

Fire Brigades Union Sexual Harassment Research Project

1. Executive Summary

In 2017, the ‘MeToo’ movement took off. MeToo’s background is described by the Global Fund for Women as follows:

*“The **‘me too’ movement** was founded in 2006 by Tarana Burke to support survivors of sexual violence, particularly young women of color from low-wealth communities, to find pathways to healing. The movement’s vision from the beginning has been to address both the dearth of resources for survivors of sexual violence and to build a robust community of advocates and allies. In October 2017, the movement went global as the #MeToo hashtag went viral and survivors across the world came forward about their experiences with sexual assault.”¹*

Since 2017, in the UK, there has been a heightened call from women and allies to address the misogynistic environments and behaviours that result in a lack of both psychological and physical safety for women. Since 2017, despite countless campaigns and initiatives, and despite the decades of work prior to MeToo by women and allies, there has been an ongoing series of news stories about sexual harassment in institutions, movements and professions, for example in surgery, the Metropolitan Police and McDonalds.²³⁴

It is important for leaders across all organisations and sectors to understand what is meant by misogyny. Misogyny is not really about ‘men who hate women.’ Many men who behave in misogynistic ways will consider that they love women; their mothers, partners, daughters and so on. Misogyny is helpfully explained by Baroness Helena Kennedy KC in her report [Misogyny – A Human Rights Issue \(March 2022\)](#) as

“...a way of thinking that upholds the primary status of men and a sense of male entitlement, while subordinating women and limiting their power and freedom. Conduct based on this thinking can include a range of abusive and controlling behaviours including rape, sexual offences, harassment and bullying, and domestic abuse.”

Reflecting on this definition, it can be understood that in addition to *rape, sexual offences, harassment and bullying, and domestic abuse*; ‘banter,’ inappropriate joking and innuendo can all be seen as misogynistic behaviours. These behaviours, even if they are ‘one off’ rather than part of a pattern, demonstrate the perpetrators’ senses of entitlement – to attention, to a recognition of power or the primary status of men, to the idea that the physical space (e.g the pub, the hotel bar, the conference floor, the meeting room) is ‘theirs.’ And so, these behaviours serve to continue the subordination of women.

The trade union movement has been under considerable scrutiny in terms of attitudes and behaviours towards women. The GMB⁵, the Royal College of Nursing⁶ and the TSSA,⁷ for example, have made

¹ Global Fund for Women [here](http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/movements/me-too/) www.globalfundforwomen.org/movements/me-too/

² BBC News Female Surgeons sexually assaulted while operating 12 Sept 2023 [here](#)

³ The Guardian More than 150 Met officers investigated 9 Jan 2023 [here](#)

⁴ BBC News McDonalds workers speak out [here](#) 18 July 2023

⁵ INVESTIGATION INTO SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND THE MANAGEMENT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS WITHIN THE GMB, Karon Monaghan QC, August 2020

⁶ The Guardian Bullying, misogyny and sexual culture at Royal College of Nursing 10 Oct 2022 [here](#)

⁷ TSSA Independent Inquiry Baroness Helena Kennedy KC 8 Feb 2023 [here](#)

headlines for the wrong reasons, and are now undertaking significant work to address deeply rooted cultural issues. Admirably, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), prompted by a TUC working group and supported by its National Women's Committee, chose to undertake an independent research project to assess whether sexual harassment was an issue it needed to address. This report presents the findings of the research project and makes recommendations for improvements, where appropriate.

This project matters for three reasons:

1. The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has a duty to create psychologically and physically safe environments for all who engage with it.
2. The FBU's work is, at least in part, about fighting for equality. The legitimacy of this fight is undermined if the FBU's own house is not in order.
3. If the environments and cultures in which women operate are not psychologically safe or physically safe, women are unlikely to contribute their best work to the Union, and they are also less likely to recommend engagement with the Union to others. In this respect it is important to understand that data on the *prevalence* of sexual harassment does not give a complete understanding of the *impact* of sexual harassment. The existence of sexual harassment – whether experienced directly or indirectly (for example, a woman hearing about an incident after it has happened) – has a chilling effect on the safety and freedoms of women. So, one act of sexual harassment that goes unchecked will have a knock-on impact far beyond that incident.

The research project chiefly comprised a survey (see Methodology, below) alongside a limited number of interviews of women members of the FBU⁸. Detailed findings are elaborated further in this report, but the key messages are:

- What constitutes sexual harassment is well understood within the FBU. There was no meaningful evidence to suggest that men do not know what is – or is not – acceptable behaviour.
- Nevertheless, **30% of women who completed the survey reported having experienced sexual harassment in an FBU context**. This compares to 5% of men. **15% of women indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months**. For emphasis, this means that 3 out of every 10 current women members of the FBU have experienced sexual harassment in an FBU context.⁹
- **Only one in ten of those who'd experienced sexual harassment reported it to the Union** – responses suggested a low confidence in being believed or taken seriously. Responses also suggested that people felt there would be **negative repercussions for them if they did report**.
- Women are less confident than men in challenging sexism and sexual harassment and are more **fearful of what it will mean for them within the FBU if they do speak up**.
- Men may be more confident speaking up, but they **see sexual harassment and sexism as being less prevalent than women**.
- Women are **five times more likely than men to say that they experience and / or fear discrimination because of their gender**. Women were also more likely to report being

⁸ Interviews are not reported separately in this document as the small number of interviews and the concerns about reporting revealed by the survey suggested that this would not be appropriate. This said, there was nothing in the interviews that contradicted the main findings of the survey.

⁹ Note that the survey did not include ex-members of the FBU. Anecdotally, we understand that there may be a material number of women have left the service and the FBU because of sexual harassment. These people would not have contributed to this project which raises the possibility that prevalence of sexual harassment would be even higher than stated were it not for these departures.

talked down to and being excluded from meetings, events, communications or work-related activities.

It can be concluded from these findings that the FBU frequently fails to create psychologically or physically safe spaces for women.

- Reports of being a victim of sexual harassment and reports of witnessing sexual harassment paint a **consistent picture of the most common forms of sexual harassment in FBU contexts** – unwelcome ‘jokes’ of a sexual nature and unwelcome comments about someone’s body, clothes or sex life. The most common environment for sexual harassment to take place appears to be at a ‘social’ occasion after an FBU event.
- Just under one-in-ten of female respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that “I am less willing to participate in FBU activities because of fears of sexual harassment” compared with less than one in a hundred of male respondents.

The picture is of one where the experiences of men and women within the FBU differ widely.

Whilst both men and women appear to have a clear understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment, **this understanding is not translating into spaces where women can operate with the same safety and freedom as their male colleagues.** The survey results posed an interesting question, which is ‘if sexual harassment is understood, why is it happening?’ From the results, it seems possible – in fact likely – that the answer to this question lies in **a there being a lack of consequences for perpetrators.** Reporting doesn’t seem to happen with anything like the frequency that it should, and confidence is low that reporting won’t result in the victim being labelled a ‘trouble maker’ or vexatious. In addition, the greater confidence that men seem to have than women that the FBU does not tolerate sexism, and that men see sexual harassment as being less prevalent than women, suggests women who do report it may encounter a culture of – or behaviour that suggests – disbelief. A potential outcome, therefore, of the presentation of this report, could be men reacting with disappointment, surprise or disbelief. Women may react with little surprise and perhaps a sense that this report is only confirming what they have been trying to say – or have leaders hear - for years.

A culture of disbelief is a fundamental problem. Sexual harassment is rife across society¹⁰ and thought to be compounded in competitive, ‘masculine contest’ environments, as well as in environments in which men are significantly dominant¹¹. Union leadership and members need to question themselves at a profound and reflective level as to whether women members of the FBU are suffering significant harms because of bias which results in a **default setting of not believing women.** This reflection should also pose the question of whether leaders or members have been lazy - or reckless - as to understanding the risks women face in cultures of male dominance. Likewise, reflection should take place as to whether there has been – or continues to be – a fear, even at senior levels, of standing up to men who are known to behave, or to have behaved, unacceptably.

The impact of women’s experiencing sexual harassment in the FBU goes beyond the harms to the women themselves and into the possibility (or likelihood) of losing women’s engagement, their skills and talents. The FBU’s firefighters’ manifesto¹² lists *‘equality – an inclusive service, open to everyone’*

¹⁰ See for example UN Women UK’s research published in March 2021 that found that only 3% of 18-24 year-olds reported having not experienced any of the types of sexual harassment listed in the survey.

¹¹ See for example Putting People Down and Pushing Them Out: Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behaviour, Lilia M. Cortina & Maria A. Areguin Vol 8 Jan 2021 [here](#)

¹² Firefighters’ Manifesto: our service, our future [here](#)

as one of its demands. To increase its legitimacy and capability to fight on this point, and to respect the contributions of those who have shared their experiences through this project, we make a number of recommendations.

2. Recommendations

As a result of the findings of this project we recommend:

1. Committing to change

- a. Senior FBU officials should create a statement committing to a determination to eliminate sexual harassment and misogynistic behaviour in the Union. They should speak out on this frequently and act immediately on any issues brought to their attention. This statement should be shared prior to the commencement of any FBU meeting or activity.
- b. Senior FBU officials – and in fact men across the Union - should open up a conversation about *believing women*. This means building a deeper understanding of the prevalence and impacts of sexual harassment (in society as well as in the Union) and facing up to personal biases or prejudices that may result in a default setting towards disbelief of women.
- c. Support services for victims, including access to safe spaces, legal advice and counselling, should be established or, if they exist already, should be invested in further to ensure that they are fit for purpose and reflect the prevalence levels shown in this project, not the prevalence levels suggested by current levels of reporting.
- d. A review should be established of reporting procedures to ensure that they are aligned with the principles of equity and justice and that processes can be completed both **promptly and sensitively**. This may mean bypassing 'local' structures and creating a centralised capability to enact procedures. Again, resourcing of these procedures should reflect the prevalence levels shown in this project, not the prevalence levels suggested by current levels of reporting. It is essential that any new procedures work to minimise the vulnerability of victims.
- e. This review should be considered a strategic priority of the Union and resourced and given profile across all structures and convenings of the Union accordingly.

2. Valuing women and increasing the presence of women: The FBU should look for opportunities to demonstrate the value it places on women members and officials and make a commitment to reducing male dominance. This will mean taking a critical look at many areas to ensure that the status quo of male dominance is not being privileged, but rather is being addressed and changed. This critical look should include, at least:

- a. Reviewing which FBU roles are paid to ensure women are treated equitably for their contributions.
- b. Reviewing opportunities for women to progress through the Union's structures.
- c. Creating space for women in Union structures, including on committees and at conference.
- d. Investing further in initiatives that support women members.

3. Training and education: The FBU should undertake work to train and educate officials and members on a number of key points arising from this project including:

- a. Sexual harassment is not a ‘*women’s issue*.’ It is a *Trade Union issue* that goes to the heart of the Union’s aims in terms of equality, inclusion and justice.
- b. What constitutes misogynistic behaviour and sexual harassment; e.g. ‘jokes’ that belittle, demean, humiliate or objectify women are not acceptable in any environment.
- c. Building understanding and competence in developing and running events and meetings that reflect the experiences of under-represented groups, particularly women, (for example distinguishing equity from equality, making sure that all know that they are valued and belong). This understanding should play directly into how meetings are run, chaired and how agenda are developed.
- d. The FBU’s policies and processes on sexual harassment.
- e. Ensure mandatory sexual harassment training for Brigade Officials (up to and including National Officials).

4. Creating safe spaces:

- a. FBU events, including drinks and social occasions following meetings and trainings, should be constructed as ‘safe spaces.’ This means reminding all present – at the outset of any convening - of the values of the FBU and what they mean in terms of respectful and appropriate conduct. It also means ensuring appropriate safeguarding measures are in place for all events, and making sure attendees and organisers are aware of these.
- b. It should not be the job of, for example, the only woman present, to undertake this very necessary work to create safe spaces. It should be undertaken as a serious responsibility by men, particularly senior men, at whatever event or gathering is taking place.
- c. On-line spaces and communications should be considered similarly.

Finally, if the FBU is to make progress it needs to build on the momentum created by current work on equalities¹³ and incorporate these recommendations into plans as a high priority and with a sense of urgency. The newly formed Equalities Committee must take ownership of this report, ensuring all the recommendations are delivered in full.

3. Findings in Full

3.1 Understanding what constitutes sexual harassment

In our survey we listed a number of behaviours and asked which could be considered sexual harassment. The vast majority of respondents were able to identify that all of the items listed (see below) could be considered sexual harassment, which is an interpretation in line with guidance from, amongst others, the TUC.

Behaviours which could be considered sexual harassment

Sexual comments or jokes, for example, about a person’s appearance or clothes
The display or circulation of pornography
Displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photos
Suggestive looks, staring or leering
Uninvited or unwanted propositions and sexual advances
Uninvited or unwanted requests or demands for sexual favours
Sexual gestures
Intrusive questions, uninvited comments or sharing information about a person’s sex life
Sexual posts or contact on social media

¹³ For example: Creation of Equalities Committee (EC Policy Statement 2023 Conference); Equality Matters Campaign

Spreading sexual rumours about a person
Sending emails or text messages with sexual undertones
Unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing

Over 98% of respondents indicated that both *uninvited propositions and sexual advances* and *unwelcome touching...* are considered sexual harassment. The behaviour to be least recognised as sexual harassment was *sexual comments or jokes, for example, about a person's appearance or clothes*. However, this behaviour was nevertheless recognised as sexual harassment by 86% of respondents.

We think it is reasonable to conclude that there is a **fair to good level of understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment within the FBU.**

3.2 Experiences of sexual harassment

This section explores experiences of sexual harassment within the FBU, reporting on:

- Estimates of the prevalence of sexual harassment at any time and within the last 12 months.
- The types of sexual harassment experienced.
- The places sexual harassment took place and the characteristics of the perpetrator.

Prevalence of sexual harassment

Our survey asked “Since you first joined the FBU, have you ever experienced any [of the following types of] unwanted sexual behaviour when engaging in FBU activities, from FBU members, officials, staff or from third parties.”

- Three-in-ten (30.1%) female respondents indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment at any time since they joined the FBU, compared with one-in-twenty (6.1%) male respondents.
- Three-in-twenty (14.7%) female respondents indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment within the last 12 months, compared with 3.4% of male respondents.
- Although there were differences in estimated prevalence of sexual harassment for LGBT+ and BAME members, these are not statistically significant.

Estimated prevalence of sexual harassment





Type of sexual harassment experienced

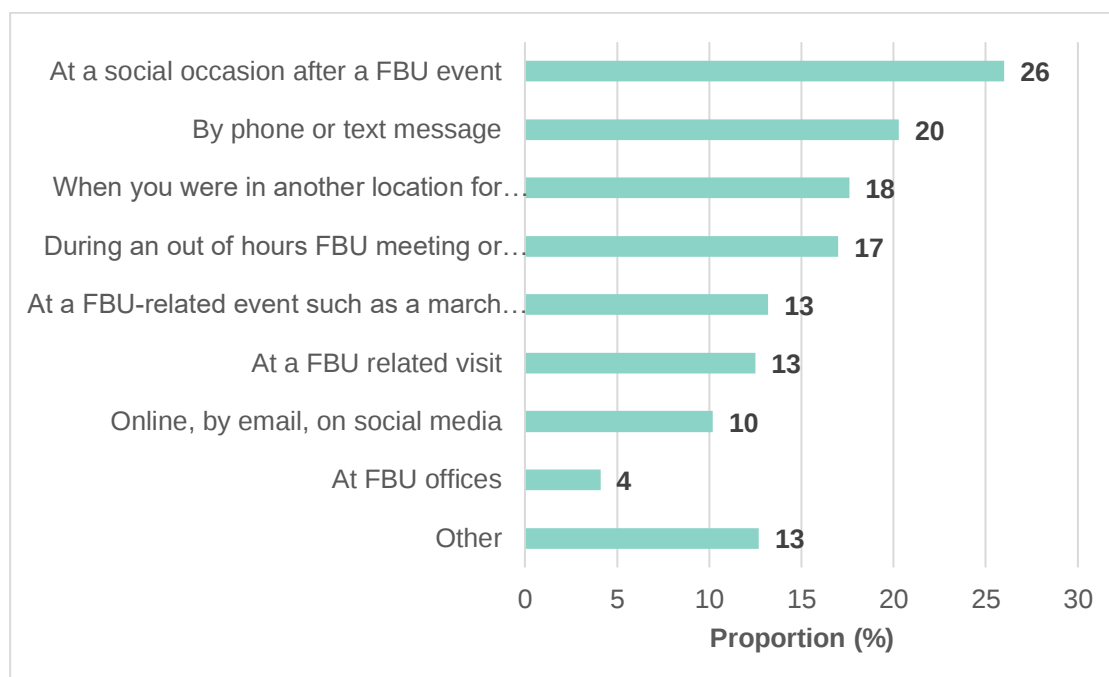
Whilst no form of sexual harassment received a nil return (in other words, all forms had been experienced by some survey respondents), the most commonly experienced types of sexual harassment reported were:

- Unwelcome jokes of a sexual nature.
- Unwelcome questions about [the individual's] sex life.
- Unwelcome comments, sounds or looks/staring of a sexual nature about [the individual's] body or clothes.

Where sexual harassment was experienced and perpetrator characteristics

- One-quarter (26%) of respondents who experienced sexual harassment did so at a 'social occasion' after an FBU event.
- One-fifth (20%) of respondents who experienced sexual harassment did so by phone or text message.

Where did this incident/these incidents take place?



Respondents were asked about the gender and role of the perpetrator of sexual harassment. They were given the option to respond with multiple genders/roles if there was more than one person involved.

- Over nine-in-ten (93%) of respondents identified that the perpetrator was a man/men.
- 16.3% of respondents reported that a perpetrator was a brigade/area official, and 13.4% of respondents reported that a perpetrator was a branch official. The remaining 69.3% of respondents identified that a perpetrator was an FBU member with no official role.

On the basis of the survey, **we conclude that sexual harassment is an issue within the FBU. It is experienced overwhelmingly by women and the perpetrators are overwhelmingly men** and include men undertaking roles on behalf of the Union (e.g as branch officials).

Despite an apparent good understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment – including unwelcome and intrusive (sexual) behaviour – **it is unwelcome, ‘jokes,’ comments and questions** that are the most common form of sexual harassment.

The most ‘high risk’ environment for sexual harassment appears to be convenings after FBU events, followed by on-line behaviour.

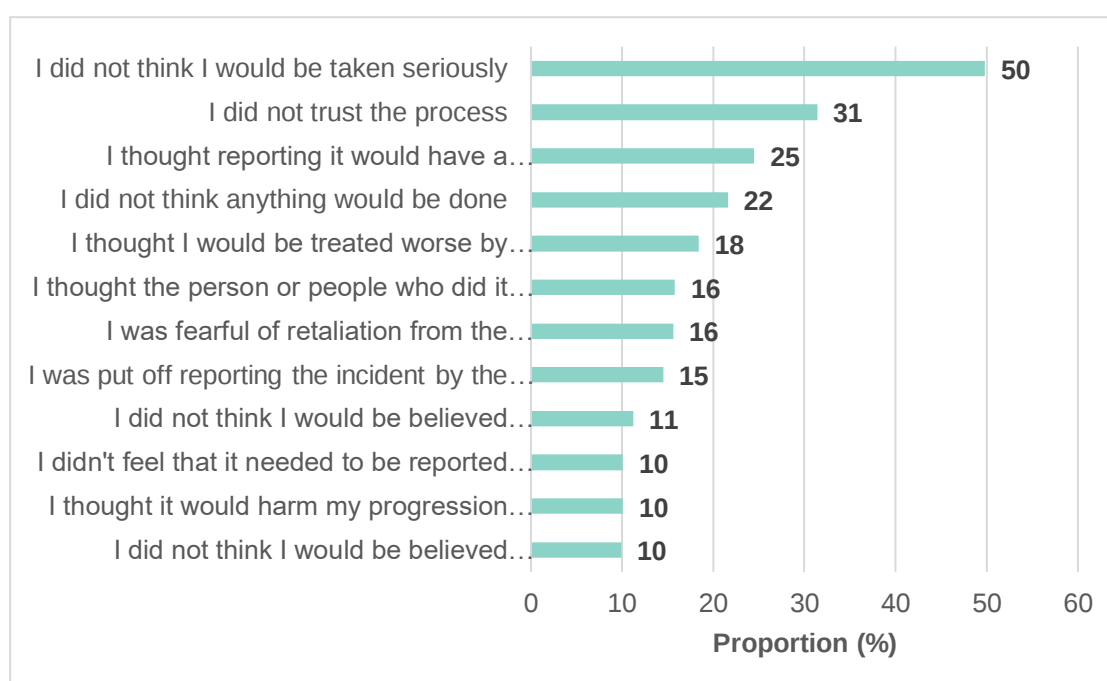
3.3 Reporting of sexual harassment

This section covers reporting of sexual harassment and the reasons for reporting or not reporting it.

- Only one-in-ten (9.9%) of respondents who experienced sexual harassment said that they had reported sexual harassment to the union on at least one occasion.
- Of those who had reported sexual harassment, less than one-in-five (16.3%) always reported sexual harassment when it occurred. More than two-fifths (43.5%) rarely reported sexual harassment, with a further fifth (17.8%) only reporting sexual harassment occasionally.

- Over one-third (34.9%) of those who reported sexual harassment said that no action was taken.
- Only one-in-ten (10.3%) of those who reported sexual harassment felt that the complaint was taken seriously and dealt with satisfactorily.
- The most common reasons for not reporting sexual harassment were:
 - “I did not think I would be taken seriously.”
 - “I did not trust the process.”
 - “I thought reporting it would have a negative effect on my relationships with other members of the FBU.”
 - “I did not think anything would be done.”

Thinking about when you did not report an incident of sexual harassment to the FBU, which of the following statements influenced your decision not to report the incident?



3.4 Impact of sexual harassment

Respondents who experienced sexual harassment were asked about what they did in response to their experience.

- Just under half of respondents told no-one about the incident.
- One-in-five (20.8%) confided in another member of the FBU.
- Three-in-twenty (15.5%) challenged the person/people responsible.
- Only a very small minority looked into how to start a formal FBU complaint (2.5%) or started a formal complaint (1.8%).

Respondents who experienced sexual harassment were asked “Did the unwanted sexual behaviour have any of the following effects on you?”

- Two-thirds (67.7%) of respondents reported that the unwanted sexual behaviour made them feel embarrassed.
- Just over one-quarter (26.3%) of respondents reported that the unwanted sexual behaviour had a negative impact on their mental health.
- Just under one-quarter (22.5%) of respondents reported that the unwanted sexual behaviour made them feel less confident in engaging in FBU activities.
- Respondents were asked if they were aware that the FBU had a policy on sexual harassment, and if so, did they know where they could access it if they needed it.
 - Two-thirds (64.9%) of male respondents were aware of the sexual harassment policy, compared with half (47.4%) of female respondents.
 - Of those that were aware of the policy, four-in-five (78.9%) of male respondents knew how to access the policy if they needed it, compared with two-thirds (65.1%) of female respondents.

From these findings we conclude that there is **significant under-reporting of sexual harassment in the FBU** and that this under reporting stems directly from **a lack of confidence in process and culture**. The **costs of this lack of reporting are high** – for the Union in terms of engagement – and **for the victims – in terms of their mental health and overall wellbeing**. It is clear that **suffering is being inflicted on women** as a result of the prevalence of sexual harassment and the lack of trust in systems, processes and culture.

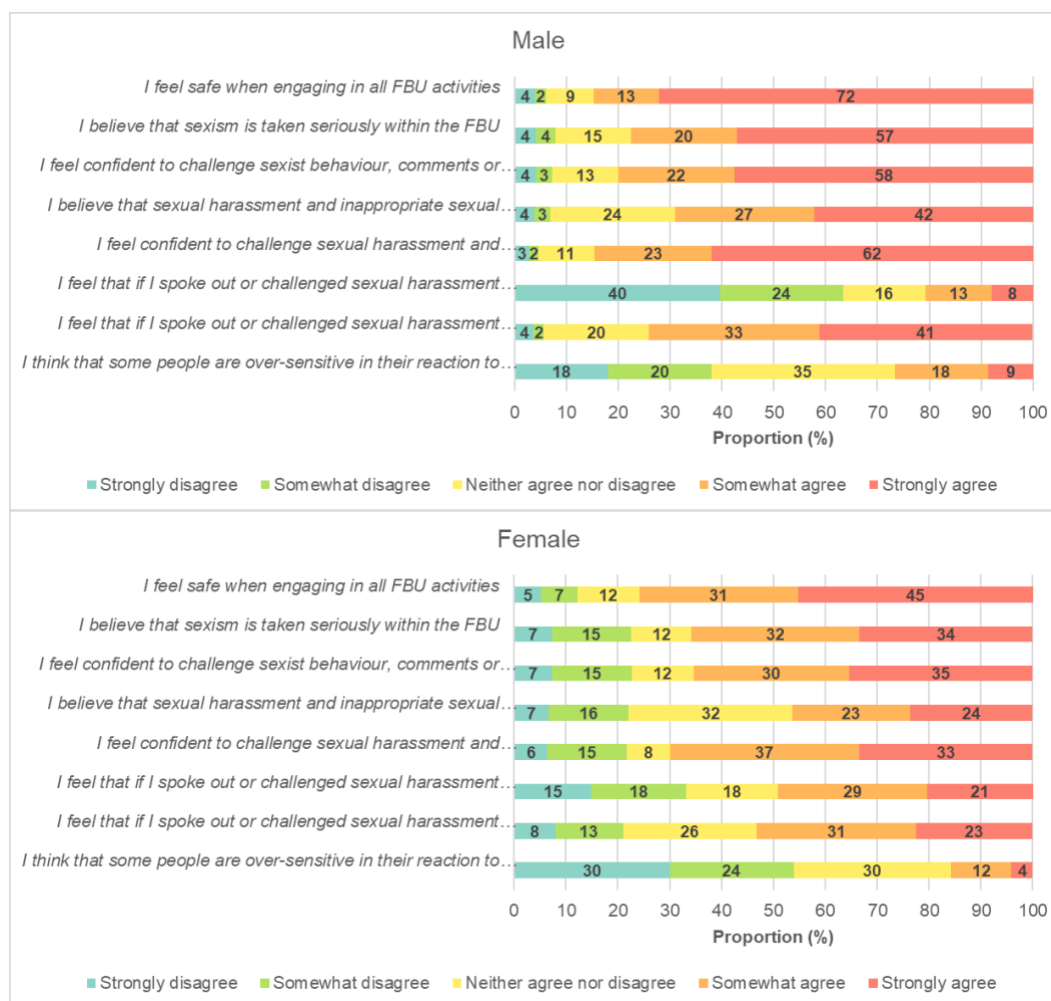
Lack of awareness of the FBU's policy on sexual harassment may also be responsible for under-reporting.

3.5 FBU environment and culture

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a set of statements about the culture and environment within the FBU. Responses showed:

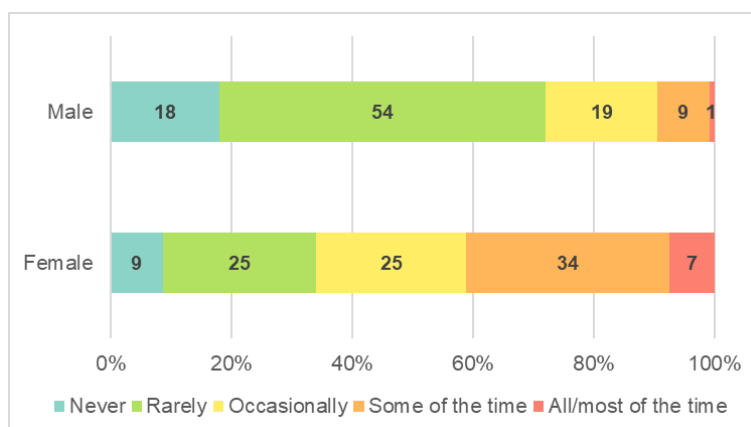
- Approximately two-thirds (65.8%) of female respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that “sexism is taken seriously within the FBU”, compared with over three-quarters (77.5%) of men.
- Male respondents were more likely to somewhat or strongly agree that they felt confident to challenge sexist behaviour or sexual harassment than women, and were also more likely to *disagree* with the statement “I feel that if I spoke out or challenged sexual harassment within the FBU it would not go down well with other people in the union.”
- Less than half (46.3%) of female respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that “I believe that sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual behaviour is dealt with appropriately within the FBU”, compared with one-in-seven (69.1%) of male respondents.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



The survey also sought to understand members' sense of the frequency or prevalence of sexual harassment. The survey responses revealed that female respondents perceived that sexual harassment occurs more often within the FBU relative to male respondents.

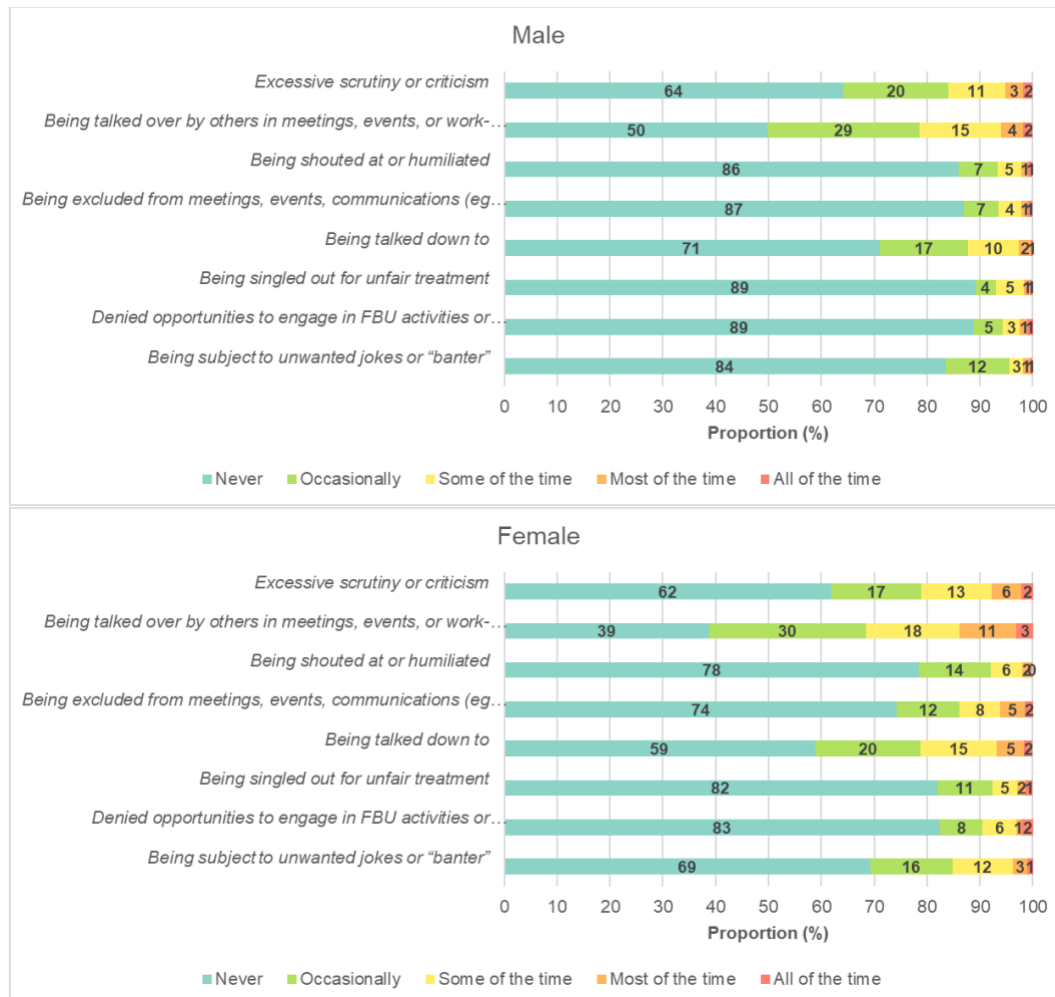
In your opinion, sexual harassment occurs within the FBU...



Recognising that misogyny can display across a range of behaviours, the survey asked about the general environment within the FBU. Responses reported that:

- Female respondents were more than twice as likely to report “being talked over by others in meetings, events, or work” *most or all of the time* compared with male respondents (14.0% and 6.0% respectively).
- Women were also more likely to report being talked down to (6.8% relative to 2.7% for men) and being excluded from meetings, events, communications or work-related activities (6.3% relative to 2.1% for men).

Thinking about your general experience within the FBU, how often do you experience the following?



Respondents were also asked “Thinking about your experiences and/or perception of the general environment within the FBU, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?”

- Over one-in-five (21.4%) of female respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that “I experience and/or fear discrimination within the FBU because of my gender”, compared with fewer than one-in-twenty (3.9%) male respondents.
- Seven-in-ten (69.7%) female respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that “reports of sexual harassment are taken seriously by the FBU” compared with over four-fifths (86.3%) of male respondents.
- Similarly, seven-in-ten (71.1%) female respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that “sexism is not tolerated within the FBU” compared with over four-fifths (84.6%) of male respondents.

- Just under one-in-ten (8.0%) of female respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that “I am less willing to participate in FBU activities because of fears of sexual harassment” compared with less than one-percent (0.7%) of male respondents.

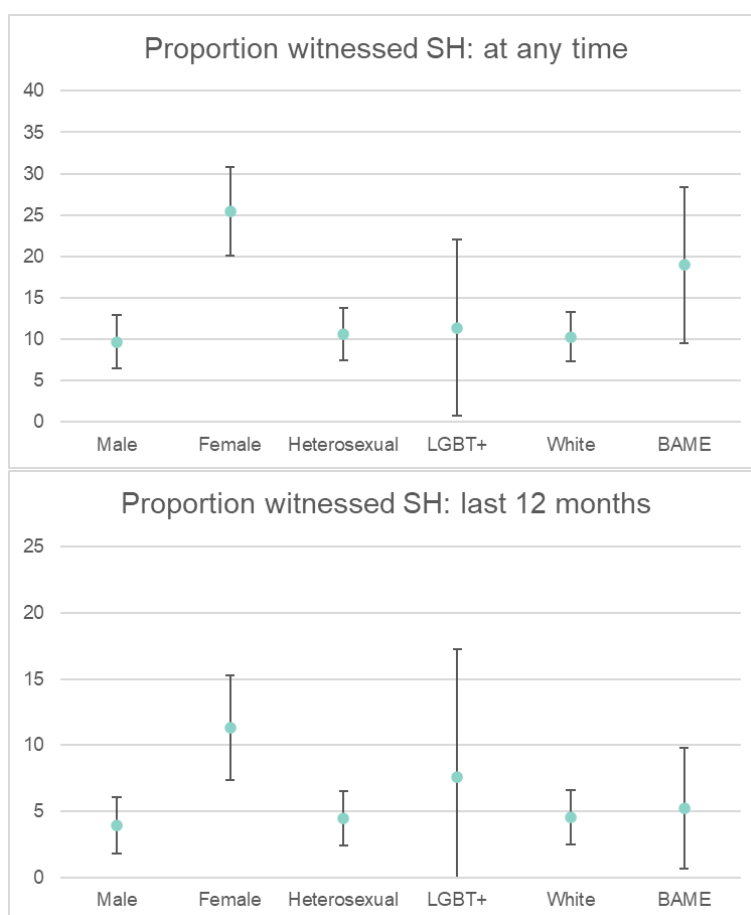
Survey findings show that women’s and men’s experiences and perceptions of being valued differ considerably. Similarly, it appears that confidence in the FBU’s commitments to equality differ between men and women.

Women are less likely to feel valued and heard. They are also less confident that the FBU takes sexism and sexual harassment seriously.

3.6 Witnessing sexual harassment

- One-quarter (25.5%) of female respondents said they had witnessed an incident of sexual harassment, compared with one-in-ten (9.7%) male respondents.
- One-in-ten (11.3%) of female respondents said they had witnessed an incident of sexual harassment within the last 12 months, compared with just under one-in-twenty (3.9%) men.

Prevalence of witnessing sexual harassment



3.7 Challenging incidents of sexual harassment

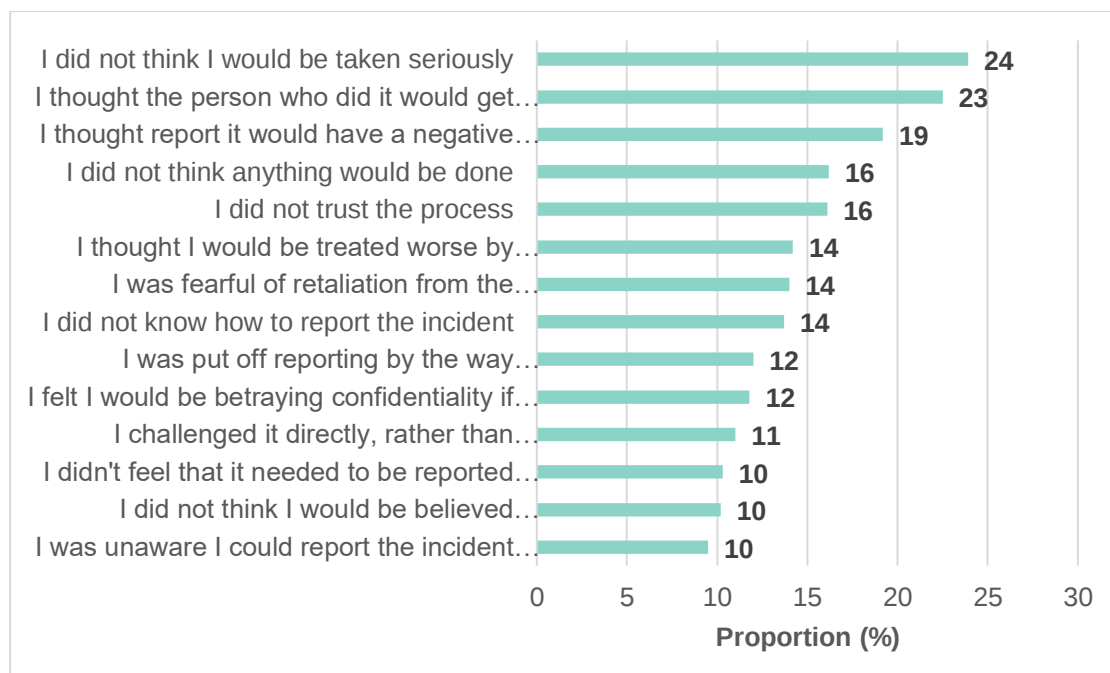
- Just under three-in-ten (28.6%) of respondents who witnessed sexual harassment challenged the person or people involved.

- Just over three-in-ten (30.9%) spoke to the person being targeted.
- Just under two-fifths (37.0%) did not challenge the incident.
 - Approximately one-third (37.0%) of respondents did not challenge because they were fearful of retaliation.
 - Approximately one-third (36.3%) of respondents did not challenge it because they thought it would have a negative effect on their relationships within the FBU.
 - Approximately two-fifths (39.3%) of respondents did not challenge it because they felt embarrassed or awkward.

3.8 Reporting witnessing of sexual harassment

- Just over one-in-twenty (6.4%) of respondents who had witnessed sexual harassment reported at least one incident to the FBU.
- In four-fifths (82.3%) of witnessed incidents of sexual harassment that were reported to the FBU, no action was taken. No respondents indicated that their complaint was taken seriously and they were satisfied with the outcome.
- The most common reasons for not reporting an incident of sexual harassment were:
 - I did not think I would be taken seriously.
 - I thought the person who did it would get away with it.
 - I thought reporting it would have a negative effect on my relationships with other FBU members.

Thinking about when you did not report an incident of sexual harassment to the FBU, which of the following statements influenced your decision not to report the incident?



The findings on witnessing, reporting witnessing and challenging sexual harassment echo those in Section 3.3 above – there appears to be a lack of confidence in culture and processes such that reporting or standing up to sexual harassment may feel ‘too risky’ to the witness.

4. Methodology

This section outlines the survey methodology used for questionnaire development, sampling, data collection and analysis.

4.1 Questionnaire development

The survey questionnaire was co-designed with the members of the FBUs National Women's Committee (NWC) and FBU staff. The questionnaire is largely based on the questionnaire developed as part of the Trade Union Congress (TUC) "[Guidance on completing an anonymous climate survey on experiences of sexual harassment](#)", but has been adapted specifically for the FBU. The questionnaire is designed specifically to explore **sexual harassment taking place within the FBU, rather than the Fire and Rescue Service as a whole**. The questionnaire covers the following topics:

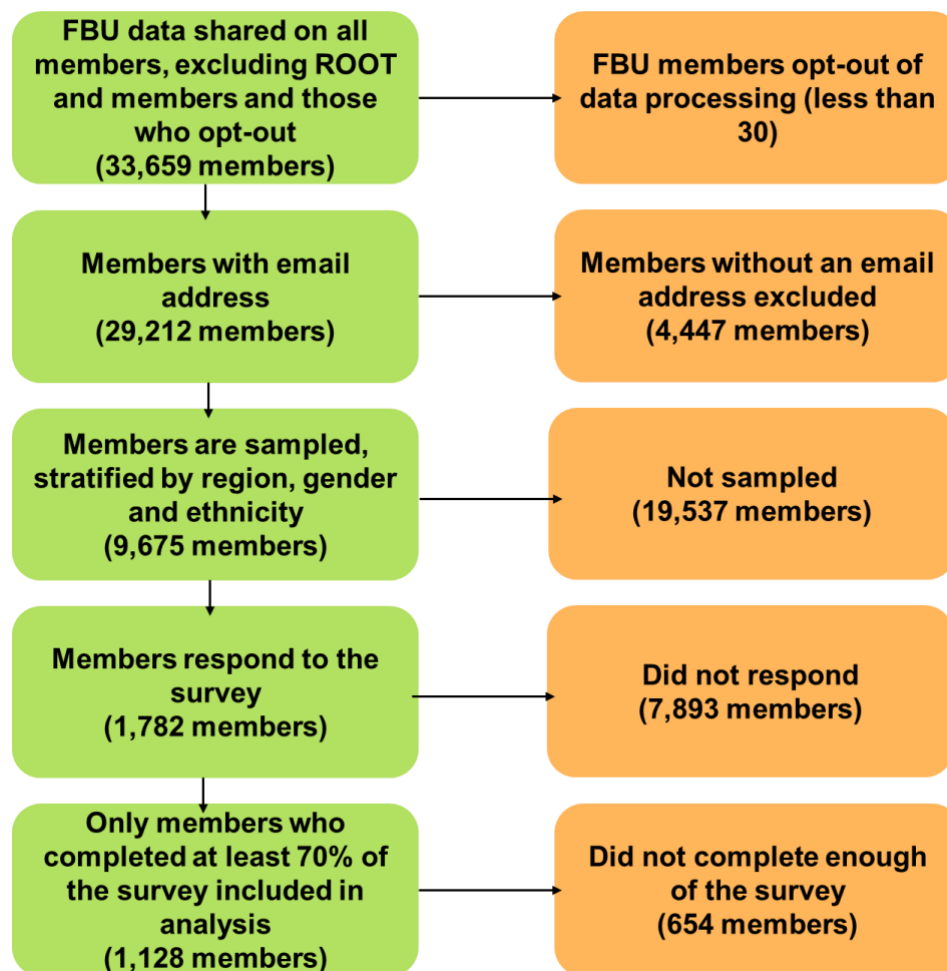
- Participation in FBU activities: This was used as a screening question for subsequent sections about sexual harassment.
- Experiences of sexual harassment: This section explored perceptions of what constitutes sexual harassment and direct experiences of sexual harassment within the FBU. Members who reported experiencing at least one incident of sexual harassment were then asked additional questions about:
 - Where sexual harassment took place.
 - The characteristics of the perpetrator(s).
 - Whether they had reported sexual harassment to the FBU (and if applicable, their experiences of reporting it).
 - The impact sexual harassment had on them.
- Witnessing sexual harassment: This section explored when members had witnessed sexual harassment taking place within the FBU. Members who reported witnessing at least one incident of sexual harassment were asked additional questions about:
 - The characteristics of the perpetrator(s).
 - Whether they challenged the incident.
 - Whether they had reported sexual harassment to the FBU (and if applicable, their experiences of reporting it).
- Additional questions were asked to gather characteristics about survey respondents, to supplement existing data and collect data on characteristics not held by the FBU. These characteristics were:
 - Gender
 - Gender identity differing from the gender assigned at birth
 - Whether they consider themselves to have a disability or chronic health condition
 - Sexual orientation

4.2 Sampling

Sampling is a technique used to ensure that data collected is representative of the population, whilst reducing the resources required and burden on potential participants. To comply with GDPR, all members were emailed informing them about the survey, providing them with a link to the project [privacy notice](#) and giving them a chance to object to data processing. A small number (less than 30) of individuals objected to data processing. The FBU removed their data from the dataset before it was shared with Laura Harrison and Robert Wishart.

The chart below outlines the flow from the population, to sampling, to those included in analysis.

Survey data flow



The data supplied by the FBU contained information for 33,659 FBU members. This is all current members who are not retired or out of service (ROOT) members, and excluding members who objected to data processing. Of these, no email address was available for 4,447 members.

A random sample was drawn from the remaining 29,212 members (the sample frame). The random sample was stratified by specific characteristics to ensure that there would be a sufficient number of female respondents, and respondents from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicities for robust analysis. Sampling was stratified by:

- Region (collapsed to England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and missing to ensure stratum were not too small).
- Gender (male, female, missing)
- Ethnicity (White, Black, Asian, Mixed, Other, Missing)

To ensure this, some groups were oversampled (i.e. a larger number of individuals were sampled from these groups to take part relative to the size of these population groups in the FBU membership). This oversampling is accounted for at analysis using survey weights to ensure that the results are representative of the FBU membership (see analysis). Specifically, all female, Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnicity members were sampled, as were all members who were missing gender or ethnicity information. All other members were sampled proportionately to their prevalence in the FBU membership.

In total, 9,675 members were sampled to be invited to take part in the survey (33.1% of the sample frame, or 28.7% of all members). Of these, 1,782 responded to the survey. Not all respondents completed enough of the survey for their responses to be included in analysis. Only respondents who completed at least 70% of survey questions were retained for the analysis. Most members who completed less than 70% of the survey closed the survey after the first three questions. The analysis sample is therefore comprised of 1,128 respondents, giving a survey response rate of 11.7%.

4.3 Data collection

The survey used an online survey data collection mode, using Qualtrics, a widely used survey platform. Respondents were invited to take part in the survey by email, receiving a unique link for survey completion, which facilitated linking back to the sample frame data. Respondents could complete the survey on computer, tablet or smartphone. If a respondent did not complete the survey, they could return to the survey and continue from where they left off.

Survey fieldwork took place from 26th September 2023 to 17th October 2023 (three weeks). Respondents received multiple email reminders during this period to encourage response rates. During fieldwork, there was evidence to suggest that some members were not receiving the emails as they were being sent to Spam folders. A second email provider was adopted and used for email reminders from the 13th October onwards. Following this, there was a substantial increase in the number of responses received.

4.4 Analysis

This section outlines the approach to weighting and analysis.

Weighting

As is outlined in *Sampling*, a larger number of female members and members from Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnic groups were sampled relative to the size of these groups in the FBU membership. To ensure that the analysis conducted was representative of the FBU membership, survey weighting methods were applied. The survey weights consisted of three weight factors:

- A sampling weight to account for the difference in the proportion of members from different groups who were sampled relative to the whole FBU membership.
- A non-response weight to account for differential rates of response/non-response to the survey from the members who were sampled.
- A post-stratification weight to calibrate the sampling and non-response weights to ensure that the analysis is representative of the FBU membership as a whole.

These weight factors were combined, and the weights were scaled to the sample size of respondents.

Analysis

Analysis was conducted in Stata 18.0 Standard Edition. Analysis was conducted using the survey weights using the `svy` command in Stata. The analysis primarily consisted of descriptive analysis (frequencies, correlation/cross-tabulation analysis and data visualisation).

In addition, estimates of the prevalence of sexual harassment (experienced and witnessed) were estimated using regression analysis. The regression analysis used the outcome (experienced or witnessed sexual harassment at any time/in the last twelve months) as the dependent variable. The independent variables were region, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, whether the member is an official or holds some other role in the FBU, age, whether their gender is different to the gender they were assigned at birth, whether they have a disability or other chronic health conditions and whether they are an active member (based on the survey screening question).

The estimates reported are the marginal probabilities of the individuals experiencing/witnessing sexual harassment based on these regression estimates. The estimates are provided with 95% confidence intervals, which indicate the range in estimates that would be expected in 95 out of 100 samples drawn from a population. Larger confidence intervals indicate greater levels of uncertainty about the likely prevalence of sexual harassment for each group.

Data destruction

At the end of the project, the data shared with Robert Wishart and Laura Harrison will be securely deleted. In addition, all survey data collected will be securely deleted. At no point will the survey data will be shared with the FBU.