



Ministry
of Defence

Royal Navy and Royal Marines Sexual Harassment Survey 2021

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Executive Summary

Rationale and Design

This report reflects the data gathered from a survey of perceptions and experiences of the nature, prevalence, prevention and management of unwanted sexualised behaviours within the Royal Navy (RN), including the Royal Marines. The survey data was gathered over a 10 week period between July and September 2021.

The survey addressed the following areas:

- a. Generalised sexualised behaviours
- b. Targeted sexualised behaviours
- c. Perceptions of sexual harassment
- d. Particularly upsetting experiences
- e. Managing and preventing sexual harassment

Generalised sexualised behaviours

- Overall, the percentage of Royal Navy personnel witnessing generalised sexualised behaviours in the workplace has reduced significantly since 2015. Some behaviours, however, remain commonplace. Over 80% of personnel continue to experience explicit jokes and stories and the use of explicit language.
- Ratings experience generalised sexualised behaviours to a greater extent than Officers and female personnel are more likely to witness them than are male personnel.
- RN personnel take offence to generalised sexual behaviours in greater numbers than they did in 2015. Servicewomen are twice as likely as Servicemen to be offended, and Officers take offence more commonly than Ratings.
- Overall, men continue to be assessed as most responsible for these behaviours but there has been a reduction in the extent to which this is the case since 2015; the proportion of personnel assessing that women and men are together responsible for generalised sexualised behaviours has nearly doubled since 2015. This change has been driven by the experiences of male personnel; the 81% of Servicewomen who are estimated to attribute behaviours solely to men has not changed since 2015.

Targeted sexualised behaviours

- 27% of RN personnel experienced targeted sexualised behaviours in the twelve months prior to the survey. This is a significant reduction against the

38% estimated in 2015. The types of behaviour experienced remain unchanged in their distribution with two exceptions: sexual gestures and body language have reduced and exposure to explicit material has increased.

- The reduction in the prevalence of targeted behaviours varies by group. Whilst fewer men experienced these behaviours than in 2015, there was no significant change for women.
- Half of all women and a quarter of men are now estimated to experience targeted sexualised behaviours in the RN.
- All rank groups, other than Junior Officers, are estimated to have experienced a lower prevalence of targeted sexualised behaviour than in 2015. Of the different rank groups differentiated by gender, only female Junior Ratings and female Junior Officers have experienced an increase in the prevalence of targeted behaviours. It is estimated that 64% of female Junior Ratings and 60% of female Junior Officers experience exposure to targeted sexualised behaviours.

Perceptions of sexual harassment

- Overall, there is an increase in the percentage of RN personnel who regard targeted sexualised behaviours as harassment, compared with 2015. This change is consistent across genders and broad rank groups and is of higher magnitude among Servicemen generally, and Ratings.
- Whilst most targeted behaviours are deemed harassment by more than 90% of all RN personnel irrespective of gender, some behaviours are less likely to be considered to constitute harassment than others. These behaviours are those evidencing the greatest difference in assessment between male and female personnel and are those which are both indicative of a generalised sexualised environment, and which are the most prevalent targeted sexualised behaviours across the Royal Navy.
- Of the different rank groups, only Junior Ratings' perceptions of what does and does not constitute sexual harassment are statistically different from other groups. In the case of most behaviours, a higher percentage of Junior Ratings than any other rank group consider them not to constitute sexual harassment. However, within the Junior Rating group, female Junior Ratings' assessment of what constitutes harassment does not differ from any other rank group, other than their male Junior Rating colleagues.

Particularly upsetting experiences: the context and consequences of sexual harassment

- 25% of survey respondents indicated they had experienced an incident during the past twelve months which they had found particularly upsetting. Whilst 43% of Servicewomen respondents chose to report an upsetting incident,

compared to only 10% of responding Servicemen, the types and prevalence of incident described were broadly the same across genders.

- Overall, the most frequently cited behaviours leading to significant upset were unwelcome comments, attempts to touch, sexual talk and the display of explicit material, accounting for 76% of incidents.
- More Ratings reported experiencing an upsetting incident than did Officers and in most of those reports the incident was attributed to another Rating. In over half of cases the perpetrator was a work colleague or someone more junior to the victim. Perpetrators of particularly upsetting incidents were overwhelmingly men.
- Whilst half of upsetting incidents were reported to be of one-off duration, nearly a quarter were described as having a duration of 4 months or more. The most common impact of incidents was loss of respect for the perpetrator. Other common impacts were feelings of embarrassment, humiliation and uncomfortableness in the workplace.
- Most commonly, victims chose to ignore the behaviour, avoid the perpetrator or ask them to stop. In only 15% of cases was the behaviour reported through the chain of command. In nearly two thirds of cases, the actions taken were successful in resolving the situation. Fewer than half of victims elected to tell anyone about the incident. Those that did most commonly confided in colleagues. Where individuals chose not to tell anyone, it was most commonly because they considered they could handle the situation on their own.
- Only 4% of reported incidents involved formal written complaint. The most frequently cited reasons for non-complaint were informal resolution and a preference for personal handling of the problem.

Managing and preventing sexual harassment

- Whilst 25% of personnel overall consider sexual harassment to be widespread across the RN, 61% of Servicewomen hold this belief. More Ratings than Officers consider harassment to be widespread.
- Overall, nearly two thirds of personnel consider the RN to try, to a large extent, to prevent sexual harassment.
- 58% of personnel overall consider the RN to support victims of harassment. However, whilst 62% of men consider organisational support to be provided to a large extent, only 34% of women hold this view.
- There are strong levels of support for all existing harassment prevention measures.
- Over three quarters of personnel take a positive view of methods used to manage sexual harassment when it occurs. However, the proportions of Service personnel who consider these management methods to be effective has reduced in respect of every method since 2015.

BACKGROUND

1. Introduction and Rationale

1.1 This report describes the data gathered from a survey of perceptions and experiences of the nature, prevalence, prevention and management of unwanted sexualised behaviours within the Royal Navy (RN), including the Royal Marines.

1.2 Research into sexual harassment in the UK Armed Forces began in 2006, with a tri-Service survey of all female personnel carried out on behalf of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in the context of an action plan agreed between MoD and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) (now the Equality and Human Rights Commission). Subsequently the single Services carried out independent research and, in 2009 and 2015, the RN undertook repeated investigations using a variation of the 2006 MoD methodology but expanding the deployment of the survey to include a sample of male personnel. Over this period the Army and Royal Air Force (RAF) used the same survey design with slight variations in overall methodology. RN undertook, in early 2021, to carry out a further investigation, using its own 2015 methodology as the basis for its survey design. The survey data was gathered over a 10 week period between July and September 2021.

1.3 Consistent with previous investigations within the RN, this research was a survey-based exercise and was administered to all Regular trained strength and Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) female personnel, and a representative sample of male RN Regular trained strength and FTRS personnel. It aimed to gather information on the prevalence and nature of sexualised behaviour within the RN with a view to revealing both the nature and extent of this issue and understanding group differences in the experience of sexualised behaviours. It also aimed to gather opinions about the effectiveness of current initiatives in place to prevent and manage sexual harassment. Gathering this information enables the RN to better understand how successful its efforts in tackling this issue have been to date, and what still needs to be done to ensure that the moral, ethical, health and safety, and legal obligations to Service personnel are met.

2. Defining Sexual Harassment

2.1 Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a worker's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment. Conduct which has one of these effects can be harassment even if the effect was not intended. The conduct need not be sexually motivated, only sexual in nature.

2.2 People differ in their views on what constitutes sexual harassment and on the circumstances under which conduct is found to be offensive. What is considered acceptable "banter" by some may be considered offensive by others. To reduce the potential for subjective variation in the way behaviours are defined, participants in this survey were asked about their experiences of and attitudes towards specific

sexualised behaviours, rather than to give those experiences a pre-defined definition. Participants were also asked whether they considered sexualised behaviours, regardless of having experienced them or not, to count as sexual harassment. This aids an understanding of which behaviours are considered unacceptable by Service personnel, and to what extent. The term "sexualised behaviours" is, therefore, used when describing the results, and not the term "sexual harassment".

2.3 The key characteristic of sexual harassment is that the behaviour is unwanted. For the purposes of this research therefore, sexualised behaviours which are reported as unwanted, unwelcome or which were considered offensive can be classified as sexual harassment.

2.4 Sexualised behaviours can be categorised as generalised or targeted. Generalised behaviours refer to those indicative of a potentially sexually harassing environment. This broader sexualised environment is increasingly recognised as potentially harassing even though the language and behaviours may not be targeted at an individual, because an individual may take offence. Many men and women would not call this sexual harassment, but if offence is taken it may be.

Generalised sexualised behaviours
Telling sexual jokes or stories
Using sexually explicit language e.g. sexual swear words and suggestive language
Displaying, using or distributing sexually explicit materials e.g. pornographic photos, calendars, or other objects of a sexual nature
Making gestures or using body language of a sexual nature

Table 1: Generalised sexual behaviours

2.5 Targeted sexualised behaviours are those unwelcome sexualised behaviours from one or more people directed at one individual. Table 2 shows the targeted sexualised behaviours included within the survey. This list of behaviours was expanded for this survey to reflect changes in the contexts in which sexual harassment can occur, most notably the potential for social media and other electronic means of communication to provide a vehicle for targeted sexualised behaviours. New items are marked in Table 2 with an asterisk*.

Targeted sexualised behaviours
Making unwelcome comments about someone's appearance, body or sexual activities
Making unwelcome attempts to talk to someone about sexual matters
Sending someone inappropriate sexual messages/texts through social media*
Sending someone sexually explicit material
Posting sexually suggestive material about someone on social media without permission*
Making unwelcome gestures or using body language of a sexual nature that embarrasses or offends
Making unwelcome attempts to touch someone
Making unwelcome attempts to establish a romantic or sexual relationship despite discouragement

Saying or making someone feel that they would be treated better in return for having a sexual relationship with them
Saying or making someone feel that they would be treated worse if they did not have a sexual relationship with them
Treating someone badly for refusing to have sex with them*
Sexually assaulting someone

Table 2: targeted sexualised behaviours

METHODOLOGY

3. Design

3.1 Consistent with research carried out in 2015, this research adopted a survey-only approach to understanding the types and prevalence of sexualised behaviours in the RN.

3.2 A revised survey was designed, based on previous surveys conducted across the MoD in 2006, and subsequently within the RN in 2009 and 2015. The original 2006 survey was designed using the United States Department of Defense 1995 Sexual Harassment survey as a model. The US survey was adapted to suit UK culture and was designed to examine two types of sexualised behaviour: general behaviours, and whether survey respondents found these offensive, and specifically-targeted unwelcome behaviours.

3.3 The 2021 survey was largely consistent with the 2015 survey but updated to reflect current research on sexual harassment, most especially in respect of social media use. The 2021 survey addressed the following areas:

- a. working environment and inappropriate behaviours

This section measures generalised and targeted sexualised behaviours and the extent to which Service personnel experienced these at work during the previous 12 months. Survey respondents were asked the extent to which they had been offended by generalised sexualised behaviours and the gender of those carrying out both generalised and targeted sexualised behaviours. Separately, respondents were asked, whether they had experienced them or not, if they considered a range of sexualised behaviours to constitute sexual harassment.

- b. your experience in the last 12 months

This section was only completed by those respondents who stated that they had a particularly upsetting experience involving targeted sexualised behaviour in the previous 12 months. It investigates what types of behaviours were likely to be particularly upsetting, the characteristics of those responsible and the context of the behaviour. It also explores the impact on the individual and how they managed the situation. Questions about the formal complaint process were also included.

c. prevention and management

This section was completed by all respondents and addressed overall perceptions of the prevalence of sexual harassment across the organisation, and beliefs regarding the extent to which the RN both actively attempts to prevent and manage sexual harassment, and supports those experiencing sexual harassment. It assesses views of the relative effectiveness of a range of management and preventative interventions.

4. Participants

4.1 The survey was administered to a randomly selected, stratified sample of male RN Regular and FTRS personnel. The male sample was weighted by rank to ensure that all rank groups were represented in the sample in the same proportions with which they exist in the wider RN population, including the Royal Marines. Where survey data is analysed and reported by rank, it is most commonly (but not exclusively) carried out within the report using a simple differentiation between Officers and Ratings. Whilst Ratings are called Other Ranks within the Royal Marines, the term Ratings is used in this report and in the associated data tables to describe all non-commissioned RN personnel, including Royal Marines Other Ranks. In line with previous research methodology, the survey was sent to all female Regular and FTRS personnel. The rationale for sampling proportionally more Servicewomen than Servicemen is two-fold. First, evidence suggests that Servicewomen are more likely to experience sexual harassment than their male colleagues. Secondly, Servicewomen are significantly under-represented within the Royal Navy, constituting only around 10% of personnel. Therefore, surveying all Servicewomen, rather than a sample, increases the likelihood of Servicemen's and Servicewomen's views on, and experiences of, sexualised behaviours being equally well captured.

5. Ethics

5.1 Full approval for this survey was given by the Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee (MoDREC) on 12 July 2021 (protocol no. 2054/MODREC/21).

6. Survey Response

6.1 2,041 usable responses were obtained, giving an overall response rate of 21% from a sample of 9,824. The sample was designed to provide sufficient responses to yield estimates with a 95% Confidence Interval and a margin of error of plus or minus 5%. Table 3 below contains detailed information on the number of questionnaires issued and received along with corresponding response rates by rank and gender.

6.2 The RN operated fully throughout the period of time addressed by the survey. However, it is the case that some personnel were required, in accordance with RN and national Covid 19 guidelines, to work from home where possible and appropriate. Because of this, physical co-location with colleagues will have been

less frequent for some people than it would otherwise have been. It is therefore possible that estimates of the prevalence of both generalised and targeted sexualised behaviours are influenced by working contexts which, for some, mitigated the opportunities for those behaviours to have been witnessed or experienced.

Rank Group	Gender	Sample size	Surveys returned	2021 response rate
Senior Officers (OF3-OF10)	Male	858	387	45%
Senior Officers (OF3-OF10)	Female	354	222	63%
Junior Officers (OF1-OF2)	Male	575	123	21%
Junior Officers (OF1-OF2)	Female	311	156	50%
Senior Ratings (OR4 – OR9)	Male	1,523	376	25%
Senior Ratings (OR4 – OR9)	Female	576	232	40%
Junior Ratings (OR1 – OR3)	Male	4,152	220	5%
Junior Ratings (OR1 – OR3)	Female	1,475	325	22%
Total		9,824	2,041	21%

Table 3: Response rate by gender and rank group.

7. Data Analysis

7.1 Weighting of the data

Owing to the disproportionate sample design and differences in the prevalence of non-response between different groups, the distribution of characteristics amongst RNSHS21 respondents did not reflect the distribution of people within those groups across the RN population as a whole. Response rates tend to vary by rank and by gender; therefore responses are weighted by both rank and gender in order to correct for the bias caused by over- or under-representation.

The weights were calculated simply by:

$$\frac{\text{Population size within weighting class (p)}}{\text{Number of responses within weighting class (r)}}$$

Weighting in this way assumes missing data are missing at random (MAR) only within weighting classes. This means we assume that within a single weighting class the views of non-respondents do not differ (on average) to the views of respondents.

Note: The weightings in Table 4 have been rounded for presentational purposes.

Weighting class by Rank Group	Gender	Weighting applied
Senior Officers (OF3-OF10)	Male	8.2
Senior Officers (OF3-OF10)	Female	1.7
Junior Officers (OF1-OF2)	Male	17.3
Junior Officers (OF1-OF2)	Female	2.1
Senior Ratings (OR4 – OR9)	Male	20
Senior Ratings (OR4 – OR9)	Female	2.7
Junior Ratings (OR1 – OR3)	Male	62.2
Junior Ratings (OR1 – OR3)	Female	5

Table 4: weightings applied to groups by gender and rank

7.2 Analysis and statistical tests

Missing values, where respondents have not provided a response, have not been included in the analysis. In addition, some questions were filtered to exclude invalid responses (such as “don’t know”). As a result, the unweighted counts of respondent data (or “base”) will vary from question to question and these are shown in association with weighted percentages in the context of both graphs within this narrative report, and in the reference data tables published alongside this report.

Unless otherwise specified, “don’t know” or “not applicable” responses are ignored, and percentages are based only on the numbers of respondents who chose the remaining item response options.

Where applicable, Z tests at a 5% significance level were used to test whether observed estimates were significantly different between groups undertaking this survey and between estimates from this survey and those from the 2015 survey. A statistically significant difference means that there is enough evidence that the difference observed is unlikely to be due to chance variation (less than a 5% probability that the difference is the result of chance alone).

7.3 Format of the reference tables

These are published separately to the report on the www.gov.uk website. Each reference table refers to a question asked in the survey and includes estimates for the RN population as a whole, as well as itemising the count of actual survey

respondents. Where the unweighted count of responses to a question falls below 30, data is not reported.

Tables are arranged generally in the order in which questions were asked within the survey, and the order of sections within this report. In most cases there are multiple tables for each question, tables illustrating the breakdown of data by rank, gender and in some cases rank and gender combined.

FINDINGS

8. Generalised sexualised behaviours in the working environment

Previous research identifies that behaviours potentially amounting to sexual harassment can be divided into two groups. The first can be termed a potentially sexually harassing environment. This exists where behaviours which are sexualised could be construed as creating a degrading, hostile, humiliating or offensive environment, irrespective of whether an individual might or might not be a specific target of those behaviours. This broader sexualised environment is recognised as potentially harassing because an individual may take offence.

8.1 Service personnel were asked whether and how often over the preceding 12 months they had witnessed situations in which military personnel or civil servants around them had displayed sexualised behaviours. These behaviours may or may not have been directed at them personally.

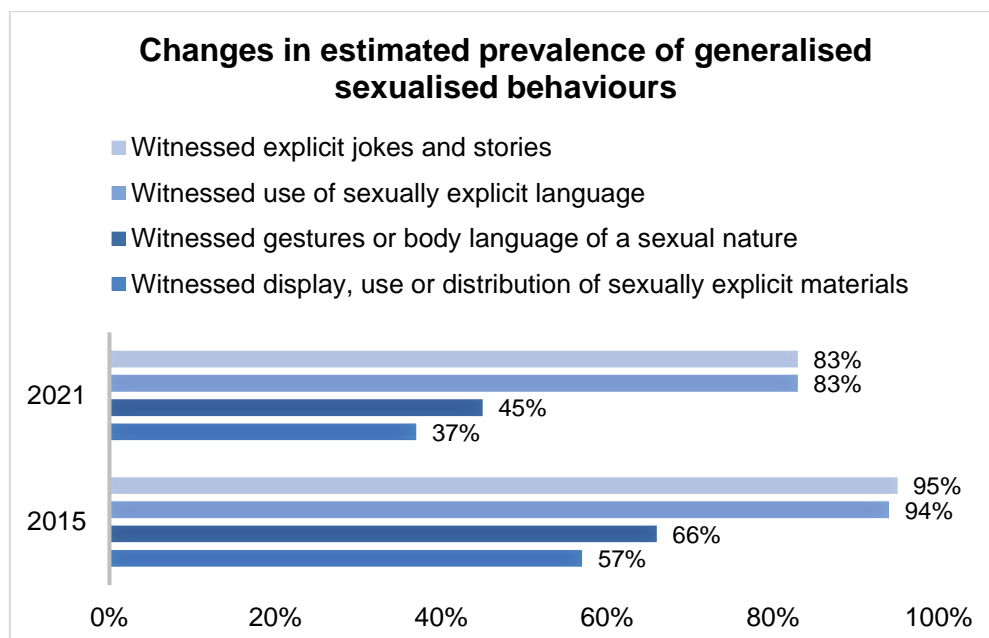


Figure 1 Base: 2,033-2,039. How often over the past 12 months have you witnessed behaviours where male or female UK military personnel and/or civil servants...? Response = "sometimes" or "a lot":

8.2 Overall, the prevalence of these generalised sexualised behaviours across the Royal Navy is estimated to be significantly lower than in 2015. Whilst the largest estimates of reduction over time lie in the witnessing of the display of explicit materials and in the prevalence of sexual gestures and body language, verbally-based sexualised behaviour - jokes, stories and explicit language - are estimated to have reduced by about half that and remain an extremely common experience: 83% of Service personnel are estimated to be exposed to verbal sexualised behaviours in the work environment "sometimes" or "a lot".

8.3 Whilst reporting similar levels of reduction, since 2015, to exposure to verbal sexualised behaviour as their male colleagues, Servicewomen are estimated to continue to experience a slightly greater exposure to explicit jokes and stories than Servicemen. 88% of Servicewomen are estimated to witness this behaviour either "sometimes" or "a lot".

8.4 The sizeable overall reductions since 2015 in environmental exposure to sexually explicit materials and sexual gestures and body language has been driven by the observations of male personnel. Servicewomen are estimated to have experienced no change since 2015 in their exposure to these behaviours and now experience both to a significantly greater extent than Servicemen.

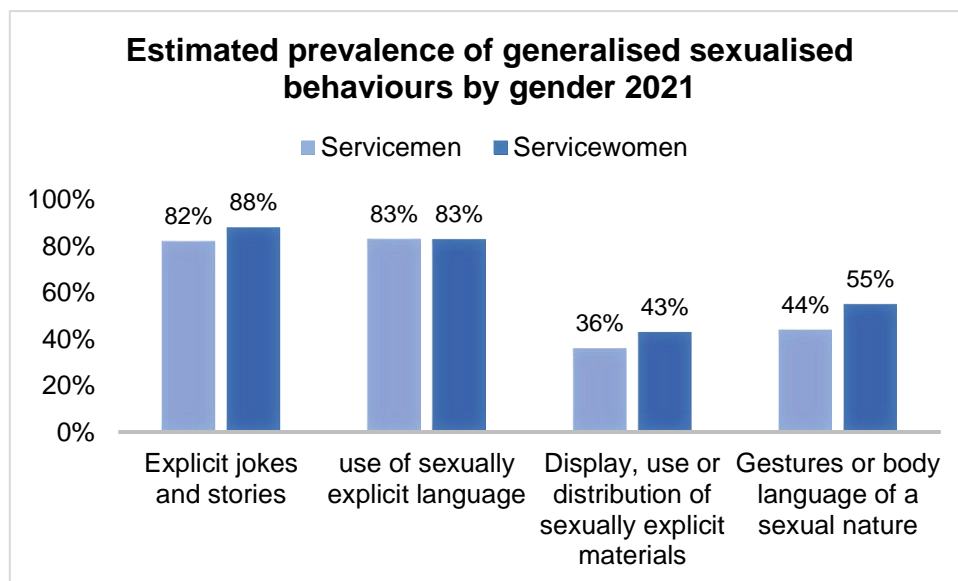


Figure 2 Base: 2,033-2,039. "How often over the past 12 months have you witnessed behaviours where male or female UK military personnel and/or civil servants...? Response = "sometimes" or "a lot":

8.5 Analysis of exposure to generalised sexualised behaviours by rank group reveals significant reductions in exposure across all behaviours for both Officers and Ratings, compared with 2015. However, reductions in exposure to verbal-based sexualised behaviours among Officers are twice that among Ratings. In contrast, Ratings' exposure to sexually explicit materials and to sexual gestures has reduced by a margin twice that of Officers. Nonetheless, Ratings' exposure in 2021 to those behaviours remains twice that of Officers.

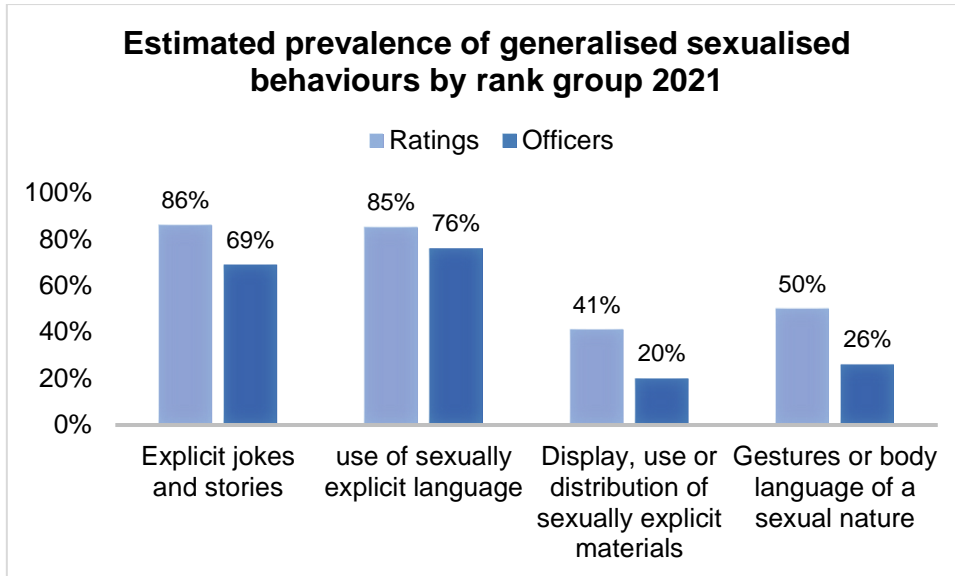


Figure 3 Base: 2,033-2,039. "How often over the past 12 months have you witnessed behaviours where male or female UK military personnel and/or civil servants...? Response = "sometimes" or "a lot":

8.6 To what extent are generalised sexualised behaviours offensive?

Personnel who had witnessed generalised sexualised behaviours were asked whether they found those behaviours offensive. Both Servicemen and Servicewomen report increases in levels of offence, since 2015, against each of the surveyed generalised sexualised behaviours. In responding to the question "were you offended by the behaviour?", personnel indicated "yes", "sometimes" or "no". Overall, offence is taken to these behaviours more commonly "sometimes" than in all cases ("yes") and the increase in level of response in this former category is greatest, too, compared with 2015. This underlines the often subjective nature of response to generalised sexualised behaviour; the context of the behaviour can have a strong bearing on how it is interpreted and defined by an individual experiencing it.

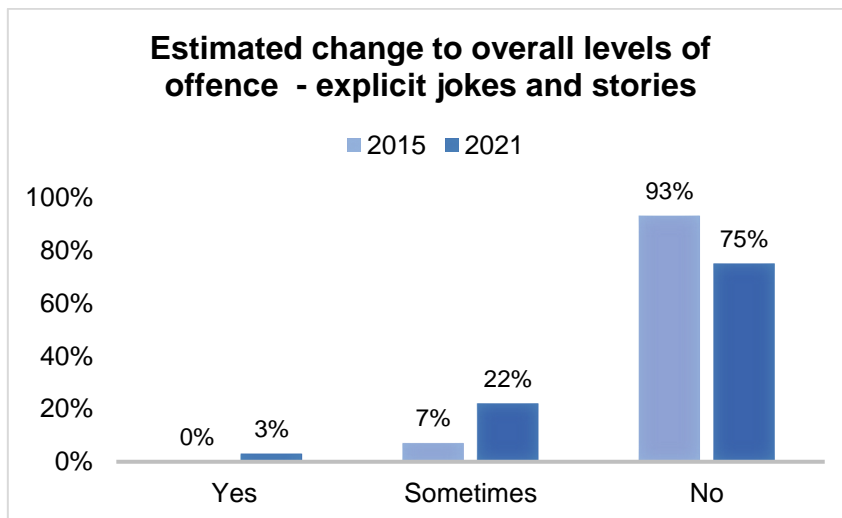


Figure 4 Base: 1,663 responses: And did you find these behaviours offensive?

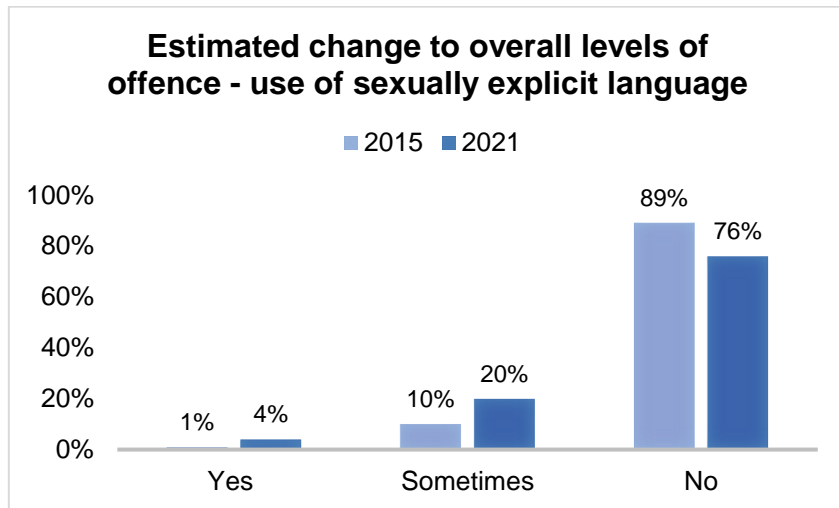


Figure 5 Base: 1,663 responses: And did you find these behaviours offensive?

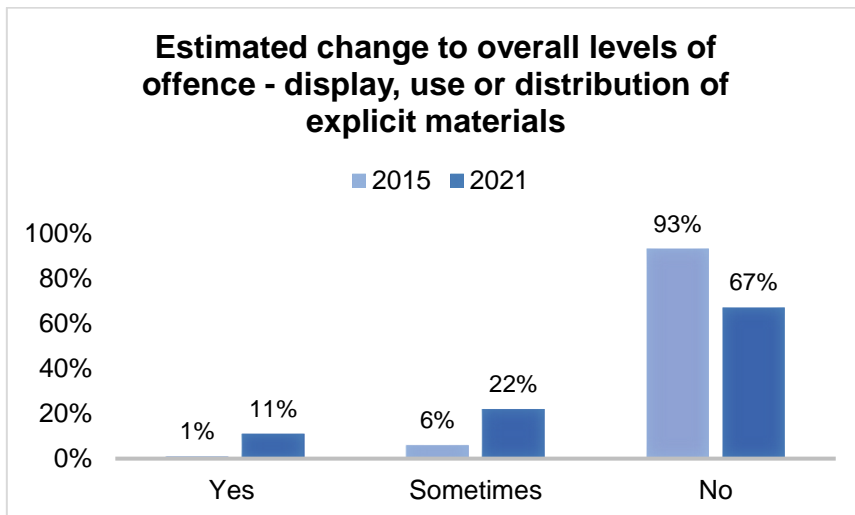


Figure 6 Base: 912 responses: And did you find these behaviours offensive?

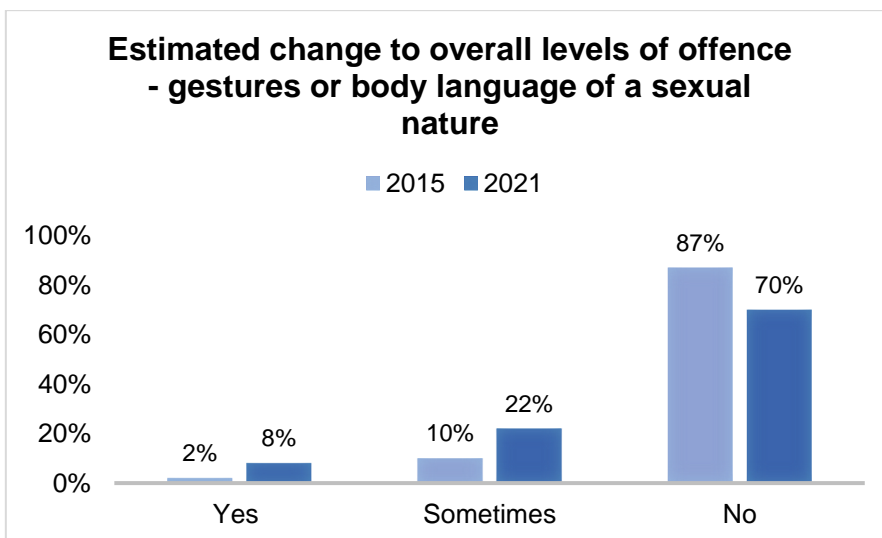


Figure 7 Base: 1,057 responses: And did you find these behaviours offensive?

8.7 Despite significant evidence of change in the degree to which generalised sexualised behaviours are tolerated, three quarters of personnel overall are estimated not to be offended at all by either sexual jokes and stories or by sexually explicit language. Further, two thirds of personnel are unoffended by any display, use or distribution of sexually explicit materials, nor 70% by gestures or body language of a sexual nature. However, these overall statistics mask sizeable and significant differences between how Servicemen and Servicewomen respond to these generalised behaviours. Whilst both genders report increased levels of offence taken against all behaviour types, Servicewomen are estimated to be twice as likely as Servicemen to be offended by verbally-based behaviours, and more than twice as likely to be offended by witnessing sexually explicit materials or sexual gestures. These latter behaviours show the greatest differences, for women, in levels of intolerance under any circumstances ("yes" response) compared to 2015.

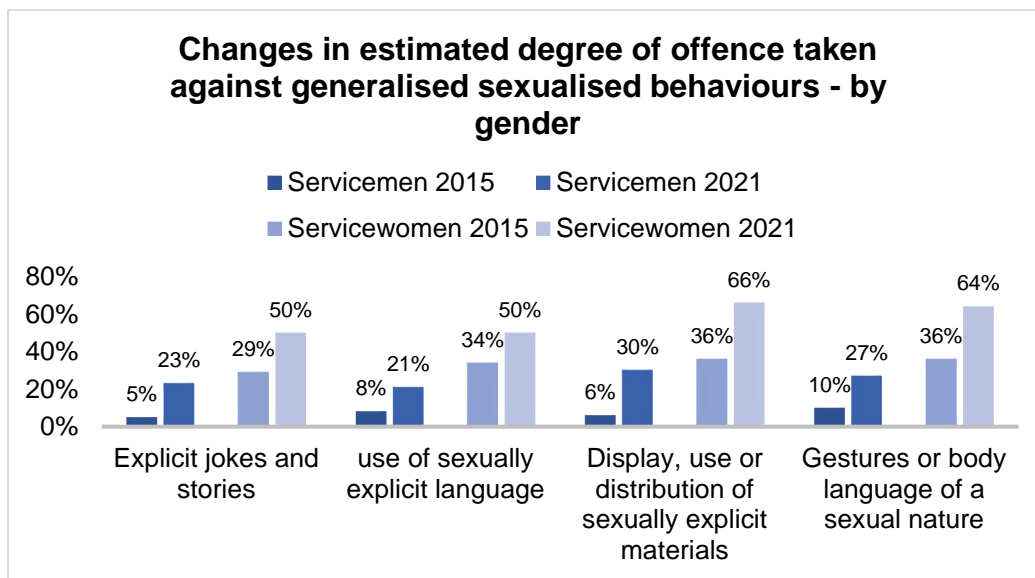


Figure 8 2021 Base: 912-1,663. And did you find these behaviours offensive? responses = "yes" or "sometimes"

8.8 Both Officers and Ratings report significantly reduced tolerance for generalised sexualised behaviours compared to 2015. This change is greater among Officers than Ratings and is focused within both groups on the greater extent to which personnel are offended "sometimes" rather than on all occasions the behaviour is witnessed. In addition to reporting greater change over time, Officers report significantly higher levels of offence to all behaviours than do Ratings. An estimated 70% of Ratings and 42% of Officers remain unoffended by the display, use or distribution of sexually explicit material, whilst 79% of Ratings and 65% of Officers do not take offence at sexually explicit language.

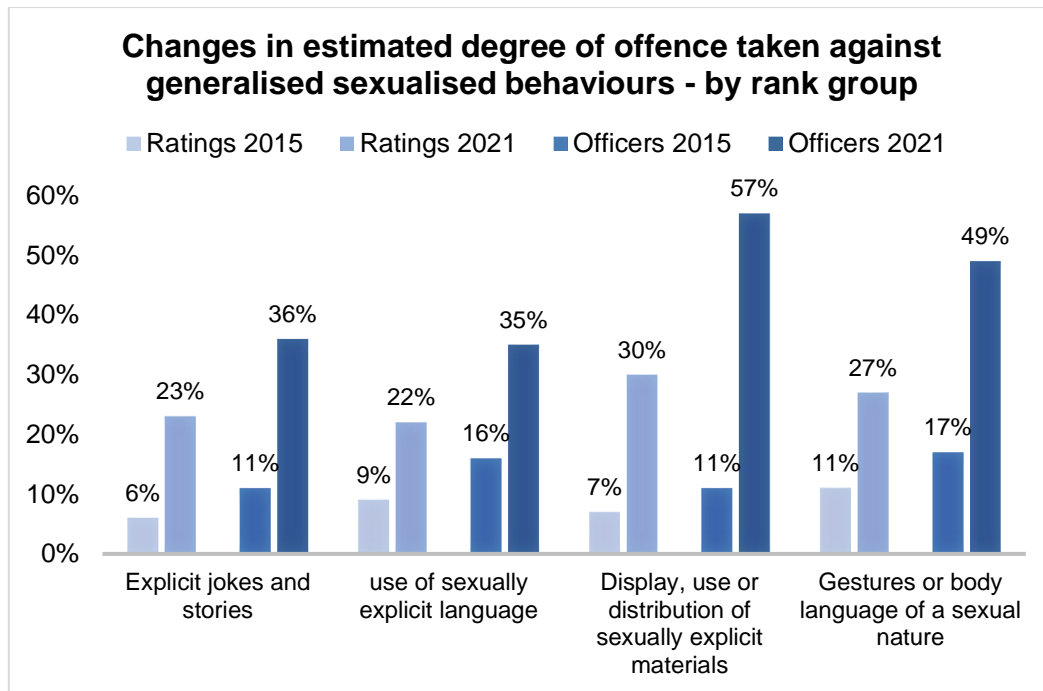


Figure 9 Base: 912-1,663 responses of "yes" or "sometimes": And did you find these behaviours offensive?

8.9 Those indicating witnessing and being offended by any generalised sexualised behaviours in the work environment were asked to indicate the gender of those responsible. The response rate to this question indicates that 57% of respondents either had not witnessed, or were not offended by, any of the behaviours. Servicewomen are significantly more likely than Servicemen to identify men as being solely responsible for the behaviours. Servicemen, on the other hand, are significantly more likely than Servicewomen to identify both men and women as carrying out the behaviours. Both Servicemen's and Servicewomen's perceptions of the extent to which responsibility is shared between men and women has almost doubled since 2015.

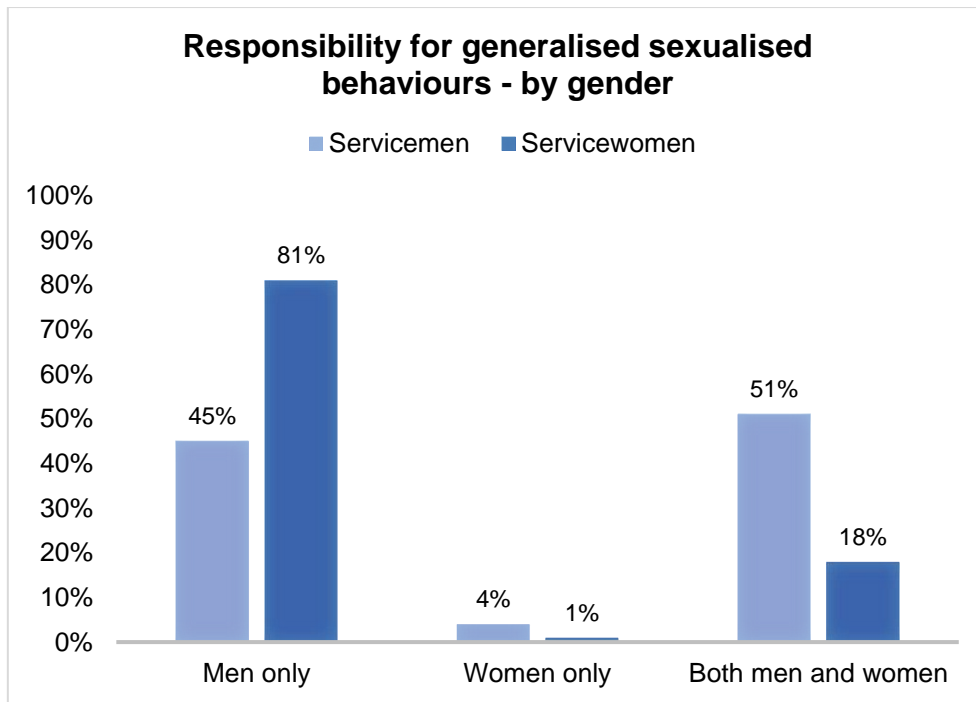


Figure 10 Base: 871 responses: If you indicated that you found any of the above offensive, were those responsible mainly...?

8.10 Ratings place responsibility for generalised sexualised behaviours broadly evenly between men, and men and women combined. This is a sizeable change to 2015 when only 22% considered both men and women equally responsible. Officers' views are unchanged since 2015 with two thirds estimated to blame men and the remaining third holding both men and women equally responsible.

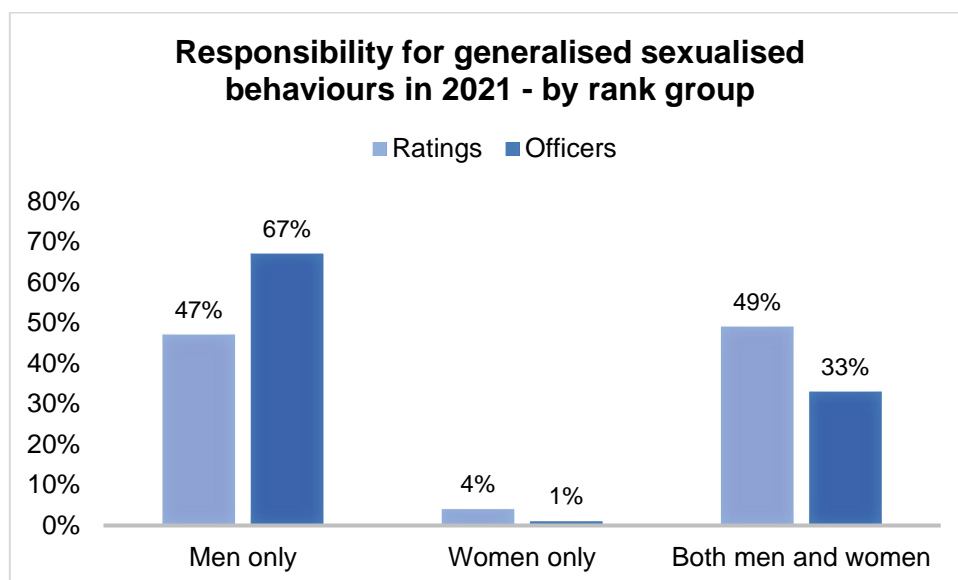


Figure 11 Base: 871 responses: If you indicated that you found any of the above offensive, were those responsible mainly...?

9. Targeted sexualised behaviours

This section of the survey questionnaire dealt with the second identified, and generally more recognisable, type of potentially harassing behaviour - unwelcome sexual or gender-based behaviours from one or more people directed at one individual. The behaviours included here are wide ranging from sexual comments to sexual coercion and sexual assault.

9.1 Service personnel were asked whether and how frequently ("never", "sometimes" or "a lot") over the preceding twelve months they had been in situations in which military personnel or civil servants around them had directed sexualised behaviours towards them personally. They were not asked whether they considered this treatment to have constituted harassment.

How often over the past 12 months have YOU been in situations where male or female UK military personnel and/or civil servants around you have:

Made unwelcome comments (e.g. about your appearance, body or sexual activities)?
Made unwelcome attempts to talk to you about sexual matters (e.g. sexually explicit language, jokes, asked you about your own sex life)?
Sent inappropriate sexual messages and/or texts about you through social media?
Sent you sexually explicit material (e.g. pornographic photos or other objects of a sexual nature)?
Posted sexually suggestive material about you on social media without your permission?
Made unwelcome gestures or used body language of a sexual nature that embarrassed or offended you?
Made unwelcome attempts to touch you?
Made unwelcome attempts to establish a romantic or sexual relationship despite your discouragement?
Said or made you feel you would be treated better in return for having a sexual relationship with them?
Said or made you feel you would be treated worse if you did not have a sexual relationship with them?
Treated you badly for refusing to have sex with them?
Made a sexual assault on you?

Table 5 Targeted sexualised behaviours

9.2 Overall, an estimated 27% of RN personnel experienced one or more targeted sexualised behaviour during the 12 month period prior to the survey. This represents a reduction of nearly a third against this measure of estimated overall prevalence compared to the 2015 survey.

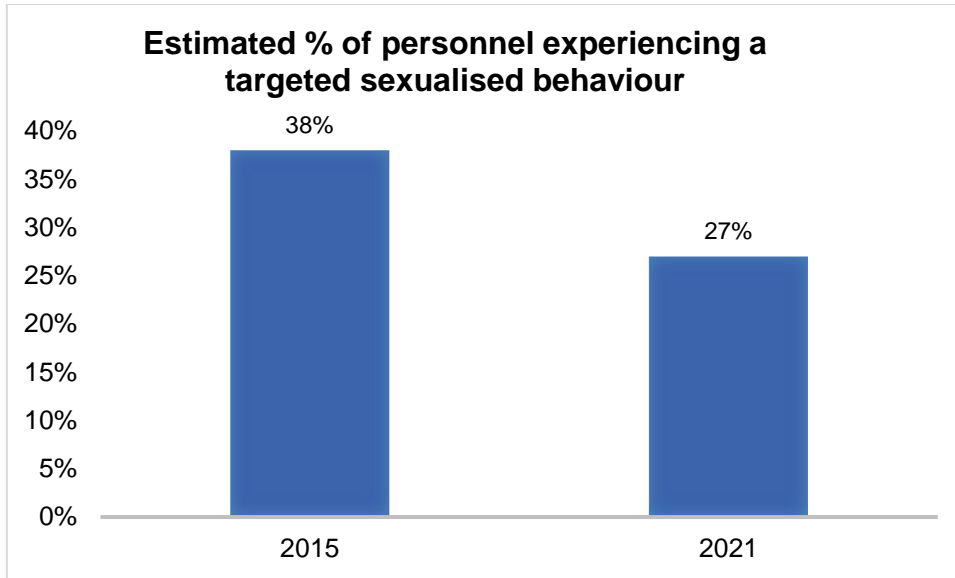


Figure 12 2021 Base: 2,029-2,040

9.3 The targeted behaviours estimated to have been experienced by the largest percentages of people are unwelcome comments, unwelcome attempts to talk about sexual matters, and being sent sexually explicit material. The prevalence of this latter behaviour has increased significantly in the experience of both male and female personnel since 2015 and represents one of only two significant changes, since that year, in the relative prevalence of individual targeted behaviours.

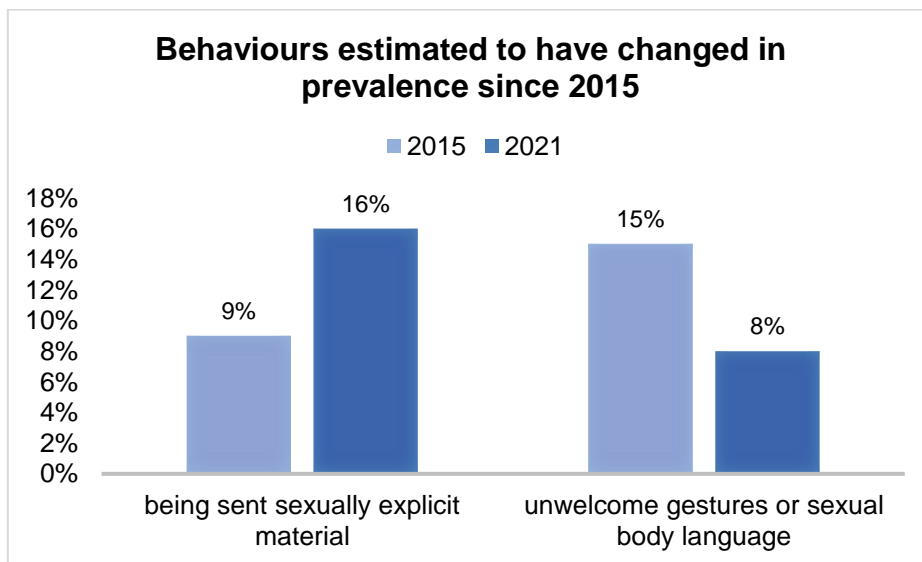


Figure 13 Base: 2,029-2,040 respondents in 2021.

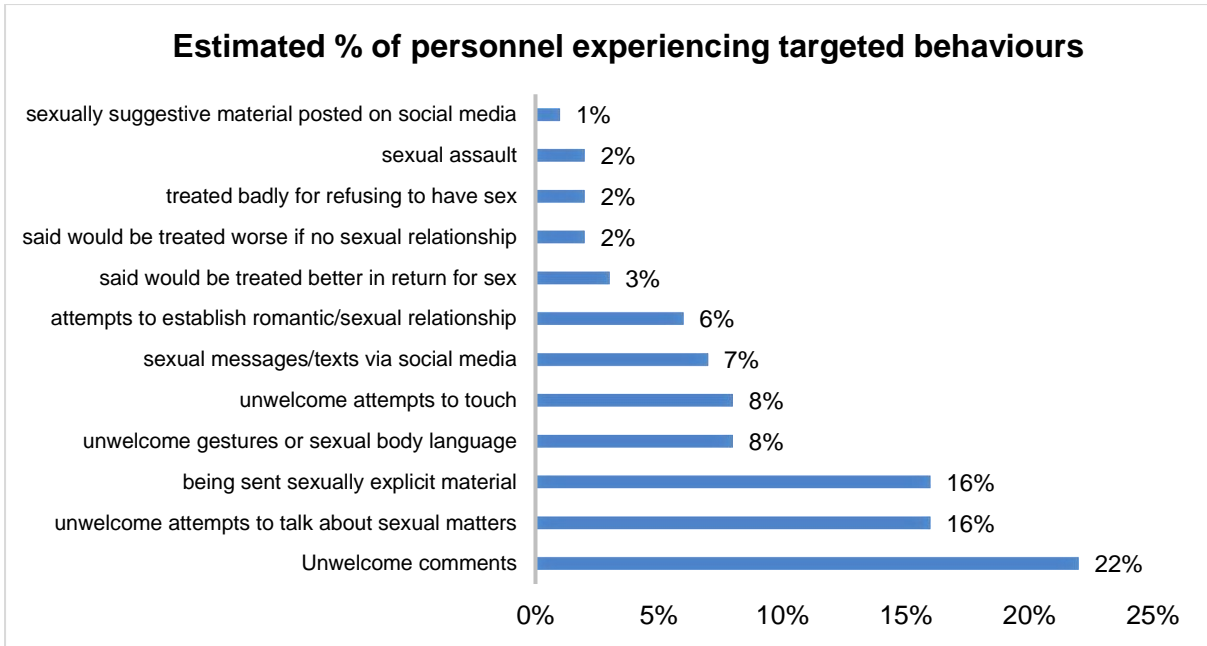


Figure 14 Base: 2,029-2,040

Gender Differences

9.4 The overall reduction, since 2015, in the estimated percentage of Royal Navy personnel experiencing one or more targeted sexualised behaviours has been driven by changes in the experiences of Servicemen. Whilst a third fewer Servicemen are estimated to have experienced targeted behaviour than in 2015, there is no significant change in this measure for Servicewomen. Half of all Servicewomen and a quarter of Servicemen are estimated to have experienced targeted sexualised behaviours during the twelve months prior to the survey.

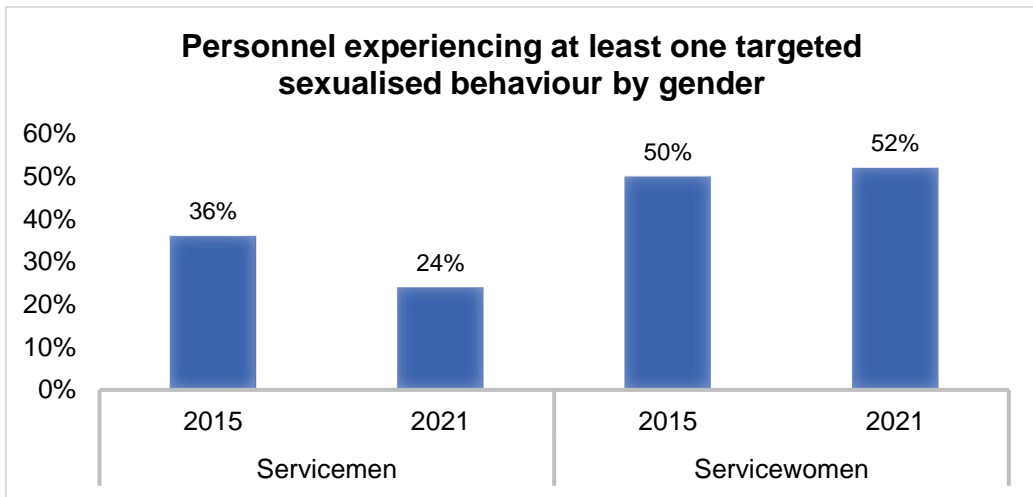


Figure 15 Base: 2,029-2,040

9.5 Significantly greater numbers of Servicewomen than Servicemen are estimated to experience targeted sexualised behaviour across each category of behaviour. The only exception to this is being sent sexually explicit material.

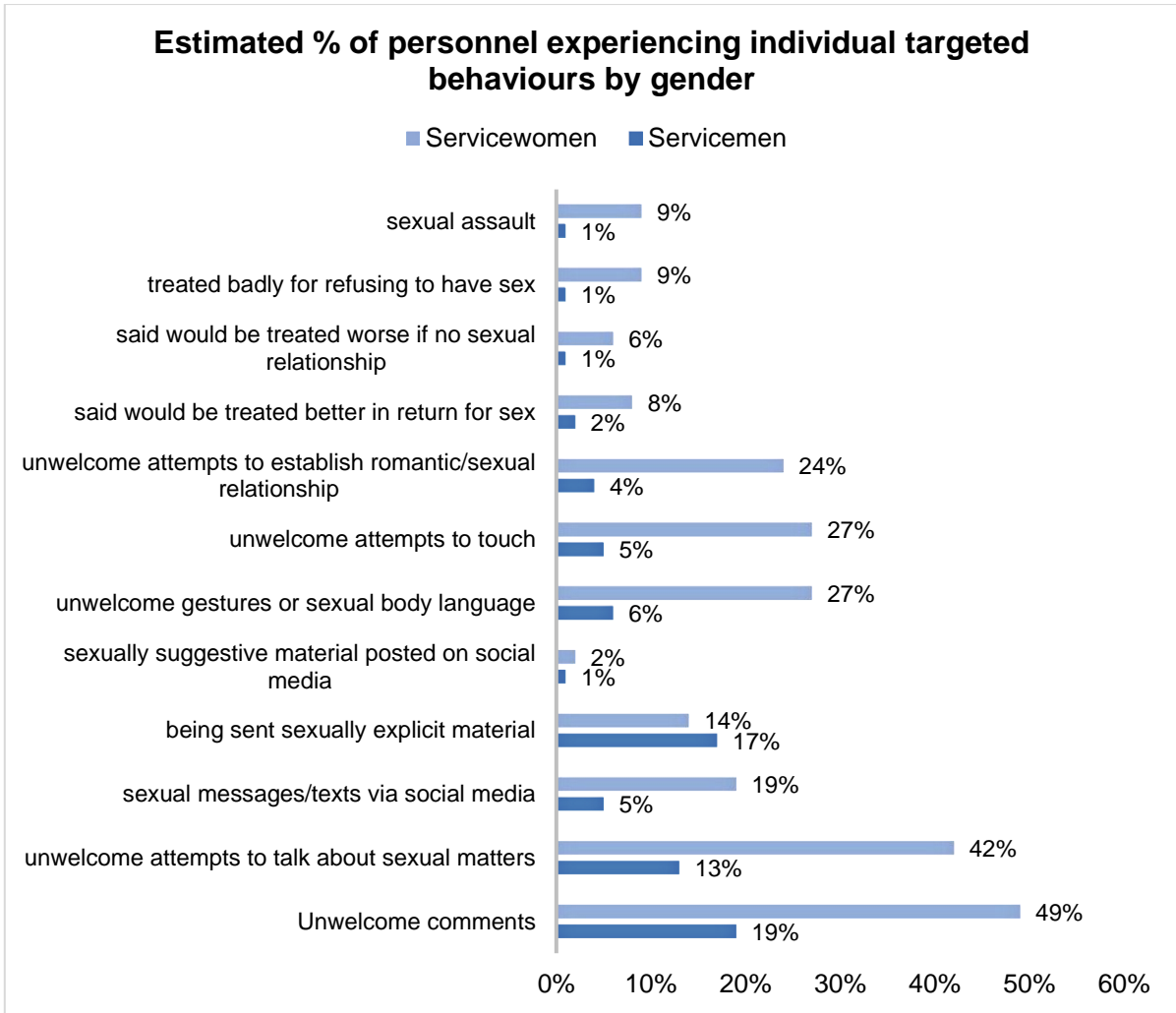


Figure 16 Base: 2,029-2,040

9.6 For Servicemen, the prevalence of unwelcome attempts to touch, attempts to talk about sexual matters, and unwelcome gestures or sexual body language are estimated to have significantly reduced by appreciable amounts since 2015. The prevalence of being sent sexually explicit material has, however, increased significantly over that period. No other targeted behaviours which were measured in 2015 indicate any notable change in prevalence for Servicemen in 2021.

9.7 Other than in the case of behaviours measured for the first time in 2021, estimated percentages of Servicewomen subject to targeted sexualised behaviours have increased significantly for every behavioural category other than sexual assault (increased but not statistically significantly), compared to 2015.

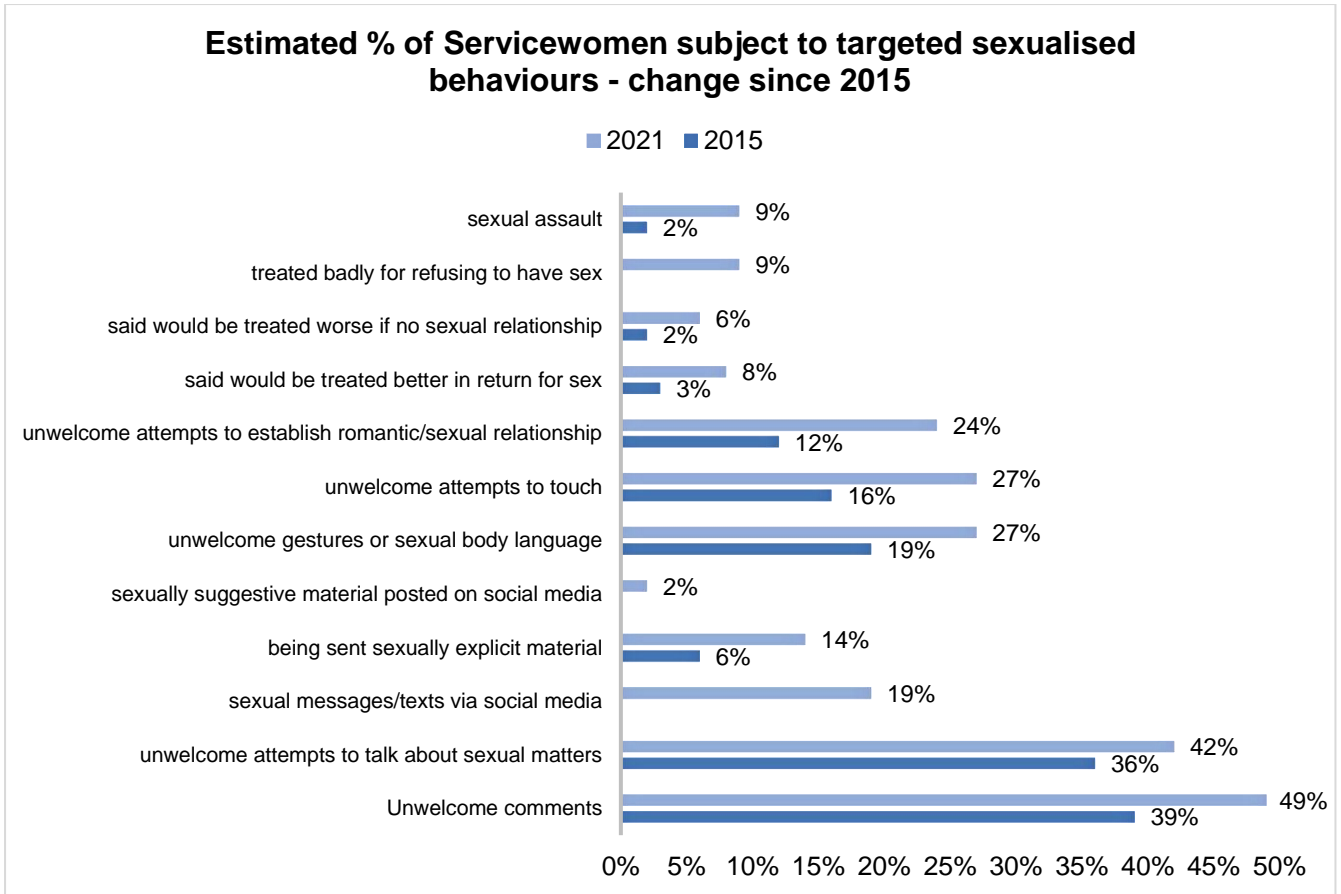


Figure 17 Base: 927-934

9.8 The behaviours most commonly experienced by Servicewomen are unwelcome comments and attempts to talk about sexual matters. The relative dominance of these behaviours is unchanged since 2015 and it is estimated that around half of all Servicewomen experienced targeted sexually-based comments in the twelve months prior to the survey.

Rank differences

9.9 Smaller percentages within most rank groups (Junior Ratings, Senior Ratings, Senior Officers) are estimated to have experienced targeted sexualised behaviours compared to 2015. The exception is Junior Officers for whom the estimated percentage exposed remains statistically unchanged.

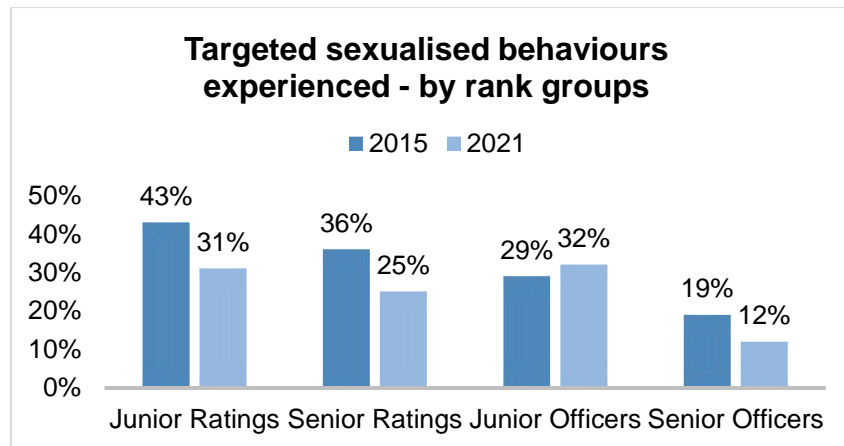


Figure 18 Base: 2,041 responses

9.10 Rank has been found in other studies to have some protective effect against the likelihood of being targeted with sexualised behaviours. However, it appears that seniority, rather than rank, is a more accurate measure, alongside gender, for identifying differences in the prevalence and types of behaviours experienced among different groups of Royal Navy personnel.

9.11 Analysis of rank groups differentiated by gender indicates that most groups have experienced a reduction in exposure to targeted sexualised behaviours since 2015. The exceptions are male Junior Officers, whose estimated exposure as a group remains statistically unchanged, and female Junior Ratings and female Junior Officers. Both of these female groups report a significant increase in experience. It is estimated that 60% of female Junior Officers and 64% of female Junior Ratings experienced targeted sexualised behaviours over the 12 month period covered by the survey.



Figure 19 Base: 2,041 responses

9.12 As is the case with generalised behaviours, servicemen experiencing targeted sexual behaviours receive these more commonly from women, and from men and women together, than do Servicewomen. By contrast, over 90% of Servicewomen in

receipt of targeted sexualised behaviours are estimated to receive them exclusively from men.

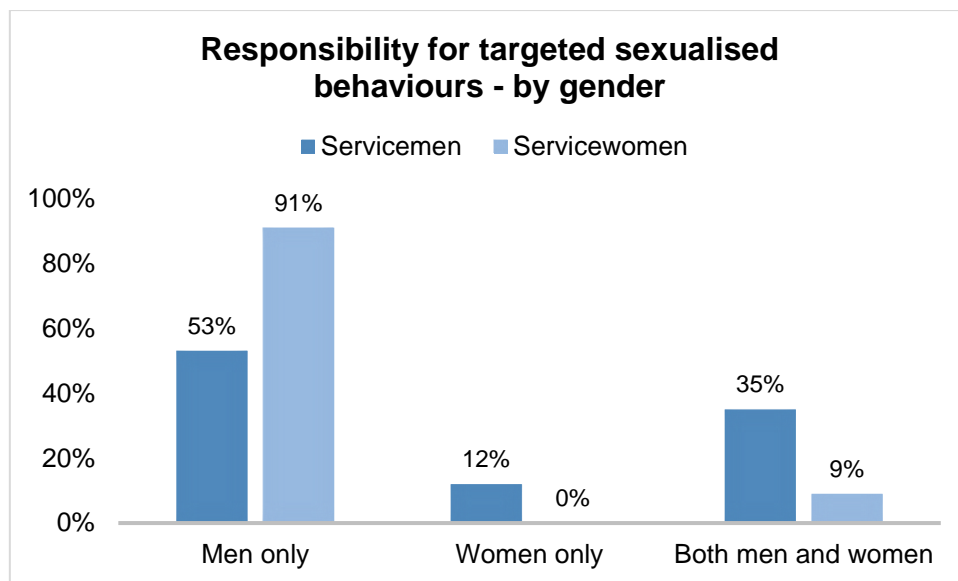


Figure 20 Base: 663.

9.13 Compared with Officers, Ratings are less commonly targeted by men alone, experiencing a greater amount of this behaviour from both men and women.

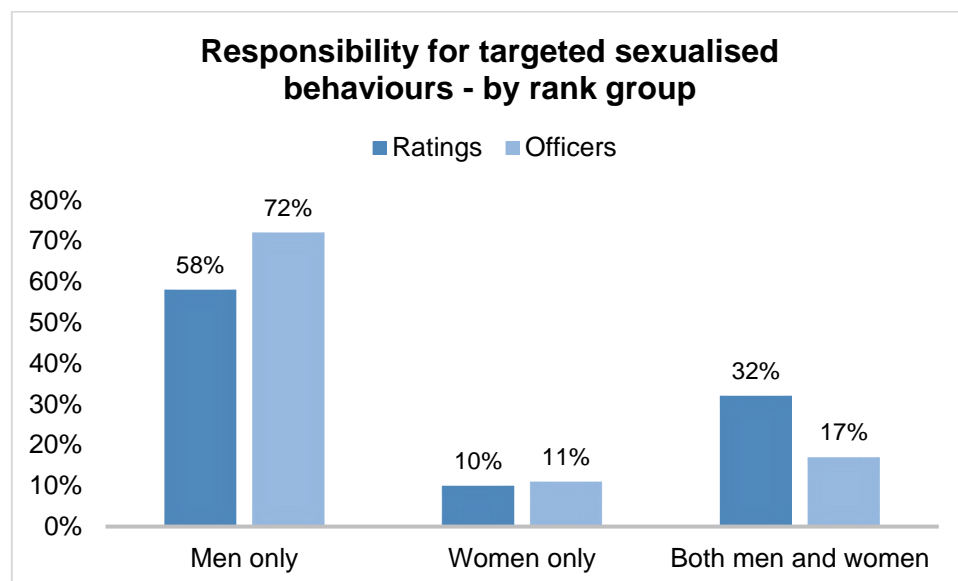


Figure 21 Base: 663

10. Perceptions of what constitutes sexual harassment

This section of the survey asked Service personnel, whether or not they had personally experienced any of the behaviours, to assess whether they considered the behaviours itemised in the list of targeted sexual behaviours to constitute sexual harassment.

10.1 Overall, there is a significant increase in the estimated proportion of Royal Navy personnel who regard targeted sexualised behaviours as harassment,

compared with 2015. This increase averages 16% and is evidenced across all behaviours, increases ranging from 14% to 19%.

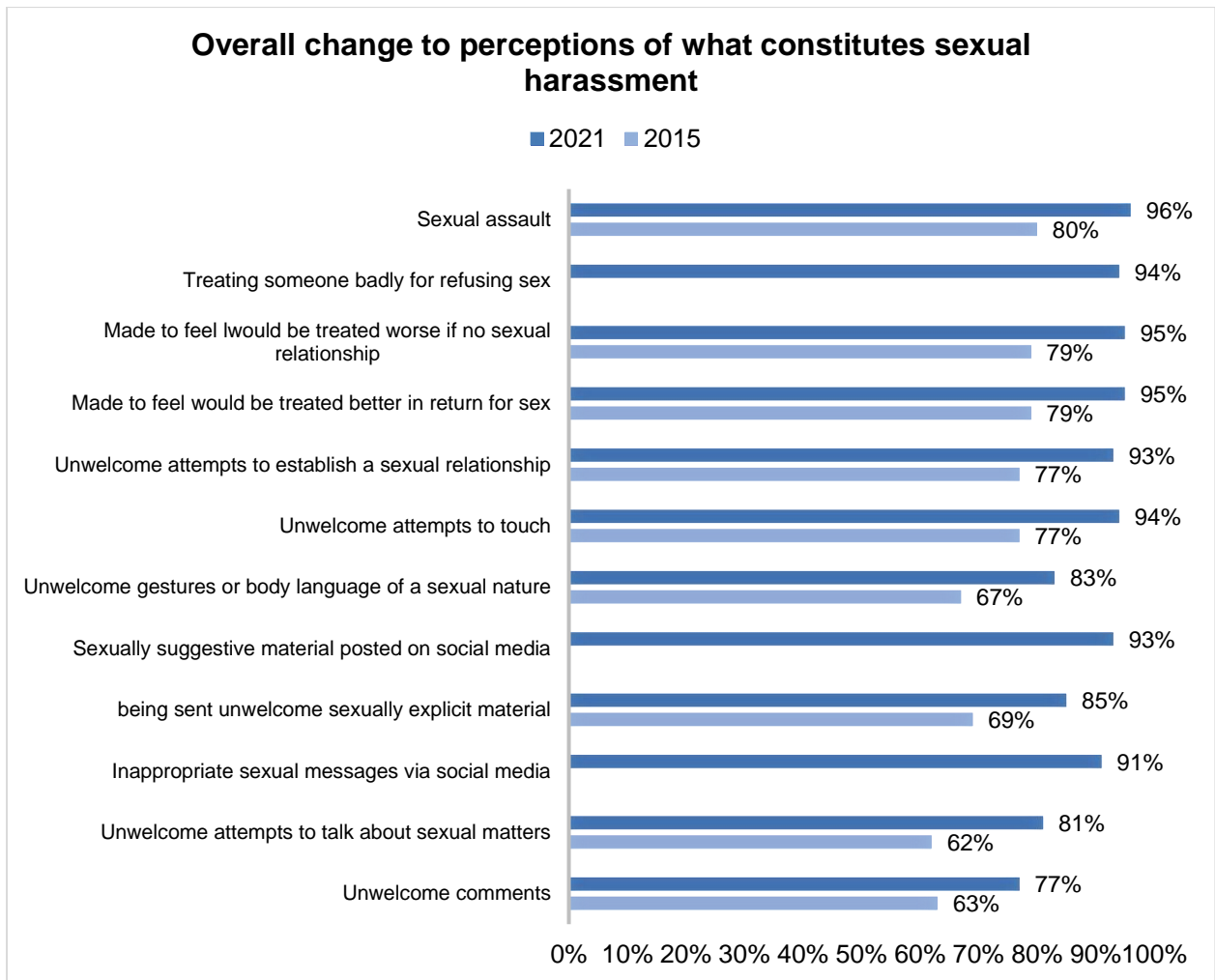


Figure 22 Base: 2,041. Regardless of whether you have experienced them or not, do you think any of these behaviours count as sexual harassment? Response: Yes

Gender Differences

10.2 Both Servicemen and Servicewomen are estimated now to consider all these behaviours as harassment in significantly higher percentages than in 2015.

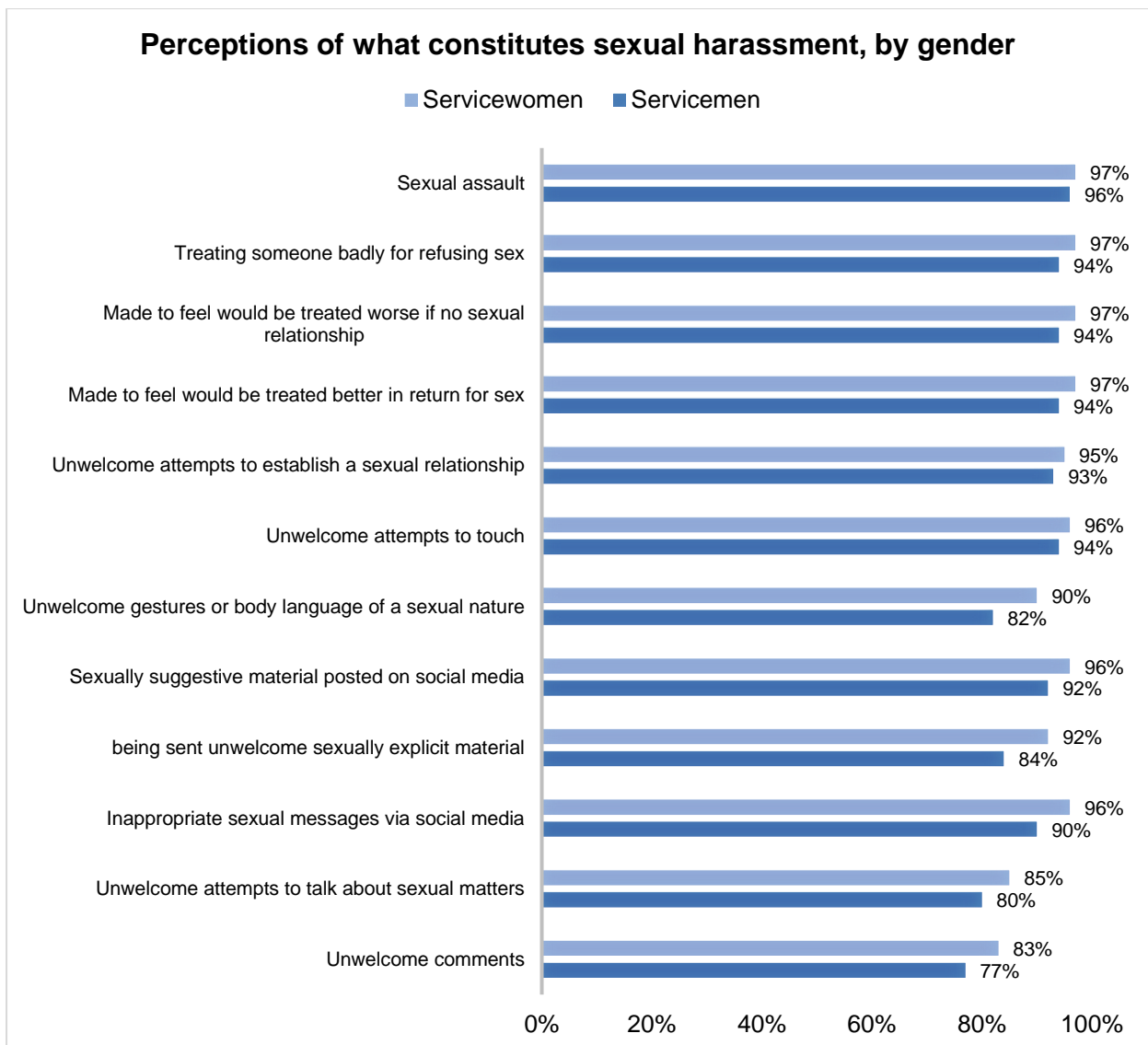


Figure 23 Base: 2,041. Regardless of whether you have experienced them or not, do you think any of these behaviours count as sexual harassment? Response: Yes

10.3 Whilst most targeted sexualised behaviours are deemed sexual harassment by more than 90% of all Service personnel irrespective of gender, some behaviours are less commonly considered to constitute harassment. These behaviours are those evidencing the greatest difference in assessment between Servicemen and Servicewomen, and are those both indicative of a generalised sexualised environment and most prevalent among targeted sexualised behaviours in the Royal Navy.

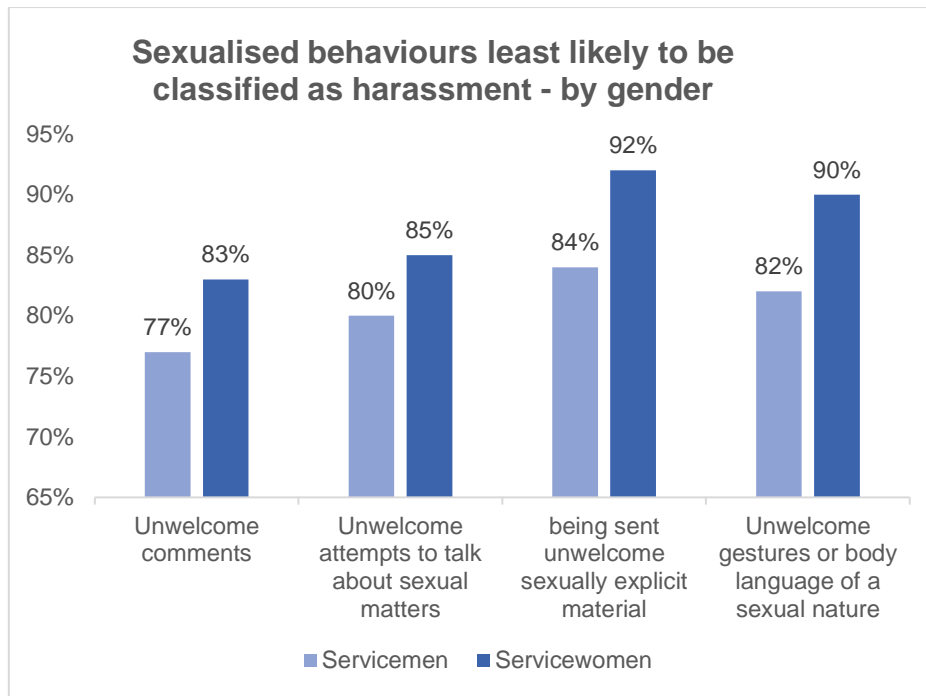


Figure 24 Base: 2,041. Regardless of whether you have experienced them or not, do you think any of these behaviours count as sexual harassment? Response: Yes

Rank differences

10.4 Of the different rank groups, only Junior Ratings' perceptions of what does and does not constitute sexual harassment are statistically differentiated. In the case of all targeted sexualised behaviours other than sexual assault, a significantly higher percentage of Junior Ratings than any other group assess them not to constitute sexual harassment.

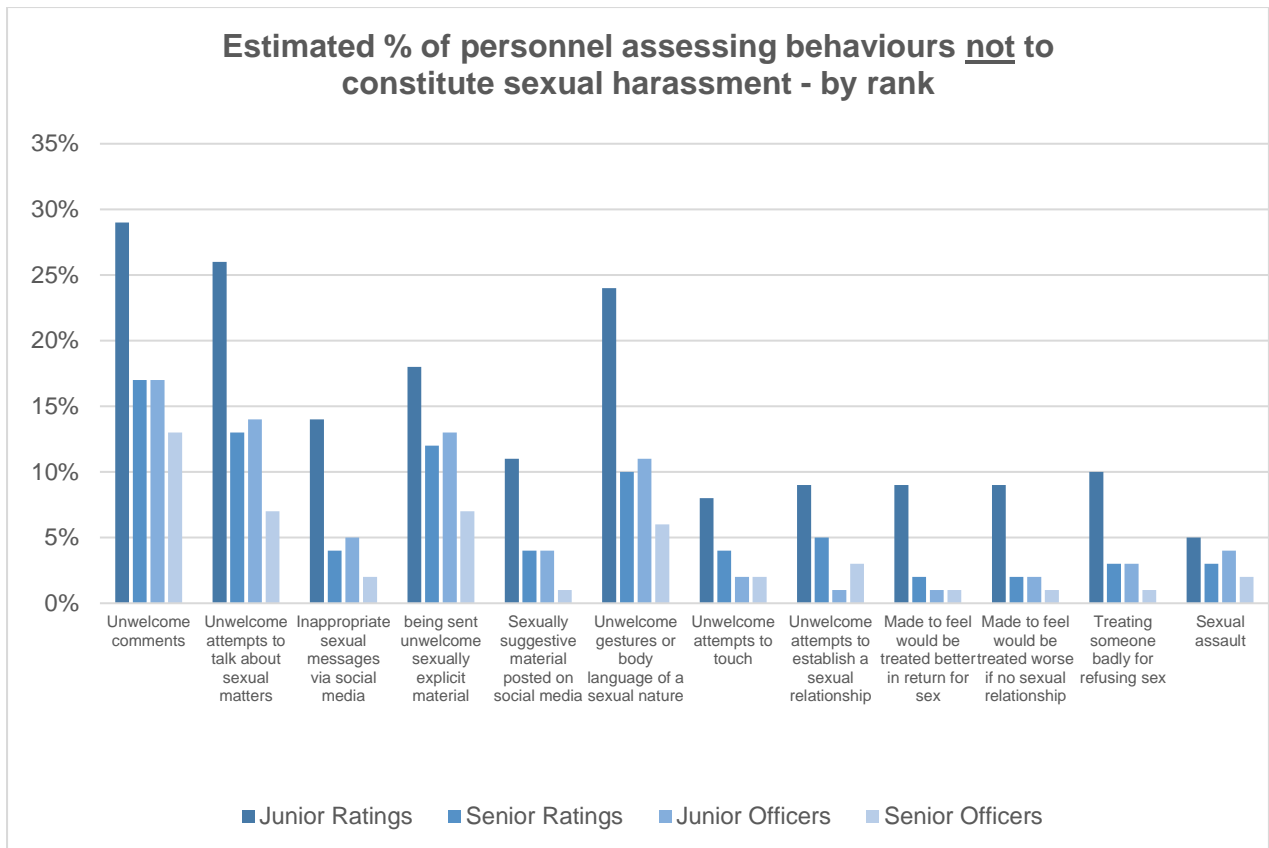


Figure 25 Base: 2,041. Regardless of whether you have experienced them or not, do you think any of these behaviours count as sexual harassment? Response: No

10.5 Within the Junior Rating cohort, differences between Servicemen and Servicewomen are significant for assessments of all behaviours other than unwelcome attempts to establish a sexual or romantic relationship.

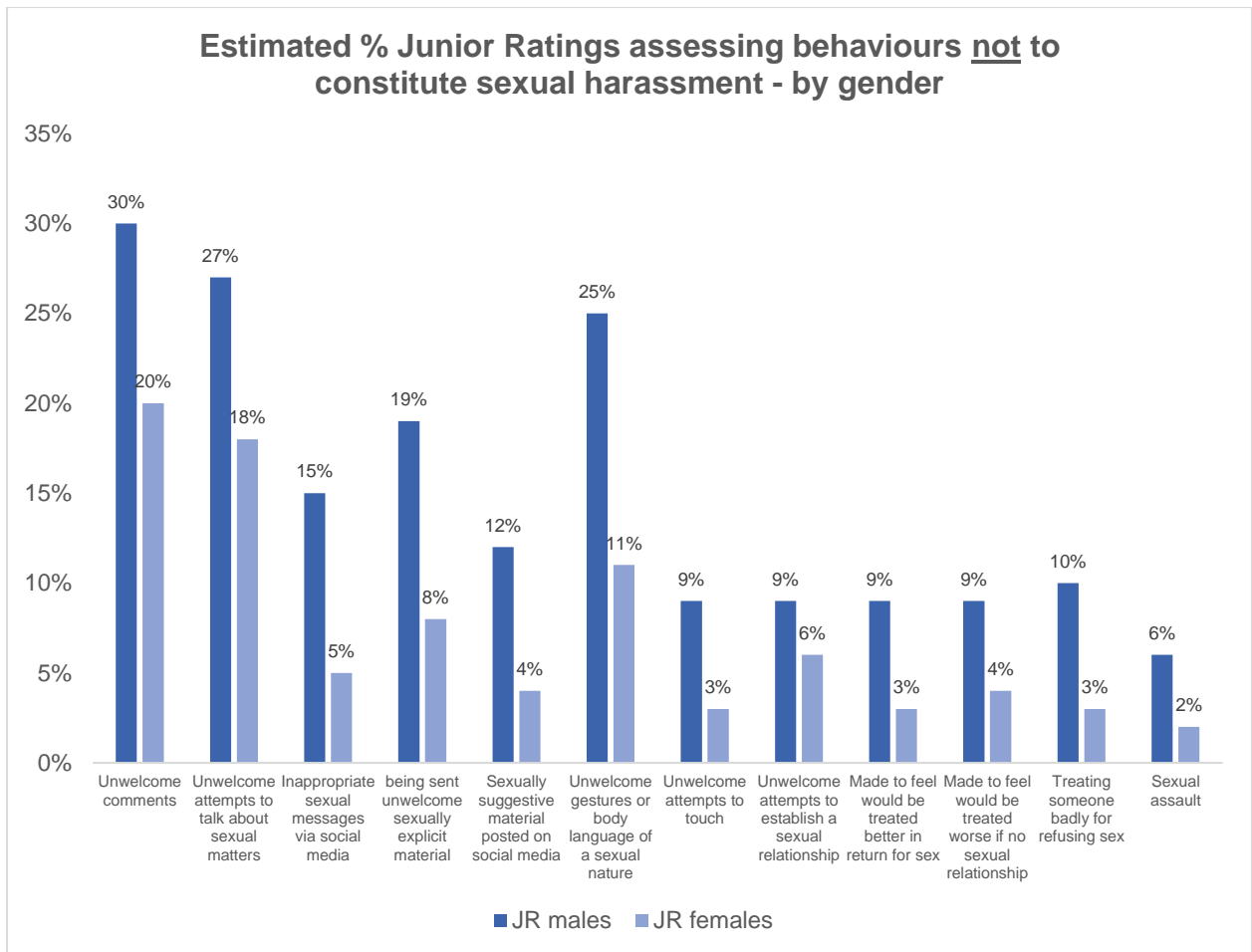


Figure 26 Base: 545. Regardless of whether you have experienced them or not, do you think any of these behaviours count as sexual harassment? Response: No

10.6 In contrast to male Junior Ratings, the estimated proportion of Junior Rating Servicewomen assessing sexualised behaviours not to constitute harassment does not differ significantly from any other rank group.

11. Dealing with sexual harassment – the context and consequences of particularly upsetting experiences

11.1 This section of the survey dealt with specific instances of harassment and the context of them. Personnel were asked to identify and detail the context and consequences of an individual incident which took place during the previous twelve months and which they had found particularly upsetting. Survey respondents who identified an experience which they found particularly upsetting were asked supplementary questions regarding their experience. Specifically, respondents were asked to share details such the characteristics of the person involved, as well as the duration and location of the incident. Respondents were also asked to share subjective details of their experience, such as how they felt following the incident, as well as how they responded, and whether they told anyone in an official or unofficial capacity.

11.2 25% of survey respondents reported and described experiencing a particularly upsetting experience. Because each reported instance is unique to the individual experiencing it in terms of its impact, its context and the ways in which it was dealt with, this section of the report does not describe estimates of prevalence for the RN as a whole. Instead, it provides an important qualitative picture of the impact and consequences of behaviour affecting only those who chose to respond to this section of the survey.

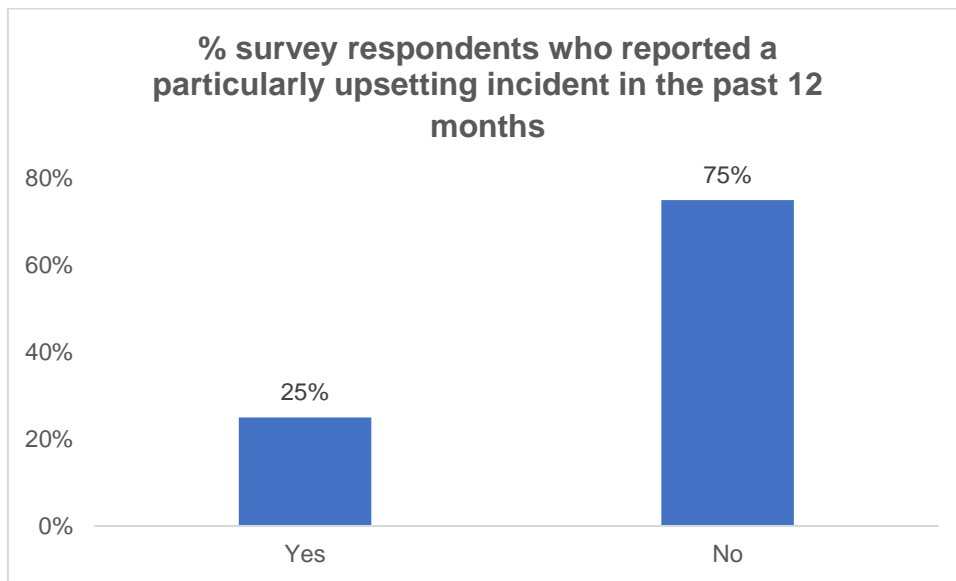


Figure 27 Base: 2,081

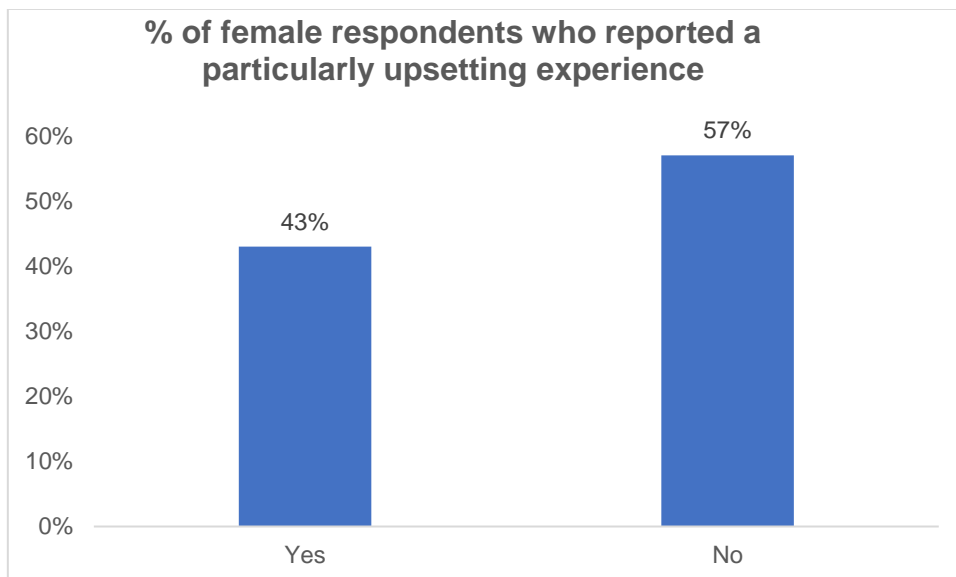


Figure 28 Base: 935

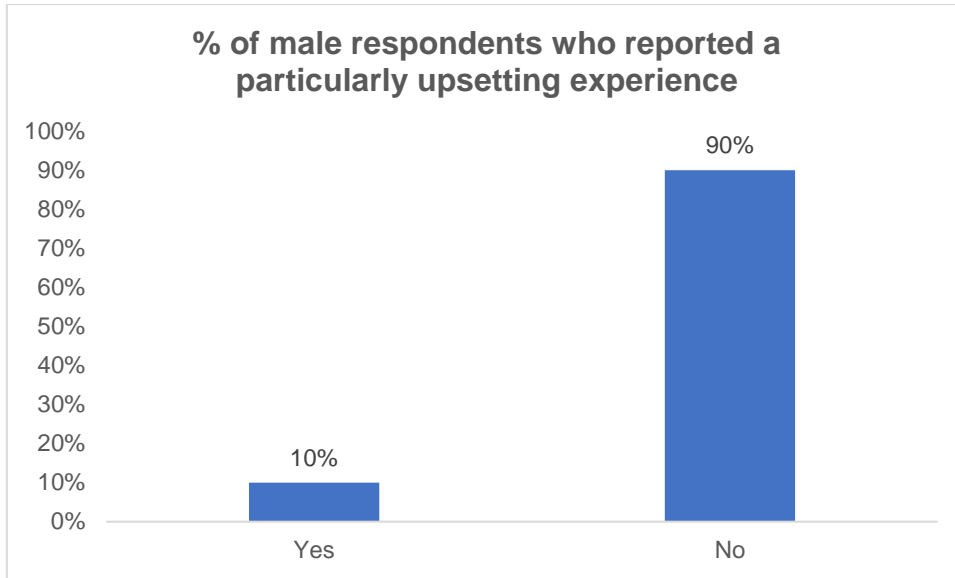


Figure 29 Base: 1,106

11.3 For most behaviours, there was no significant difference in the extent to which male or female personnel reported them as being particularly upsetting. The only exceptions are that more Servicemen than Servicewomen reported being sent sexually explicit material as upsetting, and more Servicewomen were particularly upset by unwelcome attempts to establish a sexual/romantic relationship, and by sexual assault, than Servicemen.

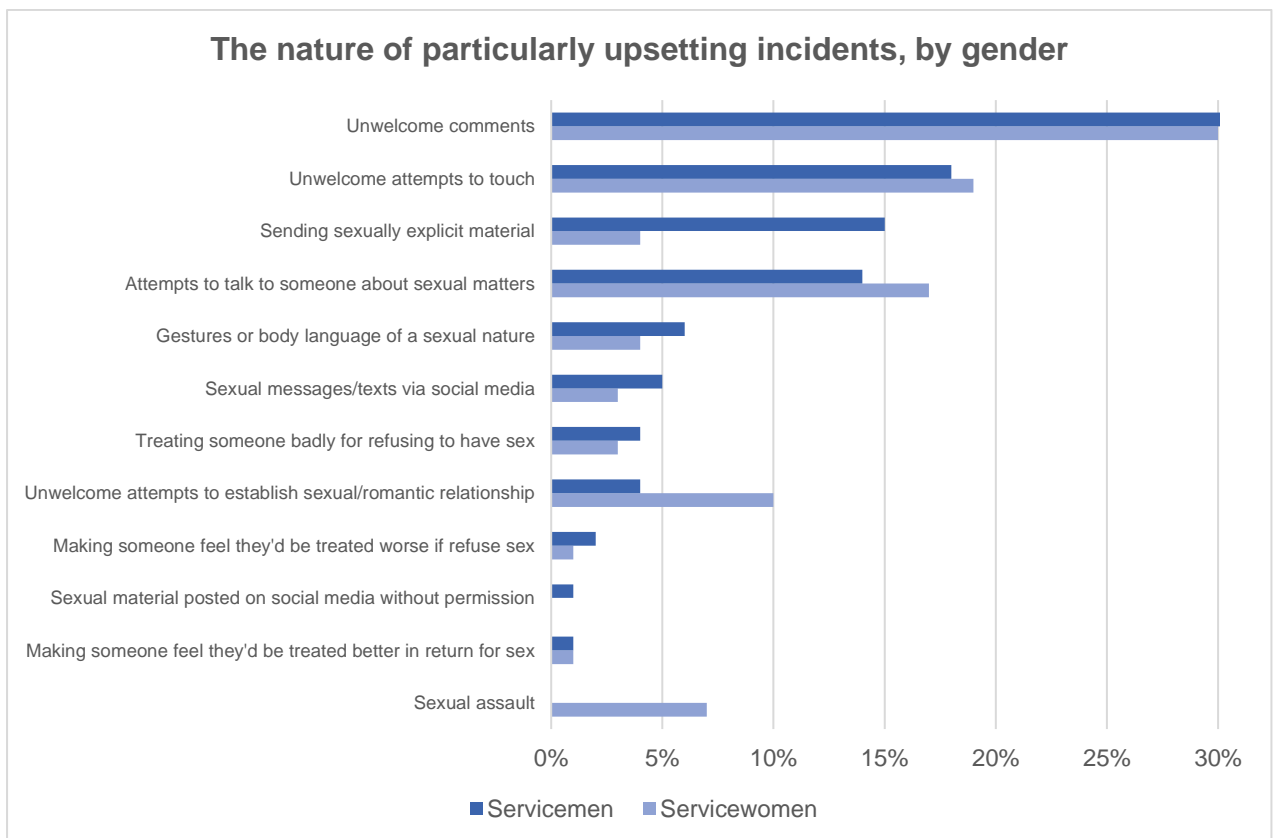


Figure 30 Base: 521

12. Perpetrators of upsetting experiences

Gender

12.1 Consistent with wider estimates of the gender breakdown of those conducting targeted sexualised behaviours, 93% of those respondents describing a particularly upsetting experience reported the perpetrator to have been male. Whilst the perpetrator was a male in a large majority of the experiences reported by both Servicemen and Servicewomen, a greater proportion of victimised Servicemen than Servicewomen reported that the perpetrator was a female.

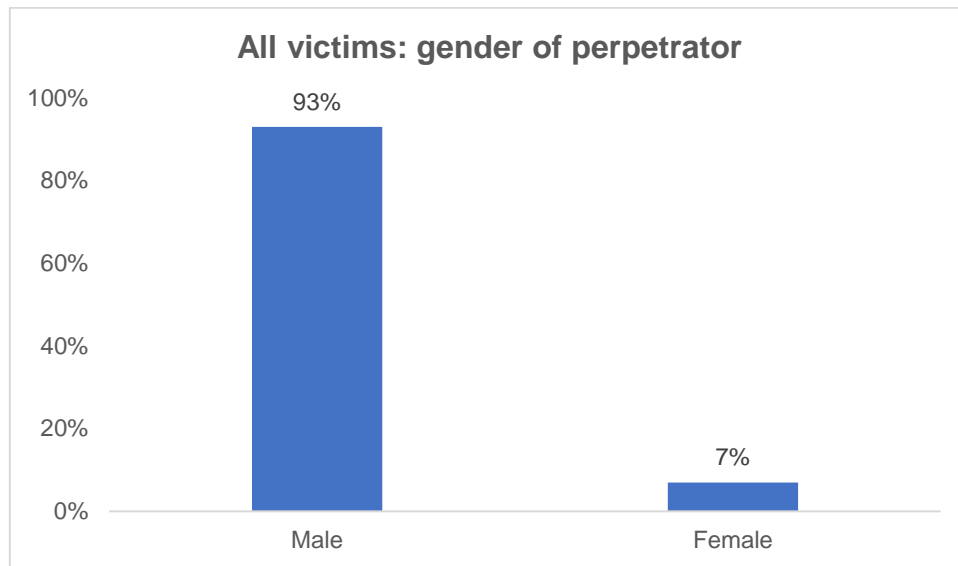


Figure 31 Base: 521.

Rank

12.2 Overall, the majority – 70% - of respondents reported that the perpetrator of the upsetting experience was a Rating (Junior or Senior).

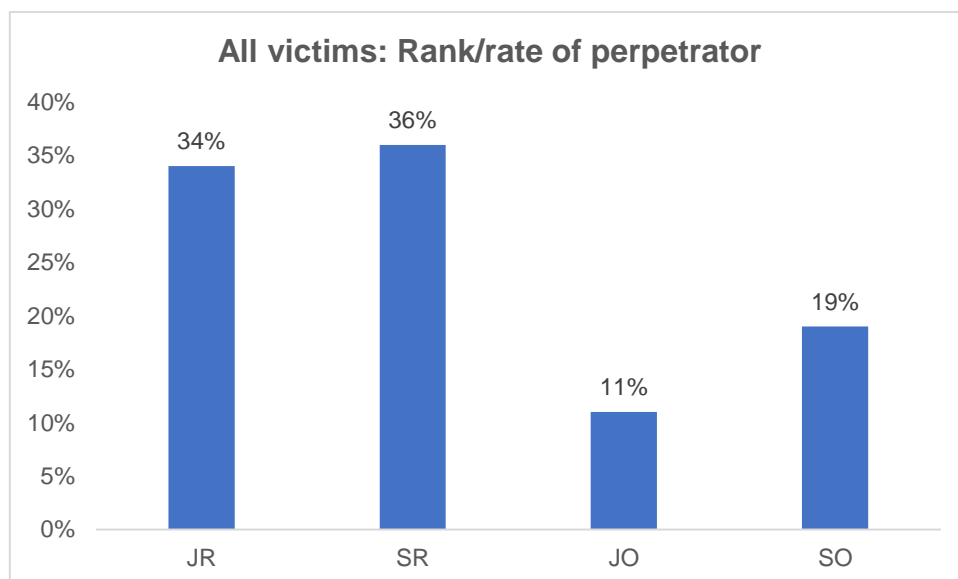


Figure 32 Base: 521

However, both Officers and Ratings typically described that their experience occurred within their own rank group. 93% of responding Ratings reported that the person responsible was a fellow Rating, whilst 74% of Officers reported that the perpetrator was another Officer.

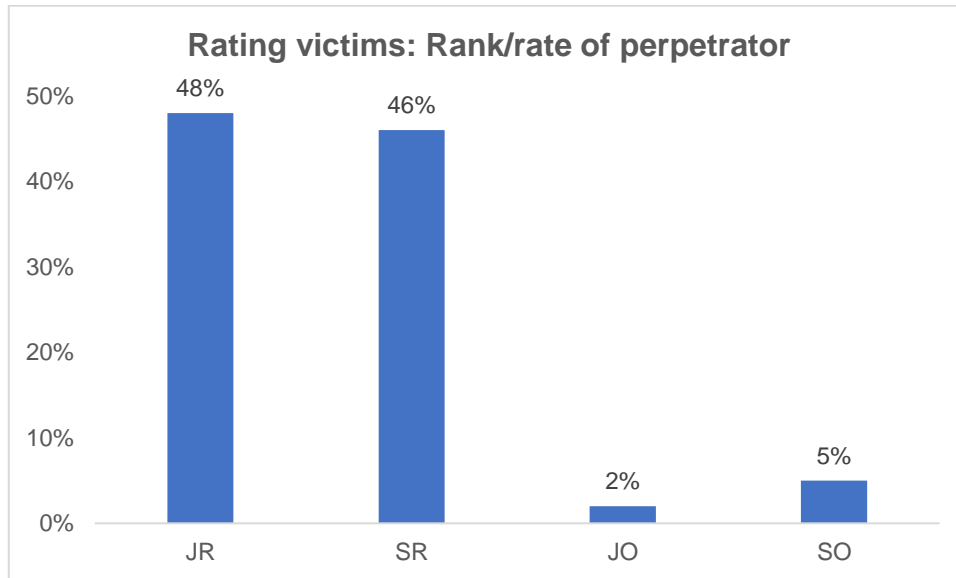


Figure 33 Base: 336

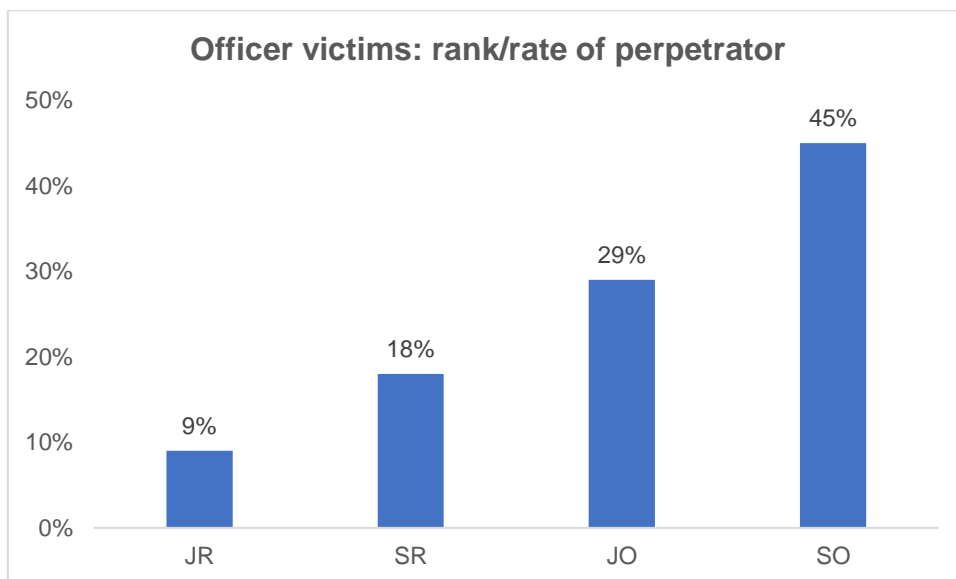


Figure 34 Base: 185

Role

12.3 In over half of cases the perpetrator was a work colleague or someone more junior. By contrast, in only 23% of cases was responsibility placed on either an individual's line manager or another person who was more senior to them.

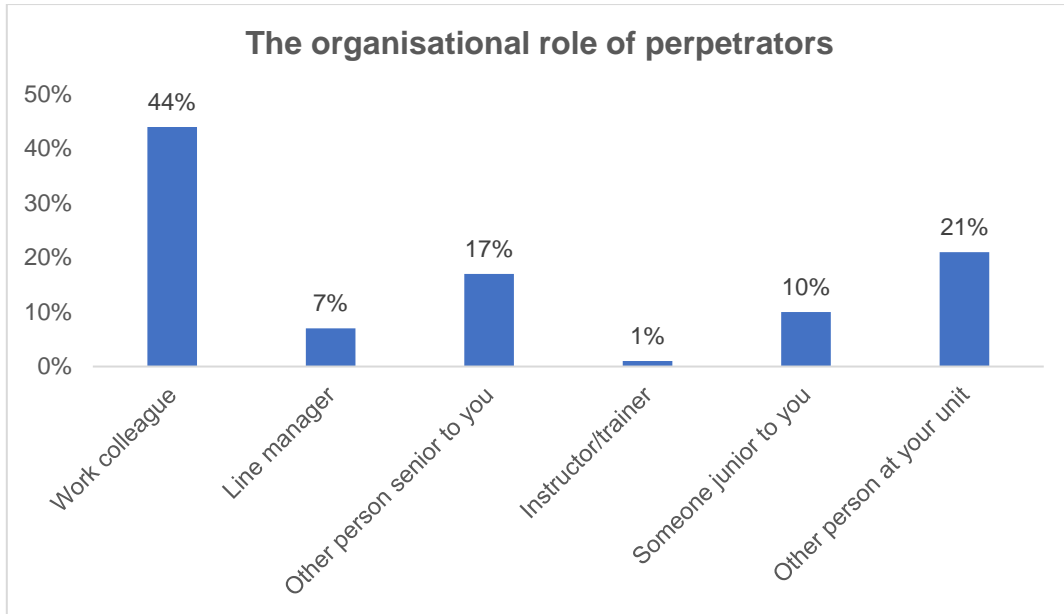


Figure 35 Base: 521 Which of the following best describes the individual?

12.4 Nearly two thirds of experiences took place at the respondent’s unit, either in the workplace or in a shared or communal area (e.g., mess, accommodation block, NAAFI). A greater proportion of Servicemen than Servicewomen reported that the incident took place over an electronic device (e.g., phone, tablet) compared with Servicewomen, which is consistent with the greater prevalence among male respondents of upsetting incidents based on the receipt of sexually explicit material.

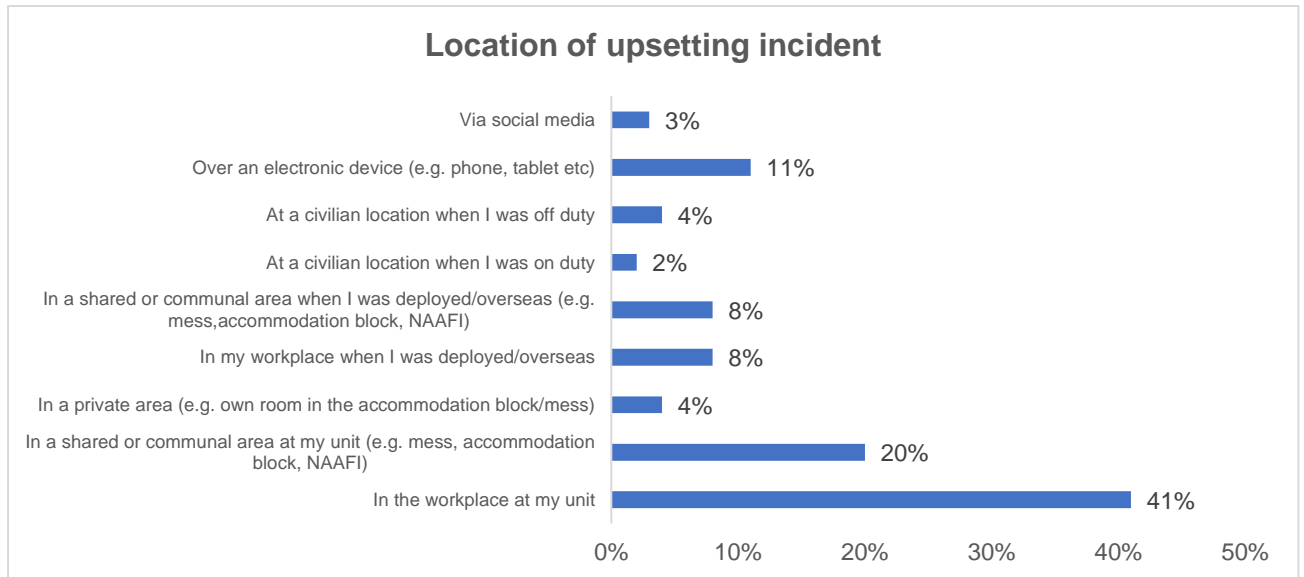


Figure 36 Base: 522: Where did the experience mainly occur?

12.5 Overall, just over half of upsetting episodes were one-off incidents.

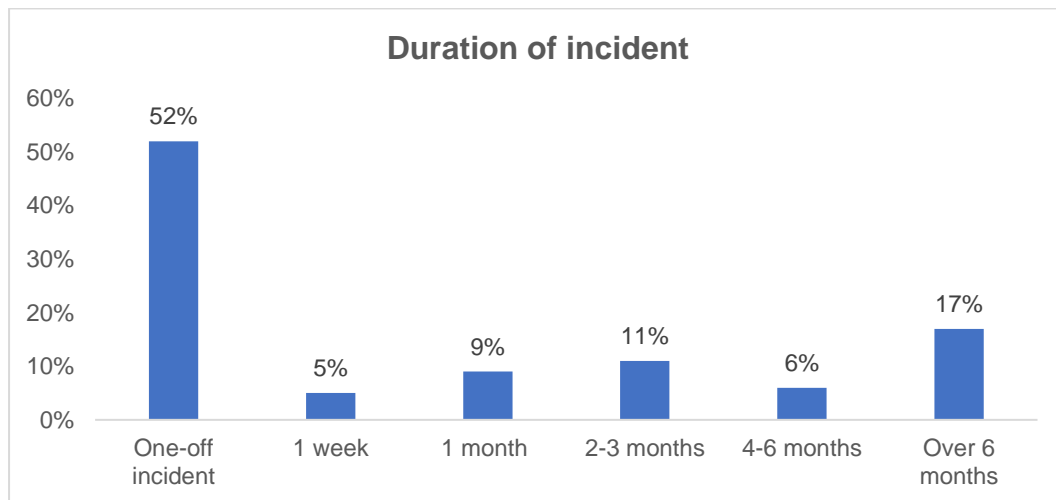


Figure 37 Base: 520 How long did the upsetting behaviour persist?

13. Impact of upsetting experiences

13.1 The majority of respondents reported that they lost respect for the people involved in the experience. Many respondents also described feeling embarrassed, uncomfortable at work, and humiliated as a result of the experience.

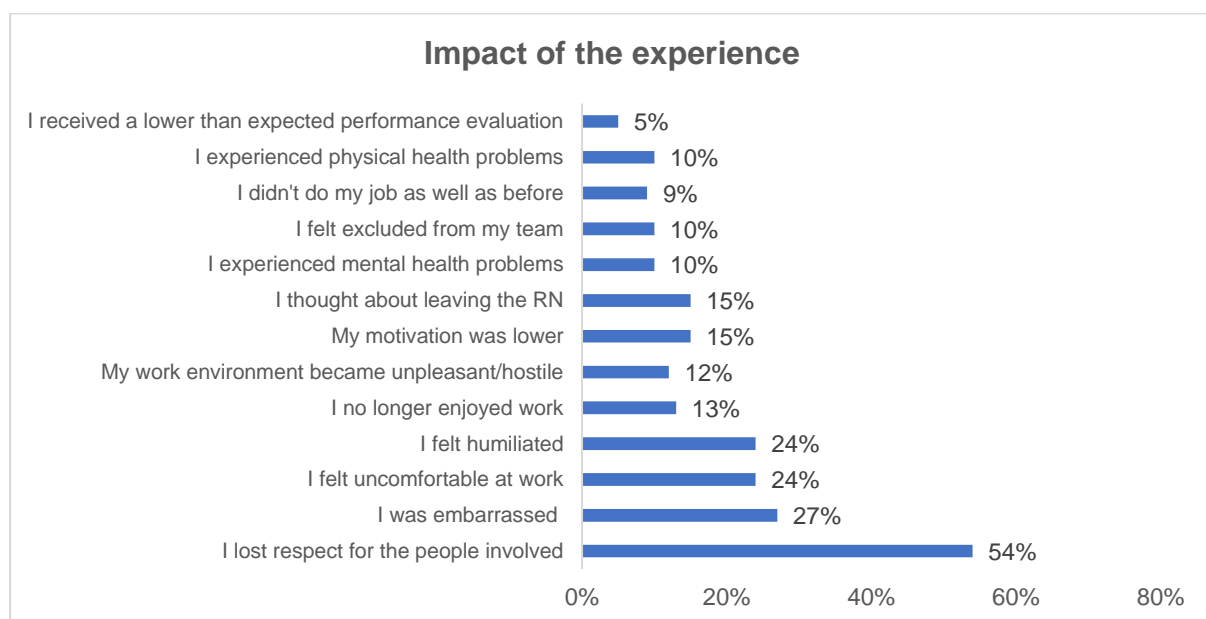


Figure 38 Base: 516-522. To what extent did you feel the following as result of this upsetting experience? response: felt to a large or very large extent

13.2 Even when an experience has been particularly upsetting, Service personnel will not necessarily either tell anyone or report it. Respondents reported that they took the action of ignoring the behaviour, avoiding the person if they could, or asking the person to stop, more frequently than any other type of response.

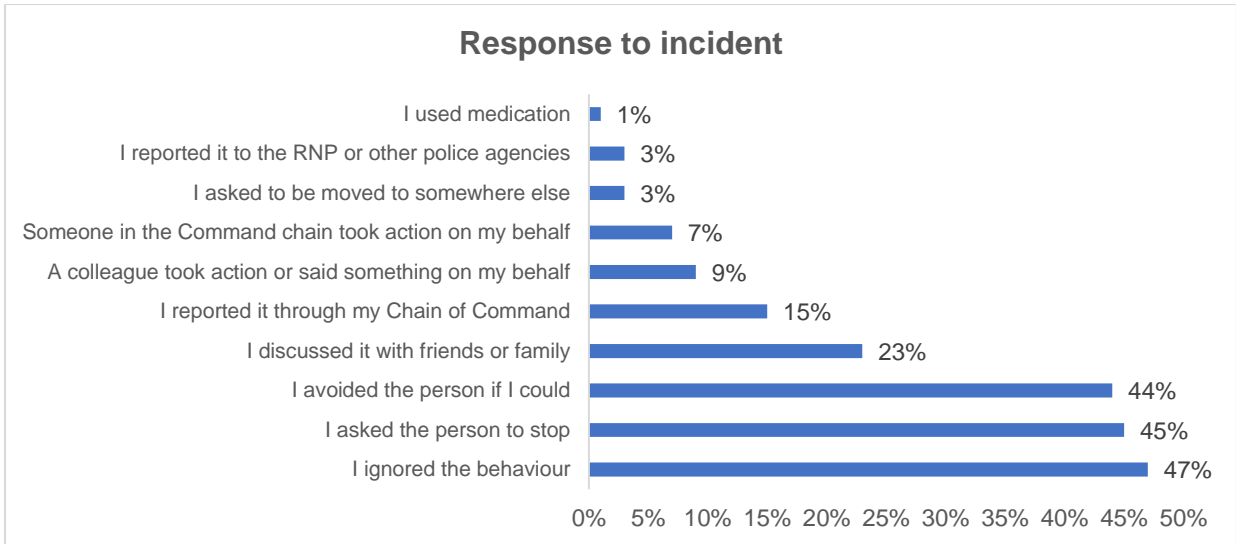


Figure 39 Base: 526 How did you respond to the upsetting experience? Choose all that apply

In the majority of reported cases, their actions resolved the situation. However, in a third of cases the situation remained unresolved by the action.

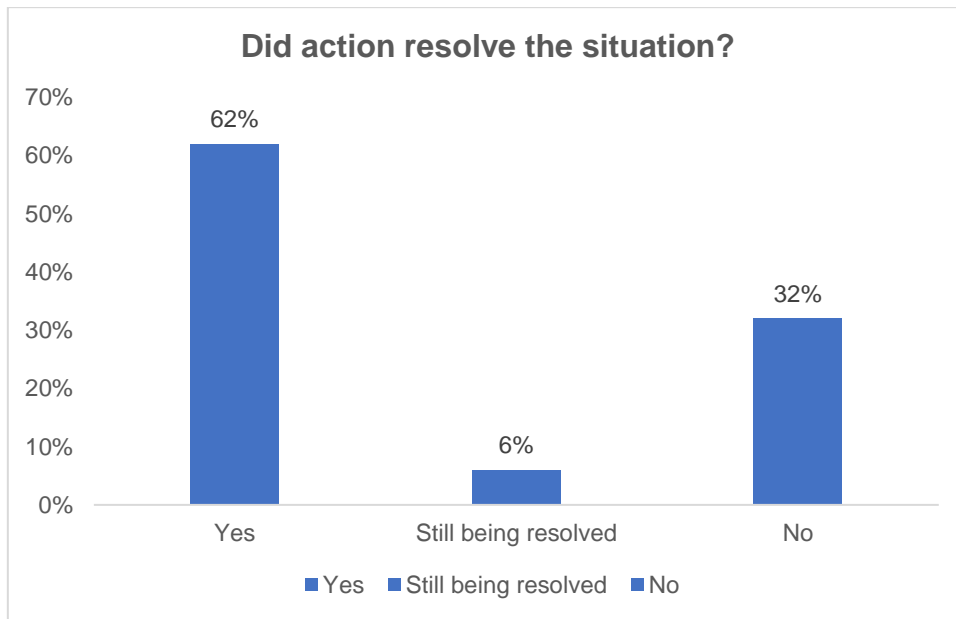


Figure 40 Base: 521 Did any of the actions listed above resolve the situation?

13.3 44% overall of those reporting an upsetting incident told someone at work about their experience. Half of Servicewomen told someone at work, compared with a quarter of Servicemen.

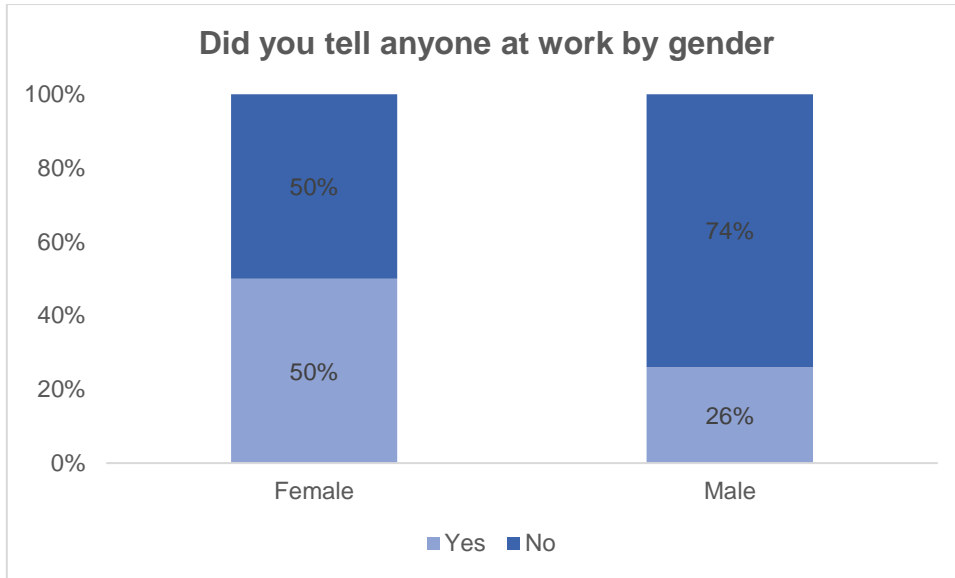


Figure 41 Base: 518 Did you tell anyone at work what was happening

13.4 Of those who told someone or more than one person at work, respondents reported telling a colleague far more commonly than any other person. Three quarters of respondents who told anyone, told a colleague. Half either told their line manager or someone else who was superior. Very rarely did Service personnel tell services such as Welfare people, Unit Equality and Diversity Advisors (EDA), Diversity and Inclusion Advisors (DIA), Chaplains, or Service helpline or support lines.

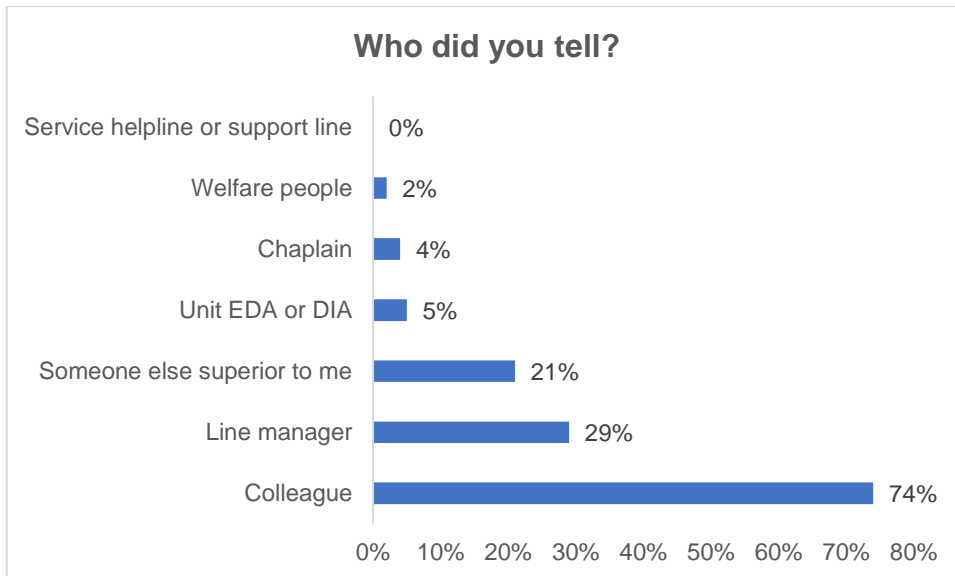


Figure 42: Base 230

13.5 Regardless of who was approached, telling someone at work helped to stop the upsetting behaviour, either in full or in part, for 60% of individuals.

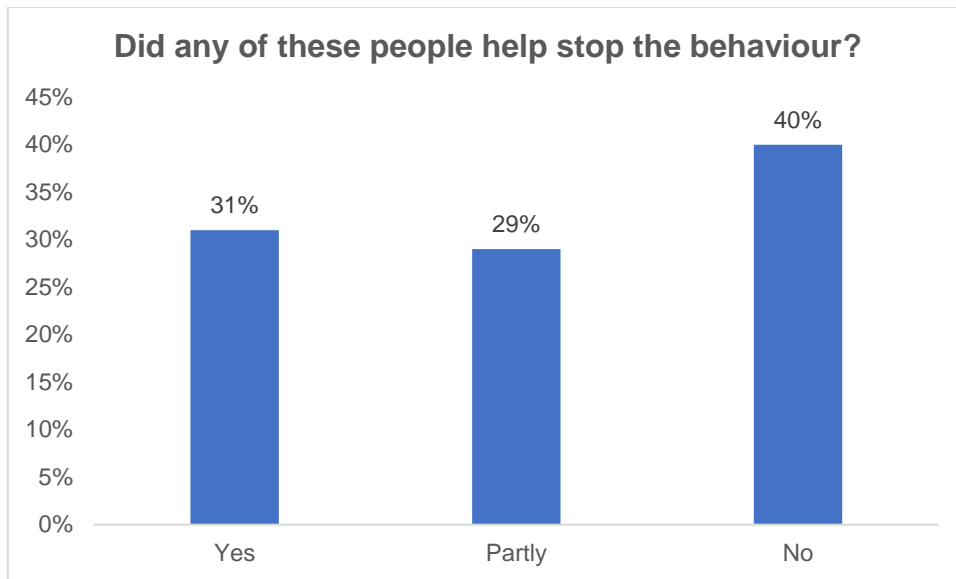


Figure 43 Base: 220

13.6 Over half of respondents reported that colleagues were the most helpful in stopping the upsetting behaviour. Roughly 2 in 5 respondents reported that their Line Manager or someone else superior to them was most helpful. Only in very rare instances did personnel find services such as Welfare people, Unit Diversity and Inclusion Advisors (DIA), Chaplains, or Service helpline or support lines the most helpful in stopping the behaviour.

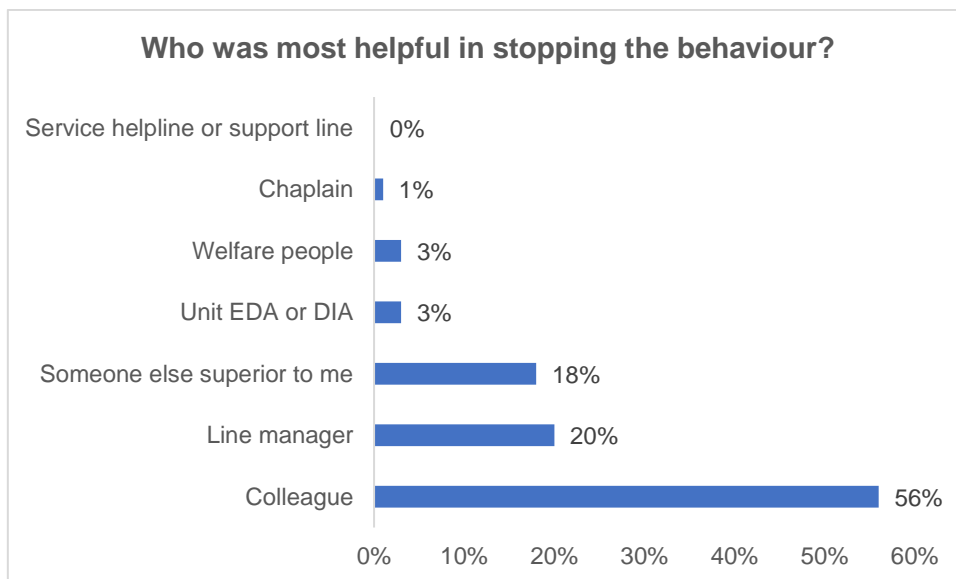


Figure 44 Base: 120

13.7 Of the 56% of individuals who did not tell anyone at work, the majority chose not to because they felt that they could handle the situation by themselves. Respondents also frequently reported that they did not tell anyone at work because they did not think it sufficiently important and/or because they did not think anything would be done about it. There were also common perceptions that it would make their work situation unpleasant or that they would be labelled a troublemaker.

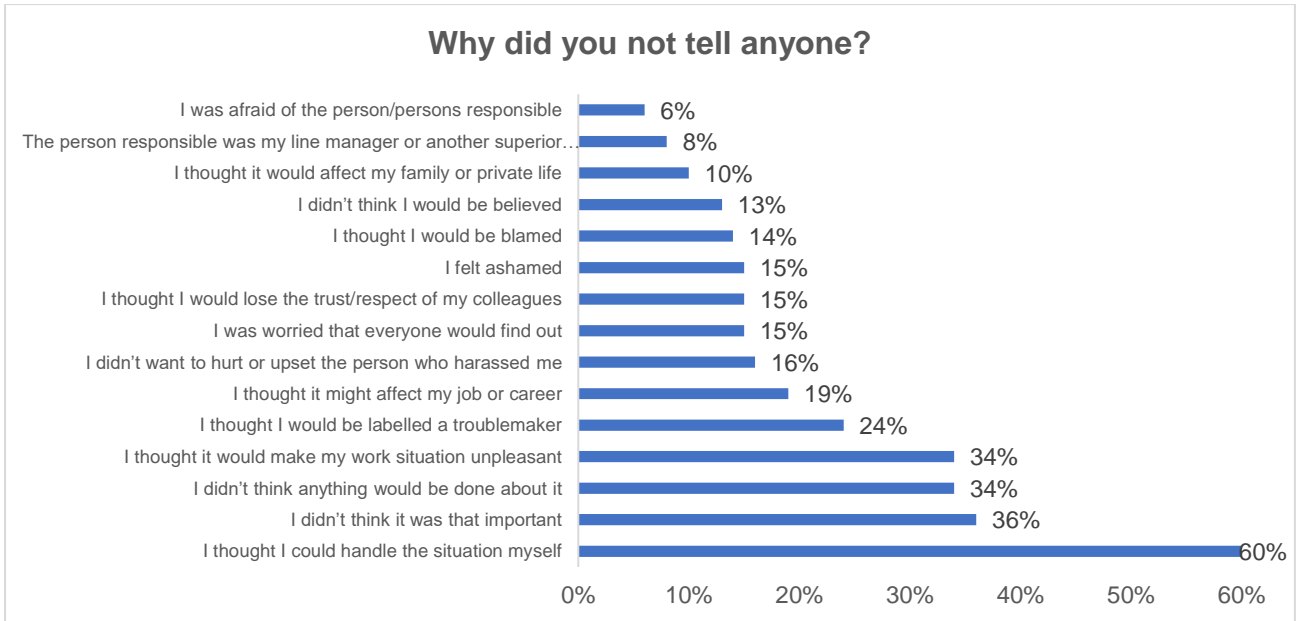


Figure 45 Base: 288 If you did not tell anyone in the workplace what was happening please tell us why

13.8 Only 4% of those respondents reporting experiencing a particularly upsetting episode made a formal written complaint about their experience.

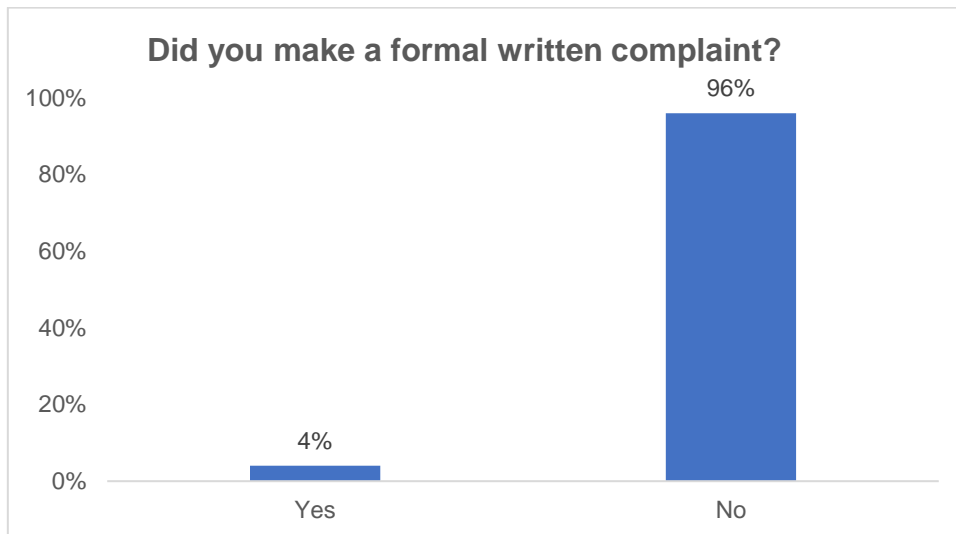


Figure 46 Base: 520 Did you at any time make a formal written complaint to your Commanding Officer about this upsetting experience

13.9 The main reasons individuals did not make a formal written complaint were largely the same as why they did not tell anyone at work: they believed they could handle the situation themselves, they did not believe it was important, or that they felt it may make their work situation unpleasant. Nearly a third of respondents who experienced an upsetting incident did not report it because they considered it insufficiently important.

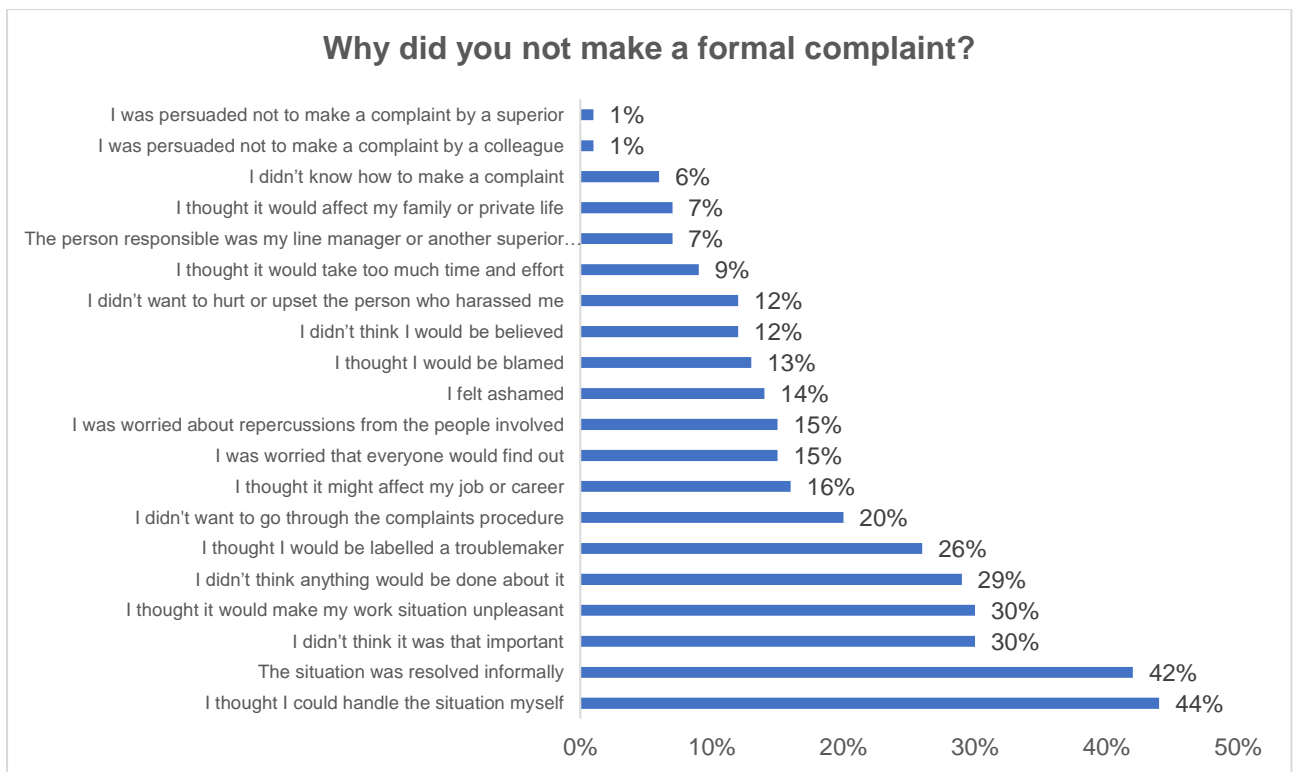


Figure 47 Base: 498

13.10 Respondents who made a formal complaint were asked how satisfied they were with various aspects of the complaints procedure. Please note that it is not possible to provide data for this question due to the low base size (fewer than 30 respondents).

13.11 Respondents who made a formal complaint were asked if they suffered any negative consequences as a result of making a formal complaint? Please note that it is not possible to provide data for this question due to the low base size (fewer than 30 respondents).

13.12 Respondents who indicated that they had suffered negative consequences of making a formal written complaint were asked to share details of the negative consequences they had experienced. Please note that it is not possible to provide data for this question due to the low base size (fewer than 30 respondents).

14. Managing and preventing sexual harassment

14.1 This section is about Service personnel's views on how widespread sexual harassment is considered to be within the Royal Navy, how it is managed and prevented, and the extent to which the Royal Navy supports those who have been sexually harassed. It also considers Service personnel's views about the effectiveness of action taken since the last survey.

14.2 The 2015 survey included the question "is there a problem with sexual harassment in the Royal Navy?". A third of Servicewomen considered sexual

harassment to be a problem, more than twice the proportion of Servicemen taking that view.

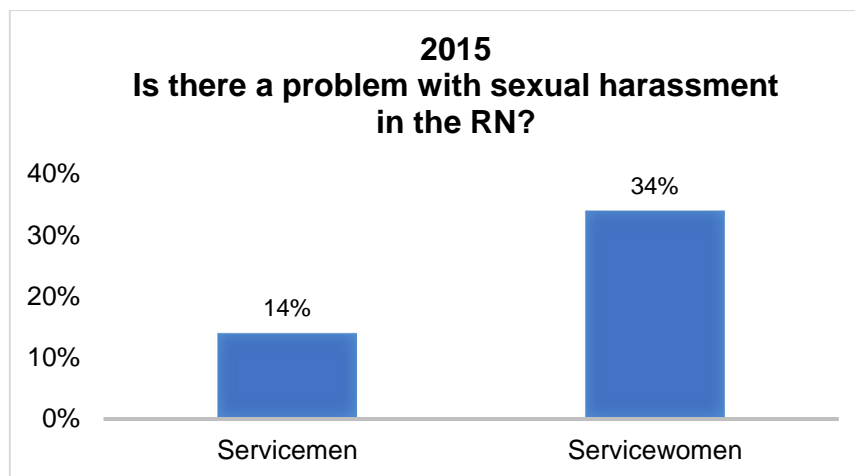


Figure 48 Base: 1,295. Response: Yes

14.3 In 2021 this question was amended to more precisely address the aim of estimating the extent to which behaviours considered to fall within the scope of sexual harassment are perceived to exist across the organisation: do you believe sexual harassment is widespread in the RN? Because of the change to the wording of the question it is not possible to draw valid comparisons between 2015 and 2021 responses in this instance.

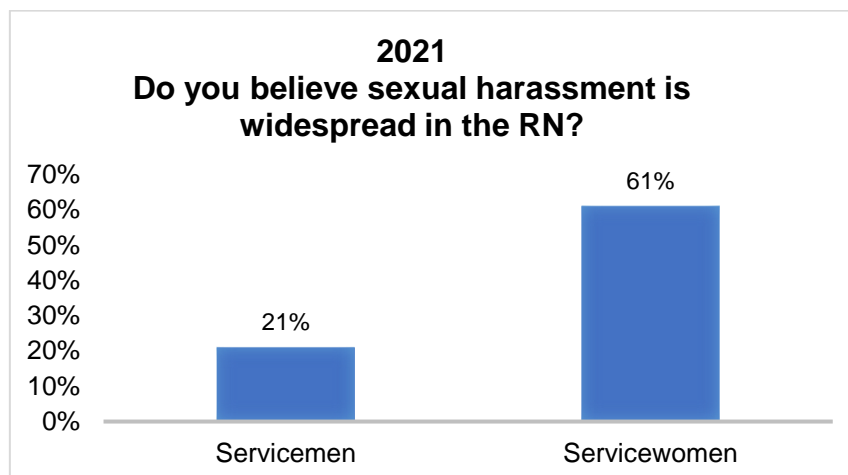


Figure 49 Base: 1,844. Response: Yes

14.4 While an overall 25% of RN personnel consider sexual harassment to be widespread within the Royal Navy, an estimated 61% of Servicewomen consider that to be the case. This figure is nearly three times that of Servicemen.

14.5 Ratings and Officers differ in their perceptions of whether sexual harassment is widespread by a significant 10%.

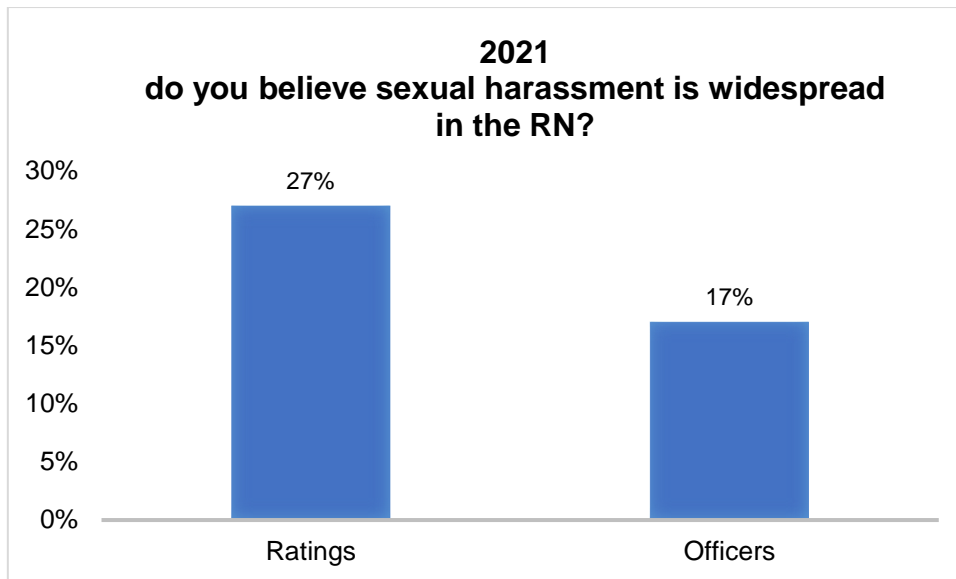


Figure 50 Base: 1,844. Response: Yes

14.6 Analysis of perceptions by rank group show a general tendency for the view that sexual harassment is widespread to decrease as seniority increases. An estimated third of Junior Ratings consider sexual harassment to be widespread, a proportion significantly greater than within any other rank group.

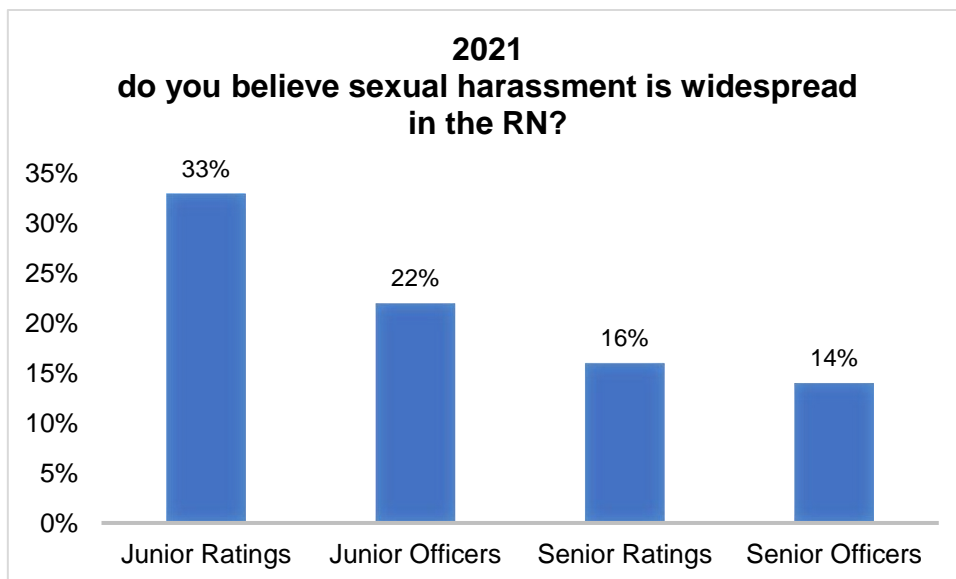


Figure 51 Base: 1,844. Response: Yes

Perceptions of overall commitment to prevention of sexual harassment

14.7 Overall, an estimated 59% of Service personnel consider the RN to try to prevent sexual harassment to a large or very large extent. There is no significant change in response to this question since 2015 either overall or for male personnel.

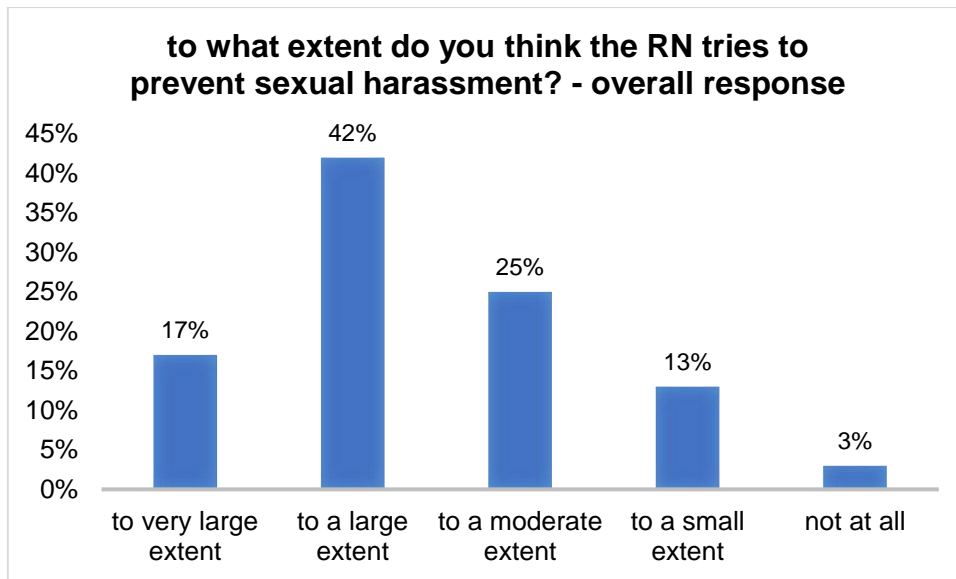


Figure 52 Base: 2,033

Significantly fewer servicewomen than Servicemen, however, are estimated to consider that the RN tries to prevent sexual harassment to a moderate, large or very large extent. Servicewomen are more likely to assess efforts to prevent sexual harassment to be to a small extent and less likely to a large extent than in 2015.

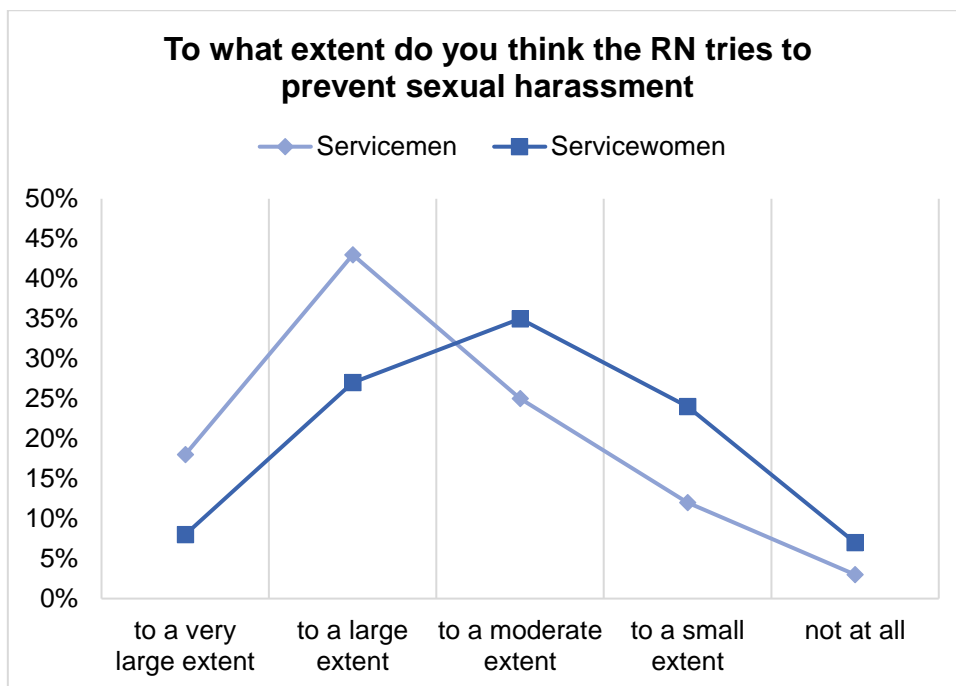


Figure 53 Base: 2033.

14.8 Ratings and Officers do not significantly differ in the extent to which they assess the RN's efforts to prevent sexual harassment. Only 4% of Ratings and 1% of officers consider no effort to be made at all.

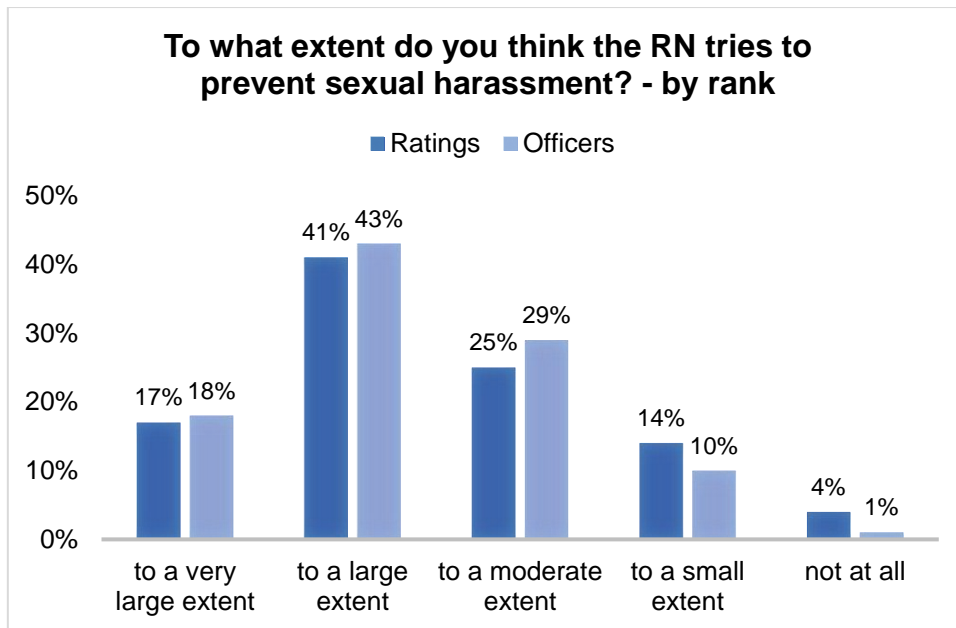


Figure 54 Base: 2,033.

Perceptions of support for sexually harassed personnel

14.9 Overall, an estimated 58% of personnel consider the RN to support, to a large or very large extent, those subjected to sexual harassment. This compares with 66% in 2015.

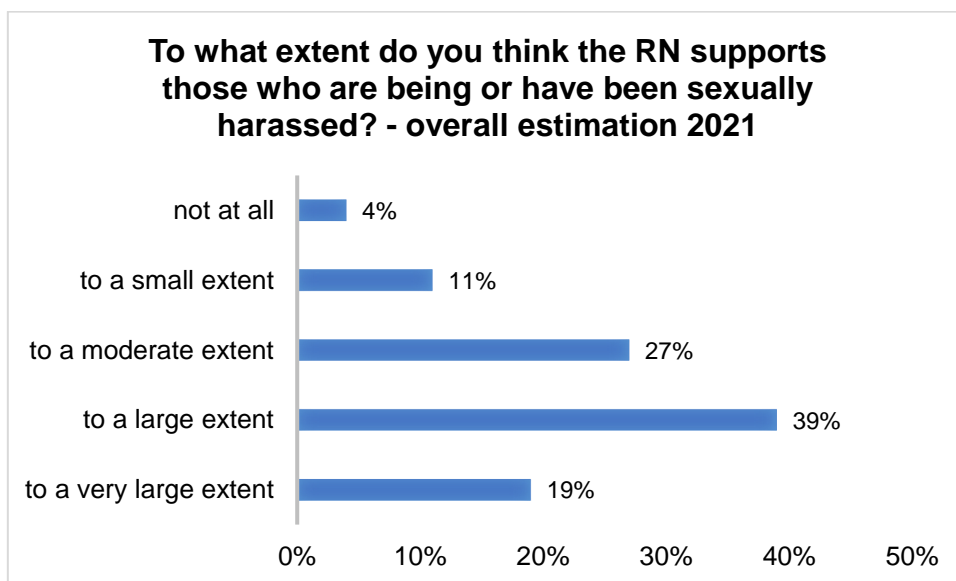


Figure 55 Base: 2,025

14.10 There are significant gender differences in attitudes towards support. Whilst an estimated 62% of Servicemen consider the RN to support victims of sexual harassment to a large or very large extent, only 34% of Servicewomen hold this view.

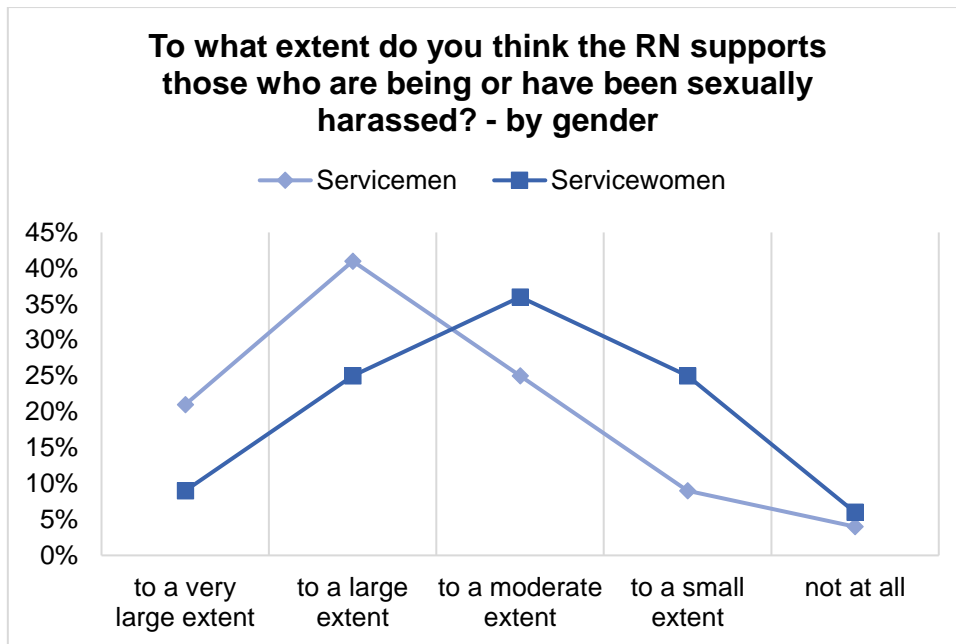


Figure 56 Base: 2,025

14.11 Statistically unchanged since 2015, 59% of Ratings and 54% of Officers assess support as existing to a large or very large extent.

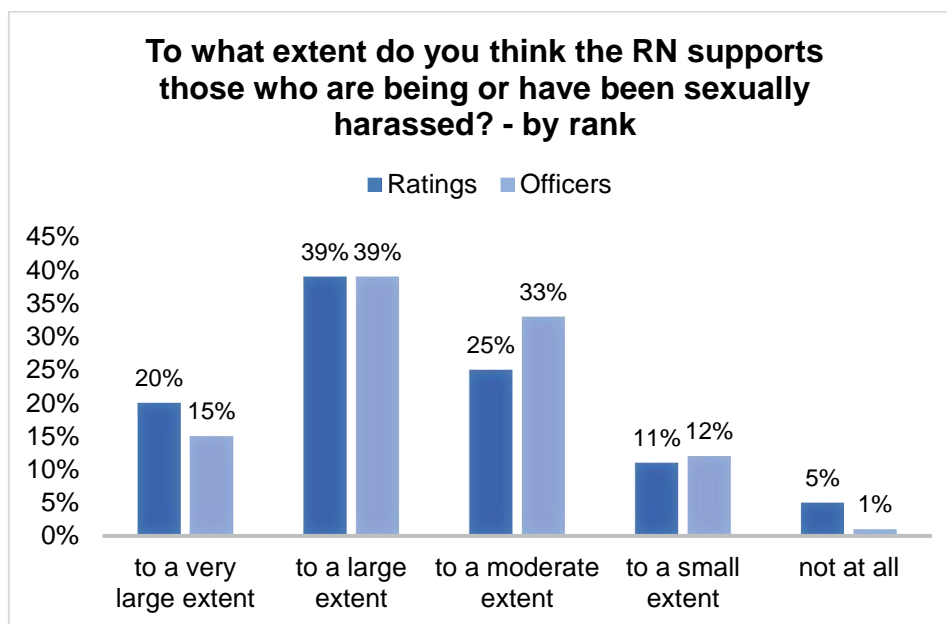


Figure 57 Base: 2,025

Perceived effectiveness of prevention methods

14.12 Service personnel were asked the extent to which they considered a range of policy interventions effective in helping prevent sexual harassment:

- Penalties being taken against managers / supervisors / leaders who allow sexual harassment to continue
- Penalties being taken against those who sexually harass others
- Training for line managers about preventing sexual harassment

- Awareness training for all personnel about sexual harassment
- Operating a zero tolerance policy towards sexual harassment

14.13 Overall, there are strong levels of support for all of these actual or potential methods of for preventing sexual harassment with between 68% and 82% of personnel considering them to be effective or very effective. A policy of enacting sanctions against harassers is, as in 2015, the most highly rated of prevention measures. Prevention training for managers is considered less effective than it was in 2015 whilst penalties against managers and leaders permitting sexual harassment is viewed as more effective than in 2015.

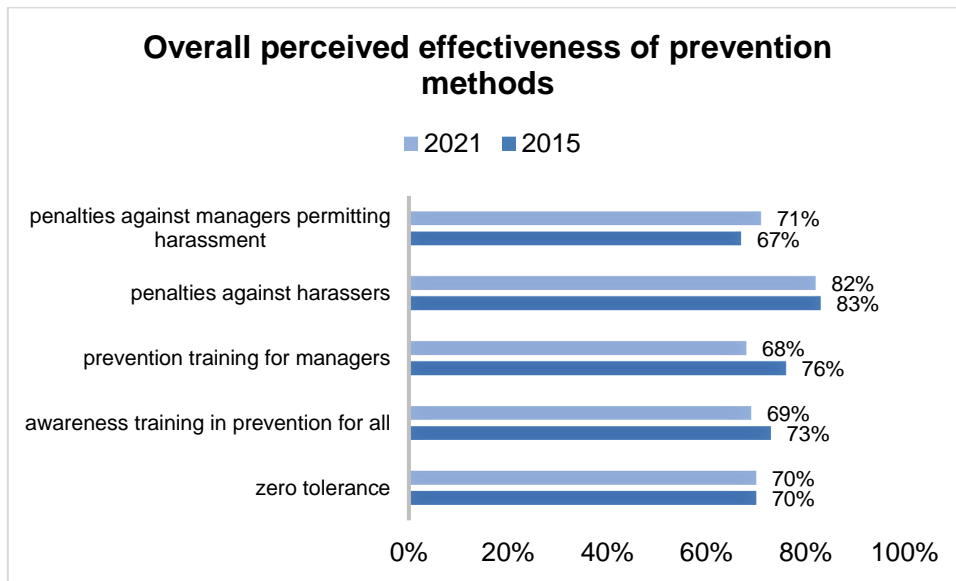


Figure 58 Base: 2,035: response – effective or very effective

14.14 Servicewomen are less confident in the effectiveness of zero tolerance policies than in 2015. There are no other significant differences between Servicemen and Servicewomen in respect of positive views of the effectiveness of methods of prevention of sexual harassment.

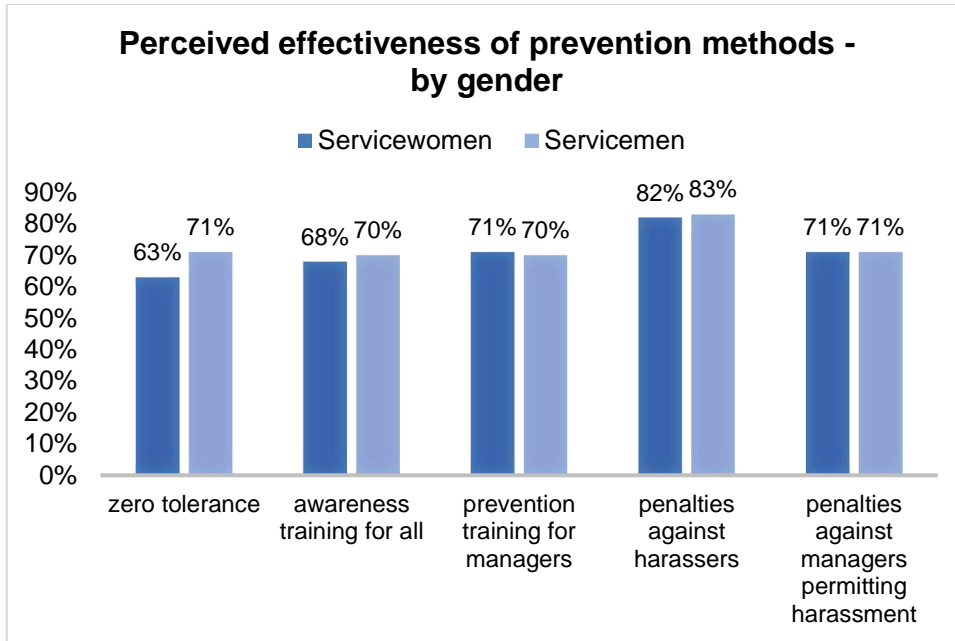


Figure 59 Base: 2,025: response effective or very effective

14.15 By contrast, Officers express significantly greater positive assessment of all preventative measures than do Ratings, with the exception of penalties against managers permitting sexual harassment to take place.

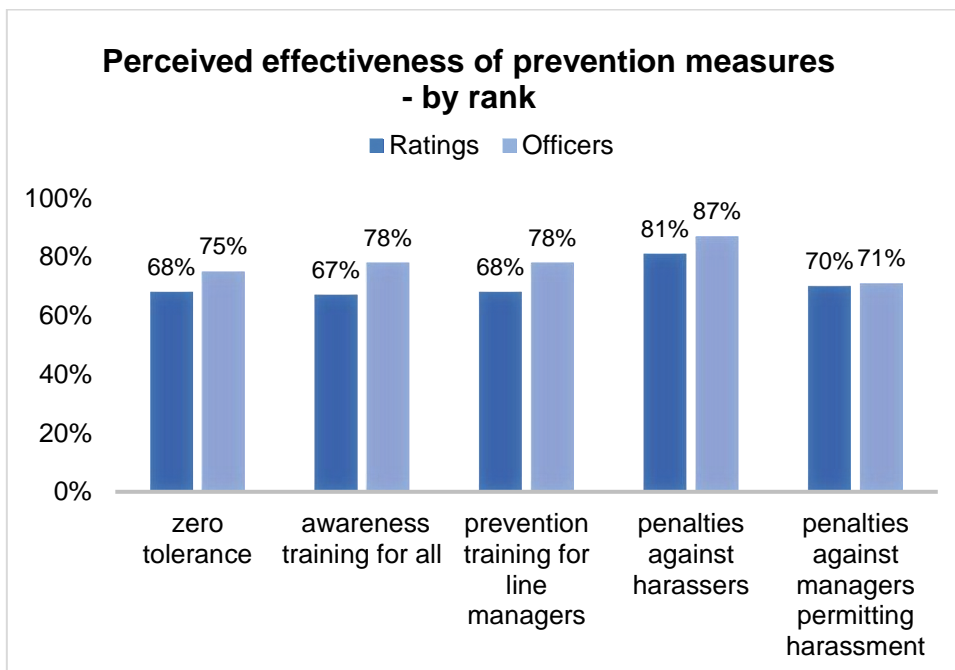


Figure 60 Base: 2,035: response effective or very effective

Perceived effectiveness of management methods

14.16 Service personnel were asked the extent to which they considered a range of management interventions effective in dealing with sexual harassment where it was found to take place:

- Having a complaints procedure that works
- Having people who could help sort out a sexual harassment problem without having to make a formal complaint
- Training for line managers about dealing with sexual harassment
- Having good information about where to go to for help

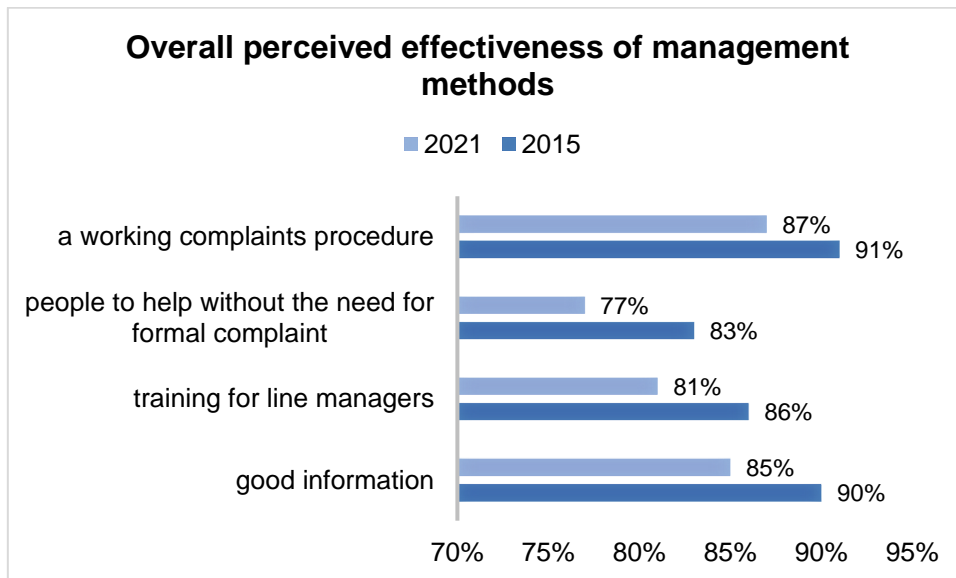


Figure 61 Base: 2,035: response effective or very effective

14.17 Over three quarters of personnel take a positive view of methods used to manage sexual harassment when it occurs. However, the estimated proportions of Service personnel who consider these management methods to be either very effective or effective has reduced in respect of every method since 2015. The provision of good information and an effective complaints mechanism remain the most well regarded interventions.

14.18 Significantly greater numbers of Servicewomen than Servicemen are estimated to view both training for line managers and having people who can help without the need for formal complaint as being effective or very effective management methods for dealing with sexual harassment.

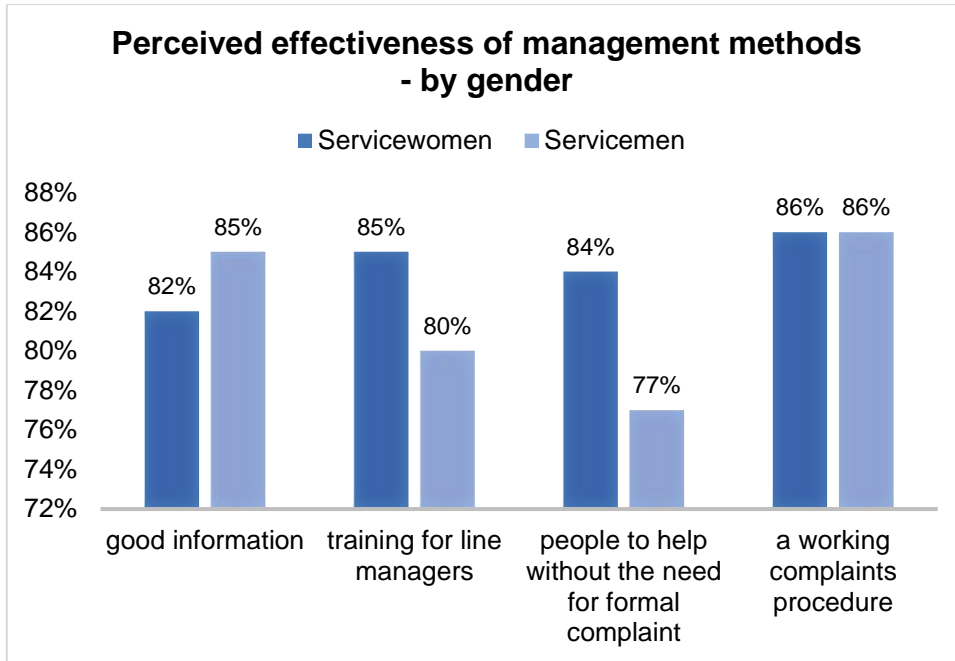


Figure 62 Base: 2,035: response effective or very effective

14.19 Significantly greater percentages of Officers than Ratings view training for line managers and a working complaints procedure as effective or very effective in managing sexual harassment when it occurs.

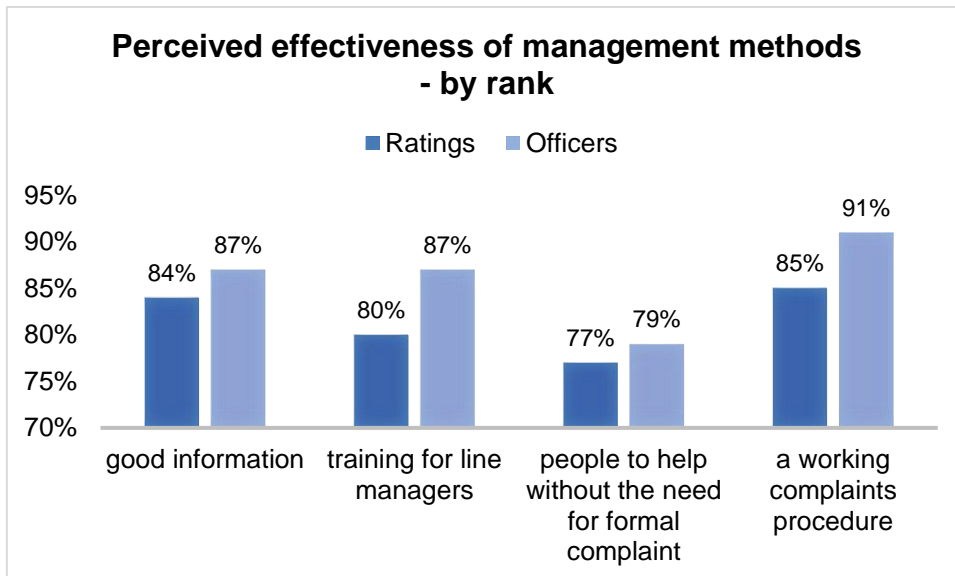


Figure 63 Base: 2,035: response effective or very effective

Perceptions relating to the RN Police

14.20 Service personnel were asked whether they knew how to contact the RN Police in order to make a complaint. Whilst there are no significant differences by rank group, a quarter of Ratings and Officers report a lack of knowledge in this area. An estimated 68% of Servicewomen know how to complain to the RN Police - a significantly smaller percentage than among Servicemen.

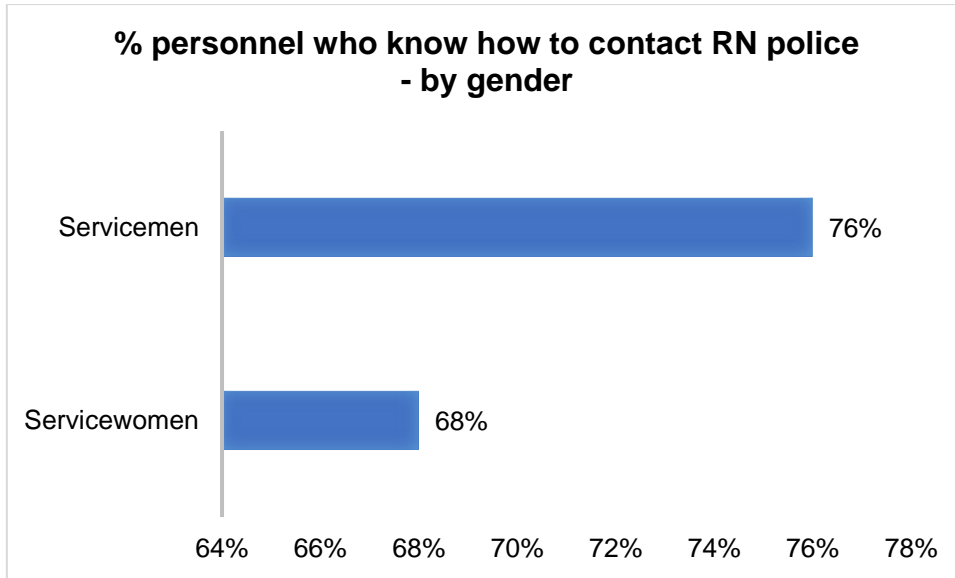


Figure 64 Base: 2,035: response: yes

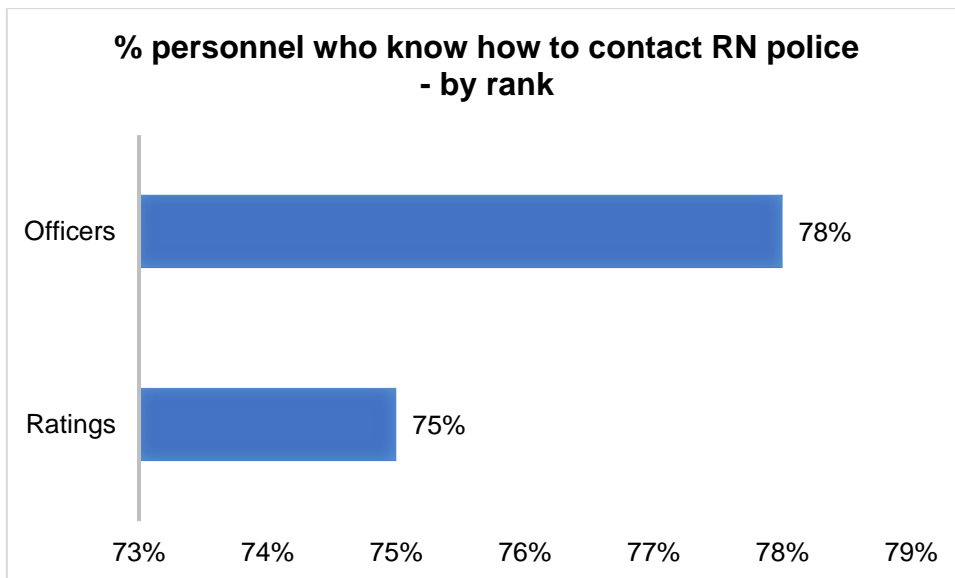


Figure 65 Base: 2,035: response: yes

14.21 The RN Police undertook a poster-based sexual consent awareness campaign prior to the survey. Service personnel were asked in the survey to rate the effectiveness of that campaign. There were no significant differences between the assessments by rank group, both Ratings and Officers judging the campaign effective, neutral, and less than effective in equal measure. Compared with Servicemen however, significantly fewer Servicewomen are estimated to view the campaign as effective or very effective. Servicewomen are nearly twice as likely as Servicemen to assess the campaign as being not very effective.

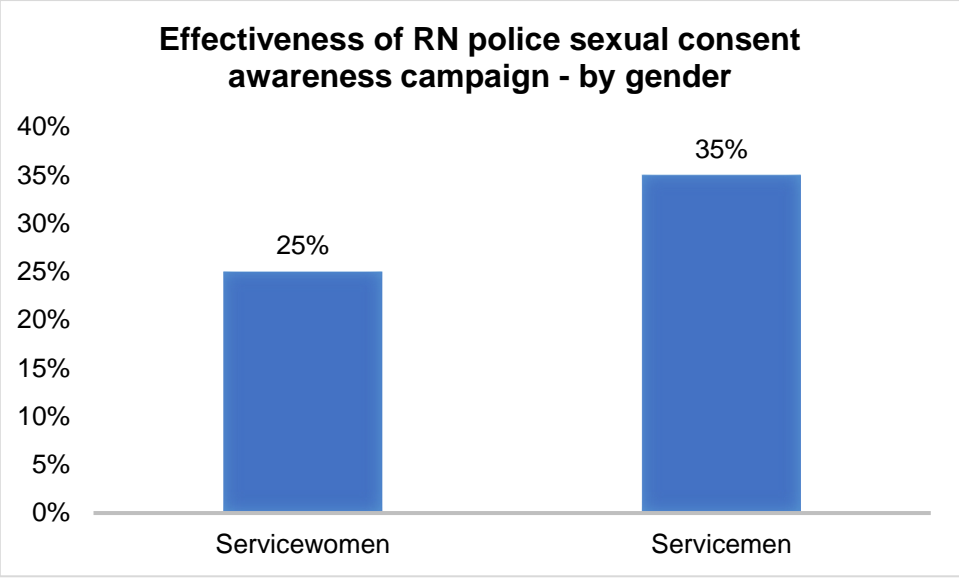


Figure 66 Base: 2,025; response: considered effective or very effective