Tackling bullying & harassment in the NHS

19% of staff experienced bullying or harassment in the last year from colleagues.1
13% of staff experienced bullying or harassment in the last year from their manager.1
98% of staff experienced incivility in the workplace.4

Disproportionate impact
- BME staff are more likely to experience bullying or harassment.1
- 26.6% of disabled staff reported bullying or harassment in the last year.1
- Bisexual and gay staff are more likely to experience bullying or harassment than heterosexual staff.1

Costs to the NHS
- Toxic behaviour costs the NHS more than £2bn a year.2
- If bullied NHS workers left their jobs, it would mean a loss of 42,681 staff.3
- The cost of replacing those staff would be £231.9m.3
- Sickness presenteeism due to bullying costs £604.4m a year.3

What is the impact?

On the organisation
- Greater risk of human error2
- Poorer patient care
- Reduced productivity
- Low morale
- Increased absenteeism
- Reduced teamwork4

On the individual
- Anxiety and depression
- Disengagement and isolation
- Reduced confidence4
- Take the feelings home with you4

What can my organisation do?
- Create policies to develop and promote a positive culture.
- Appoint a leader to work with your freedom to speak up guardian.
- Monitor organisational data to identify patterns to target interventions.4

What can my manager do?
- Identify early warning signs and challenge inappropriate behaviours.
- Respond quickly to complaints and issues.
- Engage and involve trade union colleagues.7
- Provide training on inappropriate behaviour and its impact.6

What can I do?
- Ask the individual to stop.
- Speak to your manager, senior colleague and/or union rep.
- Keep a record of the incidents.
- Speak up when you see staff treated unkindly.
- Report the incident to your freedom to speak up guardian.

1. NHS Staff Survey, 2018
3. Bullying in the Healthcare Industry (Dalton, 2016)
4. The price of fear: Estimating the financial cost of bullying and harassment to the NHS in England (Kline and Lewis, 2018)
5. Make or Break: Incivility in the workplace ESTH 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1EDatTYMkE
6. Evidence synthesis on the occurrence, causes, consequences, prevention and management of bullying and harassing behaviours to inform decision-making in the NHS, Illegu et al, (February 2013)
7. Creating a culture of civility, compassion and respect in the NHS, 2018, Social Partnership Forum