

Liam Byrne MP

Business and Trade Committee

House of Commons

**By email only**

**From:** Cath Denholm, Acting CEO

Our ref: Byrne2123

29 November 2023

Dear Mr Byrne,

**Subject: McDonald's**

Thank you for your letter dated 16 November 2023.

We share your concerns about the recent allegations concerning treatment of workers in McDonald's restaurants in Britain and welcome the Business and Trade Committee's scrutiny of this matter.

In February 2023, the Equality and Human Rights Commission ('EHRC') signed an agreement with McDonald's pursuant to section 23 of the Equality Act 2006 ('EA 2006'), to protect staff from sexual harassment ('the section 23 Agreement'). This followed concerns that were raised with the EHRC in 2019.

We are committed to a transparent approach to our regulatory activity, including our enforcement work under the EA 2006. However, we are constrained in our power to disclose information by section 6 of the EA 2006, which makes it a criminal offence for any person within the EHRC to disclose information obtained from an organisation with whom we are engaging in relation to section 23 of that Act. We regret that we are not in a position to share the full content of the section 23 Agreement as requested by the Committee, or details of McDonald's response to, or compliance with, the same. However, we are able to share a summary of the commitments made by McDonald's under the section 23 Agreement, which is published on our website [here](#).

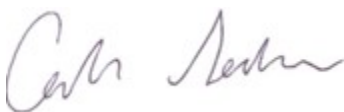
Our confidential email hotline was set up in response to allegations first publicised by the BBC in July 2023, to enable us to gather intelligence directly from those affected. It was not our intention to investigate individual complaints or allegations reported to our email hotline. Instead, we have analysed the information received to identify issues or themes of particular concern, to inform our ongoing enforcement work.

The hotline remains open for individuals to share information with us. To date we have been contacted by approximately 235 individuals directly in relation to McDonald's (most of whom are former or current employees of McDonald's restaurants). We have signposted all individuals, who made a complaint about McDonald's, to McDonald's to have their complaints investigated in the employment context if they so wish (McDonald's will be able to confirm action taken as a consequence of complaints, in terms of internal disciplinary proceedings or otherwise). We have sought further information, pertinent to our ongoing enforcement work, from approximately 70 individuals.

In terms of next steps, we are continuing to assess the new information available to us through our email hotline and otherwise. We are seeking to address emerging issues in the context of the current section 23 Agreement, which requires specific actions from McDonald's as outlined on our website. This will involve continuing to monitor progress against the agreed action plan and keeping under review, as standard, any potential requirement for further enforcement action to be taken.

We would be happy to provide a further update to the Committee in January 2024, if that would assist.

Yours sincerely,



Cath Denholm

**Acting Chief Executive**

**Equality and Human Rights Commission**