

No: 634/17

20<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**TO: ALL BRANCHES**

Dear Colleague

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE**

The issue of sexual harassment in the workplace has been headline news for several weeks and allegations ranging from inappropriate behaviour to rape have been levelled at celebrities and some MPs working in Westminster.

In response to these developments the CWU recognises that sexual harassment is not confined to Westminster and can be a significant issue in workplaces.

To reinforce this point we are publishing to Branches a major TUC survey and report undertaken in 2016 entitled "Still Just a Bit of Banter?" (Sexual Harassment in the Workplace 2016) copy attached. The Report focused on the treatment of women in the modern workplace and the key findings were as follows:-

- More than half (52 per cent) of all women polled have experienced some form of sexual harassment.
- Nearly two thirds of young women (age 18-24) have experienced some form of sexual harassment.
- 32 per cent of women have been subject to unwelcome jokes of a sexual nature.
- 28 per cent of women have been subject to comments of a sexual nature about their body or clothes.
- Nearly one quarter of women have experienced unwanted touching (such as a hand on the knee or lower back).
- One fifth of women have experienced unwanted sexual advances.
- More than one in ten women reported experiencing unwanted sexual touching or attempts to kiss them.
- In the vast majority of cases, the perpetrator was a male colleague, with nearly one in five reporting that their direct manager or someone else with direct authority over them was the perpetrator.
- Four out of five women did not report the sexual harassment to their employer.
- Crucially for trade unions, only 1 per cent of those polled who had experienced sexual harassment reported it to their union.

At a meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017, the TUC Executive Committee discussed a further document which included a commitment to undertake training for trade union representatives via 7 one day workshops that will take place between November 2017 and January 2018. These are in the following areas:

- Glasgow, 22<sup>nd</sup> November
- Newcastle, 1<sup>st</sup> December
- Liverpool, 14<sup>th</sup> December
- Birmingham, 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018
- London, 11<sup>th</sup> January
- Cardiff, 15<sup>th</sup> January
- Bristol, 16<sup>th</sup> January

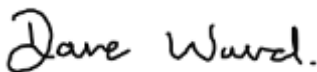
We are encouraging our Branch Secretaries to attend these seminars or send an appropriate representative on behalf of the Branch. If you contact Linda Roy Assistant Secretary at CWU Headquarters more details will be provided.

In light of these developments the union will now review our own approach to tackling sexual harassment in the workplace, including support for representatives in dealing with cases with the employer and consideration of whether the issue of sexual harassment is adequately covered in our own Rule Book and internal procedures as both an employer and as a trade union organisation. These matters will be fully discussed at the NEC meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

In the meantime, we would ask all Branch Secretaries to share the TUC Report and along with this LTB bring these to attention of all CWU Representatives. We must be clear that sexual harassment in any shape or form is completely unacceptable and that we all have a role to play in making workplaces safe and inclusive for all workers.

Any enquiries relating to the TUC Report should be addressed to General Secretaries Office [gsoffice@cwu.org](mailto:gsoffice@cwu.org), any enquires on CWU policy and the TUC Seminars to the Equality Department [lroy@cwu.org](mailto:lroy@cwu.org).

Yours sincerely



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**General Secretary**



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