

SEXUAL HARASSMENT RIFE IN THE WORKPLACE

Sexual harassment and bullying against teachers is rife, a survey by the **NASUWT – The Teachers' Union** has uncovered.

More than eight in ten (81%) of teachers believe they have suffered sexual harassment or bullying in the workplace.

One in five teachers (20%) said they had been sexually harassed at school by a colleague, manager, parent or pupil since becoming a teacher.

Nearly a third (30%) of those who have been sexually harassed have been subjected to unwanted touching, while two thirds (67%) have experienced inappropriate comments about their appearance or body.

Over half (51%) have been subjected to inappropriate comments about sex, and 21% have been sexually propositioned. 3% said they had suffered upskirting or down blousing (photos taken up their skirts or down their tops).

As a result of these incidents, 43% of teachers say they had suffered loss of confidence and 38% had experienced anxiety and/or depression. 48% made changes to their daily routine to avoid the harasser, while nearly a third (32%) felt pressure to change their appearance or style of clothing to seek to avoid further harassment.

14% changed jobs or moved to a new school, and 18% felt the incident has had a negative impact on their career progression.

Worryingly, 42% of victims did not report the incidents of sexual harassment. When asked why, over a quarter (28%) said they didn't think they would be believed, while over two thirds (68%) said they didn't feel anything would be done about it. 46% were fearful or embarrassed and 46% said they thought they would be blamed or face negative consequences.

Of those who did report the sexual harassment, in over a fifth (21%) of incidents no action was taken against the harasser. Four in ten (41%) said the harasser was spoken to about their behaviour, but the victim did not feel this matched the seriousness of the incident.

One in ten (10%) also said they felt they were not believed and their claim was dismissed.

Chris Keates, General Secretary of the NASUWT, said:

“Whilst the scale of the sexual harassment is deeply disturbing, equally disturbing is the scale of the failure to act on the incidents that were reported.

“The NASUWT will be using this survey to empower teachers to speak out. There can be no place in our schools for sexual harassment or bullying of staff.

“Schools should be places of safety, yet research undertaken by the NASUWT is showing us that too often teachers are being exposed to sexualised comments and abuse from colleagues, managers, parents and pupils.

“The NASUWT will have no hesitation in taking action in schools where sexual harassment and bullying occur and employers fail to operate a zero-tolerance approach.

“The Government must ensure its responsibility for ensuring that schools are safe environments is taken seriously.

“The NASUWT believes that statutory provisions are urgently needed to require schools to record all incidents of sexual harassment and bullying and to have a policy to deal with such incidents.”

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The Teachers' Union