



Changing the world
of work for good

Tackling sexual harassment in the workplace

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Sexual harassment in the workplace

- What is sexual harassment ?
- Prevalence of sexual harassment
- Sexual harassment : a trade union issue
- What can unions do to tackle sexual harassment?

What do we mean by sexual harassment?

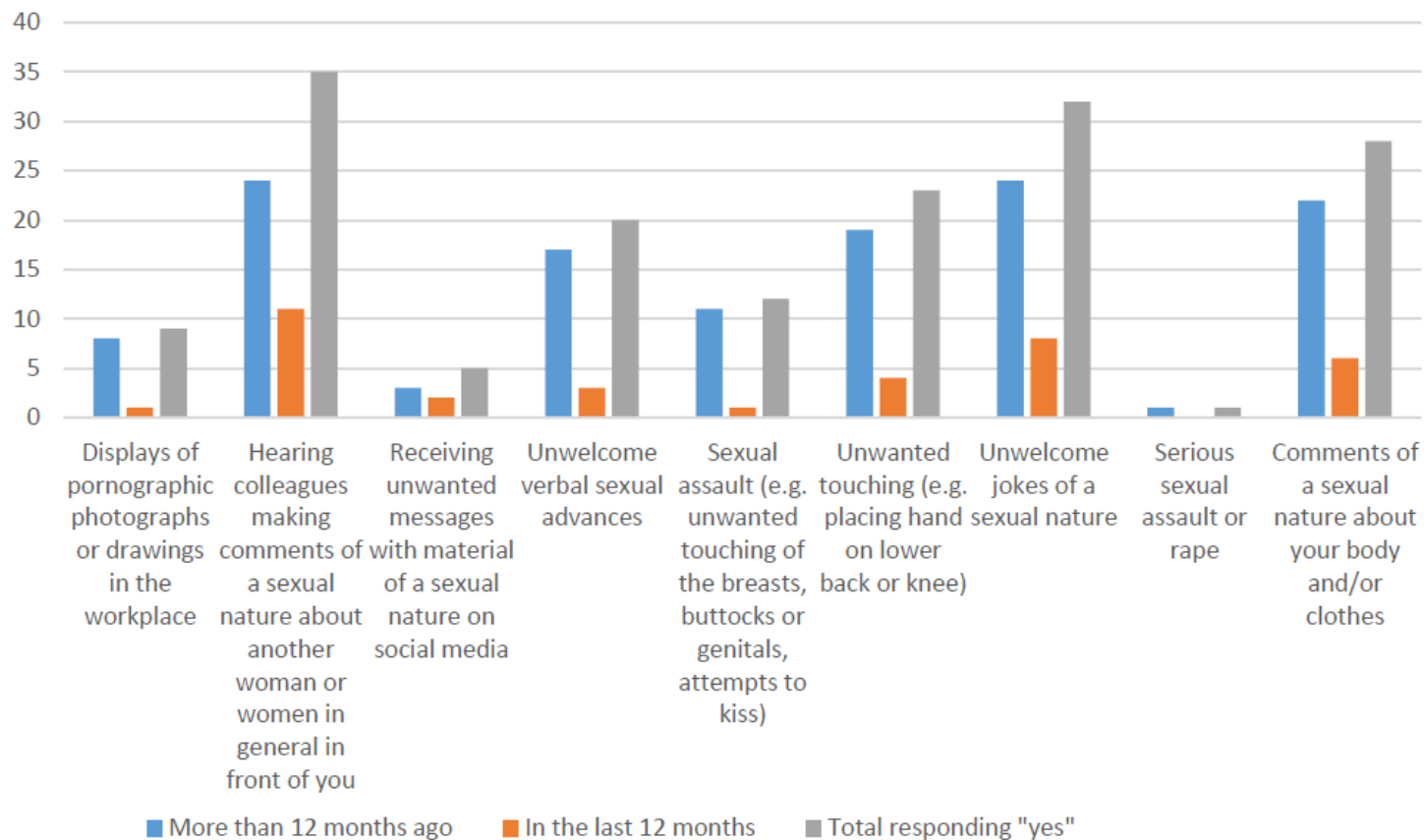
Equality Act 2010 definition –

“unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating someone’s dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them”

Prevalence of sexual harassment

- Women three times more likely than men to experience sexual harassment
- The perpetrators of sexual harassment are overwhelmingly male
- Younger women are more likely to experience sexual harassment and online harassment
- Tenure, contract type and casualisation is a factor
- Male-dominated workplaces and occupational segregation are factors
- An abuse of power is the common feature in sexual harassment

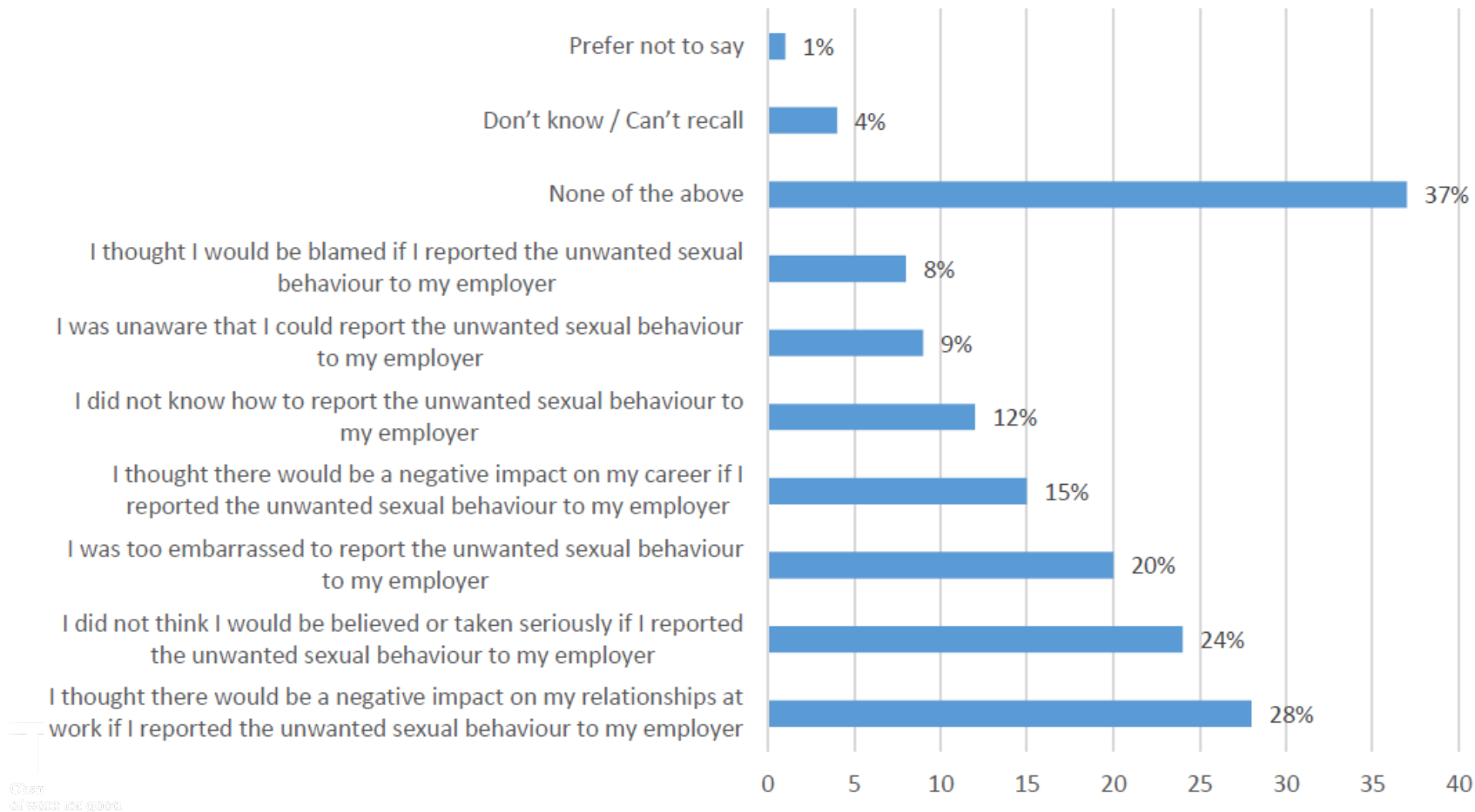
Have you ever experienced any of the following types of unwanted sexual behaviour from a work colleague or work client in your workplace? Percentage of those responding "yes"



Sexual harassment: a trade union issue

- Findings from TUC polling and surveys, 2016
- Impacts of sexual harassment on workers
- Nearly three-quarters of perpetrators were colleagues or direct line managers
- Incidence of “3rd party” harassment – by clients, customers, patients
- Sexual harassment and power : increase of precarious and casualised work
- Equality and discrimination issue as well as a health and safety issue
- Very low reporting rate to trade unions

Reasons given for not reporting sexual harassment to employer



What can be done to tackle sexual harassment?

- Government and employers must act
- Reinstate employer duty to protect workers from 3rd party harassment
- Reinstate employment tribunals' power to make wider recommendations
- Statutory employment rights to all workers, regardless of status or contract type
- Recognition and facility time for union reps
- Training for HR and management
- Clear policies that are implemented and enforced

Negotiating zero-tolerance policies

- Clearly define sexual harassment
- Disciplinary matter
- Include employers' duties
- Incorporate into existing non-discrimination and equality policies
- Need to be widely publicised to members
- Prevention as well as procedures to deal with it

Training

- Legislation covering harassment
- Surveys
- Behaviour, impact and barriers to reporting
- Policies and procedures
- Handling harassment cases
- Challenging harassment in the workplace
- Organising around equality

Challenging workplace cultures

- Unions must lead on tackling sexual harassment
- Awareness raising campaigns in the workplace
- Zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment
- Challenge the “normalising” of sexist attitudes
- Assurance that the union is able to help

Representing members

- Comprehensive training which challenges discriminatory stereotypes
- Sensitivity, validation and active listening are essential
- Clear union policy on representation of the accused and of the accuser
- Recognition of power dynamic
- Confidentiality and data

Next steps

- Speak to your union about existing resources
- Tackling sexual harassment in the workplace – a TUC guide for trade union activists
- Protection from sexual harassment – a TUC Know Your Rights guide for workers
- Still Just a Bit of Banter? report (TUC, 2016)
- You Are Not Alone workplace posters
- E-note for reps and activists
- TUC Equality audit – deadline 14th February 2018

Next webinars

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The logo consists of the letters 'TUC' in a bold, sans-serif font. Each letter is rendered with a 3D effect, appearing to be made of a translucent material with a white-to-purple gradient. The letters are slightly offset from each other, creating a sense of depth and movement. The 'T' is on the left, 'U' is in the middle, and 'C' is on the right.

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