

Half of LGBT+ workers have been bullied or harassed at work – new TUC poll

2 years ago



More than half (52%) of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) people report being bullied or harassed at work, according to new research published by the [TUC](#).

The new poll – carried out for the TUC by Number Cruncher Politics – found:

- Around one in five (19%) LGBT+ people had been exposed to verbal abuse at work in the last five years.
- More than a quarter (28%) said they had homophobic, biphobic or transphobic remarks directed at them or made in their presence.
- And one in 20 (5%) told the TUC that they had experienced physical violence, threats or intimidation at work because of their sexual orientation.

As a result, the TUC says it is not surprising that nearly three in 10 (29%) of LGBT+ people keep their sexual orientation a secret at work.

Young workers

The TUC poll found that on every measure, young LGBT+ workers aged between 18 and 24 are experiencing higher levels of discrimination at work:

- Two-thirds (65%) said they had experienced some form of bullying, harassment and discrimination in the last five years, compared to half (52%) of the full sample.

- And one in five (20%) said they were bullied because of their sexual orientation compared with one in 10 (11%) workers of all ages.

Impact

The poll clearly showed that harassment and bullying at work takes its toll on LGBT+ people:

- Four in 10 (38%) who had experienced bullying said that it had had a negative impact on their mental health, leaving them feeling more stressed, anxious or depressed.
- One in three (34%) said they lost confidence at work following the incident(s).
- Around one in 16 (6%) left their job because of the abuse they experienced at work.

Reporting

Only around one in six (16%) LGBT+ people told the TUC that they reported the harassment to their employers.

Just one in four (25%) told a colleague – but two in five (40%) didn't tell anyone.

Almost half (47%) of respondents who reported the abuse said their complaint was taken seriously. But one in five (20%) said their complaint was ignored, and one in eight (12%) said their grievance was not believed.

The TUC says this shows there is room for employers to improve their practices when it comes to dealing with LGBT+ related bullying, harassment and discrimination.

TUC General Secretary Paul Nowak said:

“This new report shines a light on the extent of discrimination LGBT+ workers face in our workplaces.

“LGBT+ people should be safe and supported at work. But instead, they're experiencing shockingly high levels of bullying and harassment – including assault.

“Workplace culture clearly needs to change. No one should think that a colleague being LGBT+ means it's ok to make discriminatory comments or ask them inappropriate questions – let alone carry out serious acts of assault.

“Ministers must change the law to put the responsibility for preventing harassment on employers, not victims.

“We need stronger workplace rights to protect all staff from abuse at work. Good, secure jobs are essential to building a motivated, healthy workforce – and are what every worker deserves.

“Labour's Employment Rights Bill – which will come into place in the first 100 days of this new government – will make a real difference.

“Ministers have pledged to ban zero-hours contracts, raise the national minimum wage to £15 an hour as soon as possible, and work with unions to make sure all workplaces are safe and inclusive for all workers.

“And employers must adopt a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of bullying, harassment and discrimination.”