

**young
members
in UNISON**

"Gonnae No Dae That"



Bullying or Banter?



Advice and Guidance

for

Young Workers

Produced by Scottish Regional Young Members



***For information on
UNISON Young Members
What we do, and how
you can get involved,
contact us on –***

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 0800 0 857 857

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A word cloud centered around the word "bullying" in large green letters. Other words include: "threats", "hostility", "injured", "intimidated", "anxious", "offensive", "hurt", "scared", "criticism", "malicious", "sickness", "sexism", "undermined", "offended", "overbearing", "excluded", "discrimination", "homophobia", "unreasonable", "gossiping", "violence", "abused".

Introduction

Bullying and harassment are common problems affecting many young people at work. But both bullying and harassment are unacceptable, and the law makes it clear that all employees have the right to work in a safe environment.

Your employer is responsible for creating and maintaining a safe workplace, free from bullying, intimidation and harassment. Employees are protected by a combination of employers' policies and the law.

UNISON Scotland Young Members recently undertook a survey of its young members, which showed shocking numbers of young people are still being bullied and harassed in the workplace, despite the policies and laws that should protect them.

This guide is part of a wider campaign by our young members group to raise awareness of the issue, to help you understand what bullying and harassment is, how you can recognise it and how UNISON can help you when you need it.

What is Bullying & Harassment?

Examples of bullying include:

- ♦ *offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behavior*
- ♦ *abuse of authority which violates the dignity of an individual or a group of individuals*
 - ♦ *creating a hostile environment against an individual*
 - ♦ *the undermining, humiliation or injury of an individual*

The bullying does not need to relate to what is called a protected characteristic, which are listed under the Equality Act 2010. Although, unless it comes under one of these, or is of a sexual nature, it is not prohibited by the Equality Act.

50% of Scottish Young Members that had experienced bullying/harassment did not know this was classed as bullying

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of people in the workplace or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

To be protected under the Equality Act, it must be related to one of the protected characteristics.

Examples of harassment could include:

- ♦ *making offensive or intimidating comments*
- ♦ *withholding information so the job cannot be done properly*
 - ♦ *unreasonable or impossible deadlines or workloads*
 - ♦ *overbearing supervision or unjust criticism*
- ♦ *blocking opportunities or making threats about job security*



Real Case Study- 23 year old Callum works as an admin assistant at a primary school. Callum suffers from a disability called Asperger's Syndrome. This causes Callum difficulties with social communication, social interaction, and social imagination. As a result of Callum's disability, he is often called names by colleagues and pupils in the school. Callum has reported this to his manager although nothing was done and pupils even physically assaulted him. Callum has reported this to his manager although nothing was done and things got worse for him, with assaulting him. He became anxious and depressed about coming to work. Nothing was done about the issue for him until he was pulled to the ground and stamped on by a colleague who shouted abusive words at him. Callum ended up leaving the school and finding another job in a school where he was supported by colleagues rather than bullied. Callum has now joined a trade union who have supported him and helped him work with his employer.

"I became anxious and depressed"

Are You Being Bullied?

Have you been subjected to derogatory name calling?

Do you feel alone or isolated?

Do colleagues ever physically hurt you on purpose?

Are you ever afraid to go to work?

Had someone else taken credit for your work?

Have you been treated in a rude or disrespectful manner?

Are you anxious about going to work?

Had others refuse your requests for assistance?

Been yelled at or shouted at in a hostile manner?

Had your contributions ignored by others?

Had someone interfere with your work activities?

Been subjected to mean pranks?

Been denied a raise or promotion without being given a valid reason?

Been the target of rumours or gossip?

Shown little empathy or sympathy when you were having a tough time?

Been excluded from work-related social gatherings?

Been given unreasonable workloads or deadlines — more than others?

Had attempts made to turn other employees against you?

Had someone flaunt his or her status or treat you in a condescending manner?

Been subjected to negative comments about your intelligence or competence?

1 in 5 LGBT workers have experienced verbal bullying from colleagues, customers or service users because of their sexual orientation.

75% of Young People have experienced some form of bullying in the workplace.

Real Case Study- 22 year old Jessica, has just started work with her local council as a home carer doing the morning shift. The other carers Jessica works with have been gossiping about her with clients in a negative way, leading to complaining “I lost faith in my employer” clients about her. Jessica has also experienced physical violence from service users. Jessica reported this to her line manager but nothing was done about it, she did not report it anywhere else as she feels she has lost faith in her employers who won’t do anything about the situation.

What can you do about it?

There are a few simple steps you can take if you are affected by bullying at work:

- ◆ Keep a written record or diary of all bullying incidents, including past incidents – no matter how small
- ◆ Speak to the bully (if you can): they may not have realised how distressing their actions are to you – if you are unable to do this, ask your rep or a colleague to raise it on your behalf
 - ◆ Speak to your UNISON rep
- ◆ Speak to your employer – your rep will be able to advise you on the best way of doing so and accompany you to any meetings
- ◆ Contact an occupational health service or employee assistance programme

19% of disabled people experienced unfair treatment at work compared to 13% of non-disabled people



- ◆ Become a UNISON rep to help reduce bullying and harassment in your workplace

What can UNISON do about it?

UNISON works at many levels to tackle bullying and harassment in the workplace:

- ◆ Nationally – UNISON campaigns against bullying and harassment
- ◆ Locally – UNISON safety reps and stewards are trained to help you find a solution to bullying and harassment issues
- ◆ Your UNISON rep may investigate whether your case is a one-off incident, or part of a wider problem
- ◆ Your UNISON rep may also survey members and workers and may negotiate with your employer to create or revise policies

IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS

CALL UNISON DIRECT FREE 0800 0 857 857

Is someone you know being bullied?

Bullying might be difficult to recognise, as it can happen with the person is alone. People who experience bullying might be scared to talk about it, or they might feel ashamed about being bullied. This could lead them to try and hide what is going on. If you haven't been present when a person is being hassled, some indications that he or she is being bullied are:

55% of Scottish Young Members did not report their experience of bullying and harassment

Lack of motivation
Vagueness, especially when talking about certain topics
Unusual behaviour
Physical injuries
Avoiding work social situations

Take care that you don't immediately assume that the problem is bullying. These signs might be visible for a variety of reasons.

TALK—It's a good idea to talk to the person to find out more. Remember they could be very sensitive about the situation and could be scared to talk.

CARE—Help boost the person's self-confidence. It can help to let the person know that you are a friend and you care. Point out all the great things they have to offer to boost their self-esteem.

INCLUDE—Make a special effort to include the person into your group. This can help raise their confidence and may encourage them to confide in you.

What to do if you think someone is being bullied

HELP—Let someone know about the situation. Try to go together with the person being bullied to talk to your UNISON rep, employer or manager.

DEFEND—Stick up for the person. If you see someone is being bullied it might be helpful to say something. Take care not to make the situation worse or put yourself in danger.

Bully or Banter?

Are you a Bully?

You've been rude to a colleague, made fun of the way they look or speak

You've spread gossip and rumours about a colleague

You've publicly humiliated a colleague

You've physically assaulted a colleague for no reason or regularly take your anger out on them

violent
terrorise racist
aggressive gossip crude
homophobic humiliate mean
bully overbearing
manipulate
intimidating exclude
negative two-faced fakerude
sexist foul

You've posted negative comments about a colleague via email, text, or social media

You and your friends have intentionally excluded a colleague from a work social activity

You undermine a particular colleague regularly in meetings or in front of other staff

You intentionally make things difficult for a colleague to get their work done

If you answered these questions honestly and agreed with a number of them, you are displaying bullying behaviour. Think about how your behaviour affects other people. We're all hurt at some point in our lives.

Be part of the solution, not the problem.

STOP BULLYING

The Health Impact

Bullying can affect everyone—those who are bullied, those who bully, and those who witness bullying. Bullying is linked to many negative outcomes including impacts on mental health, substance use, and suicide.

People who are bullied can experience negative physical, and mental health issues. They are more likely to experience:

- Depression and anxiety
- Thoughts or attempts at suicide
- Increased feelings of sadness and loneliness
- Changes in sleep and eating patterns
- Loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy
- Physical health complaints
- Decreased productivity at work
- They are more likely to miss, or avoid work
- Withdrawal from social activities
- Headaches and stomach-aches
- Panic attacks

40% of Young Members experienced mental health issues as a result of bullying

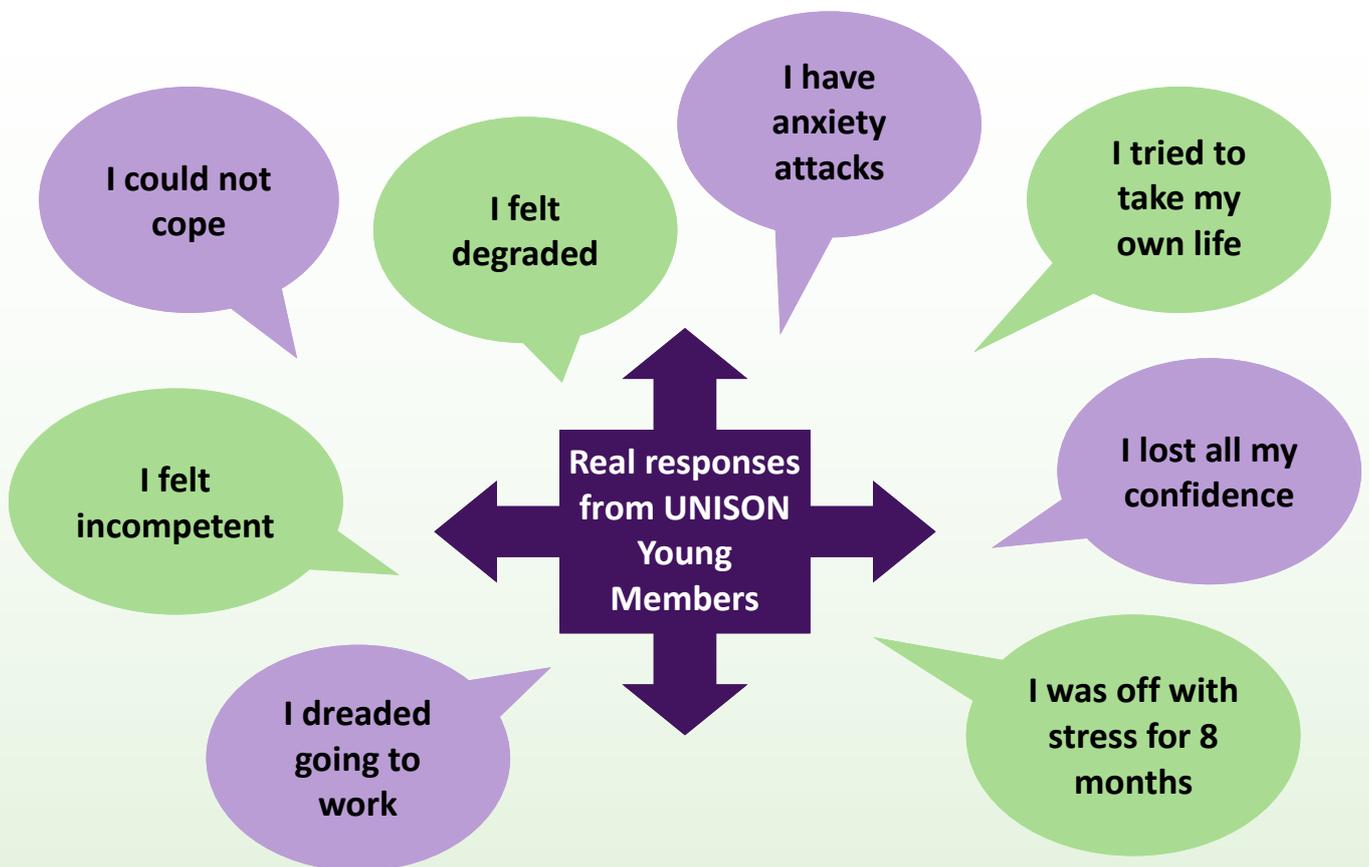
28% of cases reported, did not result in any support being put in place

People who bully others may also engage in violent and other risky behaviours. They are more likely to:

- Abuse alcohol and other drugs
- Get into fights, vandalize property
 - Have criminal convictions
- Be abusive toward their romantic partners, spouses, family or children

If bullying isn't stopped, it also hurts bystanders, as well as the person who is being bullied. Bystanders are afraid they could be the next victim. Even if they feel badly for the person being bullied, they avoid getting involved in order to protect themselves or because they aren't sure what to do.

30% of Young Members needed time off work due to bullying



UNISON Success Story

Real Case Study- 24 year old Stephen works as a staff nurse for the NHS. Stephen is gay, and feels he has been targeted for bullying and harassment because of this. Stephen's manager ignored any suggestions that Stephen made as to how to improve services. Stephen's work was also checked up on by people more than his colleagues, leading to Stephen feeling threatened and battled in the workplace. Behaviour towards him also depended on the mood of other staff, and he regularly received verbal abuse from colleagues. On 4 occasions he applied for a promotion and was denied, without satisfactory feedback as to why. Finally, Stephen was accused of causing upset in the ward and rumours were spread that he had abused a family member. Stephen began to suffer from anxiety and depression and with no support from his work colleagues he broke down and made his way home, where he took all the pills in his home along with a bottle of vodka in an attempt at suicide. Stephen survived, but was signed off by his GP for severe depression and attended 2 years of counselling afterward which he believes saved his life. Stephen also attended Occupational Health who recommended Stephen moved to another hospital which helped him. At first this change was very difficult for Stephen, but with the help of a UNISON rep who gave him the strength to fight back, management allowed Stephen to return to work in a new hospital where he is very happy and supported by an excellent team of senior staff.

Helpful Contacts & Organisations



www.unison.org.uk/get-help

0800 0 857 857

www.bullying.co.uk

0808 800 2222



BullyingUK

Part of **family lives**



www.acas.org.uk

0300 123 1100

www.samaritans.org

116 123



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Legal disclaimer

The information contained within this guide is not a complete or final statement of the law and is based on the laws of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. While UNISON has sought to ensure that the information is accurate and up to date, it is not responsible and will not be held liable for any inaccuracies and their consequences, including any loss arising from relying on this information. If you are a UNISON member with a legal problem, please contact your branch or region as soon as possible for advice.