Guidance on managing and mitigating risks associated with the expression of beliefs in the workplace

On 29 April 2025, our webinar, “Beliefs, Backlash and the Workplace – Navigating the New Culture Wars” explored the legal rights and responsibilities surrounding belief expression in today’s complex work environment.

Here, we provide further guidance on managing and mitigating risks associated with the expression of beliefs in the workplace.

Check out our guide here or click the image to view.

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Beliefs, Backlash and the Workplace – Navigating the New Culture Wars

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Understanding the risks

Disciplining employees for expressing their beliefs - whether within the workplace or externally, such as on social media - carries potential legal consequences under the Equality Act 2010 (**EqA**), including claims for direct or indirect discrimination, as well as harassment. Even where a belief is not protected under the EqA, dismissal arising from the expression of a belief may result in a claim for unfair dismissal.

Conversely, failing to take appropriate action in such situations may expose the employer to risk. An employee's expression of controversial views, particularly where this is perceived as reflective of the organisation's values, can lead to reputational damage. There is also the risk of internal complaints of discriminatory harassment, for which an employer may be held vicariously liable.

Proactive measures: preparation before issues arise

Employers should set clear expectations regarding acceptable behaviour through robust policy frameworks, including:

Code of Conduct	Clearly articulate the standards of behaviour expected of employees, including whether and how these extend beyond the workplace and working hours.
Social Media and IT Policies	These should prohibit personal use of social media during working hours or on work-issued devices and clarify that breaches may amount to misconduct. They should also outline expectations regarding personal use of social media outside working hours. For instance: • Remind employees that disclosing their place of work may lead to association with the organisation, with heightened expectations for senior staff. • Require a disclaimer stating that views expressed are personal and not representative of the organisation. • Provide examples of conduct that may give rise to disciplinary action, including dismissal.
Equality and Anti-Harassment Policies	These should set out the protected characteristics under the EqA, include illustrative examples of protected beliefs and describe conduct likely to be considered harassment.
Disciplinary Rules	These should make clear that violations of the Code of Conduct and internal policies may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct.

Employees should acknowledge in writing that they have read and understood the relevant policies, with signed copies retained on file. These policies should be reinforced through regular training on equality, anti-harassment, and appropriate social media use.