



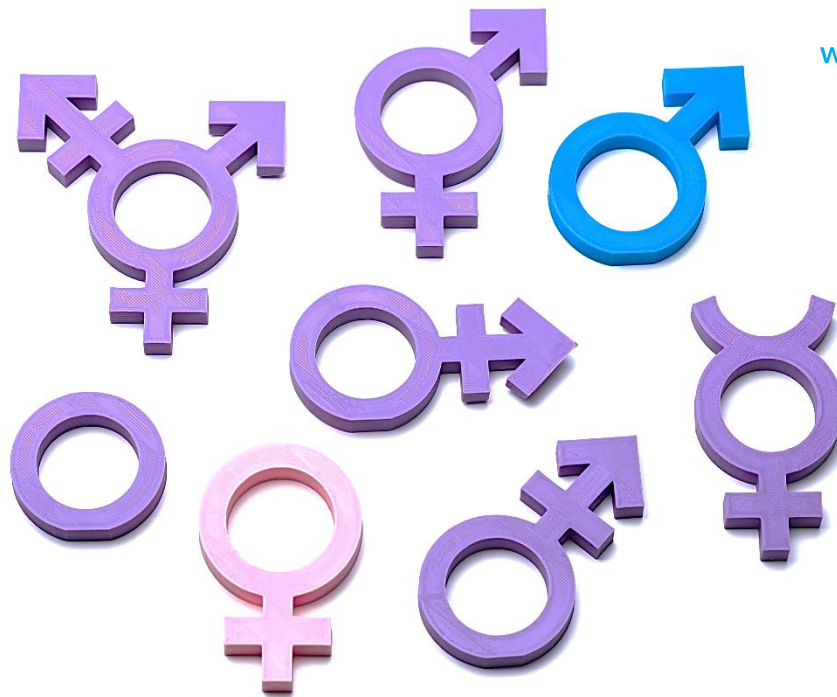
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Workplace Sexual Harassment | Employer's Toolkit

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# TOOLKIT

## WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT | EMPLOYERS' TOOLKIT

This toolkit uses leading academic research and findings from Business in the Community's Project 28-40. The largest ever survey of women at work, to understand sexual harassment in the workplace.

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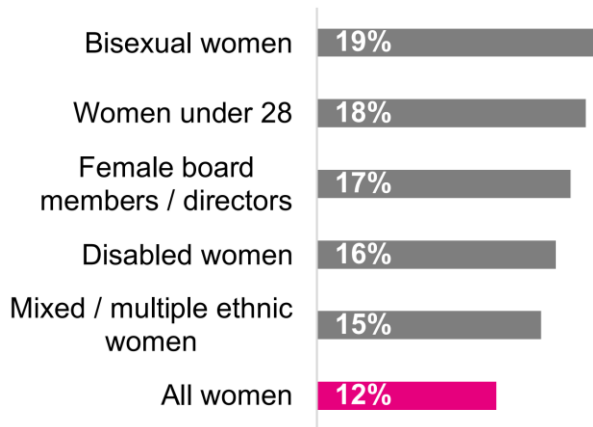
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## 1. THREE REASONS EMPLOYERS SHOULD TACKLE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

### 1. Sexual harassment is widespread in UK workplaces

According to Project 28-40, our survey of 23,000 women, 12% of respondents had experienced sexual harassment at work in the past three years alone. The Trade Union Congress's (TUC) 2016 research into sexual harassment found that a disturbing 52% of women have experienced it at work.<sup>i</sup> But Project 28-40 shows that women's experiences are not all the same; age, level of seniority, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation impact the likelihood of being sexually harassed or the experience itself.<sup>ii</sup> Women who had experienced sexual harassment in the past three years:



### 2. Sexual harassment is costly for employers

The consequences of not dealing with sexual harassment include poor performance, absence, resignations or dismissals and/or employment tribunals, all of which can be incredibly costly for an employer. Emotional, psychological and psychosomatic (such as muscular pains) are the most common effects on a victim.<sup>iii</sup> They often feel angry, stressed and fearful which can decrease their commitment to work, lower their confidence and deteriorate their relationships with colleagues. Witnesses are also impacted; they may conclude their employer does not care about employees' welfare. The perception of a work environment as being tolerant of sexual harassment has been found to be a better predictor of negative mental health than actual reports of sexual harassment.<sup>iv</sup> This is particularly concerning as TUC found that 35% of women have heard comments of a sexual nature being made about their female colleagues; 11% in the past 12 months alone.<sup>v</sup>

### 3. Women want their employers to tackle it

96% of the employers that took part in our benchmark survey have policies around bullying and harassment, but only half of respondents in Project 28-40 agreed that their employer had good policies around harassment, suggesting a gap between policies and lived experience.<sup>vi</sup> Policies must be reviewed, but action needs to go beyond policy. When respondents were asked, unprompted, what their organisation could do to improve the overall culture in their workplace, addressing bullying and harassment was the most frequent suggestion; one in six women suggested it.<sup>vii</sup>

**THIS WAS A PREVIOUS EMPLOYER AND MY HARASSER WAS A CLIENT. MY ORGANISATION DID NOTHING TO ADDRESS HIS BEHAVIOUR SO I LEFT.**  
Project 28- 40 respondent

### 2. WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

#### The official definition

Sexual harassment is illegal. The legal definition under section 26 of the Equality Act 2010 is: “A person harasses another if they engage in “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature”, and the “conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment” for the victim.”<sup>viii</sup>

“A person also harasses another if they engage in “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or that is related to gender reassignment or sex” and because of their rejection of or submission to the conduct, the perpetrator treats them less favourably than if they had not rejected or submitted to the conduct.”<sup>ix</sup>

Acas outlines how it might take place: “not necessarily face to face, they may be by written communications, visual images (for example pictures of a sexual nature or embarrassing photographs of colleagues), electronic email (so called ‘flame-mail’), phone, and automatic supervision methods”<sup>x</sup> (recording someone’s telephone conversations or computer downtime, and not universally applying this).

#### Towards a more holistic definition

When we consider the broad spectrum of harassment cited by our and others’ research, the government’s definition of sexual harassment suddenly seems very simplistic. It fails to mention micro behaviours and one-off incidents which may still impact an employee’s confidence, productivity and wellbeing at work. **Enduring a culture of everyday, subtle sexual harassment can be equally as damaging to the workplace culture and productivity. Sexual harassment can also be bound up with homophobic, racist or other identity-based harassment.**

Sexual harassment is unwelcome and unreciprocated behaviour; it is not consensual behaviour between two people who are mutually attracted to each other.<sup>xi</sup> It includes different levels of severity, ranging from physical and serious behaviour to nonphysical behaviour that is often excused as banter.

Explicit examples can help explain what is and isn’t acceptable behaviour in the workplace. A survey of adolescents’ experiences of sexual harassment at work provided a list of eight specific behaviours constituting sexual harassment for respondents to select from, from “called me sexually offensive names” to

“attempted to hurt me in a sexual way (attempted rape or rape)”.<sup>xii</sup>

Other research defines three distinct but fairly broad levels of severity, encompassing many ways in which sexual harassment can manifest:

- Patronising sexual harassment includes sexist but nonsexual comments, gestures and condescension.
- Taunting behaviours include sexual gestures, physical displays and overly personal comments.
- Predatory sexual harassment involves threatening behaviour, sexual solicitation, sexual promises or threats, touching and forced sexual contact.<sup>xiii</sup>

**The term ‘sexual harassment’ was only coined in the 1970s and there is no universally accepted definition of it. Employers must use a holistic and thorough definition of sexual harassment to be able to communicate the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.**

**ANONYMISED QUOTES FROM PROJECT 28-40 RESPONDENTS**

**EVERY WOMAN I KNOW IN OUR ORGANISATION HAS HAD SOME FORM OF UNPLEASANTNESS DIRECTED TOWARDS THEM – SEVERAL INSTANCES OF RAPE, INDECENT ASSAULT RIGHT DOWN TO THE LEVEL OF EXCLUSION FROM CONVERSATION DUE TO GENDER. IT AFFECTS US ALL.**

**I'VE BEEN ON THE RECEIVING END OF BOTH PHYSICAL AND VERBAL HARASSMENT [SIC] E.G. THE ALL-FEMALE TEAM THAT I LEAD WAS REFERED [SIC] TO AS 'TEAM DOMINATRIX' BY MY MALE MANAGER. I THINK THESE SORTS OF ATTITUDES LEAD TO WOMEN FEELING REJECTED BY THE CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT AND LEADS SOME, LIKE MYSELF, TO LEAVE AND SET UP ON THEIR OWN.**

**WALKING THROUGH THE OFFICE – WEARING JEANS, SAFETY SHOES, A SWEATSHIRT – I RECEIVE THE COMMENT 'NICE PUPPIES!' I MAY BEND OVER TO DO SOMETHING AND GET A 'WHILE YOU'RE DOWN THERE' OR SOMEONE BEHIND ME SIMULATING SEX!**

**I HAVE EXPERIENCED A LOT OF SEXIST STEREOTYPING AND SEXUALISATION WITHIN THE WORKPLACE. HOWEVER MINOR THE INDIVIDUAL CASES ARE, THE ACCUMULATIVE CONSEQUENCES ARE USUALLY HUGELY DAMAGING AND DISTRESSING.**

**STOP THE 'LAD' CULTURE IN THE BREAK ROOM. HEFTY BLOKES COMPARING THE FEMALE EMPLOYEES' 'TITS' TO THOSE ON PAGE 3 DOES NOT MAKE FOR A HARMONIOUS WORKING ENVIRONMENT.**

**MY EXPERIENCES LARGELY RELATE TO MY PREVIOUS ROLE AND ORGANISATION - THE PROBLEM WAS SEXISM AT THE MOST SENIOR LEVEL WHICH RANGED FROM THE WOMEN BEING PAID LESS THAN THE MEN TO DAILY SEXIST COMMENTS AND BEHAVIOUR (EXAMPLES IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE, I'LL JUST HAVE TO SPANK YOU, BEING REFERRED TO AS SWEETIE, GORGEOUS AND THE LITTLE LADY WHILE MALE COLLEAGUES ARE MATE, BEING TOLD OFF WHEN I WENT UP A DRESS SIZE, NEW HAIRSTYLES BEING RATED OUT OF TEN... SADLY, I COULD GO ON).**

### 3. WHAT CAUSES AND ENABLES SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE?

#### 1. Power and the workplace hierarchy

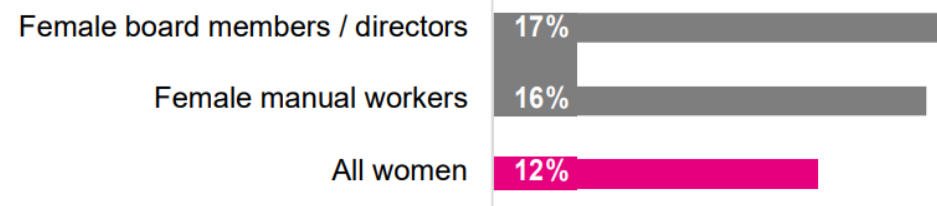
Contrary to popular belief, sexual harassment is driven by power, not passion. In a workplace hierarchy power is unequally distributed amongst individuals, so sexual harassment is a way in which the abuse or assertion of power can manifest. The amount of power one has can influence their experience of sexual harassment, whether they are the perpetrator or the victim.

Multiple studies have found that those with very little power at work are more vulnerable and easily targeted; powerful male bosses have been found to sexually harass relatively powerless female assistants or women lower down the hierarchy.<sup>xiv</sup> Employees in insecure jobs, such as temporary work, are more likely to experience serious sexual harassment because they are relatively powerless in a workplace context.<sup>xv</sup>

However, women in positions of power and authority are also at increased risk; sexual harassment may be used as an 'equalizer' against such women, putting them back in their subordinate position to men in society.<sup>xvi</sup>

#### **RESEARCH HAS FOUND THAT WOMEN WHO THREATEN MALE STATUS AND CHALLENGE THEIR OWN SUBORDINATE POSITION IN A PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY WERE MORE LIKELY TO BE SEXUALLY HARASSED THAN RELATIVELY POWERLESS WOMEN.**

Project 28-40 findings support both of the above power explanations; powerful female board members / directors and female manual workers were both more likely than average to have experienced sexual harassment at work in the past three years:



#### 2. Society's gender roles and the sexual objectification of women

Traditional attitudes around women's roles in society do still exist, and can often guide men's interactions with women. Women are often still primarily perceived as mothers, sex objects and helpers (wives) and most suitable for jobs which align with these roles, such as a nurse, carer, dancer, personal assistant or secretary. When women do work traditionally done by men, some men potentially see women acting over and above their social role, which can lead to a threat to the male role, status and power.<sup>xvii</sup>

Such gender roles are learned and enforced from a young age, particularly women – or girls – as sex objects. Data published in September 2015 showed that 5,500 sexual offences, included 600 rapes, were recorded in UK schools over a three-year period.<sup>xviii</sup> Not only this, a 2010 YouGov poll of 16-18 year olds found 29% of girls experienced unwanted sexual touching at school, whilst 71% said they heard sexual name-calling towards girls at school on either a daily basis or a few times per week.<sup>xix</sup> Sexually harassing behaviours are experienced early on, and continue into higher education and beyond.

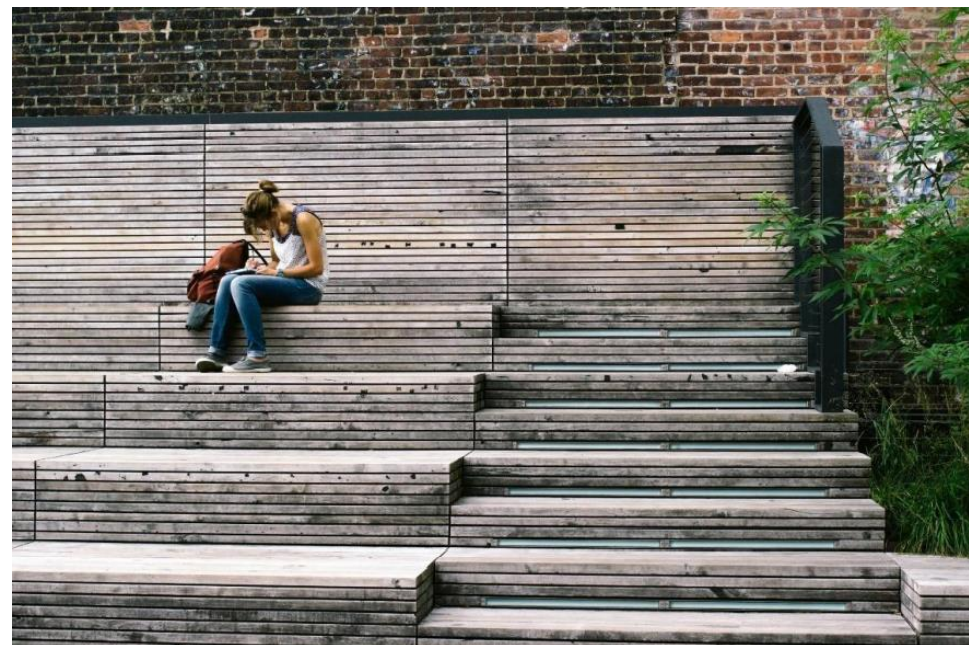
University life in the UK is increasingly dominated by "lad culture" – or "laddism". Laddism is described by participants in Phipps and Young's research as a pack/group mentality, which includes the sexual objectification of women and rape-supportive attitudes, occasionally spilling over into sexual

harassment and violence.<sup>xx</sup> It involves 'banter' which is often sexist, misogynist and homophobic.<sup>xxi</sup> This type of 'modern masculinity' has emerged in parallel with women's increased success in education and employment – and consequent separation from their traditional, less powerful gender role.

Laura Bates, founder of the Everyday Sexism Project, collated comments posted on Facebook's 'Spotted' pages which demonstrates the sexually harassing behaviour occurring in universities. The pages are filled with comments such as:

"To the girl on the c+ floor with the red Toshiba laptop... I was sitting next to you a few hours ago. I literally couldn't take my hand out of my pants the whole time."

Bates found that the Spotted pages "veer into heavily sexualised and offensive comments about students' appearance and sexuality, and female students are targeted with particularly misogynistic comments."<sup>xxii</sup> These attitudes and behaviours are easily carried into the workplace.



### 3. Workplace characteristics

Individual perpetrators must take responsibility for their own actions and be reprimanded accordingly but understanding the structural and cultural factors enabling sexual harassment at work is also crucial to tackling it. We know that workplace hierarchy influences sexual harassment, but research shows that other, more specific workplace characteristics also influence the likelihood and seriousness of sexual harassment in the workplace<sup>xxiii</sup>:

- **Workplace anonymity:** large employers will have formal grievance procedures to protect against serious abuse, yet the sheer scale of these organisations can mean perpetrators are more able to act without others becoming aware and victims more likely to feel isolated and unable to report incidents.
- **Male dominated and physical work** has long fostered male solidarity and pride, and centres on the physical body, so the presence of women in this type of workplace may be felt as a threat to such masculinity, leading to an increased likelihood of sexual harassment.
- **Lack of manager and co-worker solidarity:** workforces where employees are less invested in colleagues' wellbeing means individuals are less willing to intercede if sexual harassment is witnessed – enabling it to occur and continue.
- **Gender composition:** sexual harassment is more likely to occur in workplaces or teams with a high proportion of men, mostly because it is easier and safer to target those in the minority. Female dominated workplaces offer protection from more serious sexual harassment, but do not always prevent the less serious, patronising behaviours. Environments outside of the office, for example where client meetings or team bonding

initiatives might take place, can also influence the likelihood of sexual harassment. Using sexual environments such as strip clubs for work meetings is outdated; employers should not sign off any expenses that come from them.

**Different workplace characteristics interact to form different workplace environments. Some environments enable a higher prevalence and more serious manifestations of sexual harassment to occur.**





### 4. WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORK?

#### Men or women?

Men and women can be both victims and perpetrators of sexual harassment and their experiences can differ. Studies have found that men who complain of sexual harassment tend to be believed less, liked less and punished more. However, evidence continues to suggest that women are more likely to be sexually harassed, and perpetrators of more serious harassment tend to be male.<sup>xxiv</sup>

TUC's research found that in 9 out of 10 cases, the perpetrators were men, which is in line with existing research. In 2015, the formal sexual harassment complaints logged in Australia's equal opportunity commission over six months were analysed. It found that harassment of women by men was the most common form, but also highlighted 'a-typical' harassment:<sup>xxv</sup>

- Of 282 cases analysed, 221 involved a man harassing a woman.
- Of 282 cases, 25% of women compared to 16% of men had experienced sexual harassment at work in the past five years, and in 9 out of 10 cases the harassers were male, showing that men also sexually harass other men.
- 1 in 5 formal complaints in the Australian commissions were atypical sexual harassment, which includes female perpetrators and/or male victims.
- 23% were male-to-male and 6% were female-to-female.
- Harassment of men by women was most likely to be non-physical only (57%) compared to male-to-female (46%).



#### Gender non-conforming

A person's gender (the character traits and behaviours that we assign to femininity/females or masculinity/males) can influence experiences of sexual harassment. When someone is perceived as not conforming to traditional gender, for example "effeminate men" or "masculine women", they may be at a higher risk of experiencing sexual harassment, from either men or women.<sup>xxvi</sup> They may be perceived as an easy target for someone to assert power over. Scenarios described in complaints in the Australian equal opportunity commission suggest gender non-conforming men were singled out for harassment by other men, and sometimes by women.

### Sexual orientation

#### Nonsexual harassment of LGB people

Research into the prevalence of sexual harassment amongst LGB people is lacking, however we know that experiences of harassment can often be linked to a person's sexual orientation, whether that harassment is sexual or not. Stonewall found that 1 in 5 lesbian, gay and bisexual employees have experienced verbal bullying from colleagues, customers or service users because of their sexual orientation in the last five years.<sup>xxvii</sup> Project 28-40 found that 61% of bisexual women and 55% of gay and lesbian women had experienced bullying and harassment in the past three years, compared to 52% of all women, however this wasn't necessarily sexual.<sup>xxviii</sup>

#### Sexual harassment linked to sexual orientation

Sexual harassment can be perpetrated by someone of the same sex, whether or not that person or the victim are gay or bisexual. Analysis of the Australian equality commission's sexual harassment complaints found that male-to-male incidents often included homosexual slurs and the questioning of their sexuality, and men who were gay or perceived to be gay were at a greater risk of being sexually harassed.<sup>xxix</sup>

Project 28-40 found that bisexual women were more likely to have experienced sexual harassment at work than gay or straight women; 19% of bisexual women had experienced it in the past three years compared to 12% of all women.<sup>xxx</sup> There are multiple reasons for this.

The media tends to portray bisexual women as promiscuous, "bi-curious" or incapable of monogamy, and there are very few female bisexual role models to debunk the myth. The term itself is also thought to be unhelpful, especially in the workplace – referring to being "bisexual" can automatically take people's thoughts to the sexual aspect of one's identity, leading to increased likelihood of sexual harassment and inappropriate questions.

Society is generally less knowledgeable about bisexuality; it has been excluded from mainstream media, lesbian and gay communities, policy and psychology.<sup>xxxi</sup> Confusion and ignorance can lead to an increased likelihood of discrimination, violence and harassment, and in the workplace, stereotypical assumptions about bisexual people and their lives persist, both from straight and gay people. This means they may feel unable to access the initiatives which are supposed to support them.<sup>xxxii</sup>

**Employers must ensure that their initiatives to tackle sexual harassment include the unique experiences of LGBT people. This is particularly imperative since the younger generation coming into the workforce are less likely to define themselves as 100% heterosexual; a recent poll by YouGov found that 1 in 2 young people do not see themselves as 100% heterosexual, 6% define themselves as completely gay/lesbian and 43% see themselves as non-binary.<sup>xxxiii</sup>**

### Race and ethnicity

Project 28-40 found that mixed or multiple ethnic women were more likely to have experienced sexual harassment; 15% compared to 12% of all women.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Research into racialised experiences of sexual harassment is lacking, however some research by Woolnough highlights the complexity of dealing with sexual harassment at work for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women. Most participants believed they would not have experienced sexual harassment if they were a different race or ethnicity.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Only a small number of respondents formally reported the incident and those who did found the decision very difficult. Many feared losing their job or facing negative ramifications at work, in their family or their community, such as tarnishing the family name. One participant stated:

“White women are different as they can go to the police and report it. An Asian is thinking the community will talk. Honour makes you keep things down and not let anyone know.” – participant in Woolnough, 2008

Woolnough found it difficult to recruit respondents because many women did not wish to talk about their experience again, so the prevalence of sexual harassment amongst some ethnic or racial groups is harder to measure. Employers must consider different cultures when dealing with sexual harassment at work, in both preventative strategies and the reporting process.

### Age

Project 28-40 found that women under 28 years old were more likely to have experienced sexual harassment in the past three years; 18% compared to 12% of all women. This is in line with TUC's research which found that younger women are far more likely to have experienced sexual harassment at work.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

This is particularly concerning as research has found that whilst younger employees are increasingly aware of sexual harassment as a theoretical concept, they're less able to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour that occurs in the workplace.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Another study shows how age and gender influence sexual harassment in US workplaces<sup>xxxviii</sup>:

- Older employees tend to have a broader definition of sexual harassment which includes less serious behaviours. However, they could have been more aware of sexual harassment because of their tenure and experience and not necessarily their age.
- Younger men (under 30) are generally unaware of the nature of sexual harassment; they do not really know when they behave in a way which constitutes it and equally, they are not likely to report it.
- Similarly, younger women are less likely to label behaviour as “sexual harassment”, so they may not feel they can challenge or report it if it made them feel uncomfortable.

### 5. WHY DON'T EMPLOYEES REPORT SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Official reports of incidences of sexual harassment are likely to be much lower than the real number of incidences. The TUC's research into sexual harassment found that 4 out of 5 women did not report the sexual harassment they experienced to their employer.<sup>xxxix</sup> There are many reasons:

- A negative past experience of reporting sexual harassment to their employer or knowing a colleague who had a negative experience. Of those who reported to their employer in TUC's research (1 in 5), nearly three quarters saw no change whatsoever, and 16% said they were treated worse as a result.<sup>xl</sup>
- A belief that the perpetrator will be protected instead of facing ramifications.
- Fear of being perceived as too soft or weak, or unable to take a joke. Similarly, fear that they would be labelled a troublemaker or "that girl who complained", or even blamed for the incident.
- Doubting their own experience as being serious enough to report – even if it should be reported.
- Unsure whether their employer would believe them.
- Fear it would destroy their career, especially if the perpetrator was more senior or their line manager.
- The workplace culture may prevent them reporting if there's generally a lack of line manager or co-worker support, a hostile environment, or if sexual harassment is normalised in their workplace; a part of everyday life which they don't believe could be changed.
- Lack of clarity around whether or how they could report it.
- Active discouragement from a colleague, line manager or the perpetrator themselves.

- Feeling too embarrassed or shameful to tell anyone. This could be particularly true for male victims<sup>xli</sup>, or it could be influenced by their cultural norms.<sup>xlii</sup>

Many victims of sexual harassment, however serious their experience, would be put off from reporting due to a combination of reasons. Preventing sexual harassment in the first place is absolutely crucial, but ensuring that all employees – irrespective of gender, ethnicity or level of seniority – feel they can report their experience to someone in their organisation.

**I HAVE REPORTED CASES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR TO MY CEO ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS AND EACH TIME HE HAS REFUSED TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM HEAD ON ENCOURAGING ME TO ASK THE VICTIMS TO RAISE A WRITTEN GRIEVANCE. FOR REASONS OF INTIMIDATION, WANTING 'A QUIET LIFE' AND HAVING LITTLE FAITH IN THE OUTCOME OF ANY GRIEVANCE THEY HAVE NOT DONE SO. I THINK MANY WOMEN FEEL THIS WAY AS RAISING A GRIEVANCE OFTEN LEADS TO GREATER MALE SOLIDARITY AND CONVERSATIONS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS ABOUT WOMEN BEING OVER SENSITIVE, BEING PREMENSTRUAL AND SIMILAR CLICHÉS.**

Project 28-40 respondent

### 6. HOW CAN EMPLOYERS PREVENT IT IN THEIR WORKPLACES?

#### Structural change: equalising power

Many of the workplace characteristics that increase the prevalence of sexual harassment are structural, therefore tackling sexual harassment requires structural changes. Traditional gender roles and the inherent inequality can be challenged by employers; achieving gender balance throughout the organisation and promoting equality at home through policies such as shared parental leave are crucial steps.

#### Cultural change: changing attitudes

In order to minimise the likelihood of sexual harassment occurring in your workplace, you as an employer must take action to create an inclusive and safe culture. This involves tackling outdated and sexist attitudes towards women and men amongst staff. Inclusive leadership, excellent line management and education is key.

### Actions for structural change

- ✓ **Define a policy with a holistic definition of sexual harassment – or review your pre-existing policy:** use a broad definition which encompasses all types of sexual harassment; displaying sexual images, making sexual comments, inappropriate touching, pressuring for a date or sexual favours and physical harm. Don't sign off any expenses that come from strip clubs.
- ✓ **Establish both informal and formal confidential reporting processes.** This must be communicated widely and regularly to make the processes for complaints clear and easy. Different cultural norms should be considered when designing the procedures for victims to talk to someone.
- ✓ **Ensure the policy and processes in place are inclusive** and consider gender, sexual orientation and cultural norms, and whether the victim is in an insecure role (temporary, zero-hour contract etc.).
- ✓ **Ensure each workplace has multiple 'go-to' people** for those experiencing sexual, mental health practitioners, an anonymous helpline, first aiders, trade union representatives and another more informal go-to person such as a bullying and harassment adviser.
- ✓ **Improve the gender balance within teams and at each level – especially the top.** Attract and recruit more women into leadership positions and more women and men into non-traditional work. Make senior women more visible and offer generous shared parental leave in order to challenge traditional thinking around gender roles.
- ✓ **Be aware that people in insecure roles are more easily targeted with sexual harassment; increase their job security** e.g. consider turning contracted roles into permanent roles; ensure temporary staff and zero-hour contract staff understand their rights; retain seasonal or temporary staff into other roles; offer training and development opportunities.
- ✓ **Reduce the difference in power between each level of seniority** e.g. add more levels or enable employees to alternate the "project lead" for different projects rather than working in a hierarchy, to minimise the abuse of power.
- ✓ **Measure and monitor instances of sexual harassment** year on year through anonymous staff surveys and focus groups facilitated by external and impartial researchers, as well as formal HR systems. A short term outcome may well be increased reports – but that's because people feel more confident to report than keep silent. Then, it's about tracking who and how it was reported, and the resolution.
- ✓ **In offices, create open plan workspaces with hot-desking to remove workplace anonymity,** thereby reducing the likelihood of sexual harassment. Including open breakout areas enables staff to get to know one another and build stronger relationships.

### Actions for cultural change

- ✓ **Regularly communicate policy and behaviour standards to staff**, as many may not be aware of the process or action that could be taken, and others may be unclear about what behaviour is unacceptable. Communication is key and men must be involved in the discussion too.
- ✓ **Educate staff to improve attitudes. Train all employees on sexual harassment** – what it is (include explicit examples to ensure it resonates), how to call it out and the business case for tackling it. Discuss the social context, such as the history of gender roles, the impact of the media and other information in this toolkit. This is especially important for recent graduates and younger employees.
- ✓ Open up discussions about the ambiguity of some sexual behaviour and language; what are the boundaries? Does it depend on your relationship with your colleague? 'Banter' which may be fine between friendly colleagues may not be for others. Do this through internal networks (wellbeing, LGBT, cultural etc.), training and learning lunches.
- ✓ **Leaders and managers must be seen to walk the talk and take a strong line** on harassment, including speaking out about what is or isn't acceptable at internal events, in digital communications and training. They must also realise that senior or board level perpetrators are replaceable.
- ✓ **Develop excellent line managers**; train them on diversity, communication style, and inclusive leadership. Equip them to spot and effectively deal with harassment or inappropriate behaviour in their team, including signposting to other support.
- ✓ **Actively encourage teamwork, collaboration and relationship building** rather than internal competition. Train team leads on how to do this.
- ✓ **Launch internal campaigns about everyday sexism, discrimination and harassment** to raise awareness. Use both paper (posters, employee magazines, flyers) and digital communications (email, intranet, and internal social media) to ensure staff working in different environments are reached. Get senior leaders and line managers to support the campaigns.
- ✓ **Create a wellbeing network, along with an online portal**, where employees can access information and advice and take part in mental health and wellbeing activities. This contributes to a culture of openness.
- ✓ **Enable staff to build relationships and improve co-worker solidarity**, thus reducing the likelihood of harassment. This can include (inclusive) social activities across teams and departments.
- ✓ **Take action against perpetrators regardless of their position**. This sends the strongest message that sexual harassment is not tolerated. Many women speak of senior level perpetrators getting away with harassment and it being them rather than the perpetrator who is moved, penalised or has to leave the company.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU'VE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

You may have experienced sexual harassment as an isolated event, a series of events or as part of everyday behaviour at your workplace. This can leave you feeling stressed, anxious, irritated or even shameful. It is important to recognise it as unlawful sexual harassment and act quickly so that it doesn't affect your health and wellbeing. You might want to ask the offender to stop, or if you don't feel comfortable, it carries on, or your experience is too serious, then you might want to speak to someone you trust such as a friend or colleague. Your workplace might have a designated bullying and harassment adviser or another 'go to' person who isn't necessarily in HR. You can then find out what options you have for reporting it and dealing with it.

#### Helpful organisations and guidance:

- Citizen's Advice: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/resources-and-tools/search-navigationtools/Search/?c=HOME&q=sexual+harassment>
- Stonewall's guidance on harassment of LGBT people: <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/employer/harassment-workplace>
- Rape Crisis helpline and centers: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/>
- The Survivor's Trust local specialist support: <https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org/find-support>
- Solace Women's Aid: <http://solacewomensaid.org/>
- NHS help after rape and sexual assault: <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Sexualhealth/Pages/Sexualassault.aspx>
- Victim Support: <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/crime-info/types-crime/rape-sexual-assault-and-sexualharassment>
- Survivors UK: <https://www.survivorsuk.org>
- Acas' bullying and harassment guide for employees: <http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/o/c/Bullying-and-harassment-at-work-a-guide-foremployees.pdf>
- EHRC's advice and guidance on discrimination: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance>

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