



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE HOUSE OF COMMONS POLICY ON PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING HARASSMENT

2019–2020

Introduction

The [*House of Commons Policy on Preventing and Addressing Harassment*](#) was adopted by the Board of Internal Economy on December 9, 2014. This policy applies to:

- all Members of Parliament as employers, including House Officers whose employees' salaries are paid out of the House Officer's budget set by the Board of Internal Economy in accordance with section 16 of the *Governance and Administration By-law*;
- staff employed by
 - Members,
 - House Officers,
 - Research Offices; and
- interns and volunteers (paid or unpaid).

The policy builds on the framework previously implemented by the Board—namely access to Finding Solutions Together, a confidential program for informal conflict management resolution, as well as to the Harassment Prevention Program, which focuses on increasing awareness and proactively stopping potential harassment in its earliest stages.

The policy addresses prevention, processes for filing informal and formal complaints, investigating and reporting, appeals, and communicating findings. Enquiries and complaints will not always result in formal harassment investigations; they may be resolved through one of the options outlined in the policy, such as mediation and the tools available through the Finding Solutions Together program.

The policy applies to Members as employers and does not cover situations between Members.

The report covers the 2019–2020 fiscal year.

Enquiries and complaints

The reporting requirements under the policy include reporting on complaints and their outcomes, alternate dispute resolution processes such as mediation, and the training given. To provide a more comprehensive view, the cases outlined in this report are categorized as enquiries or complaints (formal and informal). All were managed through the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, either by the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) or by the Respectful Workplace Program, which reports to the CHRO. Enquiries may involve a request for information regarding the options available under the policy or otherwise, and, in certain situations, the person making the enquiry may be referred to a more appropriate channel to resolve the issue. A table is also included to show the enquiries that came through the Respectful Workplace Program.

The numbers regarding cases may appear to be lower than in previous years for various reasons. First, this year was an electoral year, and similarly to 2015, few requests were received during this period.

Furthermore, the creation of a dedicated Members' Human Resources Services team in February 2019 has greatly reduced the number of requests and cases. The House of Commons now has senior human

resources consultants who work proactively with Members to provide the best advice in labour relations and employee management; this has significantly minimized the escalation of potential cases. The team is also responsible for training and provides additional coaching on management to Members.

A number of training sessions that were scheduled in March had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation.

During the period covered by this report, a total of five cases were managed through the Office of the CHRO. Of the five cases managed in 2019–2020, none were enquiries only, one was formally investigated, and one was resolved through policy mechanisms. A total of three cases remain active. No specific enquiries were submitted to the Respectful Workplace Program from Members or Members' employees this year.

Training and awareness

To achieve the objectives of the policy, significant emphasis is placed on awareness and training opportunities. To ensure Members and their staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the *House of Commons Policy on Preventing and Addressing Harassment*, the Office of the CHRO works closely with Whips' offices. Following the election, a significant number of training sessions were provided to Members and their employees as part of the Members' Orientation Program (MOP).

Harassment prevention in the workplace – online training program

A training session on harassment prevention in the workplace that is specifically designed for Members and their employees is offered as part of the Harassment Prevention Program. This session aims to ensure that Members and their employees gain a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities related to maintaining a harassment-free workplace; it also aims to raise awareness about the different types of harassment. This online session, which is available in both official languages and accessible through the "Learning" section of the *Source* intranet site, allows the House of Commons to deliver training to targeted groups anywhere in Canada, including in Ottawa and in constituency offices. This model also eliminates travel costs for participants and instructors. During the period covered by this report, 68 participants completed the online training program. A total of 782 participants have completed it since the program was launched in 2016.

Harassment prevention for Members – in-class training program

The Harassment Prevention Program continued to offer a three-hour in-class session on harassment prevention for Members called "Strengthening a Culture of Respect – From Awareness to Action." A total of five sessions on harassment prevention were offered to Members between April 1, 2019, and March 31, 2020. 250 Members of the current Parliament have attended sessions. Additional training sessions were scheduled for March 2020 and had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis. These sessions will be rescheduled as soon as the situation permits.

Harassment prevention for Members' employees – in-class training program

An in-class training session on harassment prevention for Members' employees is also offered upon request. This interactive session, which is designed specifically for Members' employees, provides information on what could constitute harassment in the workplace—including sexual harassment—and covers definitions found in the *House of Commons Policy on Preventing and Addressing Harassment*. The session also provides practical tools for prevention as well as information on the resources available when assistance is needed. Most importantly, this training gives participants a better understanding of the role that employees, their supervisors and their employers play in maintaining a culture of respect in the workplace. No sessions have been offered this year due to the election. Since the election, the program for Members' employees has been delayed on account of the pandemic. There is a will to offer virtual sessions over the upcoming months.

Other training for Members' employees

No requests were received from Members to provide ad hoc training sessions on the Finding Solutions Together program to their employees this year.

Awareness tools

“Harassment-free office” and “zero tolerance” posters in both official languages are available to promote a respectful office environment. They can be accessed through the following links:

<https://hoccdc.sharepoint.com/sites/info/en/services/health-wellness/Documents/Poster-HarassmentFree-en.pdf>

<https://hoccdc.sharepoint.com/sites/info/en/services/safety-security/Documents/SecurityPoster-ZeroTolerance-e.pdf>

Finally, *Source*, the parliamentary intranet site, has a prominent section on harassment prevention.

Pierre Parent, CHRP
Chief Human Resources Officer
House of Commons
Ottawa, June 2020



Reporting

Table 1 – Grounds for enquiry/complaint

Grounds	Complaint	Enquiry	Total
Abuse of authority	2	-	2
Harassment	2	-	2
Discrimination	-	-	-
Sexual harassment	1	-	1
Mixed	-	-	-
Prevention	-	-	-
Total	5	-	5

Table 2 – Status of respondent

Status	Total
Member	5
Colleague / staff member	-
Other	-
Total	5

Table 3 – Gender of complainants/enquirers and respondents

Gender	Complainant/enquirer	Respondent
Male	1	3
Female	4	2
Unknown / not applicable	-	-
Total	5	5

Table 4 – Outcomes

Outcome	Abuse of authority	Harassment	Sexual harassment	Discrimination	Mixed	Prevention
Enquiry only	-	-	-	-	-	-
Complaint withdrawn	-	-	-	-	-	-
Informal resolution	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mediated resolution	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investigation	1	-	-	-	-	-
Resolved (other)	-	-	1	-	-	-
Non-receivable	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pending (still open)	1	2	-	-	-	-

Table 5 – Results of investigation

Result	Total
Substantiated	1
Partially substantiated	-
Not substantiated	-
Frivolous or in bad faith	-
Resolved before the end of the investigation	-

Table 6 – Related enquiries through the Respectful Workplace Program

Grounds	Enquiry
Abuse of authority	-
Harassment	-
Discrimination	-
Training	-
Other enquiries	-
Total	0