

Tackling bullying & harassment

in the NHS

18.7% of staff experienced bullying or harassment in the last year from colleagues.¹

12.4% of staff experienced bullying or harassment in the last year from their manager.¹



98% of staff experienced incivility in the workplace.⁴

Staff who see incivility have a 20% decrease in their performance and a 50% decrease in wanting to help others.⁴

Disproportionate impact

- > BME staff are more likely to experience bullying or harassment.¹
- > 26.3% of disabled staff reported bullying or harassment in the last year.⁵
- > Bisexual and gay staff are more likely to experience bullying or harassment than heterosexual staff.¹

Costs to the NHS

- Toxic behaviour costs the NHS more than £2bn a year.³
- If bullied NHS workers left their jobs, it would mean a loss of 42,681 staff.³
- The cost of replacing those staff would be £231.9m.³
- Sickness presenteeism due to bullying costs £604.4m a year.³

What is the impact?

On the organisation

- Greater risk of human error²
- Poorer patient care
- Reduced productivity
- Lower morale
- Increased absenteeism
- Reduced teamwork⁴

On the individual

- Anxiety and depression
- Disengagement and isolation
- Reduced confidence⁴
- Take the feelings home with you⁴

What can my organisation do?

- Promote NHSEI's civility and respect toolkit to meet the People Plan's vision.⁸ ✓
- Create policies to develop and promote a positive culture. ✓
- Appoint a leader to work with your freedom to speak up guardian. ✓
- Monitor organisational data to identify patterns to target interventions.⁶ ✓

What can my manager do?

- Identify early warning signs and challenge inappropriate behaviours. ✓
- Respond quickly to complaints and issues, ensuring effective wellbeing conversations are had. ✓
- Engage and involve trade unions colleagues.⁷ ✓
- Provide training on inappropriate behaviour and its impact.⁶ ✓

What can I do?

- Ask the individual to stop. ✓
- Speak to your manager, senior colleague and/or union rep. ✓
- Keep a record of the incidents. ✓
- Speak up when you see staff treated unkindly. ✓
- Report the incident to your freedom to speak up guardian. ✓

1. NHS Staff Survey, 2020.

2. Workplace bullying in emergency nursing: Development of a grounded theory using situational analysis. (Wolf et al, 2017) Bullying in the Healthcare Industry (Dalton, 2016).

3. The price of fear: Estimating the financial cost of bullying and harassment to the NHS in England. (Kline and Lewis, 2018).

4. Make or Break: Incivility in the workplace ESTH 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1EDatTYMkE>

5. Workforce Disability Equality Standard (2020) data analysis report.

6. Evidence synthesis on the occurrence, causes, consequences, prevention and management of bullying and harassing behaviours to inform decision-making in the NHS, Illing et al, (February 2013).

7. Creating a culture of civility, compassion and respect in the NHS, 2019, Social Partnership Forum.

8. NHSEI Supporting our staff - A toolkit to promote cultures of civility and respect.



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