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PRESS RELEASE

Is your workplace a safe place?

One fifth of NI workers who responded to an online questionnaire have personally experienced unwanted behaviour at work in the previous 12 months. Of these unwanted behaviours, 27% were on the grounds of sex, 24% were about religion and 20% about politics. One quarter of employees responding had witnessed unwanted behaviour at work.

Over 3,500 employees have responded to a request from the Equality Commission to share their experiences at work, asking about diversity, inclusivity, and if employees felt safe and secure from harassment at work.

“The topline figures are encouraging, with the majority of employees reporting that they have neither experienced (75%) nor witnessed (69%) unwanted behaviours in the workplace. 75% said their line managers made them welcome and supported, and 74% said their colleagues did the same.

“However this snapshot provides a mixed picture of life at work in Northern Ireland today,” said Dr Michael Wardlow, Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission.

“These results show that while many workers feel secure and respected at work, there’s still a sizeable minority for whom work is a very different experience. 1 in 5 employees personally experienced unwanted behaviour at work in the previous 12 months, yet only 11% said they had raised the issue through their workplace’s formal procedures – and 52% did not raise the issue at all.

“There is no doubt that employers have made enormous strides in getting all the structures in place to create a good and harmonious workplace.

“The next step is to fill in more pieces of the jigsaw to understand the reported behaviours. The information we have gathered will be analysed in more depth and will be used to build the evidence base for developing advice and guidance to employers to support them in making workplaces more welcoming and inclusive.”

Notes for editors

- Download: [The Employee Survey Report 1 – an introduction](#) (pdf)
- Between 29 November 2018 and 1 March 2019, the Commission undertook two information-gathering exercises, asking employers and

- employees to complete an online survey. These used 'snowball' or referral sampling methodologies. The findings cannot be representative for all either employers or employees in Northern Ireland.
- The majority of respondents are from the public sector.