

Agenda – Standards of Conduct Committee

Meeting Venue:

For further information contact:

Conference via Zoom

Meriel Singleton

Meeting date: 2 February 2026

Committee Clerk

Meeting time: 09:00

0300 200 6565

SeneddStandards@senedd.wales

- 1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions**

- 2 Dignity and Respect draft report**
(09.00–09.15)

- 3 Inquiry into the registration and declaration of interests –
consideration of recommendations**
(09.15 – 09:30)

- 4 Papers to note**
 - 4.1 Dignity and Respect survey results 2025**

 - 4.2 Letter from the Family Friendly and Inclusive Parliament Review Board**

 - 4.3 Further information from former lay member Arun Midha**

 - 4.4 Letter from the Chair of the Remuneration Board**



Agenda Item 2

Document is Restricted

This paper has been deemed not suitable for publication in line with the Commission's rules for conduct of business.

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Dignity and Respect – Autumn 2025 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 in September - October.

All Members and Member Support Staff were encouraged to complete the survey, which was communicated through a variety of methods. The overall response rate (for Members and Support Staff) was 13% (43 respondents out of 337). This breaks down as 12% for Members (7 respondents out of 60) and 12% for Member Support Staff (32 respondents out of 266). 2 respondents chose 'Prefer not to say' (which accounts for the difference in the overall percentage).

These response rates are exactly half the response rate compared to the survey conducted in Autumn 2024 (was 26% overall, comprising of 22% for Members and 27% for Member Support Staff). Autumn 2024 response rates had also marked a slight decrease from the results the year before.

With a response rate of only 13%, these survey results should be interpreted as indicative rather than representative of Members and Support Staff views as a whole. The findings do not provide sufficient confidence to generalise to all members of this group. Comparisons with the results from last year's survey, should also be viewed through this lens.

Commission staff

The survey was live in September – October.

The overall number of staff who started the survey was 70% (excluding staff who were on any form of long-term leave) – which is 353 respondents. However, of these, 34 respondents (7%) only gave partial data i.e. provided responses to some of the core questions, but not all. Therefore, the 'truer' response rate providing a complete dataset is 63%, (excluding staff who were on any form of long-term leave) – which is 325 respondents. This has decreased from the 2024/2023 response rates of 70%/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 actively selecting Prefer Not to Say as their service areas was 6% (32 respondents), which is on par with 2024. However, none of the 34 respondents who provided partial data provided their service area.

Where responses have been provided by those who only submitted partial data, these have been included in the overall percentages for those questions.

3rd party building users

The survey was live in October - November and was conducted via MS Forms and via paper copies.

There are around 763 (full and temporary) passholders who are not Members, Support Staff or Commission Staff. These include contractors, sub-tenants within Tŷ Hywel, (such as the police, broadcasters, Welsh Government civil servants, special advisers, independent advisers and the Senedd's external stakeholders (for example, the Standards Commissioner and Members of the Independent Remuneration Board). The number of passholders have increased significantly (from 560 when we last conducted the survey) as we have welcomed more contractors onto the estate to carry out works within Ty Hywel and the Senedd Siambr. Most of the 763 passholders are very occasional visitors to the Senedd estate.

Building users as identified on the list above were encouraged to complete the survey, which was communicated to the named contact for each relevant organisation by their Senedd Commission contact.

The total number of responses was 33 out of 763 passholders. This represents around 4.3% of passholders and is slightly more than half of the rate in 2024 (7%). The findings show the views of respondents who chose to participate in the survey, therefore these 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.

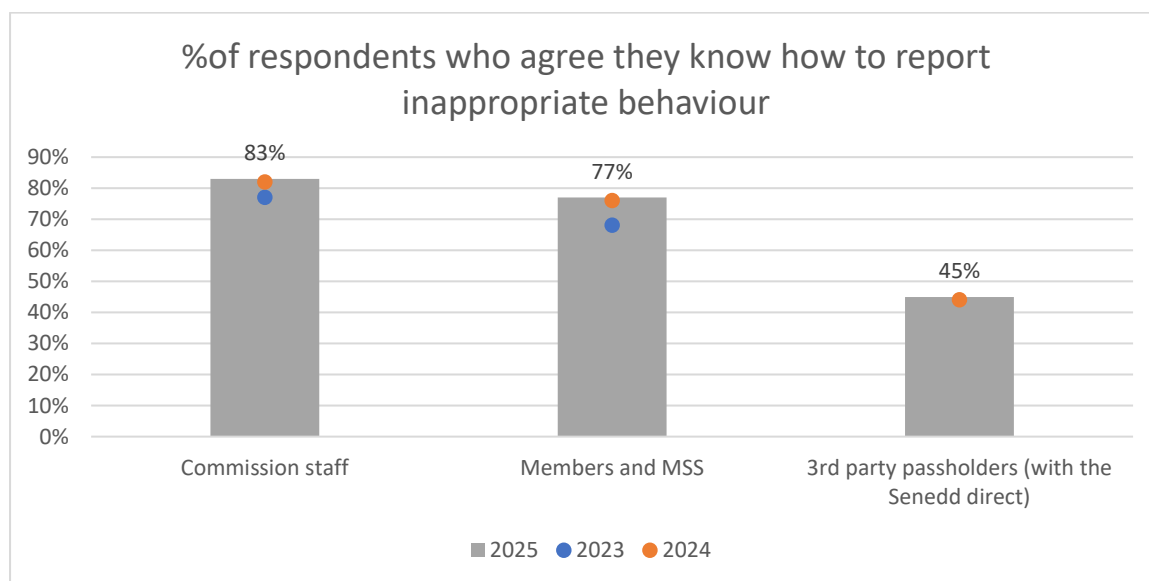
Key Findings

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, MBS can advise.

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

This has remained broadly the same since the 2024 survey for both the Commission and Members, with 77% of Members and MSS, and 83% of Commission staff agreeing they know how to report inappropriate behaviour (76% and 86% in 2024 respectively). The overall trend shows an ongoing slight increase.



We asked: If you needed to, would you feel comfortable reporting inappropriate behaviour using the existing process?

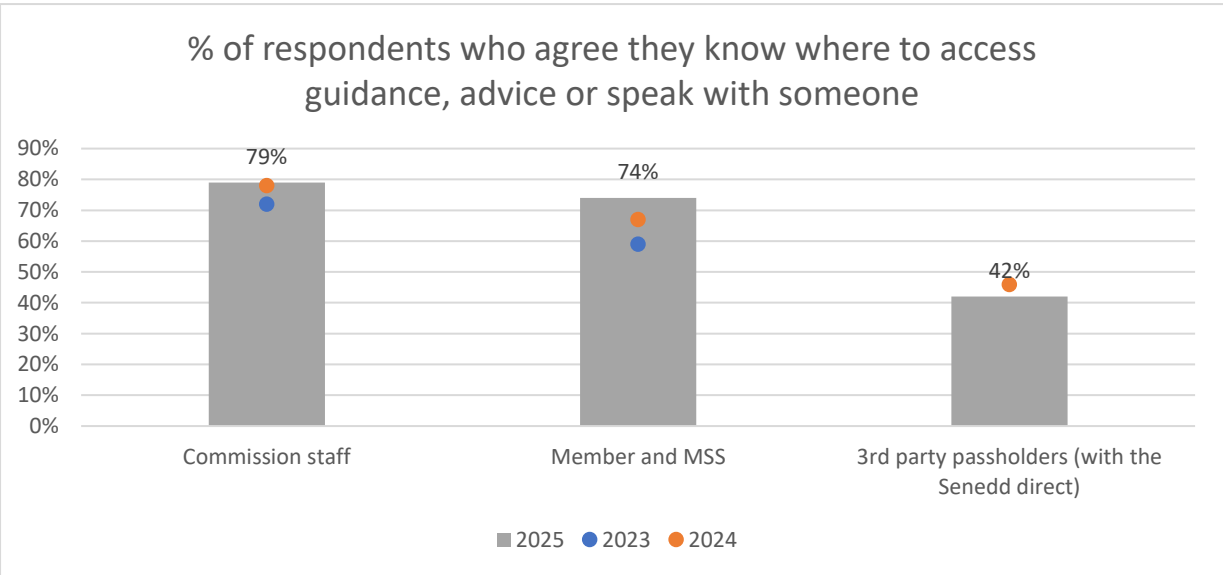
This was a new question in the survey year as a result of the Dignity and Respect audit recommendation. The results show that for both Members/MSS and Commission staff,

4 out of 5 respondents would feel comfortable to report inappropriate behaviour, with just under two thirds of 3rd party passholder respondents agreeing with this.

Commission staff	Member and MSS	3rd party passholders
80%	82%	60%

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?

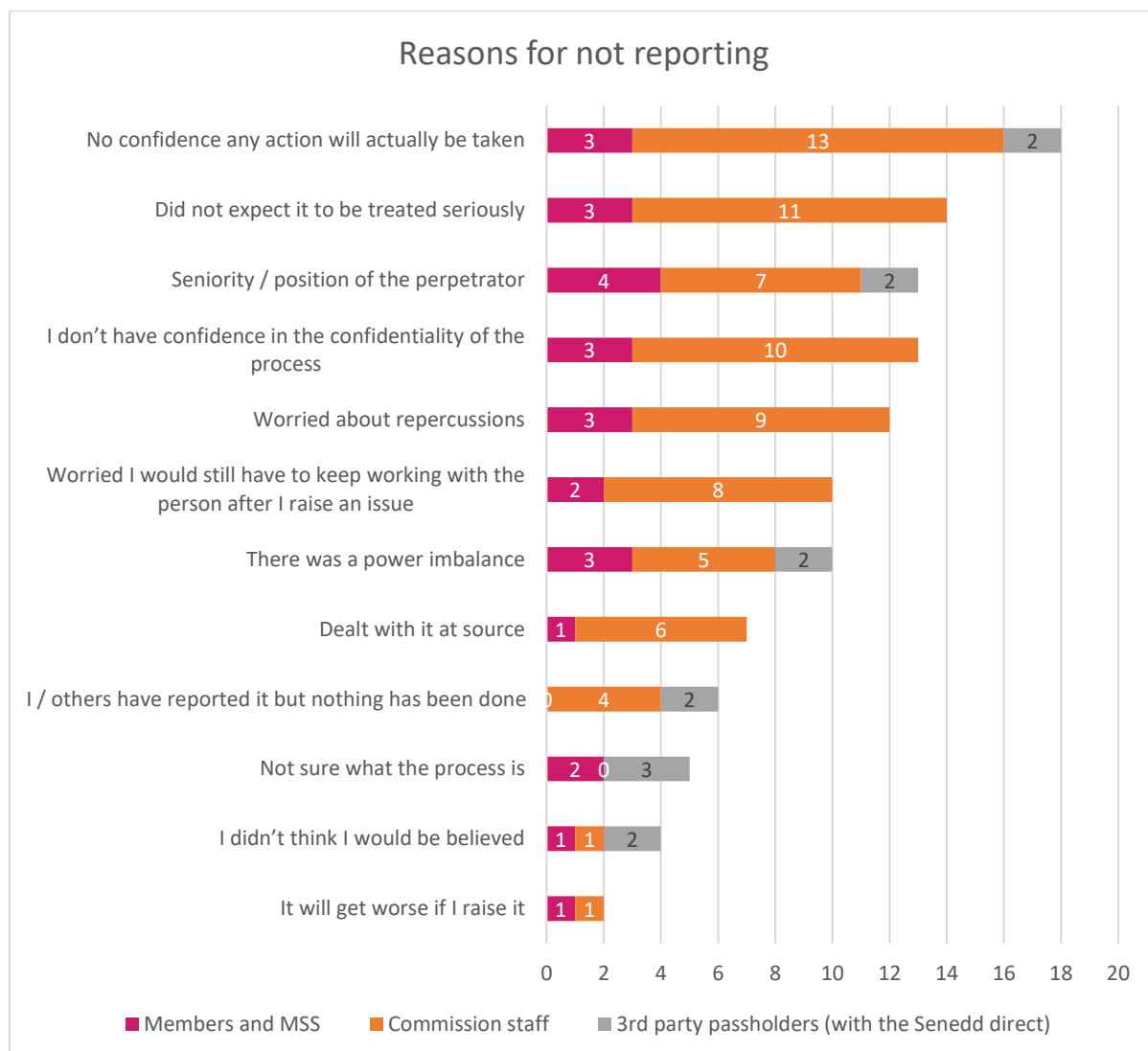
This remains broadly the same for Commission staff (79% compared to 78% in 2024). The proportion of respondents who agree increased by 7% for Members/MSS, with the caveat that fewer Members responded overall.



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

In this year's survey, respondents were asked to select reasons from a pre-defined list (with respondents asked to select all that apply) – as opposed to last year's survey where the responses to this were free text. The pre-defined list was formed from the themed responses to this question from last year's survey. This was new approach was also as a result of an audit recommendation.

As with both the 2024 and 2023 surveys, the most cited reason is that respondents did not expect it to be treated seriously/had no confidence action will be taken.



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 key themes are:

- Make the information and process and who to contact for advice easier to find/ understand/more visible, as well as more regular/more consistent communication about the process and initiatives – this was a key theme across Members/MSS and Commission staff.

- Process for Dignity and Respect concerns to be reviewed via independent/external agency – this was a strong suggestion from Members/MSS respondents.
- Improvements to formal process including quicker action, more regular communication and support, and a clear outcome – this was a strong suggestion from Commission staff respondents.
- Make it clear that complaints will be taken seriously and staff supported – both Members/MSS and Commission staff respondents noted this as a key action, supported by a suggestion from three Commission staff that cultural change needed from the top/stronger advocacy from Executive Board and managers/leaders about calling out poor behaviours.

A number of suggestions were made about training, such as:

- To include dignity and respect as part of induction (dignity and respect is already included as part of induction for Commission and Members).
- Should be mandatory (the dignity and respect training is already mandatory for Commission and Members, but this can be recommunicated).
- Bystander training – this is being included in the sexual harassment training and will be extended as part of the general dignity and respect training session.
- Yearly refresher training – the 4 year programme that is now agreed will ensure that everyone receives some level of training on a yearly basis.
- Training should be more concise – with each of the training sessions we will seek to ensure that we strike the right balance between being concise, but allowing sufficient time for the topics to be covered.
- More training for managers/Team Leaders – specific training for managers is planned for 2026-27.

Analysis and next steps:

The majority of respondents understand how to report inappropriate behaviour and where to seek advice and guidance, and would feel confident to raise inappropriate behaviour should they need to do so.

However, there is more work to do to tackle barriers to reporting, including reassurance to affected colleagues about concerns being treated seriously,

appropriate action being taken, and confidentiality being protected.

More frequent communications regarding the process and the commitment to deal with dignity and respect concerns is needed. As part of their current review into Dignity and Respect, the Standards of Conduct Committee is currently consulting on proposals to strengthen the process for complaints against Members.

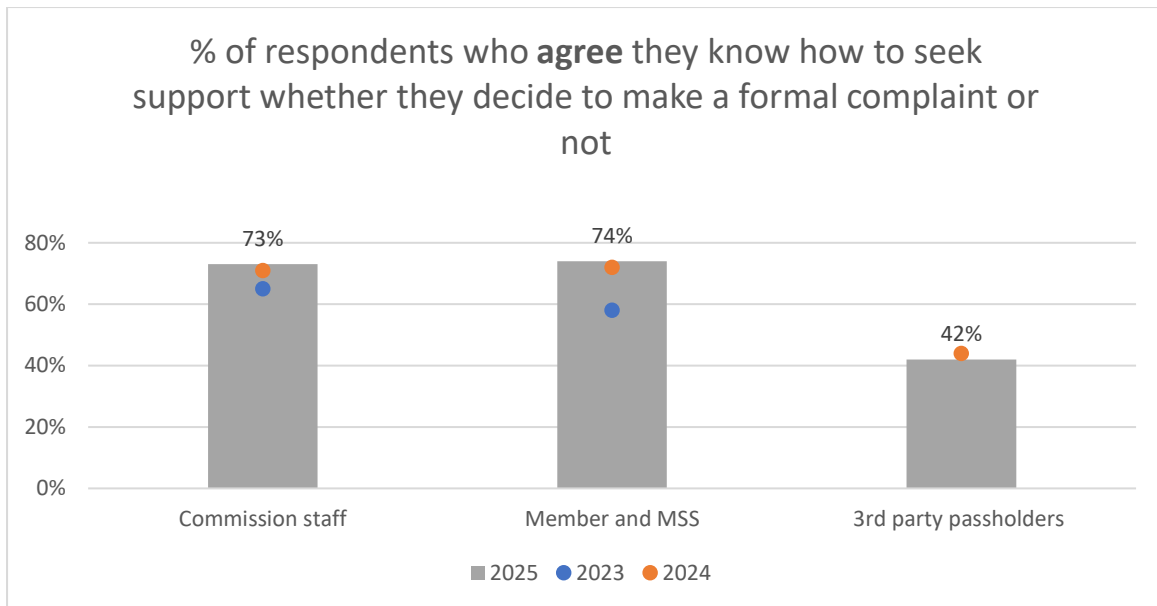
2. Views on the support in place

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 made up of staff across the Commission 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?

Again, compared to 2024 the percentage of respondents agreeing with this has broadly remained the same, with around three quarters of Commission staff and Members/MSS respondents agreeing they know how to seek support.

A supporting question for Commission staff was asked as to whether they were aware that the Dignity and Respect Policy was updated and republished in Summer term 2025, and just under 1/2 of staff (46%) agreed they were aware.

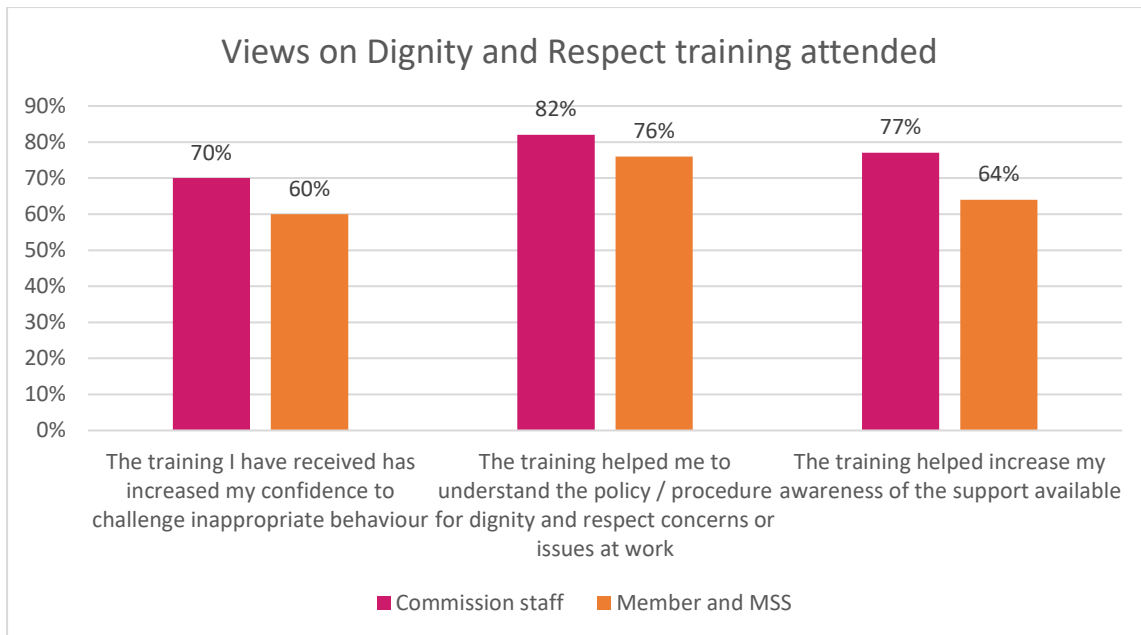


We asked: Where you have received any form of Dignity and Respect at work training or awareness delivered by the Commission, within the last two years, to what extent would you agree that:

- **The training I have received has increased my confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviour**
- **The training helped me to understand the policy/procedure for dignity and respect concerns or issues at work**
- **The training helped increase my awareness of the support available**

This was a new question in the survey this year, to assess the impact of the training that's been rolled out.

This demonstrates that the training has been most effective in helping colleagues to understand the policy and procedures and raise awareness of the support available.



Analysis and next steps:

Generally respondents feel informed on the support and procedure. 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 to be shared more regularly and to be more accessible.

Whilst ongoing communications on the intranet is a key part of this, the effectiveness of this type of communication can be limited, as news articles require staff to engage with them/can be missed. Training to underpin key messages is essential, and a rolling four year training programme will be adopted for Commission staff and a similar offer be provided for Members and Support Staff. This will serve as an opportunity for an annual reminder of the process and support available. The training will be reviewed to consider how this can help develop colleagues confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviour.

For Members/Member Support staff during the 7th Senedd, there will be a training and awareness programme comprising the following:

- the requirements of the Code of Conduct and complaints process and D&R awareness raising as part of Member and MSS induction programme;
- anti-sexual harassment training;
- other training in the realm of D&R which Members and MSS can access -

Gender Based Violence, Bystander training, Unconscious Bias; Bullying and Harassment.

For Commission staff, the training and awareness programme broadly mirrors this:

Year 1 (already delivered in 2024) - Dignity and Respect training (broad session 90 mins, ongoing for new starters)

Year 2 (2025-2026) - Sexual harassment awareness (1 hour, online)

Year 3 (2026-2027) - Inclusive Workplaces

Year 4 (2027) - Dignity and Respect e-learning refresher

The Commission will also ask contractor organisations to ensure their staff have sufficient dignity and respect and sexual harassment training and confirm that with us.

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

The Commission's Executive Board, 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).'

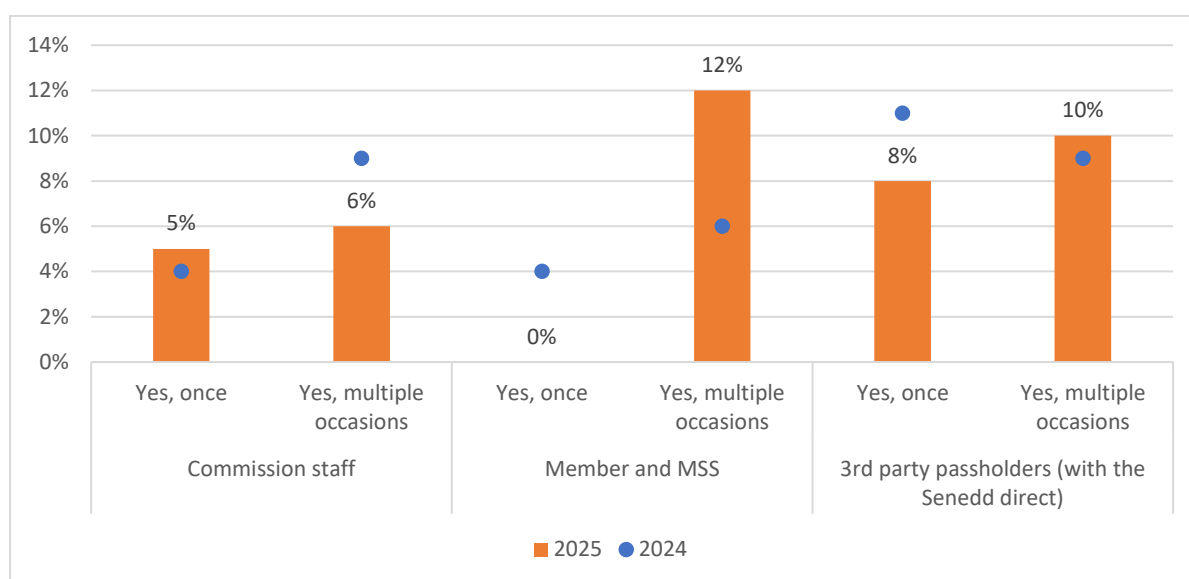
For Members and Member Support Staff, the percentage of respondents stating that they had never experienced inappropriate behaviour in the last 12 months whilst in the workplace or whilst conducting business remained similar (89% in 2024 and 86% in 2025). However, 12% had experienced inappropriate behaviour in the last 12 months, with 2% stating that they were not sure.

For Commission staff, the percentage of respondents stating that they had never experienced inappropriate behaviour in the last 12 months whilst in the workplace increased slightly, from 83% in 2024 to 86% in 2025. 11% however, have

experienced inappropriate behaviour in the last 12 months, with 3% stating they were not sure.

For 3rd party passholders, the percentage of respondents stating that they had experienced inappropriate behaviour in the last 12 months has decreased slightly from 20% in 2024 to 18% in 2025.

For both Members/MSS and 3rd party passholder however, the very small numbers of respondents mean the data is easily skewed.



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).’

For Members and Member Support Staff, the percentage of respondents stating that they had not observed inappropriate behaviour in the last 12 months whilst in the workplace or whilst conducting business decreased slightly to 74%. However, 14% had observed inappropriate behaviour in the last 12 months, with 12% stating that they were not sure.

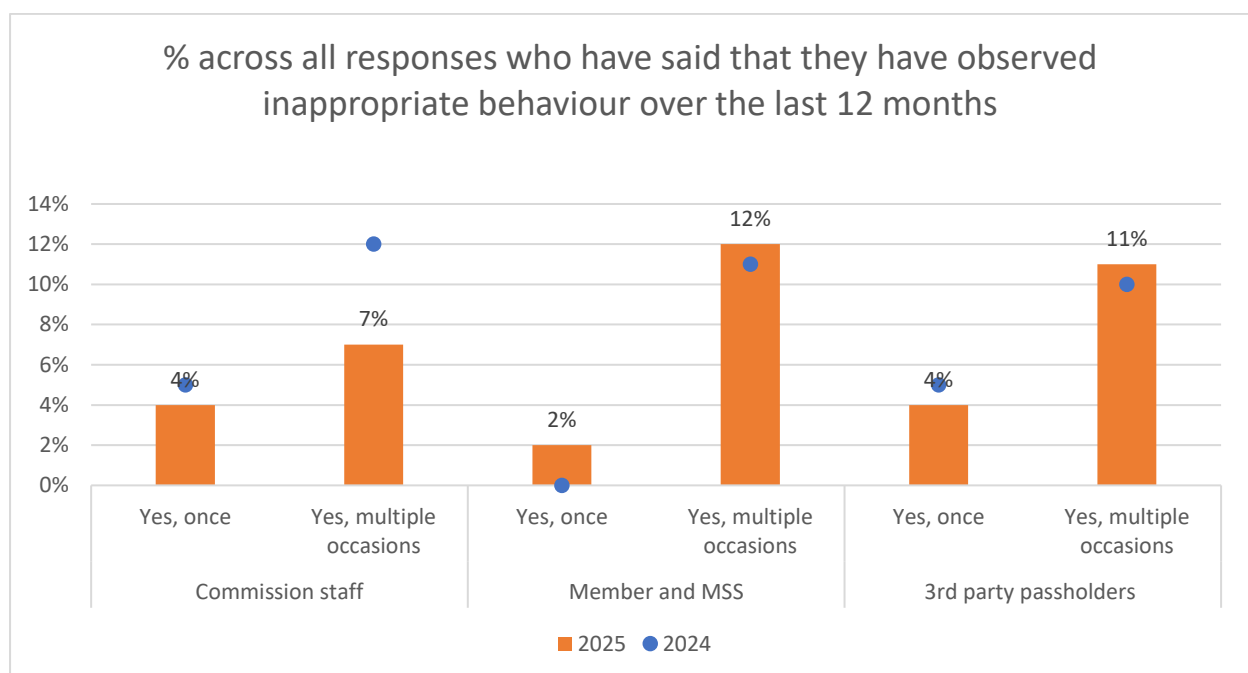
For Commission staff, the percentage of respondents stating that they had not observed inappropriate behaviour in the last 12 months whilst in the workplace

increased slightly to 81%. 11% however, 11% have observed inappropriate behaviour in the last 12 months, with 8% stating they were not sure.

85% of 3rd party passholders said they had not observed inappropriate behaviour, with 15% stating that they had observed inappropriate behaviour.

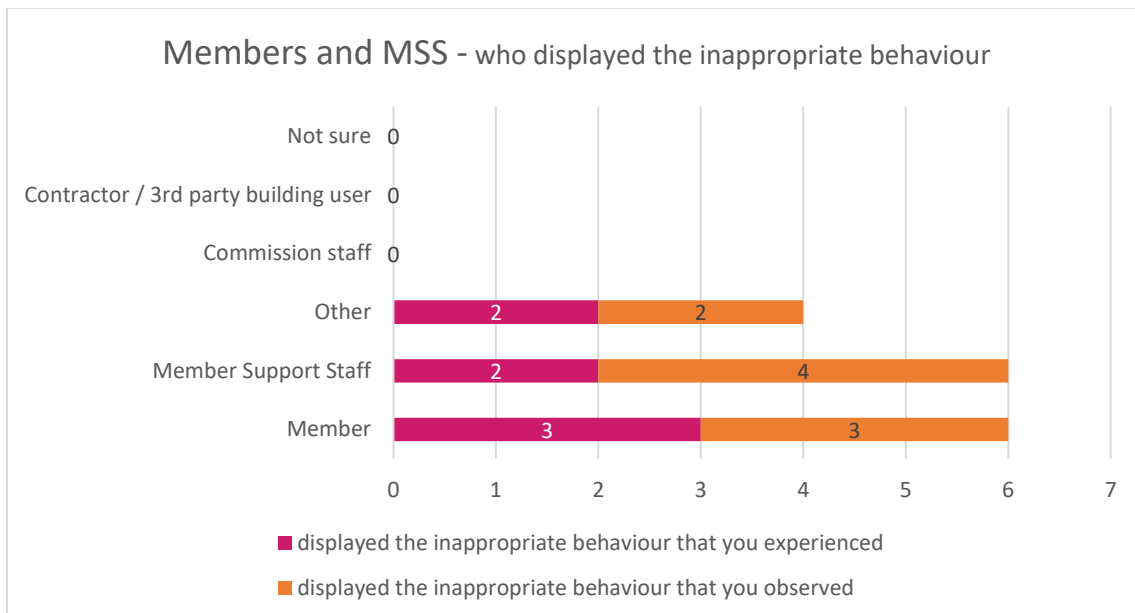
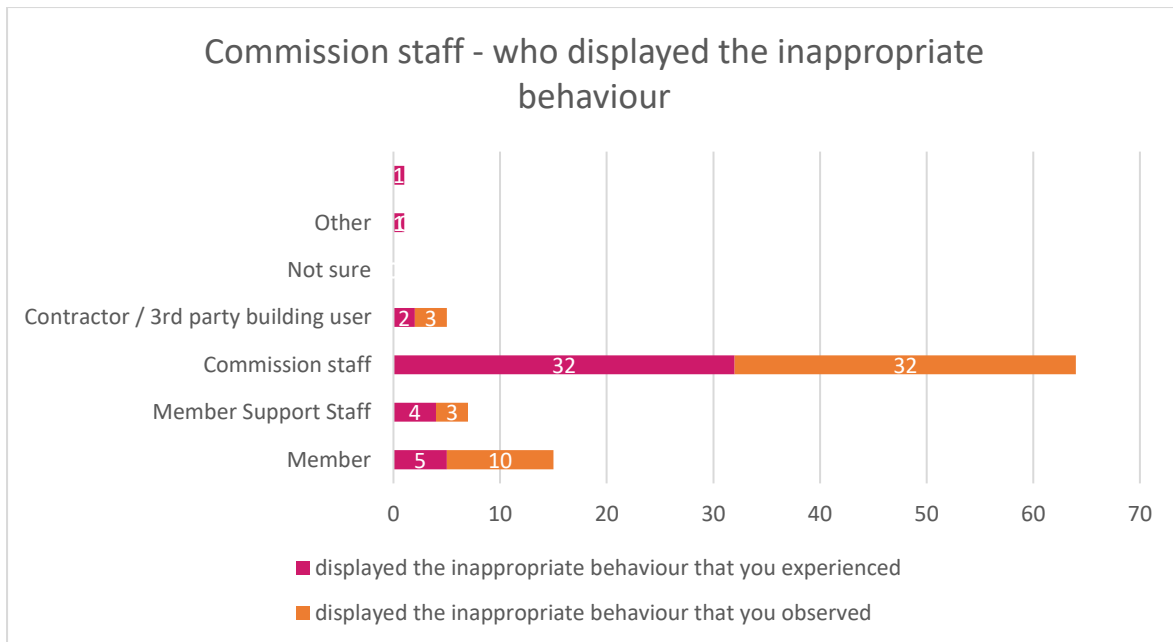
This is an overall positive increase for Commission staff, an overall slight negative decrease for Members/MSS and about the same for 3rd party passholders.

For both Members/MSS and 3rd party passholder however, the very small numbers of respondents mean the data is easily skewed.



We asked: Who was/were the individuals who displayed the inappropriate behaviour that you experienced or observed?

This was a new question in the survey this year as a result of recommendations from, the dignity and respect audit. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the individual displaying inappropriate behaviour were more likely to be within workforce unit that the individual experiencing or observing the behaviour also worked in (i.e. Commission staff were more likely to experience or observe inappropriate behaviour from other Commission staff, and Members/MSS more likely to experience or observe inappropriate behaviour from other Members/MSS.)



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. 6% of respondents overall had experienced inappropriate behaviour by members of the public at work, predominantly from service areas which are public facing. This was marginally reduced compared to 2024 (7%), however there was also a 3% increase in respondents saying they were unsure whether they had observed inappropriate behaviour.

	2023 (Commission staff only)	2024 (Commission staff only)	2025 (Commission staff only)
Yes, once	2%	2%	2%
Yes, multiple occasions	4%	5%	4%
No	89%	91%	89%
Not sure	5%	2%	5%

We asked: So 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?

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

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?

	Members and Member Support Staff	Commission staff	3rd party passholders
Yes	0%	4%	0%
No	100%	94%	100%
Prefer not to say	0%	2%	0%

Analysis and next steps:

For Commission staff, there has been a slight reduction in the percentage of respondents who experience or observe inappropriate behaviour at work. For Members/MSS, and for 3rd party building users, given the very low numbers, it is difficult to draw any comparisons to previous data.

The numbers of numbers of respondents who stated that they have called out inappropriate behaviour are low. 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

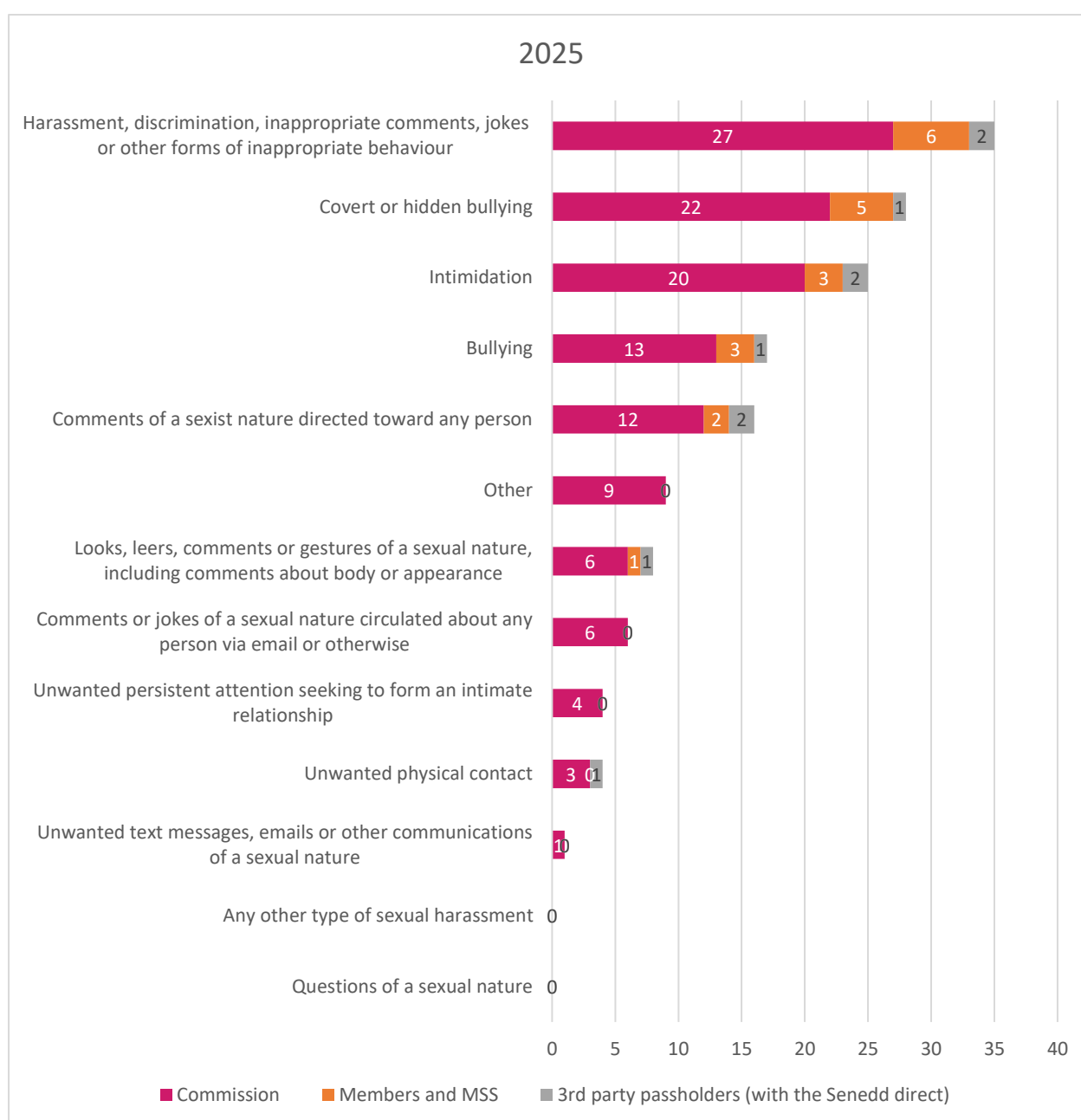
Information published on the website and intranet pages makes clear any unwanted behaviour is unacceptable – that is any inappropriate behaviour that adversely affects the dignity of another person. This guidance also details what is meant by harassment, discrimination and bullying.

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.

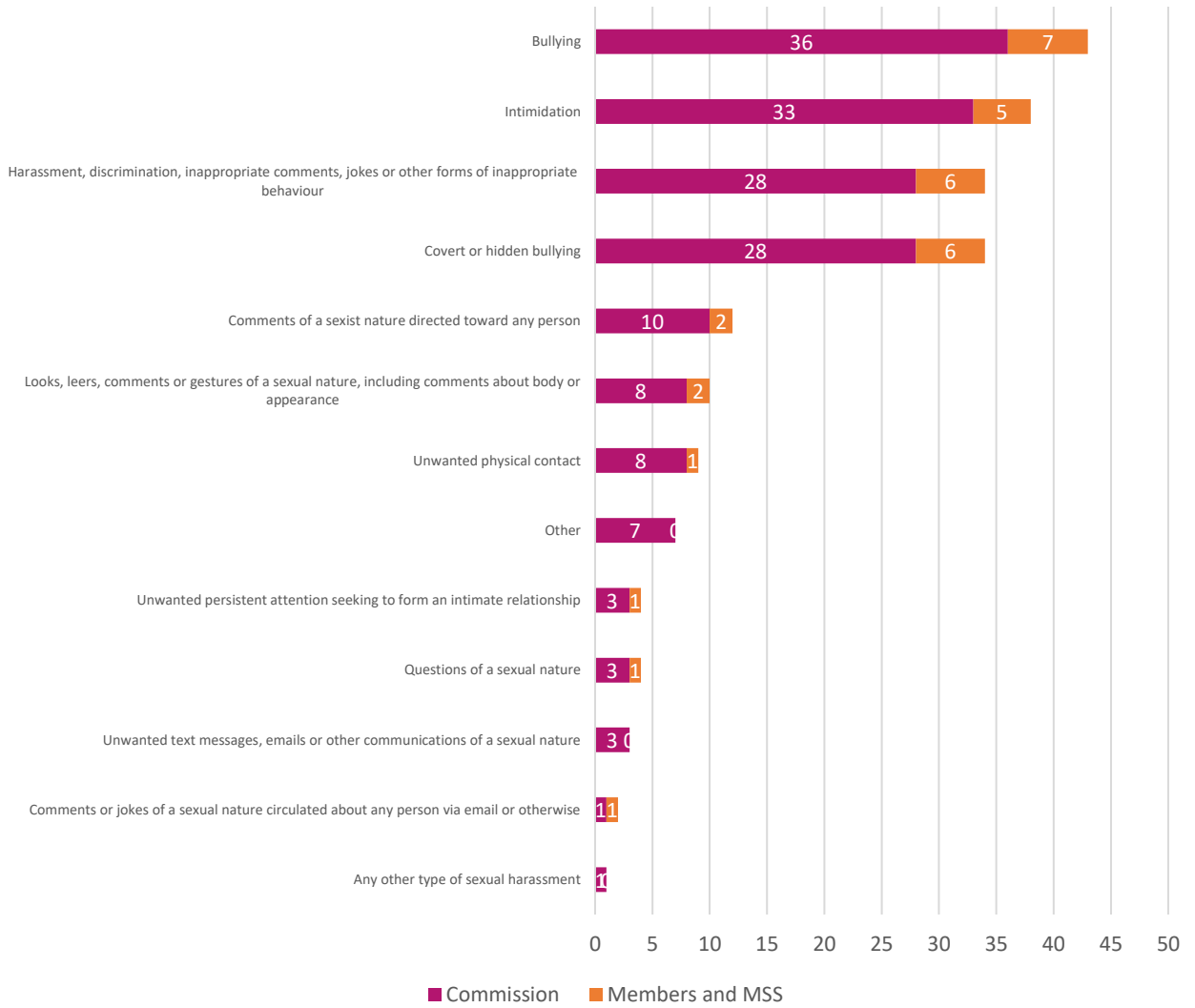
Due to the difference in response rates between Commission staff, Members/MSS, and 3rd party building users, two graphs are included for each section below: 1. The actual number of responses received; 2. The percentage of responses from these groups.

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?

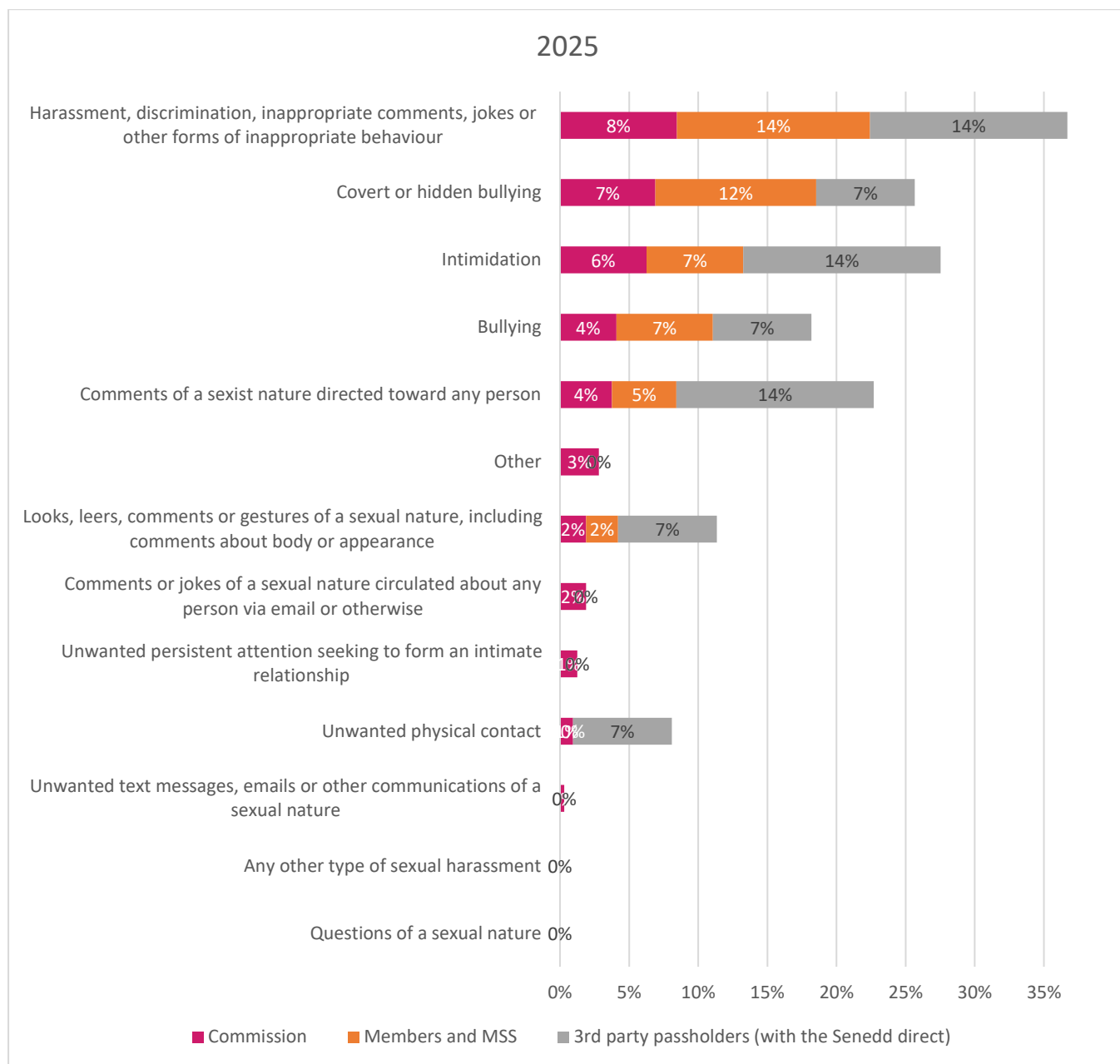
Actual number of responses received from Commission staff and Members and MSS



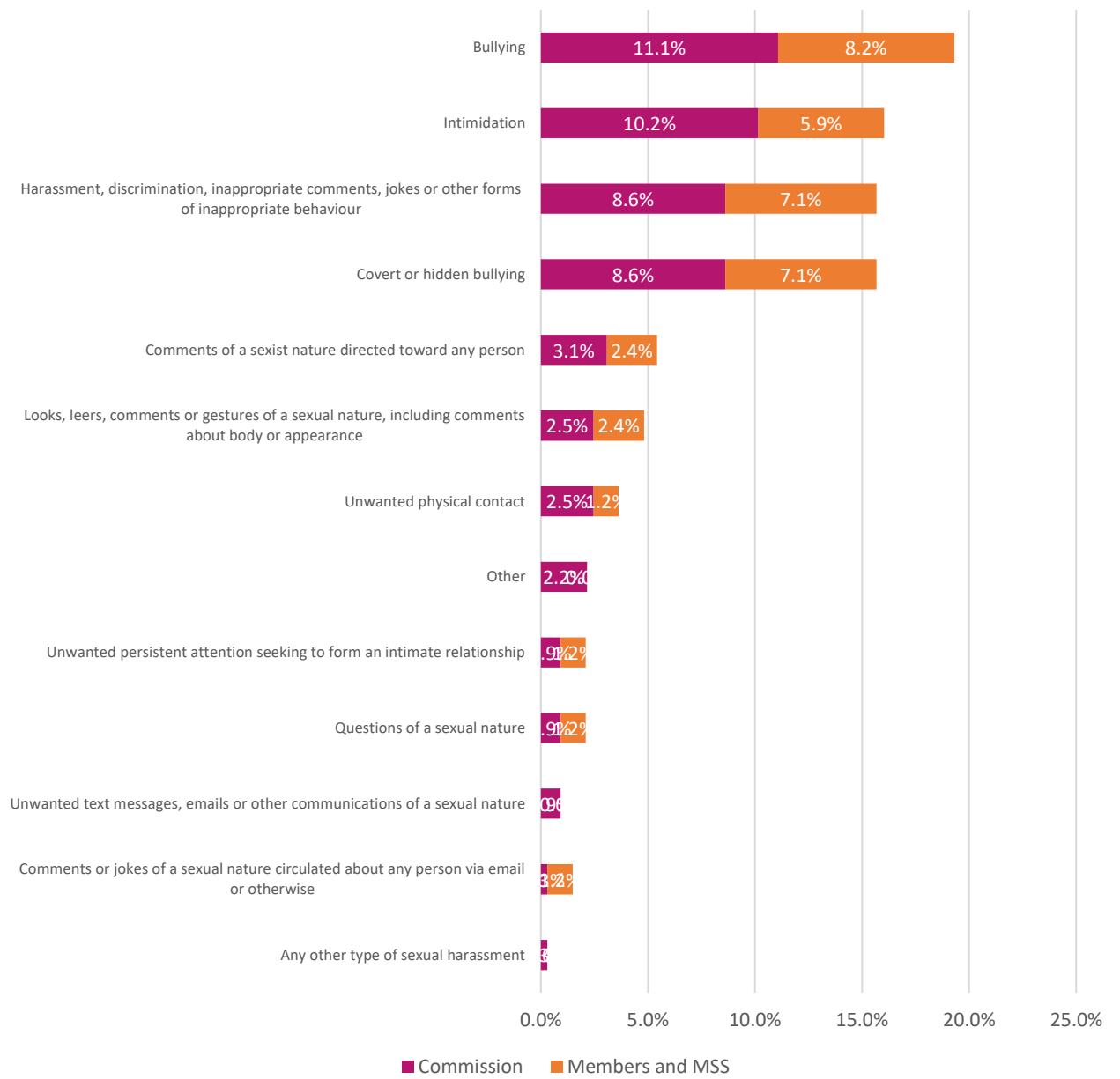
2024



Percentage of responses received from Commission staff and Members and MSS

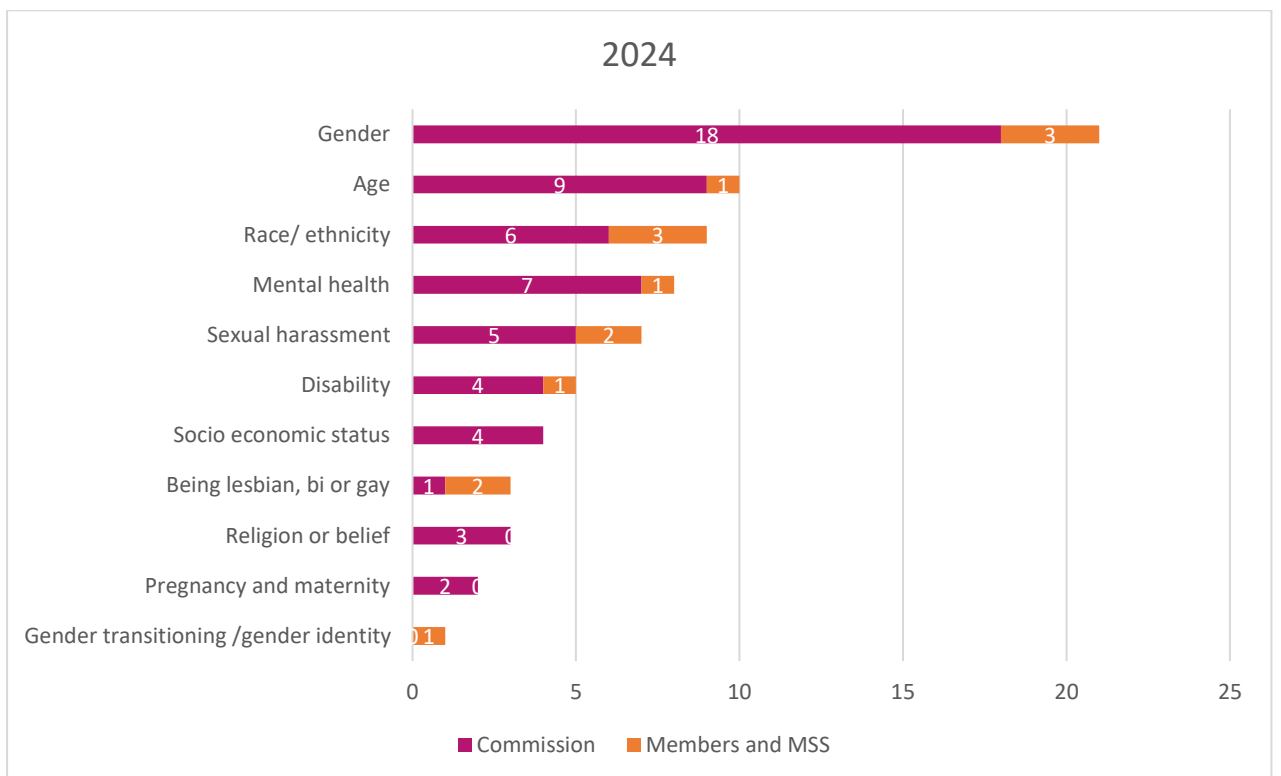
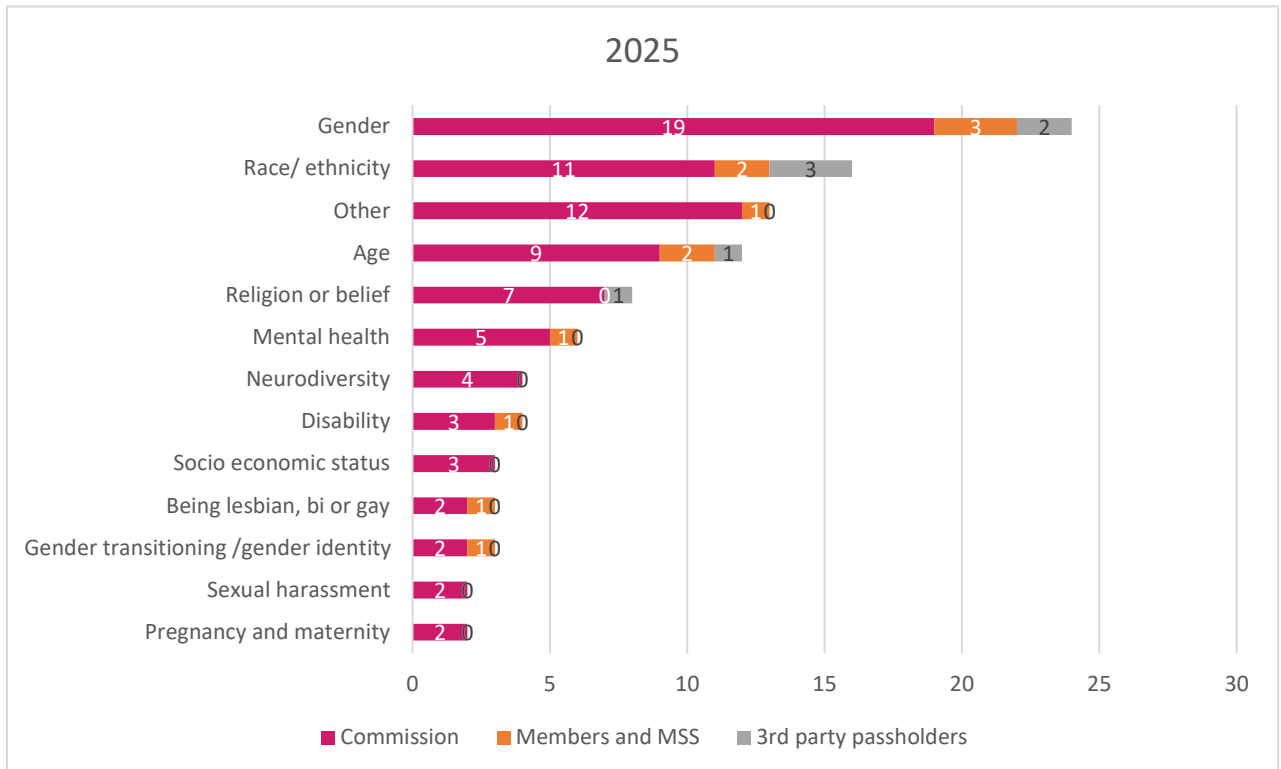


2024

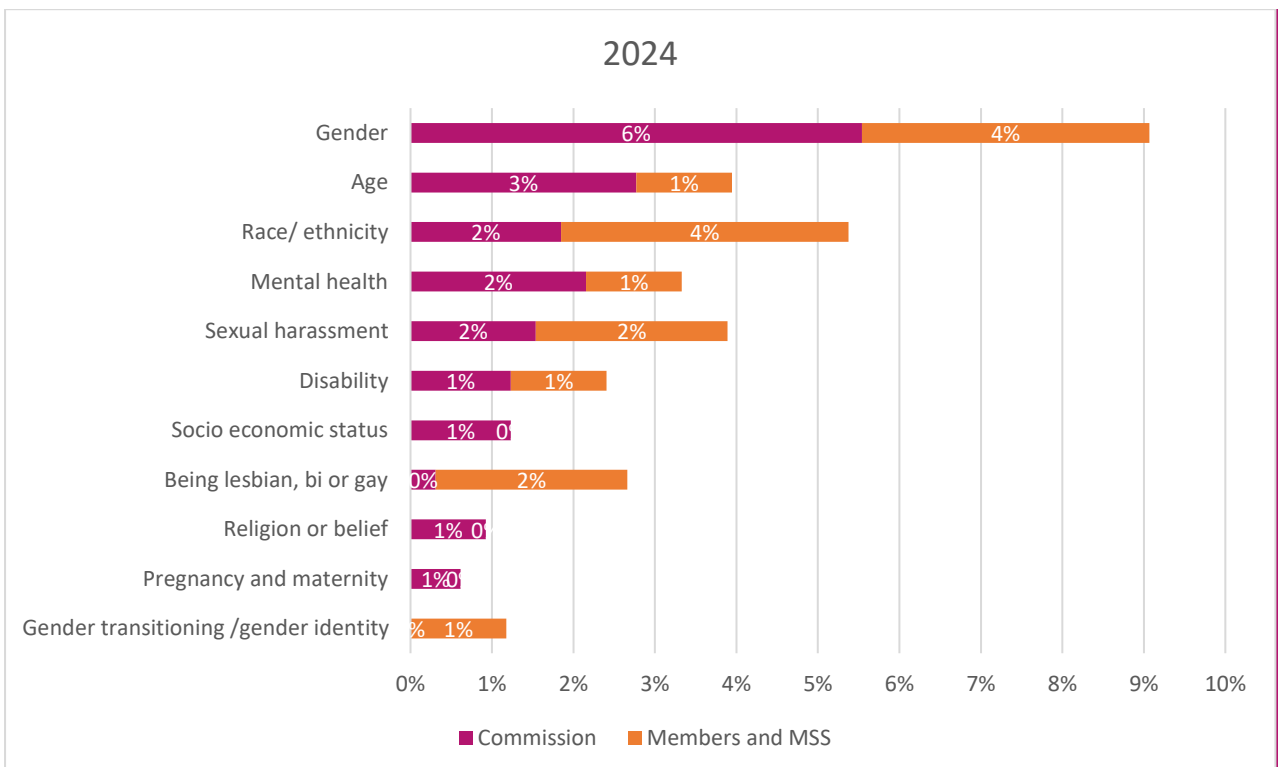
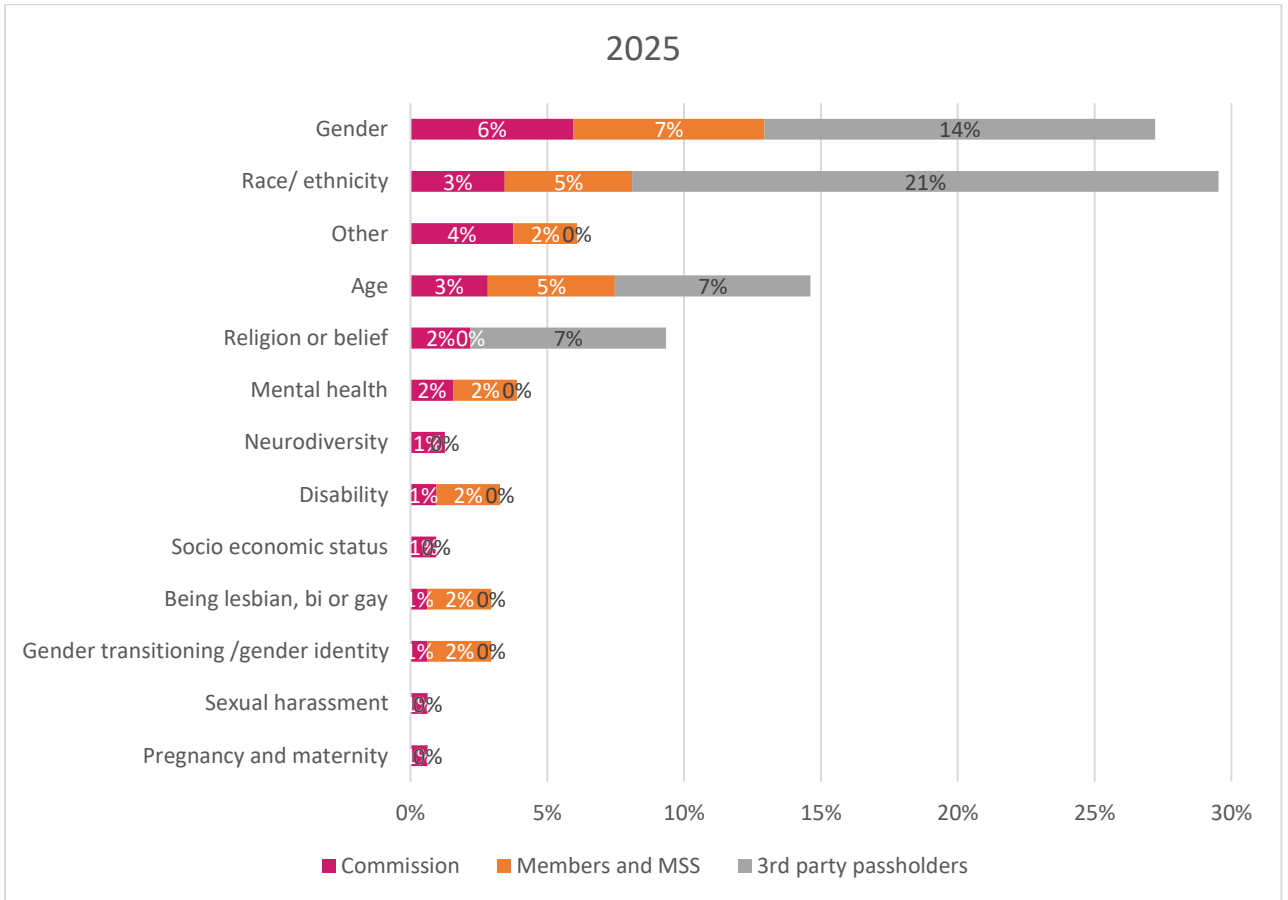


We asked: If you have been subject to, or witnessed inappropriate behaviour in work in the last 12 months, was this behaviour linked to any of the following?

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:

Whilst most participants reported that they haven't encountered or witnessed any inappropriate behaviour, there is still a small percentage of respondents who report that they have been subject to inappropriate behaviour. Therefore, there is still progress to be made in building the positive culture we aim for across the Senedd. 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, as well as race/ethnicity, which has increased slightly this year.

Sexual harassment awareness training is in the process of being rolled out for Commission staff, and will be introduced for Members/MSS as part of the 7th Senedd. Ongoing communications and awareness programmes are ongoing related to race and ethnicity, as well as other protected characteristics.

Annex A: 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	5
More regular / more consistent communication about the process and initiatives	1	5
Process for Dignity and Respect concerns to be reviewed via independent / external agency	5	
Improvements to formal process including quicker action, more regular communication and support, and a clear outcome	-	5
Make it clear that complaints will be taken seriously and staff supported	2	4
Cultural change needed from the top / stronger advocacy from EB and leadership about calling out poor behaviours and a commitment to creating an environment that feels safe to challenge.	-	3
Reassure about anonymity	-	2
More avenues to raise issues that aren't your line manager	-	2
Ensure proper / appropriate action is taken once something is raised	-	2

	Members/MSS	Commission staff
Ensure managers listen and take appropriate action when someone raises an issue	-	2
Anonymous reporting mechanism	-	1
Do not have anonymous routes for raising issues as unable to defend yourself against this	-	1
Closer working with Trade Unions	1	
Training:		
Include as part of induction	1	2
Should be mandatory		1
Bystander training		1
Yearly refresher training		1
Training should be more concise		1
More training for managers / TLs		1
Clear collective grievances process	-	1
A clear route to complain about MSS behaviour rather than having to deal directly with the relevant MS	-	1
More mental health support for those against whom something has been raised	-	1
Promote workplace stories about Dignity and Respect to encourage staff to know that they don't have to deal with inappropriate behaviour on their own.	-	1
Contact officer who is more senior staff /	-	1

	Members/MSS	Commission staff
Consistency in dealing with complaints		1

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted