



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/00117/23

Ian Price
CBI Director Wales
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11 April 2023

Dear Ian,

I understand you spoke to my officials last Thursday, 6th April about the reported allegations of misconduct at the CBI.

These allegations are serious, include criminal behaviour and will be personally devastating for the victims involved. Whilst we note that none of the allegations made to date appear to relate to CBI Wales, we cannot be assured that employees are unaffected given that the Wales operation functions within a wider, single CBI. The welfare of employees here will be impacted by the culture and behaviours of the body's UK leadership but I hope that your engagement on the next steps in this process will help to demonstrate that the culture and behaviours within the Wales operation are in a much better place.

We recognise the courage it takes for anyone to speak out after experiencing abuse, harassment, or bullying. The Welsh Government is committed to tackling harassment, bullying and all forms of violence against women head on. Women and girls should be and feel safe in all aspects of their lives, including the workplace. We expect the same level of commitment from all our partners, stakeholders and citizens, including the CBI.

My officials confirmed my intention to pause Ministerial engagement and bilaterals between senior officials and the CBI. Officials at Deputy Director level will continue to engage with the CBI in circumstances where other social partners and/or stakeholders are present. However, this engagement will also be contingent upon assurances regarding the handling of the reported allegations and the CBI's commitment to taking swift and appropriate action pending the outcome of the independent investigation that I understand is underway. I note that the CBI's Director General has now been dismissed and that three employees have been suspended. It is encouraging to see swift action at this stage and the commitment to instigate a root and branch review of culture, governance and processes within the organisation.

I would be grateful for the clarification that you can provide on the following:

- What are the Terms of Reference for the independent investigation and will these be published?

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

- What is the timescale for the investigation, who will it report to and again will its recommendations be published?
- Has a robust whistle-blowing mechanism been established so that others can bring forward concerns safely and anonymously?
- Has the CBI referred any of these matters to the Police and will it co-operate fully with any police investigations that may ensue?
- Is the CBI currently engaging any external support to improve procedures & responses to inappropriate behaviour in the workplace?
- Does the CBI have a workplace sexual harassment policy? If so, how often is this reviewed?
- What processes and procedures does the CBI have in place to protect staff from sexual harassment in the workplace?
- What avenues for reporting concerns are currently in place?
- What grievance processes are used to investigate complaints and carry out disciplinarys?
- Are staff signposted to any external helplines for support?

Further to this and for clarity, I would also expect to see:

- A thorough and transparent independent external review of existing processes and disciplinary procedures.
- A review of workplace cultures and staff feedback to establish a baseline from which to improve. This can include a climate survey, anonymised staff questionnaires & analysis of areas of the organisation where there is a significant gendered power discrepancy.
- Training for all staff in understanding what sexual harassment is, the impact it has and how to maintain a safe and equal workplace.
- Clear signposting to support helplines, including [Live Fear Free](#) and [Rights of Women](#) sexual harassment at work helpline and the [ACAS](#) helpline.
- Regular monitoring of the process and procedures, making modifications where necessary to prevent sexual harassment from happening.

It is important that action is taken to ensure that CBI employees working in Wales receive the care and assistance they might need. I urge the CBI and its members in Wales to engage with our ground-breaking Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and to make use of the tools available to establish a best practice approach that supports women. We also provide support for the Live Fear Free, a free, confidential helpline for anyone experiencing any form of violence against women, harassment or abuse. The service can be accessed in several different ways and I would urge you to ensure that all employees in Wales are signposted to the services available to them at the details below. Regardless of whether employees in Wales have highlighted concerns to management, it is important that they are made aware of the free, confidential and expert support that is available to everyone in Wales:

Phone: 0808 80 10 800

Text: 07860077333

Live Chat: www.gov.wales/live-fear-free

e-mail: info@livefearfreehelpline.wales

The CBI's status as a social partner in Wales is significant. It's wider role affords the organisation a platform that allows it influence our civic and economic life. We must all recognise and act upon the role our institutions play in determining how women and girls feel about their place in society, and their safety.

While these allegations are incredibly serious, the CBI is not alone in facing these issues and the VAWDASV Act exists because we recognise the scale of injustice faced by so many, whether in work, in the community or at home. The expertise and resources we

support are available to help organisations embrace best practice to prevent and act upon VAWDASV.

I hope that the CBI will seek to adopt such an approach via a thorough and transparent process and that here in Wales we can then explore how the essential lessons from this work can support business cultures that tackle VAWDASV at its stem in a fairer Wales.

I recognise that urgent work is now required to swiftly establish that robust process and I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vaughan Gething AS/MS
Gweinidog yr Economi
Minister for Economy