



Seirbhís Thithe
an Oireachtais
Houses of the
Oireachtas Service

Houses of the Oireachtas – Parliamentary Workplace Survey

Coyne Research
October 2019



Table of Contents

	Page
1. Executive Summary	2
2. Research Objectives and Methodology	4
2.1 Research Objectives	4
2.2 Research Approach	4
2.3 Sample Profile	4
2.4 Methodological Note on Survey Sample Sizes	5
3. Research Findings	6
3.1 Experience of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment in the Parliamentary Workplace	6
3.2 Witnessing of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment in the Parliamentary Workplace	12
3.3 Perception of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment in the Parliamentary Workplace	14
3.4 Support and Contact Channels	15
4. Appendices	17

1. Executive Summary

Introduction:

In March 2019, the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission launched the Dignity and Respect Statement of Principles and Policy following consultation with the political parties, groups and staff representatives. The Dignity and Respect Statement of Principles sets the standards of respect, dignity, safety and equality that apply to everyone in the Parliamentary Community and the purpose of the principles is to encourage a safe and harmonious workplace, free of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment.

As part of the implementation of the policy, it was agreed to survey those who work in the parliamentary workplace to:

- Determine the extent to which bullying, harassment and sexual harassment is currently prevalent within the parliamentary workplace and to
- Inform how the Dignity and Respect Statement of Principles and Policy should be implemented in order to effectively discourage and prevent behaviours which are contrary to the principles and policy.

The work was commissioned by HR and conducted on its behalf by Coyne Research, an independent market research agency which also analysed the results. An online survey was conducted between the 25th March – 15th April 2019 amongst all those who work in the parliamentary workplace - a total of 1,401 people were invited to participate. 515 respondents completed the survey, representing an overall response rate of 37% of the survey population of 1,401.

Experiences of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment:

In the last 12 months, 15% of the 515 who responded (76 people) state that they have experienced bullying in the parliamentary workplace, 8% (40 people) harassment and 3% (18 people) sexual harassment.

In 62% (47 people) of the reported cases of bullying, the perpetrator of bullying is/was a staff member of the Houses of the Oireachtas, with 21% of perpetrators (16 people) being a Member of one of the Houses. For 28% of those who have reported experience of bullying in the past 12 months, the bullying has ceased. However, 72% claim the bullying is likely to happen again in the future or is ongoing.

The vast majority (84%) of those who have reported to have experienced bullying state that the behaviours occurred within Leinster House and its environs. The main types of bullying behaviour reported are abuse of power (64%), and verbal bullying (58%). The majority (76%) of respondents who have reported experience of bullying did not formally report the behaviour. The main barriers to reporting bullying are feeling that it would be ineffective and fear of the repercussions. Informal

sources of advice for bullying are most frequently used, the majority sought advice from colleagues and from friends or family members.

Perceptions of Working in the Parliamentary Workplace:

78% of respondents feel safe working in the parliamentary workplace, with 61% agreeing that they are treated with respect by all members of the parliamentary workplace. However, only 48% of those who responded know what to do/where to go if they were a victim of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment in the parliamentary workplace.

In relation to the perception of the prevalence of inappropriate behaviours of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment in the workplace:

- 32% of respondents claim to have witnessed one or more of these behaviours in the parliamentary workplace.
- 38% of respondents do not agree that bullying is a problem, with an almost an equal number, 32%, agreeing that it is a problem. 30% of respondents neither agree nor disagree.
- 43% of respondents do not agree that harassment is a problem, however 23% agree that it is a problem. 34% of respondents neither agree nor disagree.
- 46% of respondents do not agree that sexual harassment is a problem, 13% agree that it is a problem. A significant 41% of respondents neither agree nor disagree.

Support and Contact Channels:

In respect of proposed support channels the nominated complaint recipient is felt to be the most appealing resolution channel if bullying or harassment occurs. 60% find the telephone service appealing and 50% find the online web chat service appealing.

2. Research Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Research Objectives

A parliamentary workplace survey was required to:

- Determine the extent to which bullying, harassment and sexual harassment is currently prevalent within the parliamentary workplace.
- Inform how the Dignity and Respect Statement of Principles and Policy should be implemented in order to effectively discourage and prevent behaviours which are contrary to the principles and policy.

2.2 Research Approach

An online survey was conducted amongst all those who work in the parliamentary workplace including; staff employed by the house, staff employed by Members or political parties, TDs, Senators and journalists.

All who work in the parliamentary workplace were invited to participate in the research with a total of 1,401 being invited to participate via an email invitation. A total sample of 515 completed surveys was achieved, this represents a 37% response rate. The response rate by role is shown below.

Table 1

	Total Invited to Complete Survey	Total Sample Responded	Response Rate
House of Oireachtas Staff	580	312	54%
Political Staff/Members/ Journalists/Interns	821	203	25%

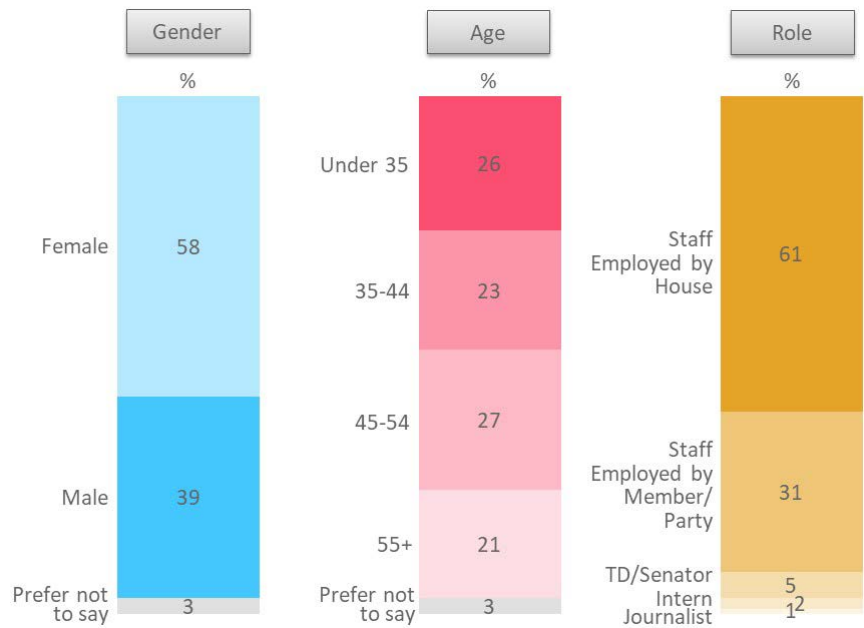
Coyne Research, an independent market research agency, hosted the survey and analysed the results. All fieldwork was conducted between the 25th March – 15th April 2019, with two reminder emails being sent to all who had not completed the survey during this time.

2.3 Sample Profile

A spread of gender, age and role within the parliamentary workplace was achieved within the total sample of 1,401, as shown in figure 1, of which 515 responded to the survey.

Figure 1

Base: All survey respondents – 515



2.4 Methodological Note on Survey Sample Sizes

Due to the nature of the survey some questions were only asked to a subset of the total survey sample, for example those who had experienced bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment in the workplace.

In instances where this subsample is less than 50 people results have not been reported. This is to avoid incorrect inferences being drawn from the data. A sample size of less than 50 has a higher margin of error meaning the actual result could vary greatly from the reported result.

3. Research Findings

The research covered the following four key topic areas:

- 3.1 Experience of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment in the Parliamentary Workplace
- 3.2 Witnessing of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment in the Parliamentary Workplace
- 3.3 Perception of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment in the Parliamentary Workplace
- 3.4. Support and Contact Channels

3.1 Experience of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment in the Parliamentary Workplace

Of those who responded, 15% claim to have experienced bullying in the past 12 months, whilst 8% claim to have been harassed and 3% sexually harassed.

Figure 2: Experience of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment in Past 12 Months

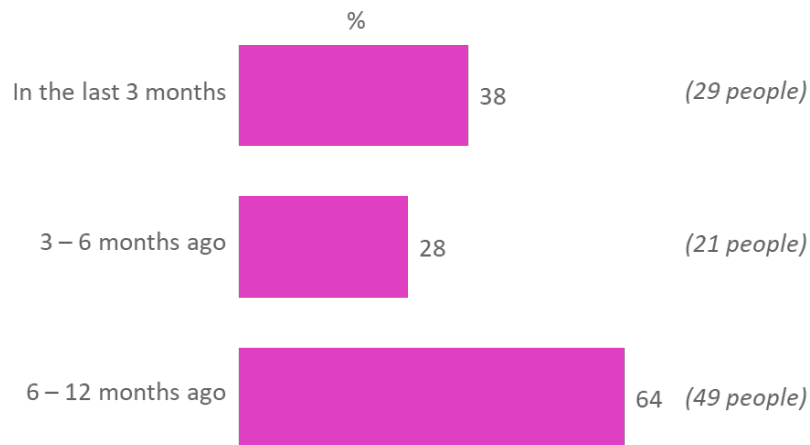
Base: All survey respondents – 515



Some respondents have experienced more than one of these behaviours in the past 12 months.

Figure 3: When Bullying Occurred in the Past 12 Months

Base: All experienced bullying in last 12 months – 76



Amongst those who have been bullied 64% experienced it 6 – 12 months ago, 38% experiencing bullying in the past 3 months.

Figure 4: Status of Bullying

Base: All experienced bullying in last 12 months – 76

For 28% of those who have experienced bullying in the past 12 months the bullying has ceased. 72% claim the bullying is likely to happen again in the future or is ongoing.

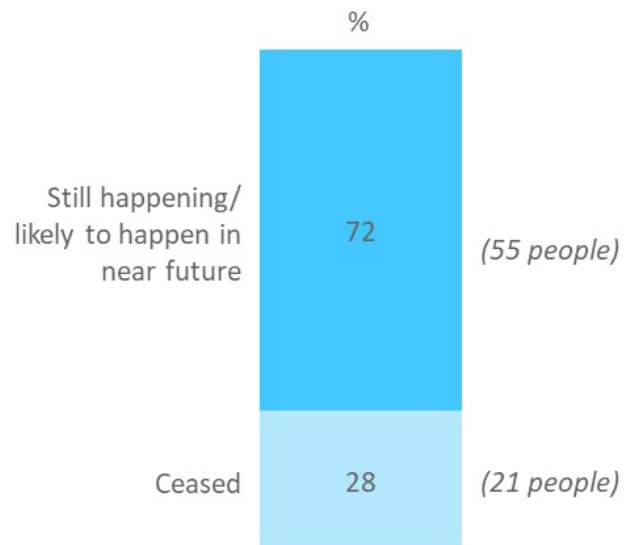
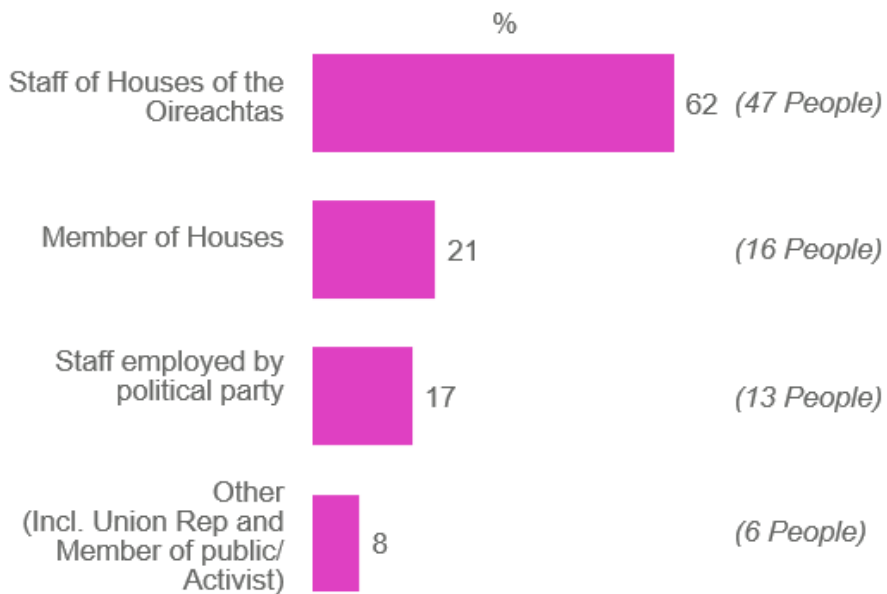


Figure 5: Role of the Perpetrator

Base: All experienced bullying in last 12 months – 76

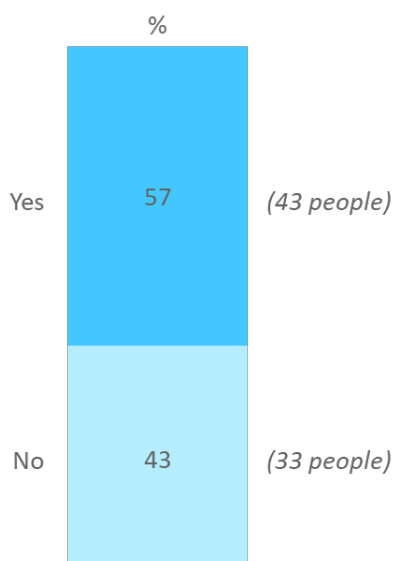


In 62% of cases the perpetrator of bullying is/was a staff member of the Houses of the Oireachtas, with 21% of perpetrators being a Member of one of the Houses.

Note: The above reflects the profile of the sample of respondents, with 61% of respondents being Staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas, 31% Staff employed by a Member/ Party and less than 5% in each other role.

Figure 6: Was the perpetrator in any of these cases your direct employer or superior?

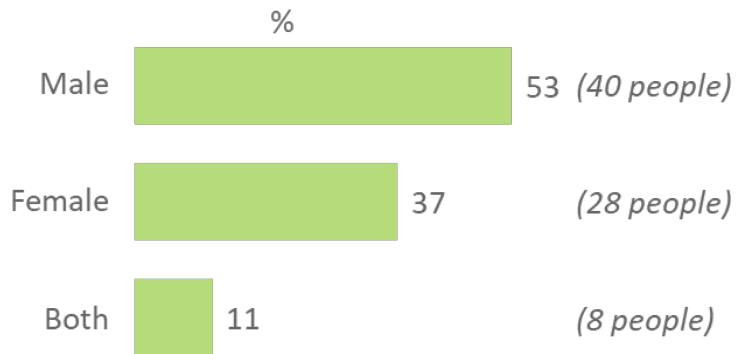
Base: All experienced bullying in last 12 months – 76



The majority (57%) experiencing bullying state that the bullying was carried out by their direct employer/superior/line manager. However, 43% were bullied by another individual in the parliamentary workplace.

Figure 7: Gender of Perpetrator

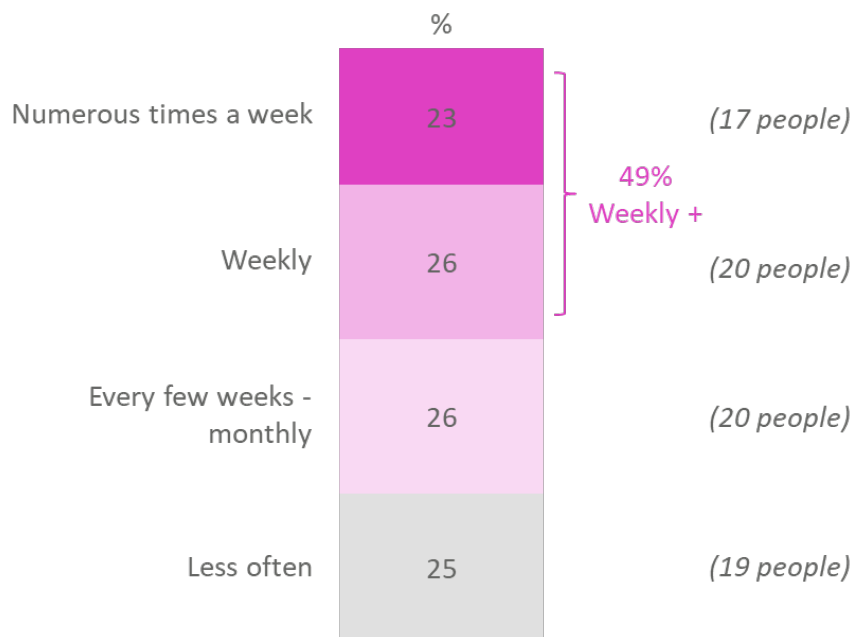
Base: All experienced bullying in last 12 months – 76



The perpetrator of bullying is male in 53% of the cases, with 37% being female and in 11% of cases the respondent stated that they were bullied by both males and females.

Figure 8: Frequency of Bullying

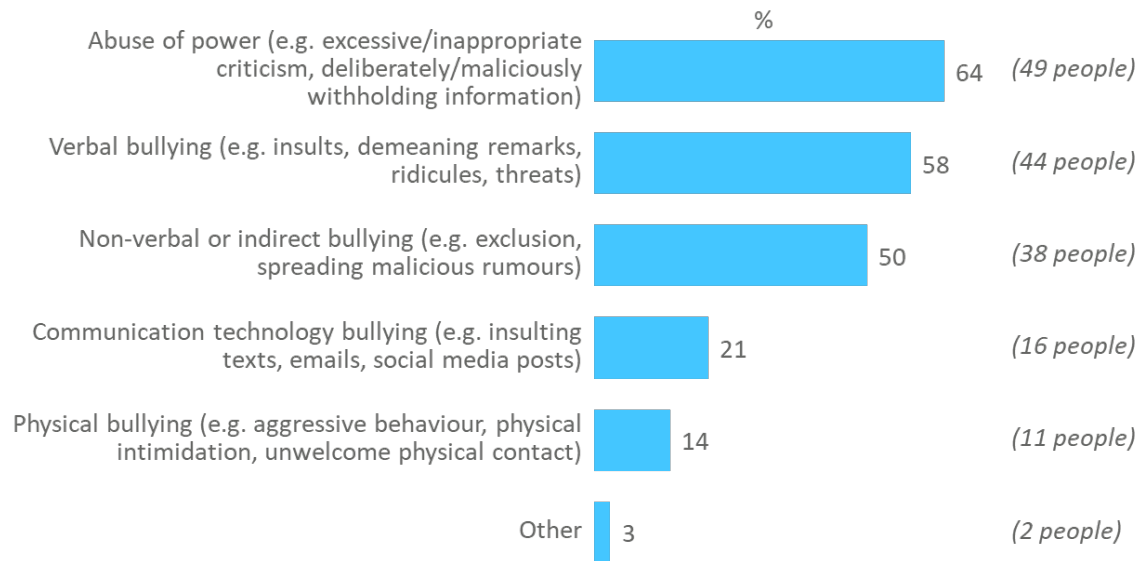
Base: All experienced bullying in the last 12 months – 76



As shown in figure 8, for 25% of those being bullied it is occurring less than monthly, whilst for 49% the bullying occurs weekly or more frequently.

Figure 9: Type of Bullying

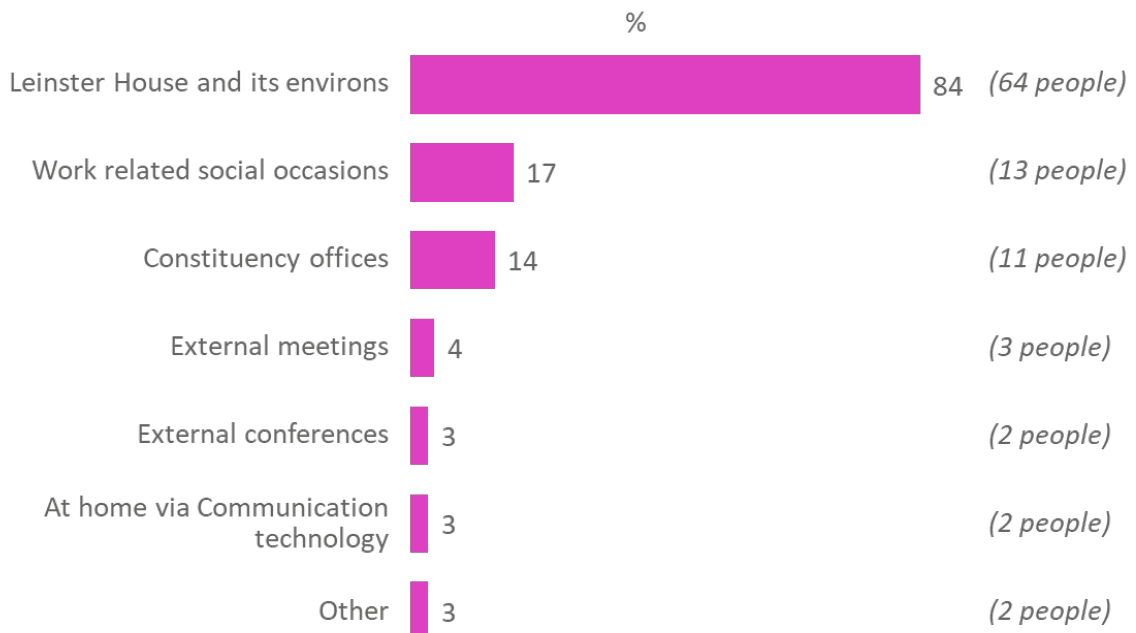
Base: All experienced bullying in the last 12 months – 76



Abuse of power and verbal bullying are the most prevalent bullying behaviours. 21% of those bullied in the past 12 months claim it came through communication technology and 14% maintain it was physical bullying.

Figure 10: Where Bullying Occurred

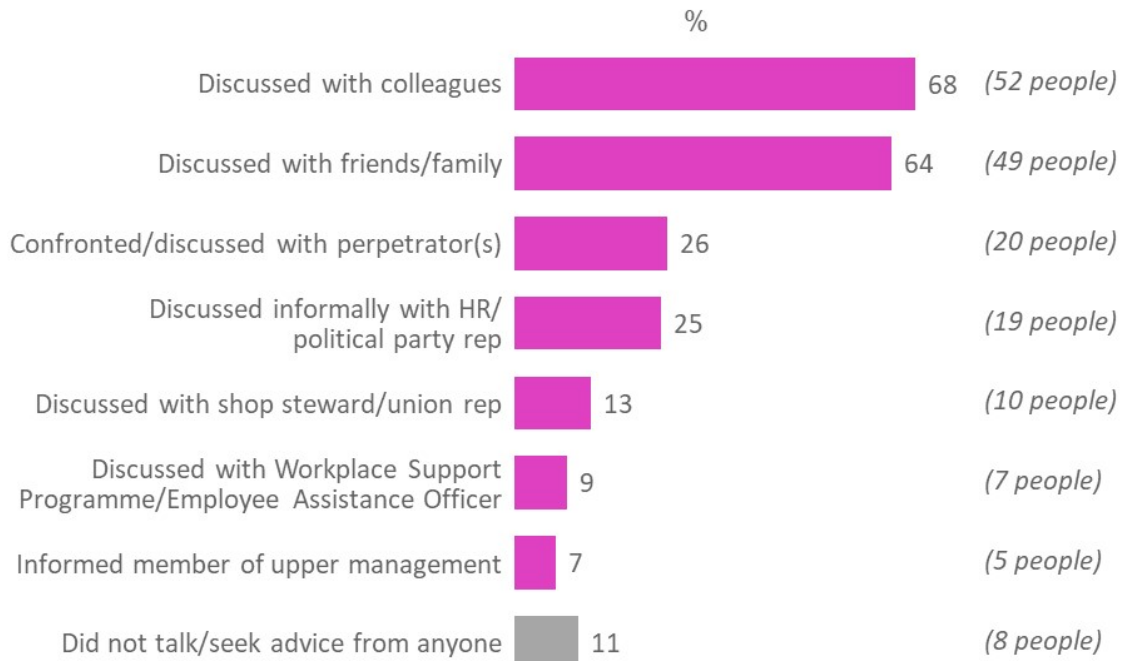
Base: All experienced bullying in the last 12 months – 76



Bullying occurred in Leinster House and its environs in 84% of instances, with work related social occasions the next most likely place for bullying to occur.

Figure 11: Advice Sought about Bullying

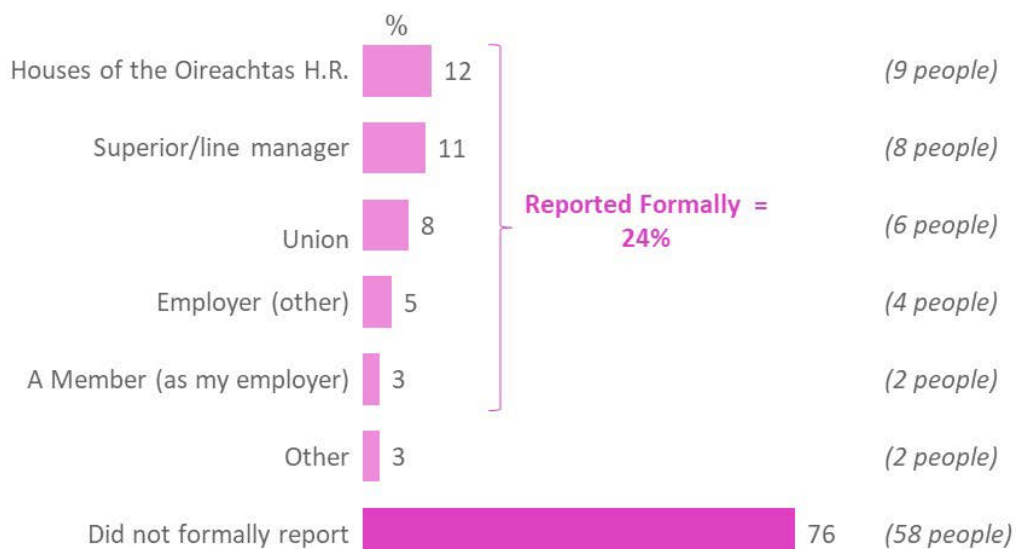
Base: All experienced bullying in the last 12 months – 76



Use of more informal advice channels is prevalent, with the majority of those who have reported to have experienced bullying speaking to colleagues or friends about their experiences, 68% and 64% respectively. 25% talked to HR or their party representative. 11% of those who experienced bullying did not discuss it with anyone.

Figure 12: Formal Reporting of Bullying

Base: All experienced bullying in the last 12 months – 76

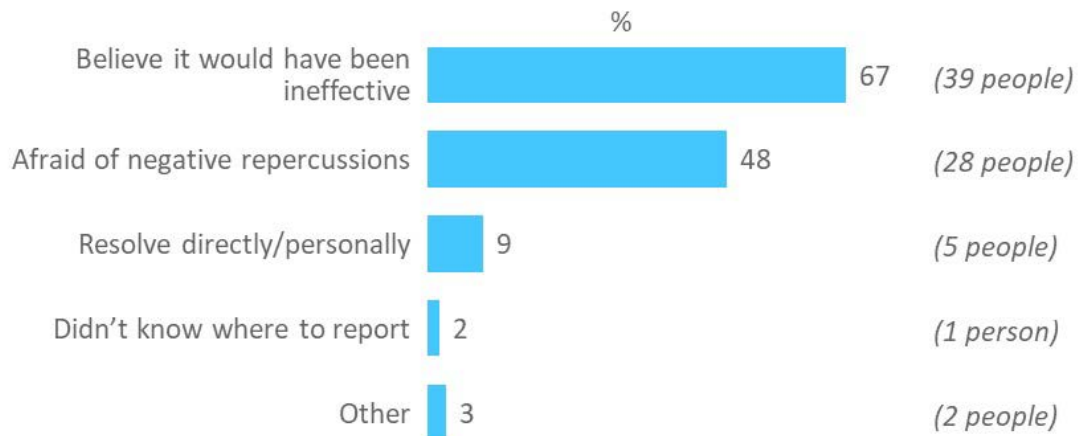


The majority (76%) of those who have experienced bullying in the past 12 months have not formally reported it. Those who have reported

were most likely to have reported to the Houses of the Oireachtas H.R. or to their superior/line manager.

Figure 13: Reasons for not Formally Reporting Bullying

Base: All not formally reporting bullying - 58



Amongst those not reporting bullying a belief that it would be ineffective, and fear of the negative repercussions are the main barriers.

3.2 Witnessing of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment in the Parliamentary Workplace

Amongst those who responded 27% claim to have witnessed bullying in the parliamentary workplace in the past 12 months, 18% harassment and 6% sexual harassment.

Figure 14: Witnessing of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment

Base: All survey respondents – 515

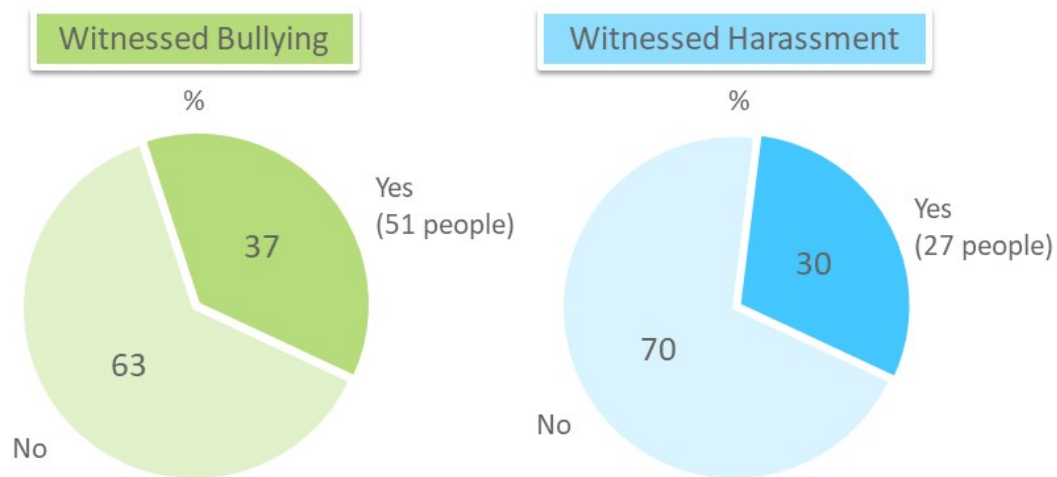


Some respondents indicated that they had witnessed more than one of these behaviours.

Figure 15: Incidence of Taking Action when Witnessed Bullying/Harassment

Base: All witnessed bullying – 137/ All witnessed harassment – 91

N.B sample size too small to report for those witnessing sexual harassment.

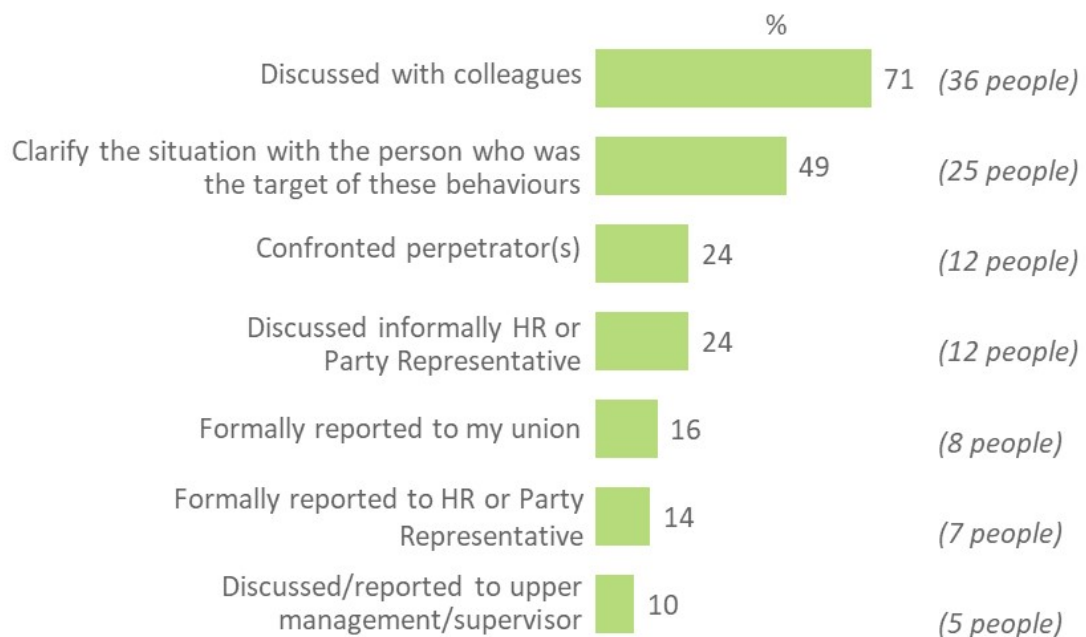


37% of those witnessing bullying took action due to what they saw, whilst 30% of those witnessing harassment in the parliamentary workplace took action.

Figure 16: Action Taken when Witnessed Bullying

Base: All taking action when witnessed bullying – 51

N.B sample size too small to report for those witnessing harassment or sexual harassment.



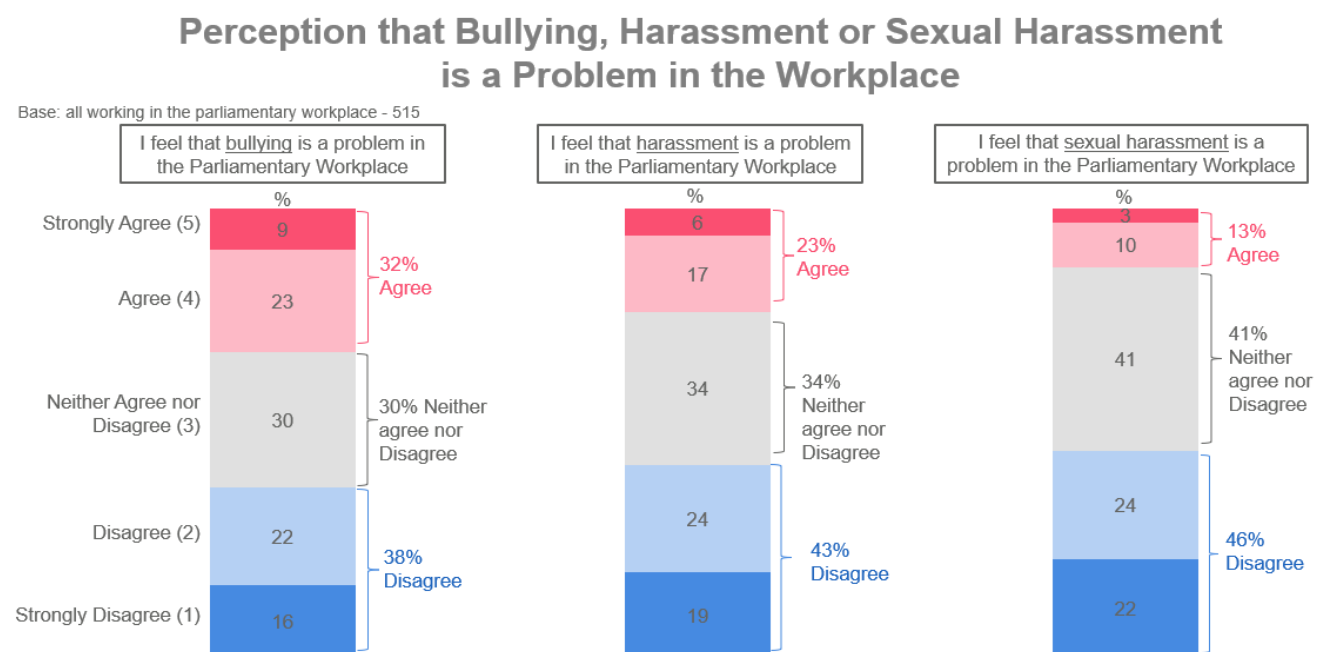
3.3 Perception of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment in the Parliamentary Workplace

A large proportion of those working in the parliamentary workplace do not agree that bullying, harassment or sexual harassment are a problem.

- 38% do not agree that bullying is a problem, 32% agree that it is a problem and 30% neither agree nor disagree that bullying is a problem in the parliamentary workplace.
- 43% do not agree that harassment is a problem, 23% agree that it is a problem and 34% neither agree nor disagree that harassment is a problem in the parliamentary workplace.
- 46% do not agree that sexual harassment is a problem, 13% agree that it is a problem and 41% neither agree nor disagree that sexual harassment is a problem in the parliamentary workplace.

Figure 17: Perception of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment in the Parliamentary Workplace

Base: All survey respondents – 515



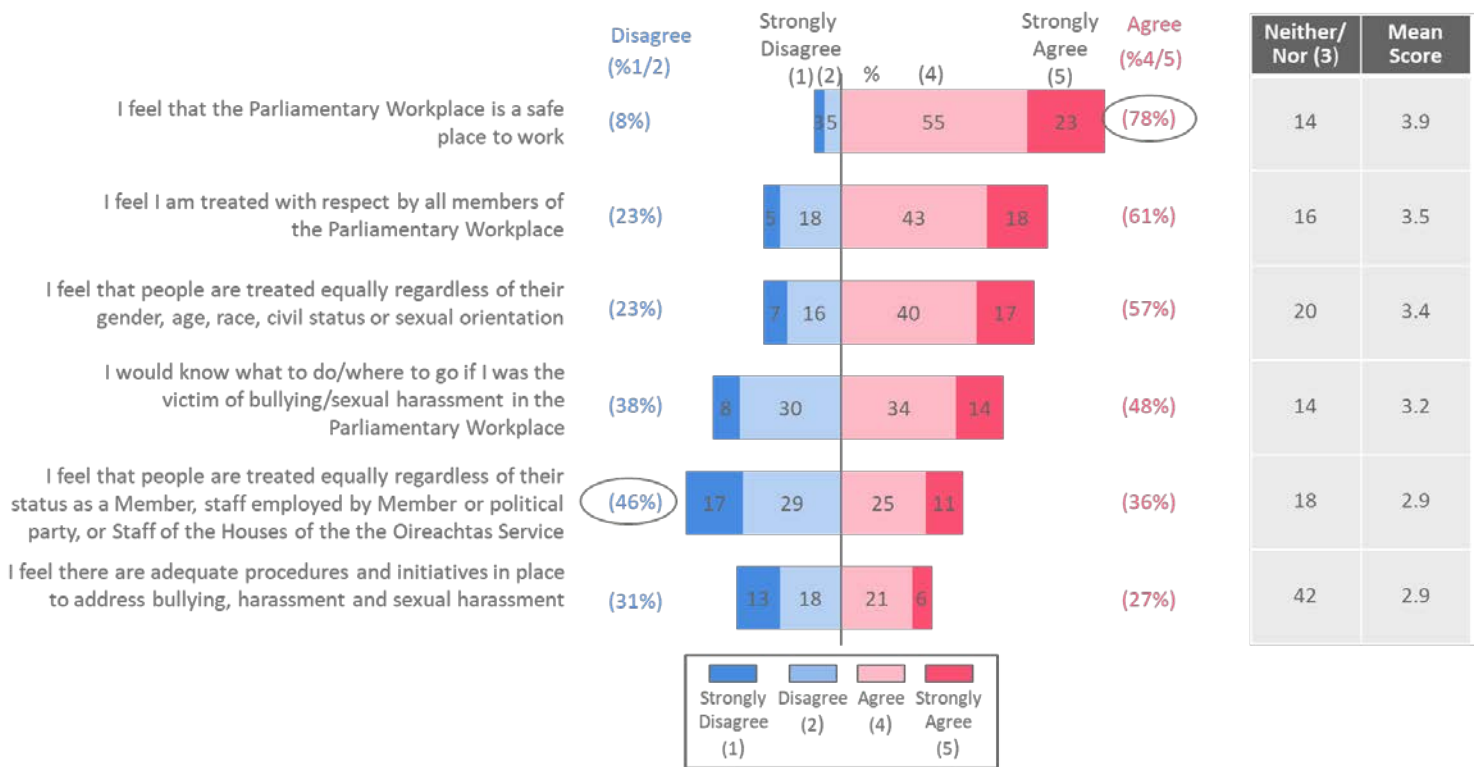
As shown in figure 18, 78% feel safe working in the parliamentary workplace, with 61% agreeing that they are treated with respect by all members of the parliamentary workplace.

57% agree that people are treated equally regardless of gender, age, race, civil status or sexual orientation. Agreement is lower when asked if people are treated regardless of their status as a Member, staff employed by Member or political party, or Staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service, with 46% disagreeing with the statement.

Half of those who responded claim to know what to do/where to go if they were a victim of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment in the parliamentary workplace, however 38% disagree with this statement.

Figure 18: Perceptions of Working in the Parliamentary Workplace

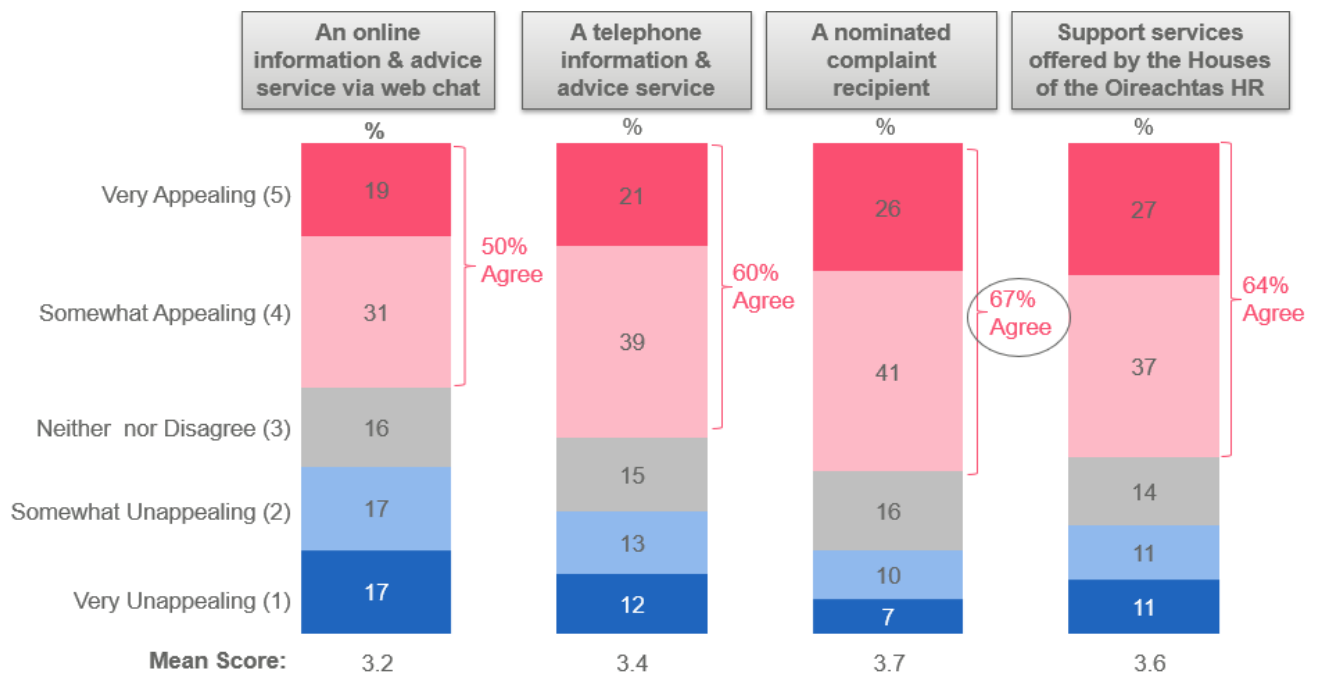
Base: All survey respondents – 515



3.4 Support and Contact Channels

Figure 19: Appeal of Support Channels to Resolve Issues Around Bullying, Harassment or Sexual Harassment

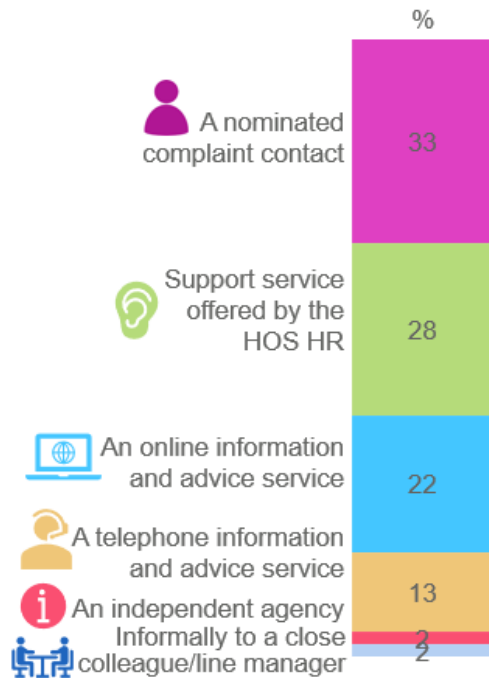
Base: All survey respondents – 515



The nominated complaint recipient is felt to be the most appealing resolution channel if bullying, harassment or sexual harassment occurs. However, 60% find the telephone service appealing and 50% find an online web chat service appealing.

Figure 20: Likely First Point of Contact if a Victim of Bullying, Harassment or Sexual Harassment

Base: All survey respondents – 515



A nominated complaint contact is the preferred first point of contact for a slim majority (33%), however support services from the Houses of the Oireachtas H.R. and an online information service are also favoured by 28% and 22% of survey respondents respectively.

4. Appendices

Norm Comparisons

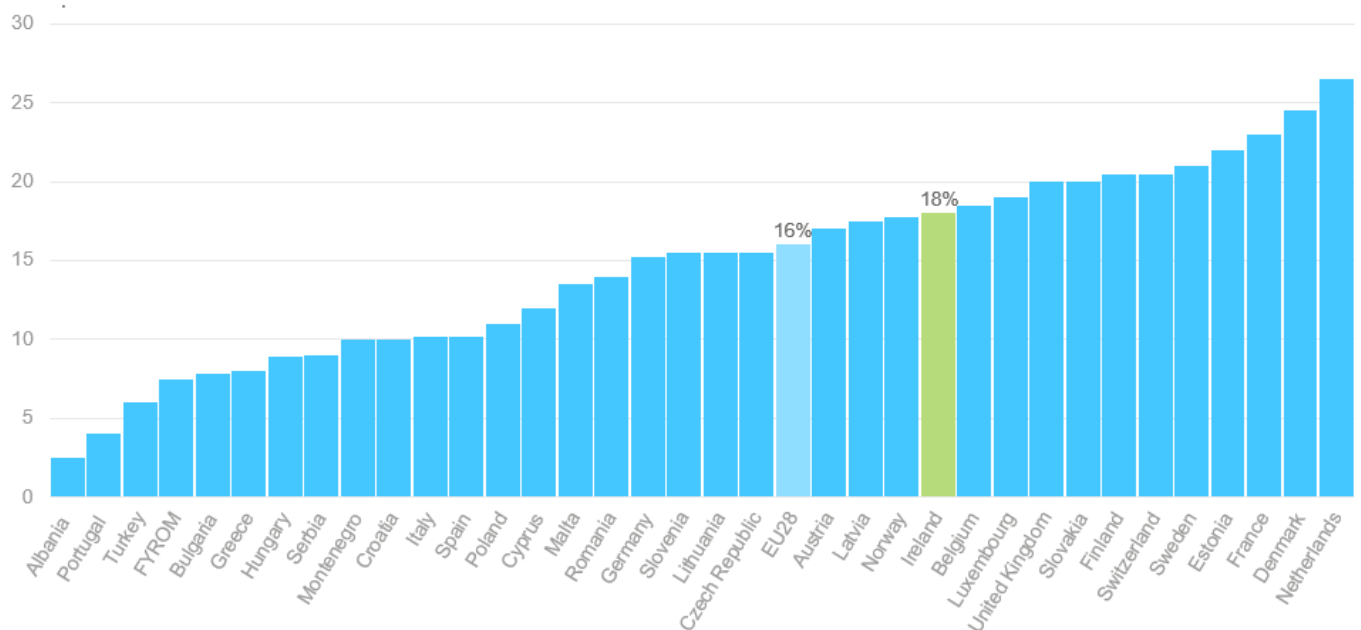
Appendix 1

Figure 1

Proportion of workers reporting at least one adverse social behaviour, by country (%)

Source: 6th European Working Conditions Survey 2015 – Overview report (2017).

Base: 43,850 workers (Face-to-face Methodology).



Adverse Social behaviour: verbal abuse, unwanted sexual attention, humiliating behaviour, threats, physical violence, sexual harassment and bullying/harassment.

Appendix 2

Figure 2

Experience of ill treatment in the Workplace in the Past 2 years, Total (%)

Source: Irish Workplace Behaviour Safety Report, 2018

Base: 1,764 Employees (National Probability Sample Methodology)



Unreasonable management

- Someone withholding information which affects performance.
- Pressure from someone to do work below their level of competence.
- Having opinions and views ignored.
- Someone continually checking up on work when it is not necessary.
- Pressure not to claim something which by right staff are entitled to.
- Being given an unmanageable workload or impossible deadlines.
- Employers not following proper procedures.
- Employees being treated unfairly compared to others in the workplace.

Incivility or disrespect

- Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with their work.
- Gossip and rumours being spread or allegations made against others.
- Insulting or offensive remarks made about people in work.
- Being treated in a disrespectful or rude way.
- People excluding others from their group.
- Hints or signals that they should quit their job.
- Persistent criticism of work or performance which is unfair.
- Teasing, mocking, sarcasm or jokes which go too far.
- Being shouted at or someone losing their temper.
- Intimidating behaviour from people at work.
- Feeling threatened in any way while at work.

Violence or injury

- Actual physical violence at work.
- Injury in some way as a result of violence or aggression at work.

Figure 3

Experience of ill treatment in the Workplace in the Past 2 years, by Organisation Type (%)

Source: Irish Workplace Behaviour Safety Report, 2018.

Base: 1,764 Employees (National Probability Sample Methodology)

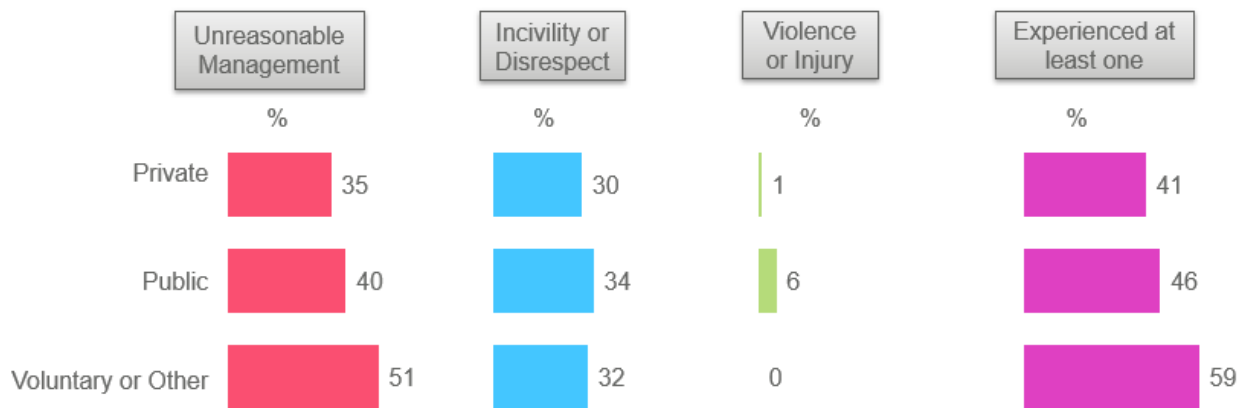
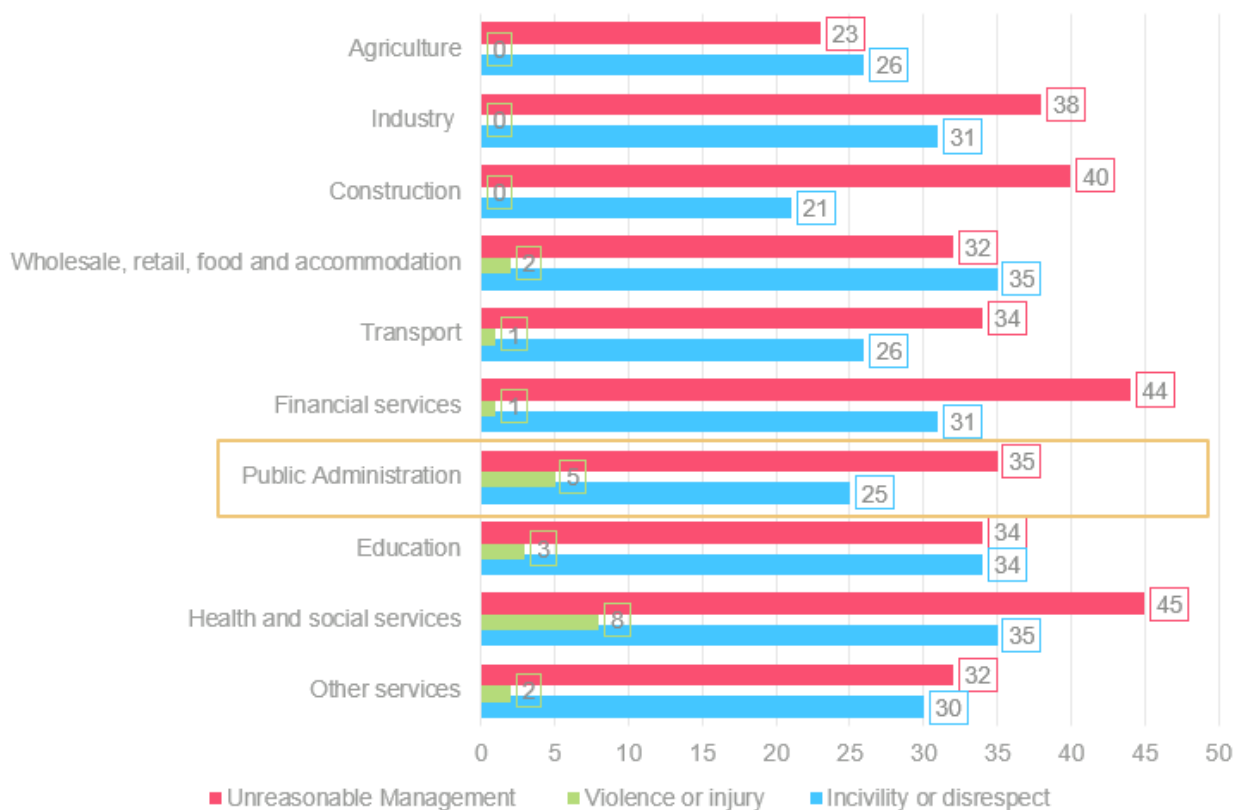


Figure 4

Experience of ill treatment in the Workplace in the Past 2 years, by Sector (%)

Source: Irish Workplace Behaviour Safety Report, 2018

Base: 1,764 Employees (National Probability Sample Methodology)



Appendix 3

Figure 5

Experience of bullying and/or harassment in the past 2 years (%)

Source: HSE National Staff Survey 2018 (Online data collection Methodology)

Base: 18,836 Staff Members

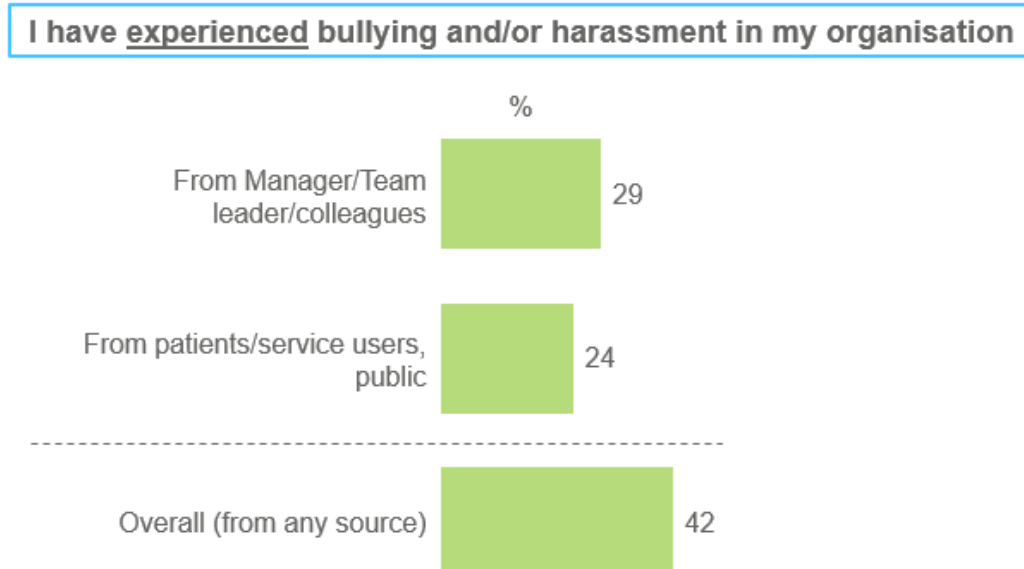
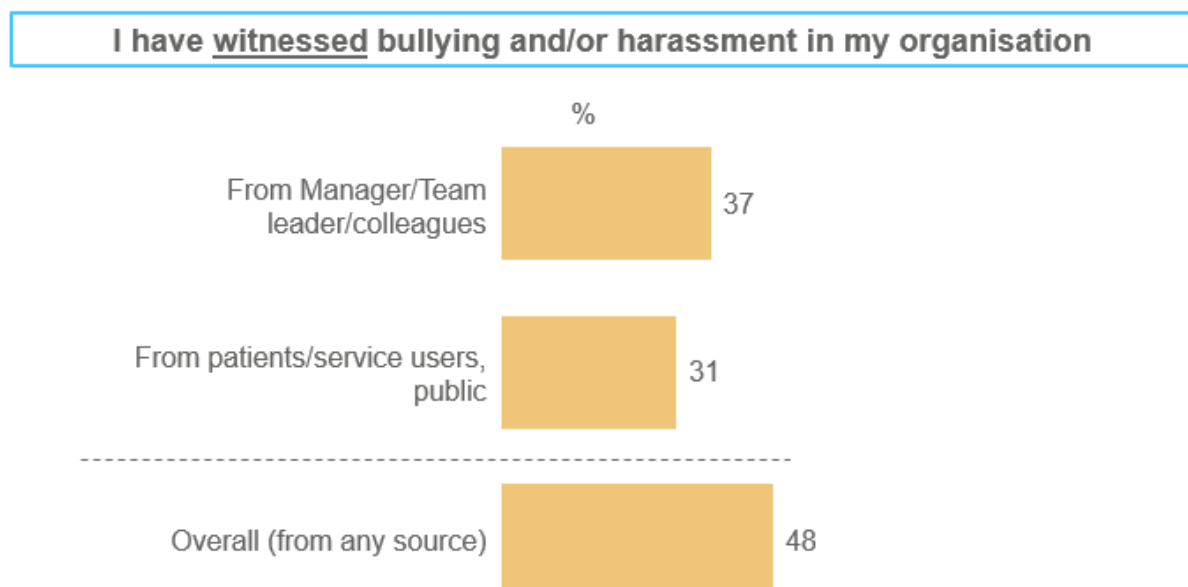


Figure 6

Witnessing bullying and/or harassment in the past 2 years (%)

Source: HSE National Staff Survey 2018 (Online data collection Methodology)

Base: 18,836 Staff Members



Definitions (from Dignity At Work Policy for Health Service, 2009) provided in survey as follows;

Workplace bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect whether verbal, physical or otherwise conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work.

Harassment is defined as any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the discriminatory grounds covered by the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015.

Appendix 4

Figure 7

Experienced Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, by Gender (%)

Source: UK Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Survey (2017)

Base: All working – 3,575 (Online data collection Methodology)

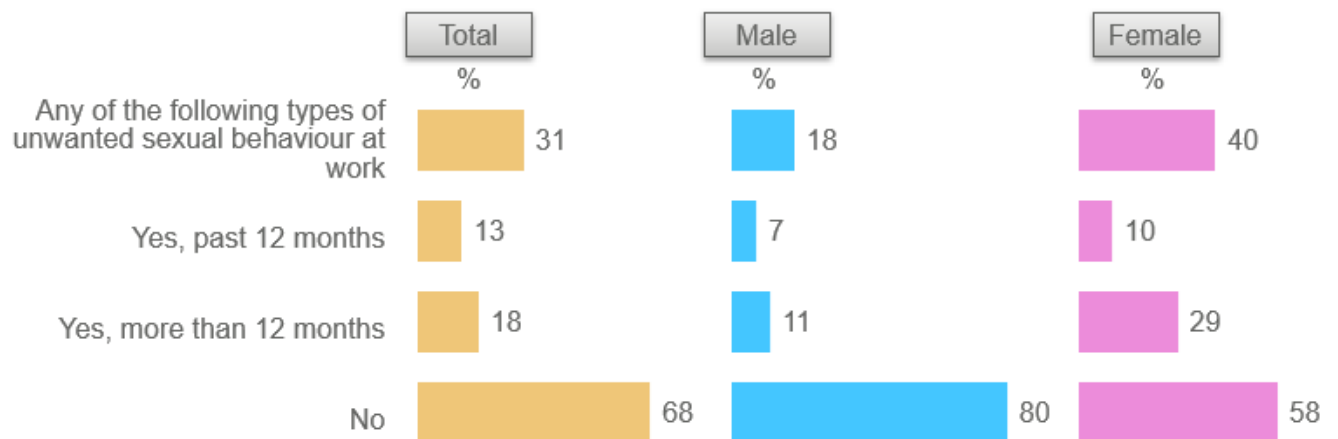


Figure 8

Experienced Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, by Sector (%)

Base: All working – 3,575

