Introduction

1. Stonewall is a national charity that campaigns for lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) equality, in Britain and abroad. We warmly welcome this opportunity to respond to the Committee’s inquiry into sexual harassment in the workplace.

2. Stonewall knows that sexual harassment in the workplace has the potential to affect everyone. This response outlines the specific experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) people.

3. Stonewall works directly with over 750 employers as part of our Diversity Champions programme, across the private and public sector, to ensure that they have the appropriate LGBT policies, staff training, networks and support for LGBT employees.

4. We urge that all recommendations made as a result of this inquiry be made inclusive of LGBT people.

Who experiences sexual harassment in the workplace, who perpetrates it and what the impact is on different groups

5. The sexual harassment of LGBT people, or those perceived to be LGBT, often intersect with homophobic, biphobic and transphobic attitudes, abuse and discrimination.

6. Stonewall knows that LGBT people continue to face discrimination, abuse and violence in the workplace. YouGov polling of over 2,000 lesbian, gay and bi people for Stonewall’s *Gay in Britain* (2013) found that one in five lesbian, gay and bi employees had experienced verbal abuse from their colleagues. Additionally, YouGov polling of 871 trans and non-binary people (as part of a over 5,000 LGBT people surveyed for the *LGBT in Britain* series) for Stonewall’s *LGBT in Britain: Trans Report*, found that one in eight trans employees (12 per cent) have been physically attacked by colleagues or customers in the last year.

7. Furthermore, many LGBT people alter their behaviour or appearance in order to hide or disguise the fact that they are LGBT. For example, half of trans and non-binary people have hidden or disguised the fact that they are LGBT at work because they were afraid of discrimination.

Actions that the Government and employers should be taking

8. Government should encourage employers to develop clear zero tolerance policies on homophobic, biphobic and transphobic discrimination and harassment, with clear sanctions for staff and customers. This should include details of a key point of contact for reporting homophobic, biphobic and transphobic harassment in the workplace, which is clearly communicated to staff.

9. Stonewall runs a Diversity Champions programme, which supports employers to ensure all LGBT staff are accepted, and able to work in environments free from discrimination and harassment. We work with over 750 organisations, helping them to create inclusive environments for almost a quarter of the UK workforce. We would encourage employers to engage with expert third sector organisations, to improve monitoring, reporting, and ending sexual harassment in the workplace.
How workers can be better protected from sexual harassment by clients, customers and other third parties

10. Employers should display a zero-tolerance policy on anti-LGBT abuse and language against employees, which includes sexual harassment, with clear sanctions for clients, customers and other third parties.

11. Furthermore, employers should ensure that they have procurement policies in place which clearly outline that suppliers, and other clients which offer services to the organisation, are LGBT inclusive and have clear approaches to prevent homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse, including sexual harassment. Suppliers must be held to account if they do not meet their commitments on harassment. Failure to meet these should result in a termination of contract.

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