

Over half of UK employees think shouting at work isn't bullying

12 months ago



New research on 1,026 employees in the UK found that 50% of people have either been bullied at work or witnessed it (47.80% of men and 59% of women).

It found that, worryingly, over half of UK employees (57%) think that shouting at work doesn't count as bullying. It also found that 35% of people didn't think jokes about a person could be considered bullying, 32% of people didn't believe that exclusion from group meetings to be bullying behaviour, and 63% of people felt that abrupt emails wouldn't be classed as bullying.

Alarmingly, one in 10 people (12%) didn't think intimidation was bullying, and 21% of people didn't think that spreading rumours about a person was bullying. Moreover, 6% of people didn't believe that any of the above-mentioned behaviours would be considered bullying.

Men are split almost 50:50 on whether or not they have experienced bullying at work (47.80% v 44.30%). Whereas 59% more women (56.30%) have experienced them than those who haven't (35.50%).

A disturbing 26.22% of all people do not know what to do if they are being bullied at work.

The biggest disparity when experiencing it comes in the age group 45-54, where 68% more people say they have experienced or witnessed bullying than haven't.

Tina Chander, Head of Employment law at [Wright Hassall](#), says: "Workplaces that tolerate shouting from senior colleagues may write it off as people simply 'being passionate', but this behaviour can cause serious problems, especially if an employee decides to make a formal complaint and take the employer to a tribunal; the costs and reputation damage associated with this can be crippling.

“In today’s world, where there is so much more awareness about what behaviour is acceptable or not, it’s upsetting to see that 50% of people have witnessed someone being bullied.

“Given that more women have experienced bullying compared to men, and fewer women know what to do, it’s time for workplaces to focus bullying reporting activity on them and make sure that everybody knows what support is available to them.

“At the very least, a workplace should have a bullying and harassment policy in place, but there’s no point in having a policy if no one is aware of it.”

When asked who was responsible for fixing the problem, the survey commissioned by law firm Wright Hassall found that 13% of people weren’t sure. Younger age groups (18-24 and 25-34) put more emphasis on HR sorting out bullying (34.90% and 37.10%, respectively) than the older respondents, who average 26.7% think it should be HR to sort out bullying.

Tina Chander added: “It’s everyone’s responsibility to fix the problem of workplace bullying. HR plays a vital role, as do the leaders, but it’s up to colleagues to care for one another and speak up when behaviour is wrong. No one should suffer in silence.”

The information provided in this article is provided for general information purposes only, and does not provide definitive advice. It does not amount to legal or other professional advice and so you should not rely on any information contained here as if it were such advice.

Wright Hassall does not accept any responsibility for any loss which may arise from reliance on any information published here. Definitive advice can only be given with full knowledge of all relevant facts. If you need such advice please contact a member of our professional staff.