

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.

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.

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)
- ☐ Kept confidential (the submission will only be seen by the review team and not published)

If you would like to submit your answers completely anonymously and confidentially, please use [Talk to Spot](#).

Name (optional)

Click or tap here to enter text.

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?

Yes

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

Yes

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

No

- 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](#)

Yes to being set out in code

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I personally became rather withdrawn after an incidence of judicial bullying and looked at alternative career options

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

Yes a lack of confidence

3. Reporting mechanisms, resources, and sanctions

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

Prospects of promotion i.e. silk / judicial appointment

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

Support from senior members of chambers / senior members of the judiciary

- 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

- 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

- 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?

Yes

- 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

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?

Regular forums with the judiciary and members of the bar to discuss and concerns

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

Barrister counselling that focuses on harassment and bullying

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

Have a forum discussion group on this topic

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

Medical profession / GMC

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please answer as many of the questions as you are able and submit your answers via email to 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](#).