

Agenda – Standards of Conduct Committee

Meeting Venue:

Video-conference via Zoom

Meeting date: 27 January 2025

Meeting time: 09.30

For further information contact:

Meriel Singleton

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddStandards@senedd.wales

1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions

2 Individual Member Accountability: Deception

(9.30 – 10.55)

(Pages 1 – 6)

3 Dignity and Respect – Autumn 2024 Survey Results

(10.55 – 11.00)

(Pages 7 – 31)



Document is Restricted

Dignity and Respect – Autumn 2024 Survey Results

Purpose of the Survey

In 2018, the Senedd formally approved a Dignity and Respect policy which states that:

“Inappropriate behaviour means any behaviour that adversely affects the dignity of another person. It includes harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, intimidation and unlawful discrimination. Instances of inappropriate behaviour may constitute criminal offences, such as criminal harassment, common assault or sexual assault. But it is wider than that. **It covers all unwanted behaviour – that is, behaviour which is not encouraged or reciprocated by the recipient, regardless of whether it was meant to cause offence, and whether it is repeated or an isolated incident.”**

In 2018, Standards of Conduct Committee made a series of recommendations in its Report, Creating the Right Culture, including that:

1. The Commission issue an annual dignity and respect survey of Members, Member Support Staff and Commission staff and present the findings and an accompanying action plan to the Standards of Conduct Committee.
2. The Commission evaluates the dignity and respect survey of Members, Member Support Staff and Commission staff and develops it to identify types of inappropriate behaviour.
3. The annual dignity and respect survey and/or staff surveys include a series of questions around awareness of the Complaints procedure and processes.

The purpose of the Dignity and Respect survey is therefore to help us to understand:

1. Views on the processes in place;
2. Views on the support in place;
3. Whether there is any inherent culture of bullying or harassment;
4. The nature of any inappropriate behaviour experienced.

Methodology and Response Rates

Members and Member Support Staff

The survey was conducted via Microsoft Forms and was live from 5 November to 24 November 2024.

All Members and Member Support Staff were encouraged to complete the survey, which was communicated through a variety of methods, including through email, Chiefs of Staff meetings, messages on the Members' intranet, and promotion at Cwrt drop-ins and outside the main dining room. The overall response rate (for Members and Support Staff) was 26% (85 respondents out of 327). This breaks down as 22% for Members (13 respondents out of 60) and 27% for Member Support Staff (72 respondents out of 267). 0% of respondents chose 'Prefer not to say'.

As the overall response rate is fairly low, the results should be considered as indicative only, as the response rate is not high enough to give confidence that the views expressed represent the broad views of this group as a whole. Compared to the last survey in 2023, the response rate for Members has decreased very slightly from 22%, and the Member Support Staff response rate has reduced by 4% from 31%.

Commission staff

The survey was live from 4 November to 24 November 2024.

All staff were encouraged to complete the survey, which was communicated via email and news feed articles with requests to Heads of Service to promote this to their staff. The overall response rate was 66% (excluding staff who were on any form of long-term leave) – which is 325 respondents. This has decreased from the 2023 response rate of 71%, however is still a high enough response rate to be able to rely on the results as a reasonable indicator of broad workforce views.

The number of people choosing not to identify their service areas was 9% (30 respondents). Interestingly, this was significantly more people than in 2023 when it was 8 respondents, however the reason for this increase is unknown.

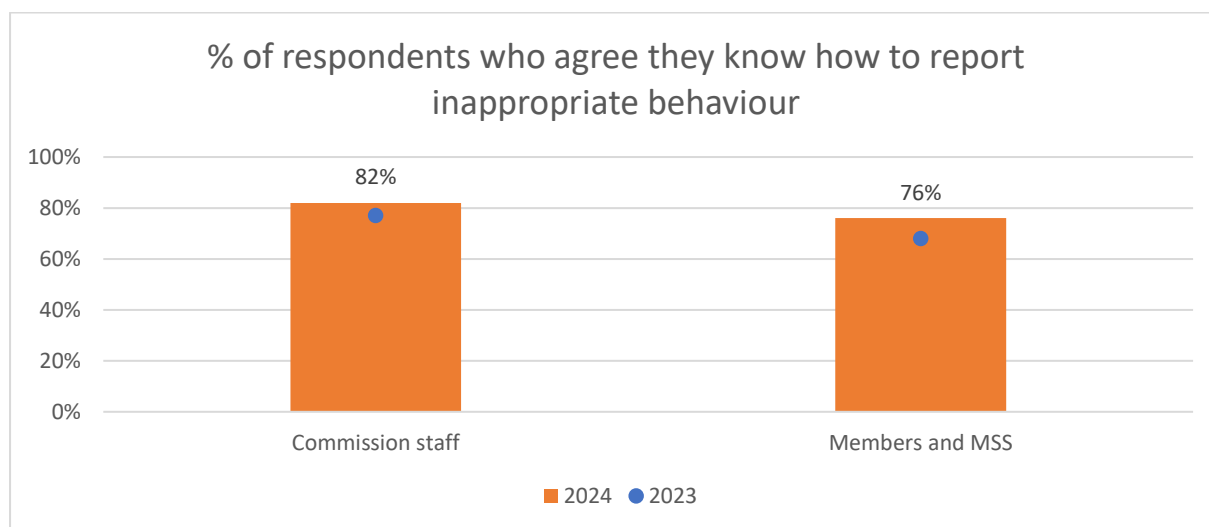
Key Findings

1. Views on the processes in place

One of the aims of our work on Dignity and Respect is to bring greater clarity and accessibility to anyone wishing to use a complaints procedure or to discuss their concerns. These are set out on the Senedd's external website, on Member and Commission staff intranet pages, are promoted through training, and can be discussed with Contact Officers through our confidential helpline. For Commission staff, HR Operations Team are also available to provide information on the processes. For Members and their support staff MBS can advise.

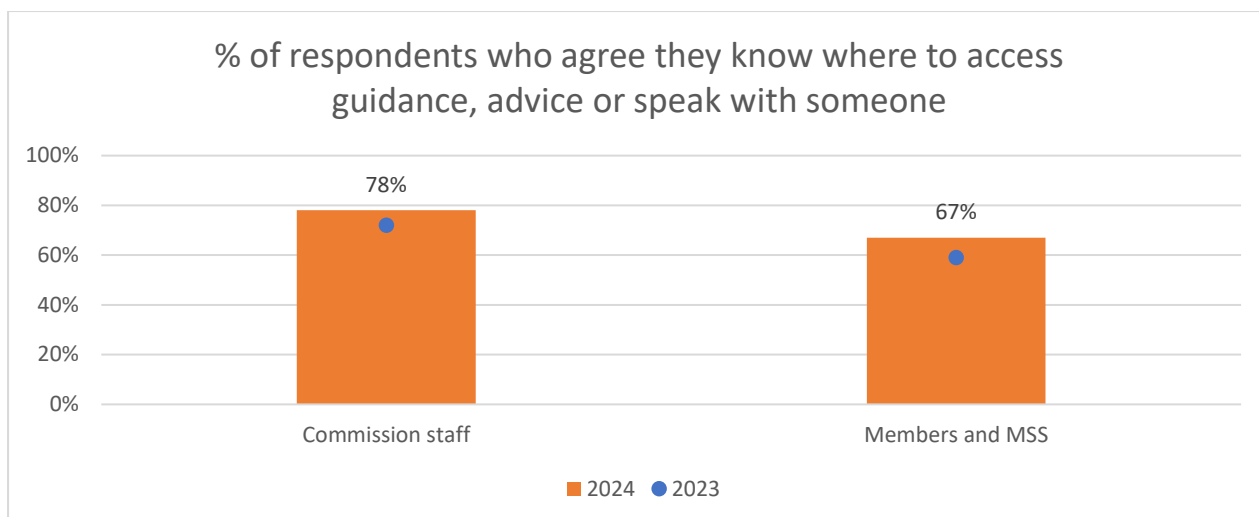
We asked: Do you know how to report inappropriate behaviour?

This has increased since the 2023 survey for both the Commission and Members, with 76% of Members and MSS, and 82% of Commission staff agreeing they know how to report inappropriate behaviour.



We asked: Do you know where you can access guidance, advice or speak with someone if you're not ready to make a complaint or unsure of the correct route?

Again, this has increased compared to last year's survey, for both Commission staff and Members. Last year there was a significant difference between the Member and Member Support Staff response to this question, with 79% of Members answering Yes, but only 59% of support staff responding Yes. This year there is still a difference, but the gap has reduced (76% for Members and 65% for Member Support Staff).



We asked: If you have experienced or observed inappropriate behaviour but not reported it, please tell us why you did not.

The full list of themed responses to this question is in Annex A, however responses mentioned more than once are detailed below. The most cited reason is that respondents did not expect it to be treated seriously / had no confidence action will be taken. This was also the most cited reason in the 2023 survey. The second highest reason continues to be concerns about repercussions if they reported it. Positively, the most cited reason for Commission staff is that it was dealt with at source, so there was no need to report it.

Did not expect it to be treated seriously / no confidence action will be taken	8
Worried about repercussions	4
Dealt with it at source	4
Seniority of person / they were a manager / Member / there was a power imbalance	3
Not sure what the process is	2
I / others have reported it but nothing has been done	2

Don't want to raise formally / it will be blown out of proportion / pushed to be dealt with formally	2
--	---

We asked: Are there any improvements to the Dignity and Respect Policy or process that you think we could make?

The full list of themed responses to this question is in Annexe B, however the responses which were mentioned multiple times were:

Make the information and process and who to contact for advice easier to find / understand / more visible	16
More regular / more consistent communication about the process and initiatives	8
Review and update the policy	5
Process for Dignity and Respect concerns to be reviewed via independent / external agency	4
More training / improve training	3
Improvements to formal process including quicker action	3
Make it clear that complaints will be taken seriously and staff supported	3
More information / support regarding informal resolution mechanisms	3
Process is not possible / unfair when in a small office	3
More information about what we mean by inappropriate behaviour	3
Anonymous reporting mechanism	2

Analysis and next steps:

The majority of respondents understand how to report inappropriate behaviour and where to seek advice and guidance, and this has increased compared to last year, which is likely due to increased training over the last year for Commission staff, Members and Member Support staff. However there is more work to be done to make the information on this easier to access. The Dignity and Respect policy for Commission staff is being reviewed and updated to better articulate the process for staff. More frequent communications regarding the process and how to access advice need to be provided. Building on the success of the training roll out in 2023-24, a framework for dignity and respect training is being developed, which will ensure a level of training annually on topics related to dignity and respect and diversity and inclusion. For Commission staff where complaints are raised, the formal processes have been reviewed specifically to look to reduce the time taken to investigate issues (whilst still maintaining a thorough approach to investigation), as well as ensuring that all involved are regularly kept updated with progress. The process for Members and their Support Staff is being reviewed by the Committee on Standards.

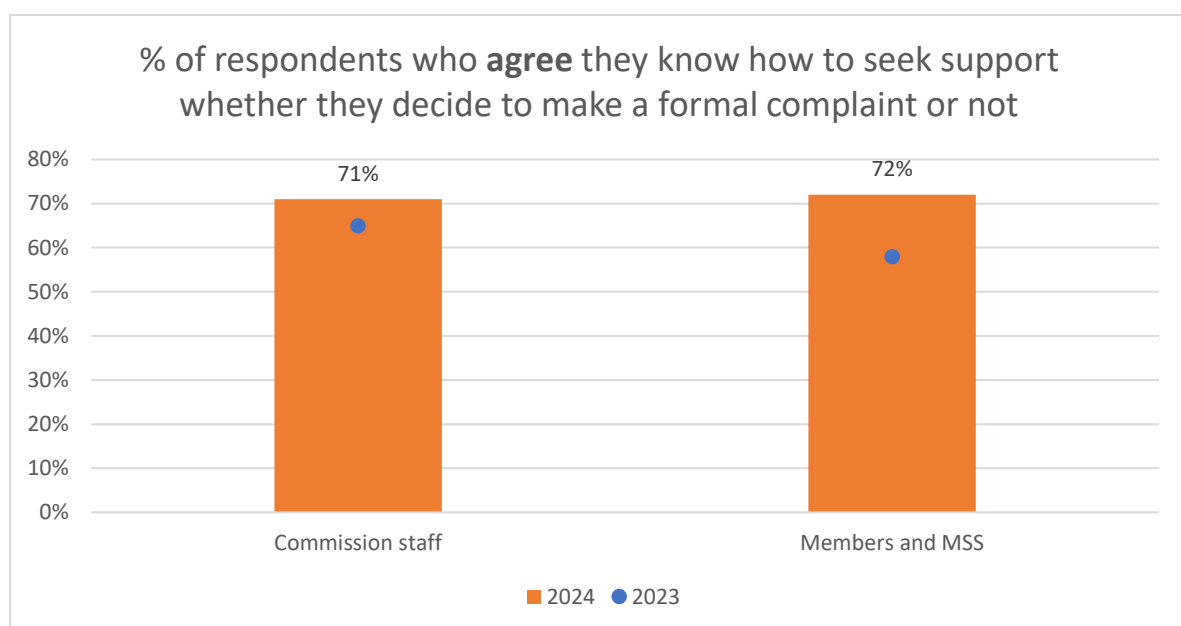
2. Views on the support in place

There is a range of support available for anyone raising an issue related to inappropriate behaviour, or who has had a concern raised against them. This includes Occupational Health, HR for Commission staff, MBS for Members, and Trade Unions. Ten Contact Officers are also available who sit outside of HR and can advise on the options available for Members, Member Support Staff and Commission staff to deal with any issues informally (if appropriate), as well as the formal routes, whose details are available on Member and Commission staff intranets. The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available, with services including telephone and face to face counselling (including CBT counselling). For Members and Member Support Staff, access is also available to the Survivors Trust.

We asked: Do you know how to seek support whether you decide to make a formal complaint or not? (For Members and Member Support Staff the question was: Do you know how to seek emotional support whether you decide to make a formal complaint or not?)

Again, compared to 2023 the percentage of respondents agreeing with this has increased.

However within the Member and Member Support Staff responses to this question (an overall 72% agreement rate), there is a significant difference with 84% of Members answering yes to this question, but only 69% of Support Staff responding yes.



Analysis and next steps:

Again the increased training over the last year for Commission staff, Members and Member Support staff is likely to be a key factor in the increase in respondents feeling more informed on the support available this year. However, as seen in the responses to the question 'Are there any improvements to the Dignity and Respect Policy or process that you think we could make?' there is an appetite for more information about support mechanisms, to be shared more regularly.

Suggestions from respondents regarding external / independent sources of advice requires further consideration.

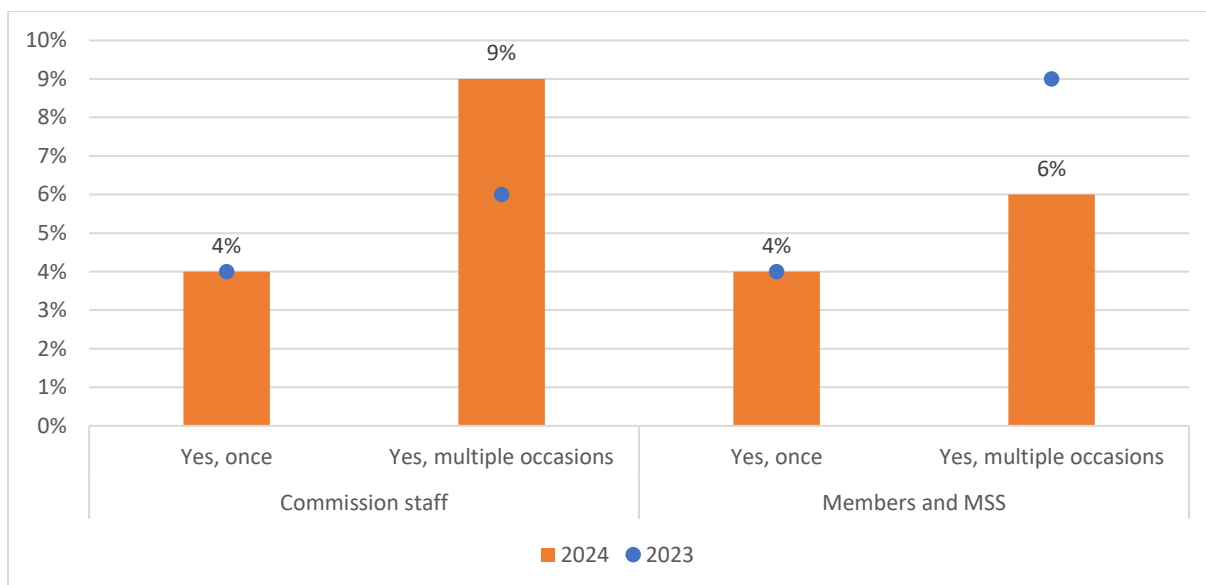
3. Whether there is any inherent culture of bullying or harassment

The Commission's senior management team, the Senedd Commission, party group leaders and the Standards of Conduct Committee have all committed to creating an inclusive workplace environment free from harassment. We asked about individuals' experiences and whether they had personally experienced inappropriate behaviour.

We asked: In the last 12 months have you experienced inappropriate behaviour in the workplace by anyone covered under our policy – Members, Support Staff, Senedd Commission staff or contractors? For Members and Member Support Staff, the wording included: 'in the workplace (or whilst conducting business).'

For Members and Member Support Staff, the percentage of respondents stating that they had never experienced inappropriate behaviour in the last 12 months whilst in the workplace or whilst conducting business increased from 85% to 89%, with the percentage of those experiencing inappropriate behaviour once staying static, and the percentage experiencing it on multiple occasions reducing. 1% were unsure whether they had experienced inappropriate behaviour.

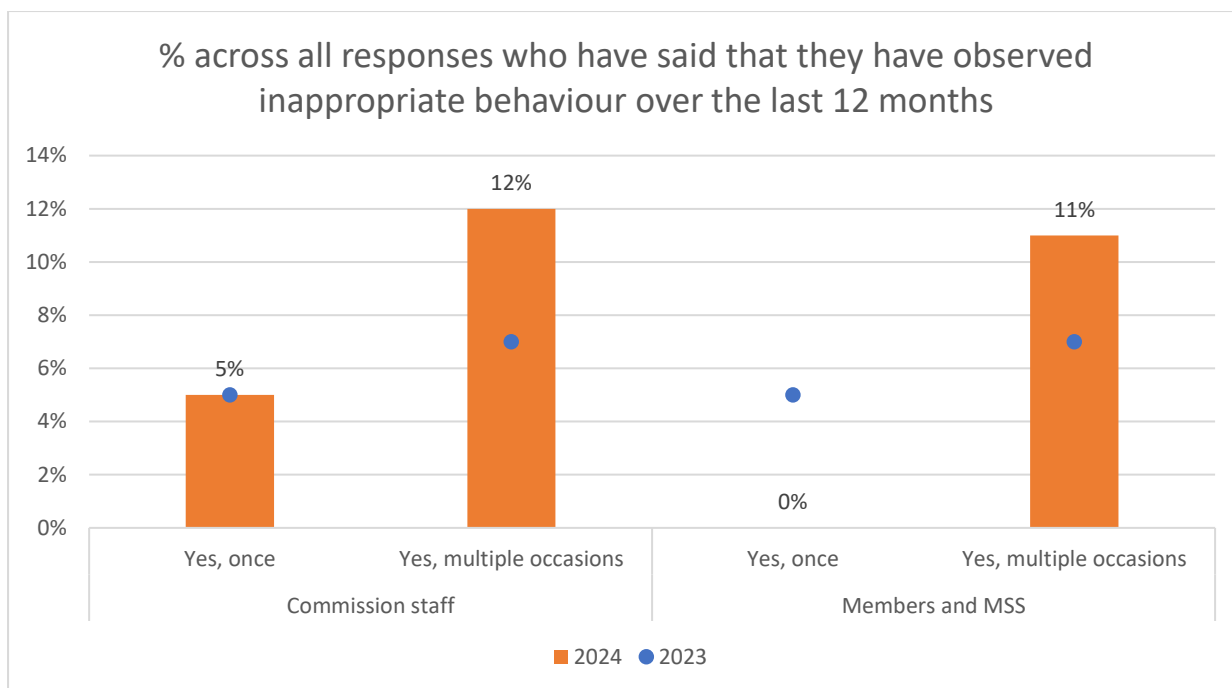
For Commission staff, the percentage of respondents stating that they had never experienced inappropriate behaviour in the last 12 months whilst in the workplace remained the same at 83%. However, the percentage of respondents saying they experienced inappropriate behaviour on multiple occasions increased by 3% compared to 2023. This is as a result of less respondents saying they weren't sure whether they experienced inappropriate behaviour (7% in 2023 and 4% in 2024).



We asked: In the last 12 months have you observed inappropriate behaviour in the workplace by anyone covered under our policy – Members, Support Staff, Senedd Commission staff or contractors? For Members and Member Support Staff, the wording included: ‘in the workplace (or whilst conducting business).’

78% of Commission staff and 85% of Members and Member Support staff said they have never observed inappropriate behaviour in the workplace in the previous 12 months.

Compared to 2023, the number of respondents observing inappropriate behaviour on multiple occasions has increased for Commission Staff and for Members and Member Support staff. However as no Members or Member Support staff said they had observing inappropriate behaviour once, overall for Members and Member Support staff there has been a slight decrease in them observing inappropriate behaviour.



We asked: In the last 12 months have you observed inappropriate behaviour in the workplace by members of the public?

This question was only asked of Commission staff. 7% of respondents overall had experienced inappropriate behaviour by members of the public at work, predominantly from service areas which are public facing.

	2023 (Commission staff only)	2024 (Commission staff only)
Yes, once	2%	2%
Yes, multiple occasions	4%	5%
No	89%	91%
Not sure	5%	2%

We asked: In the last 12 months have you been accused of inappropriate behaviour and referred to a formal complaint process?

Overall, under 1% of respondents had been accused of inappropriate behaviour and referred to a formal complaint process.

	Members and Member Support Staff	Commission staff
Yes	0%	1%
No	100%	98%
Prefer not to say	0%	1%

We asked: So that we can assess whether more people have been 'calling out' any form of inappropriate behaviour, can you tell us whether, in the last 12 months, anyone has informally approached you to call you to account over something they might deem to have been inappropriate?

Compared to 2023, there has been an increase in the percentage of Commission staff who have said they have been called out on inappropriate behaviour – from 1% in 2023 to 5% this year (15 people).

	Members and Member Support Staff	Commission staff
Yes	4%	5%
No	96%	93%
Prefer not to say	0%	2%

We asked: Can you tell us whether, in the last 12 months, you have approached someone to call them to account over something you deem to have been inappropriate behaviour?

There has been a small increase in the percentage of Commission staff saying they have called someone out on inappropriate behaviour (from 6% in 2023 to 9% - 28

people). The rates here for Members and Member Support staff remain broadly the same.

	Members and Member Support Staff	Commission staff
Yes	7%	9%
No	92%	89%
Prefer not to say	1%	0%

Analysis and next steps:

For Members and Member Support staff, there has been a slight reduction in the percentage of respondents who experience or observe inappropriate behaviour at work. However for Commission staff there has been a slight increase.

As with the 2023 survey, the numbers of respondents who stated that they have called out inappropriate behaviour continue to suggest that challenge is taking place. There has been a small increase in the percentage of Commission staff saying they have called someone out on inappropriate behaviour (from 6% in 2023 to 9% - 28 people). This suggests more willingness / confidence to address issues which arise.

However, the number of respondents who state that they themselves have been called out is very small. This is likely to mean either that respondents have not recognised being called out when it has happened or that they are unwilling to share the information within a survey, or are not included in the survey respondent numbers.

We will continue to focus our training opportunities in this area to help Members, Member Support Staff and Commission staff recognise inappropriate behaviour, and feel equipped to call it out / challenge it if it happens.

4. The nature of any inappropriate behaviour experienced

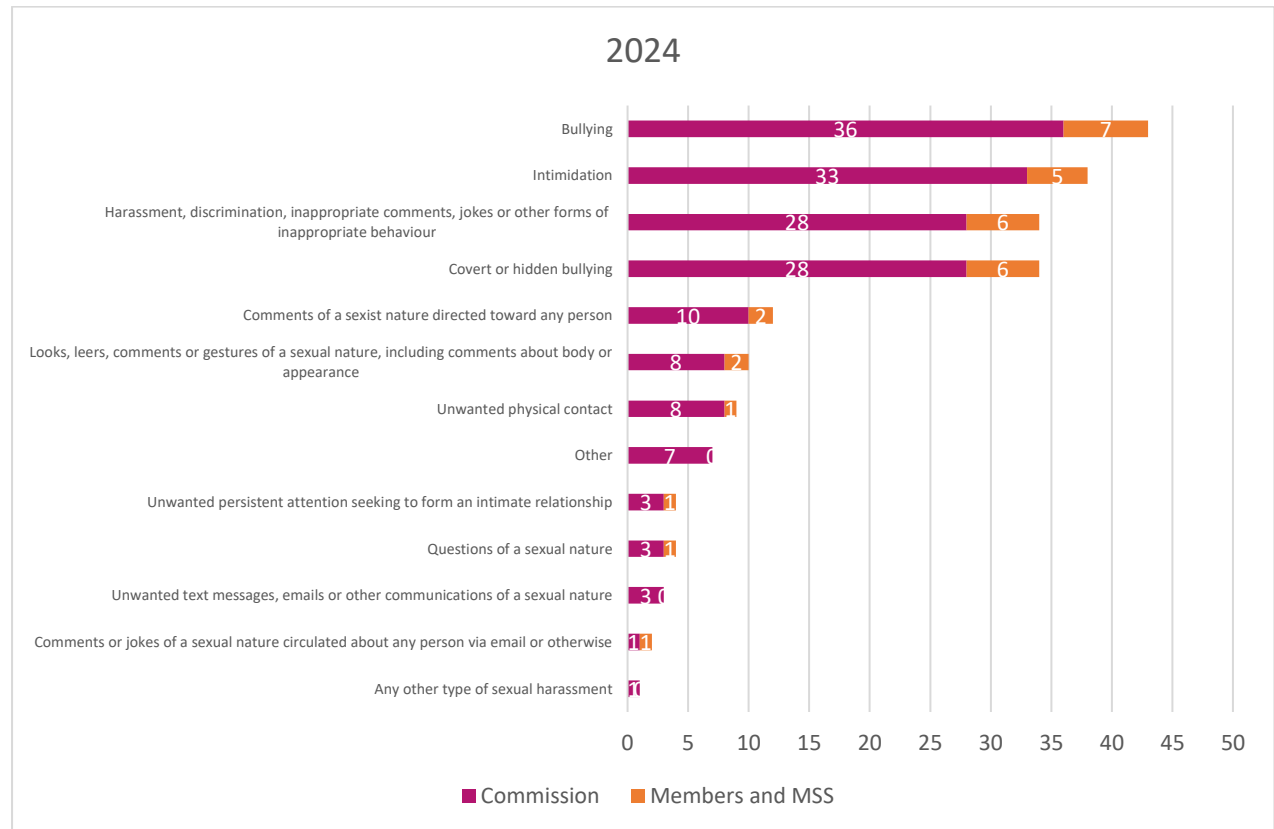
Information published on the website and intranet pages makes clear any unwanted behaviour is unacceptable – that is any inappropriate behaviour that adversely affects the dignity of another person. This guidance also details what is meant by harassment, discrimination and bullying.

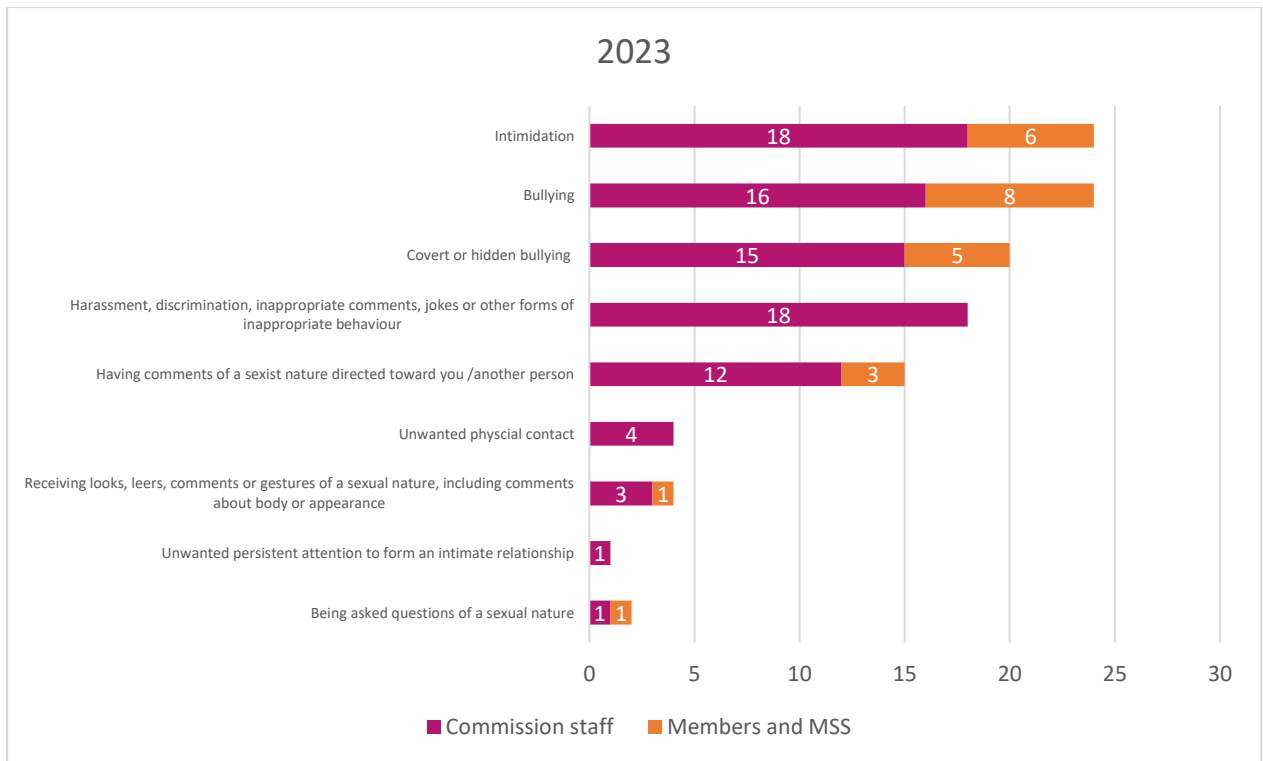
We asked participants to provide us with details of the type of inappropriate behaviour experienced or observed in order to establish whether there were specific issues that we needed to tackle, and whether these could be discriminatory behaviours.

Due to the difference in response rates between Commission staff (66%), and Members and Member Support (26%), two graphs are included for each section below: 1. The actual number of responses received from Commission staff and Members and MSS; 2. The percentage of responses from these groups.

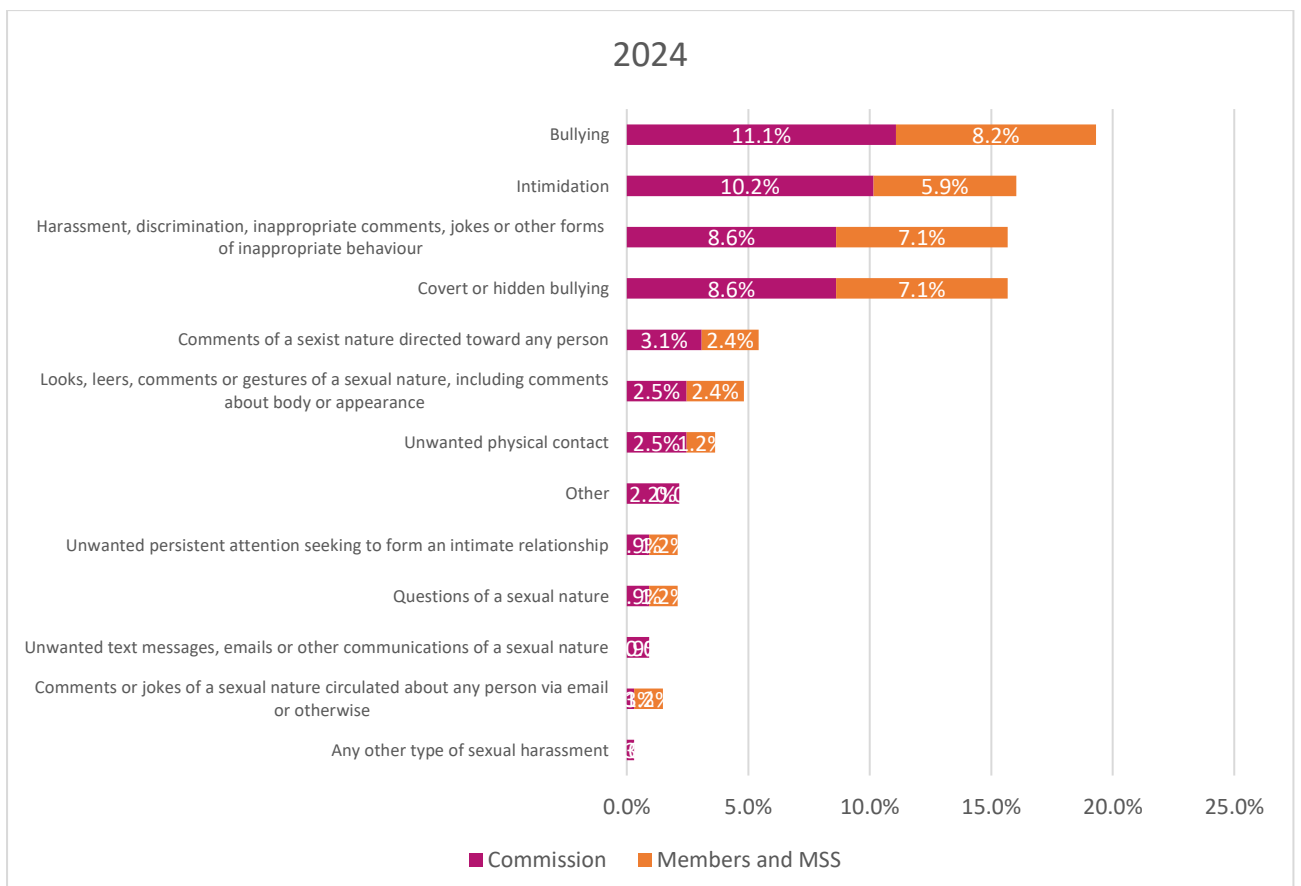
We asked: If you have been subject to, or witnessed inappropriate behaviour in work in the last 12 months, what type of inappropriate behaviour was this?

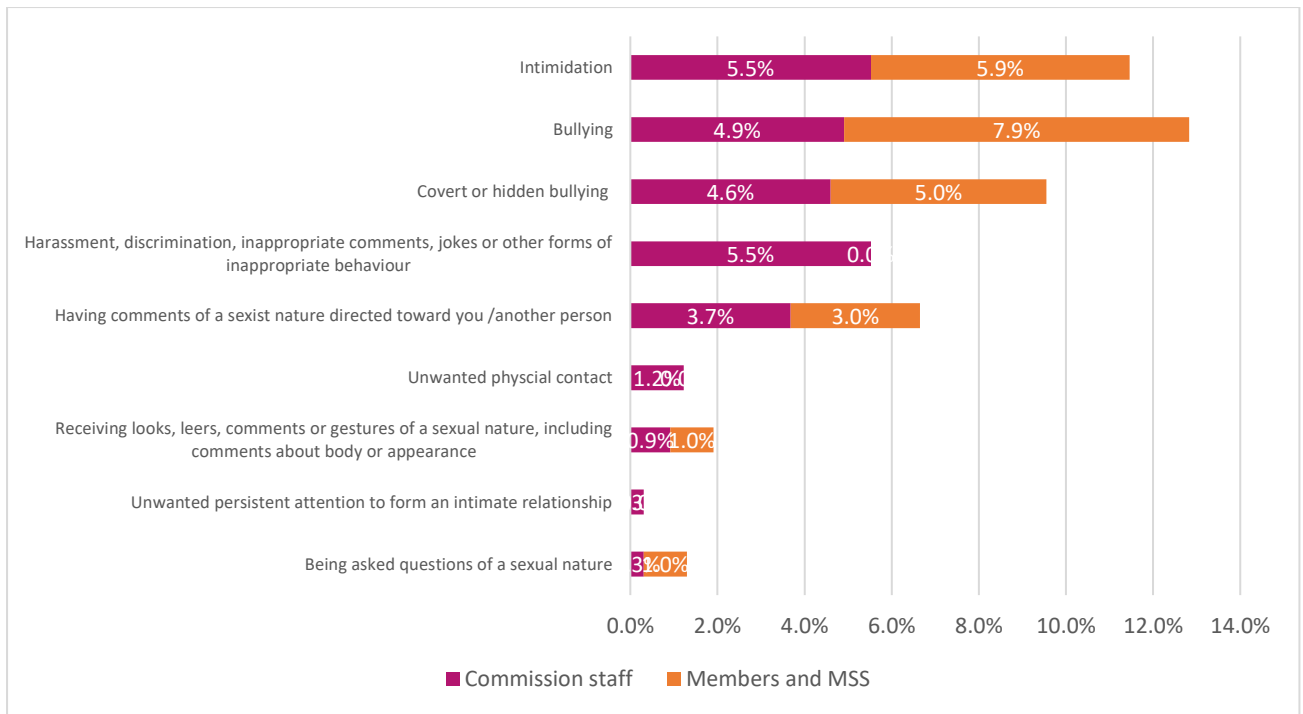
Actual number of responses received from Commission staff and Members and MSS





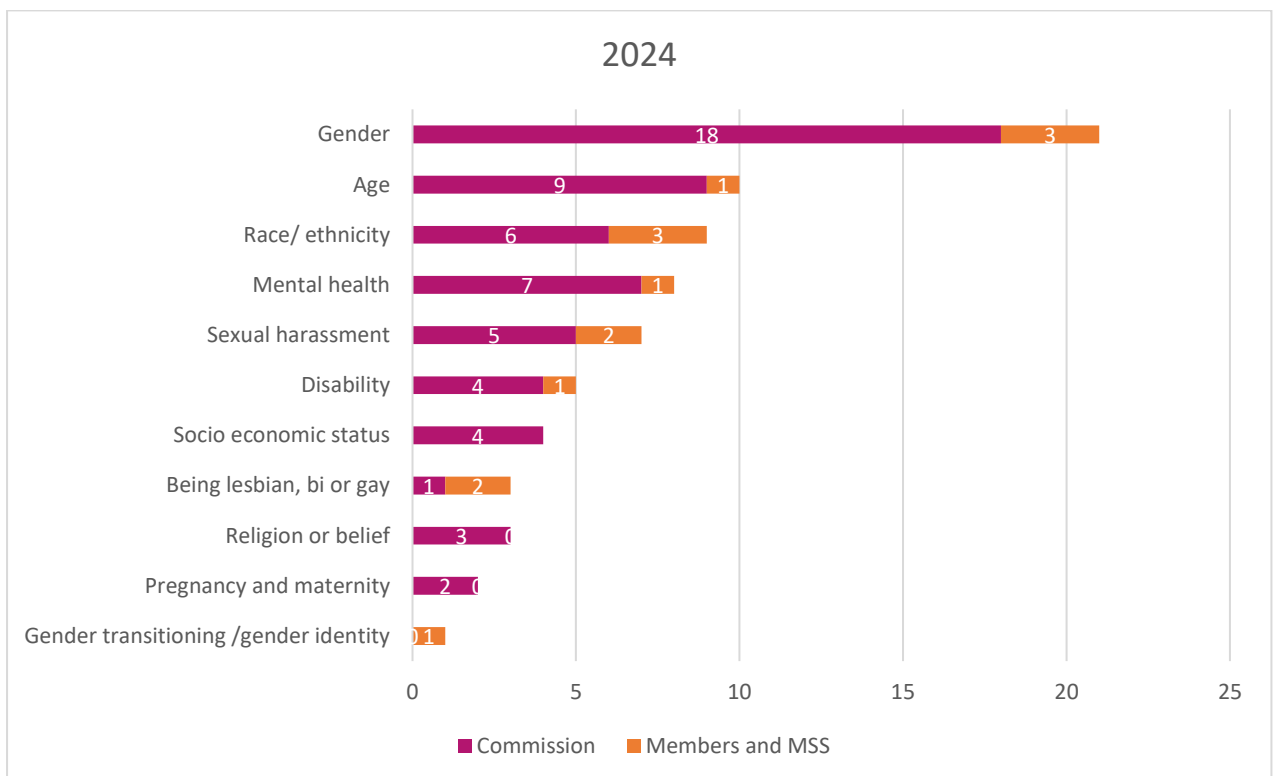
Percentage of responses received from Commission staff and Members and MSS





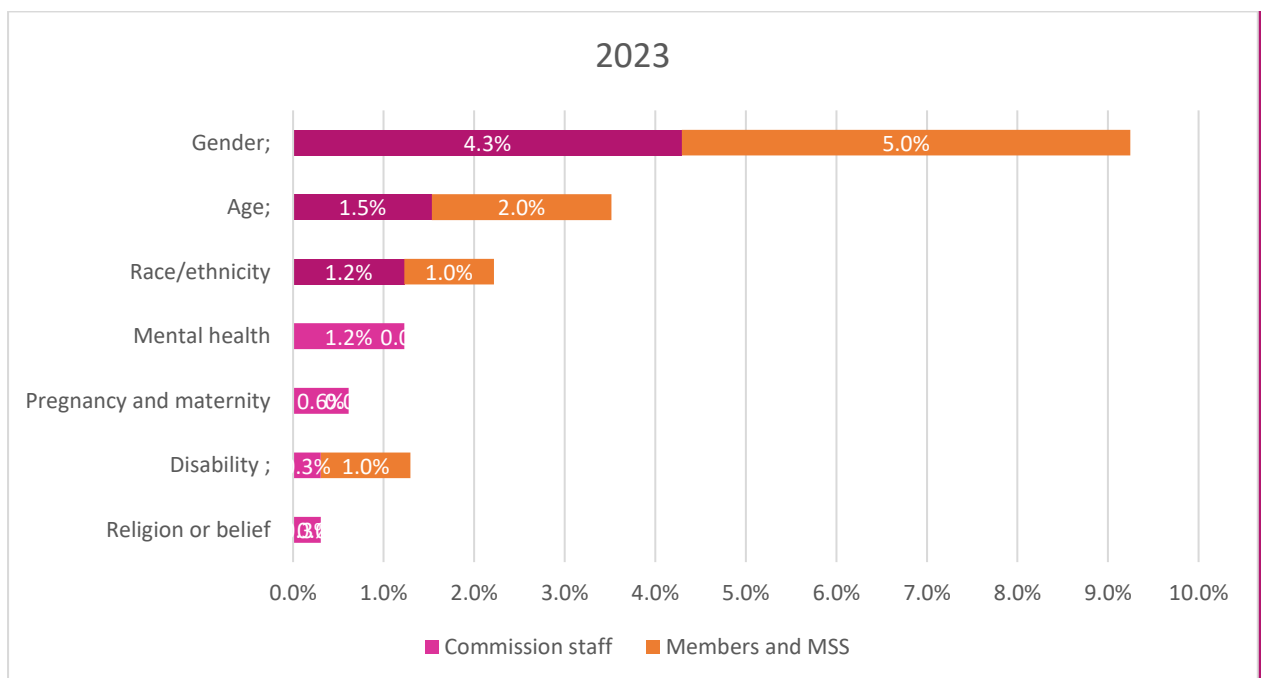
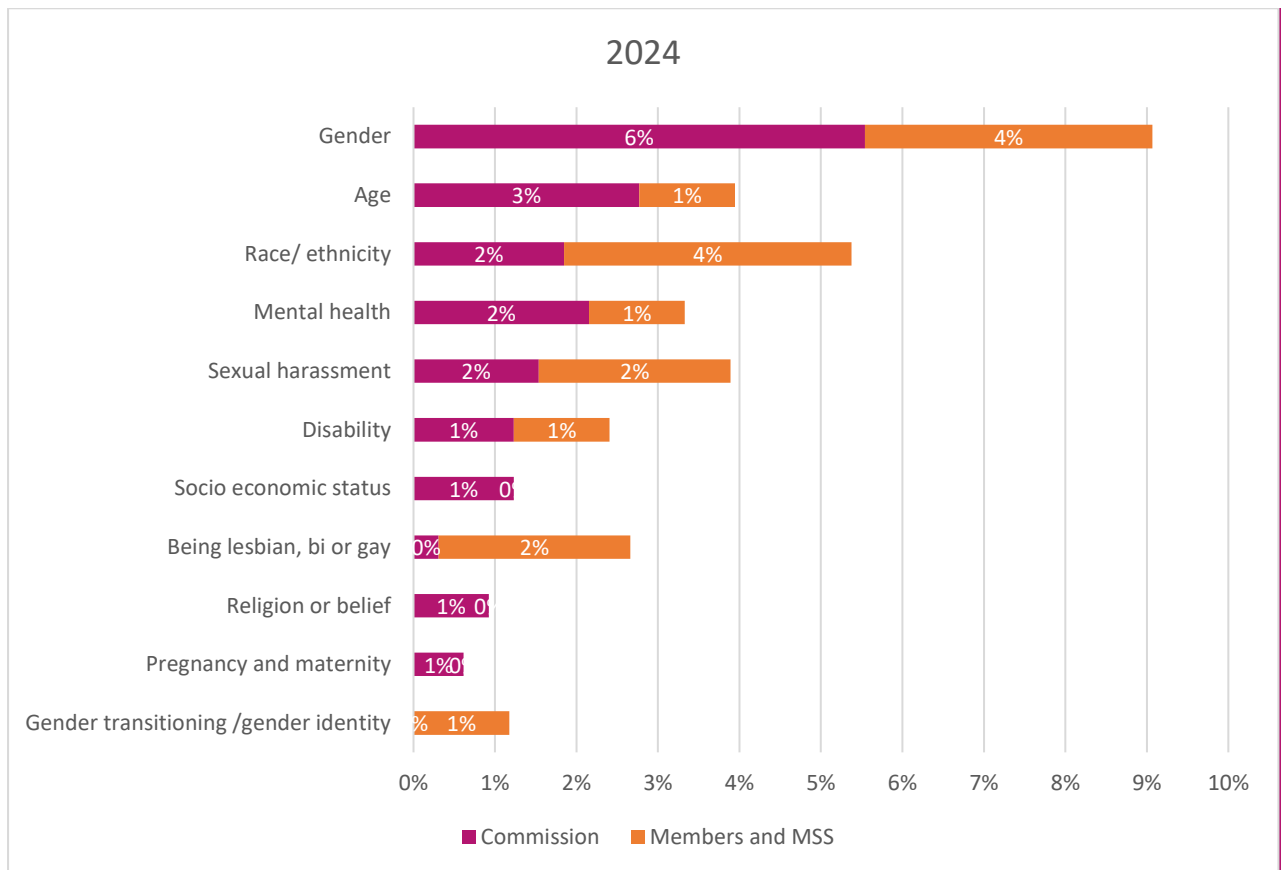
We asked: If you have been subject to, or witnessed inappropriate behaviour in work in the last 12 months, was this behaviour linked to any of the following?

Actual number of responses received from Commission staff and Members and MSS





Percentage of responses received from Commission staff and Members and MSS



Analysis and next steps:

While a large majority of participants have stated that they have not experienced or observed inappropriate behaviour of any kind, there remains work to be done to develop the culture we strive to create. Although the overall percentage of respondents noting inappropriate behaviour linked to any protected characteristic is low overall, work needs to particularly focus on behaviours related to gender / sexism. Work is planned to introduce sexual harassment training and greater awareness about routes available to staff for sexual harassment at work.

Annexe A: Themed responses to 'If you have experienced or observed inappropriate behaviour but not reported it, please tell us why you did not'

	Members/MSS	Commission staff
Did not expect it to be treated seriously / no confidence action will be taken	5	3
Worried about repercussions	2	2
Not sure what the process is	2	
Seniority of person / they were a manager / Member / there was a power imbalance	1	2
I observed someone else experiencing the inappropriate behaviour, and I wasn't sure if they wanted it raised / they asked me not to	1	
Worried about internal confidentiality	1	
Wasn't sure if it was inappropriate behaviour	1	
Most of the time I am working from home.	1	
Dealt with it at source		4
I / others have reported it but nothing has been done		2
Don't want to raise formally / it will be blown out of proportion / pushed to be dealt with formally		2
It was an external person		1
The lack of minority ethnic representation at a senior level makes it harder to trust that senior colleagues will understand the issues		1

	Members/MSS	Commission staff
Senior management don't care		1

Annexe B: Themed responses to 'Are there any improvements to the Dignity and Respect Policy or process that you think we could make?'

	Members/MSS	Commission staff
Make the information and process and who to contact for advice easier to find / understand / more visible	5	11
More regular / more consistent communication about the process and initiatives	4	4
Process for Dignity and Respect concerns to be reviewed via independent / external agency	2	2
Review and update the policy		5
More training / improve training	2	1
Improvements to formal process including quicker action		3
Make it clear that complaints will be taken seriously and staff supported	3	
More information / support regarding informal resolution mechanisms		3
Anonymous reporting mechanism		2

	Members/MSS	Commission staff
Process is not possible / unfair when in a small office	3	
A section on Upwards Bullying		1
more explanation of offers of help available would ensure colleagues of all levels are protected, not just people higher up.		1
Share information regarding if you've raised something with your line manager but still aren't satisfied with the response.		1
organisation should be values-led, and consider values such as 'respect' when making decisions.		1
Raising awareness of how we can protect staff from an ethnic minority background against racism		1
Apply it consistently across the organisation		1
Include as part of induction		1
More information about what we mean by inappropriate behaviour	1	2

Action plan

What	Who	Approx timescale
Provide service area specific results to HoS	HR Ops	By 20 Dec
Seek to understand low Member and Member Support Staff response rates and how to increase rates for future surveys	MLE	Before next survey in Autumn 2025
Put posters in key areas such as back of toilet doors / security mess room / kitchens with reminder of Contact Officer details, copy rooms. Consider any additional appropriate areas for Members. Consider including a flow chart to show where to go and complain for what	HR Ops /MBS	By 20 Dec
Contact officer vlogs	HR Ops / Cos	By end Spring term
Publish periodic reminders about the policy and process via News Feed and Yammer. Include information in policy and news articles about the processes to keep complaints confidential, and how complaints will be taken seriously	HR Ops/MBS	Every 6 months starting Spring term
Continue with review of Dignity and Respect training to ensure there is a framework which delivers some form of training annually, including what is inappropriate behaviour and what the informal and formal mechanisms are	HR Ops/MBS	Ongoing
Full review of Commission Dignity and Respect policy	HR Ops	By end Spring term
Update D and R intranet page including policy and contact details and pin to home page, promote this to staff	HR Ops	By end Jan 2025
Continue to review options for handling complaints of bullying and harassment	Standards Committee	Ongoing
Continue to regularly promote informal options for resolution, including attendance at service areas meetings to promote these and including this in training. Including what to do in the moment if someone acts in a way that someone feel uncomfortable/disrespected.	HR Ops / ODLI / MLE	2025
Tie in links between dignity and respect, and competency framework development, as well as awareness raising initiatives such as 360 feedback, insights profiles etc, to seek to increase staff awareness and pre-empt issues	HR Ops / ODLI / MLE	2025
Consider options for anonymous reporting	HR Ops / MLE	2025

What	Who	Approx timescale
Consider specific awareness raising regarding protecting staff from an ethnic minority background against racism, including information around Ramadhan for managers	HR Ops / MLE / D and I	2025