

Ending Bullying & Harassment

Get it Right - RIGHT WORK PLACE

As employees nurses deserve to be treated fairly and to work in an environment free from bullying and harassment where they are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment are descriptors of a wide set of negative behaviours that cause offence, distress, embarrassment and humiliation. They can include physical assault.

An RCN survey of nurses in 2009 found **30%** of NHS nurses reported that bullying and harassment was a problem where they worked. In contrast, 8% of practice nurses say bullying and harassment is a problem where they work, and **21%** of NHS community nurses. Within the independent sector, **23%** of those working in hospitals and **27%** of those in care homes report it is a problem where they work.

In November 2007 the Welsh Assembly Government launched "Bringing Respect to Work", policy guidance aimed at eliminating bullying and harassment in the NHS. RCN Wales believes that the implementation of this guidance should be audited and the NHS in Wales should move towards a standard All Wales policy on tackling bullying and harassment that includes:

- a standard investigation procedure
- fast track to NHS consultants and/or counsellors
- an external review/appeal process
- processes for tackling institutional bullying & harassment
- regular monitoring and discussion at health organisation board level with an identified non-executive director as a bullying & harassment champion.

There also needs to be standard All Wales training for investigation officers, mediators and their subsequent accreditation with a body such as the NHS Equality Unit.

RCN Wales also believes that trade unions need to work alongside the employers to promote equality and would like to achieve equality representation in each workplace. The UK Government has signalled its support for the role of trade union equality representatives but so far the proposed Equality Bill does not mention placing the equality representative role within the scope of statutory protections afforded to other accredited trade union representatives.

KEY POLICY ACTIONS

- RCN Wales believes that "Bringing respect to Work" and its implementation should be audited.
- RCN Wales believes a national audit should be undertaken of work being done to promoting equality across health organisations for both employees and within service delivery to the public.
- RCN Wales believes the Government should extend to equality representatives the statutory protections afforded to other accredited trade union representatives.

