



BRITISH AIRWAYS

The world's favourite airline?

A Unite
the union
survey into
bullying at BA



Unite
the union
January 2011

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Selected quotes from respondents highlight the pressure faced by BA employees:

"They have divided the workforce and began a massive campaign to bully, intimidate and harass us cabin crew. They are continually belittling us as a workforce."

"There's a culture of bullying that is coming from top management down."

"The working environment is the worst I've experienced in 22 years."

"Bombardment with emails by management telling me how I'll be punished if I take strike action."

"Threats started before we took lawful industrial action and have continued to this day. If I so much as look at someone in the wrong way I am suspended."

"I've feel bullied by the way BA are suspending and sacking my colleagues in great numbers."

Quotes from a survey of 1,905 British Airways employees

Unite
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Posed by a model

BRITISH AIRWAYS

Introduction

Shock results confirm culture of bullying is rife at British Airways

Unite is calling on BA's senior management to sit down with union representatives and turn around the endemic bullying culture that has taken hold at what used to be called the world's favourite airline.

Unite joint general secretary Tony Woodley said: ***"This survey shows that the company's macho management has pitched colleagues against one another."***

"BA's management needs to do a corporate U-turn and sit down with Unite representatives to address this bullying epidemic."

"The message of this survey to chief executive Willie Walsh and the BA board is your war on your workforce is ruining this once great airline. Your conduct is making it dysfunctional; but you have the power to end this misery and restore this airline to the place of public affection it once deserved."

This survey exposes British Airways as *Brutish Airways*, it's time to bring back the world's favourite airline and banish the bullying culture for good.

Key findings

The main findings of the survey show:

- Almost one in every two workers at British Airways has been bullied
- More than 72 per cent of staff had either been bullied or witnessed bullying at work
- Over 50 per cent of staff said they had been bullied by higher managers and 29 per cent said they had been bullied by their line manager
- Intimidation, unfair criticism and humiliation were cited as the top three forms of bullying
- Almost two thirds say the bullying has got worse since it started
- More than 90 per cent of employees are aware of company policies relating to bullying and harassment
- But over six out of ten people (64.7 per cent) did not report the bullying with many saying they saw no point due to the company's/management approach
- 37.4 per cent of respondents did report the bullying, but of those two thirds said no action was then taken by the company
- Over 85 per cent of cases of bullying involved more than one person doing the bullying
- More than three quarters of respondents said that they knew of more than four colleagues that had also been subject to bullying
- Almost two thirds of respondents said that they had also been abused by passengers, and 9 per cent had been physically abused by passengers

Methodology

As part of a survey into working conditions at British Airways Unite emailed 11,055 employees of the airline in late November/early December 2010. They were asked to respond to a survey that featured 32 questions, approximately half of which specifically related to bullying.

A total of 1,905 responses (17 per cent) were received by the time the survey closed, respondents were also able to provide comments as well as direct answers to the survey questions.

The survey covered staff across BA's sites, with the vast majority (98.6 per cent) employed at the company's Heathrow hub. The survey received responses from both new and long standing BA employees, there was an almost even split by gender (51.3 per cent of respondents were male) and the vast majority (98.6 per cent) were also Unite members, highlighting the high level of union density at the airline.

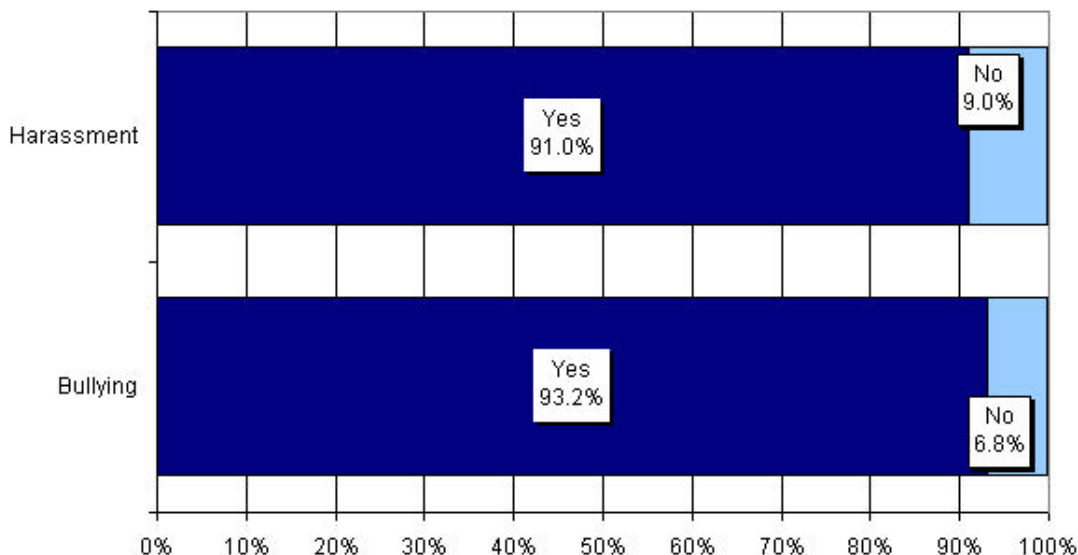
Main findings

The following section contains the main findings and an outline analysis from the results of the survey into bullying at BA.

Company policy

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of the company's policies relating to bullying and harassment?

Are you aware of company policies relating to bullying and harassment?

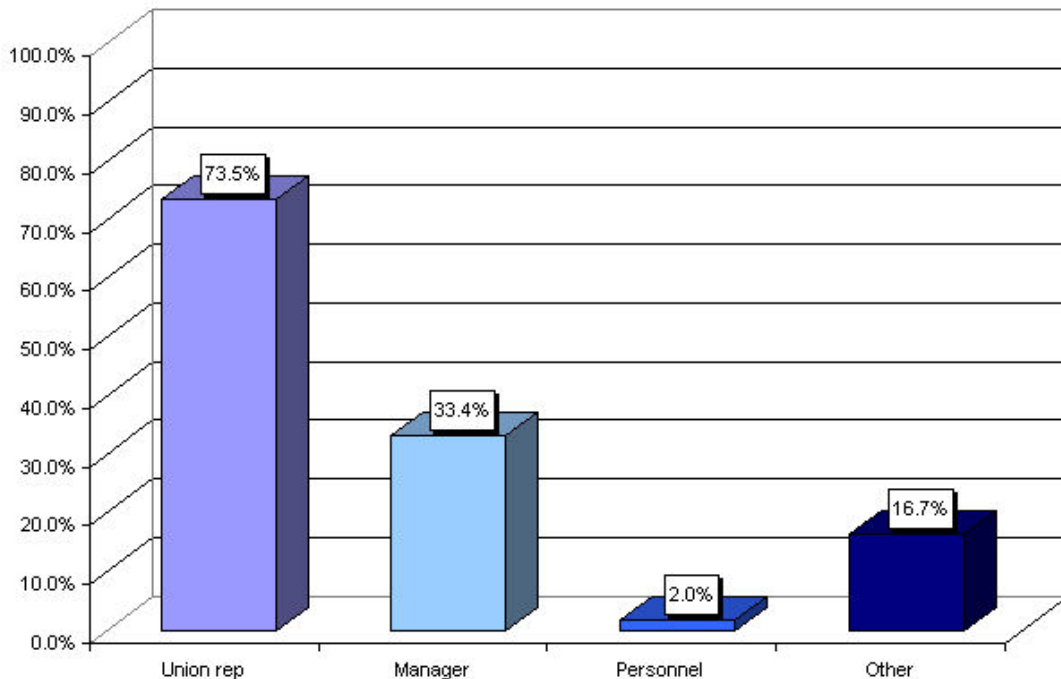


There is a high awareness of British Airways' policies among the company's employees; more than 93 per cent claim to be aware of the policy towards bullying and 91.0 per cent with regards to harassment.

Reporting bullying

Respondents were asked whom they would approach if they were concerned about an incident of bullying. Respondents could give more than one answer.

Who would you approach if you were concerned about an incident of bullying?

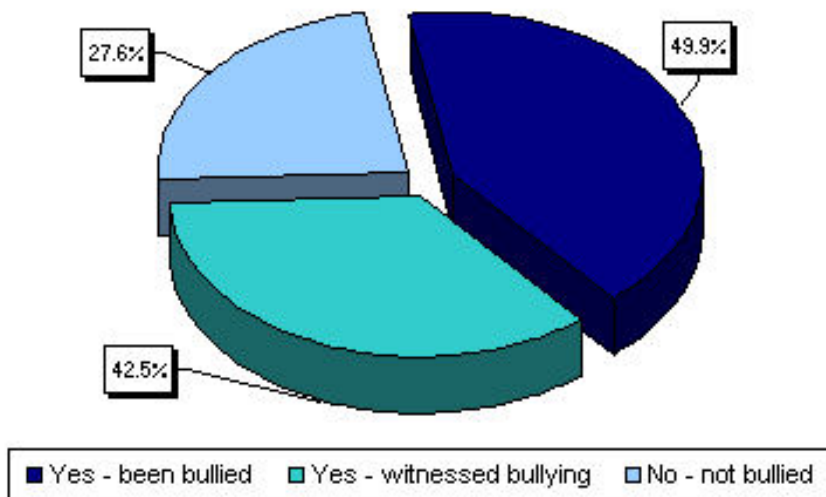


Just over a third said they would report an incident to their manager, just two per cent trusted BA’s personnel, while almost three quarters (73.5 per cent) would report an incident to their union rep. A number of respondents stated that they were too scared to report incidents of bullying and there were also concerns that due to the large number of union reps that had been suspended some BA staff felt they had no one to whom they could report incidents.

Have been bullied

Respondents were asked whether they had been bullied or witnessed bullying at work? Respondents were able to provide more than one answer.

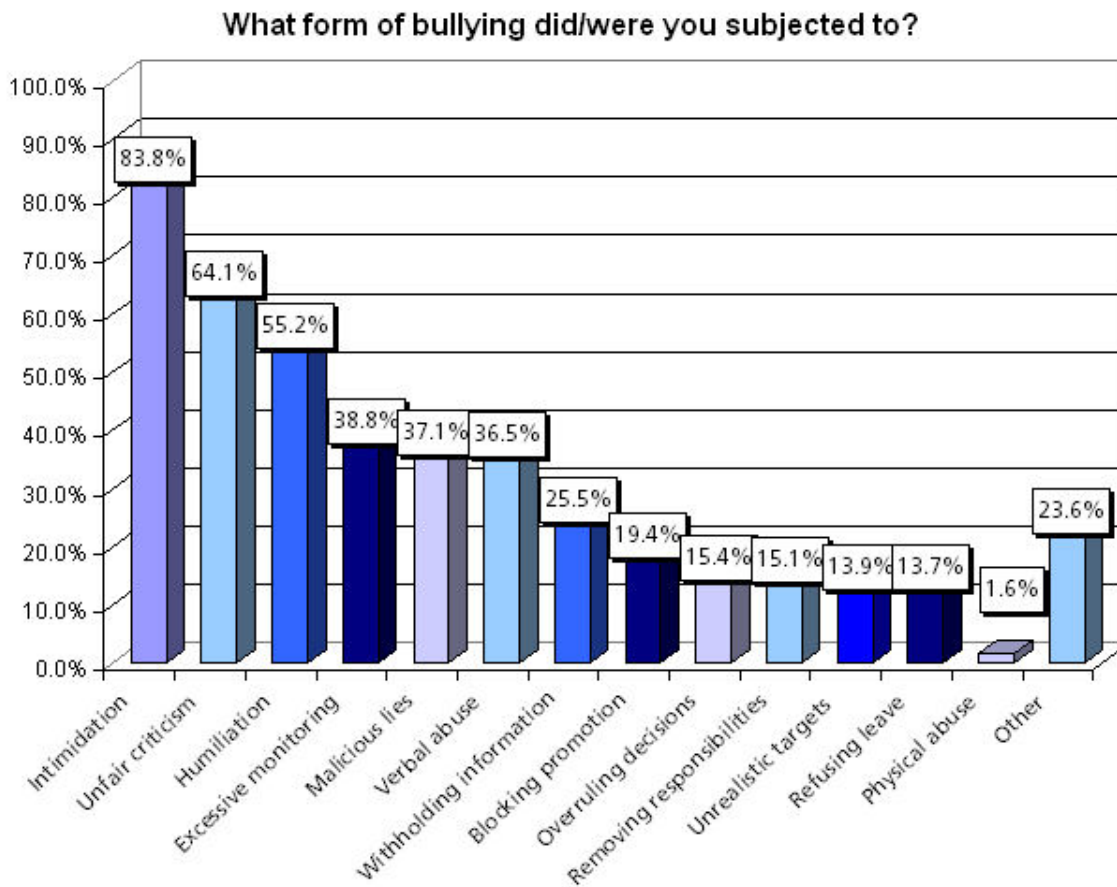
Have you been bullied or witnessed bullying at work?



Almost three quarters of people (72.4 per cent) had either been bullied or witnessed bullying at work, and almost one in two of workers (49.9 per cent) had been the subject of bullying themselves.

Form of bullying

Respondents were asked what form of bullying they were subjected to, and given a list of thirteen choices plus others. Respondents were able to provide more than one answer.



The single most common form of bullying was intimidation; 83.8 per cent of respondents said they had faced that type of bullying.

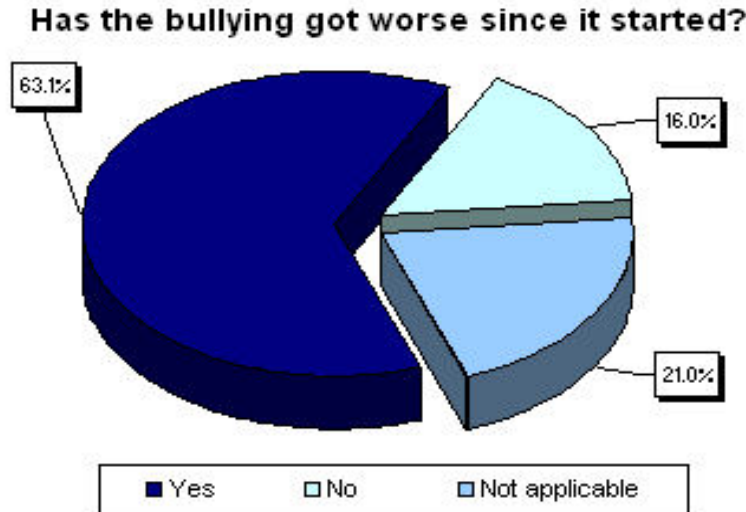
Unfair criticism was cited by almost two thirds of respondents (64.1 per cent) and humiliation was the third most common form of bullying reported by 55.2 per cent of respondents.

Over a third of respondents had faced verbal abuse (36.5 per cent), almost one fifth (19.5 per cent) felt that future opportunities at the airline were restricted as they felt chances for promotion were blocked and just under a sixth (13.7 per cent) said they were refused leave.

All forms of bullying listed in the survey were cited by respondents ranging from verbal abuse to selected cases of physical abuse (1.6 per cent of respondents).

Has bullying got worse?

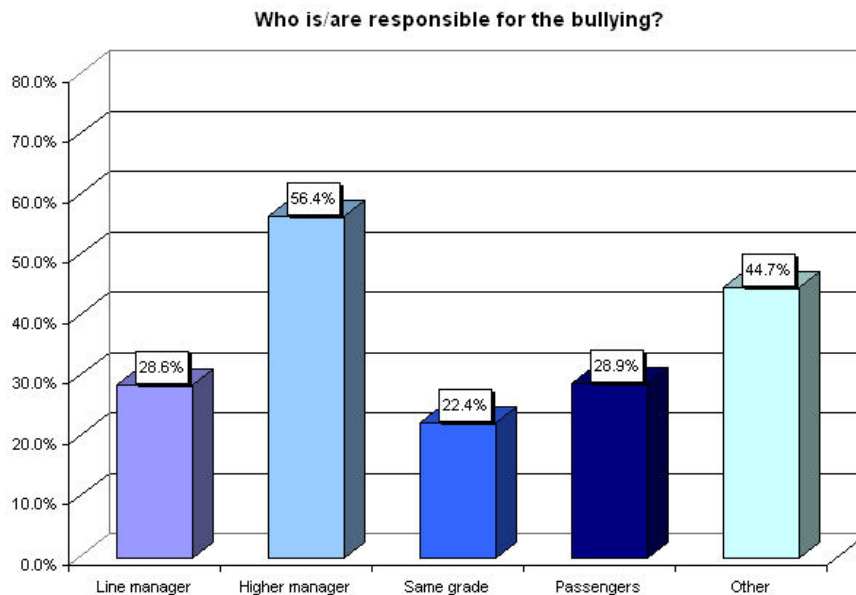
Respondents were asked if bullying had got worse since it started.



Just over one in five answered that this question was not applicable, implying that the bullying may have been a one off event. However of the remaining 79 per cent that answered the question directly 79.9 per cent said that the bullying had worsened since it started.

The bullies

Respondents were asked who was responsible for the bullying? They were able to provide more than one answer.

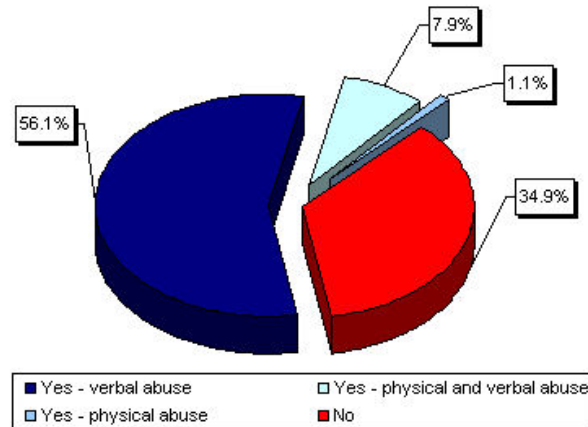


The results show that in more than half of all cases (56.4 per cent) higher managers were cited as being responsible for the bullying. There was also a high level of intimidation from passengers (28.9 per cent) while over one in five were bullied by workers on the same grade.

Others - cited in 44.7 per cent of cases - included lower grades, flight crew, the public, some of the media and the senior management team.

Respondents were also asked if they had been subjected to bullying from passengers and given a choice of four options. They were able to provide only one answer.

Have you been subjected to bullying or physical abuse by passengers?

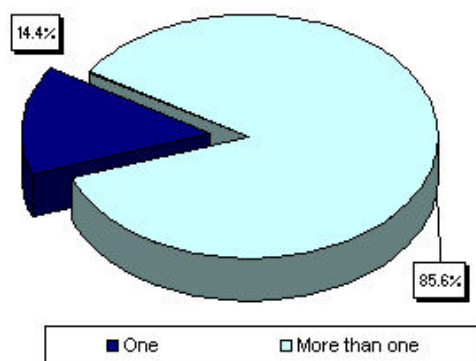


The chart shows that over half of respondents had received verbal abuse from passengers, and worryingly 9.0 per cent of respondents had faced physical abuse.

How many bullies?

Respondents were also asked how many people were responsible for the bullying? They were able to provide only one answer.

How many people are doing the bullying?

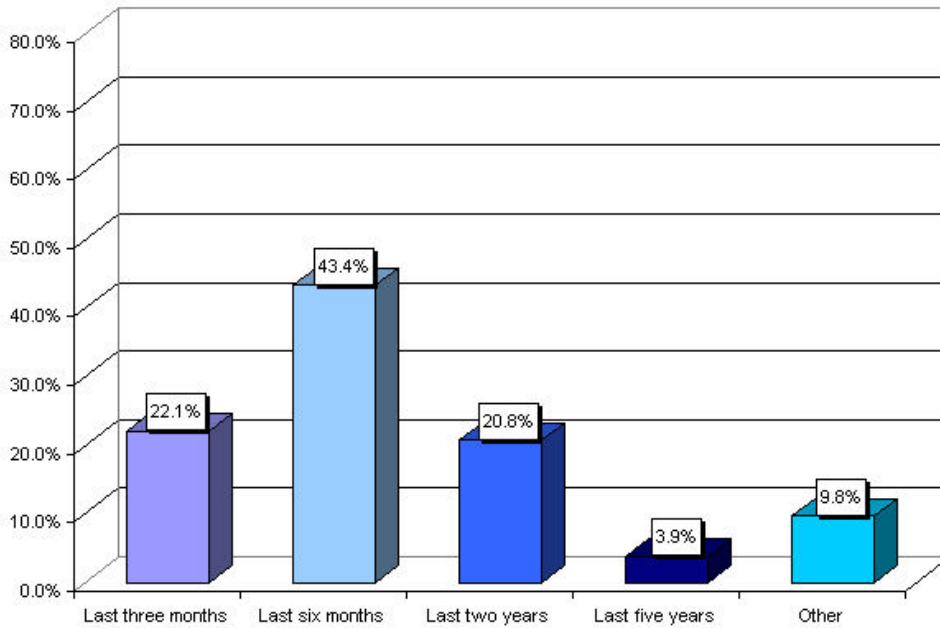


In the vast majority of cases respondents were being bullied by more than one person. 85.6 per cent said they were being bullied by multiple groups including management, pilots, crew and the public.

When did the bullying take place?

Respondents were also asked when the bullying they witnessed took place? They were able to provide only one answer.

When did the bullying take place?

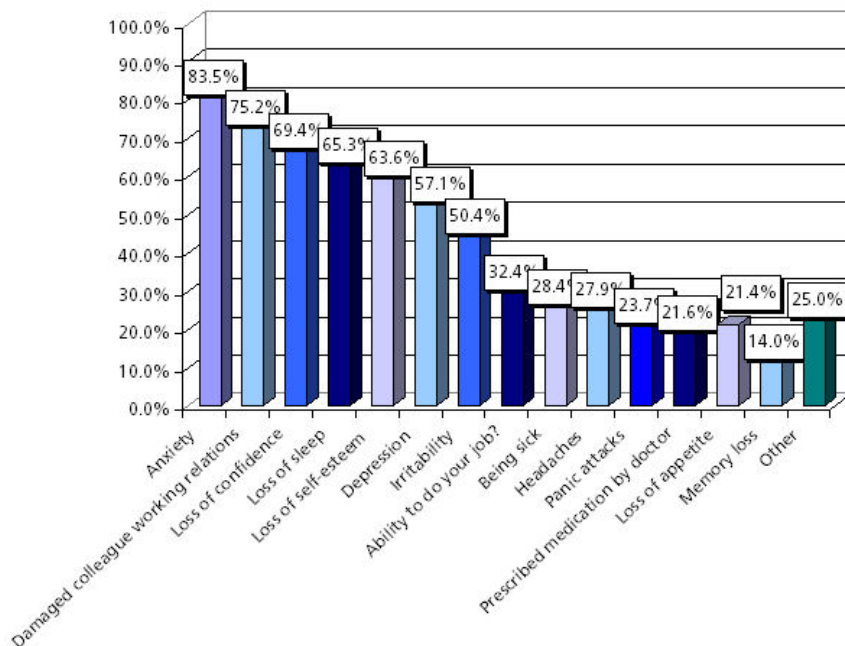


The highest number of respondents reported that bullying had taken place over the last six months (43.4 per cent) , with just 3.9 per cent saying the bullying had occurred in the last five years. Over one in five of respondents (22.1 per cent) said they had witnessed bullying in the last three months.

The effect of bullying

Respondents were asked about the effects of the bullying on them personally? They were able to provide multiple answers.

What effect did the bullying have on you?

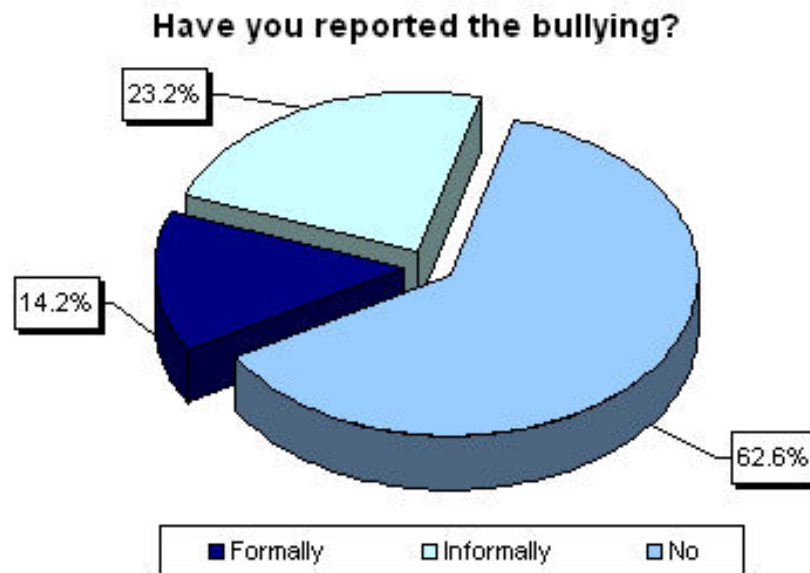


The top impact of bullying was anxiety with 83.5 per cent of respondents citing this issue arising due to bullying. The second most cited issue was damage to working relations between colleagues. Three quarters (75.2 per cent) of respondents highlighted working relations with some saying working environment was deteriorating and a divide was developing between flight crew and cabin crew. Respondents also felt they were being forced to work alongside volunteer cabin crew.

Almost seven out of ten (69.4 per cent) reported a loss in confidence, two thirds (65.3 per cent) said they had lost sleep as a result of bullying, and 63.6 per cent said they had suffered lower self esteem. 57.1 per cent of crew said they were depressed as a result of bullying and over one in five was prescribed medication by their doctor. Nearly one third (32.4 per cent) felt that bullying made it harder to do their job.

Reporting bullying

Respondents were asked if they had reported the bullying? They were able to provide only one answer.



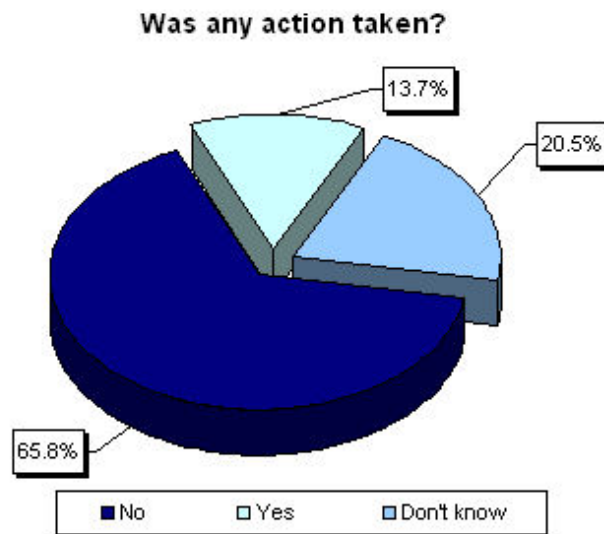
Only 14.2 per cent of respondents made a formal complaint, while 23.2 per cent made an informal complaint as a result of bullying.

Almost two thirds of respondents (62.6 per cent) chose not to report the bullying. Many respondents felt that nothing would be done about the bullying, others felt that they had no one to report the bullying to as reps were suspended or managers were responsible: ***"I'm afraid to report it, the company won't be interested as they won't see what they're doing as bullying, harassment or intimidation even though that's how I'm feeling."*** While others cited a culture of fear: ***"I daren't because I would be suspended like those who have tried!"***

Taking action on bullying

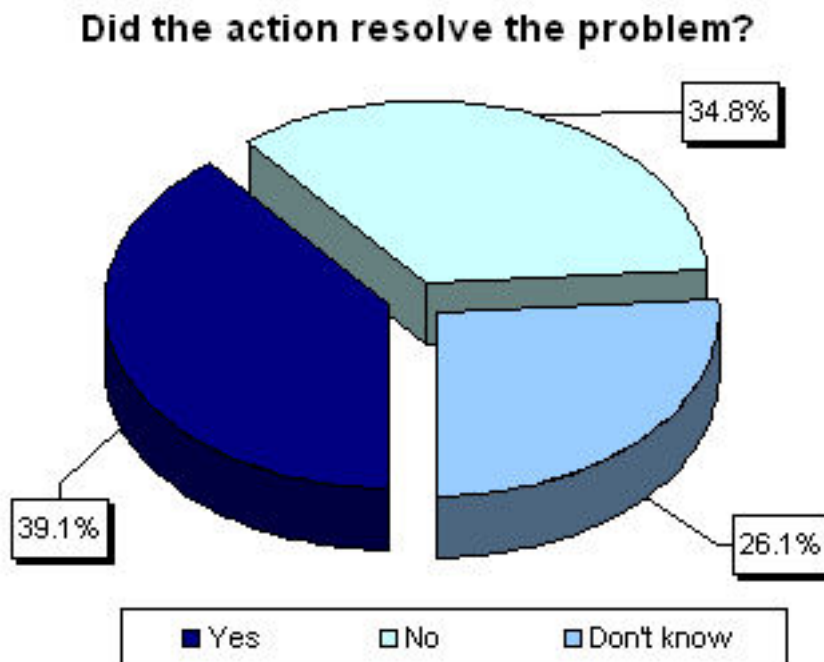
Of those respondents that reported the bullying they were asked if any action had been taken as a result? They were able to provide only one answer.

In almost two thirds of cases (65.8 per cent) respondents said that no action was taken, and one in five respondents did not know if any action had been taken. Just 13.7 per cent of respondents reported action taken as a result of the bullying being reported.



Resolving bullying

These respondents were also asked if the action that had been taken resolved the problem? They were able to provide only one answer.



More than a third (34.8 per cent) said the action had failed to resolve the problem, against 39.1 per cent that said the action did resolve the problem. Almost a quarter

were unsure whether the problem was resolved meaning some 60 per cent of cases did not meet with an effective conclusion in the eyes of those being bullied.

Conclusions and recommendations

The survey into bullying at British Airways highlights:

- Bullying is not taken seriously at BA
- Bullying is coming from the top down
- A bullying culture has been allowed to grow unchecked at the company
- Management need to recognise the damage being done to the workforce
- Management must recognise the effect that the bullying culture has on BA's front line customer service
- A new culture needs to be created which treats all workers with due respect

As a result of these findings Unite is urgently calling on British Airways' management to sit down with the union to address the epidemic of bullying that is contaminating the company and turning the world's favourite airline into the world's most intimidating airline.

Unite Recommendations

Unite is calling for:

- Bullying to be taken seriously at British Airways
- An end to the culture of intimidation, imposition and union busting
- Recognition of union reps and facilities time
- An independent review of sackings of crew and reps
- A new corporate strategy that treats all members of staff equally and fairly and where all have a role to play and contribution to make to the business

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