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BEWARE RISQUÉ OFFICE BANTER

John French, Solicitor in our Litigation Department warns that “Bosses need to clamp down on risqué office banter after a landmark court ruling”.

The Court of Appeal upheld a complaint from a straight man who received homophobic abuse at work - despite the fact that his tormentors did not believe him to be gay.

In addition, the man did not think his abusers thought he was homosexual – but the Court still ruled in the complainant’s favour.

John said the case shows that bosses need to have a clear policy on office banter, to protect employees from feeling harassed.

“It is an employer’s responsibility to protect their staff from feeling abused at work,” he said.

“There’s a fine line between having some light-hearted banter and harassing an individual, and it’s extremely important that management ensure that no-one is victimised.”

“This recent case was very interesting because the victim has been protected by Sexual Orientation Regulations despite being heterosexual. He was abused simply because he’d gone to a boarding school and had lived in Brighton.”

“This sets a precedent and shows businesses that if they fail to deal with the problem properly, they can end up in court. The outcome, in cases like this, is that employers can be sued and the perpetrators can be disciplined.”

“To avoid that, it’s important that there is a clear equal opportunities policy that everyone should follow.”

If anyone would like advice please do not hesitate to call us on our Departmental Direct Line 024 7649 3114 and ask to speak initially to Keri Tucker.