



Cabinet Office

# Bullying, Harassment and Misconduct Survey

Commissioned by Sue Owen

ANNEX

SURVEY ANALYSIS RESULTS

Analysis & Insight, Civil Service Group, Cabinet Office

# At a glance: background and key findings

## **Please note:**

*The respondents to this survey were self-selecting and the statistics presented in this pack should not be interpreted as 'percentages of civil servants' but rather the percentages of civil servants responding to this survey.*

*This pack should be read alongside the main report from the Review which draws on evidence from a range of sources.*

## **Background**

In this pack we summarise the results of a cross - Civil Service survey on Bullying, Harassment and Misconduct. This was developed as a key input to the Sue Owen Review alongside additional research, expert interviews, analysis of the Civil Service People Survey and case work data.

We know from the People Survey 2017 that, on average, 11% of staff said they'd personally experienced bullying or harassment at work in the preceding 12 months – a figure that has remained fairly static since the survey began in 2009. Among those who had experienced bullying & harassment, an average of 36% said they'd reported it, of whom only 1 in 5 (20%) felt it had been resolved.

## **Purpose**

We wanted to understand better the experiences of current and former civil servants over their careers, how departments and agencies have dealt with cases, and the barriers and enablers to creating a better work environment.

This survey was therefore **not intended to seek views from a representative sample of civil servants** – but to act as a vehicle for exploring the views of those with relevant experiences or views to share. We did not collect demographic information and responses were anonymous. **The survey opened in Jan 2018 and closed end May 2018** to provide a wide window of opportunity for people to contribute to the review.

## **Headlines**

We received **18,898 responses – around 4% of the Civil Service workforce**, covering more than 80 civil service organisations, and including more than **40,000 free text comments** and suggestions.

Respondents were **more likely to disagree with statements such as 'It is safe to speak up and raise concerns'**; this is likely to be higher because of the high proportion of those answering the survey having experienced bullying and harassment.

Whilst more than **4 in 5 people knew how to report incidents**, this was significantly lower for recent starters. 1 in 2 people agreed there were barriers to incidents being tackled effectively.

Based on our **text-based analysis** of the barriers discussed by respondents, more than **3 in 5 cited managers as the biggest blocker to speaking out** or reaching a satisfactory outcome. References to a **lack of independent and impartial investigators, 'fear', and workplace 'culture' were also commonly cited**. In our assessment of people's experiences line managers and senior managers were also most often cited as being responsible for bullying and harassment.

Respondents told us about the impact on them; this was mainly around **poorer health and wellbeing**. Some victims felt it has influenced their career e.g. they were given **lower performance ratings** or had to move jobs. At an organisation level bullying and harassment may affect productivity through **poorer working environments, sickness absence and staff turnover**.

A smaller proportion, **around 1 in 10, had been accused of bullying or harassment**, but this group was more likely to have also experienced these behaviours than those never accused.

**Many incidents are observed by others** in meetings or open plan offices. This is corrosive – observers have poorer views of the workplace; but perhaps there is also the opportunity to **encourage more observers to challenge and report**.

# Contents

## Definitions used in this survey

**Bullying** is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

**Harassment** is unwanted actions or comments that are demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient. It may be related to any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident.

**Misconduct** is any other form of inappropriate behaviour between or towards individuals which contravenes the values and code of conduct of the organisation.

The survey did not focus on discrimination, but some respondents told us about their experiences:

**Discrimination** is treating a person or group of people less favourably because they have one of the "protected characteristics", which are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Overall Response Rates	4
Levels of Bullying, Harassment and Misconduct	6
Nature of Bullying, Harassment and Misconduct Incidents	10
Knowledge and Confidence in Reporting Incidents	17
Detailed Barriers and Blockers	20
Perceived Quality and Fairness of Investigations	24
Ideas for Improving our System	26

# Overall Response Rates

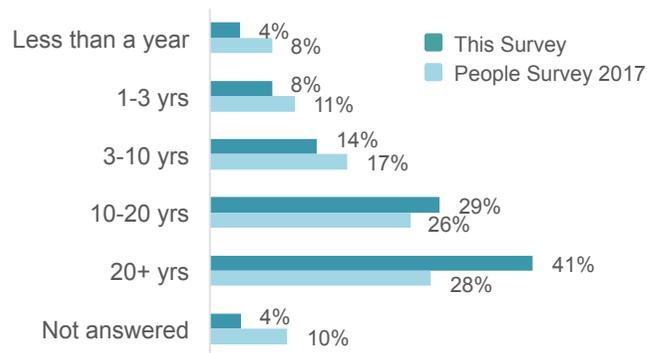
# Responses from 80+ departments and agencies

Overall, 18,898 people responded to our survey – around 4% of the Civil Service workforce. This includes a wealth of qualitative information – with around 40,000 detailed comments on experiences and ideas for improvements (respondents were given the opportunity to comment on multiple issues).

92% provided departmental details – covering more than 80 civil service organisations. Around 8% of respondents chose not to provide the details of the organisation they work for.

Respondents were overwhelmingly current civil servants (97%), with more than two thirds (71%) having been in the Civil Service for 10+ years. Only 64 (0.3%) of the respondents were former civil servants, or have never worked for the civil service.

## Time in Civil Service (% respondents)



## Responses by Department

Department currently working in	Responses	% of all Responses
HM Revenue and Customs (Incl Agencies)	5130	27.1%
Department for Work and Pensions (Incl Agencies)	3696	19.6%
Home Office (Incl Agencies)	1612	8.5%
Ministry of Defence (Incl Agencies)	1287	6.8%
Ministry of Justice (Incl Agencies)	1042	5.5%
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Incl Agencies)	494	2.6%
Office for National Statistics	488	2.6%
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (Incl Agencies)	434	2.3%
Other	394	2.1%
Department for Transport (Incl Agencies)	374	2.0%
Cabinet Office (Incl Agencies)	350	1.9%
Department for Education (Incl Agencies)	304	1.6%
Department of Health and Social Care (Incl Agencies)	283	1.5%
Scottish Government (Incl Agencies)	217	1.1%
Foreign & Commonwealth Office (Incl Agencies)	214	1.1%
Department for International Trade	187	1.0%
Attorney General's Office (Incl Agencies)	186	1.0%
Welsh Government (Incl Agencies)	154	0.8%
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (Incl Agencies)	137	0.7%
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (Incl Agencies)	118	0.6%
Department for International Development (Incl Agencies)	82	0.4%
HM Treasury (Incl Agencies)	56	0.3%
UK Export Finance	27	0.1%
Department for Exiting the European Union	21	0.1%
Others	6	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17293</b>	<b>91.5%</b>
I do not currently work in a Civil Service Department	64	0.3%
Prefer not to say	927	4.9%
Not Provided	614	3.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1605</b>	<b>8.5%</b>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>18898</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**47%** reported DWP or HMRC as their current department

**92%** provided their department details

**18,898** responses, around 4% of the Civil Service workforce

# Levels of Bullying, Harassment and Misconduct

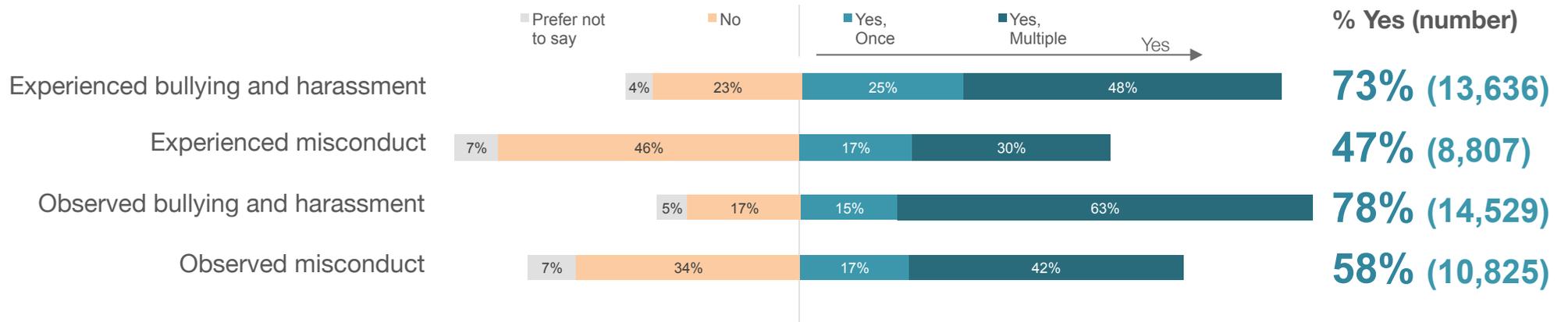
# Nearly 3 in 4 respondents have experienced bullying or harassment during their career

73% (13,636) of survey respondents report having experienced bullying and harassment while working in the civil service, with nearly 1 in 2, 48% (9,043) saying it's happened on multiple occasions.

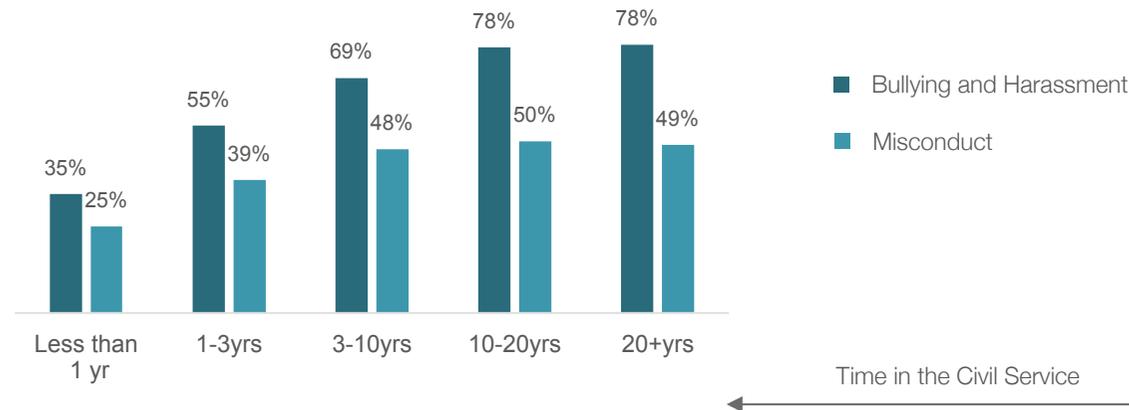
Slightly more respondents, 78% (14,529), said they've observed bullying and harassment happen to someone else, whilst a much lower proportion said they've experienced or observed misconduct - 47% (8,807) and 58% (10,825) respectively.

Likelihood of experiencing or observing increases with length of time in the civil service. Survey respondents who have been in the civil service less than one year were less than half as likely to report experiencing bullying, harassment and misconduct than those working here for 10+ years. That said, 35% of the recent joiners who responded to the survey reported experiencing bullying and harassment.

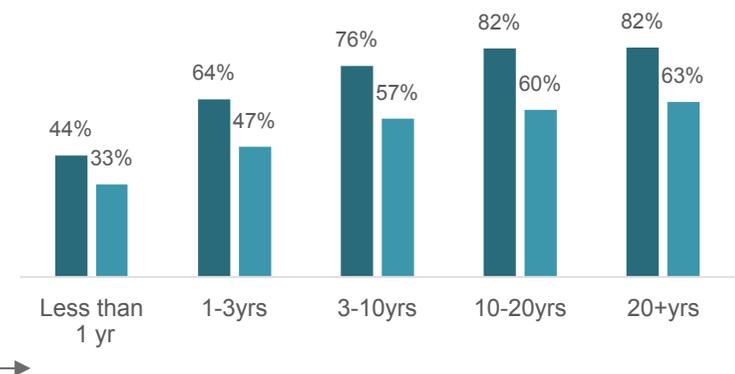
## Have you ever .... while working as a civil servant or while working for a Civil Service organisation?



## Experience (% yes – once or multiple times)



## Observation (% yes – once or multiple times)

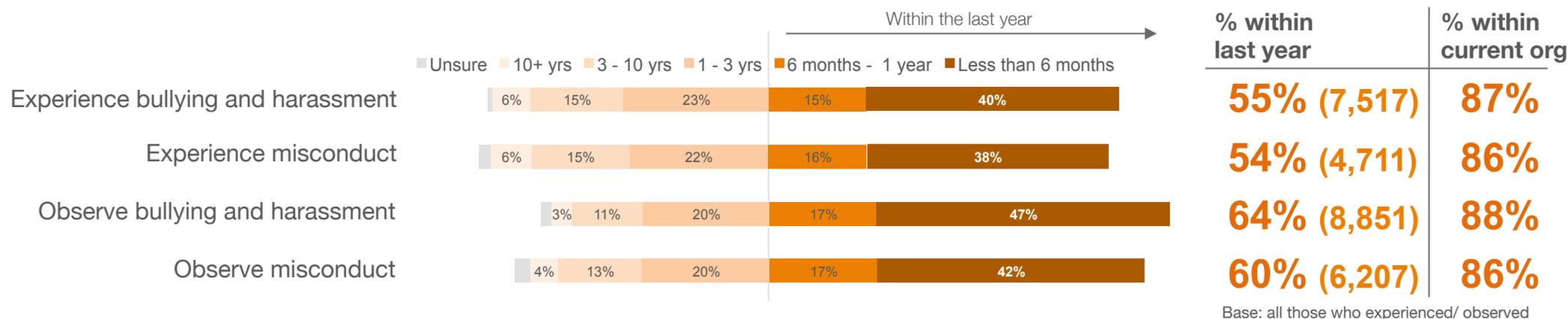


# Over 1 in 3 have experienced and observed both bullying/harassment, and misconduct

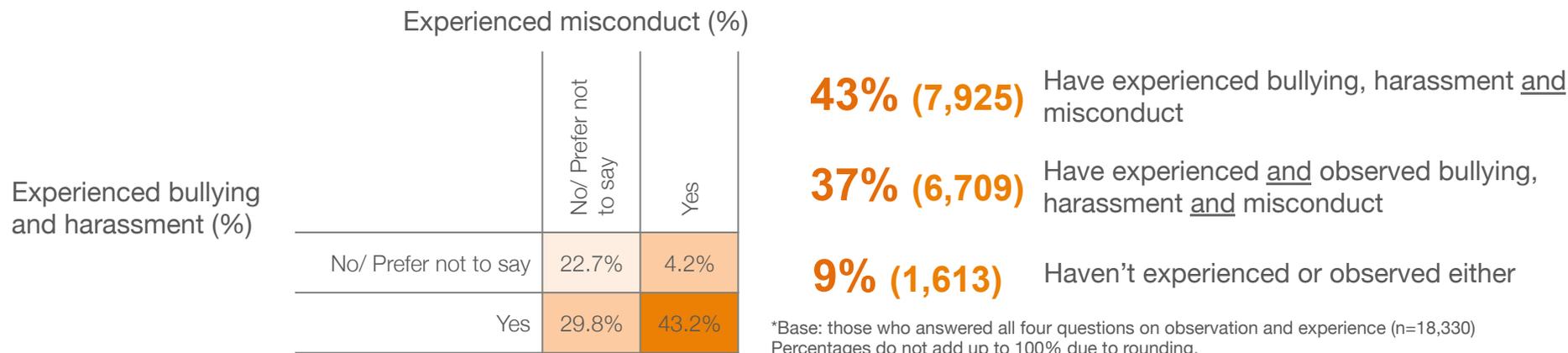
We asked respondents when their most recent experience or observation was. Over half reported they had experienced it within the year leading up to the survey, with around 2 in 5 answering that it occurred within the preceding 6 months. The vast majority (over 86%) of the most recent incidents recalled by respondents occurred in the current organisation they work in.

There is considerable overlap of experiences of bullying and harassment and misconduct. Looking at those who answered all the questions\* (n=18,330), 43% (7,925) have experienced bullying and harassment and misconduct; 37% (6,709) have experienced and observed both; whilst just 1 in 10 (9% - 1,613) say they haven't experienced or observed anything.

## When was your most recent experience/ did you most recently observe bullying and harassment/ misconduct?



## The overlap between experience and observation of bullying and harassment and misconduct...



# Those accused are more likely to also have experienced it

11% (2,072) of respondents said they have been accused of bullying and harassment, and 7% (1,294) report having been accused of misconduct.

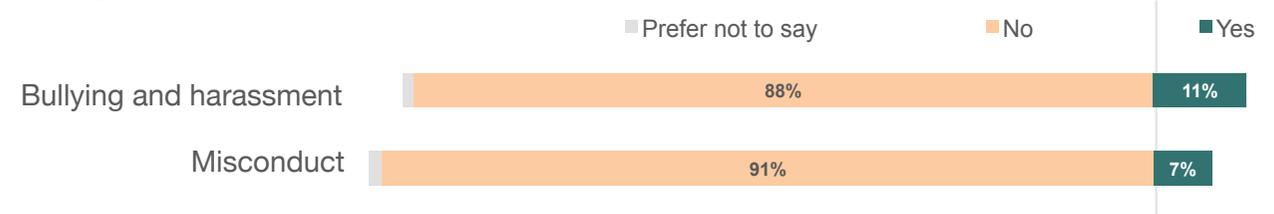
The likelihood of having been accused increases with time in the Civil Service – 14% of respondents who have been in for 20+ years have been accused of bullying and harassment, compared to only 2% of those in for less than a year.

There is a significantly higher likelihood of someone who has been accused also having experienced it. 83% of those accused of misconduct said they have experienced it themselves, compared to only 45% of those not accused. Similarly 87% of those accused of bullying and harassment said they have experienced it themselves, compared to 72% of those not accused.

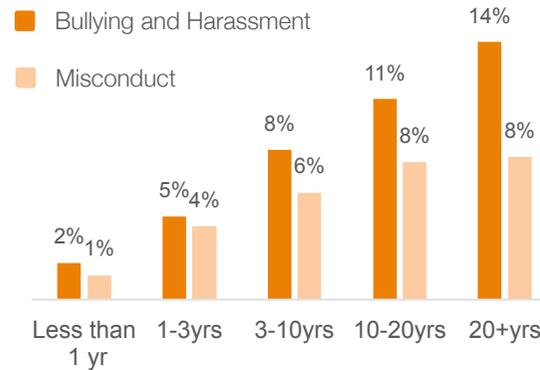
It is interesting to note the different perspectives that those accused have to those not accused. Those accused of bullying and harassment are more likely to agree that victims are supported and less likely to agree those accused are.

Those accused of misconduct are much less positive about their organisation's approach to tackling it than those not accused.

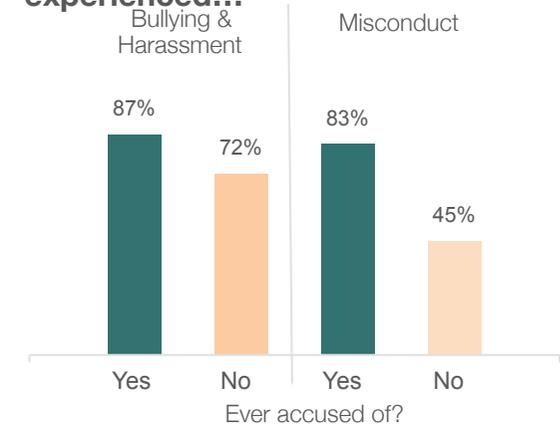
## Have you ever been accused of ...



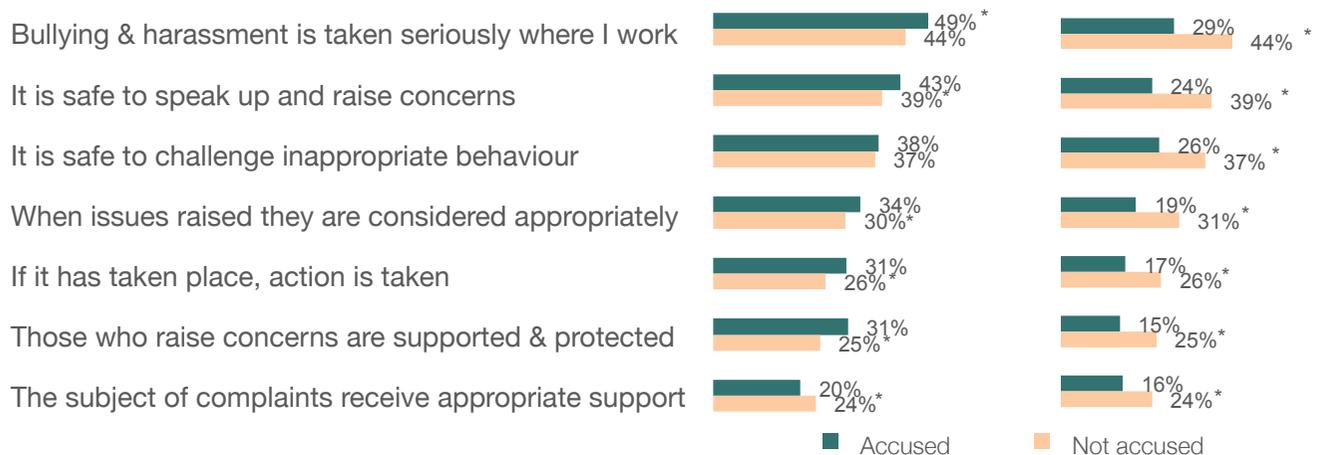
## % of respondents who have been accused of ... by time in CS:



## % of respondents who have experienced...



## % agreeing or strongly agreeing...



\* Difference significant with 95% confidence

\*\* These charts omit respondents accused of both for a purer comparison of views

# Nature of Bullying, Harassment and Misconduct Incidents

# Respondent experiences cover a broad range of behaviours

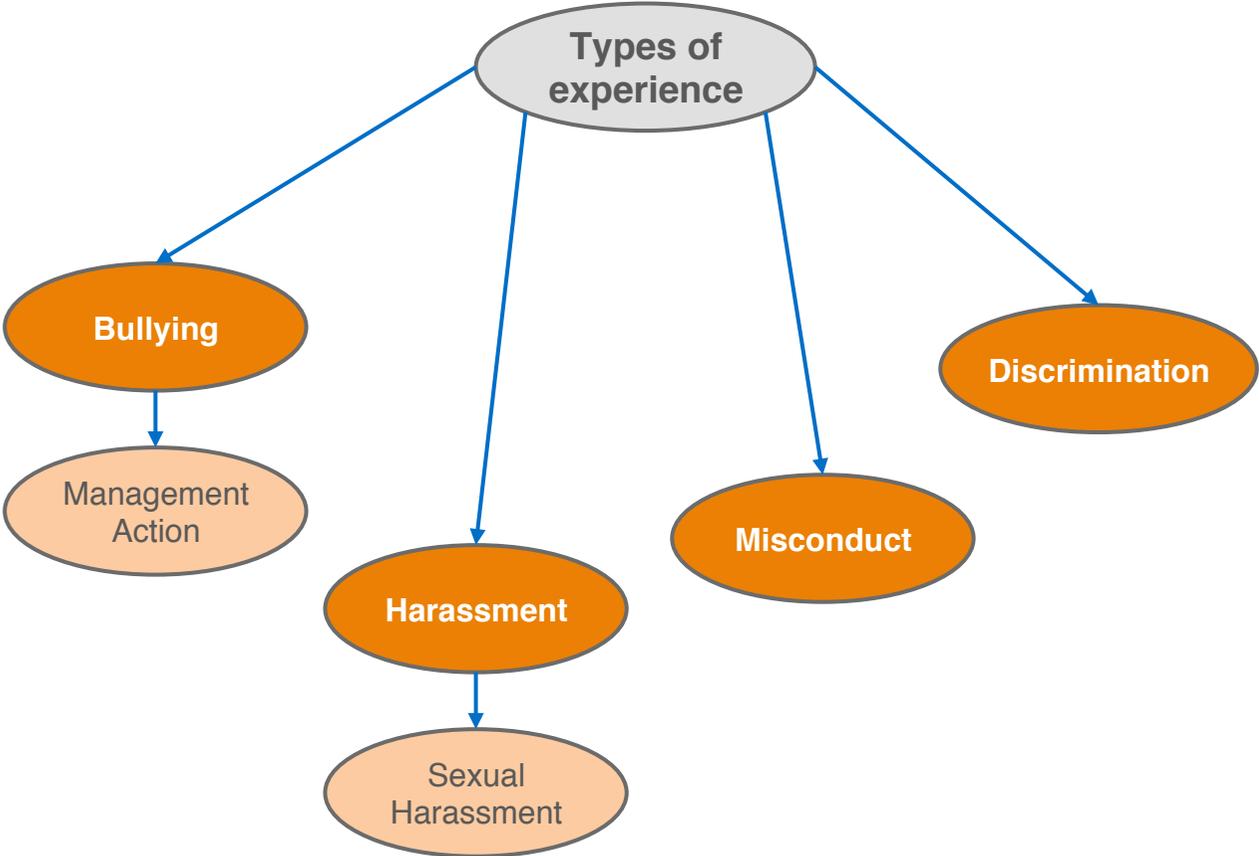
We have analysed a 10% random sample of 6,000 free text responses to the question “Please tell us very briefly and in general terms the nature of your experiences”. We have explored themes in these responses including the impact of experiences on individuals and organisations, how witnesses reacted, where incidents took place, justifications people gave for poor behaviour or rationale for people being victims of poor behaviour.

One area we particularly explored was the type of experiences that people had. Bullying was clearly the most frequent type of case that respondents reported and misconduct the least frequent. We specifically analysed sexual harassment because of wider external context. While a significant number of people were comfortable enough to report sexual harassment only a relative small fraction (4%, 21) of the sample of cases related to sexual harassment.

It is important to note that sometimes experiences overlapped – some respondents used bullying and harassment together to describe their experience.

Some bullying experiences also seemed to relate to line management actions such as performance management and attendance management which have been experienced as bullying by the respondent. In some cases these experiences seem to be about poor line management. We have categorised these as ‘Management Action’.

The rest of this section provides more details on each type of experience.



# Humiliation and belittling are common aspects of bullying

“Bullying“ was the most frequent type of experience that was reported by survey respondents when asked to describe their experiences in more detail.

Experiences included humiliation in front of others, negative ‘overbearing’ micromanagement and being isolated and ignored. People also reported experiencing anger and aggression and being shouted at.

Misconduct cases were less frequent than bullying, harassment and discrimination. The examples were also quite varied.

Examples include issues with annual leave – recording and authorising it, misuse of flexi and IT. A number of examples related to office gossip about individuals, and individuals who reported people ‘talking behind their backs’ about them.

## Types of bullying experiences provided.....

**Humiliation;** spoken to badly, belittled, undermined, discredited, denigrated, made to feel uncomfortable in front of team, external stakeholders or members of the public.

**Negative Micromanagement;** excessive control - constant scrutiny of work checking of whereabouts and work, questioning everything. Made to feel incompetent and doing a bad job. Constantly told doing things wrong, nothing ever right and never satisfied with results.

**Isolation;** exclusion and marginalisation. Isolation from line manager and team. Ignored and not spoken to. Information not passed on. Deliberately excluded from meetings and decisions.

**Aggression and Intimidation;** anger, shouting, ranting, swearing and thumping fists on the table. Spoken to abruptly, rudely and in a demeaning way. Verbal abuse. Threats.

**Job change;** having job descriptions and responsibilities changed without being informed. Taking away aspects of role – diminishing status. Cajoled or coerced into jobs, tasks or roles that aren’t suitable - over and above what they are trained for. Being held accountable for failings of others.

**Favouritism;** treated differently and less favourably to others. Excluded from aspects of work reserved for more favoured people.

## Types of misconduct experiences provided.....

**Annual Leave;** failure to record leave, taking leave without authorisation, unexplained absences from work.

**Flexible working;** “fiddling flexi”.

**IT;** misuse of IT, constant use of office internet for personal use during working hours, sending inappropriate emails.

**Alcohol/ Drunkenness in work**

**Gossip;** about individuals to other co-workers, talking behind people’s backs.

**Making false or vexatious accusations**

**Physical assault;** violence, aggressive conflicts on the office floor.

**Foul and abusive language**

**Lies;** fraudulent statements e.g. in performance reviews or misconduct hearings.

**Destruction of property**

**Insubordination**

# Harassment & Sexual Harassment

Many respondents viewed and described their experiences as both bullying and harassment. However in some cases people described their experience as harassment, and fewer cases sexual harassment.

Harassment experiences recounted tended to relate to inappropriate comments e.g. about someone's appearance, frequent verbal harassment (negative and derogatory comments) and repeatedly making life difficult for people.

**We specifically assessed sexual harassment because of the wider external context.**

Experiences recounted included sexual comments, persistent unwanted advances, inappropriate behaviour e.g. touching, and making people feel uncomfortable by looking at them inappropriately. In almost all cases (but not all) the perpetrator was a male, and often a manager.

There were relatively few cases compared to other forms of bullying/ harassment reported.

## Types of Harassment experiences.....

### Inappropriate comments

Comments about the way someone dresses, their clothing, hair and appearance. Inappropriate comments about female anatomy. Repeating information provided in confidence to others.

### Verbal harassment

Frequent negative/derogatory and personal comments. Referred to in third person when present.

### Making life difficult

Continually bombarding with emails, threatening emails, lots of 'small things' over long period of time.

## Types of Sexual Harassment experiences.....

### Sexual comments

Sexual 'jokes', victim of sexual innuendo, comments on appearance.

### Unwanted advances

In the office - letters/ gifts/ cards, attention at desk at work, sending emails, being pestered relentlessly.

Out of workplace – stalking, threats.

### Inappropriate sexual behaviour

Touching inappropriately, touching repeatedly by colleague.

### Made to feel uncomfortable

Being looked at inappropriately.

## What proportion of cases reviewed related to Sexual Harassment?

- 4% (21) of the random sample of cases reviewed related specifically to sexual harassment

### In comparison:

- 55% (284) of cases related to bullying
- 16% (85) related to discrimination (with race, age, gender and working patterns the most common)
- 11% (54) related to harassment of a non-sexual nature
- 9% (46) related to other forms of misconduct

### Note:

Sexual harassment may well be under-reported in our survey – however all we can conclude from our results is:

- a significant number of people were comfortable enough to report their experiences in the survey
- the proportion reporting sexual harassment was only a small fraction of overall experiences reported

# Discrimination due to ill-health & part-time work was reported

Experiences of discrimination were provided across a broad range of grounds – including age, race, gender and disability.

One of the more frequent grounds for discrimination was on working pattern or flexible working. Cases involving staff who felt that they were treated differently during periods of poor health were also provided.

For some grounds there were contrasting examples provided; for instance, in the case of religion some perceived religious groups as being favoured over secular staff, while others of faith reported being discriminated against.

Similarly there were examples of both younger and older staff feeling discriminated against due to their age.

## Types of Discrimination experiences.....

### Part time/ Flexi-Working

Not allowing flexibility or blocking flexible working, being expected to work beyond contracted hours, being told not to expect promotion, being treated differently after asking for flexi working.

### Health

Treated less favourably because of medical condition (or condition of close family member), being bullied back to work after being sick, being denied reasonable adjustments. Abused because of weight.

### Maternity

Discrimination when pregnant. Denying time off for maternity appointments. Refusal of paternity leave.

### Sexism

Inappropriate treatment of women and use of discriminatory language.

### Disability

Discriminated against on disability grounds, no reasonable adjustments in place or adjustments challenged when manager changed.

## Types of Discrimination experiences.....

### Race

Discriminatory language and treatment based on race, racist comments and abuse.

### Age

Older members of staff abusing younger staff. Older staff feeling overlooked and having no hope of career progression.

### Religion

Religious groups perceived to be given preference over secular members of staff. Those of faith being discriminated against.

### Others mentioned

Gradism and reverse gradism,  
Homophobia,  
Military favouritism.

## ‘Management Action’ cases seem to be related to ‘active’ line management or poor line management

Some experiences we categorised as ‘Management Action’ reported as bullying or harassment. The examples recounted appear to fall into the categories of ‘active’ line management or ‘poor’ line management. Both can be interpreted as bullying and harassment by the employee.

‘Active’ line management experiences cover performance management, attendance management, tackling poor behaviour etc. Line managers feel that they get accused of bullying and harassment for just doing their job and managing people.

On the other hand there are examples of people feeling undervalued, ignored, given jobs which don’t match skills etc. These appear to be cases which are more about poor approaches to line management rather than intentional bullying and harassment.

Either way – good line management skills, particularly the ability to deal effectively and sensitively with poor performance, behaviour and attendance are essential to reducing these forms of reported bullying and harassment.

Approaches to line management can be interpreted as bullying and harassment



**Active Management;** ‘reasonable management’ perceived as bullying, tackling poor performance, time-keeping, attendance

**Poor Management;** poor management of people, poor handling, poor delegation, not valuing team members, not making the most of skills and advice within team, poor performance management and staff development

# Bullying and harassment can have a negative impact on health and wellbeing

We analysed what people said about the impact of the experience either on them, others or on the team/ organisation.

The impacts on the victims varied but the most frequent impacts were emotional and health and wellbeing related. However a number of the impacts related to the victims' career prospects.

It is important to point out that those accused also reported negative health and wellbeing outcomes.

Some of the cases mention specific impacts at the team/ unit and department level. Furthermore some of the impacts at an individual level clearly aggregate up to the organisation level as well.

Three main impacts mentioned were poor working environment, staff turnover and sickness absence. So aside from the moral case for tackling bullying and harassment there is also a potential economic case related to improved productivity.

## Impact on Individuals...

### Emotional

Driven to tears, loss of confidence, feeling hurt, upset, embarrassed, uncomfortable, humiliated, worthless, worried, disempowered, vulnerable, distressed, 'dread coming to work', left 'scared', out on a limb, isolated.

### Health and Wellbeing

Caused illness, off work, stress, depression, anxiety, mental health suffered, breakdown, in some cases hospitalisation, in a few cases left feeling suicidal.

### Given lower performance mark

Negative performance feedback, given lower box marking, or 'must improve', put on performance improvement plan.

### Denied move or opportunity

Overlooked for promotion/ advancement, blocked moves, no support to get other jobs, denied learning and development opportunities, overlooked for bonus.

### Victim was moved

Forced to move, in some cases the victim moved but perpetrator stayed.

### Victim seeking to leave or left

Seeking to leave or left of own accord to get away from issues, put in for transfer.

## Team or organisational level impacts...

### Poor working environment

This has the potential to impact engagement and productivity levels.

### Staff Turnover

Victims of incidents and those observing them can prefer to move on, or actively search for a new job. In some cases they are actively transferred.

### Sickness Absence

Some victims of bullying, harassment and misconduct report poorer health and wellbeing that has resulted in taking sick leave and being too unwell to perform their work.

# Knowledge and Confidence in Reporting Incidents

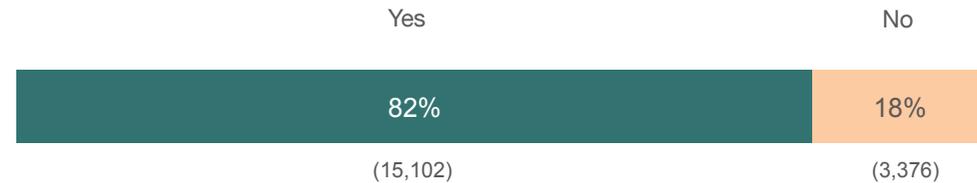
# Recent joiners are less likely to know how to report bullying and harassment

Around 4 in 5 respondents (82% - 15,102) said they know how to report bullying, harassment and misconduct in their organisation. However, this varies significantly according to how long they have worked in the Civil Service. Around 3 in 5 (61%) who have worked in the Civil Service for less than a year, know how to report it. This compares to 88% for those who have been in the Civil Service for over 20 years.

There is also significant variation across Civil Service organisations with around a 17 percentage point difference between the lowest and highest.

We found no significant variation in knowledge of reporting mechanisms between those who have and haven't experienced/observed bullying, harassment and misconduct. Those not disclosing whether they have or haven't experienced/observed it (i.e. those who answer "Prefer not to say") tend to be the least likely to know how to report it.

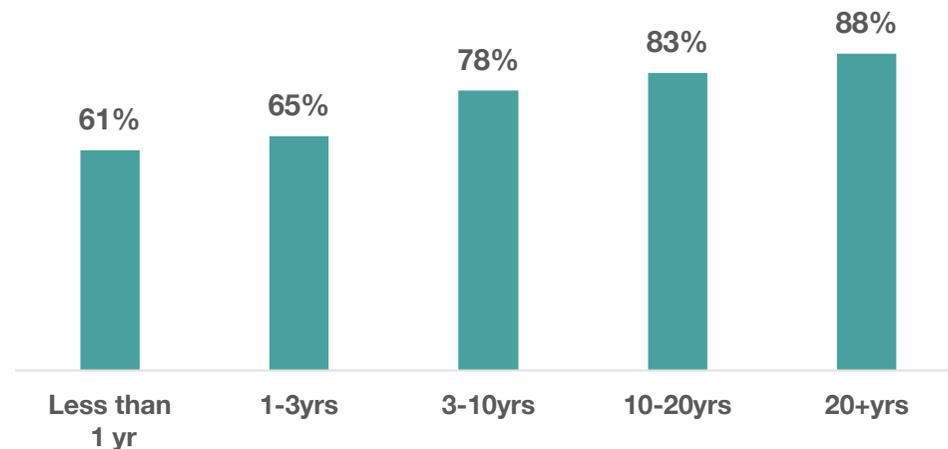
## Do you know how to report bullying, harassment and misconduct?



## % yes varies significantly across Civil Service organisations



## % yes, also varies significantly by time in the Civil Service



# Staff are more likely to disagree than agree that it is safe to speak up and that issues are addressed

Whilst 42% (7,934) of respondents agreed bullying, harassment and misconduct is taken seriously where they work, 42% (7,963) also disagreed.

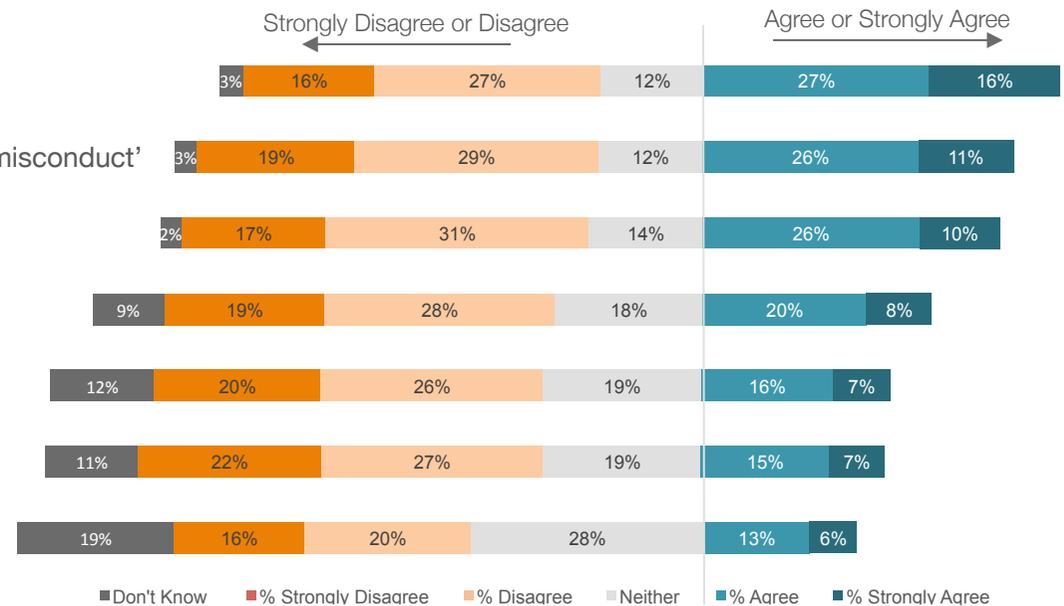
Just 37% (6,936) feel it is safe to speak up and raise a complaint. Less than 1 in 4 respondents (4,202) feel that appropriate action is taken if bullying, harassment and misconduct is found to have taken place, and that those who raise concerns are supported and protected (22% for both).

Those who have actually experienced or observed bullying, harassment and misconduct are significantly less likely to agree that these issues are taken seriously where they work.

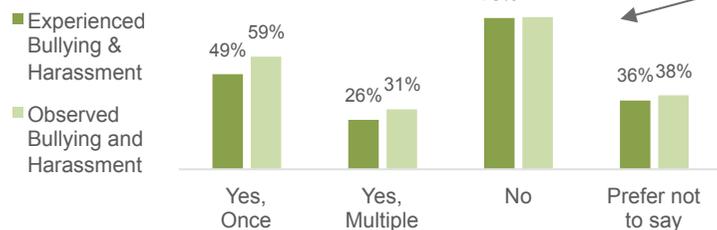
These results indicate that those most likely to have experienced departmental systems and processes for dealing with bullying and harassment, are the least confident in them.

## Statements:-

- 'Bullying, harassment and misconduct is taken seriously where I work'
- 'It is safe to speak up and raise concerns about bullying, harassment and misconduct'
- 'It is safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour'
- 'When issues are raised they are considered appropriately'
- 'If bullying ... is found to have taken place, appropriate action is taken'
- 'Those who raise concerns are supported and protected'
- 'Those who are the subject of complaints receive appropriate support'

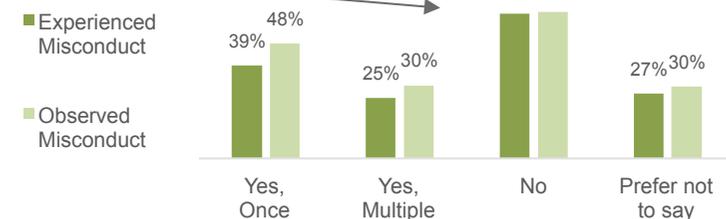


Bullying, harassment and misconduct is taken seriously where I work (% Agree/ Strongly Agree)



Much more likely to agree if not experienced or observed bullying and harassment

Bullying, harassment and misconduct is taken seriously where I work (% Agree/ Strongly Agree)



## Detailed Barriers and Blockers

# Those who have experienced bullying and harassment are more likely to agree there are barriers to tackling it

Around 1 in 2 respondents agree / strongly agree that there are significant barriers preventing issues from being raised (47% - 8,826) and tackled (51% - 9,535). This compares with only 1 in 3 who disagree / strongly disagree with these statements (34% - 6,332 and 30% - 5,560 respectively).

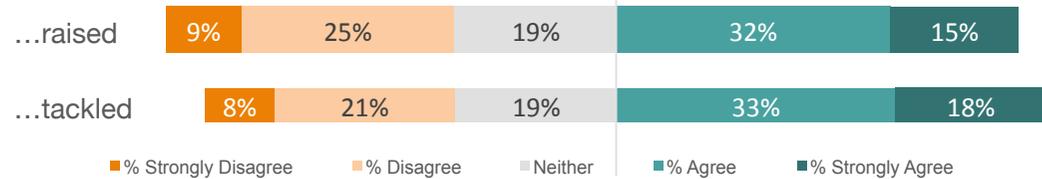
More recent joiners to the Civil Service are less likely to agree there are issues. In the People Survey recent joiners were also more likely to feel able to challenge inappropriate behaviour.

Those who have actually experienced bullying, harassment and misconduct are significantly more likely to say there are barriers, than those reporting no experience.

For example, 1 in 5 (21%) of those who have not experienced bullying and harassment say there are significant barriers to tackling issues - this rises to 2 in 3 (66%) among those who have had multiple experiences. There are similar differences in views between those who have and haven't observed bullying, harassment and misconduct (not shown in charts).

## A greater proportion agree there are significant barriers than disagree:

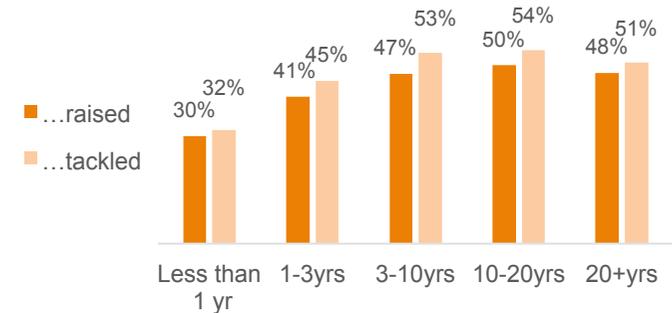
There are significant barriers that are preventing bullying, harassment and misconduct being ...



More recent joiners less likely to agree there are barriers....

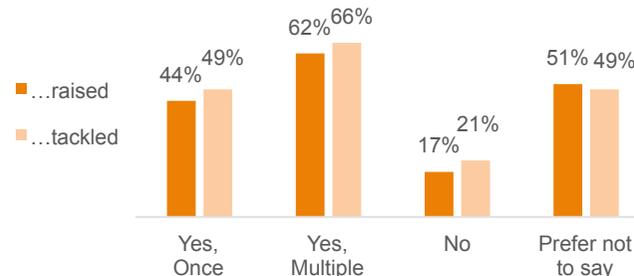


% who agree or strongly agree by length of time in the Civil Service

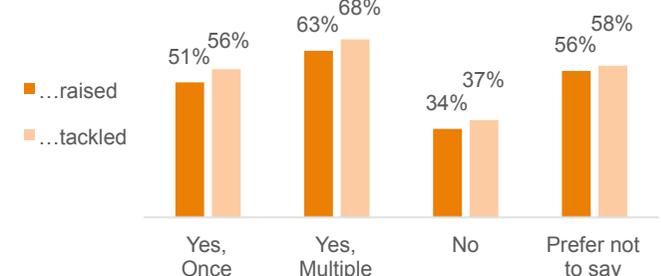


## ...and those who have a personal experience are more likely to agree there are barriers

% who agree or strongly agree by experience of bullying and harassment



% who agree or strongly agree by experience of misconduct



## Different factors were identified as key barriers by those with and without personal experience of bullying and harassment

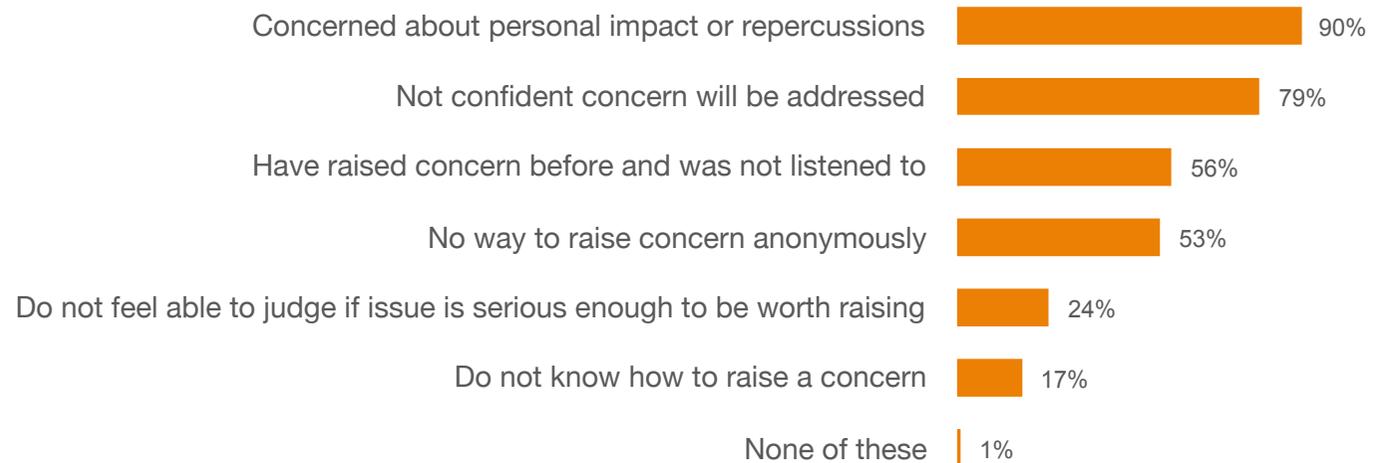
For those who agreed there were barriers we provided a list of issues, and asked them to select any they personally viewed as important blockers to reporting bullying, harassment and misconduct.

The most common barriers selected were personal impact or repercussions (90%), and a lack of confidence that concerns will be addressed (79%). These themes also came up frequently in our analysis of the detailed accounts provided by respondents (discussed on the next page).

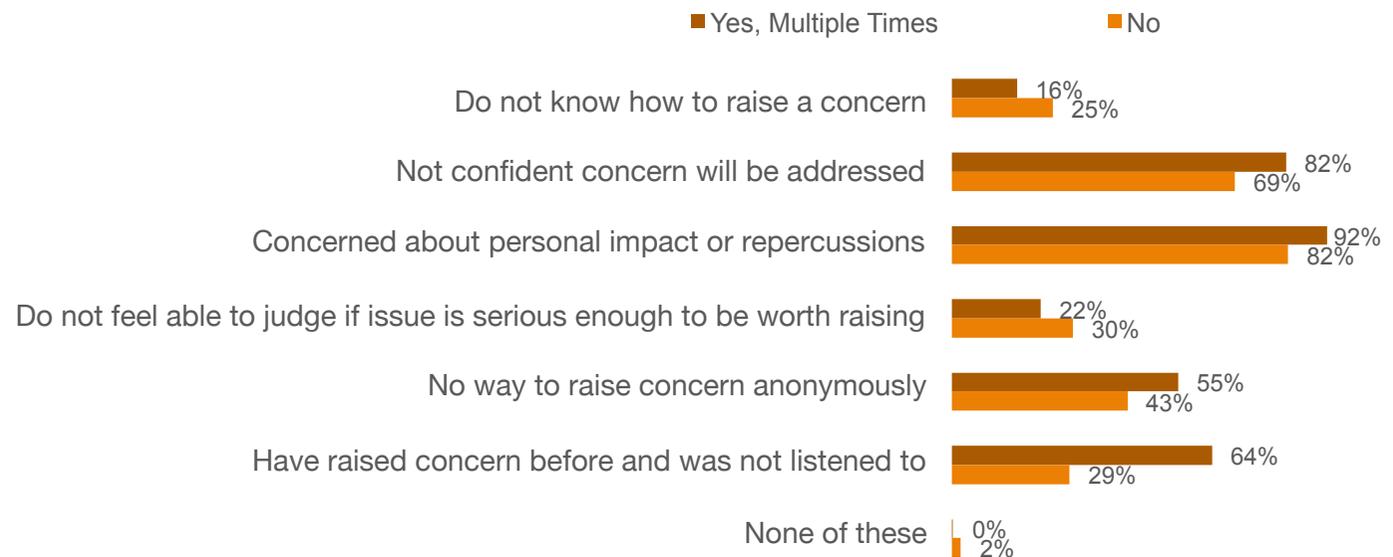
Again, there were differences when we compared the barriers identified by those reporting personal experiences, and those not. For example, those with no personal experience of bullying and harassment were more likely to think that 'not knowing how to raise a concern' or 'how to judge whether an issue is serious enough' were key factors.

Those who had experienced bullying and harassment multiple times were more likely to cite 'raised a concern before but not listened to' as a barrier (64%, compared to 29% among those who had not experienced it).

### Do you view any of the following factors listed below as a barrier to reporting bullying, harassment and other misconduct? (% yes)



### Differences in views about barriers - % yes to each barrier by experience of bullying and harassment



## Managers or management chains seen as a barrier

We analysed the responses of a sample of **5,722 people** who provided detailed comments on the barriers and blockers they have experienced or observed.

Around **45% of comments talked about barriers in relation to bullying**; 16% in relation to harassment; and 5% misconduct. However, this is based on whether respondents used the specific labels we searched for, and so should be interpreted carefully – especially because some accounts blur the lines between our formal definitions of bullying, harassment and misconduct. That said – these proportions are very similar to the categories of experience that people recounted in a later question in the survey.

**More than 3 in 5 respondents (61%) cited managers or management chains as one of the biggest blockers** to speaking out and/or tackling issues effectively – often because the accused was in their line management chain and/or more senior in grade.

**Another frequently occurring theme was ‘fear’ of personal repercussions** – with career, personal health, creating a poorer work environment, and attracting more bullying mentioned. This was followed by references to **workplace ‘culture’** – with some respondents stating they feel no meaningful action will ever be taken.

			Comments	
Cluster	Root word	Covers all comments containing, for example:	No.	%
Type of behaviour	‘Bull’	Bully, Bullying, Bullies, Bullied	2,577	45%
	‘Harass’	Harass, Harasser, Harassers, Harassment	897	16%
	‘Misconduct’	Misconduct, Misconducts	274	5%
Managers and Senior Leaders	<b>‘Manage’</b>	<b>Manage, Manager, Managers, Management</b>	<b>3,495</b>	<b>61%</b>
	‘Senior’	Senior, Seniors, Seniority	1,599	28%
	‘Grade’	Grade, Grades, Gradeism, Grading	655	11%
	‘Leader’	Leader, Leaders, Leadership, Leading	373	7%
	‘SCS’	SCS (stands for Senior Civil Servants)	173	3%
	‘Minister’	Minister, Ministers, Ministerial	29	1%
Fear of consequences	‘Fear’	Fear, Fears, Feared, Fearful	770	13%
	‘Repercussion’	Repercussion, Repercussions	271	5%
	‘Afraid’	Afraid	201	4%
	‘Reprisal’	Reprisal, Reprisals	104	2%
Workplace culture	‘Cultur’	Culture, Cultures, Cultural	659	12%
	‘Favour’	Favour, Favours, Favouritism, Favouritise	224	4%
	‘Brush’	Brush, Brushing - e.g. under the carpet	115	2%

# Perceived Quality and Fairness of Investigations

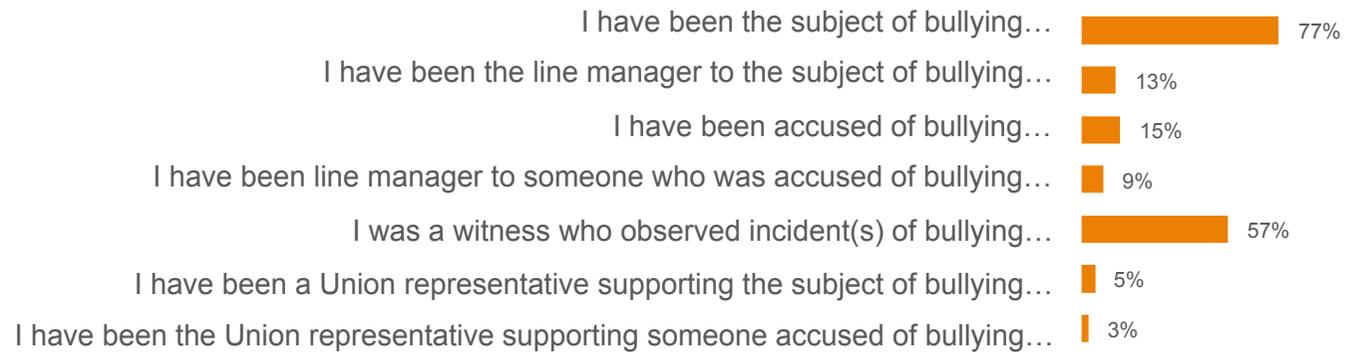
# Only 1 in 5 agreed that those subjected to or accused of bullying, harassment and misconduct were treated fairly after it was reported

Just over half of respondents (56%) were happy to provide more information on their personal experiences and their role in any incidents.

The most frequent situations involved either being subjected to bullying, harassment and misconduct or witnessing it happen to someone else. However a range of other situations were highlighted – particularly employees supporting their colleagues and acting as a confidante. This perhaps suggests the need for all employees to understand how to support a colleague deal with bullying and harassment.

When recalling their personal experiences few respondents, only 1 in 5, agreed that those subjected to, or accused of, bullying and harassment were subsequently treated fairly. Only 16% agreed that those subjected to it were well supported. However when asked about those accused, a large proportion answered neutrally or chose ‘don’t know’ – 42%.

## Which of the following situations have you experienced...

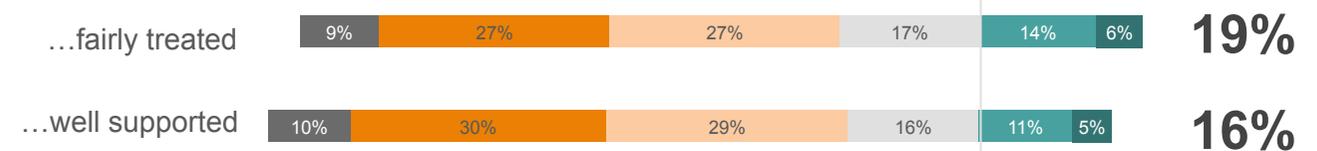


## Other situations experienced..

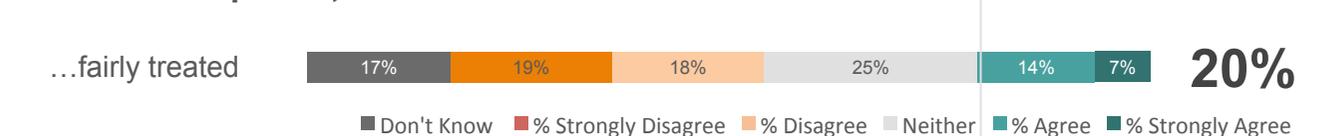
*Supported a colleague  
Investigator  
HR Advisor  
Confidante*

*Deciding officer  
Line manager bullied by union rep  
Non-union rep supporter  
Bullying and harassment champion*

## After reporting it, were those subjected to bullying, harassment and misconduct...



## After it was reported, were those accused...



# Ideas for Improving our System

# Prevention, Signposting, Independent Investigators, and Meaningful Outcomes, to name a few ...

We reviewed suggestions for improving how we tackle bullying, harassment and misconduct put forward by 9,699 people. A quarter of these suggestions specifically related to the act and process of 'raising' an issue or complaint (with 2,415 references). There were also more than 1,000 comments that referred to 'independent', 'external' or 'impartial' procedures and investigators. On this slide we present the most common suggestions - this is not intended to be exhaustive.

## Early Intervention and Prevention

Tackling and challenging unhelpful attitudes and behaviours that, over time, can manifest in or perpetuate incidents of bullying, harassment and misconduct. Support opportunities to address tensions and conflicts at an early stage, before the formal grievance procedure is needed.

## Education and Signposting

Having clear and consistent guidance that is well promoted across all departments. Educate staff on what bullying, harassment and misconduct looks like in tangible terms, and provide opportunities for staff to seek confidential advice on the range of pathways and remedies available to them as victims and witnesses. Ensure those dealing with formal complaints are well trained and, if necessary, qualified.

## Impartial and Timely Procedures

Enable staff to raise a complaint confidentially and outside of their management chain. Ensure those investigating complaints are impartial and, if necessary, independent from the business unit where the alleged incident occurred. Revisit the length of time required to conduct effective investigations, depending on their severity, to minimise incidents taking months or years to conclude. Provide both sides with fair representation.

## Appropriate and Transparent Outcomes

Ensure both parties are fully briefed on the outcomes of the investigation. Enforce proportionate and meaningful penalties where a complaint is upheld. Provide aftercare for those involved, to deal with the potential 'fall-out' of investigations, including the impact this might have on people's wellbeing.

## Build the Evidence Base

Use data to monitor system and track how many cases are raised, actually resolved and resulted in a tangible outcome. Use evidence to inform and monitor procedural changes to ensure they are having the intended impact. Look at other aspects of the system that might be affected by, or perpetuate, certain practices – such as performance management, internal recruitment and promotions.

*A selection of recurring terms, phrases and quotes are presented in a word cloud on the next slide.*



Word Cloud: Suggested Improvements: Non-exhaustive selection of recurring words, phrases and quotes



Cabinet Office

# Bullying, Harassment and Misconduct Survey

Commissioned by Sue Owen

ANNEX

SURVEY ANALYSIS RESULTS

Analysis & Insight, Civil Service Group, Cabinet Office