

Tackling bullying and harassment in the NHS

18.7%

of staff experience bullying or harassment in the last year from colleagues.¹

11.1%

of staff experienced bullying or harassment in the last year from their manager.¹



98%

of staff experience incivility in the workplace.⁴

Staff who see incivility have a **20%** decrease in their performance and a **50%** decrease in wanting to help others.⁴



Disproportionate impact

- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff are more likely to experience bullying and harassment.¹
- **25%** of disabled staff reported bullying or harassment by other colleagues 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.³
- 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
- Lower morale
- Increased absenteeism
- Reduced productivity and teamwork⁴

On the individual:

- Anxiety and depression
- Disengagement and isolation
- Take their feelings home with them³
- Reduced confidence⁴

What can my organisation do?

- Promote NHS England's civility and respect toolkit to meet the People Plan's vision.⁷
- 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.⁵

What can my manager do?

- Identify early warning signs and challenge inappropriate behaviours.
- Respond quickly to complaints and issues, ensuring effective wellbeing conversations are had.
- Engage and involve trade union colleagues.⁶
- Provide training on inappropriate behaviour and its impact.⁵

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, 2022.

² Workplace bullying in emergency nursing: Development of a grounded theory using situational analysis. (Wolf et al, 2017) Bullying in the Healthcare Industry (Dalton, 2016).

³ The price of fear: Estimating the financial cost of bullying and harassment to the NHS in England. (Kline and Lewis, 2018).

⁴ Make or Break: Incivility in the workplace ESTH 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1EDatTYMKE

⁵ Evidence synthesis on the occurrence, causes, consequences, prevention and management of bullying and harassing behaviours to inform decision-making in the NHS, Illing et al, (February 2013).

⁶ Creating a culture of civility, compassion and respect in the NHS, 2019, Social Partnership Forum.

⁷ NHS England's Supporting our staff - A toolkit to promote cultures of civility and respect.