

# Independent review of bullying and harassment at the Bar

Call for submissions response form

Submissions can be sent in any format directly to the review team via [BHReview@barcouncil.org.uk](mailto:BHReview@barcouncil.org.uk).

If you find it easier, you can complete any or all of the questions below and email your completed form to [BHReview@barcouncil.org.uk](mailto:BHReview@barcouncil.org.uk).

Unless told otherwise, submissions will be published alongside the final report on the Bar Council's website.

Please indicate how you would like your responses to be treated (check the box):

- Published in full
- Published anonymously (the content will be published but not the name of the submitting party)
- Published with certain redactions (please indicate this in the responses)
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If you would like to submit your answers completely anonymously and confidentially, please use [Talk to Spot](#).

Name (optional)

Organisation (if you are responding on behalf of an organisation)

Click or tap here to enter text.

## 1. Reasons for bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment

- a. In your view, why is bullying, harassment and sexual harassment a persistent problem at the Bar?

Historically, the bar was predominantly white male and public school. Times were also different as to how harassment was approached in society as a whole. In the 80's women were said to "asking for it" if they were a short skirt. Racist and sexist views were rampant in society

- b. Are there particular dynamics or working practices at the Bar which allow for bullying, harassment and sexual harassment to persist?

The Bar has improved immeasurably. I do think that there is still a problem with judges, as it is almost impossible to complain about them. I think the Bar has improved but the judiciary needs work.

- c. Are the relevant standards of behaviour relating to bullying, harassment and sexual harassment known, clear, accessible, and sufficiently robust?

At the Bar, yes. But not at the judiciary. It is impossible to complain without risk to one's career

- d. Are the relevant standards of behaviour relating to bullying, harassment and sexual harassment sufficiently mainstreamed within barristers' professional obligations? Should they, for example, be included within the Core Duties set out in the [BSB Code of Conduct](#)

I don't think changes are required

## **2. Impact of bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment**

- a. What is the impact of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment on those who are subject to such misconduct?

I have had historically, sexual harassment, racist harassment and bullying. Now, I still suffer from bullying from the judiciary.

- b. Is there a wider impact upon barristers' staff, clients (professional and law), or the justice system more broadly?

I think certain judges need to learn courtesy and shouting at a barrister is not good judicial practice. I would like to see reporting of judges to be anonymous and that their conduct is regularly reviewed.

## **3. Reporting mechanisms, resources, and sanctions**

- a. What are the barriers to reporting incidents of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment?

Yes, effect on one's career. It needs to be anonymous to the judge.

- b. What mechanisms could be put in place to mitigate any repercussions against a complainant who has reported bullying, harassment or sexual harassment?

Anonymous reporting, or the complainants name be withheld from the judge

- c. The Bar Standards Board (BSB) rules place a duty on barristers to report to the BSB in circumstances where there are reasonable grounds to believe there has been serious misconduct (with an exception set out in guidance for victims). Is this duty to report known, understood and implemented in practice?

no

- d. Is there sufficient support in place both for complainants and persons accused of bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment? Do the existing mechanisms appropriately balance the need for confidentiality and transparency?

No. there is no support if one wants to report a judge

- e. Should there be interim measures which permit a person accused of bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment to be subject to a precautionary exclusion from Chambers, their employer, or from practice during the adjudication of a complaint?

Yes, as far as the judiciary is concerned. The difficulty with excluding barristers is that they are self-employed and if they are found to be innocent, there is no way to compensate them for their loss of earnings. So I do not consider that they should be excluded from chambers. However, restriction of contact or movement within chambers may be acceptable.

- f. Are investigations into complaints (by the BSB, Chambers or any other relevant body) concerning bullying, harassment or sexual harassment sufficiently independent, prompt, robust, and fair?

No experience

- g. Following an upheld complaint of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment, are the sanctions imposed appropriate and fair? Is enforcement action sufficiently robust to act as a deterrent?

No knowledge

#### **4. Potential reforms to tackle bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment**

- a. Are there any preventative steps which can be taken to tackle bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment? In particular, what could be done in the court room, in Chambers, and at the Bar more widely, to assist in preventing such misconduct?

I would like reporting of judges to be easier and for there to be enhanced training and removal from office if they can not be courteous and stop shouting at barristers.

- b. What improvements could be made to existing reporting mechanisms and support services?

There needs to be significant improvement of reporting of judges. The complainant must be able to be anonymous

- c. In what ways could the judiciary, clerks, chambers professionals, and others work together with the Bar to bring about change?

Basic understanding of how one should speak to another in a professional arena

- d. Are there any other comparable professions which can offer examples of best practice in tackling bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment?

Click or tap here to enter text.

#### **5. Is there anything else you would like to share with the review?**

I have been doing this job for over 20 years. I had suffered racist and sexual harassment historically. This has improved considerably.

However, the issue that I still have are rude, harassing judges. I deal with litigants in persons who can sometimes be abusive. Why should I have to deal with harassment of judges.

I have a particular court [REDACTED] where there is at one female judge [REDACTED] who shouts at counsel and is rude and obnoxious. She is abusive sometimes and threatening to report counsel. I dread going there. Why should I have to put up with abuse when im trying to do my job. I have even asked her to speak to me courteously, and she is still abusive

Please answer as many of the questions as you are able and submit your answers via email to [BHReview@barcouncil.org.uk](mailto:BHReview@barcouncil.org.uk). Please note your responses will not be seen by the Bar Council unless you have opted to have them published.

The review team is not able to respond to specific concerns or reports. Please report these via the usual channel in Talk to Spot or to the BSB. [Find out more](#).