

## Case Study

Embedding dignity at work in  
a fast-growing technology  
company through training

## The problem:

**Joe Thompson, our Head of HR Services, received a call from the Head of People and Culture at a rapidly scaling technology company. The call was urgent. A female employee had made a serious allegation of sexual harassment against a senior manager following an off-site, work-organised retirement party. The company needed advice - fast.**

**Joe provided immediate guidance to help contain and respond appropriately to the complaint. Our Workplace Investigations team was brought in to carry out an impartial, fair, and confidential investigation.**

**The process was handled with care and professionalism, ensuring that both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator were treated with respect, and that the company fulfilled its legal obligations.**



**"With Insight HR, your investment will never just be about fixing a problem or developing a strategy. Instead, our partnership approach arms teams with the knowledge they need to make better decisions. We leave HR teams better informed and more confident in their abilities to resolve future HR issues."**

**Joe Thompson, Head of HR Services**

# Key findings from the investigation

While the allegation was ultimately managed appropriately, the investigation exposed deeper systemic issues within the organisation. The company's Dignity at Work policy had not been updated in years. Managers were unclear on how to respond. HR hesitated. Nobody was certain if what had occurred was serious, or how to distinguish between inappropriate behaviour, sexual harassment and misconduct.

It became clear that the lack of clear procedures and training had led to confusion, inconsistency, and risk. As is often the case, poor initial handling of the complaint had the potential to escalate the situation and worsen the outcome for both parties.

## A Holistic Solution:

### Tailored training and organisational learning

Joe approached the Head of People and Culture after the investigation concluded.

He spoke candidly about the organisation's obligation not only to update its policy, but to ensure that everyone - HR, management, and employees - understood what dignity at work truly means.

We proposed a bespoke, multi-layered training and awareness programme to embed learning across the organisation.



# Bespoke in-house training for the HR team

We began with the HR team. The training was designed to build confidence and competence in responding to allegations, guiding investigations, and supporting employees appropriately.

The sessions focused on legislative and statutory obligations, Irish case law, risk, fair procedures, and the importance of consistency in communication.

We also explored psychological safety and how HR can support a culture of dignity in practice - not just on paper.



# Bespoke in-house management team training

Next, we trained the full management team. These sessions went beyond compliance.

We explored:

- Legislation and the Codes of Practice
- Case Law
- How dignity at work plays out in daily interactions
- How to spot inappropriate behaviour early
- The impact of power dynamics
- How to handle a sensitive conversation
- Escalation of a complaint to HR
- What bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment look like in context

The training was interactive, practical, and scenario-based, encouraging managers to reflect on their own behaviour and responsibilities. Real examples (anonymised) from their industry were used to make it relevant and engaging.

# Bespoke in-house investigator training

We worked with the client to identify a small group of staff with strong people, analytical and report writing skills to be trained as internal investigators. This ensured the organisation could respond more quickly and appropriately in future.

Our training covered:

- Legislation and the Codes of Practice.
- Case Law
- Natural justice and due process
- Interview techniques
- Report writing
- Managing bias and emotional reactions
- Confidentiality and record keeping

## Bespoke training for in-house contact support people

A group of designated 'contact support people' were trained to serve as an informal listening and support channel for employees who might have concerns.

These individuals are often the first port of call, so we trained them to listen empathetically, maintain confidentiality, and escalate appropriately, without becoming entangled in the matter themselves.

## Custom training video for the LMS

We developed a high-quality Dignity at Work video module for the company's Learning Management System. This covered key definitions, examples, and the company's internal processes for handling concerns. It was made compulsory for all staff and will remain relevant and in use for years to come.

The tone and messaging were carefully aligned to the company's culture, while ensuring clarity and compliance.

## Live Q&A sessions with all staff

To reinforce the messaging and address common misunderstandings, we held a series of live Q&A sessions with all staff. These sessions allowed employees to ask questions, raise concerns, and hear from our team directly.

We created a safe, open environment where clarity and shared understanding were the goals.

## Interactive, real-world training

Throughout all levels of training, we focused on making content real and applicable. Role plays, peer learning, industry-specific examples, and discussion of grey areas were core to the design.

We didn't just present slides - we created active learning experiences.

## From policy to practice: Creating ongoing managerial support

After the training concluded, one thing became clear: while managers were now more aware and better equipped, many still lacked the confidence to deal with tricky people issues as they arose. So, we created a structured Management Learning Circle initiative.

Each month, managers are brought together in small groups facilitated by an Insight HR consultant. Over twelve months, they explore common people challenges, share their experiences, and support each other in applying what they've learned. These peer-to-peer sessions are safe spaces for growth, accountability, and practical learning.

### Outcome: A culture shift, not just a compliance box

#### The organisation now has:

- A clear and current Dignity at Work policy.
- Trained HR professionals, internal investigators and contact support people.
- A management team with greater awareness and confidence.
- Evergreen training materials available to all staff.
- A commitment to continuous learning and accountability through Learning Circles.

By investing in meaningful, embedded learning, the company didn't just manage a complaint - they made a long-term investment in workplace dignity, culture, and employee wellbeing.



# Reflections from Mary Cullen, managing director

**"Too many HR and L&D professionals still treat dignity at work as a tick-box exercise - believing that having a policy on the intranet is enough. It's not"**

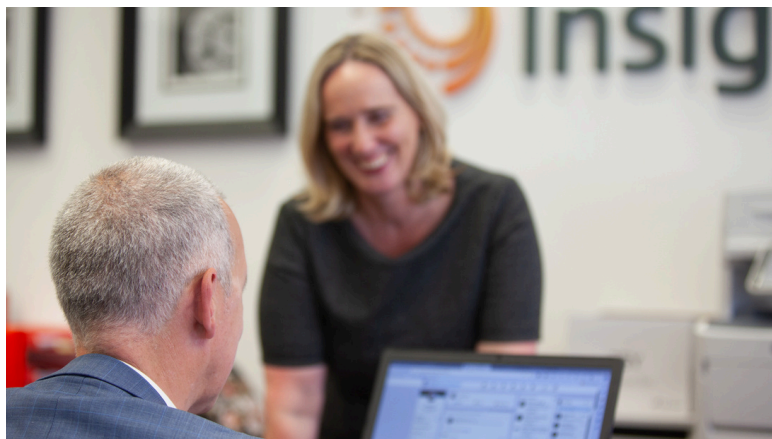
**"This case demonstrates what true compliance looks like: a strategic, embedded, and human-centred approach that ensures everyone in the organisation understands not just the rules, but the why behind them.**

**In our experience, when we carry out investigations into dignity at work issues, it's striking how often the alleged perpetrator doesn't realise they've done anything wrong. But that doesn't minimise the impact. Unintentional harm can still be deeply damaging. In other cases, the behaviour is deliberate and the consequences can be devastating.**

**Either way, the employer is vicariously liable for the actions of their employees - even if they were unaware of the behaviour. That carries significant reputational and legal risk, not to mention the potential to destroy trust and do lasting harm to those affected.**

**Bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment are real. They happen in all types of organisations - from the smallest to the largest - and the impact on individuals can be long-lasting, even irreversible.**

**This is not an area you can afford to leave to chance. Getting it right isn't just about policy - it's about culture. It's about creating a workplace that is truly safe, inclusive, and respectful for everyone."**



**"Too many HR and L&D professionals still treat dignity at work as a tick-box exercise - believing that having a policy on the intranet is enough. It's not"**

**Mary Cullen, Managing Director**

**Reach out to us today to discuss how you can better protect your organisation with our customised, thoughtful, and bespoke approach to dignity in the workplace.**

**At Insight HR, we don't offer one-size-fits-all solutions - we partner with you to build understanding, embed learning, and create a culture where everyone feels safe, respected, and supported.**

**Check out our podcasts,  
webinars, and everything else!**

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