



Code of Conduct to combat bullying and harassment in the media and arts industries

At the end of 2013, the Federation of Entertainment Unions published a survey, based on responses of more than 4,000 members, which identified media and entertainment workplaces as hotspots of bullying, harassment and discrimination.

The main factors were the competitive nature of the work, which is often seen as glamorous, and the large number of freelancers who have less protection than staff. Most worrying was the almost tacit acceptance that bullying is part of the creative process and the creative industries, plus a work culture which allows "stars" to behave in ways unacceptable to most people.

The report's main findings were:

- On average 56 per cent of respondents had been bullied, harassed or discriminated against at work.
- 52 per cent of respondents across all sectors had witnessed bullying, harassment or discrimination in their workplace.
- More than two-thirds of respondents working in television, radio, film, national and local newspapers reported ill-treatment.
- All respondents in local newspapers reported being bullied, harassed or discriminated against at work.
- Women were more vulnerable to direct bullying and discrimination than men, with 64 per cent compared to 49 per cent of men; 34 per cent of women who identified gender or sexuality as a factor in their ill-treatment and disclosed details of it, reported sexual harassment. One in 10 workers in theatre, television and film witnessed sexuality-related harassment.
- Age was a significant factor, with those in the youngest and oldest age groups being most affected; just over half (51 per cent) of those aged 51-60 and 16-30 experienced bullying, harassment or discrimination because of age.
- Of those who were happy with the outcome of their case, 45 per cent had involved their union.

The FEU held a conference in November to discuss the results of the survey and to consider how unions could work with employers, employer organisations and arts funding bodies to combat bullying and harassment. It agreed to draw up an industry-wide code of conduct.



The employers, unions and industry bodies signing the code would:

- Acknowledge there is an industry-wide problem with bullying and harassment and that employers, workers and industry bodies must pledge to make workplaces safe, positive environments to enable creative workers to do their jobs.
- Make it a priority to provide training for managers and workers in dealing with unreasonable behaviour and education on awareness of bullying.
- Provide access to confidential bullying hotlines and counselling services.
- Work towards the inclusion of workers on arts and media organisations' structures, bodies and boards.
- Provide clear guidance for staff and freelancers on all company anti-bullying and health and safety policies.
- Ensure freelance and casual workers are included in company anti-bullying policies.
- Recognise the positive role unions have in formulating anti-bullying policies and their contribution to promoting workplaces cultures where creativity can flourish without conflict.
- Support specific training for students and new entrants in the arts and media.
- Share good practice and work collectively in the workplace to promote the message of non-tolerance of bullying by managers and between co-workers.
- Require commissioners/commissioning bodies to ensure clients sign the code of conduct and, where appropriate, set up anti-bullying policies.

