

# 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)
- 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?

Culture and a lack of allyship or calling out by non-impacted parties

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

The clerks' rooms being very male-heavy and 'old school'. The reliance on senior barristers or your clerks to give you work creates a power differential that can be exploited.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 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](#)

Click or tap here to enter text.

## **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?

Psychological and physical harm, low self-esteem, leaving the profession.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

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

Fear of retribution or being blacklisted/not given work

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 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?

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 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?

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 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?

Click or tap here to enter text.

#### **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?

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 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?**

Examples of things that have happened to me: In my first week of pupillage, a clerk came into the room I was working, closed the door and said that he needed to sleep with me. When I got my first junior brief, a clerk said to me I only got it because of my "tits" and everyone else in the clerks room who heard this (which comprised other clerks and barristers laughed). Being groped at chambers' parties by senior members of chambers.

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](#).