examples of what may be regarded as suitable supporting documentation.
 - Provide the apprentice/trainee with a copy of the completed and signed Part B, and the supporting documentation.
- Complete the [Referral to OIR - Part A - A-T complaint of work-related bullying and/or harassment](#)
- Refer the completed Part A and Part B, and the supporting documentation, to the Regional Director for endorsement.
- If the Regional Director endorses the apprentice/trainee complaint referral to OIR, note the endorsement date on the Part A accordingly and forward the completed Part A and Part B, and the supporting documentation, to QATO at OPRA@desbt.qld.gov.au for consideration and processing.
- Record information in CEDRIC against the training contract of all discussions, meetings, assistance, actions taken, etc.

Note – On receipt of the completed Part A returned from OIR notifying whether the apprentice/trainee complaint has been triaged for a regional response, QATO will forward the Part A to the Regional Office that instigated the apprentice/trainee complaint referral. Refer to [Attachment 1](#) for information on the process OIR will follow if the apprentice/trainee complaint is triaged for a regional response.

Regional Director:

- Endorse (or otherwise) proposals by regional officers to refer an apprentice/trainee complaint of work-related bullying and/or harassment to the Office of Industrial Relations (OIR) via the Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Office (QATO).

TELUS Health (fee-for-service provider):

- As a minimum, on a quarterly basis (or on request of the Department), forward an invoice and/or report to Human Resources, Corporate Services. The report must identify:
 - the number of apprentices/trainees that used the service, and
 - the region/s in which the apprentice/trainee is/are located.

Human Resources, Corporate Services:

- On receipt of an invoice from TELUS Health, action as per normal processes.
- Maintain a record of fee-for-service counselling sessions provided to apprentices/trainees, by region, for statistical purposes.
- On receiving a request from the Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Office (QATO), provide the requested information.

Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Office (QATO):

Support and Referral Forms:

- On receipt of a Support and Referral Form from a Regional Office:
 - save the email from the Regional Office in the TELUS Health folder of the OPRA inbox, and
 - record the details on the Support and referral spreadsheet on SharePoint.
- Monitor the use of fee-for-service referrals.
- Request, when required, statistical information from Human Resources.

Apprentice/Trainee complaint referral to the Office of Industrial Relations (OIR):

Note – Save all emails relating to apprentice/trainee complaint referrals submitted by Regional Offices in the OIR Complaint Referrals folder of the OPRA inbox.

- On receipt of a Referral to OIR – Part A and Part B – Apprentice/Trainee complaint of work-related bullying and/or harassment from a Regional Office, ensure all details on the forms have been completed and supporting documentation is attached.
 - The apprentice/trainee complaint referral to OIR must be endorsed by the Regional Director, and Part A noted accordingly.
- Confirm with the Manager QATO that the apprentice/trainee complaint referral to OIR is ready to be forwarded to the Director, QATO.
 - If yes, forward to the Director, QATO for consideration and endorsement.
 - If no, follow up with the Regional Office to provide further information as necessary.

- If the Director, QATO endorses the apprentice/trainee complaint referral to OIR, note Part A accordingly and forward it with Part B and the supporting documentation via the OPRA inbox email address to the nominated contact person for OIR using the wording contained in the [Email template](#) .
 - Cc the Director, QATO into the email.
 - Complete details of the complaint referral in the [Referral to OIR Register - A-T complaints of work-related bullying and-or harassment](#)
 - Monitor the process to ensure a completed Part A is returned from OIR.
- On receipt of a completed Part A returned from OIR notifying whether an apprentice/trainee complaint has been triaged for a regional response, forward the Part A to the Regional Office that instigated the apprentice/trainee complaint referral.
 - Complete details relating to the return of the Part A and forwarding back to the Regional Office in the [Referral to OIR Register - A-T complaints of work-related bullying and-or harassment](#)

○ **Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Office (QATO), Director:**

- Endorse (or otherwise) proposals from Regional Offices to refer an apprentice/trainee complaint of work-related bullying and/or harassment to the Office of Industrial Relations (OIR).

Office of Industrial Relations (OIR):

- On receipt of a Referral to OIR – Part A and Part B – Apprentice/Trainee complaint of work-related bullying and/or harassment, and the supporting documentation from the Department via the Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Office (QATO), advise the apprentice/trainee directly if any further additional information is required to enable the complaint to be assessed by OIR.
- Triage the apprentice/trainee complaint and advise both the apprentice/trainee and the Department (via QATO) whether the complaint has been triaged for a regional response.
 - Notify the Department by completing the OIR section of the Referral to OIR – Part A – Apprentice/Trainee complaint of work-related bullying and/or harassment, and emailing the Part A to the Department via the contact email addresses listed on the Part A.

Definitions

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| <p>Critical incident</p> | <p>May include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-harming attempts or threats of self-harm • threat of harm to others • recipient of threats or actual violence • involved in or witnessing a robbery or other violence • informed of or witnessing a sudden or unexpected death • present when a fatality or serious bodily injury occurs • seriously injured, or exposed to the risk of serious injury • involved in a hostage or siege situation. |
| <p>Non-critical incident</p> | <p>Situations which may impact at the workplace include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apprentice or trainee has disengaged from training • uncharacteristic behaviour • learning problems • general behavioural problems (e.g. attendance, attitude) • long-term emotional problems that are not affecting the day-to-day functioning of the apprentice or trainee • relationship problems • serious medical or mental health issues • substance abuse issues. |
| <p>Workplace bullying</p> | <p>Workplace bullying is defined as repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety. Refer to the WHSQ or Safe Work Australia websites for further details.</p> <p>Bullying behaviour – is behaviour that a reasonable person, having considered the circumstances, would see as unreasonable, including behaviour that is victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.</p> <p>Examples of bullying behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abusive, insulting or offensive language or comments • unjustified criticism or complaints • deliberately excluding someone from workplace activities • withholding information that is vital for effective work performance • setting unreasonable timelines or constantly changing deadlines • setting tasks that are unreasonably below or beyond a person’s skill level • denying access to information, supervision, consultation or resources to the detriment of the worker • spreading misinformation or malicious rumours • changing work arrangements, such as rosters and leave, to deliberately inconvenience a particular worker or workers. |
| <p>Workplace harassment (including sexual harassment)</p> | <p>Workplace harassment refers to behaviour that is unwelcome or unsolicited, offensive, humiliating or intimidating, and relates to someone’s sex, race, age or other attributes such as, pregnancy, relationship status, religious belief, sexuality, or disability.</p> <p>It may be directed towards an individual or group of workers, and may be a single act, or an ongoing pattern of behaviour. Refer to the WHSQ website for further details.</p> <p>Sexual harassment is any form of unwelcome attention of a sexual nature that is humiliating, intimidating or offensive. Refer to the Safe Work Australia website for further details.</p> |

Definitions – other

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| Ad hoc risk identifier | An automated business rule that is derived from the Department's and other departments' legislation, policies and procedures. Additionally, a business rule for a specific purpose may be added to DELTA for a temporary period. DELTA automatically checks training contract details against all the business rules during the registration process. |
| CEDRIC | A Client Relationship Management system used by the Department to capture information on client and stakeholder engagement and correspondence (for internal access only). |
| DELTA | Direct Entry Level Training Administration, the Department's database of registered apprentices and trainees (for internal access only) |
| Department or DTET | Department of Trade, Employment and Training |
| FWC | Fair Work Commission – Australia's workplace tribunal. They create awards, approve enterprise agreements and help resolve issues at work. |
| OIR | Office of Industrial Relations, Queensland |
| QATO | Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Office |
| TELUS Health | Fee-for-service provider contracted by the Queensland Government and funded by the Department to provide counselling services to apprentices and trainees. TELUS Health can be contacted 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on telephone 1800 816 152 or SMS 0480 032 310. |
| WHSQ | Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, OIR. Queensland's work health and safety regulator. |

Legislation

- Nil

Delegations/Authorisations

- Nil

Related policies

- [Code of Conduct, Queensland Public Service](#)

Related procedures

- Nil

Supporting information/websites

Agreements

- [Memorandum of Understanding between the Department and OIR](#) (Department only)

Forms

- [Support and Referral Form](#) (Department only)
- [Referral to OIR - Part A - A-T complaint of work-related bullying and/or harassment](#) (Department only)
- [Referral to OIR - Part B - A-T complaint of work-related bullying and/or harassment](#) (Department only)

Work instructions

- Nil

Online materials

- [SharePoint](#) – Referral to OIR – Email template – For QATO use only (Departmental employees only)
- [SharePoint](#) - Referral to OIR Register – For QATO use only (Departmental employees only)

Letters

- Nil

Websites

- [Apprenticeships Info – support for apprentices, trainees and employers](#)
- [Fair Work Commission](#)
- [Safe Work Australia](#)
- [Workplace Health and Safety Queensland](#)



Attachment 1

Factors to be considered when assisting apprentices and trainees experiencing difficulties

A range of factors may impact on the decision of the regional officer and these will vary from case to case. Whilst this is not an exhaustive list of factors and considerations, the information below may assist with taking the most appropriate action.

| Factor | Consideration |
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| Is the issue bullying? | <p>Bullying occurs when a person or group of people repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards a worker or a group of workers at work AND the behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.</p> <p>Bullying behaviour may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressive or intimidating conduct • Belittling or humiliating comments • Spreading malicious rumours • Teasing, practical jokes or 'initiation ceremonies' • Exclusion from work-related events • Unreasonable work expectations, including too much or too little work, or work below or beyond a worker's skill level • Displaying offensive material • Pressure to behave in an inappropriate manner |
| What does not constitute bullying? | <p>Reasonable management action carried out in a reasonable manner does not constitute bullying.</p> <p>Reasonable management action may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance management processes • Disciplinary action for misconduct • Informing a worker about unsatisfactory work performance or inappropriate work behaviour • Asking a worker to perform reasonable duties in keeping with their job • Maintaining reasonable workplace goals and standards. |
| <p>When referring an apprentice/trainee complaint of work-related bullying and/or harassment to OIR, what supporting documentation may be regarded as suitable to assist OIR with making an initial assessment of the complaint?</p> <p>(Note – Only <u>copies</u> of suitable supporting documentation should be collected by the Departmental officer. Original documents MUST be retained by the party supplying the document.)</p> | <p>Examples of what may be regarded as suitable supporting documentation include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of any documentation, such as diary entries or notes, kept by the apprentice/trainee detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What has been happening in the workplace to lead them to making the complaint ○ How they have raised the issue/s relating to the complaint at the workplace ○ What attempts they have made to try and resolve the issue/s. • Copies of any other documentation supporting the complaint, that you may have gathered as part of the process from the apprentice/trainee or other interested parties, such as other apprentices/trainees/employees in the workplace. • Copies of any documentation gathered from the employer as part of the process, such as workplace harassment prevention policy, bullying policy, complaints procedure, or code of conduct. <p>Consider the type of information an OIR Inspector may request as part of their process.</p> <p>Consider also, the 'Scope of WHSQ involvement' information included in The role of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland in work-related bullying complaints.</p> |

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| <p>What process will OIR follow if an apprentice/trainee complaint of work-related bullying and/or harassment has been referred from the Department (via QATO) and is triaged by OIR for a regional response?</p> | <p>If an apprentice/trainee complaint is triaged for a regional response, OIR will conduct the following process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Inspector will initially contact the apprentice/trainee to confirm the particulars of the complaint and discuss WHSQ's role in responding to complaints of work-related bullying and/or harassment. • The Inspector will also contact the workplace to advise that a complaint has been received and request evidence that the risk of injury or illness from work related bullying or harassment is being managed. • The Inspector may request the evidence be forwarded to a Regional Office and/or the Inspector may visit the workplace. <p>The type of information the Inspector may request could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incident records ○ Workplace harassment policy, grievance procedures ○ Information about the workplace complaint handling system ○ Documentation that demonstrates the management of an employee complaint in accordance with the workplace procedures ○ Records demonstrating information, training and instruction provided to staff regarding work related bullying and harassment ○ Any other information required by the Inspector. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Inspector will review documentation and may interview workers and duty holders as part of their investigation. • The Inspector will identify if there is an uncontrolled risk of harm from work-related bullying and/or harassment and may take enforcement action to ensure that these risks are eliminated or minimised as far as is reasonably practicable. |
| <p>What would be some community based/government agencies that could assist apprentices or trainees deal with stress/anxiety/trauma?</p> | <p>Agencies include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifeline – Telephone 13 11 14 • Relationships Australia – Telephone 1300 364 277 • Kids Helpline – Telephone 1800 55 1800 • Child safety service centres – contains a list of Queensland regional centres and contact details for support and assistance during working hours (or for emergencies outside of working hours – Telephone 1800 177 135) • My Community Directory – contains a comprehensive list of counselling services. • DV Connect – Telephone 1800 811 811 • MensLine Australia – Telephone 1300 78 99 78 • Beyond Blue – 1300 22 46 36 • The Salvation Army – 13 72 58 |
| <p>What benefits are there from counselling?</p> | <p>Counselling can assist in clarifying confusion and/or providing strategies to help increase emotional and psychological wellbeing.</p> |