

# Dignity and Respect – Autumn 2023 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**

Across Members, Member Support Staff and Commission staff, the overall response rate was 55%.

### **Members and Member Support Staff**

The survey was conducted via Microsoft Forms and was live from 18 September to 15 October 2023. The questions were included as part of the wider customer service survey.

All Members and Member Support Staff were encouraged to complete the survey, which was communicated through a variety of methods, including through email, telephone calls to regional and constituency offices, messages on the Members' intranet and promotion at Cwrt drop-ins and outside the main dining room. The overall response rate was 31% (101 respondents out of 327). This breaks down as 23% for Members (14 respondents out of 60) and 31% for Member Support Staff (83 respondents out of 267). 4% of respondents chose 'Prefer not to say' (4 respondents).

Whilst the overall response rate is fairly low, this still represents nearly a third of Members and Member Support Staff, and represents a significant increase in response rates compared to the 2020 survey when these questions were last asked.

### **Commission staff**

The survey was live from 20 September to 4 October 2023. The questions were included as part of the wider pulse wellbeing survey.

All staff were encouraged to complete the survey, which was communicated via email with requests to Heads of Service to promote this to their staff. The overall response rate was 71% (excluding staff who were on any form of long-term leave). The number of people choosing not to identify their service areas was 2.3% (8 respondents).

### **Previous surveys**

In 2020, a dignity and respect survey was conducted; the questions in the autumn 2023 survey mirror the questions asked then. Response rates for the two surveys were:

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2023</b>
Overall	17%	55%
Members and Member Support Staff	6%	31%
Commission staff	24%	71%

The Key Findings section of this report highlight broad changes in the results between the two surveys. These should be read with caution as the response rates for the two surveys were significantly different. This makes it difficult to compare the two. For instance, in 2020, 5% of Members and Member Support, represents one individual. But in 2023, 5%, represents approximately five individuals. Therefore, any comparisons between 2020 and 2023 are approximate rather than exact.

A dignity and respect survey was also conducted in 2022. However, this survey was designed to test the awareness of processes and support around dignity and respect in order to inform the dignity and respect review. The 2022 survey cannot therefore be usefully compared with the 2020 survey or the 2023 survey.

# Key Findings

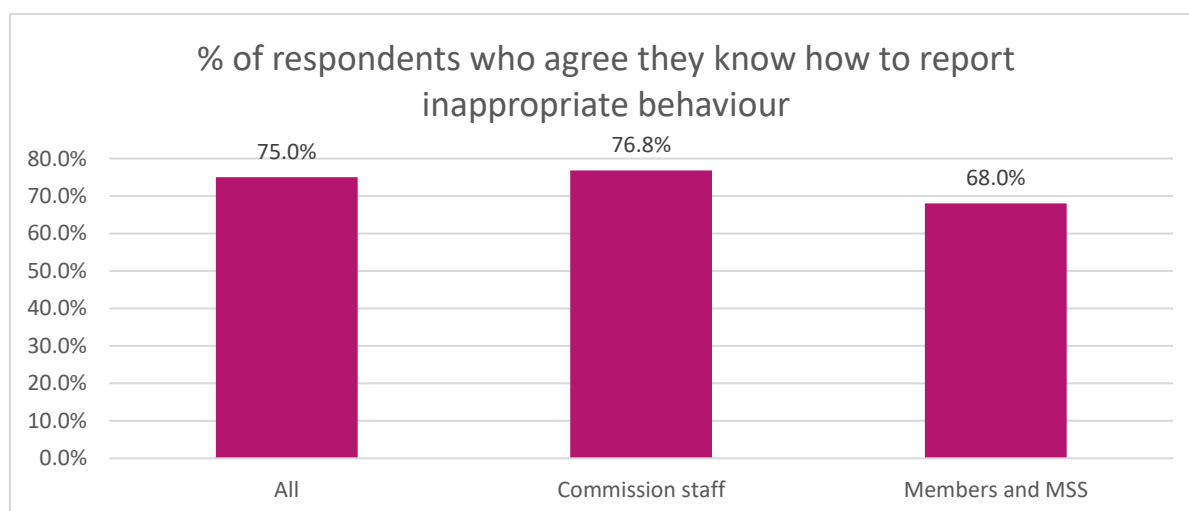
## 1. Views on the processes in place

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 our external website, in 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 are also available to provide information on the processes. For Members and their support staff MBS can advise.

---

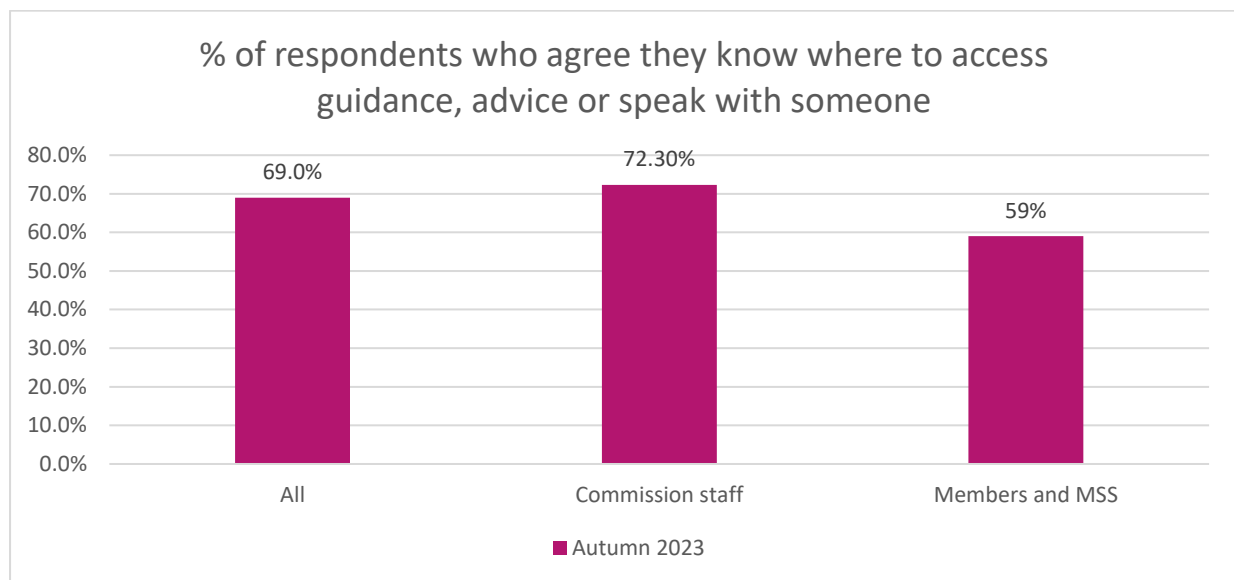
### **We asked: Do you know how to report inappropriate behaviour?**

Three quarters (75%) of respondents overall agreed they know how to report inappropriate behaviour. This has reduced slightly since the 2020 figure, however due to the low response rate in 2020, the ability to make meaningful comparisons is limited.



### **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?**

Just over two thirds (69%) of all respondents agreed they know how to report inappropriate behaviour. This has reduced since the 2020 figure which was around four fifths of respondents, however due to the low response rate in 2020, the ability to make meaningful comparisons is limited. There is 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.



**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 B, however the most commonly mentioned responses were:

Did not expect it to be treated seriously / no confidence action will be taken	9
Worried about repercussions	8
I have reported it but nothing has been done	5
Dealt with it at source	3
Seniority of person / they were a Member	4

It was an external person	3
I observed someone else experiencing the inappropriate behaviour, and I wasn't sure if they wanted it raised / they asked me not to	5

---

**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 Annex A, however the most commonly mentioned responses were:

Make the info easier to find / understand	8
More regular / more consistent communication about the process and initiatives	6
Unsure of process	4
Needs more of a genuine approach from the organisation to D & R, rather than tick box/paper exercise	4
Provide support for D and R concerns via independent / external agency	4
Ensure senior staff heed dignity and respect /ensure culture of D & R	3

---

**Analysis and next steps:**

Whilst the majority of respondents understand how to report inappropriate behaviour and where to seek advice and guidance, there is work to be done to make the information on this easier to access and understand. More frequent communications need to be provided. These are areas that have already been identified through the Dignity and Respect review. Work is ongoing to improve this, through website and intranet information, policy development, induction and refresher training, and ongoing communication plans. We are already starting to see the positive impact of this approach. Commission staff who have recently been given training report a high

degree of awareness of how to report inappropriate behaviour. This demonstrates that the training has been effective.

One lesson is clear: communication needs to give assurance that reports of inappropriate behaviour will be treated seriously and appropriate action will be taken. There also needs to be a particular focus on improving awareness for Member Support Staff.

---

## **2. Views on the support in place**

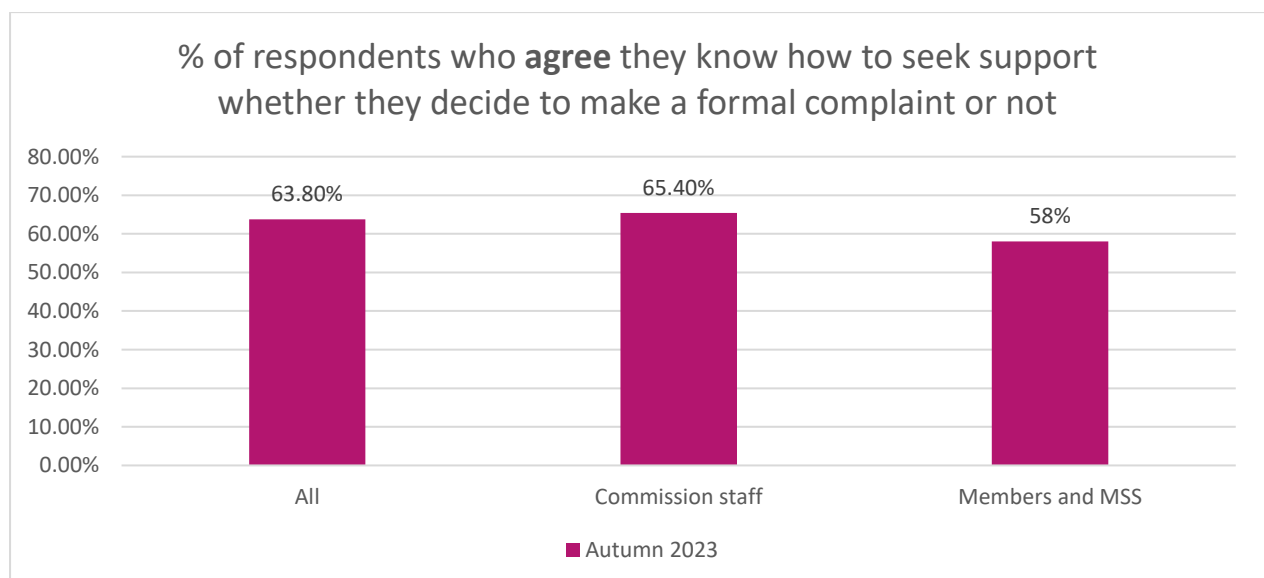
There is a range of support available for anyone raising an issue related to inappropriate behaviour, or who has had a concern raised against them. This includes Occupational Health, HR for Commission staff, MBS for Members, Trade Unions, and Contact Officers. A number of new Contact Officers have been trained over the last 3 months, which has also increased the diversity of COs; there are now 12 Contact Officers, whose details are available on Member and Commission staff intranets. The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) has been reprocurd, with a new provider (ViVUP) in place from 1 October 2023, whose services now include 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?)***

(To note: When this question was asked in 2020, the question was 'Do you know how to seek emotional support whether you decide to make a formal complaint or not?')

Overall, just under two thirds of respondents know where to seek support whether making a formal complaint or not. This has reduced slightly compared to the 2020 results, however due to the low response rate in 2020, the ability to make meaningful comparisons is limited. Within the Member and Member Support Staff responses to this question (an overall 58% agreement rate), there is a significant difference with 71% of Members answering Yes to this question and 7% answering no, but only 58% of Support Staff responding Yes, and a quarter (25%), answering no. NB because of the small number of Members who responded, and factoring in the prefer not to says (which broadly disagreed in response to this question), 58% of Member Support Staff replied yes, and the overall response in the group including MSS and members was 58%.



---

### Analysis and next steps:

Just under two thirds of respondents know where to get support, and more work is required to promote the support available, including for those against whom allegations are made. These are areas already identified through the Dignity and Respect review. Work is ongoing to make improvements, through better information about the support available on the website, intranet information, policies, and through training and communication plans. The new EAP service will be promoted on an ongoing basis in coming months, and for Commission staff, knowledge of support generally will be reassessed in the spring 2024 wellbeing survey.

---



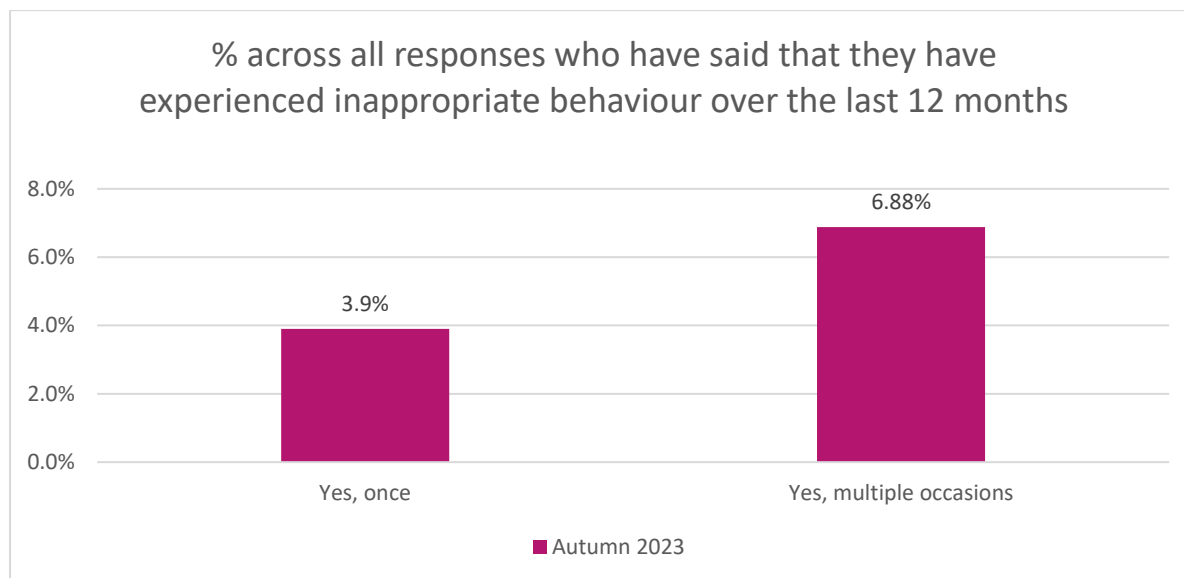
### 3. Whether there is any inherent culture of bullying or harassment

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).'**

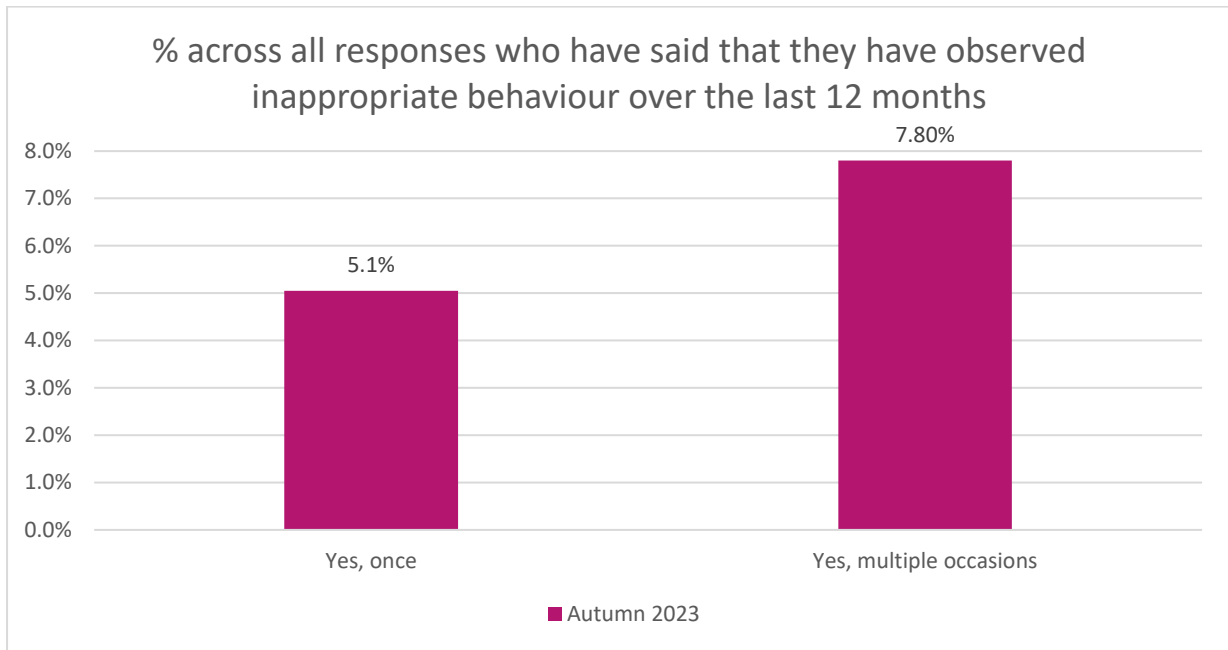
9 out of 10 respondents (89.2%) stated that they had ***never experienced*** inappropriate behaviour in the last 12 months whilst in the workplace (or for Members/Member Support Staff, whilst conducting business). This is an improvement on 2020 where it was around four fifths of respondents, and a significant improvement on the first time this question was asked in 2018, where only 61.6% of participants said that they had never experienced inappropriate behaviour.



---

**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).'**

The percentage of respondents saying they have observed inappropriate behaviour in the workplace either once or on multiple occasions has also reduced since 2020. Some 'not sure' responses recorded were recorded this time, which means the overall percentage of respondents who have not experienced any inappropriate behaviour at work over the last 12 months is 86%.



***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 and was not asked in 2020. 6% of respondents overall had experienced inappropriate behaviour by members of the public at work, predominantly from service areas which are public facing.

	<b>2023 (Commission staff only)</b>
Yes, once	2.2%
Yes, multiple occasions	3.8%
No	94.0%

***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.

	<b>Members and Member Support Staff</b>	<b>Commission staff</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Yes	1%	0.9%	0.9%
No	97%	99%	98.6%
Prefer not to say	2%	0.10%	0.9%

---

***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?***

Overall, under 2% of respondents have been informally ‘called out’ about inappropriate behaviour.

	<b>Members and Member Support Staff</b>	<b>Commission staff</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Yes	3%	1.2%	1.6%
No	95%	97.6%	97.0%
Prefer not to say	2%	1.2%	1.4%

---

***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 is a higher rate here of respondents saying they have called someone out, compared to respondents who say they have been called out.

	<b>Members and Member Support Staff</b>	<b>Commission staff</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Yes	7%	5.7%	6%
No	90%	92.7%	92%
Prefer not to say	3%	1.5%	2%

---

### **Analysis and next steps:**

There has been a significant improvement in the percentage of respondents who experience or observe inappropriate behaviour at work. As with the 2020 survey, the numbers of respondents who stated that they have called out inappropriate behaviour continue to suggest that challenge is taking place. 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 and ensure that all groups protected by the policy understand the support available to them.

---

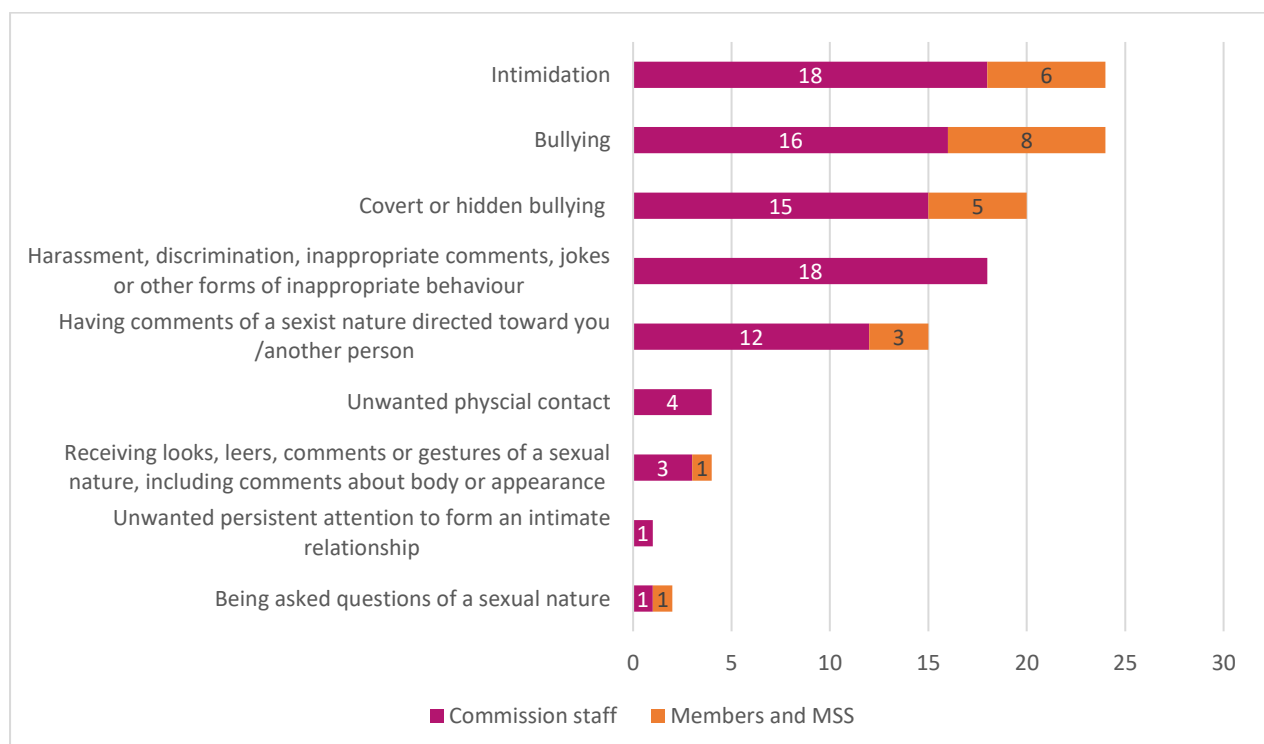
## **4. The nature of any inappropriate behaviour experienced**

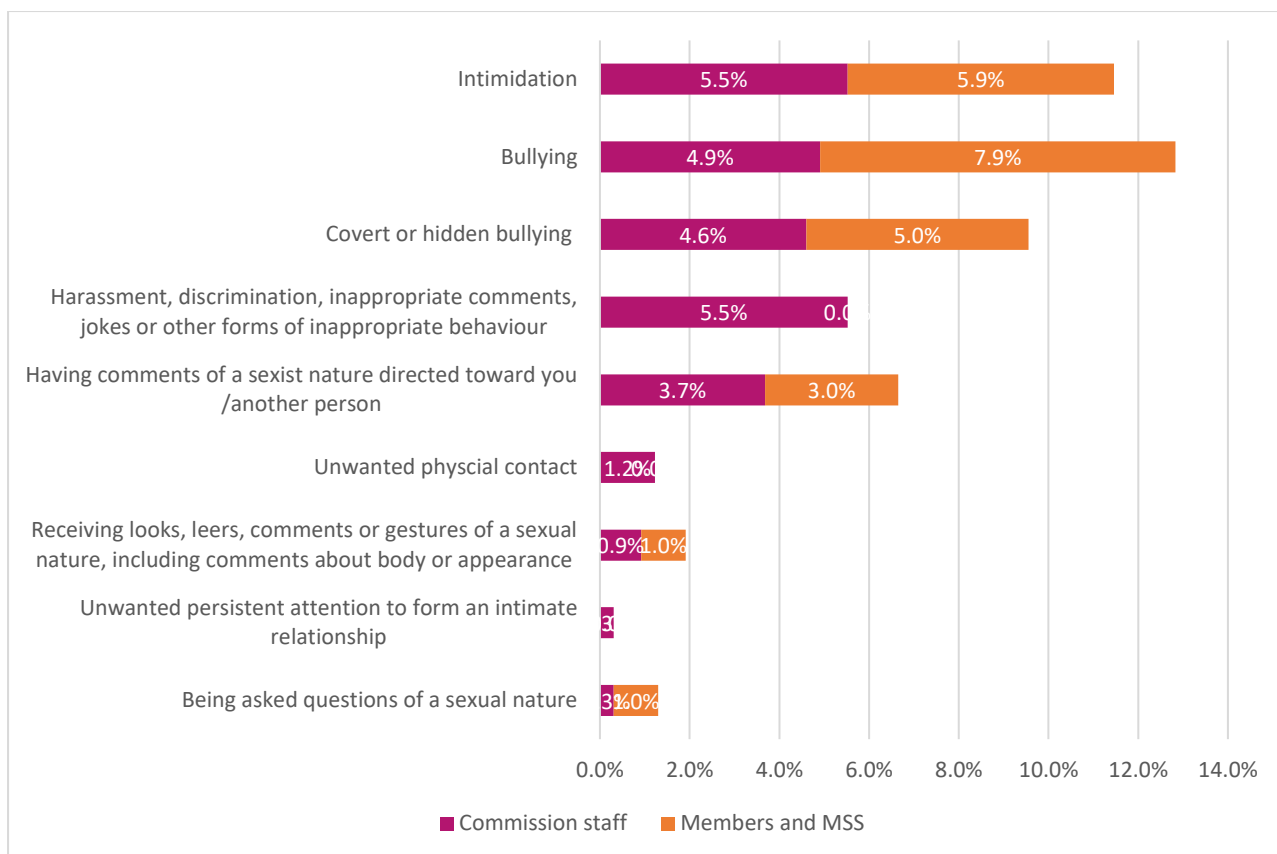
Information published on the website and intranet pages makes clear any unwanted behaviour is unacceptable – that is any inappropriate behaviour that adversely affects the dignity of another person. This guidance also details what is meant by harassment, discrimination and bullying.

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.

**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?**

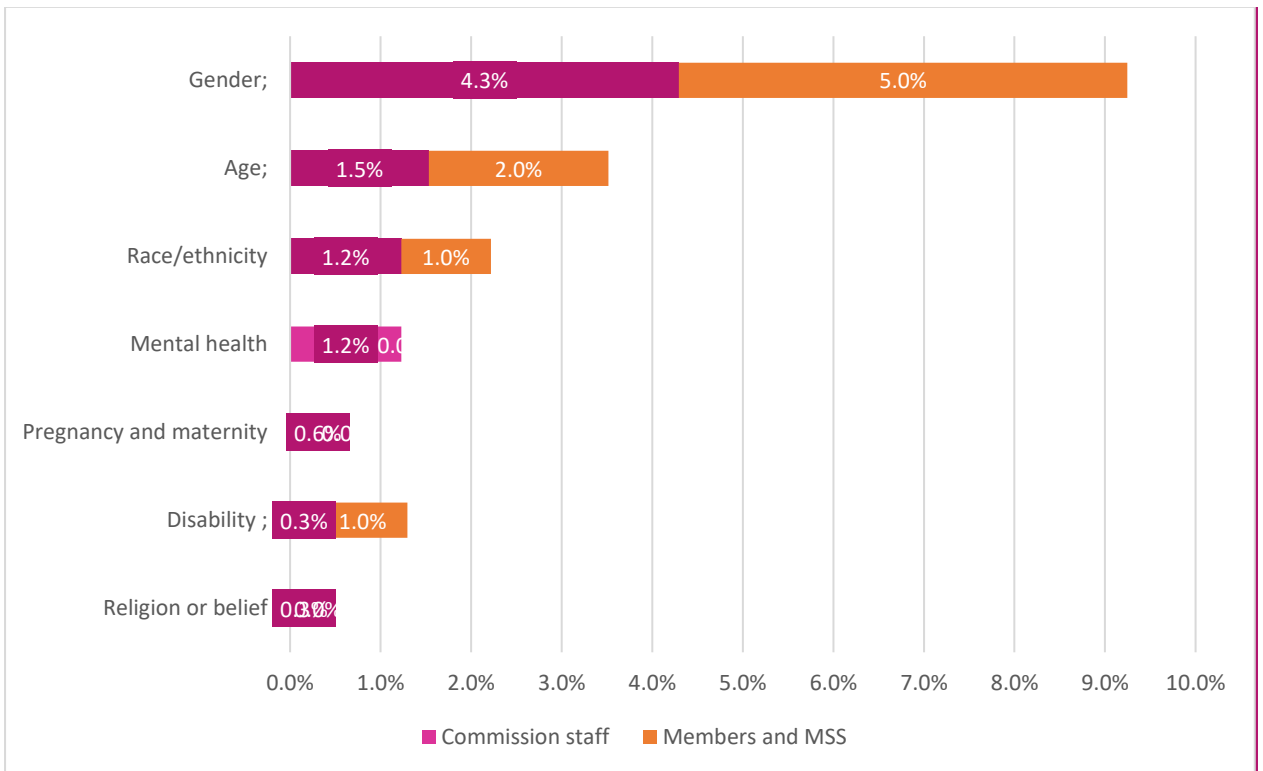
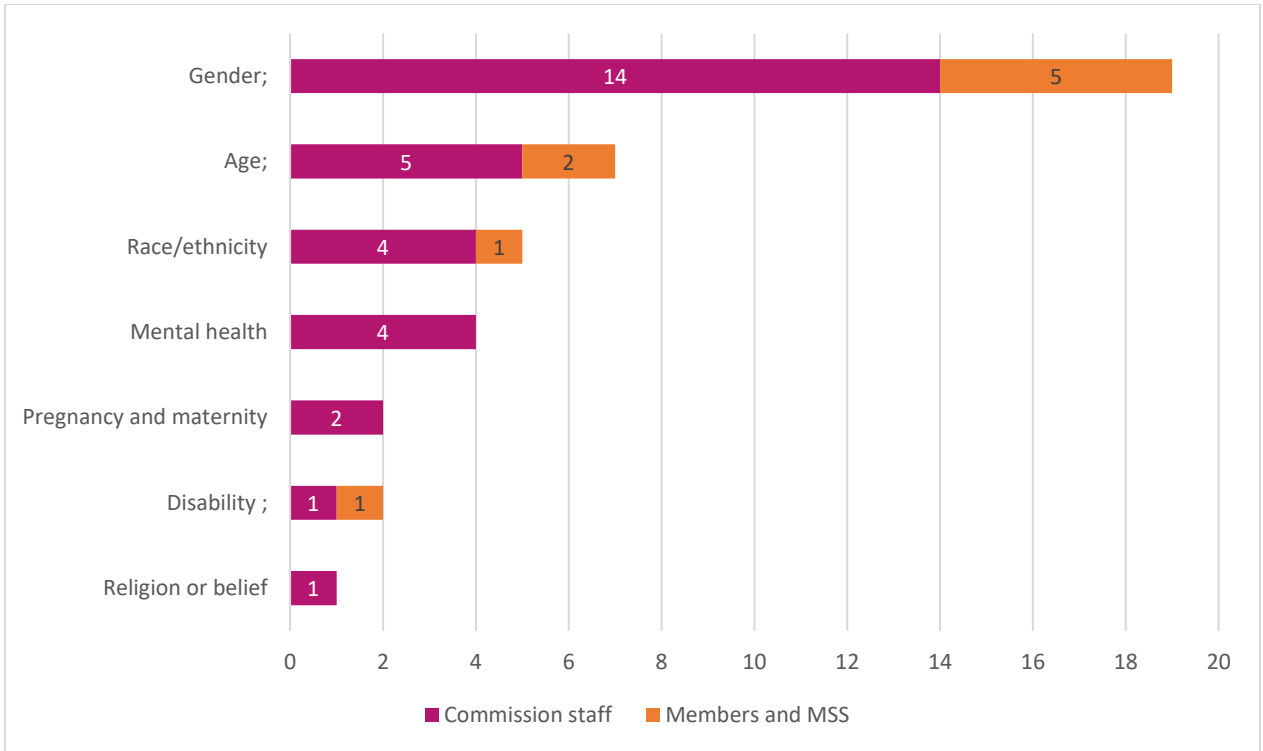
Due to the difference in response rates between Commission staff (71%), and Members and Member Support (31%), two graphs are included below: 1. The actual number of responses received from Commission staff and Members and MSS; 2. The percentage of responses from these groups which referenced inappropriate behaviour in the following areas. This second graph shows that although there is generally not a significant difference between Commission staff and Members and Member Support Staff in the types of inappropriate behaviour cited, there is a difference in 'Harassment, discrimination, inappropriate comments, jokes or other forms of inappropriate behaviour', with 5.5% of Commission staff referencing this, but 0% of Members or Member Support Staff citing this.





**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?**

Due to the difference in response rates between Commission staff (71%), and Members and Member Support (31%), two graphs are included below: 1. The actual number of responses received from Commission staff and Members and MSS; 2. The percentage of responses from these groups which referenced inappropriate behaviour in the following areas. This second graph shows that overall there is generally not a significant difference between Commission staff and Members and Member Support Staff in the types of characteristics cited in relation to inappropriate behaviour, with the biggest difference being references to mental health (4 Commission staff (1.2% of this group) / 0 Members/Member Support staff (0% of this group)).



**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. Inappropriate behaviour linked to gender was noted by 4% of respondents. This may include sexual harassment training and greater awareness about routes available to staff for sexual harassment at work.



**Appendix A: Full list of themed responses to Are there any improvements to the Dignity and Respect Policy or process that you think we could make?**

Make the info easier to find / understand	8
More regular / more consistent communication about the process and initiatives	6
Unsure of process	4
Needs more of a genuine approach from the organisation to D & R, rather than tick box exercise	4
Provide support for D and R concerns via independent / external agency	4
Ensure senior staff heed dignity and respect /ensure culture of D & R	3
Take a continuous improvement approach, taking on board feedback	2
Better awareness of neurodiversity	1
Embed policies consistently across the organisation	1
Make info more accessible to those who don't regularly use computers	1
Remind people of the Contact Officers	1
Ensure clear expectations / process for Member Support Staff	1
Make basic training mandatory	1
More information about whistleblowing, the grievance policy and the link to D&R	1
Make it clearer who to talk to	1
Better / more decisive / quicker HR practices	1
Remind Members about D and R	1

Chaplaincy should be a formal Senedd Commission provided service	1
Provide clarity about the tension between the duty to report versus the need to show sensitivity and understanding to victims of inappropriate behaviour	1
Too much work for many support staff, resulting in considerable pressure	1
Put D and R posters in constituency offices	1
Completely independent process like Westminster	1
Counselling support was very poor	1
Support provided by the Chief Executive directly was good	1

**Appendix B: Full list of themed responses to 'If you have experienced or observed inappropriate behaviour but not reported it, please tell us why you did not'**

Did not expect it to be treated seriously / no confidence action will be taken	9
Worried about repercussions	8
I have reported it but nothing has been done	5
Dealt with it at source	3
Seniority of person / they were a Member	4
It was an external person	3
I observed someone else experiencing the inappropriate behaviour, and I wasn't sure if they wanted it raised / they asked me not to	5
Not sure how	2
Dealt with through occupational health	1
Doesn't bother me personally	1
Because I am used to it	1
I was asked not to	1
Unsure whether it was bullying behaviour	1
Didn't want to make a fuss / be perceived as causing trouble	2
It's the culture	1
Stress of raising it	1
No credible process	1
Financial stability	1

Inappropriate comments - not to do with protected characteristics	1
Not sure if 'serious enough'	1
Can't trust that it is kept confidential	1