



Changing the world
of work for good

Don't just put up or shut up

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3 ways to participate

- **Ask questions** and vote for your favourite – links below this presentation
- **Answer the polls** – link below this presentation
- **Comment and chat** – click on 'Say something nice' (bottom-right)

What is third-party harassment?

“**Third party**” refers to someone who you interact with as part of your job but who is not employed by the same employer as you.

“**Harassment**” is when a person or people’s behaviour is meant to, or has the effect of, either violating your dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

How widespread is third-party harassment?

- Limited research into harassment at work, and even less on third-party harassment
- Previous TUC research into harassment at work showed that third-parties were perpetrators
- Over 265 assaults a day on retail workers in 2017

“(I) have been physically assaulted twice, am consistently threatened with violence and threats of violence against my family.”

“ A few months ago a man was on the wrong train and he was drunk. I had to get involved as he was smoking on the train and refused to get off. He said to me: “What are you doing here? You are a black bastard.”

Young workers and harassment

"Not a day goes by when I'm not called names by old men, usually 'baby' or 'pretty' etc, little do they know I am underage, and it is extremely uncomfortable."

- Not just an issue for young workers – but a significant one
- Young workers overrepresented in insecure work, public-facing roles and low paid jobs
- Over two thirds of 21 to 30 year olds are in caring, sales and elementary roles
- Rude and abusive customers second biggest issue
- Feelings of futility and that nothing can change

“Not part of the job” – November 2018

“I have been spat at, shouted at and pushed by customers on different occasions while lone working. This has happened several times over the last year.”

“[I am] called slow, incompetent, stupid because I cannot do things as quickly as others due to [my] disability, and also [the] restrictions from systems and processes.”

- 1411 18-34 year olds polled
- 408 responses to survey
- 80 per cent retail workers
- 90 per cent trade union members
- Only 10 per cent reported incident or incidents to their union

What does third-party harassment look like?

"An elderly male photographed me as I was working, which involves me bending over at times. A man wolf whistled at me and told me he loved to see a woman on her knees as I was stocking a bottom shelf."

"Customers sexually harassing staff members and myself whilst drunk. It also occurs when they are sober. It happens every time I work. My managers think it's funny."

- Most common form is verbal abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Bullying
- Physical assault or violence
- Stalking
- Alcohol and lone working

Frequency of harassment

- High volume of harassment, abuse and violence
- "One-off" incidences, occurring constantly
- Repeat perpetrator/s

"[I am] constantly being sworn at by customers for no reason, also being called racial slurs.... I've witnessed people being hit."

"Customer groped me. Customers on multiple occasions made suggestive innuendo about my body. Customer threatened to attack me. Customer stalked me for over a year."

Experiences of reporting third-party harassment

- Fewer than half of young workers reported the last incident
- Two thirds that we surveyed have reported at least one incident
- Only ten percent reported it to their union rep
- Some good examples of employer action in the survey responses

“Me and other staff members reported him to multiple managers over the year (or possibly longer), nothing was done as he was a “regular customer”.”

“Managers didn’t seem to care. A lot of them laugh it off because they see it as a joke. Within 2 years, I’ve lost count of how many times I’ve been harassed.”

Why people did not report third-party harassment

"I didn't go to my boss [senior manager] as previous experiences... [showed me that he believed] the harassment was overexaggerated... he made previous remarks that he doesn't believe in sexual harassment."

"There is no point, "the customer is always right" and it would be seen as "exacerbating things"."

- Individual employer attitudes
- Acceptance that it is "part of the job"
- Feelings of futility and that nothing can be done
- Feelings that they are to blame or won't be believed

Impact on young workers

- Safety and dignity
- Frustration and anger
- Loss of confidence
- Stress and mental health
- Negative attitude work and employer

"Harassment from customers has been a contributing factor to my depression and anxiety so much so that I've considered quitting my job."

"Lost confidence in myself... I lived in constant fear as I didn't know when it could get worse"

What can the government do?

- Strengthen legislation to tackle third-party harassment
- Give statutory employment rights to workers
- Strengthen the role of enforcement bodies

"[I felt] irritated, angry and insecure because there isn't that much I can do about it."

What can employers do?

- Strengthen harassment prevention policies
- Adopt a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of harassment, abuse and violence
- Provide comprehensive training for all managers and supervisors to ensure proper support for staff
- Work in partnership with unions to agree policies, procedures and training

“The employer did nothing. It left me frustrated and unhappy, I was good at my job and deserved better than them ignoring the issue.”

What can trade unions do?

- Workplace campaigns and organising
- Negotiate robust workplace policies
- Training for reps

“When you are paid the bare minimum and given so much responsibility to protect your staff it becomes impossible to protect yourself.”

Further resources

[“Not part of the job” Young workers’ experiences of third-party harassment: polling and survey findings](#)

[Tackling sexual harassment in the workplace - A TUC guide for trade union activists](#)

[Bullying, violence and harassment: guide for reps](#)

[Protection from sexual harassment: Know Your Rights](#)

[Sexual harassment: TUC E-note for reps](#)

[Reporting work-related violence](#)

[The Great Jobs Agenda - dignity and respect](#)

Next webinar

- January 2019 TBC
- Keep up to date and view all of our previous webinars on the [TUC website](#).

The logo consists of the letters 'TUC' in a bold, sans-serif font. Each letter is rendered with a 3D effect, appearing as if it's a white object with a light blue shadow on its top and right sides, set against a teal background. The 'T' has a horizontal bar that tapers to a point on the right. The 'U' and 'C' are solid blocks with a slight shadow on their right side.

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