REPORT

acevo
Charity Leaders Network

Centre for
Mental Health

In plain sight

Workplace bullying in charities and the implications for leadership

Rob Fitzpatrick and Laura Thorne

Contents

Ministerial foreword

Charities should be safe spaces for everyone; whether employees, volunteers or members of the public. We have thousands of incredible charities that play a vital role in our communities, most are amazing places to work.

This research on bullying is important because the poor behaviour of the few shouldn't be allowed to tarnish the excellent behaviour of many. Leaders must tackle bullying and ensure that victims are properly protected. Delivering this vision requires action from all.

I am personally grateful to those people who have shared their experiences to inform this research. I thank them for their courage in sharing traumatic experiences. We must recognise this bravery by ensuring this is the start of tangible change in those charities whose workplace culture does not currently reflect their values.

I would like to thank ACEVO, with Centre for Mental Health, for mobilising and reviewing the invaluable input of over 500 people across civil society to inform the research findings.

This research is just the first phase; cultural change takes sustained commitment. I am proud of the work we are doing with charities, government and regulators in partnership to raise awareness and focus attention on such important issues.

Together we want to create a culture where people feel confident talking about and reporting bullying and that there are systems in place to stop it and provide support. I am confident that the civil society partnership has the commitment to create real change and protect people from harm.

Mims Davies MP

Minister of the Office for Sport and Civil Society

Chief Executives' foreword

Last year's reports about sexual harassment, exploitation and bullying in international charities made national and international headlines. In response the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for International Development (DFID) called two summits to ask charity sector representatives what they would do to reduce the risk of behaviour like this happening again. In July 2018, ACEVO released a report called *Leading with values* which identified the three pillars of moral leadership:

1. Being values led
2. Modelling ethical behaviour
3. Nurturing a culture of continuous improvement

The report finished with recommendations designed to support the development of safe cultures across the entire charity sector, one of which was for research to be conducted into bullying at work. Early in 2019 ACEVO and Centre for Mental Health received funding from DCMS to undertake this research.

There has been huge support for this project over the last five months. It is clear that the idea of bullying in charities is something the majority of people working in the sector finds abhorrent. But it is also something many people working in the sector know happens but are worried to talk publicly about.

If we don't help to take conversations about bullying out of the shadows and into organisational discourse, we will never be able to change the system that has let down many of the people who shared their stories for this research.

This report is not easy to read, but it is an accurate reflection of the stories that have been shared with us. There is a difference between knowing that bullying occurs in an abstract sense and reading about its impact on individuals. We have chosen to focus this report on the impact of bullying and the policies, leadership and systems that contribute to it because we believe this is necessary to enable us all to create change. If you find the report difficult to read then please do look at and use the resources listed at the end.

Bullying can happen in any workplace but we believe that civil society should be taking the lead on tackling workplace bullying and creating inclusive and supportive cultures. As well as being positive for staff and volunteers, inclusive cultures that have a focus on well-being are more productive and innovative, so taking action is good for our workers, our volunteers, our organisations and most importantly the people and causes we serve.

This research identifies six recommendations to reduce the risk of bullying occurring and to effectively respond to it when it does. ACEVO is committed to continuing to work with its network and partners to realise the report recommendations.

We hope this research will create the space for our sector to collectively reject bullying and to provide support for those who have experienced it. This will require long-term, sustained commitment and we look forward to working alongside colleagues who share this commitment.

Vicky Browning, ACEVO

Sarah Hughes, Centre for Mental Health

Executive summary

Introduction

Following revelations over recent years about the sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries within the international aid sector, as well as reports of abusive organisational cultures within this sector and more widely, there has been a rise in public, political and sectoral concern about the possibility of misconduct taking place within charities in England and Wales, including bullying behaviour.

In response, government, the Charity Commission and umbrella organisations have initiated urgent work to address immediate safeguarding challenges as well as to prepare for longer term developmental and awareness-raising activity to strengthen the health of charity workplace cultures. As a result, charities in England and Wales are now undergoing a process of significant revaluation - of values, systems and organisational cultures.

Bullying cultures demonstrate clear breaches of trust and values upon which charities depend, both for their legal status and for their credibility. This report seeks to shine a light on what wrongdoing can look like in this context and using the data to inform an understanding of how charities might inadvertently facilitate an abusive culture.

Our investigation draws upon the voices of victims of bullying in charities to describe the conditions in which it occurs and might persist and to provide analysis and recommendations for what charity leaders should do to create safer working cultures. By listening to detailed narrative accounts, we have sought to gain insight into the extent to which current policy and guidance supports victims and organisations to deal with bullying.

This report is intended to be read by staff, managers and leaders within the charity sector, policy makers, as well as the victims of bullying who participated in the online survey and interviews.

The investigation involved a review of relevant literature, a detailed anonymous online survey returned by over 500 respondents, in-depth interviews with 20 victims of bullying in charities plus two sector specialists, and a process of evaluation and analysis.

Results

The survey results do not tell us anything about the prevalence of bullying within the charity sector. However, where bullying has been experienced, victims rated its personal and emotional impact as being severe.

Where respondents provided detailed survey data, approximately 87% of responses cite social bullying; 78% verbal bullying, 25% cyber bullying and 7% physical bullying, with a significant overlap between social and verbal bullying. Bullying was reported formally in 58% of cases with complaints considered to have been satisfactorily addressed in just 3% of cases, and not resolved or resolved unsatisfactorily in 68% and 29% of cases respectively.

The majority of those answering the question about who bullied cited chief executives and senior managers as perpetrating or being involved in the bullying (45% and 57% respectively). Co-workers were reported in 27% of cases, with the chair and other trustees cited in 17% and 18% of cases respectively.

We asked survey respondents if they felt the bullying behaviour contained elements of prejudice or discrimination. Of those who provided detailed data and descriptions, approximately 22% reported prejudice or discrimination on grounds of age, 13% disability, 30% gender, 7% race, 2% religion and 3% sexual orientation.

Following bullying, 67% left their organisation, 27% stayed in their same role and 5% changed role internally. Many respondents and interviewees described an enduring impact of historic bullying which was felt financially, professionally and psychologically. In addition to the financial impact of bullying, some people's mental health was so adversely affected that they needed to seek professional

counselling support, almost always at their own expense.

In the majority of examples given, bullying behaviour was not happening in secret; rather, it was often described as 'an open secret'. Accounts referred to victims' incredulity at this apparent normalising of bullying and emotionally abusive behaviour and the insidious effect it has on an organisation's culture. While recognising the obvious role played by perpetrators, most identified the conditions and culture within which bullying takes place as being the biggest factors in sustaining the behaviour. This includes instances of victims being marginalised and bullies protected within organisations, and those reporting bullying finding themselves losing their employment. In almost all cases, they described internal and external systems for dealing with bullying as unfit for purpose.

Frequently, victims described feelings of frustration, powerlessness and exhaustion at the injustice they faced when trying to tackle bullying behaviour. Often their sense was that the organisation had 'turned its back' on them.

Some participants also raised concerns about the use of a non-disclosure agreement (NDA). This is a legal contract which limits how information or ideas (for example commercial information) can be shared. A high number of interviewees holding senior positions had signed NDAs and clearly expressed the impact on their mental health of being trapped in secrecy, unable according to the letter of their agreements to discuss or "tell anybody at all why I left, or any of the details" or to process the traumatic incident, even in a therapeutic context.

Analysis

We have identified a number of sector-specific factors or dynamics which can combine to produce a bullying culture. These include:

1. Weaknesses in governance and senior leadership

This can happen in a number of different ways: for example where trustees actively bully staff themselves; where trustees or senior managers fail to apply due scrutiny to organisational policies, procedures and practice leading to bullying behaviour being unchecked; where senior leaders conceal information from trustees and trustees do not challenge; or where trustees or senior managers 'turn a blind eye' to known or visible instances of bullying behaviour.

2. Weaknesses in organisational policies, procedures and practices

Victims have spoken with great force about how organisational policies, procedures and established behaviours can serve to sustain bullying behaviour and protect the perpetrator. For smaller charities, a lack of robust HR management procedures can result in bullying behaviour being inadequately tackled. Conversely, in larger charities, victims describe a failure of often extensive HR infrastructure to 'take their side'.

3. A lack of information, skills and confidence within the charity workforce to identify and respond to bullying

Victims of bullying frequently identified being unaware of or lacking confidence in how to best progress their complaint within their organisation.

4. Uncertainty among victims and charities about the regulatory framework and the specific remit of the Charity Commission in relation to bullying

Many victims, particularly those in senior leadership positions, or considering options around whistleblowing or reporting safeguarding or serious wrongdoing concerns, described finding the policy provided by the Charity Commission in relation to workplace bullying to be unclear.

5. The absence of any sector-wide initiative to respond to bullying or promote healthier workplace cultures

6. The absence of internal or external recourse for victims of bullying, or for concerned charity leaders

Conclusion

Charities undertake vital work in society, but this can also at times be difficult or stressful for staff, and present risks for organisations. Our research shows the necessity for strong governance and organisational leadership, coupled with effective policies, procedures and practices to make sure that these intrinsic challenges, particularly around the expression and management of conflict, can be better understood and negotiated where they occur.

In our analysis we have presented a range of practical recommendations and measures which individual charities can adopt to help tackle bullying behaviour and to improve workplace cultures. We hope that these will also provide a foundation for longer-term activity involving volunteers, staff, managers, charity leaders and other stakeholders. The objective should to create safer, healthier, happier and more productive organisational cultures for all who work in the charity sector.

Recommendations

The report makes six recommendations in the key areas of:

- Improved governance and senior leadership
- Improved policy, procedure and practice
- Clarification around the existing regulatory framework
- A programme of sectoral cultural change
- Improved data to inform policy

1. While safeguarding, staff wellbeing and workplace culture remain the collective responsibility of boards, chief executives and senior leadership teams, charities should nominate at least one trustee and one senior manager to lead on staff workplace wellbeing.
2. Policies, procedures and practices should reflect charities' commitment to promoting safe cultures and fostering good relations.
3. Non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) issued as part of employment settlements to victims of bullying can have a detrimental impact on both mental wellbeing and emotional recovery, as well as impede organisational learning and cultural change. NDAs should never be issued so as to restrict a victim of bullying from disclosing traumatic experience in a therapeutic setting.
4. The Charity Commission should clarify how existing regulations and guidance, including those around whistleblowing and safeguarding and the reporting of serious incidents, should be understood and used by victims of bullying in charities and by charity leaders in relation to workplace bullying. The Commission should help victims understand its own thresholds for reporting bullying incidents including what is in or out of the Charity Commission's scope.
5. Charity leaders should come together to initiate a sector-wide 'discussion' about bullying and workplace culture. They should also identify how current sectoral guidance (including The Charity Governance Code (Charity Governance Code Steering Group, 2017), Leading with Values (ACEVO, 2018) and Charity Ethical Principles (NCVO, 2019)) can be applied in order to frame a programme of collective sectoral action to address bullying behaviour and promote healthier, happier and more productive workplace cultures.
6. We recommend that charity leaders come together to explore how data might be effectively collected in the following fields:

- The wider experience of staff of charity workplace cultures, including a prevalence study for bullying and emotionally abusive behaviour across the charity sector in England and Wales, including sub-sectors.
- The particular experiences of employees with 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act (2010) - in particular the experiences of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people, of charity sector workplace cultures, and of discrimination.
- The particular experience of junior level staff and career entrants of charity sector workplace cultures.

1. Introduction

Background

In Plain Sight: Workplace bullying in charities and the implications for leadership has been funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and produced as a collaboration between ACEVO, the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations, and Centre for Mental Health. It represents the first significant sector-wide investigation into this subject in England and Wales.

Aims and objectives

This investigation draws upon the voices of victims of bullying in charities to describe the conditions in which it occurs and might persist, and provides analysis and recommendations for what charity leaders should do to create safer working cultures.

This report is intended to be read by staff, managers and leaders within the charity sector, policy makers, as well as the victims of bullying who participated in the online survey and interviews.

Method

The investigation involved a review of relevant literature, a detailed anonymous online survey (open 18 February-25 March 2019), in-depth interviews with 20 victims of bullying in charities plus two sector specialists, and a process of evaluation and analysis.

We have committed to protecting the identities of all participants in this research, and have therefore concealed any detail in accounts which could serve to identify the organisation concerned (for example by referring to 'unique' events, the area of work in which the charity concerned is involved, or on occasion the gender or other characteristics of the alleged perpetrator).

Limitations

In our evaluation of data from the online survey and face to face interviews, we do not seek to quantify the extent to which bullying occurs in the charity sector (or any other sector), or to identify particular fields of work or sub-sectors where bullying is more or less prevalent.

By investigating accounts of victims of bullying in charities, we have not actively sought responses from other groups, for example witnesses, bystanders, or people who themselves have themselves been accused of bullying. However, we feel confident to draw clear conclusions and identify recommendations, including areas where we feel further research may be useful.

Terminology

> *"I'm not sure that bullying is the right term because it makes you think about something that is going on in the playground."*
> [Interview]

Throughout this investigation, participants have described the term 'bullying' as holding connotations and meanings which did not fully reflect their experience. While we refer to 'bullying' throughout the report, we use it as a shorthand to also incorporate the wider term 'emotional abuse'.

About the accounts of victims of bullying

Please note: Many of the personal accounts from both the online survey and the interviews are clearly deeply felt and can be upsetting to read. At the end of this document, we have provided a list of freely available information and resources for anyone who may have been affected by issues and experiences raised in this report.

As researchers we felt it very important to carefully read all the accounts, and to create safe, confidential spaces where we could listen closely and respectfully to the personal testimony of interview participants. Many interviewees stressed the personal importance of having their experiences validated by participating in the research. For a significant number, participating in the interviews represented a first opportunity to speak openly about what had happened.

Nearly all interviewees and survey respondents described being bullied as having a devastating personal impact. We have felt moved and humbled by the experience of bearing witness to these deeply painful accounts of bullying in charities.

> *"I found that period absolutely exhausting and humiliating and hurtful beyond belief so the impact on me was huge reservoirs of hurt. I do feel I'm struggling every day to reinvent myself."* [Interview]

> *"I don't know who to trust. I feel lonely in this place and isolated. I feel like a burden. I feel like I am the only one here that believes in me. I am doubtful of everything I do now and seek constant reassurance - I guess I feel like a nervous wreck. It feels that narratives have been spun around me that I am unaware of, but it is hard to know. I just feel so low."* [Online survey]

As researchers, we have also been struck by the many examples of wisdom, humanity and inner strength of those participating.

> *"You know those Russian dolls? - I felt that the tiny one inside of me was made of titanium."* [Interview]

This report is dedicated to all those who contributed in anonymity to this research.

2. Bullying in charities: The policy context

Introduction

In order to provide fuller context for the research findings to be presented, this section summarises some of the key drivers and elements within government policy in relation to the subjects of charity culture and bullying behaviour.

Following revelations over recent years about the sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries within the international aid sector, as well as reports of abusive organisational cultures within this sector and more widely, there has been a rise in public, political and sectoral concern about the possibility of misconduct taking place within charities in England and Wales, including bullying behaviour.

In response, government, the Charity Commission and umbrella organisations have initiated urgent work to address immediate safeguarding challenges as well as to prepare for longer term developmental and awareness-raising activity to strengthen the health of charity workplace cultures.

Government

Work within government around this topic takes place through two strands, one managed by Department for International Development (DFID), the other by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

DFID's programme of work is centred upon ensuring the protection of beneficiaries of the 179 UK-based charities working overseas which receive funding from the Government. As a result of this, 'enhanced due diligence' standards have been applied to all organisations funded by DFID, requiring organisations to commit to transparency around their safeguarding environment and policies, organisational culture, clarity and transparency and in the handling of incidents (DFID 2018, DFID 2019).

The programme managed by DCMS covers domestic charity safeguarding (DCMS 2019a, DCMS 2019b) across two fields: 'Safeguarding' focusing on the protection of children and adults at risk; and 'Safe Cultures', protecting charity employees and volunteers from bullying, harassment and sexual harassment.

As part of this work, a number of initiatives have commenced, including new guidance from the Charity Commission around whistleblowing and safeguarding, and the development of sector-wide Charity Ethical Principles by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).

Additionally, a £1.2M fund from government and the National Lottery Community Fund has been established to develop training to improve charities' awareness of safeguarding practice, and a digital toolkit for reporting safeguarding concerns and researching implications for charity leadership is being developed.

Zero Tolerance

Central to the government response to safeguarding and addressing bullying cultures in both the international sector and domestic charities is one of zero tolerance – of an absolute requirement for charity leaders to put in place robust and effective systems for internal leadership and management to identify, report, investigate and deal with misconduct, and to remove wrongdoers.

> **"Charity leaders must take a zero-tolerance approach to misconduct and make sure proper protections are in place"**
>
> Mims Davies, Minister for Civil Society, 21 March 2019.

Charity Commission

Over the past year, the Charity Commission, the statutory regulator for the charity sector in England and Wales, has published detailed new guidance with content that is relevant to charity governance, organisational culture and bullying.

The Commission's new guidance around safeguarding (Charity Commission, 2018a) requires trustees to take "reasonable steps" to protect beneficiaries, staff or volunteers from "harm", and to put policies into practice which are reviewed yearly and available to the public. The guidance also identifies a number of risks within scope, including many which can be directly associated with workplace bullying.

Safeguarding – Key areas of risk or concern identified in Charity Commission Guidance

- *Sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation*
- *Negligent treatment*
- *Physical or emotional abuse*
- *Bullying or harassment*
- *Health and safety*
- Commercial exploitation
- Extremism and radicalisation
- Forced marriage
- Child trafficking
- Female genital mutilation
- *Discrimination on any of the grounds in the Equality Act 2010*
- *People may target your charity*
- *A charity's culture may allow poor behaviour*
- *People may abuse a position of trust they hold within a charity*

('Safeguarding and Protecting People for Charities and Trustees', Charity Commission 2018a, italics ours)

While guidance on serious wrongdoing (Charity Commission, 2019) does not explicitly cite bullying behaviour or bullying culture in themselves as grounds for reporting/requesting an investigation, the fields for "serious harm" do include "the charity's staff or volunteers" and "the charity's reputation". Further, examples of harm which are in scope include "If someone's health and safety is in danger, or a charity does not use its safeguarding policy".

Similarly, the guidance on whistleblowing (Charity Commission 2019) does not explicitly cite bullying as grounds for a worker to take action, however the legal criteria for reporting (see box below) may in certain cases cover bullying. In its guidance, the Charity Commission does provide a link to an advice line run by the legal charity Protect, enabling staff to obtain confidential and independent advice around whistleblowing concerns (Public Concern at Work, 2019).

Charity Commission guidance on whistleblowing: Complaints protected by law in relation to whistleblowing

- A criminal offence, for example fraud
- *Someone's health and safety is in danger*
- Risk or actual damage to the environment
- A miscarriage of justice
- The company is breaking the law, for example does not have the right insurance
- *You believe someone is covering up wrongdoing*

('Whistleblowing for employees' Charity Commission 2019, italics ours)

Charity sector initiatives

Umbrella organisations for the charity sector have also worked with members to produce clear statements concerning organisational culture, conduct and values.

The Charity Governance Code is a proactive, sector driven initiative, which was developed prior to recent events by a group of umbrella organisations to provide a set of effective governance principles for both large and smaller charities. While it does not explicitly refer to workplace bullying, the Code sets a high standard for a charity's engagement with all stakeholders, including staff, such that:

"The board ensures that the charity's performance and interaction with its stakeholders are guided by the values, ethics and culture put in place by the board. Trustees make sure that the charity collaborates with stakeholders to promote ethical conduct."

Further, it stipulates that effective processes be in place for dealing with concerns or complaints. Here, boards are expected to make sure "there is a transparent, well-publicised, effective and timely process for making and handling a complaint and that any internal or external complaints are handled constructively, impartially and effectively" (Charity Governance Code Steering Group, 2017).

In 2018 ACEVO published Leading with Values (ACEVO, 2018), a position paper identifying three key 'pillars' of moral leadership in charities with the overall purpose of creating safer workplace cultures where unacceptable behaviour can be addressed before becoming institutionalised. Key elements of this include the need for: Values to define all aspects of a charities work and decision making; ethical behaviour being modelled by leaders; and, the nurturing of organisational cultures which value the voice of all, and which encourage open, honest and constructive conversation.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) recent report Charity Ethical Principles (NCVO, 2019) provides a framework for ethical practice, stressing four key elements:

- Placing the interests of beneficiaries first in all aspects of a charities work;
- All staff upholding the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct;
- A culture which enables openness about how an organisation operates and spend funds;
- Which provides a right to be safe for all people who work with or come into contact with a charity (NCVO, 2019).

'A right to be safe'

"Every person who volunteers with, works for or comes into contact with a charity should be treated with dignity and respect, and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment. All charities have a responsibility to create an inclusive culture that does not tolerate inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive or harmful behaviour towards any person who works for, volunteers with, or comes into contact with the charity. Charities should also be places where people's wellbeing and mental health are valued and promoted, so that anyone working in the charity or coming into contact with the charity is encouraged to value and invest in their own health and wellbeing."

(From Charity Ethical Principles, NCVO 2019)

The international sector umbrella organisation Bond has also produced a sector wide framework for tackling sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment of beneficiaries. In identifying clear processes, standards and accountabilities relating to how organisations conduct their activities and respond to concerns, the subject of workplace culture is also considered integral, including the need to "change organisational culture and the inappropriate exercise of power" (Bond, 2018).

Conclusion: Applying this policy to the research

Charities in England and Wales are now undergoing a process of significant revaluation - of values, systems and organisational cultures - taking place through significantly raised scrutiny from government, the statutory regulator, within the sector and also from the public.

Bullying cultures demonstrate clear breaches of trust and values upon which charities depend, both for their legal status and for their credibility. By inviting victims of bullying in the charity sector to share their experiences, Centre for Mental Health and ACEVO are shining a light on what wrongdoing can look like in this context and using the data to inform an understanding of how charities might inadvertently facilitate an abusive culture. By listening to detailed narrative accounts, we have sought to gain insight into the extent to which current policy and guidance supports victims and organisations to deal with bullying. This report does not, however, enter into any evaluation of the success of recent policy initiatives, which would require further research.

3. Method

The method for this investigation involved a review of relevant literature, an online survey and in-depth interviews, combined with close cross-analysis of data.

A review of relevant literature

A review of published and 'grey' literature was conducted on the phenomenon of workplace bullying/emotional abuse, and associated policy, with a focus (where possible) on the England and Wales charity sector.

Online survey

The survey was open for five weeks between 18 February and 25 March. It was publicised in ACEVO's weekly members' newsletter, on Twitter and LinkedIn and featured in articles and social media content written by Third Sector, Civil Society and Charity Times. Both ACEVO and Centre for Mental Health sent out a press release to charity sector publications detailing the work. We sought responses from people working in the charity sector who have experienced bullying within the last five years.

All participants in the online survey were asked to provide organisational and demographic data, to rate the personal impact of their bullying, and their particular experience of bullying in four categories: verbal, social, cyber and physical. These four categories were adapted from a range of sources, including from ACAS, Unison, Anti Bullying Alliance and National Centre Against Bullying (AU):

- **Verbal bullying** (for example harsh or undermining treatment; verbal intimidation or threat; verbal abuse, including racist, sexist, homophobic or other prejudiced remarks)
- **Physical bullying** (for example intimidating physical presence; inappropriate touch; physical assault; intentional damage of property or work)
- **Social bullying** (for example belittling in front of colleagues; lying, spreading rumours or making comments to damage someone's reputation; preferential treatment of others; excluding from activities/opportunities, or encouraging others to exclude)
- **Cyber/remote bullying** (for example using text message, email or social media to deliver abusive, undermining or hurtful messages; online intimidation or harassment; intentional exclusion of others from online forums; public sharing of private information without consent).

Participants were also invited to describe their experience of bullying using free text in the following categories:

- The instance of bullying itself – what happened and who in the organisation was involved/implicated
- The personal and professional impact of the bullying
- The response of the organisation
- Views of what worked well, what worked less well and what can be done better to address bullying in charities.

In-depth interviews

Subjects for interview were identified via ACEVO members, direct approach to ACEVO and Centre for Mental Health, and also via the researchers' professional networks. Following the identification of an initial cohort of interview participants, we actively identified later participants to promote greater balance, for example around race, gender, age and stage of career in the charity sector.

Analysis

After conducting an analysis of the quantitative survey data, we carried out two coding exercises with the narrative fields from the online survey, and with the transcripts and notes from interviews.

First, we used Susan Long's established model of perverse process in organisations (Long, 2004) to determine the extent to which the following interrelated 'signature' dynamics might be present:

- Individual pleasure at the expense of another or the common 'good'
- Simultaneous acknowledgement and denial of emotional reality – the 'turning of a blind eye' by individuals or within systems
- The engagement of accomplices
- Instrumental relationships
- A repeating cycle of perverse organisational process.

The second frame for the coding of data marked recorded dynamics in the following individual and organisational relationships:

- Governance
- Line management
- Peer to peer
- Funding and resourcing
- Inter-organisational
- Inter-sectoral.

Definitions

In engaging with the victims of bullying through interviews and the online survey we did not wish to impose a particular definition of workplace bullying. Rather, we sought to understand the meanings of bullying that participants themselves held in relation to their experiences. As an aid to initiate discussion and dialogue, we provided two working definitions of bullying behaviour:

"The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power." (Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2019)

"Persistent offensive, intimidating, humiliating behaviour, which attempts to undermine an individual or group." (Unison, 2013)

4. The online survey

Response

A total of 529 responses were received, 524 of which relate to the experience of bullying in a registered charity in England or Wales within the last five years.

Of the total number of 'in-scope' survey submissions we received 365 detailed responses, including information about the respondents' role, their organisation, demographic information and narrative accounts of the personal experience of bullying.

Additionally, we received 159 survey submissions containing less completed data fields. Due to the confidential nature of the research we cannot ascertain why this number of respondents did not complete the survey, but in many of these cases participants appeared to use the survey as a means of 'registering' their experience of bullying, for example by providing some information about their role and field of work, without completing any additional fields to give a fuller account.

About the organisations involved

Responses came from across the charity sector, and included every 'operational model' and 'activity sector' category used by ACEVO, which are listed below:

Operational models	Represented?
Service Provider	✓
Funder/grant-maker	✓
Membership Body/ Association	✓
Campaigner/Advocate	✓
Research Institute or 'Think Tank'	✓
Umbrella Organisation	✓

Activity sectors	Represented?
Animals and wildlife	✓
Armed forces	✓
Art, culture and heritage	✓
Children and young people	✓
Community care and hospices	✓
Education/training	✓
Employment Support	✓
Environment and conservation	✓
Equality and diversity	✓
Faith-based	✓
Family welfare	✓
Health	✓
Homelessness	✓
Housing	✓
LBGTQ+	✓
Mental health	✓
Older people	✓
Overseas development and disaster relief	✓
Physical/sensory disability	✓
Prisoners and offenders	✓
Residential and day care	✓
Sport and recreation	✓

Every size of charity is also represented in the findings, from those with an annual income of under £100,000, to over £20M.

About the bullying

The survey results do not tell us anything about the prevalence of bullying within the charity sector. However, where bullying has been experienced, victims rated its impact as being severe, with an average score of 4.5 out of 5.

Where respondents provided detailed survey data, approximately 87% of responses cite social bullying; 78% verbal bullying, 25% cyber bullying and 7% physical bullying, with a significant overlap between social and verbal bullying. Most instances of cyber bullying took place alongside social bullying, and in a very small number of cases victims experienced verbal, social and cyber bullying combined.

The majority of those answering the question about who bullied cited chief executives and senior managers as perpetrating or being involved in the bullying (45% and 57% respectively). Co-workers were reported in 27% of cases, with the chair and other trustees cited in 17% and 18% of cases respectively. From these responses, it is clear that bullying sometimes involves more than one perpetrator.

Where detailed responses were provided, bullying was reported formally in 58% of cases with complaints considered to have been satisfactorily addressed in just 3% of cases, and not resolved or resolved unsatisfactorily in 68% and 29% of cases respectively. The people to whom the bullying was reported, either formally or informally, varied depending on the role of the bully and their position in the organisation, as well as that of the victim. Narrative accounts indicate that victims told one or more of the following people about the bullying: the chair/other trustee; CEO; senior management team member; colleague; and human resources.

When bullying was not reported, the main reasons cited were lack of faith that it would be effectively dealt with, fear of negative repercussions and, in cases where the CEO and/or the chair/board were implicated, the (perceived) absence of anyone/anywhere to report to.

Following bullying, 67% left their organisation, 27% stayed in the same role and 5% changed role internally. By cross referencing this data with qualitative data from the narrative fields, we observe that many of those who did stay in their original role following bulling were relatively junior staff, and possibly those with more limited options for career progression, or to obtain some form of investigatory or financial redress.

Of those who responded to questions about wider bullying, almost half (46%) said they had experienced more than one instance of bullying in the same organisation, over 80% said they had witnessed other people being bullied in the same organisation, and 10% said they had themselves been accused of bullying in the same organisation. This clearly indicates that bullying is not always happening as an isolated incident and is very often an 'open secret', witnessed by many.

About the survey respondents

Of the respondents who provided data:

- Approximately 80% stated their gender as female and 20% male.
- They came from a wide range of age groups between 18 and 70+. The highest reported incidences of bullying were in the following age groups: 30-39 (24%); 40-49 (31%); and 50-59 (26%).
- Approximately 10% stated they were from BAME groups and 90% were from white ethnic groups.
- All categories of organisational position were represented in the following proportions: non-managerial (31%); senior manager (30%); manager (24%); CEO (10%); volunteer (3%); Chair (1%); and trustee (1%).

Bullying and discrimination

We asked survey respondents if they felt the bullying behaviour contained elements of prejudice or discrimination. Of those who provided detailed data and descriptions, approximately 22% reported prejudice or discrimination on grounds of age, 13% disability, 30% gender, 7% race, 2% religion and 3% sexual orientation.

5. Personal accounts of victims of bullying

Introduction

The key aim of this investigation was to give voice to the victims of bullying, via interviews and written narratives, in order to explore how their experience can inform our understanding of what happens in charities if and when emotionally abusive cultures become established; and what might be done to stop these dynamics from occurring. As such, we have endeavoured to include as many examples in victims' own voices as possible, to support and illustrate our learning.

We acknowledge the deep distress, trauma and profound emotional and professional impact of bullying behaviour that was expressed both in the interviews and via the online survey. During interviews, while we held to our main task of listening very carefully, we also needed on occasion to reassure participants that what happened was 'not their fault', that having experienced bullying did not infer some form of weakness, and also to affirm their demonstrable personal strength and bravery.

Some victims became very upset while describing their bullying experiences during interviews, or spoke about how hard it had been in the days preceding the interview.

> *"Even now, knowing I was going to be speaking with you today, it's been two weeks of not sleeping very well because I really wanted to speak to you, please don't get me wrong, but it's just the anxiety of having to talk about it again and go over it. I got my old notebook out this morning and it was just, whoa, so overwhelming."* [Interview]

Many victims of bullying in the charity sector reported a common experience – the dilemma of being in an organisation with an ethical mission but experiencing unethical behaviour from colleagues – of being treated inhumanely, of feeling isolated and trapped in their roles and relationships, and of feeling that they have no place, inside the organisation or outside in the wider world, where they might obtain recourse.

The word 'devastating' was used often to describe the experience of having been bullied and a sense of devastation was palpable in both the interviews and text fields. It was very difficult to bear witness to people who had undergone various forms of emotional abuse and who had been demeaned, depleted and hurt by those experiences. People described their experience of bullying in raw and often shocking terms; they laid themselves open emotionally, and their simultaneous expression of strength and vulnerability was extremely moving and humbling to encounter.

> *"I have always been an outgoing and strong individual but the impact it has had on me is huge. I have developed a propensity to panic attacks, I have what my GP describes as situational depression and anxiety. It is more common than not for me to be retching before I go to work, I now have no interest socially and have been told my personality has almost been snuffed out. I have had times where I just want to sleep and not ever wake up."* [Online survey]

Types of bullying identified

The vast majority of bullying accounts described by victims in interviews and through the online survey relate to downward hierarchical bullying behaviour, with the perpetrator holding a more senior position in the organisation to the victim. However, other forms of bullying behaviour were also readily identified by victims, including upward hierarchical bullying, peer-to-peer bullying and group bullying behaviour (or mobbing). It is important to note that these categories of bullying are not mutually exclusive and often victims described more than one form of bullying behaviour co-existing in an organisation, for example a chief executive upward bullying board members and simultaneously downward bullying a senior manager or other employee.

Different types of bullying described by victims include forms of the following: downward hierarchical bullying; upward hierarchical bullying; group bullying behaviour; peer to peer bullying.

Downward hierarchical bullying

Bullying of a junior colleague by a more senior member of staff

The most frequently occurring bullying scenario identified by participants was the bullying of a non-managerial member of staff by a manager or senior manager. In the following example, a young woman in her first paid role working for a high-profile charity witnessed and was subjected to bullying by a manager in a different team.

> *"I would hear her shouting at her assistant a lot. She would make cruel comments about her assistant to me and to other staff, undermining her, saying she clearly doesn't know what she's doing [...] In one to one meetings with her, I would write something for her and she would rip it to shreds in front of me and she'd make me sit with her while she deleted everything and rewrote everything. Instead of telling me the reasons why something wasn't good or needed improving, I would sit there in silence while she re-typed everything and it just made me feel horrible. She was just quite scary so you felt you couldn't talk back and you had to sit there and smile and say thank you [...] I remember thinking, 'why isn't anyone doing anything about this, why doesn't anyone speak up?' [...] By the end of it I knew that everyone knew. I'd told everyone I could in the ways I could but still nothing was happening about it. No one was going to tell her to stop."* [Interview]

Bullying of a manager by the chief executive or senior manager

Where managers provided feedback about their experience of bullying, the perpetrator was frequently either the chief executive or other senior colleague. In the following example, a manager describes being humiliated, intimidated and destabilised over a two-year period, culminating in her being signed off work with anxiety and depression.

> *"She [CEO] called an aggressive meeting of a disciplinary nature which was completely unwarranted and shocking. Regular meeting requests over the following eight months for things like "I am not happy about how we left things" or "I am concerned about something you said" or "I want to discuss your role" sent to me at end of my working week for meetings the next week which either did not take place or were to settle a few words on a document. Mind games. Regularly preventing me from completing my work causing me stress. Intimidating behaviour if I complained e.g. I was not permitted notes and CEO insisting on a stand-up meeting where she stood in my personal space. Drawing me to one side during a social occasion with all my colleagues present to express her displeasure at something trivial. It could be overheard and I was humiliated."* [Online survey]

Bullying at this organisational level is described by victims as particularly inexorable when undertaken by the founder or founders of a charity, in part because it invariably involves, or is at least poorly challenged by, the board.

> *"The bully had a history of bullying and having it covered up. The Board colluded [...] Because they [the bully] were the founder they had/have a lot of power. In spite of so many victims coming forward, nothing was done."* [Online survey]

The bullying of a chief executive or senior manager by a chair or other trustee

A frequently occurring bullying scenario for senior staff was to be bullied by the chair or other board members. In the following example, the CEO of a mental health charity underwent a sustained 'campaign' to undermine her leadership, conducted by a single trustee and enabled by the chair. Her own mental health suffered, and she eventually left the organisation under a non-disclosure agreement:

> *"On the day it was this trustee and the chair, they were half an hour late, made me wait outside. I was called in and told that all the trustees had filled out the 360-degree appraisal [...] I was in a room with the chair and the trustee for two hours and I wasn't allowed a break and, it was just horrible. There was no evidence, [...] it was 'what is it that's difficult for you about thinking about strategies, is it that you can't think it*

in your head or is it that you cannot write it down?' - those kinds of things and it was just destroying." [Interview]

In the following example, the CEO was bullied out of the charity by the chair, seemingly in response to having repeatedly legitimately challenged decisions made by the board:

"I was CEO and I held the Chair and trustees to account. The Chair was weak, so they got rid of me. I wanted conflicts of interest and trustee governance on the agenda, but the Chair kept taking them off. He was a very senior businessman who'd never been challenged before. He made himself unaccountable, didn't use the evidence and couldn't hold the line. He did not understand or would not accept the location of authority and the role and remit of trustees. He behaved as Director of his company. [An independent governance review] did a great job and found that the charity had completely failed." [Interview]

Upward hierarchical bullying

Upward bullying of board member(s) by a chief executive

We also heard accounts from victims of bullying by chief executives that the abuse was not limited to more junior colleagues, but could also, on occasion extend to bullying behaviour being directed towards trustees.

In such cases the bullying behaviour tended to take the form of keeping things from the board, controlling and overpowering them or intimidating them.

"She was not afraid to humiliate the trustees, keep them in their place. She just concealed what she wanted and kept the board as tame pets." [Interview]

"As a trustee I was coerced into resigning from the board via a threat from the CEO to suspend my membership while making it clear I had done nothing wrong. Some trustees were also involved. They then lied about what they had done. Having stood for re-election I have been targeted and bullied since my return. They have used every power at their disposal including legal threats, comms systems, and process loopholes." [Online survey]

Upward bullying of a manager by more junior colleagues

In a small number of cases, managers reported being bullied by a more junior member of staff or by someone they manage.

"It's just as easy to be bullied from beneath as it is from above." [Interview]

The following example illustrates how the power base for this type of bullying can lie in the bully being supported or enabled by someone more senior than the victim.

"The staff I managed were not willing to take instruction from me and I had to manage insubordination, rudeness and disregard for my position as their manager. One individual had been with the organisation for some time and bullying and humiliation appeared to be part of their modus operandi. They were rude to me and others in public but were never censured by anyone senior. My line manager clearly had power over me, but staff I managed and the individual from another team were allowed to bully because it was endemic within the organisation." [Online survey]

Group bullying (mobbing) behaviour

Another scenario which was surfaced in the interviews and online survey was where several perpetrators bullied together. In such cases, the feeling of having nowhere to turn seems heightened because group bullying, by definition, involves more than one perpetrator and invariably a number of bystanders, so the excuse that 'nobody knew' is redundant. In the following example, a CEO was bullied by two members of the senior management team (with the awareness and compliance of the Board).

"I've met people who bully silently, quietly and I would say one of my senior colleagues did it by omission, so I was kept out of the loop. I started to notice I wasn't being copied into stuff, I didn't know about certain things, I wasn't kept informed, I was being challenged in meetings and I would see eyes between three different people, between one another." [Interview]

In the next example, the victim was initially bullied by one member of senior staff who then influenced other, new members of staff to take part.

> *"[The bully] was the kind of person when they like you, they like you, when they don't like you, that's it. [The bully] had a lot of power and influence; was the head of marketing. [The bully] started it [the bullying] off and then recruited a new person who would become my line manager, where I didn't have one before, suddenly [the bully] created this new position and this new guy was certainly told to bully me, to get me to go [...] [The bully] used to influence other new people who arrived. This young woman joined, another black woman like me, and because of the way [the bully] spoke to me in front of everyone, very derogatory and undermining, this new woman must have thought I was the queen of the idiots and she never respected me, ever. She talked to me very badly always."* [Interview]

Very occasionally 'mobbing' appeared to extend to involving the whole organisation (in the case of very small charities) or representatives from all levels within an organisation.

> *"I was mobbed by a group of paid staff and volunteers and the chair who cultivated complaints against me. An independent investigation described it as a 'witch hunt'."* [Online survey]

Peer to peer bullying

In a small number of cases, victims described being bullied by peers either within their organisation or outside of their organisation but within the sector. In the following example, one member of non-managerial staff working in a charity described behaviour carried out by a colleague who attempted to recruit other supporters.

> *"A co-worker at the same level behaved very aggressively towards me, including shouting/pointing/standing over me. They made a concerted effort to make my work uncomfortable and upsetting, including sending emails about me to colleagues, spreading rumours about me and making false reports about me to my manager. They encouraged colleagues to make similar false reports based on rumours. They were extremely hostile, including refusing to talk to me in meetings/social situations, deliberately sitting away from me, refusing to work with me on shared projects and refusing to update me on work, meaning I wasn't able to complete my work. As we were a team of 3, with a very absent manager who massively favoured the person doing the bullying, I became very isolated between the person doing the bullying and their supporter within our team."* [Online survey]

In cases of peer to peer bullying, where the power base is less obvious than in most other forms, victims appear particularly likely to be told to deal with the problem themselves or have it brushed off as a 'personality clash', as illustrated in the following example:

> *"By a co-worker: lying about things I'd said to further their own career, grabbing me by the face, getting in my personal space and not moving. I told my line manager, HR and the CEO (I escalated it myself as the responses I got were so poor) and they all recommended speaking to the bully myself and trying to fix it."* [Online survey]

Inter-organisational and inter-sectoral bullying

Another scenario reported was where bullying behaviour originated outside of a charity, with the perpetrator(s) being either senior-level sectoral colleagues, funders or other powerful external stakeholders. For example, a former CEO of a charity described being bullied and sexually harassed by other CEOs and funders.

> *"Where do you go with it? Utterly unspoken the rabid bullying and harassment (sexual, sexist and social) by other CEOs, chairs, trustees and funders. Power based harassment is especially invidious."* [Online survey]

One interviewee also described an occasion where, during a period of sectoral reorganisation and re-commissioning, a powerful government stakeholder referred to

their charity and its staff at a public meeting in graphic, offensive, and for the employees concerned, humiliating terms. (Note: in this case we have decided to withhold the specific quotation as it might reveal the identity of the victims (as well as the perpetrator) of this particular instance of inter-sectoral bullying.)

Impact

The impact of bullying, from the online survey and interviews, was almost universally described as having profound and longstanding personal and professional consequences, with respondents describing feeling emotionally overwhelmed, exhausted, alone, and with no place for recourse. The impact of the bullying experience for many appeared to invoke paralysis or immobilisation of thought or feelings, serving to further entrap victims within a negative emotional space.

Victims routinely described experiencing severe symptoms of anxiety, and some reported having suicidal ideation as a result of the bullying. Physical conditions such as migraines/headaches, high blood pressure and cold or flu-like symptoms were also frequently noted. Within work settings, victims of bullying described decimated self-confidence and diminished productivity combined with feelings of shame and attributed stigma. For those forced to leave work settings, some also described experiencing significant financial consequences and hardship. Further, the painful experience of bullying was described by many as holding enduring repercussions for both mental wellbeing and subsequent career choices.

> *"My physical and mental health were damaged and even after 8 months of being in a new job and a different organisation, I have not brought my stress and anxiety levels back down to how they were before. I have chronic shoulder and neck pain from accumulated tension and experience a number of debilitating migraines per month. I am working on that with therapy I have sought privately. My professional confidence is improving in my new role, but I still suffer from insecurities about how my peers see my competence occasionally."* [Online survey]

Physical responses

Victims routinely reported experiencing a range of physical symptoms as a result of being bullied, including migraines and headaches, high blood pressure, muscular-skeletal pain and cold and flu-like symptoms.

> *"Being unable to sleep and developed indigestion and hives as a result of stress and anxiety. This all cleared up when I left."* [Online survey]

> *"I became ill with panic attacks, high blood pressure and heart palpitations. This hugely affected me outside of work."* [Online survey]

> *"I had this sore throat and I couldn't shake it off for about a year - and I couldn't connect the physical with the mental and what was going on."* [Interview]

Mental and emotional distress

Almost all described the significant impact workplace bullying had on their mental health and wellbeing.

> *"They refused to deal with it, the bullying got worse and severely affected my mental health. I left 9 months later, broken. Bullying completely changed me. I was crushed."* [Online survey]

> *"I had something like a breakdown. I developed an eating disorder that I had recovered from many years ago. Very low self-worth for a while."* [Online survey]

Victims often described carrying a sense of shame or stigma and feeling that in some way it was their 'fault' that they'd been bullied.

> *"On a personal level I also feel like I failed in some way - in not doing my due diligence before accepting the role, and in not trying harder to 'tough it out' when I was there."* [Online survey]

> *"As a competent and experienced CE I felt ashamed that I was allowing myself to be subjected to this and for not being able to address it due to fear of being removed."* [Online survey]

Some participants in the online survey and interviews described experiencing invasive thoughts, dreams and memories.

"My sleep pattern went haywire. I became very depressed and had intrusive thoughts about self-harm. I questioned (and still find myself questioning) every action and decision - even down to the order in which I approach simple tasks such as making a cup of tea." [Online survey]

"I had nightmares about her and still do. I see her face in the faces of strangers on the tube or street and my heart pounds and I hide in case it is her. Of course, it is never her." [Online survey]

Many described the impact of their experiences of bullying upon relationships outside work.

"At the darkest times I was forever crying and unable to control my emotions outside of work. It put a strain on my relationships, and I had to leave my position." [Online survey]

As well as experiencing severe emotional distress, on occasion, victims of bullying also experienced more serious or severe issues including substance misuse and ideation around self-harm or suicide.

"My husband wouldn't leave me alone as he was afraid I would hurt myself. He said 'You haven't seen what I've seen of you this last year or so.'" [Online survey]

"My drinking increased and I self-harmed [...] more than once. I felt powerless, silenced, ashamed, furious, disrespected [...] I thought about killing myself on two separate occasions." [Online survey]

However, there were also times where the 'lowest' point emotionally for some participants could represent a moment of personal insight leading to subsequent growth and recovery.

"I remember going home, walking home that night after that meeting and I remember [...] thinking to myself, this isn't okay. It's not okay that this is where I'm at, it's not right." [Interview]

Loss of self-confidence and productivity

The majority of victims referred to being bullied as having a profoundly negative impact on their confidence, both at the time, and in many cases for a long time afterwards.

"I have been here for 7 years and desperately want to leave but I don't feel able to do any other job now due to the confidence I have lost. I feel sick on Sunday nights at the thought of coming to work". [Online survey]

"I had no confidence in myself and even now, I'm still building it back up. I felt so destroyed and not capable of doing anything and not worth anything. The intrusive memories, nightmares, disrupted sleep, having no confidence and no sense of who I was, and my worth in the world and what I could offer." [Interview]

"I get really anxious and sometimes I get social anxiety and I don't feel I can tell anyone." [Interview]

Many victims described feeling less productive at work, less motivated to do a good job and having to spend a lot of energy trying to manage the dynamics of the bullying situation rather than doing their job.

"I was left feeling very insecure and uncertain of myself, despite having almost 40 years' experience. I felt demotivated because there was little reason for me to make an effort in my role when she would consistently undermine me and not even let me do significant aspects of it." [Online survey]

"I would drive to work and sit in my car trying to build up the courage to walk in the office, then I'd turn on the computer and stare at the screen all day because actually, by that point, I couldn't even think." [Interview]

Associated bullying techniques include perpetrators downplaying the experience of the victim and the practice of 'gaslighting', a term used widely used by victims in their accounts of bullying.

Gaslighting

The term 'gaslighting' refers to a subtle form of psychological manipulation, where the perpetrator seeks to sow seeds of doubt in a targeted individual or in members of a targeted group to undermine their confidence. Using persistent denial, misdirection, contradiction and lying, it attempts to destabilie the victim and delegitimise the victim's belief. The term originates from Patrick Hamilton's 1938 play, *Gas Light* (Hamilton, 2015) (and later film) in which a husband convinces his wife that she has lost her sense of memory, perception of facts and emotional reality.

The planting of self-doubt within the victim of bullying was a phenomenon described by many. It is shown to have a particularly pernicious effect on victims' mental health as it can lead to feelings of self-stigmatisation and a deep mistrust of the intentions and behaviour of colleagues and organisations.

"It was horrendous. I did not want to go to work. I would have panic attacks and cry (I'm not an emotional person!) and it made me doubt my own ability and my very nature (was I being unreasonable?!)." [Online survey]

"The bullying and gaslighting behaviour left me on the edge of a nervous breakdown. I saw several before me go and leave the organisation. I didn't think it would happen to me, but it did, and it was the same pattern of behaviour - gas lighting, excessive micro-management, turning colleagues against me etc. etc." [Online survey]

"I was so ashamed of my inability to respond maturely to being bullied - this was on top of everything. So, I was unemployed, couldn't get a reference, felt like I had made everything up and that maybe I'm just weak and I should just kill myself because I make choices to go into jobs where I'm bullied and don't even notice it." [Online survey]

Loss of 'voice' in working relationships

Linked to a loss of self-confidence, often victims described feeling personally depleted and weakened in their work setting as a result of bullying. They felt, and often had, reduced standing in their organisation, felt less part of their team or wider structure and felt treated differently by colleagues, sometimes in an openly discriminatory manner.

"I came back after maternity leave and something started to change. I didn't have the same voice, influence at SMT. The trust was starting to break down; my authority was being undermined." [Interview]

"They all saw everything and some even participated. The rest ignored. Two of the directors who participated refused to do work for me [...] one, when I addressed him, came up to me and up close to my face told me what a good 'girl' I was (I was a 30-year-old woman...)" [Online survey]

Sometimes victims had to contend with a 'closing of ranks' among colleagues in addition to or as part of their experience of bullying.

"I was the scapegoat, I got the blame [...] If your face stops fitting for whatever reason, that's it [...] She was a powerful woman, had a close relationship with [CEO] who had the board in her pocket so it was inevitable I would go, I could see the writing on the wall." [Interview]

"CEO had favourites in staff team. Favourites' behaviour was problematic [...] SMT members tried to address this behaviour but favourites were 'protected' by CEO. SMT members became targeted by CEO and trustees (trustees were handpicked friends and family of CEO and favourites). SMT members involved had responsibilities stripped, were targeted by the group to the point that they were pushed out of [the] organisation." [Online survey]

Frequently victims felt they had no choice but to stay silent, in the conviction that it would be career-limiting to voice an allegation of bullying. This was particularly so for people who were junior, early in their career or otherwise unlikely to be in a position to negotiate a settlement deal.

"It came to a point when I almost started the formal route but I had to be careful, it was only me and my daughter, I had a mortgage to pay and the fact that you can be blacklisted, never work again if word gets around. There would have been enormous consequences, I had to be practical, I needed to survive, I was in a vulnerable position." [Interview]

The impact of bullying and discrimination

Within both online survey responses and in one-to one interviews, there was clear evidence of bullying behaviour containing prejudicial or discriminatory elements. While this was sometimes clearly overt, on other occasions the bullying appeared to take place in more a covert or subtle form. Participants also described experiences where bullying or emotional abuse took place in the context of 'intersectional' encounters involving different areas of personal identity, including age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and social class.

Reported experience of bullying with prejudice or discrimination within the online survey

- Age: 22%
- Disability: 13%
- Gender: 30%
- Race: 7%
- Religion: 2%
- Sexual orientation: 3%

Experiences of bullying combined with overt prejudice and discrimination taking place in full visibility were clearly highly distressing for victims:

"The person kept making racist, sexist and jokes about my country of origin every day. He used to make fun of my English. In particular he said and I quote: 'I thought [country of origin] women get slapped around'." [Online survey]

"I was a gay man aged 24 and found myself being bullied by a bunch of straight men in their fifties [...] They used a lot of gendered language against me such as accusing me of being "hysterical", "bitchy", "catty". It was blatant homophobia but one step removed from actually using homophobic slurs." [Online survey]

"I was called a little boy by a staff member also I was called a little child and should go back to school also the member of the staff called my friend a 'wog'." [Online survey]

In other examples, the combination of bullying with discrimination also appeared in more covert or subtle forms. In a manner analogous to 'gaslighting', victims described how different aspects of personal identity could be invoked, and self-doubt planted in their working relationship with a bully:

"I recently raised a number of serious health and safety issues with the CEO, and he simply brushed them off saying that nobody else thought they were an issue, and maybe the reason I did was because I was 'more vulnerable' than other people. I felt this was a multiple slight against my mental health, the fact I am a woman, and the fact that I am the youngest employee in the organisation." [Online survey]

Several online survey respondents also referred to bullying experiences where the 'higher' social class of the perpetrator represented an integral element of discriminatory bullying:

"The status of this trustee and the power she exerted over the organisation was outrageous. Her ideological and religious positions on sexuality and family breakdown and family difficulties made the organisation an unwelcoming place for a diversity of people. Her inability to listen to anyone without a clipped upper-class accent meant poorer decisions were made." [Online survey]

In other examples the bullying or emotional abuse experienced appeared 'hidden' within complex 'intersectional' workplace relationships. Here, in the context of conducting a charity's ethical mission, different areas of personal identity and social justice themes appear to become activated in the interaction between bully and victim. In such

circumstances, victims could be left with profound uncertainty around how to best navigate or respond to their experience.

One commonly occurring bullying scenario involving women, entailed younger women describing being bullied by older women.

> *"My line manager systematically bullies members of her team. She has worked in this organisation for [many] years but she is relatively new to her current director post and this increased level of seniority, I believe, her insecurities in this role have increased her inappropriate behaviour. I am a young professional and the bullying has had a career damaging effect. I have been belittled in front of other senior internal and external stakeholders etc. I have not received any sort of career development. I feel totally let down and battle trodden."*

In another example, a member of staff working for a charity addressing health inequalities within a minority ethnic community described how employees had experienced overly authoritarian or 'high-handed' behaviour from its founding trustees. Here, the experience of emotional abuse in the workplace was felt to also be directly linked to underlying patterns of social inequality and racism:

> *"Because our community hasn't always found its status in other ways, with BME charities and BME trustees [...] status can be quite a big thing, and sometimes that can lead to unhealthy displays of power."* [Interview]

Throughout the feedback from interviewees and the online survey, the experience of working with and negotiating difficult and sometimes painful 'intersectional' dynamics within charity culture was clearly evident. While this was not usually in itself seen to be the cause of bullying, in many cases the failure to consider or respect difference, combined with the personal or organisational abuse of power and authority, were.

Longer-term repercussions

Many respondents and interviewees described an enduring impact of historic bullying which was felt financially and psychologically. In addition to the often long-lasting financial impact of bullying, some people's mental health was so adversely affected that they needed to seek professional counselling support, almost always at their own expense.

> *"I sought counselling help privately at my own expense. I had to, but the financial impact has been very difficult."* [Online survey]

> *"I was diagnosed with severe anxiety and depression. I had to go on antidepressants for a year and had to pay privately for weekly therapy sessions for 18 months to get me to the point where I could answer the phone or leave the house without having panic attacks."* [Online survey]

When it became clear that bullying was not going to be addressed within an organisation, many victims described feeling that they had no alternative but to leave. For those without power or seniority in an organisation, and therefore no prospect of negotiating a severance deal, this can have a detrimental financial impact.

> *"I left my job because of the impact on my mental health. I had to leave to recover but it has sparked a period of extreme financial difficulty."* [Online survey]

> *"Due to being on the sick as a result of my anxiety, I am experiencing stress in relation to financial difficulties, as I am now on half pay."* [Online survey]

Many described long-lasting effects in terms of ongoing personal mental health distress but also often in feeling consumed and preoccupied with the trauma of their experience and unable to move on emotionally.

> *"I felt like I had been assaulted. This was nearly two years ago and I think about it every day. I have worked hard to move on but it is difficult not to feel shame and stigma."* [Online survey]

"My confidence was destroyed. I felt the effects of the bullying for at least two years afterwards and sometimes even now I still struggle to offer a different opinion from my current boss because that was such a trigger for venom from my previous boss." [Online survey]

"You don't realise you carry the bruises as deeply as you do." [Interview]

Some spoke of feeling the need to 'keep tabs' on the bully to ensure they would not meet accidentally or of feeling compelled to seek out the perpetrator on social media, despite this often being re-traumatising.

"Long term, I have avoided working in the VCSE sector across [location] to not risk bumping into these people again." [Online survey]

"I hate what they [the former bully] say on Twitter, but I can't stop reading the tweets." [Interview]

Enduring feelings of loss of ambition or personal horizons appeared to be a particularly problematic consequence of workplace bullying for people earlier on in their career.

"I used to be so ambitious about wanting to work in the charity sector, but now I'll just take any job as long as it's like a nice place to work. I just want to enjoy going to work and feel happy, and feel safe." [Interview]

"The bullying and constant abuse for being a young male in the workplace has left me feeling worthless, depressed, doubting my skills and doubting my profession." [Online survey]

"I am now looking for alternative employment but scared to take anything inside the charity sector again." [Online survey]

Associated organisational behaviours

From the accounts of victims, a number of techniques can be identified where either the perpetrator is able to co-opt relationships, networks and organisational processes to sustain the bullying – or where the behaviour, perpetrator and the organisational culture otherwise closely interrelate. Therefore, while the most obvious manifestation of abuse exists as a consequence of the conduct of the perpetrator, bullying behaviour is also reinforced systemically. In such circumstances, victims report trauma not just in relation to the perpetrator, but frequently find it impossible to separate the experience of bullying behaviour from the wider organisational culture, and frequently in the case of more senior staff, governance.

Organisational behaviours described by victims include:

- Bullying behaviour in charities taking place 'in plain sight'
- The victim being marginalised
- The perpetrator being protected;
- The process of 'bullying out'; and
- The process of 'structuring out'.

We also discuss the experience of interviewees and survey respondents concerning the use of Non-Disclosure Agreements.

'Bullying in plain sight'

In the majority of examples given, bullying behaviour was not happening in secret; rather, it was often described as 'an open secret'. Accounts referred to victims' incredulity at this apparent normalising of bullying and emotionally abusive behaviour and the insidious effect it has on an organisation's culture.

"Colleagues were supportive as we were all suffering, although I was the main target. We had no-one to turn to as the board of trustees were all her friends. Other people who ran other charities would pull me aside and tell me it was common knowledge that she was a perpetrator and was treating staff badly, but still nothing was done. I felt totally helpless." [Online survey]

"She used fickle favouritism, was capricious in nature. It was never clear if her treatment of people was part of a game plan or just personal; either way, it wrong-footed people. She charmed people. She had her favourites throughout the organisation - but it was double-edged [because] toxicity flows to the favourite. She tried to sabotage good work. Everybody knew what she was doing but there was no-one to go to." [Interview]

For bullying to take place in plain sight, it often relies on accomplices to turn a blind eye to abusive behaviour. Many victims described this organisational negligence as originating within the board.

"CEO was appointed by Chair & Trustees, who were wowed by her background. Chair was utterly useless and intimidated/in awe of CEO. CEO reduced people to tears all the time, destroyed people physically and mentally and made me and others doubt ourselves all the time. I reported it to the Chair and Trustees several times. Nothing was done." [Online survey]

"When the grievance is about the CEO they [the board] have a vested interest in turning a blind eye." [Online survey]

In such cases as these, the 'turning of a blind eye' by trustees equates to a failure of governance.

"They [the board] couldn't imagine the organisation without the Director [bully]." [Interview]

"I am also angry that the board didn't do anything to address it, I think they wanted to take the easy road and wait for the new CEO to address problems but in the meantime they were effectively turning a blind eye to staff being emotionally abused." [Online survey]

The victim being marginalised

Victims often described colleagues as being powerless in the face of the bullying behaviour. With no effective response to emotionally abusive behaviour occurring 'in plain sight' the organisational response appeared frequently to side-line, scapegoat, 'blame' or otherwise diminish the victim in the hope that the problem would go away.

Frequently, victims described feelings of frustration, powerlessness and exhaustion at the injustice they faced when trying to tackle bullying behaviour. Often their sense was that the organisation had 'turned its back' on them.

"There was an independent inquiry following my grievance that concluded that I was bullied. Whilst this was a satisfactory result, it became soon clear to me that I had become an inconvenience and as a result I was let go. The organisation I had worked for 7 years, and in which I had been promoted 3 times, chose to support the perpetrator." [Online survey]

"I was bullied by the CEO. I wrote a letter in explaining how I felt and I was asked to attend a meeting where the CEO and trustee were there. They presented the letter and asked me to withdraw it and said I cannot make accusations of bullying. I walked out of the room crying. No company should let the bully in the room with you and tell you to withdraw your complaint." [Online survey]

These feelings of frustration and injustice seemed to be compounded for victims by the message that they were being blamed for having been bullied and that any complaint made was of little or no importance to the organisation. In effect they felt doubly wronged.

"The bullying was widespread, mainly aimed at new staff (all women) who joined over a 12-month period. We all shared our experiences of what was happening and eventually spoke up but we were met with the sense that we were all emotional women who wanted to cause trouble." [Online survey]

"When we spoke up, we were told we should be able to take being told off." [Online survey]

"Everyone witnessed it but nobody would speak to her about her behaviour. It was eventually problematised as my failure to upward manage my bully." [Online survey]

Some victims also described feeling fearful of the personal and professional repercussions of reporting bullying, worrying that their organisation had the power to 'blacklist' them internally and within the sector. As a result, many self-censored and did not make a formal complaint or reported 'getting the drift' that it would be in their interests not to kick up a fuss.

"It could be seen as career limiting if you made an allegation of 'just' bullying." [Online survey]

"I just knew things would get worse for me if I pushed it. It's a case of 'how much do you need this job' [...] they know you don't have options." [Online survey]

Another organisational response to this was also described by a number of victims who were either told to "suck it up" or made to feel that such behaviour is normal and to be expected. In such situations the organisational culture appeared to be one of acknowledging unpleasantness but condoning it as part and parcel of working life.

"It's a successful and highly thought of organisation and this was used as a threat - the organisation is more important than you, you're lucky to work here, you're easily replaced". [Online survey]

"The trustees believed I was making it up despite there being reports from dozens of individuals from all levels within the organisation. I am sad to say that bullying still happens frequently." [Online survey]

"I tried to talk to the Chair about the problems, but it just got brushed off as 'they need to get used to you' and 'that's just the way it is'. I felt I had to be strong and just deal with it." [Online survey]

The bully being protected

Many victims of bullying have reported how, despite the incontrovertible evidence of bullying behaviour, a combination of individual actions by colleagues and internal leadership and management processes served effectively to protect the perpetrator. Further, in some cases it seemed to victims that the perpetrator acted under the tacit authorisation of the organisation 'to do bad' for the sake of the ethical mission of the organisation.

In a small number of cases, behaviour in which the organisation was complicit extended to the use of cyber methods to undertake social bullying.

"I often walked in on whispering/derogatory conversations about myself, and a member of staff disclosed to the CEO and myself that a Facebook group chat was created as a platform to continue slagging me off and undermining me after work and that another Manager was actively participating as well as these colleagues. The CEO admitted that if they had done to her what they had done to me she would not be able to come into work. The matter was not addressed effectively, no warning/discipline or reprimands were given and due to this I felt that I had no other choice but to leave." [Online survey]

In very many cases, organisations' HR processes were cited by victims as part of the problem, seemingly unresponsive in supporting them to address bullying behaviour. However, as the following quote illustrates, there may be a fundamental misunderstanding of the function of HR in such instances.

"HR is there to protect the interests of the organisation, not the individual. So you go away, you talk figures and get people to sign on the dotted line. From a business perspective, that is the right thing to do." [Interview]

Nonetheless, in organisations sufficiently large to have an HR function or department, staff believe that it is their route to tackling bullying, but report finding the process largely ineffective or at worst feeling it to be misused.

"We were told that we weren't allowed to go to HR with a complaint and that we would have to go to the person senior to who we were complaining about. In this case, this would have been the CEO and as junior members of staff, we all felt unable to do this." [Online survey]

"Everyone knew. No-one did anything. HR ignored our pleas for help, even when we went to them with written evidence. She was too powerful and too frightening to be tackled." [Online survey]

"Followed 'whistleblowing' policy and reported bad work practise. Was then hounded out of my job, accused of being a "trouble maker". Keep your mouth shut, don't rock the boat and you'll be fine. Look the other way, you'll be fine but god forbid you jeopardise profits." [Online survey]

In addition to the challenges faced in seeking to use internal organisational processes to address bullying, victims described what they saw as the inability of external regulatory frameworks or trades unions to do so either.

"Also there feels like there should be a role for the Charity Commission but I don't think they deal with this kind of thing." [Online survey]

"There needs to be somewhere else for charity staff to be able to report issues and get support, particularly in small organisations where there isn't a union and unlikely to be an experienced HR person to handle things." [Online survey]

Some victims described this organisational protection of bullies as appearing to extend to actively rewarding them for their behaviour, for example by 'promoting them out of harm's way' or by celebrating them in some way when they retire or otherwise leave.

"He was a well-known bully internally and externally but was still promoted from within. I think that was in effect their way of dealing with him." [Online survey]

"When she left, she got a big hero's send off and she got a massive cake and the Director of HR and the CEO did a speech saying we're so sad you're leaving. I felt it was such a slap in the face to me and the other people they knew had had such a terrible time with her. They were just saying it didn't matter." [Interview]

Often this type of protection of a bully seems to be inextricably linked to their perceived worth, particularly in the context of charities operating in hyper-competitive environments. In these cases, where sustained organisational reputation is considered essential, the net value of a perpetrator can ultimately be considered to be more important than any poor behaviour exhibited in pursuit of a charity's mission.

"People made the excuse that oh yes, she's a horrible bully, but she does really well and she does a good job and she's so great for this organisation. But I always thought what we do is not that important that it's worth people feeling horrendous about themselves and having to quit their jobs. I don't think any higher purpose is worth bullying people for. One of the big problems is that the bully did have a friendship with the people that were funding us, so that was seen as a real reason why she would never be tackled. She was untouchable." [Interview]

'Bullying out'

One organisational behaviour described by some victims was where bullying of staff became an institutionalised and almost perfected task within organisations. Examples of this can be found in repeating patterns of victims leaving an organisation having been bullied while the perpetrators remain in post, change role or are promoted.

"The chief executive would bully senior managers. When I became the focus, I decided I had to leave as the trustees clearly weren't interested or going to do anything. There was a very high turnover of staff at SMT level which was never acknowledged." [Online survey]

Victims described noticing a point at which the organisational response changed in tone, which rang alarm bells and seemed to signal the beginning of the process of being pushed out. Examples of this are the adoption of strict legalistic language in communications or the sudden ceasing of communications.

"I decided to report the incident to my line manager. Afterwards, the CEO started to use contractual language in communications; 'you have broken the trust'. Tiny admin mistakes became 'breaches of trust and confidence'. It was the beginning of the end." [Interview]

"The CEO just stopped talking to me [...] I could see the writing on the wall." [Interview]

'Structuring out'

Some victims described a different but similar phenomenon to bullying out, which can be applied as a tacit organisational policy. Here the organisational response to bullying takes the form of routine or perpetual restructuring which often involves the victim's (rather than the bully's) role being deleted. Some participants in interviews and the online survey described how 'structuring out' appeared to take place at a particular level. For some, this took place at junior or 'entry' level roles where staff conducting 'core' organisational roles were serially recruited on short-term contracts. For others, middle to senior ranking managers were routinely shed from the organisations. In all circumstances, the organisational behaviour of 'structuring out' served to sustain emotionally abusive cultures.

"[The chief executive] was constantly restructuring people out. It was the culture, that was just how it worked and no-one fought it." [Interview]

"The head of team had a history of getting rid of staff she didn't like. The charity allowed her to remain in post. This is why I didn't report the bullying when it started as I knew the charity supported her over junior staff members. The charity did not live up to its stated values and principles because it allowed a poorly behaved manager to get away with it, and used a restructure to get rid of staff 'legitimately'." [Online survey]

Many respondents to the online survey suggested that higher than expected staff turnover and frequent restructures ought to be a sign for concern for any board.

"We had huge staff turnover so that should have been a warning light." [Online survey]

Some victims of bullying in sufficiently senior positions, i.e. chief executive or director/senior manager, described non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) being used as a 'tool' in structuring them out. Further, a number of people were aware that their organisation had used NDAs on multiple occasions, and described them as 'part of the business model'. A few had signed more than one themselves.

"[as with previous employer] it ended with another NDA, another deal [...] they weren't interested in making it better, they just wanted a quick solution." [Interview]

Non-Disclosure Agreements

A non-disclosure agreement (NDA) is a legal contract which limits how information or ideas (for example commercial information) can be shared. Sometimes NDAs are called confidentiality agreements (HM Government Intellectual Property Office, 2019).

A high number of interviewees holding senior positions had signed NDAs and clearly expressed the impact on their mental health of being trapped in secrecy, unable according to the letter of their agreements to discuss or "tell anybody at all why I left, or any of the details" or to process the traumatic incident, even in a therapeutic context. One interviewee who had signed an NDA as part of their employment settlement spoke candidly about the deleterious personal and psychological consequence of signing an NDA.

"My silence was bought [...] It feels like locking away part of your mind." [Interview]

For some, participating in this research presented the only opportunity they had encountered to discuss the experience with anybody, and even when assured of complete confidentiality, many chose to carefully conceal the identity of the organisation.

As well as the negative impact on emotional healing that NDAs can have, many of those

who had signed one also recognised that in doing so, they had let the organisation 'off the hook' in terms of tackling the bullying and ultimately felt it did not represent a satisfactory conclusion.

> *"It gave me some more time off but it wasn't a satisfactory resolution. There was no recognition of wrongdoing."* [Interview]

> *"Refrain from imposing a gagging order on the complainant. That is a disgusting practice that protects the bully and organisation instead of dealing with the issues."* [Online survey]

Further, some interviewees questioned the ethics of using charitable funds to 'pay people off'.

> *"I am benefitting now from having plenty of money in the bank but I found it staggering that they allowed the charity to spend all this money; I thought you could have kept me on and got more for the charity's money and done all kinds of things, given me a specific remit, kept all the good will."* [Interview]

It is important to note that while the use of an NDA as a 'gagging order' was clearly described as detrimental when it inhibits a victim's ability to process their experience, some participants did recognise that an NDA can serve a positive function in securing confidentiality on both sides, and as such some protection or assurance.

> *"I was paid to leave and there was an NDA involved and therefore a protection for me in terms of future work etc. because it felt like they tried to destroy me [...] so it's problematic isn't it, but for most people they are essential in order to be able to get future work."* [Interview]

While NDAs exist as a completely legitimate element of charity business practice in many situations (for example in relation to securing confidentiality around trade secrets, and in inter-organisational partnerships, due diligence investigations and acquisitions and mergers), it is evident from the accounts of victims of bullying that when used in employment settlements to secure silence, they become ethically complicated mechanisms.

Reflections and implications for improving organisational cultures

Having described their experiences of being bullied in the charity sector, victims were invited to reflect on what worked well in terms of their organisation's response, what had worked less well and any more general views they had about what could be done better to address bullying in charities.

What worked well

Few participants were able to give an example of a positive organisational response or of things having gone well in relation to resolving the bullying situation. This may in part be due to the self-selecting sample for both the interviews and the online survey, where those who had achieved satisfactory resolution might be less likely to participate. Further, at the time the research was conducted, only very few participants appeared to be appraised of up to date guidance or developments in the sector, for example around safeguarding and whistleblowing, and also expressed confusion and a lack of awareness about how and where to seek recourse. However, a number of interviewees and survey respondents did state how pleased, grateful and relieved they felt at being able to contribute to, and tell their story via, this investigation.

> *"Taking part in conversations like this can help as well if it [bullying] can be prevented or if you know you are not on your own. The more CEOs I talk to, they've all got stories to tell about difficulties in role and leaving their role because of difficulties, particularly with trustees. Sharing those stories can really bring comfort."* [Interview]

Victims also described the importance of small, ordinary human kindnesses offered by colleagues, which effectively represented the opposite of turning a blind eye.

> *"We all tried to support each other through this, but speaking up would result in getting treated badly"*. [Online survey]

> *"A colleague who I had confided in stepped in and arranged the situation so that the heat was taken off me"*. [Online survey]

We did encounter some examples of CEOs trying very hard to 'do the right thing' and follow due process in investigating bullying and doing everything possible to try and find a creative solution through robust, thoughtful, defensible management. However, both the internal processes and procedures and ultimately the organisational governance impeded these efforts and usually ended with the CEO in turn being accused of bullying by the perpetrator they were investigating. This is illustrated in the following example where a CEO, at the request of the victim, initially took a restorative approach to addressing bullying behaviour rather than initiating formal disciplinary action, but on reflection feels that was a mistake:

> *"Her [victim's] willingness to try and find a workable solution rather than going down a formal route meant she [perpetrator] refocused her attention on me; she'd been challenged and she didn't like it. She became verbally aggressive towards me and when she ultimately resigned, she said it was due to my behaviour. We had all the processes in place to try to adopt a best practice approach and we've tried to adapt them to deal with a situation of bullying but it didn't work."* [Interview]

Further, in actively seeking to learn from the experience, the same chief executive describes how unsupported organisationally she felt in this endeavour.

> *"It has been a learning experience for us, and I don't want that to be lost. This has ended because that person has resigned, and I feel cheated out of a good result so I want to unpick that and understand it, but I am very much on my own. I don't feel lonely because I've got wonderful colleagues, but I would feel lonely if I relied on the board. If I did something horrendous, he [chair] still wouldn't challenge me; I challenge myself. What I need is some affirmation, what we did well, what could have been better, to reflect on that and capture the learning. If that person hadn't left, how would we have dealt with it? Who'd address that with me if the Chair is not prepared to?"* [Interview]

What worked less well

A number of victims had views about where things had gone wrong in terms of tackling bullying behaviour. While recognising the obvious role played by perpetrators, most identified the conditions and culture within which bullying takes place as being the biggest factors in sustaining the behaviour. In almost all cases, they described internal and external systems for dealing with bullying as unfit for purpose, citing inadequate internal, governance and regulatory structures that fail to 'grip' bullying behaviour. There was recognition that electing to deal with bullying is not an easy option, particularly as the mechanisms for doing so exist primarily to protect the organisation not the individual.

> *"Organisations are risking a lot by doing the right thing in relation to bullying."* [Interview]

The following quote illustrates just what that cost to the organisation can be.

> *"It is expensive in terms of resources, time, social and cultural capital, you jeopardise relationships, people feel nervous. There was so much lost time and energy. I was unable to give other staff what they deserve. It hit the organisation like a meteor. There were many aftershocks afterwards and we are left with a big hole that never goes away."* [Interview]

Several victims described what seem like intractable barriers within multiple organisational fields including governance, leadership, management and HR processes, as well as the organisational culture. Encountering these barriers at all levels supports the notion of the 'organisation turning a blind eye' to the victim, whereby a closing of ranks feels like a wilful refutation of their traumatic experience.

> *"If the bullying is at the top it feels like it's impossible to stop. I would hope that individuals could reach out to someone. Having spoken with HR, trustees, other senior managers I was ignored by all of them and felt incredibly alone. I would hope that the Charity Commission or another organisation would ensure the mental health of individuals in charities."* [Online survey]

One interviewee described the 'impossibility of using governance to address bullying because structures are not resilient enough to cope with the misconduct of some people' [interview].

Others described processes or actions taken by their organisation which appear to suggest an awareness that bullying is taking place but an unwillingness to acknowledge or tackle it in a way that appears fair from the victim's perspective:

> *"HR took questions about bullying off the annual employee survey rather than address the issue."* [Online survey]

> *"My advice about handling bullying would be to bring in an impartial, objective organisation to deal with the bullying complaint and not an HR company paid by the organisation that is there to save the organisation's reputation and to cover up the problem."* [Online survey]

What 'better' might look like

Overall, victims found great difficulty in identifying what good or 'better' might look like. There seem to be a number of reasons for this.

First, limited awareness of recently developed initiatives (e.g. DCMS's Safeguarding programme; the Charity Commission's guidance on safeguarding, whistleblowing and serious wrongdoing; NCVO's Charity Ethical Principles; and the ACEVO publication 'Leading with Values').

Second, many of the bullying experiences described occurred within the last five years, but before the inception of these initiatives and therefore within a different context/ atmosphere.

Third, many victims appear to have experienced a psychological trauma response to bullying, whereby they 'replay' unresolved traumatic experiences but are not able to work through them. A sense of being 'stuck' and of diminished personal horizons seems to undermine victims' capacity to grapple systemically with organisational processes and personal responses to bullying, resulting in a restating of what 'doesn't work' or is 'wrong', but without feeling able to imagine what might constitute 'better'.

Whilst recognising that charities are not the only organisations where bullying happens, many participants expressed shock at the disparity between the external messages of charities and the first-hand experience of their internal cultures. They felt strongly that charities have the moral imperative to tackle, or at least not condone, bullying, precisely because of their stated values. Further, they felt that efforts should be made to actively learn from negative experiences rather than brushing them under the carpet, denying or down-playing them.

> *"In charities there's a different social contract. You have a moral stake in it, you should treat people well; the difference it can make if you motivate people. There's always a beneficiary to hold in mind, that should make a difference. But there's a credibility gap."* [Interview]

> *"It's allowed to happen because people think we are working for this great cause so we don't matter, what matters is getting the work done properly and if she manages to bring in all this funding or get our message out to lots of people, they think nothing else matters, our individual wellbeing doesn't matter."* [Interview]

Where victims of bullying were able to offer perspectives about how things could be improved, or we have been able to infer from respondents' accounts what 'better' might look like, positive change falls broadly into three categories: governance; moral leadership; and external regulation.

The importance of good governance

Participants in the online survey and interviews widely recognised the critical role played by boards of charities. Many spoke of having a poor or non-existent relationship with the board which ultimately meant they had nowhere to turn to internally in order to seek redress. Some suggested introducing processes where members of staff should be enabled to access the board directly to report wrongdoing without more senior colleagues interceding.

"I truly believe charities should have improved governance structures and more information regarding who to turn to if your dispute is with the board/CEO." [Online survey]

"Do I think there was a wider problem of bullying? Sixteen people left the organisation in the summer after I was made redundant - at no time did the trustees question what was going on, or look into it. You would hope that they might at the very least have been curious as to why so many people left, and why they were that unhappy to have left but of course they did nothing." [Online survey]

"I like NCVO's Governance Code. I think it should be essential to mark a trustee with specific responsibility for staff wellbeing. All charities should have clear policies on bullying, not simply 'contact your line manager' as part of an outdated staff handbook! A freely available draft policy on bullying which the Trustees can look at and approve would be a good starting place. This should outline at least 3 options of people you can contact and a clear indication of what happens after you report bullying - what responses can you expect?" [Online survey]

Moral leadership

In most cases, victims of bullying did not describe isolated instances of bullying, but rather experiences based upon a wider and more entrenched culture of bullying. As such, many felt that failures to tackle bullying and emotional abuse clearly sat with leaders and that improvements must be led by them to create workplace cultures which value everyone, not just a few. A lack of willingness or ability to effectively and appropriately deal with conflict at a suitably early point represented an absence of duty of care. This weakness was described as instrumental in setting an organisational tone whereby poor behaviour can be condoned, rather than difficult challenges faced.

"You need leaders who can work with difference, conflict. I think about how I would have dealt with me and got a better outcome rather than just paying me off. You need that willingness to learn." [Interview]

"The CEO continually puts her team down in front of colleagues whilst preaching values of respect and compassion, and believes this is appropriate." [Online survey]

Some respondents described the difficulty of disentangling weaknesses in management practice from the bullying, with inadequate resourcing and support for managers as being contributing factors. One further 'charity-specific' dynamic described by some victims is how, in pursuit of fulfilling an organisational mission, the basics of management become relegated to the margins in organisational culture and life, meaning that the level of competence to respond formally to bullying is weakened or diminished.

"Management training would be helpful as [the bully had] an extremely ineffective and inappropriate style of management from someone who ultimately doesn't have formal management experience. I think management training should always be prioritised for any organisation as the assumption is that as you move up in level, you will become a manager and that management skills aren't necessarily a requirement." [Online survey]

External regulation

A large number of victims' accounts referred to the relative weakness of the external regulatory framework as being highly problematic, with several describing the Charity Commission as a 'toothless tiger'. The absence of mechanisms within either the formal regulatory framework or the charity sector to which they could take their concerns with confidence was described by some victims as 'almost worse than the bullying'. This was particularly the case where bullying involved or implicated the chief executive or the board.

However, bullying is not always overt and does not always meet the formal definitions of serious malpractice. Some of the bullying behaviour experienced by victims lies at the margins of poor performance or involves covert, subversive behaviours like gaslighting which would fall below the threshold of the Charity Commission's remit.

Nonetheless, the trauma and damage caused by the wide range of bullying behaviours described by victims needs to be recognised, irrespective of the existing regulatory framework. Many victims spoke of the need for a responsive external body capable of holding charities to account for effectively tackling bullying and promoting best practice in relation to healthy workplace cultures.

"When we looked at reporting things to the Charity Commission, the whistleblowing policy seemed to focus on trustee behaviour that was illegal or fraudulent rather than anything on best practice. There need to be more mechanisms to report bullying outside of organisations e.g. some type of neutral ombudsman for the sector especially small charities with just a few staff." [Online survey]

"The charity sector is increasingly funded through taxpayer money by the state delivering regulated services to the public. It requires much more stringent regulation and inspection pertaining to the accountabilities and behaviour of trustees, particularly local charities, governance and accountability frameworks and fit and proper persons tests for chairmanship and fiduciary duties." [Online survey]

"The Charity Commission needs to look at the accountability of those at the top in small organisations, especially where founders are still in charge after a number of years. All the warning signs are there for authorities to track - high turnover of [longstanding] trustees [...] trustees staying in positions for longer than reasonable." [Online survey]

Other respondents pointed towards the need for charities to proactively address the issue of the health of their workplace culture, to support happier and more productive organisational environments:

"I think managers should be rewarded and recognised for having a happy team and being a good line manager as well as meeting targets - put it in their objectives; highlight good examples; provide a mechanism for checking that staff are getting the support they need before it becomes an issue." [Online survey]

"At minimum I think they need more robust structures and processes for dealing with behaviours, which includes a regular discussion at a senior level of the 'health' of the organisation and staff within it." [Online survey]

Conclusion

"There is a wider problem of bullying in the organisation which I think stems from a deeply rooted historic culture, a reputation within the sector, poor decision making at board level [...] which results in poor accountability. There is in fighting at SMT level which is in plain sight, there is little transparency about the health of the charity." [Online survey]

The accounts given to us show clear evidence of bullying and emotionally abusive behaviour occurring at all levels in organisations, including governance, senior management, middle management level, administrative and 'front-line' functions. From these accounts, what appears particularly notable is the extent to which bullying behaviour can take place in the open, known to many or to all, but in some way also kept out of mind across the organisation, and so not challenged. This gap can be just as emotionally damaging to the victim as the bullying behaviour itself. Here, the type of bullying reported does not only exist simply as a toxic interaction between perpetrators and victims (which is clearly in evidence) but is also facilitated and enabled by weaknesses or failures of organisational governance, leadership and management. And with little external accountability or support, it is left to charities to manage situations that can be extremely difficult and painful to resolve.

6. Bullying in charities: A review of research and literature

This section briefly summarises current research and literature about bullying in the workplace, including definitions and behaviours, its impact, possible causes and prevalence. It will then draw upon literature relating specifically to the charity sector to describe three observed organisational and cultural challenges which have the potential to influence the occurrence of bullying or emotionally abusive behaviour. Finally, it will draw upon evidence from the UK and internationally to identify a range of practical methods which charities can adopt to tackle bullying behaviour and promote healthier workplace cultures.

Workplace bullying research

Definitions and behaviours

Over recent years a growing body of research has been conducted into the subject of workplace bullying. Common brief definitions used both in the UK and internationally include:

- "The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online." (Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2019)
- "Persistent offensive, intimidating, humiliating behaviour, which attempts to undermine an individual or group." (Unison, 2013)
- "Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient." (Civil Service HR, 2018)
- "A form of abusive behaviour where an individual or a group of people, create an intimidating or humiliating work environment for another. This is with the purpose of harming their dignity, safety and well-being. This can make those subjected to it anxious, depressed and it might affect their family life too." (Bullying UK, 2019)

The term 'petty tyranny' also appears in workplace bullying referring to autocratic, high-handed and emotionally abusive behaviour carried out frequently by middle-ranking managers in organisations. Ashforth (1994) describes this behaviour existing as a vicious circle where the bully: 1) attributes subordinates' successes to themselves; 2) develops an inflated sense of self-worth; 3) prefers greater psychological distance from subordinates; and 4) views subordinates as objects to be manipulated. Kant *et al.* (2013) has also identified the expression of anger by managers combined with anxiety among subordinates as key signature dynamics for the display of 'petty tyranny' in the workplace (Kant, et.al. 2013).

From these definitions, it is clear that workplace bullying is complex and multi-faceted, involving a range of harmful or hurtful behaviours and methods, including the exercise of prejudice and discrimination, and targeted towards an individual or a group in the workplace. Herschcovis (2011) states that workplace bullying can be differentiated from other forms of incivility or social undermining by its frequency and persistence of occurrence, and an imbalance of power between victim and perpetrator. Further, Einarsen *et al.* (2003) characterise it as an "escalating process in the course of which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position and becomes the target of systematic negative social acts." (p.15)

Impact

Rayner and Hoel (1997) argue that bullying behaviour and victimisation can impact in particular circumstances upon any demographic or segment of the population. As in the "parallel arena" of racial or sexual discrimination or harassment, the experience of bullying is one which is of necessity defined by the victim such that "intent is not included as a component element for the harassment [or bullying] to have occurred" (p184).

Research indicates that the personal impact of bullying in the workplace upon victims is in most cases severe and debilitating. For example, a survey of the experiences of victims conducted by the UK charity Family Lives in 2015 identified very high levels of distress, with significant personal and family repercussions. Here, 74% of respondents stated that workplace bullying significantly affected their family life and close relationships, with anxiety greatly affecting their emotional health and wellbeing. Further, 44% sought medical advice or counselling because of the bullying, while 20% became signed off work with stress (Family Lives, 2015).

The experience of bullying in the workplace can also set in process further personal and professional repercussions. For example, Leymann (1990) describes how the experience of bullying at work can lead to a detrimental 'ripple effect' upon victims which can extend to other areas of personal life, including their work-life balance, reduced interpersonal communication skills, reduced social contact, reduced feelings of self-respect, poorer physical health, and in some cases a risk of suicide. Barron (2014) also describes how victims' negative experiences can be further compounded by toxic organisational and group processes and negative attribution. In such circumstances, it can be the victim of bullying (rather than the perpetrator) who becomes at risk of being stigmatised by colleagues on account of the distress they experience and express in the workplace.

Causes and precursors

Stresses and conflict linked to the experience of a role or task, the organisation of management systems and the particular nature of the wider organisational culture have been identified as potential precursors for workplace bullying. Einarssen *et al.* (1994) identify low levels of personal control or discretion around when or how work is conducted, combined with high levels of conflict between colleagues around individual roles as key stressors. Bestwick, Gore and Palferman (2008) further cite the presence of interpersonal and role conflict, the absence of effective leadership as well as underlying job or organisational uncertainty as key stressors. Chen *et al.* (2019) describe a correlation between higher exposure to workplace bullying in roles and occupations where working schedules are more irregular but whose activities involve a higher level of 'conflictual contact' with others.

Prevalence internationally and in other sectors

The prevalence of workplace bullying is a contended subject. Evaluating international data on the subject across Europe, Zapf *et al.* (2003) observes considerable variance, although concludes an approximate rate of 1-4%.

Estimating prevalence in UK workplaces, Hoel and Cooper (2000) state the following survey responses provided by employees in different organisations to the question of whether they were bullied, and if so, how frequently:

- No: 89.4%
- Yes – very rarely; or now and then: 8.1%
- Yes – several times a month; several times a week; or almost daily: 2.4%

Within the UK a number of employee surveys have also shown differing rates in relation to bullying. A poll of union members conducted on behalf of the Trades Union Congress (2015) stated 29% of respondents experienced bullying. Further, in a survey conducted during 2018 in the civil service about the experience of bullying, harassment and misconduct (Cabinet Office, 2018), 48% of respondents stated that across their career they had experienced bullying multiple times, 25% they had experienced bullying once, and 23% had not experienced bullying. Of those who responded yes to this question, 35% stated they had experienced bullying during the preceding year.

Another survey conducted by the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development cited disproportionately high levels of bullying amongst BAME and disabled respondents. 29% of Asian or black workers reported having experienced work-related bullying compared

with 18% of white employees, while 37% of disabled employees experienced one or more forms of bullying or harassment compared with 18% of non-disabled employees (cited by Unison, 2013).

Prevalence in the charity sector

It is important to note that curently no credible prevalence data exists for bullying in the England and Wales charity sector, and outside of this investigation, a limited number of small-scale research studies have taken place, limited by relatively small sample sizes and participant self-selection. For example, in a survey of staff from charities in an English city, Dawood (2013) states that 15% experienced bullying in the previous year and 28% in the preceding five years. Further, in a survey conducted by Third Sector in 2008 from an open sample of approximately 1,000 respondents representing 181 charities, 12% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement 'in the last year I have not been bullied at work' (Hurst and Attenborough, 2008).

Additionally, the Charity Commission has collated data (unpublished) around references to bullying behaviour (and associated terms) in serious incident reports since 2014/15. While not an indicator of the scale or prevalence of bullying in the sector, the Commission reports that from a total of 10,709 submissions over this timeframe, bullying behaviour appears evident in 2.1% of cases. The Charity Commission further reports an upward trend in the number of reports submitted annually, and of the percentage to which bullying behaviour applies, to just under 3% during year 2018/19 (Charity Commission, 2019). However, as with the other existing survey data, this cannot provide confirmatory data around actual prevalence of bullying behaviours in the charity sector.

Sector-specific organisational dynamics and cultural challenges

We now describe organisational dynamics and cultural challenges, evidenced from both literature and accounts of victims which appear to have the potential to influence the occurrence of bullying or emotionally abusive behaviour in charities. These are, in order: emotional over-investment in a charity's activity; the internal organisational impact of work with beneficiaries; and dysfunctional behaviours and cultures that lead to the weakening, loss or negation of charitable values.

Emotional over-investment in a charity's activity

In conducting interviews and reading the personal accounts of participants in the online survey, one thing which was universally evident was a very strong personal investment in both their work and the wider mission of the charity, something which frequently made personal experience of bullying behaviour even more distressing. Dartington (1998) describes how charities function healthily by enlisting "psychological ownership" of a wide range of stakeholders in the activity of an organisation, including beneficiaries, volunteers, staff, trustees, organisational partners and funders. However, this dynamic is observed to become problematic when personal over-investment in the work of a charity leads to "a confusion of person and role" particularly in circumstances of unequal power relations.

A particularly persistent form of emotional over-investment in the work of charities, described clearly by many research participants was that of 'founder's syndrome', where an originating member or members maintain enduring and at times dysfunctional influence. Conducting a survey of the behaviours of founders of non-profit organisations in the United States, Block and Rosenberg (2002) describe how, by holding onto perceived relative privilege over time, principles of effective governance can be loosened. Dartington (1996) further describes a particular organisational dynamic where the personal identity of the founder can in effect 'merge' with the organisation they have helped create, resulting in sometimes poor governance decisions in circumstances where "the founder has moral authority that is almost unchallengeable". Here clearly, risks exist in relation to bullying or emotionally abusive

behaviours becoming manifest, particularly for interactions with managers or other paid staff.

The internal organisational impact of work with beneficiaries

Many research participants described how the mission and work of their charity could carry an emotional burden which appeared in some way to present in their experience of bullying. For example, employees in housing, mental health and social care charities frequently described organisational cultures which appeared to be hostile or intolerant to the expression of personal vulnerability by staff, or which through routinely administered processes of 'structuring out' seemed content to sustain emotional distance from colleagues, or to make them 'homeless' through redundancy.

Similarly, staff working in advice, legal or human rights charities would describe experiencing authoritarian and oppressive workplace and management cultures where employment or personal rights could be felt to be held in contempt.

Allyn (2011) coins the term 'mirroring' to describe an organisational dynamic and type of conflict particular to the charity sector which takes place "when an organisation becomes enmeshed internally in the same conflicts it was founded to deal with externally." Unchecked, such conflicts run a risk of overwhelming the experience of work in an organisation, leading to an inward-looking culture which can "consume the energies of an organisation" and result in a range of negative or hostile behaviours, including emotional abuse and bullying, becoming normalised. Allyn further argues that organisational efforts to tackle problematic behaviours, for example by imposing punishments without seeking to acknowledge the underlying conflicts which they reflect, can serve to "perpetuate organisational dysfunction."

We argue from research participants' accounts, that the process of 'mirroring' is a frequent organisational dynamic accompanying bullying behaviour in charities. Here, it appears that organisations are not 'bad' at dealing with conflict in itself, but in the face of carrying out stressful and difficult work, can struggle to apply their competence in dealing with conflict experienced in its work with beneficiaries, to their own internal organisational culture and practices.

Dysfunctional behaviours and cultures that lead to the weakening, loss or negation of charitable values

A particularly challenging organisational dynamic described by research participants is when a bullying culture appears to become ingrained and repeat over time, even when identified bullies or victims leave an organisation. In such an environment where abusive mechanisms become established, a charity clearly can risk the weakening, loss or even negation of founding charitable values. Dartington (1996) describes such a scenario when a charity fails to address problematic dynamics and conflicts over time:

"In the worst case there is an implosion of values, so that the resources of the organisation instead of being directed at need in the external environment, are put to meet the needs of those in the organisation" (16).

Susan Long has identified five 'signature' dynamics of perverse process in organisations, which may be helpful in describing the kind of behaviours that can take place when organisational cultures become seriously dysfunctional (Long, 2004):

- Individual pleasure at the expense of another or at the common 'good'
- Simultaneous acknowledgement and denial of emotional reality, for example the 'turning of a blind eye' by individuals or within systems to wrongdoing or hurtful behaviour
- The engagement of accomplices to support or sustain the problematic behaviour
- Instrumental relationships, where people are treated as objects and so made able to be abused
- A repeating cycle of perverse organisational process.

In recording, analysing and evaluating the experiences of victims of bullying, we note how these dynamics closely interrelate with the 'organisational behaviours' outlined in chapter 5, namely:

- Bullying 'in plain sight' (instrumental relationships requiring the turning of a blind eye within an organisation)
- The victim being marginalised (requiring the engagement of accomplices)
- The bully being protected (requiring the engagement of accomplices)
- 'Bullying-out' (instrumental relationships and repeating processes)
- 'Structuring out' (instrumental relationships and repeating processes)

We argue that the unresolved emotional investment and conflict, the process of 'mirroring' and perverse organisational dynamics represent considerable risks to charity cultures. In the next section we outline ways in which charities can work practically to address these risks.

Approaches to tackling bullying in charities

Introduction

"Senior management responsible for the organization: the buck stops with you [...] You must actively manage petty tyranny and execute operational procedures and policies that protect the dignity and integrity of all" (Kant *et al.* 2013).

Here, we identify a number of approaches and practical measures that charities can adopt, either singly or in combination, to tackle bullying behaviour and improve workplace cultures. This includes emergent learning and policy from charities whose experience of responding to the evidence of internal bullying cultures have recently come to sectoral, public and political attention, and which have embarked upon extensive processes of internal reflection and external evaluation to improve their culture and practice.

The approaches we outline are: evaluating workplace culture; evaluating organisational partners; promoting workplace health and safety; promoting workplace mental health and wellbeing; and working better with conflict.

Evaluating workplace culture

One method that charities in the international sector have adopted is to allow their organisational culture and internal policies, systems and practices to be externally evaluated, and to commit to recommendations made. While this approach can represent the most exposing measure which could be taken, it also represents a means of transparently committing to cultural change, demonstrating openness to rebuilding trust with the public, partner organisations, potential funders, government and staff.

Following serious incidents involving the death by suicide of two members of staff, Amnesty International commissioned an independent evaluation of its organisational culture and staff wellbeing (Avula, McKay and Galland, 2019). This report identifies ways in which to repair ruptures and recreate a sense of security or trust; to address what was reported to be a culture of criticism and blame; to provide improved support to staff experiencing stress; to support managers to address and improve wellbeing across the organisation; and to review HR management processes to prioritise staff wellbeing and personal development.

As an additional example, in response to the scandal around the abuse of beneficiaries internationally, Oxfam instigated an 'Independent Commission on Sexual Misconduct, Accountability and Culture Change' to make recommendations to changes in practice and policy. An interim report has now been published (Independent Commission, 2019) with a final report expected imminently.

Evaluating organisational partners

Another means by which organisations can demonstrate their commitment to addressing bullying in the workplace, both internally

to staff, and externally to the public, and other organisations is to formally evaluate the workplace cultures of organisations they choose to partner with.

For example Cancer Research UK has introduced a 'Policy on Dignity at Work in Research', requiring all partners and recipients of funding to demonstrate that: the organisation has an effective workplace conduct policy; they disclose any formal disciplinary findings for bullying and harassment; and they provide notification of any formal investigations they conduct into CRUK staff (Cancer Research UK, 2019).

Promoting workplace health and safety

A credible and evidence-based method for tackling bullying behaviour at work is to address the possible environmental stressors which can give rise to workplace conflict. The Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards for Work Related Stress is informed by meta-analysis of international workplace bullying research conducted by Bestwick, Gore and Palferman (2006).

The Health and Safety Executive has developed a suite of resources to support organisations, managers and staff to create healthier workplaces by identifying and addressing potential stressors. These include a set of 'management standards' for classifying different areas where individuals or teams might experience stress and implementing organisational and environmental changes (HSE 2009) and a range of other resources, including an 'indicator tool' for evaluating the health of particular management styles (HSE, 2007).

Promoting workplace mental health and wellbeing

Associated with the workplace health and safety agenda is a wider movement to promote workplace mental health and wellbeing, and to challenge mental health stigma in the workplace.

This approach is widely adopted in policy and practice in Australia, for example via the 'Heads Up' programme (Heads Up, 2019). Additionally, research into workplace bullying co-commissioned by the Australian mental health organisation Beyond Blue places this centrally within a workplace wellbeing agenda arguing that in addition to implementing robust systems and processes to directly tackle instances of bullying there is a further need to "promote positive and psychologically healthy workplaces beyond merely the absence of bullying" (Magee *et al.*, 2014). As a parallel to anti-stigma campaigns in the United Kingdon, Beyond Blue further recommends starting a 'conversation' about the health of workplace culture, in a similar way to a conversation about mental health might be initiated.

The HSE Management Standards for Work Related Stress

- Demands: Workloads, work patterns and the work environment
- Control: How much say a person has in the way they do their work
- Support: The encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
- Relationships: Promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- Role: Whether people understand their role and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles
- Change: How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

The recent government commissioned independent review of mental health at work by Lord Stevenson and Paul Farmer, *Thriving at Work* (Stevenson and Farmer, 2017) set out a framework for employers of all types and sizes to use to promote staff wellbeing.

Additionally, in the UK there exist a number of workplace mental health accreditation programmes, as well as awareness and training initiatives which can be utilised by employers and staff to create healthier workplaces.

- Time to Change, the national campaign to end mental health discrimination operates a pledge scheme and an 'employer accelerator programme' supporting employers to create an environment where conversations about mental health are commonplace (Time to Change, 2017).
- The Workplace Wellbeing Index accreditation scheme operated by Mind which focuses upon accredited awards to Bronze, Silver and Gold standards (Mind, 2017).
- Mental Health First Aid is an educational course that teaches designated people within organisations how to identify, understand and help a person who may be developing a mental health issue (Mental Health First Aid, 2017).
- The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has produced detailed guidance for the provision of workplace health and wellbeing services (NIHCE, 2015).

Working better with conflict

The descriptions of bullying and associated organisational behaviours in this report do not only demonstrate damaging personal consequences for victims, they also show how unhappy and unproductive charity workplaces can be when power and authority are not properly held, and when conflict is not effectively negotiated. Allyn (2011) argues that while "mission-driven cultures are inherently conflictual" (768) there remains a tendency in the non-profit or charity sector to emotionally avoid 'difficult' discussions in the workplace. One consequence of this can be that conflicts associated with a charity's mission or point of contact with beneficiaries become replayed and magnified internally, which in turn can lead to further conflict, and the risk of bullying or emotionally abusive cultures becoming established.

In the independent evaluation of Amnesty International's workplace culture, Avula, McKay and Galland (2019) cite Allyn's concept of 'mirroring', where charities become enmeshed 'internally' with the conflicts they deal with 'externally' as being a key factor in the organisation's workplace culture. In order for it to respond better to this dynamic, they recommend the application of a method of organisational development called the 'deliberately developmental organisation' developed by Kegan and Lahey (2016). In this approach, a workplace culture where every employee has a voice and capacity to think about and learn from the experience of others, and from conflicts and mistakes, is openly encouraged through structured and facilitated work in groups.

7. Analysis and recommendations

Based upon the first-hand accounts of bullying behaviour described by victims, and relevant literature, here we present our analysis of how a bullying culture can become established in a charity. We then identify what we consider to be the steps and measures which should be taken at organisational, policy and sectoral levels to address bullying behaviour and help create healthier, happier and more productive workplaces that more positively reflect the values of charities.

How a bullying culture can become established in a charity

We have identified a number of sector-specific factors or dynamics which can combine to produce a bullying culture. This does not mean that all need to be present for bullying to occur, but rather what might contribute to or occur in a 'worst case' scenario.

There are two sector-specific factors:

- **Systemic stressors:** Factors which are intrinsic to the governance, organisational policies, procedures and practice and external regulation of charities
- **Cultural and relational stressors:** Organisational dynamics and behaviours linked to the management of conflict which can be experienced in the pursuit of a charity's mission.

These factors interrelate in the diagram below to provide a narrative of how bullying behaviour can originate and be sustained within charities:

How a bullying culture can become established in a charity

Sector-specific systemic stressors (1-6)

Our analysis of victims' accounts of bullying can be grouped under the following six types of stressors which appear particular to charitable organisations' culture.

1. Weaknesses in governance and senior leadership

Weaknesses (or failures) in individual charity governance represent a fundamental influencing factor in the occurrence of bullying behaviour in charities. This can happen in a number of different ways: for example where a trustee or trustees cross a boundary between governance and operational activity to actively bully staff themselves; where trustees or senior managers fail to apply due scrutiny to organisational policies, procedures and practice leading to bullying behaviour being unchecked; where senior leaders conceal information from trustees and trustees do not challenge; or where trustees or senior managers 'turn a blind eye' to known or visible instances of bullying behaviour.

Additionally, we notice from victims' accounts that bullying behaviour frequently appears to take place in situations where some form of unresolved conflict at board level persists over an extended period of time, weakening the focus of trustees and senior managers and providing 'oxygen' for conflict elsewhere in the organisation. Unresolved conflicts which some victims relate to their experience of bullying include scenarios where a founder or long-serving trustee refuses to retire or allow 'new blood' into a board; where there is ongoing conflict relating to the succession of a chief executive or senior manager; or where there is a historic failure to reconcile or integrate a charity's mission and values with business aims and objectives.

2. Weaknesses in organisational policies, procedures and practices

Victims have spoken with great force about how organisational policies, procedures and established behaviours (for example in line management and responding to complaints around misconduct) can serve to sustain bullying behaviour and protect the perpetrator.

This can be seen to take place in two contexts. For smaller charities, a lack of robust HR management procedures can result in bullying behaviour being inadequately tackled. Conversely, in larger charities, victims describe a failure of often extensive HR infrastructure to 'take their side'. Furthermore, there was a perceived misapplication of procedures to effectively protect the alleged perpetrator, for example by creating unwieldy reporting procedures that would deter a victim from using them, or in 'paying off' departing victims with an NDA, while allowing the cause of the bullying behaviour to remain unchallenged.

One further sector-specific dynamic described by some victims is how, in pursuit of fulfilling an organisational mission, the basics of management become relegated to the margins of organisational culture. This results in the mission trumping all else and managers' ability to respond effectively to bullying becoming side-lined or diminished.

3. A lack of information, skills and confidence within the charity workforce to identify and respond to bullying

Victims of bullying frequently identified being unaware of or lacking confidence in how to best progress their complaint within their organisation. They observed a similar lack of confidence within management and governance structures, accompanied by organisational incompetence or apparent unwillingness to investigate bullying.

Here, it is important to note that many participants in the research appeared unaware of recent policy developments affecting the sector, for example the *Charity Ethical Principles* (NCVO, 2019) and *Leading with Values* (ACEVO, 2018), which have implications for the way charities' governance and senior leadership respond to bullying behaviour.

4. Uncertainty among victims and charities about the regulatory framework and the specific remit of the Charity Commission in relation to bullying

Many victims, particularly those in senior leadership positions, reported finding the policy provided by the Charity Commission in relation to bullying to be unclear. Noting that 'bullying' is referred to in the Safeguarding guidance (Charity Commission, 2018), some victims described having invested great energy trying to make sense of guidance around serious wrongdoing and whistleblowing to seek redress, only to fail and feel further 'trapped'. The overriding frustration experienced by both victims and organisations was in relation to having nowhere to turn in order to find recourse.

5. The absence of any sector-wide initiative to respond to bullying or promote healthier workplace cultures

Outside of the recent *Leading with Values* and *Charity Ethical Principles* initiatives, it is clear that no sector-wide work is yet being conducted to provide guidance around addressing bullying behaviour or to create healthier workplace cultures. While positive initiatives undoubtedly exist as pockets of good practice, there is a need to increase awareness, share and promote learning and lead developments on behalf of the sector.

6. The absence of internal or external recourse for victims of bullying, or for concerned charity leaders

As a consequence of the factors already described, a common experience of victims is of feeling 'trapped' and having 'nowhere to go'. This lack of recourse can be seen to exist both internally, within their organisations, or externally either through the regulatory system provided by the Charity Commission, or within the wider charity sector. Where opportunities for information, advice or support do occur, these appear to take place through chance and good fortune rather than design.

Cultural and relational challenges in managing conflict (7-9)

Based upon the accounts of victims, as well as the wider literature, we describe three key cultural and relational factors linked to the management of conflict which can also influence bullying behaviour in charities.

7. Charities become preoccupied internally with the same kinds of conflict they deal with in their mission – 'mirroring'

One clear theme from the accounts of victims is of the very difficult nature of the work which charities undertake. This often involves high levels of emotional pressure, working with vulnerable or marginalised groups, often in a context of limited human or financial resource, as well as organisational instability and uncertainty. In such an environment, it is understandable that the experience in fulfilling a charitable mission 'externally' can find some manifestation 'internally' in an organisation's culture or 'way of doing things'. Allyn's concept of 'mission mirroring' (Allyn, 2011) describes how trust and respect can easily break down in this way within charity culture. It is not so much that charities are bad at dealing with conflict per se, but that they can struggle to apply their competence in dealing with conflict in their external environment to their own internal policies and practice.

8. Breakdown of trusting and respectful working relationships

One issue universally experienced by victims of bullying in charities is that of a failure of trust and respect between themselves and the perpetrator, which can also be repeated more widely within the organisation. Here, over-close and unhealthy team relationships, combined with carrying out difficult and stressful work against the backdrop of striving to fulfil the organisation's mission 'at all costs' appear to combine at times to create toxic interpersonal and organisational environments, where personal attacks can flourish. In this context individuals' and organisations' capacities to think constructively can become paralysed, leading to lack of positive action and bullying behaviour being swept under the carpet.

9. Failure to acknowledge or resolve internal conflict over time, leading to patterns of emotionally abusive behaviour becoming established within organisational culture

Victims report how bullying behaviour and the breakdown of respectful relationships in charities frequently extend beyond the individual level and become reflective of cultures, which repeat even after staff leave an organisation. When conflict is not dealt with appropriately and in a timely way, abusive behaviours may become normalised and play out internally in a range of organisational behaviours, including: bullying taking place 'in plain sight'; the victim being marginalised; the perpetrator being protected; the 'bullying out' of the victim, and the wider organisational and employment process of 'structuring out'. These repeating patterns can develop over years in some cases, resulting in established toxic organisational cultures that become difficult to challenge or dismantle.

Recommendations for addressing bullying behaviour in the charity sector

Having described what can happen when a bullying culture becomes established, we now identify elements for better practice and areas for positive change. These can enable the sector to better respond to bullying where it occurs, and also to create organisational cultures which may help to prevent such behaviour happening in the first place.

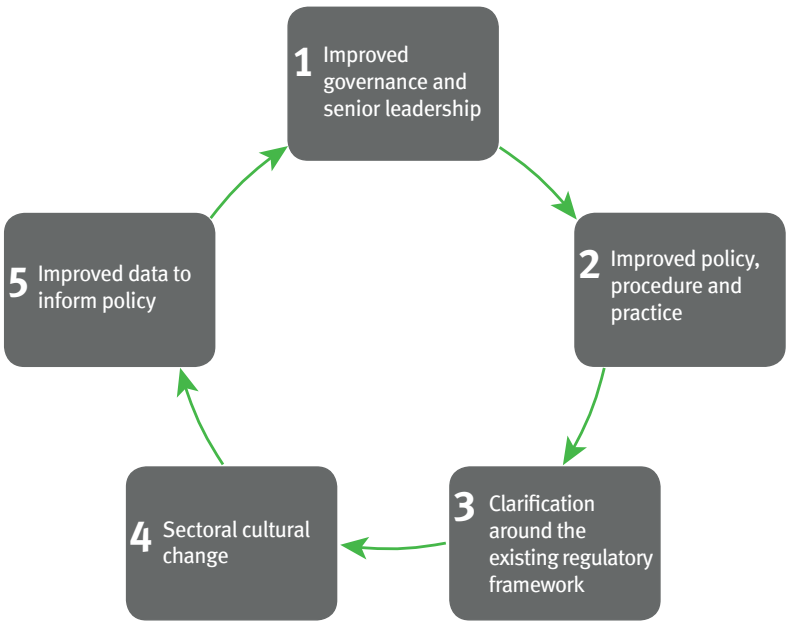
Recommendations are drawn from the experiences of victims, either in terms of directly stated opinions, or through inference of what policy, procedure or practice might have helped to address their experiences. The resultant 'model' is presented for charity leaders to explore how this might be developed and put into practice within the sector.

Through our analysis of how bullying or emotionally abusive cultures can become established in charities, we argue that sole reliance on a 'zero-tolerance' approach to individual wrongdoing may fail to address underlying sector-specific stressors which unchecked can render charities susceptible to bullying behaviour.

Therefore, in addition to strengthening governance and organisational policies, procedures and practices to respond decisively and robustly to instances of bullying, we argue that it is also necessary for the charity sector to adopt a preventative approach focusing upon improved health and safety, workplace wellbeing and the creation of healthier, happier, and more productive workplace cultures.

The diagram below identifies five interrelated areas for organisational and systemic change – or what 'better' would look like:

What would better look like?



Improved governance and senior leadership

In their accounts of bullying, victims uniformly stressed weaknesses and failures in governance and organisational leadership as being fundamental to their experience.

Recommendation one: While safeguarding, staff wellbeing and workplace culture remain the collective responsibility of boards, chief executives and senior leadership teams, charities should nominate at least one trustee and one senior manager to lead on staff workplace wellbeing. These individuals, (within the oversight of the board) should be responsible for leading work to:

- Monitor and evaluate the mental health and wellbeing of staff and volunteers, and of the workplace culture.
- Evaluate the organisational response to areas of concern around bullying and emotionally abusive behaviour, including changes around policies, procedures, practice and governance.

Improved policy, procedure and practice

In addition to issues around governance and leadership, victims of bullying have consistently identified weaknesses around organisational policies and procedures and practice as contributing to or exacerbating their experiences. As charities hold both a moral and a legal duty of care for their workforce, we identify the following essential elements of improved practice:

Recommendation two: Policies, procedures and practices should reflect charities' commitment to promoting safe cultures and fostering good relations, and be reviewed to ensure that they:

- Provide an unequivocal message about what behaviours are unacceptable from both staff and volunteers, and trustees;
- Demonstrate a transparent process for investigation, whoever the alleged perpetrator;
- Are flexible in terms of how a victim or witness of bullying can report their experience;
- Include effective measures to protect and support the victim;
- Contain provisions for all reports of bullying to be monitored at Board level;
- Ensure compliance with current policy and practice regulations and guidance – for example relating to the reporting of serious wrongdoing (Charity Commission, 2018), safeguarding (Charity Commission, 2018b), whistleblowing (Charity Commission, 2019), the Charity Governance Code, Leading with Values (ACEVO, 2018) and Charity Ethical Principles (NCVO, 2019).

Recommendation three: Non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) issued as part of employment settlements to victims of bullying can have a detrimental impact on both mental wellbeing and emotional recovery, as well as impede organisational learning and cultural change. NDAs should never be issued so as to restrict a victim of bullying from disclosing traumatic experience in a therapeutic setting.

Clarification around the existing regulatory framework

Both victims of bullying and charity leaders have repeatedly told us they feel there is no recourse outside of their organisation if things have gone wrong and bullying cannot be dealt with internally. Clarity is needed around the precise role of the Charity Commission in relation to bullying and what other mechanisms might exist if this proves to fall outside of their remit.

Recommendation four: The Charity Commission should clarify how existing regulations and guidance, including those around whistleblowing and safeguarding and the reporting of serious incidents, should be understood and used by victims of bullying in charities and by charity leaders in relation to workplace bullying. The Commission should help victims understand its own thresholds for reporting bullying incidents including what is in or out of the Charity Commission's scope.

A programme of sectoral cultural change

Participants in both the online survey and interviews have directly located responsibility for their experience of bullying not just upon a perpetrator, but upon a number of organisational behaviours and systemic factors particular to the charity sector. We therefore argue the case not just for organisational change but also for wider sectoral cultural change.

Recommendation five:

Charity leaders should come together to initiate a sector-wide 'discussion' about bullying and workplace culture. They should also identify how current sectoral guidance (including The Charity Governance Code (Charity Governance Code Steering Group, 2017), Leading with Values (ACEVO, 2018) and Charity Ethical Principles (NCVO, 2019)) can be applied in order to frame a programme of collective sectoral action to address bullying behaviour and promote healthier, happier and more productive workplace cultures.

Suggested key elements for inclusion in such a programme are listed in the table below:

Table: key elements of a sectoral cultural change programme

1. A message for victims of bullying and to the wider charity sector A message for people who may be experiencing bullying behaviour in charities, and to the wider sector, validating the experience of victims, explaining why bullying and emotional abuse is unacceptable, and what is being done to help create healthier workplace cultures in charities.
2. A timeframe for activity A clear timeframe for activity and implementation, with stated aims and objectives.
3. Communications and awareness raising Awareness raising for patrons, trustees, senior managers and staff around the regulatory framework as it applies to bullying, workplace culture, charity ethics, the correct reporting mechanisms for safeguarding and whistleblowing and ensuring the upholding of provisions within the Equality Act (2010).
4. Collaboration between charities Mechanisms for charities to work collaboratively to improve workplace cultures, for example by sharing expertise around governance and operational processes; identifying better practice and the 'benchmarking' of performance.
5. Infrastructure support for smaller charities Mechanisms for smaller charities to share HR management functions with other like-sized or larger charities.
6. Shared methodologies for evaluating workplace culture Tools for evaluating the health of workplace cultures, containing indicators and metrics around organisational governance, staff satisfaction, equalities requirements and other data which can be shared transparently with funders, partner organisations and other stakeholders. An established methodology which could be considered as a starting point is the HSE Management Standards for Work Related Stress.

7. Learning opportunities

Creating opportunities for charities to learn from the direct experience of organisations which have been forced to examine their own workplace culture following the exposure of bullying, and consider the implications for governance, systems, processes and workforce development.

Creating learning opportunities for charities to develop practice based upon the expertise and insights of charities and other organisations specialising in addressing workplace bullying.

8. Training for charity leaders

Targeted training for trustees and senior managers in relation to their roles and responsibilities around addressing bullying behaviour and promoting healthier workplace cultures.

9. Other training

Creating sector-specific information and resources around managing relationships better within charity culture, for example:

- How to initiate and sustain whole-organisation discussion around workplace culture
- Managing conflict effectively within boards and senior leadership teams
- Best practice resources for charity employees for identifying potentially problematic behaviours and how to respond.
- How to hold a 'difficult conversation' with colleagues, managing conflict, de-escalation techniques, and managing physical presence.

Improved data to inform policy

In conducting this research, it is clear that only very limited data around charity workplace cultures currently exists. Further work is therefore required to evidence the experience that people have working in charities, including bullying, as well as surfacing 'silent' voices within the sector, for example from marginalised groups and communities.

Recommendation six:

We recommend that charity leaders come together to explore how data might be effectively collected in the following fields:

- The wider experience of staff of charity workplace cultures, including a prevalence study for bullying and emotionally abusive behaviour across the charity sector in England and Wales, including sub-sectors.
- The particular experiences of employees with 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act (2010) - in particular the experiences of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people, of charity sector workplace cultures, and of discrimination.
- The particular experience of junior level staff and career entrants of charity sector workplace cultures.

8. Conclusion

In this report, we have presented the detailed experiences of victims of bullying and emotional abuse in the charity sector, to better understand the conditions in which it can occur, and describe practical steps which charities can take to tackle poor behaviour and create healthier workplaces. We are profoundly grateful for the contributions of those who participated.

Charities undertake vital work in society, but this can also at times be difficult or stressful for staff, and present risks for organisations. Our research shows the necessity for strong governance and organisational leadership, coupled with effective policies, procedures and practices to make sure that these intrinsic challenges, particularly around the expression and management of conflict, can be better understood and negotiated where they occur.

In our analysis we have presented a range of practical recommendations and measures which individual charities can adopt to help tackle bullying behaviour and to improve workplace cultures. We hope that these will also provide a foundation for longer-term activity involving volunteers, staff, managers, charity leaders and other stakeholders. The objective should be to create safer, healthier, happier and more productive organisational cultures for all who work in the charity sector.

References

ACEVO (2018) *Leading With Values: Creating A Safe Organisational Culture*. London: ACEVO [online] https://www.acevo.org.uk/leading-values-safe-organisational-culture [Accessed 28 May 2019]

ACEVO (2019) *Pay and Equalities Survey 2019*. London: ACEVO [online] https://www.acevo.org.uk/publications/pay-and-equalities-survey-2019 [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Allyn, D. (2011) Mission Mirroring: Understanding Conflict in Nonprofit Organisations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* **40**(4) 762-769

Anti-Bullying Alliance (2019) *The ABA Definition of Bullying* [Online] www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/what-bullying/aba-definition-bullying [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Ashforth, B. (1994) Petty Tyranny in Organizations. *Human Relations* **47**(7) 755-778

Avula K, McKay L, Galland S (2019) *Amnesty International: Staff Wellbeing Review*. Washington DC: Kon Terra [Online] https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ORG6097632019ENGLISH.PDF [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Barron, R.A. (2014) 'Attributions and organizational conflict' in Graham, S. and Volkes, V. (Eds.) *Attribution Theory: Applications to Achievement, Mental Health an Interpersonal Conflict*. New York: Psychology Press

Bestwick, J., Gore, J. and Palferman, D. (2006) *Bullying at work: A review of the literature*. Buxton: Health and Safety Laboratory

Block, R. and Rosenberg, S. (2002) Toward an understanding of founder's syndrome: An assessment of power and privilege among founders of nonprofit organizations. *Nonprofit management and leadership* **12**(4) 353-368

Bond (2018) *Our commitment to change in safeguarding*. London: Bond [Online] https://www.bond.org.uk/resources/our-commitment-to-change-in-safeguarding [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Bullying UK (2019) [online] Available from: https://www.bullying.co.uk/bullying-at-work/bullying-at-work/ [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Cabinet Office (2018) *Bullying, Harassment and Misconduct Survey*. London: Cabinet Office [Online] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741220/2018-07-20_Sue_Owen_Review_-_Annex_Survey.pdf [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Cancer Research UK (2019) *Policy on Dignity at Work in Research* [Online] https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/funding-for-researchers/applying-for-funding/policies-that-affect-your-grant/policy-on-dignity-at-work-in-research [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Charity Commission (2018a) *Safeguarding and Protecting People for Charities and Trustees* [Online] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Charity Commission (2019) [unpublished] *Bullying Research – March 2019*. London: Charity Commission

Charity Commission (2019) *Whistleblowing for employees* [Online] https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing/who-to-tell-what-to-expect [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Charity Governance Code Steering Group (2017) *Charity Governance Code* [Online] https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en/pdf [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Civil Service HR (2018) *Review of Arrangements for Tackling Bullying, Harassment and Misconduct in the Civil Service*. London: HM Civil Service [Online] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bullying-harassment-and-misconduct-review [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Dartington, T. (1996) Leadership and management: Oedipal struggles in voluntary organizations. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal* **17**(6) 12-16

Dartington, T. (1998) Primary task and the not for profit organisation. *Human Relations* **51**(12) 1477-1493

Dawood, S. (2013) Prevalence and forms of workplace bullying in the voluntary sector: is there a need for concern? *Voluntary Sector Review*; March **4**(1) 55-76

DCMS (2019) *DCMS Press release 21 March 2019: New funding will ensure all charities can access safeguarding training to build safe and strong civil society* [online] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-funding-will-ensure-all-charities-can-access-safeguarding-training-to-build-safe-and-strong-civil-society [Accessed 28 May 2019]

DFID (2018) *DFID Enhanced Due Diligence: Safeguarding For External Partners*. London: DFID [Online] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-enhanced-due-diligence-safeguarding-for-external-partners [Accessed 28 May 2019]

DFID (2019) *DFID press release 05 March 2019: Safeguarding Summit: Statements by the International Development Secretary and DFID's Permanent Secretary* [Online] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/safeguarding-summit-statements-by-the-international-development-secretary-and-dfids-permanent-secretary [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D. and Cooper, C. (2003) (p15) *Bullying and Emotional Abuse in the Workplace: International perspectives in research and practice*. London: Taylor and Francis

Einarssen, S., Rankes, B., Matthiesen, S. (1994) Bullying and its relationship to work and environment quality: An exploratory study. *European Work and Organisational Psychologist* **4** 381-401

Family Lives (2015) *Extended News Release: Bullying in The Workplace: 12 January 2015* [Online] https://www.familylives.org.uk/about/press/family-lives-extended-news-release-bullying-in-the-workplace/ [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Hamilton, P. (2015) *Gas Light*. London: Samuel French Limited

Heads Up (2019) *Workplace Bullying* [Online] https://www.headsup.org.au/healthy-workplaces/workplace-bullying [Accessed 29 May 2019]

Health and Safety Executive (2007) *HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool* [online] http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/assets/docs/indicatortool.pdf [accessed 29 May 2019]

Health and Safety Executive (2009) *How to Tackle Work Related Stress: A Guide for Employers on Making the Management Standards Work*. Sudbury: Health and Safety Executive [online] http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg430.pdf [accessed 29 May 2019]

Hershcovis, M (2011). "Incivility, social undermining, bullying . . . oh my!": A call to reconcile constructs within workplace aggression research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, **32**, 499–51

HM Government Intellectual Property Office 2019 [online] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-disclosure-agreements/non-disclosure-agreements [accessed 28 May 2019]

Hoel, H. and Cooper, C. (2000) *Destructive conflict and bullying at work*. Manchester: Manchester School of Management

Hurst, F. and Attenborough, S. (2008) *The Impact of Bullying in the Voluntary Sector: Insights from the Charity Pulse 2008 Staff Satisfaction Survey*. Hatfield: Birdsong/Third Sector

Independent Commission on Sexual Misconduct, Accountability and Culture Change (2019) Interim report

Kant, L., Skogstad, A., Torsheim, T., Einarsen, S. (2013) Beware the angry leader: Trait anger and trait anxiety as predictors of petty tyranny. *The Leadership Quarterly* **24** (2013)

Kegan, R. and Lahey, L. (2016) *An Everyone Culture: Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organisation*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press

Leymann, H. (1990) Mobbing and psychological terror in workplaces. *Violence and Victims* **5**(2) 119-126

Li, Y., Chen, P., Tuckey, S., McClinton, S., Dollard, F. (2019) Prevention Through Job Design: Identifying High-Risk Job Characteristics Associated with Workplace Bullying. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* **24**(2) 297-306

Long, S. (2004) *The Perverse Organisation and its Deadly Sins*. London: Karnac

Magee, C., Gordon, R., Caputi, P., Oades, L., Reis, S. and Robinson, L. (2014) *Workplace Bullying in Australia.* Centre for Health Initiatives/Beyond Blue/University of Wollogong [online] https://www.headsup.org.au/docs/default-source/resources/workplace-bullying-in-australia-final-report.pdf?sfvrsn=2 [accessed 29 May 2019]

Mental Health First Aid England (2019) [online] Available at: https://mhfaengland.org/ [accessed 29 May 2019]

Mind (2019) *Workplace Wellbeing Index: Our benchmark for best policy and practice* [online]: Available at https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/workplace-wellbeing-index/ [accessed 29 May 2019]

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2015) *Workplace health management practices*. London: NICE

NCVO (2019) *Charity Ethical Principles*. London: NCVO [online] https://www.ncvo.org.uk/2-content/2472-charity-ethical-principles [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Protect (2019) 'We provide confidential advice for individuals who have witnessed wrongdoing in their workplace but are unsure how to raise their concerns' [online] https://www.pcaw.org.uk/ [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Rayner, C. and Hoel, H. (1997) A Summary Review of Literature Relating to Workplace Bullying. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* **7** 181-191

Stevenson, D. and Farmer, P. (2017) *Thriving at work: The Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers* [Online] Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/658145/thriving-at-work-stevenson-farmer-review.pdf [Accessed 6 June 2019]

Time to Change (2019) *Bring Time to Change to Your Workplace* [online] Available at: https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved/get-your-workplace-involved [accessed 29 May 2019]

Trades Union Congress (2019) *TUC Bullying At Work: Guidance for Workplace Representatives* [Online] https://www.tuc.org.uk/resource/bullying-work [Accessed 28 May 2019]

Unison (2013) *Tackling bullying at work: A Unison guide for safety reps*. London: Unison [online] https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2013/07/On-line-Catalogue216953.pdf [accessed 28 May 2019]

Zapf, D., Einarsen, S., Hoel, H. and Vartia, M. (2003) 'Empirical findings on bullying in the workplace', in Einarsen et. al., (2003) Ibid

Resources

The following resources represent freely available sources of information, advice and support about the subject of workplace bullying and charity culture.

- Leading with Values: Creating a Safe Organisational Culture - A report from ACEVO highlighting key elements of leadership for the Charity Sector for addressing unacceptable, abusive or bullying behaviour
- The Charity Commission's work to prevent wrongdoing and harm in charities
- The Anti-Bullying Alliance Umbrella group providing resources for bullying in both school and adult settings
- Information and resources from the Tim Field Foundation about workplace bullying
- ACAS Information and advice on employment rights and bullying at work.
- Equality and Human Rights Commission information relating to rights and dignity at work
- TUC online Support, advice for anyone being bullied at work
- Protect (Formerly Public Concern at Work) Independent authority and advice line on whistle blowing.
- Information about safety in the workplace, with links to articles covering bullying, discrimination and employment law.
- Information and support around the subject of workplace bullying from Bullying UK/ Family Lives
- The Samaritans - or telephone 116 123.

In plain sight

Published June 2019
Photograph: istock.com/bernardbodo

£10 where sold

Centre for Mental Health is an independent charity and relies on donations to carry out further life-changing research. Support our work here: www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk

Centre for Mental Health

Centre for Mental Health

Office 2D21, South Bank Technopark,

90 London Road, London SE1 6LN

Tel 020 3927 2924

www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk

Follow us on social media: @CentreforMH

Charity registration no. 1091156. A company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales no. 4373019.