UK Research
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THE GLOBAL
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LEADERSHIP

KING'S
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LONDON

Bullying and Harassment in Research and Innovation Environments:
An evidence review

TACKLING BULLYING
AND HARRASSMENT

Executive summary

This evidence review was commissioned as part of UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI's) comprehensive long-term equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy to inform the organisation's approach to bullying and harassment in the research and innovation (R&I) sector. The report focuses on higher education institutions but draws on wider research literature on bullying and harassment in the workplace.

Given the current evidence on scale and impact of bullying and harassment in the UK R&I sector, there is a clear need for a strategic approach to tackling this phenomenon, underpinned by a thorough understanding of it. This report addresses that need by:

1. Providing an overview of the available evidence with regard to the extent of bullying and harassment in UK and international R&I contexts.
2. Providing an overview of existing approaches to prevent and address bullying and harassment.
3. Mapping out where the gaps are in our understanding of what works.

Key findings of the report are:

Challenges

- Bullying and harassment is a multi-faceted phenomenon arising from the interaction of individuals with their organisational environment.
- Certain characteristics of the higher education research environment can act as enablers of bullying and harassment, such as strong hierarchies and incentive structures – significant workloads, competitive behaviours and job insecurity.
- There are no agreed definitions of bullying and harassment, which can hamper evidence gathering and understanding trends.
- There are low levels of reporting of incidents — arising from unclear policies, dissatisfaction with institutions' responses and worry about retaliatory action.
- There is a lack of evidence on what is effective in tackling and preventing bullying and harassment, and interventions are insufficiently mature for evaluation

Recommendations

Ways that institutions can improve on current practice:

- See bullying and harassment as an organisational, not an individual, issue and adopt a whole organisation approach for culture change – rather than addressing issues case by case or leaving individuals to pursue solutions.
- Secure visible senior leadership commitment to tackling the issue.
- Do more than establish a policy, which is not sufficient in isolation: the culture of the organisation must be supportive of the policy.
- Adopt preventative strategies by developing codes of conduct on expected conduct and delivering training programmes that clarify and re-set norms of inclusive, supportive and respectful behaviour. These should be focused on leaders and managers.

Bullying and harassment in the research and innovation landscape: its extent and nature

Estimates of the prevalence of bullying and harassment in academic and other research environments vary greatly, reflecting a number of methodological limitations in the wider workplace bullying and harassment literature, including variations in definition, measurement tool, and a reliance on small self-selecting samples.

These caveats aside, studies conducted over the past few years provide ample evidence of the existence of a problem with various forms of bullying and harassment in higher education institutions (HEIs). These reports draw on cross-sectoral survey data and look both at general bullying and specific forms of harassment. In one of the largest of these studies (14,677 participants), carried out in 2014 by University and College Union (UCU), almost half of respondents said they experienced bullying at work, with 8.4% indicating that it happened 'always' or 'often'. While caution should be urged in making comparisons due to variations in sample and

methodology, a 2016 survey amongst black, minority and ethnic (BME) staff (446 participants) found that 72% were 'often' or 'sometimes' subject to bullying and harassment from managers, while 69% said they were 'often' or 'sometimes' subject to bullying and harassment from colleagues (UCU, 2016a). Studies with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) staff also reveal issues with group-based harassment.

However, with even the largest of these studies relying on self-selecting respondents and making use of varying methodologies, we lack the robust data to tell us about true prevalence or reveal long-term trends. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the studies and the wide variety of measurement methods it is also not possible to make cross-country comparisons, to say whether bullying is on the rise, or whether bullying and harassment is worse in academia than in other sectors (Henning et al., 2017; Keashly and Neuman, 2013).

Approaches

There has been much recent activity in the UK, US and Australia to strengthen universities' responses to student-student sexual misconduct, with some work also focusing on staff sexual misconduct. This has led to cross-sectoral reviews of approaches such as Changing the Culture in the UK, Equally Safe in Higher Education in Scotland, On Safe Ground in Australia and Sexual Harassment of Women, Climate, Culture and Consequences in the US. These reports are focused on students and we know less about what institutions are currently doing to tackle bullying and other forms of staff misconduct.

There are broad themes running through these reports on institutional best practice in tackling bullying and harassment. These include taking a whole institution approach by embedding activities across the campus, recognising that tackling harassment requires a commitment from senior leadership, improving response strategies and removing barriers to reporting by developing clear, well-signposted reporting processes and expeditious disciplinary systems, and implementing a prevention strategy by developing clear policies and codes of conduct on expected behaviour, underpinned by relevant training programmes.

To tackle low levels of reporting institutions are taking a range of measures, including developing clear and well-signposted policies in conjunction with students, staff and external partners, establishing formal and informal pathways to raise concerns, highlighting clear points of contact, sometimes including trained 'first responders', and providing online and anonymous reporting systems with a variety of options and centralised records of incidents.
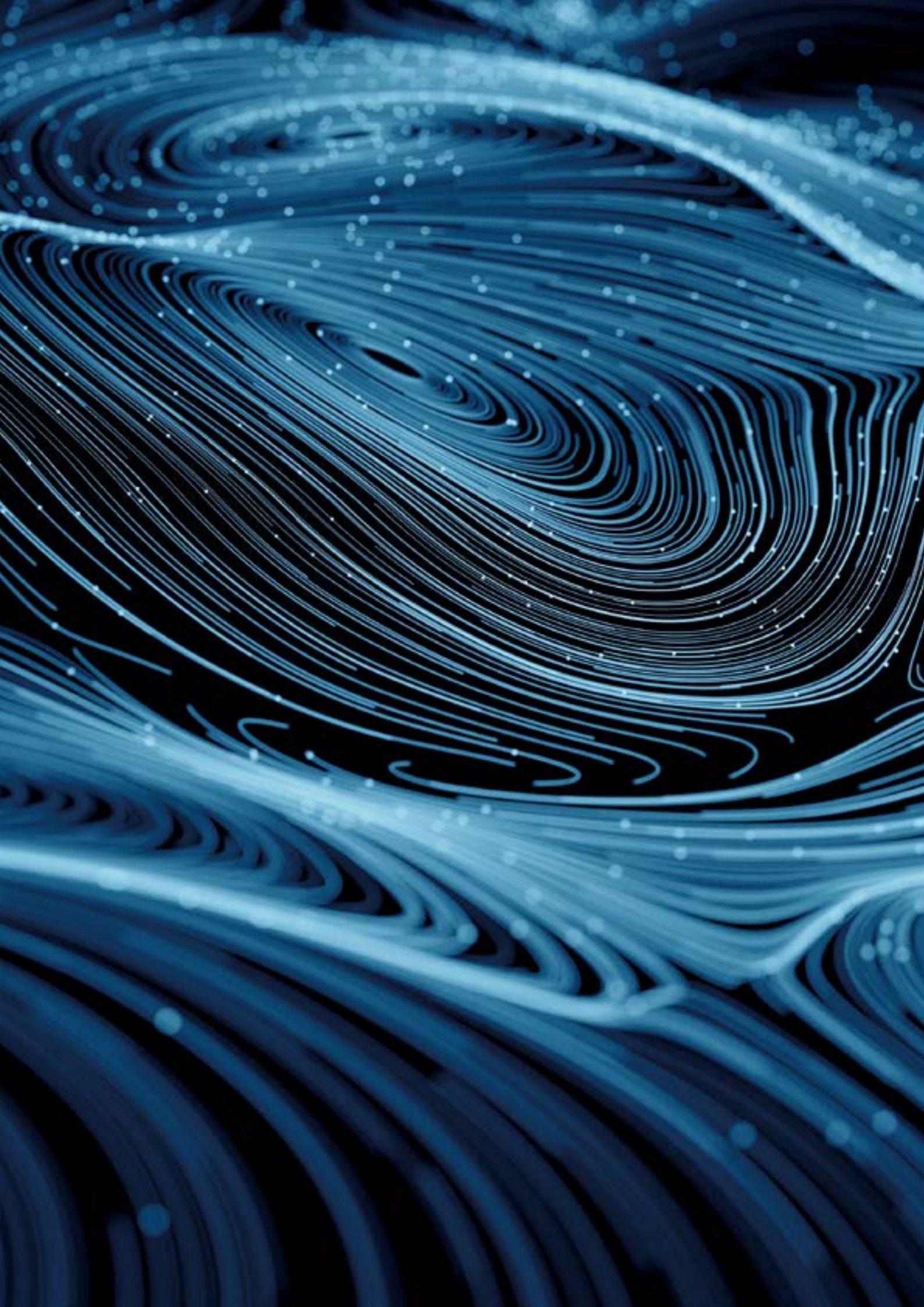
There is much less in the sectoral and wider literature on disciplinary, rehabilitative or resolution procedures. Although some HEIs use mediation there is a general agreement that this is not suitable in all cases.

It is also clear that effective response strategies alone are unlikely to reduce the overall incidence of bullying and harassment. Focusing on reporting places the onus on the victim and risks embedding the idea of bullying and harassment as individual, rather than organisational, issues. Many HEIs are taking steps to develop institutional prevention strategies. Key strands of these approaches are developing and communicating clear codes of conduct on expected behaviour and the provision of training, including bystander and conflict resolution training.

Motivating Change

The review also highlighted a number of supra-institutional approaches to motivating change and transparency, including via legislation (primarily in the US and Canada) and, more recently, via funder policies on requirements of grantees. While inevitably the focus of discussion of these policies has been around the removal of funding in cases of bullying or harassment, there is also the potential for these polices to act as catalysts for cultural change if they lead to the uptake of effective policies and interventions. While it is too early to evaluate the effect of new funder policies, there are potential warnings from related approaches that tied funding to efforts to tackle gender inequality and sexual harassment (such as Title IX in the US or Athena SWAN and National Institute for Health Research in the UK). Critics charge that they incentivise institutions to focus on symbolic rather than substantive compliance, whilst deterring whistle-blowers from reporting workplace misconduct for fear of jeopardising a grant that funds their own work.

Taking a **whole institution approach** by embedding activities across the organisation.

Securing visible **commitment from senior leadership** to tackling the issue.

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Removing barriers to reporting through clear processes and expeditious disciplinary systems.

Implementing a **prevention strategy** with codes of conduct and training programmes.

Contents

Introduction

Background

In recent years the issue of bullying and harassment in the UK research and innovation (R&I) sector has received increased attention, with a particular focus on universities. Driven by campaigns led by the National Union of Students, much effort has been targeted at tackling student to student peer harassment. In 2015 Universities UK (UUK) established a taskforce to examine the scale of the problem. The subsequent report Changing the Culture (Universities UK, 2016) set out a series of practical recommendations to initiate and drive systematic change in relation to student-to-student sexual misconduct. The guidance was supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Catalyst fund, in which £2.45 million was invested in 63 projects addressing sexual harassment. Despite increasing awareness in the university sector, progress in implementing effective and appropriate responses to deliver change has been variable (Universities UK, 2018).

Two investigations by *The Guardian* into sexual harassment (Batty et al., 2017), and bullying (Devlin and Marsh, 2018) in over 100 universities found hundreds of reported cases, and highlighted the opaque, complex and inconsistent procedures staff and students face when reporting, as well as the widespread use of non-disclosure agreements. These finding are echoed by a recent report on sexual misconduct towards students and early career researchers by the 1752 Group. That report additionally found that the majority of incidents involved serial behaviour by staff members, leading to substantial negative academic, health and financial impacts for the victim, and economic costs for the institution (Bull and Rye, 2018).

To date, the sector has primarily focused on addressing student-to-student sexual misconduct and harassment. There is far less evidence on prevention and response strategies to address staff sexual misconduct, other forms of harassment, or general bullying. One recent development is a series of policy changes by several major funders to require institutions to report the findings of sexual harassment and misconduct investigations as a requirement of funding.

The current report

Given the preceding evidence on scale and impact of bullying and harassment in the UK R&I sector there is a clear need for a strategic approach to tackling this phenomenon underpinned by a thorough understanding of it. This report addresses that need by:

1. Providing an overview of the available evidence with regard to the extent of bullying and harassment in UK and international R&I contexts, as well as the key challenges in tackling it.
2. Providing an overview of existing approaches to prevent and address bullying and harassment and an assessment of evidence of their effectiveness.
3. Mapping out where the gaps are in our understanding of what works, including where the efficacy of interventions are yet untested, or where challenges exist to which no identified interventions were targeted.

Methodology

This project consisted of a rapid evidence assessment (REA). Due to the importance of the grey literature in answering our objectives our search strategy incorporated both systematic and targeted searches of the academic and grey literature. For a full outline of the methodology please see the appendix.

International comparators

Given the limited time scale available for the project, we limited our targeted grey literature searches to the UK, USA, Australia and Canada. The selection of these countries was both pragmatic (due to their shared language) and strategic, as they represent major research producers with systems that have similarities to the UK.

Note on terminology

UKRI specified that they were interested in learning about bullying and harassment in R&I environments. After a workshop held with UKRI's stakeholders, a decision was made to keep the scope of the project as broad as possible by including evidence

on all forms of bullying and harassment, whilst also maintaining breadth in terms of the populations in scope of the report – to include staff/staff, staff/student and student/student relations.

Recurring themes within the research we located are the difficulty of defining bullying and harassment and the current lack of agreed definitions, which represent significant ongoing issues within the academic literature (Branch et al., 2013). Within the literature on which this report is based, a wide range of terms are used including specific terms such as 'racial harassment', 'gendered violence', 'sexual violence', 'sexual misconduct', 'sexual harassment' and 'sexual assault' and non-specific terms such as bullying, mobbing, 'horizontal violence', harassment, 'workplace aggression' and incivility.

These terms are often defined differently or not defined at all and between them cover a broad range of conduct. There are currently no universally accepted definitions of the terms 'harassment' and 'bullying' in the world of work (Evesson et al., 2015; ILO, 2018). However, within the UK harassment is grounded in legal definitions (including in the Equality Act 2010) and has legal protections when it is associated with protected characteristics.

The two terms most widely discussed in the literature we located were bullying and sexual harassment. Within the academic literature there are commonly three attributes that are held to be constitutive of bullying: First, the behaviour is repeated (this excludes one-off events or personal attacks); second, the bullying behaviour has a negative effect on the victim; and third, the victim finds it difficult to defend him or herself (Einarsen 2011; Gillen 2007; Zapf 2011). There is also a fourth attribute, 'intent' of the bully, but as yet, there is no consensus about including it in definitions (Gillen et al., 2017).

Scholars on sexual harassment typically distinguish between three categories of sexually harassing behaviour: (1) gender harassment (verbal and nonverbal behaviours that convey hostility, objectification, exclusion, or second-class status about members of one gender), (2) unwanted sexual attention (verbal or physical unwelcome sexual advances, which can include assault), and (3) sexual coercion

(when favourable professional or educational treatment is conditioned on sexual activity). Harassing behaviour can be either direct (targeted at an individual) or ambient (a general level of sexual harassment in an environment) (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, 2018).

In order to avoid getting entrapped in semantic difficulties we use the phrase 'bullying and harassment' in the current report to describe a continuum of behaviours which include all the above. Where pertinent, we highlight whether our findings relate to a particular form of bullying and harassment.

About the authors

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Bullying and harassment in the UK R&I landscape: its extent and nature

In recent years there has been little systematic attention to bullying in academia either in the academic (Keashly and Neuman, 2013) or grey literature. While generalised workplace bullying appears to have been a focus of sector activity and campaigning during the previous decade (UCU, 2008a), in recent years more work has centred on highlighting and responding to specific forms of harassment, with a series of reports looking at the issues within the context of BME and LGBT staff and sexual harassment among students. The issue of sexual harassment has leapt up the agenda recently and is the subject of several major reports in the UK (Universities UK, 2016), US (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM), 2018) and Australia (Australian Human Rights Centre, 2017).

In this section, we outline the key findings of this literature with regards to the nature, prevalence and effects of workplace bullying and harassment. Where pertinent the report also draws on research from the wider workplace bullying literature.

Challenges with measuring the prevalence of bullying and harassment

Estimates of the prevalence of bullying and harassment in R&I environments vary greatly, reflecting a number of methodological limitations in the wider literature. One source of difficulty comes from defining and labelling bullying and harassment, and the literature makes use of a wide range of measures. Some studies adopt a 'self-labelling' approach, asking respondents to self-identify as having been bullied or harassed, with or without an accompanying definition. Others provide a list of harassing or bullying behaviours and ask respondents to what extent they have experienced them (Branch et al., 2013).

Estimates of bullying prevalence rates can vary widely depending on the approach. Two studies conducted in university settings in the US obtained prevalence rates of 32% and 26% using the self-labelling approach and 23% and 19% using a behavioural checklist respectively (Keashly and Neuman, 2013). In a meta-analysis of studies on sexual harassment in a variety of workplaces, Ilies et al. (2003) found that incident rates of sexual harassment were 58% when studies made use of the behavioural approach, versus 24% when studies made use of the self-labelling approach.

Another source of variation comes from differences in the frequency and time period over which researchers ask about instances of bullying or harassment occurring. Some require that a target has experienced bullying behaviours at least once or twice a week for six months. Others measure less frequent behaviours; and many studies, particularly those we located in the grey literature, don't specify a time period or ask the respondents to interpret questions asking about 'frequent' or 'regular' experiences. Some ask about incidents over a specific time period (e.g. the last year), while others ask if respondents have ever experienced the phenomena.

Because studies of workplace bullying and harassment in academia vary greatly in methodology, it is difficult to compare the results across the different studies. There is also a great variation in sample with some studies focusing just on academics while others include administrators, human resource staff, counsellors and union staff.

Finally, the majority of studies rely on small self-selecting samples meaning that while they are able to alert us to the existence of a problem, they are not able to provide robust prevalence data.

The extent of bullying and harassment in R&I environments

The largest studies of bullying in academic environments in the UK were carried out by UCU in 2008 (UCU, 2008b) and 2012 (UCU, 2013). In both cases, the studies made use of the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards Indicator Tool (MSIT). The MSIT is designed to measure the level of well-being of respondents at work by capturing information about seven potential 'stressors'. The relationships stressor contains questions about bullying and harassment. The surveys were sent to all members of the University and College Union with a response rate of 23.4% (14,270 participants, of which 9,740 work in HE) in 2008. No overall response rate is recorded for the 2012 study, but it reported 14,557 respondents in HE.

The studies reported similar findings on both occasions. Only half of UCU members in higher education could say they were never subjected to bullying at work, while in 2012 2.5% and 5.9% of respondents said they were always or often subject to bullying at work, respectively. The report provided no further break down of these results by demographic.

Fig 1: HE responses to the question 'I am subject to bullying at work' (*n*=14,667 participants)

ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	NEVER
2.5%	5.9%	15.9%	23.8%	52.2%
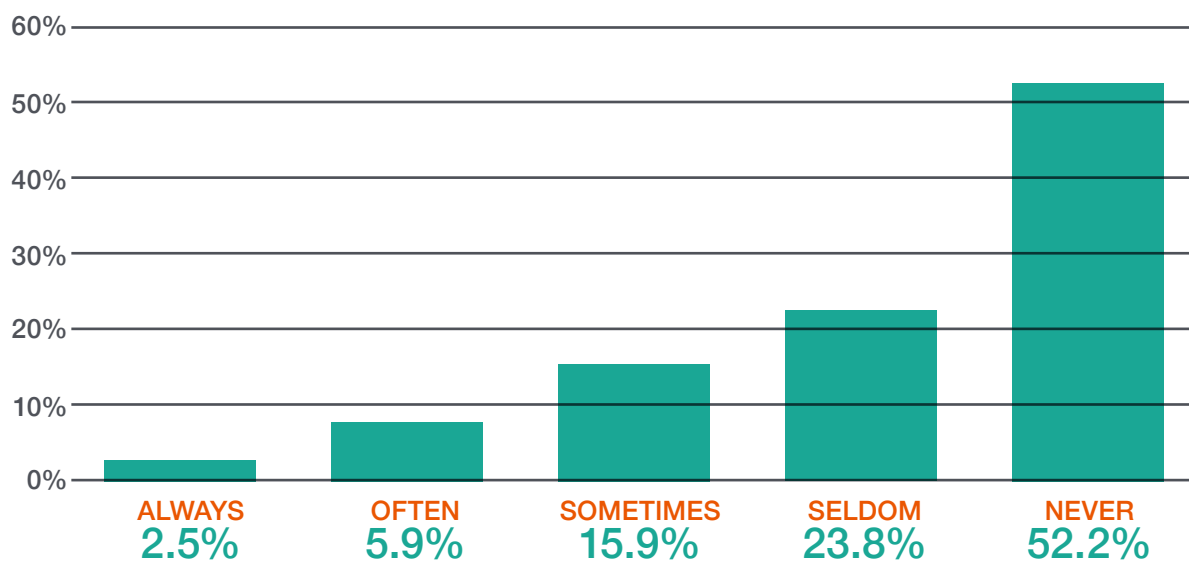
Source: (UCU, 2013)

In both the 2008 and 2012 surveys there was significant variation between HEIs in the percentage of respondents who stated that they were always or often subject to bullying at work. In 2012 this ranged from 19.2% at Canterbury Christ Church (73 participants) to 2.2% at Aberystwyth (148 participants) (UCU, 2012).

To calibrate their findings against those of other workplaces the UCU report compares the results of the 2012 survey against an all workplace survey carried out by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (2008). The comparison is made using a composite measure composed of responses to the following statements.

• I am subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour.

• There is friction or anger between colleagues.

• I am subject to bullying at work.

• Relationships at work are strained.

Potential scores range from 1.00 (lowest well-being/ highest stress) to 5.00 (highest well-being/ lowest stress). The results indicated less well-being in higher education than in the average working population, with HEI respondents scoring an average of 3.53 compared to an average for British working population of 4.20, indicating that HEI respondents on average showed higher stress due to relationships at work than the HSE British average. However, it should be noted that this comparison was made using a composite measure, only two items of which relate directly to bullying and harassment.

Although the UCU study did not provide disaggregated results to the questions on bullying and harassment that would allow for comparisons between groups, since then there have been a series of studies carried out in the UK grey literature focusing on the experience of specific groups within the academic community. Although carried out with small self-selecting samples, they clearly indicate the existence of a problem and provide insight into the relationship between bullying and harassment and other variables.

Bullying, harassment and racism targeted at BME staff

UCU & ECU (Equality Challenge Unit) have published a series of reports looking at bullying and harassment among BME staff. The most recent of these, Staying Power (Rollock, 2019) consisted of one to one interviews with 20 of the current 25 UK female black professors finding that a "culture of explicit and passive bullying persists across higher education along with racial stereotyping and racial microaggressions." These findings are echoed by earlier research. In a 2016 report which surveyed all BME UCU members 72% of the 446 respondents working in Higher Education reported that they were 'often' or 'sometimes' subject to bullying and harassment from managers, while 69% said they were 'often' or 'sometimes' subject to bullying and harassment from colleagues (UCU, 2016a). In 2015 ECU research with BME academics noted frequent mentions of overt examples of discrimination, racialised stereotyping and feelings of not being trusted. In a 2011 report based on responses to an online survey and focus groups with 110 staff (66 BME, 44 non-BME) 56% of institutions responded that racism is evident to varying degrees at their institution. Forty-five percent of institutions responded that racism is not evident at all in their institutions (ECU, 2011).

Sexual harassment of students

The National Union of Students (NUS) has written a series of reports looking at the issue of sexual harassment of students and 'lad culture' on campuses. This began with Hidden Marks in 2010, a survey of 2,058 female students, finding that one in seven survey respondents had experienced a serious physical or sexual assault during their time as a student and 68% had experienced some kind of verbal or non-verbal harassment in and around their institution (NUS, 2010). The subsequent 2014 Lad Culture and Sexism Survey of 2156 students found that 37% of female and 12% of male students surveyed had experienced unwanted sexual advances at university and 18% of students had experienced verbal harassment with gender specific comments (NUS, 2014).

More recently there has also been a focus on staff sexual harassment towards students. The 2018 report Power in the Academy (NUS, 2018) surveyed 1,839 current and former students (weighted towards post-graduates) and found that four in ten respondents who were current students (585 out of 1535) had at least one experience of sexualised behaviour from staff and one in eight current student respondents had experienced being touched by a staff member in a way that made them uncomfortable. Postgraduate students were more likely to have experienced staff misconduct than undergraduate students.

LGBT Staff and students

NUS, UCU and ECU have explored the experiences of LGBT staff and students. A 2015 survey of around 4,000 students found that one in five LGB+ and one in three trans respondents had experienced at least one form of bullying or harassment on their campus (NUS, 2015). 2016's Pride and Prejudice in Education surveyed staff in higher education (575 participants). 33% of staff respondents reported having witnessed other staff acting negatively towards people because of their sexual orientation. 60% of these respondents had seen this behaviour being directed towards other staff, while just under half of them (45%) had witnessed it being directed towards learners (NUS, 2016).

Other populations

Studies have also examined the experiences of groups at particular career stages or within disciplines. In a survey of current and former postgraduate students and staff (866 participants) in computer sciences and electronic engineering, 49% of female staff said they had experienced harassment or bullying (compared to 34% of male staff) with no significant differences found by sexuality or ethnicity. 16% of post graduate students reported they had been bullied or harassed with no significant difference by sex, sexuality or ethnicity (Graham et al., 2017).

In a review of PhD training carried out by Wellcome (2018a) inadequate or unsatisfactory supervision was most commonly identified as the main challenge faced by PhD students in the survey (225/1,837); bullying from supervisors was cited on 28 independent occasions across the survey, including on six occasions in answer to the question of what the main challenge faced during PhD training was.

A recent publication by the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) (2018), reported the findings of an online survey (1,787 participants) and focus groups with PhD students, early career researchers, senior academics and academic leavers. Although the survey did not include a question on bullying and harassment free text answers found strong anecdotal evidence of its existence, with some respondents describing these behaviours as 'characteristic' of their academic departments.

These findings are echoed by studies carried out by other professional societies among their members. A survey of classicists carried out by the Women's Classical Committee found that 25% of respondents had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour in a professional environment (WCC, 2015). The Royal Historical Society's survey of academic historians (472 participants) found that 18% of women and 5% of men had experienced sexual harassment over the last five years (Atkinson et al., 2018).

From two *Guardian* investigations, we know about the number of cases of bullying and sexual harassment recorded by UK HEIs and disciplinary steps taken. Freedom of Information requests (FOIs) sent to 120 universities revealed that students had made 169 allegations of sexual harassment, misconduct and gender violence against university staff from 2011-2017 and 48 staff left their university or changed jobs following allegations that they had sexually harassed colleagues (Batty et al., 2017). A later investigation based on FOIs sent to 135 universities asking about bullying uncovered 294 complaints against academics at 55 institutions. Thirty universities reported 337 complaints against all staff (academic and non-academic). Across 105 universities, 184 staff have been disciplined and 32 dismissed for bullying since 2013 (Devlin and Marsh, 2018).

International findings

Two recent reviews of the peer-reviewed literature produce findings that chime with the grey literature outlined above, while sharing its limitations in terms of the reliance on self-selecting or small samples. Keashly and Neuman (2013) summarise 15 studies of bullying in academic environments (1 Finland, 6 US, 6 UK, 1 New Zealand, 1 Canada, 1 Turkey). They find that estimated prevalence varies depending on the operationalisation and timeframe for experiences with findings ranging from 18% to 68% and several studies in the 25%-35% range. While they note that these rates seem high when compared to those found in the general population (10-20% UK), they strongly urge caution in making comparisons since "the vast array of ad hoc survey instruments used to capture these data, make it difficult—if not impossible—to engage in comparative research" (Keashly and Neuman, 2013).

In recent years the issue of sexual harassment, initially of students, and more recently of staff has received heightened attention in both America and Australia leading to sector wide reviews (Australian Human Rights Centre, 2017; NASEM, 2018) and large scale campus studies. In America, the Campus Climate Survey of students on 27 US campuses (150,072, participants with a 19.3% response rate) found that 23% of undergraduates and 8% of graduate female students reported sexual contact involving physical force or incapacitation (higher rates among transgender students) and 48% reported having been victims of sexual harassment. Female graduate students more often identified the offender as a faculty member (22%) compared to female undergraduates (6%). Results from specific campuses suggest students majoring in Science, Engineering and Maths (SEM) fields face more harassment than non-SEM (Cantor et al., 2015).

In Australia, a landmark national study of students in all Australian universities was carried out in 2016. It found that around half of all university students (51%) were sexually harassed on at least one occasion in 2016, and 6.9% of students were sexually assaulted on at least one occasion in 2015 or 2016. The perpetrator was most likely to be a fellow student and postgraduate students were almost twice as likely as undergraduate students to have been sexually harassed by a lecturer or tutor from their university (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2017).

Relationships between bullying and harassment and other characteristics

Among the studies we located that considered group differences, some common themes emerged with regards to the relationships between bullying and harassment and other characteristics.

Women in academia report being targets of both general bullying and sexual harassment at higher rates than men (Cantor et al., 2015; Clancy et al., 2014; Graham et al., 2017; Henning et al., 2017; Miller, 2017; Miller et al., 2018). Sexual and ethnic minorities report being targeted at higher rates than majority groups (Cantor et al., 2015; Clancy et al., 2017) and women from racial minorities often experience sexual harassment that includes racial harassment (Clancy et al., 2017). Qualitative research commissioned by NASEM found that respondents noted they were sometimes unable to disentangle whether the discrimination they faced related to gender or other intersecting identities (NASEM, 2018).

To overcome some of the limitations of the literature located in the academic environment, we also investigated these relationships in the wider workplace bullying literature. A recent meta-analysis confirmed sex and race-based differences in reported workplace mistreatment (including bullying and harassment). Analysing the results of almost 400 studies, McCord et al. (2018) find that women perceive more sex-based workplace mistreatment than men and that racial minorities report more race-based mistreatment in the workplace than white people. However, group differences were much smaller for non-group based forms of workplace mistreatment such as bullying. Data limitations prevented the estimation of subgroup differences for additional demographic groups such as LGBT populations. As the authors point out, this data leaves unanswered the question of whether there are differential outcomes for perceived workplace mistreatment, further compounding the effects of differential prevalence by subgroup. In one study of cyberbullying of faculty carried out in a Canadian university, the researchers found that female faculty targeted by cyberbullies reported a greater range of negative impacts on their professional and personal lives than men (Cassidy, 2016). Similarly, in a recent study of staff sexual misconduct towards students, women respondents were three times more likely than men to experience negative impacts because of misconduct and four times more likely to experience severe negative impacts, such as dropping out of their course or university (NUS, 2018).

Nature of bullying and harassment

Targets of bullying and harassment in academia often report repeated behaviours that can persist over a number of years. This is true both of group and non-group based forms of bullying and harassment. A study in a Canadian HEI (Mckay, 2008) found that 21% of the sample reported bullying that had persisted for more than five years, while two studies from the US reported that a third and half of reported bullying cases had lasted for more than three years (Keashly and Neuman, 2013). Similarly, studies of sexual harassment have found that only small numbers of women who experienced harassment report it as being limited to a single incident (Rosenthal et al., 2016).

Boynton's 2005 study of academic staff in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland found that while the majority of reported bullying was done in private, a large proportion occurred out in the open in meetings (18%) or communal areas (22%). According to her respondents, this exacerbated the negative effects of the bullying as the victims felt that nobody would stand up for them (*The Times Higher Education*, 2005).

Surveying the peer reviewed literature to date, Keashly and Neuman (2013) find that the most frequently cited types of bullying in academia involve threats to professional status, including isolating and obstructing behaviour which prevents the target's ability to fulfil professional objectives – such as impeding access to key resources including money, space, time or students.

While perceived power differences are central to some definitions of bullying, both the academic and wider workplace bullying literature record instances of bullying and harassment by both superiors and co-workers and colleagues (Keashly and Neuman, 2013; RSC, 2018; Theology and Religious Studies (TRS), 2013) and even junior colleagues (ECU, 2015; TRS, 2013).

One emerging area of research is cyberbullying in higher education – where the focus has generally been on students' experience of cyberbullying but some studies also explore faculty experiences. A study of the cyberbullying of faculty in one Canadian university found that bullying was mainly carried out by email and consisted of demeaning, belittling or harassing messages (Cassidy, 2016).

Consequences of experiencing bullying and harassment

Studies that we located from the literature on bullying and harassment in academia demonstrated a range of negative consequences for individuals, witnesses, organisations and the field as a whole. These link bullying to negative psychological outcomes including loss of confidence, loss of self-esteem, stress and anxiety (Bull and Rye, 2018; Cassidy, 2016; Henning et al., 2017; Keashly and Neuman, 2013; NUS, 2018), to negative individual intellectual outcomes, such as loss of productivity or ability to work (Bull and Rye, 2018; Cassidy, 2016; Keashly and Neuman, 2013), absenteeism (*The Times Higher Education*, 2005), leaving a research area or dropping out of a degree (Henning et al., 2017; NUS, 2018) to economic outcomes such

as loss of earnings (Bull and Rye, 2018). Studies also document negative effects for organisations including reduced organisational commitment (Bull and Rye, 2018) and absenteeism (*The Times Higher Education*, 2005), and for the field, such as, in particular egregious cases, reports of falsification of data to avoid incurring further bullying behaviours (Devlin and Marsh, 2018).

In a 2005 study carried out by *The Times Higher Education*, 66% of those experiencing bullying said they had considered leaving their job, or were trying to leave (*The Times Higher Education*, 2005). Similarly one third of respondents to Cassidy et al.'s study of cyberbullying in a Canadian university reported that the experience had made them want to quit (Cassidy, 2016).

Since the studies coming specifically from the academic environment were primarily qualitative or cross-sectional, we sought out meta-analyses and systematic reviews from the wider literature to supplement these findings. Meta-analyses of cross-sectional studies show that bullying is associated with post-traumatic stress symptoms, depression and anxiety and is related to work-related behavioural outcomes including intent to leave, lack of commitment, job dissatisfaction and absenteeism (Nielsen and Einarsen, 2012). In recent years these findings have been substantiated by a growing number of longitudinal studies establishing bullying as a precursor to subsequent mental health problems (Nielsen and Einarsen, 2018) and a systematic review and meta-analysis of 17 longitudinal studies looking at bullying and later sickness absence confirms that exposure to bullying increased the risk of later sickness absence (Nielsen et al., 2016).

Another meta-analysis of almost 74,000 women across 88 studies focusing particularly on sexual harassment found that high frequency but low intensity forms of sexual harassment such as sex discrimination and gender harassment were found to be as detrimental to women's occupational well-being as low frequency but high intensity harmful workplace experiences across a range of measures including job satisfaction, organizational commitment and measures of mental health (Sojo et al., 2016). However, the researchers note that as with few exceptions research in this field is cross-sectional it is difficult to draw causal conclusions – although the few longitudinal studies that have been conducted have found discrimination to predict mental health problems rather than vice versa.

Reporting and responding to bullying and harassment

Barriers to reporting

A common characteristics across all of the studies we located was that of low levels of reporting of instances of bullying and harassment (Cassidy, 2016; Clancy et al., 2014; NUS, 2010; NUS, 2018; Strebler and O'Regan, 2005; TRS, 2013). Much of the evidence for this in the UK comes from recent reports by the NUS looking at sexual harassment of students by other students and staff (NUS, 2018; NUS, 2010) but this has also been found in studies of bullying of academics both in the UK (Miller et al., 2018) and internationally (e.g. Cassidy, 2016). Although studies differ with regards to the relative importance of the primary reasons for not reporting incidents common themes emerged including:

- **Not believing the behaviour was serious enough to report**
- **A lack of clarity around what behaviours can be reported**
- **Being unclear of reporting procedures**
- **Fear of retaliation or career damage**
- **Fear of risking their jobs (particularly among those on insecure contracts)**
- **A fear that it would make things worse**
- **A belief that the complaint would not be taken seriously**

In other cases the content of the formal policies themselves presented barriers to reporting via, for example, having a three month cut off period for reporting or the requirement that the victim approach the person carrying out the harassment to ask them to stop before making a formal complaint (Bull and Rye, 2018).

Experiences of reporting

Among those who did report there was a widespread lack of satisfaction with the processes for dealing with complaints and of institutional failure in responses (Miller et al., 2018; RSC, 2018; TSR, 2018).

Of respondents to the NUS's study on staff student sexual misconduct, among those students who did make a complaint over half believed that their institution did not respond adequately, while half felt that their institution had denied their experienced or made reporting difficult (NUS, 2018). Similarly in Bull and Rye's (2018) study with 16 student and early

career academic interviewees who had experienced staff sexual misconduct, almost all described being blocked or dissuaded from reporting in some way, for example, by institutions deliberately failing to keep written records of the complaint. They also document a number of institutional failings including lack of internal processes, a lack of communication and support during the process, internal tribunal hearings occurring in the presence of the accused and experiences of academic retaliation experienced by the complainant over the period of the hearing. While complainants who are dissatisfied with internal processes are able to take their case to the Office for the Independent Adjudicator, the requirement that this occur only after all internal procedures have been exhausted (a process that can take up to four years in some cases) effectively bars this path.

Respondents to the Royal Historical Society's survey of its members reported that managers were slow to deal with complaints of harassment and bullying, and in the case of one respondent, the observation that "numerous instances of appalling behaviour (bullying, harassment, intimidation, offensive emails) typically by male colleagues seem to be ignored for fear of upsetting people who produce good research and funding bids" (Atkinson et al., 2018).

These findings are not confined to the R&I environment. A study by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC, 2018) looking at experiences of sexual harassment in all workplaces found that half of respondents hadn't reported their experiences to anyone in the workplace, with key barriers mirroring those detailed above, including:

- A fear that the organisation wouldn't take the issue seriously
- A belief that perpetrators, particularly senior staff, would be protected
- Fear of victimisation and retaliation
- A lack of appropriate reporting procedures
- Inexperienced or unsupportive managers

Challenges of transparency

Concern has grown recently about the use of Non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) by universities in instances of issues of bullying and harassment. Recent FOIs submitted by *The Guardian* have highlighted the use of NDAs, with three universities reporting they had used them in cases of sexual harassment,

and others paying out compensation (Batty et al., 2017). In 2018, *Guardian* reporters sent FOIs to 135 universities and 14 reported that they had made use of NDAs to resolve bullying cases (Devlin and Marsh, 2018). Fear of reputational damage may incentivise the use of NDAs by institutions, especially in the context of heightened public attention to the issue.

In 2016, the academic Professor Sara Ahmed resigned from Goldsmiths University in protest at what she described as a culture in which sexual harassment was 'normalised and generalised' and in which confidentiality agreements allowed staff punished for sexual harassment to move on with unblemished reputations (Weale and Batty, 2016). Recent research from the US confirms the potential for NDAs and confidentiality around disciplinary proceedings to allow a phenomenon of 'pass the harasser' (Cantalupo and Kidder, 2018).

Even when NDAs are not used, university disciplinary policies normally require that all matters relating to ongoing disciplinary proceedings be kept confidential. Whitley and Page (2015) point out that this creates a situation in which it is advantageous for accused academics to resign in the middle of such proceedings, as this prevents the disclosure of details and allows the academic to present alternative reasons for their resignation.

Why do bullying and harassment occur?

Within the literature on workplace bullying there are two key theories to explain the occurrence of bullying — the work environment hypothesis and the individual disposition hypothesis. The former focuses on bullying as a consequence of the organisational environment and job design, while the latter explores whether individual characteristics, such as personality traits predispose someone to either be a perpetrator or target of bullying (Nielsen and Einarsen, 2018).

The two theories are not mutually exclusive and bullying is increasingly portrayed in the literature as "a multi-faceted phenomenon, with its antecedents integrally related to interactions between characteristics of individuals such as the perpetrator/s and target/s and the organisational environment" (Branch et al., 2013).

One useful framework for organising organisational risk factors associated with bullying comes from Salin (2003) who classifies them into three often interacting groups.

- Organisational enablers of bullying are characteristics of the environment which are necessary background conditions for its occurrence, including power imbalances and a perception of low cost to the perpetrator for their behaviours and frustration.

- Motivating structures are characteristics of the environment which can serve to encourage bullying, including competition for jobs, job insecurity, job ambiguity (a lack of clarity around one's work responsibilities) and complexity and high workload, plus evaluative systems which reward bullying behaviour. Finally precipitating processes are those that can trigger bullying and include restructuring and organisational change (Branch et al., 2013; Salin, 2003).

In a 2016 systematic review of the empirical workplace bullying literature which drew on evidence from 42 studies (including eight with longitudinal designs), the authors found that role conflict (incompatible work demands), high workload, role ambiguity, job insecurity and cognitive demands were the most significant predictors of workplace bullying, with four out of five prospective studies included finding an association between workplace stressors and later bullying risk. However, given the scarcity of longitudinal research in this area they urge caution in interpreting causal relationships (Van den Brande et al., 2016).

A later 'review of reviews', summarising 18 systematic reviews and meta-analyses in the workplace bullying field, notes that one prospective research study with 2800 Norwegian workers showed that role stressors, including role ambiguity and role conflict measured at the beginning of the study predicted new cases of workplace bullying two years on. But two other studies found that prior exposure to workplace bullying accounts for subsequent variation in stressors including role ambiguity and role conflict, concluding that the available evidence leaves the direction of causality unclear (Nielsen and Einarsen, 2018).

The same review notes that only two studies have examined relationships between individual dispositions and bullying using longitudinal data. Of these, one conducted with 3,000 Norwegian employees found that neuroticism and conscientiousness were significant predictors of bullying two years on, but that neuroticism's significance as a predictor disappeared after adjusting for role conflict and role ambiguity, emphasising the importance of considering organisational factors (Nielsen and Einarsen, 2018).

In conclusion, while the research studying the antecedents of bullying is largely cross-sectional, and therefore precludes firm conclusions about causality, the current research to date provides support for the idea that both individual and organisational factors are associated with bullying.

Similarly, researchers exploring the phenomenon of sexual harassment have pinpointed the importance of organisational factors. A meta-analysis of data from 41 studies including 70,000 respondents (Willness et al., 2007) found that the strongest predictor of sexual harassment was organisational climate, specifically the existence of a climate that is permissive of sexual harassment (encompassing risk to targets for complaining and a lack of sanctions for perpetrators). Another significant situational risk factor (although one that exhibited a smaller effect size) was that of job gender context – working in a male dominated job. However, it should again be noted that given the reliance on primarily cross-sectional research it may be difficult to disentangle cause and effect. Women leave male-dominated environments at a higher rate than more balanced work environments (Miner-Rubino and Cortina, 2007). Harassment may play a role in this and cross-sectional data can't tell us about the direction of causality.

In their 2003 meta-analysis of 86,000 respondents from 55 probability samples Illies et al. (2003) found that sexual harassment was more prevalent in organisations characterised by large power differentials between organisational levels. However they again urge caution due to the inability of the study design to test causality.

Why do bullying and harassment occur in academia?

A number of writers have put forward analyses to suggest that university environments might be particularly susceptible to bullying and harassment, or might represent environments in which reporting and tackling instances of misconduct present unique challenges.

One strand within this points to the traditional hierarchies which characterise the academic career structure (Whitley and Page, 2015). In many cases this will involve the dependence of a student or junior staff member on a more senior member of staff for mentoring, support, access to equipment, funding and references, within a small highly specialised field.

Another strand highlights how these traditional hierarchies interact with the increasing corporatisation of academia and the associated new forms of hierarchy and competition. Phipps (2018a) argues that the logic of academics as commodities inherent in structures such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF) creates a system in which university staff's value is defined by reference to what they are able to bring to the institution. This means that

" certain people are reckoned up differently. This differentiation may become acutely visible at times of stress — for example, when a sexual harassment allegation is made — when it becomes clear that some are worth more than others." (Phipps, 2018a)

If structures such as the REF provide incentives to ignore instances of bullying and harassment, Phipps argues that they also create conditions in which bullying and harassment might thrive through a focus on competition rather than collaboration.

Due to the lack of consistent data collected over time and across different institutional contexts, there is currently insufficient empirical evidence to test whether the academic environment is uniquely structured to facilitate bullying and harassment (Keashly and Neuman, 2013). However, the empirical evidence upon which the above analyses are based, as well as that gathered from other studies, provides plenty of qualitative evidence of both the motivating and enabling structures of bullying and harassment identified in the wider bullying and harassment literature at play in the academic environment.

Enabling structures

The academic environment is characterised by strong hierarchies and small globally interconnected specialised communities. This provides both an enabling environment for bullying and harassment to occur and poses challenges in reporting and redressing.

As Bull and Rye (2018) and the NUS (2018) find in their studies of staff student sexual misconduct, the reliance of students on (often one) member(s) of staff provides an opportunity for behaviour which blurs the boundary of the professional and the personal.

In cases where the bullying and harassment comes from a direct supervisor, reporting the harassment or otherwise challenging it may bring negative career or academic consequences for the complainant. Even in cases where the bully does not have direct power over the complainant, the small interconnected nature of many fields provides an opportunity to carry out reputational damage by spreading rumours throughout the field, as is documented by Bull and Rye's interviewees (Bull and Rye, 2018).

These hierarchies interact within systems which serve to make some members of staff more valuable than others and provide an incentive to institutions to cover up bad behaviour of 'research superstars'. This is exemplified by a quote provided by one of Phipps' participants:

" *They will protect him because of his seniority or his perceived importance, they will protect him whatever he does. Now what I've described to you is kind of indefensible, and yet it was repeatedly defended over a period of years because of the REF. So, if somebody is an important professor, they can do precisely what they want.*" (Phipps 2018: 9)

In particular disciplines, risks may emerge from the fact that the realities of research require long periods of time spent together alone or in small groups either in the lab or the field, potentially in isolated environments. In one study carried out with a convenience sample of 666 field scientists, 20% of respondents reported that they had personally experienced sexual assault (Clancy et al., 2014).

Motivating structures

Systematic reviews from the workplace literature suggest that high workload, role ambiguity, job insecurity and cognitive demands are all positively associated with workplace bullying. In their 2012 occupational stress survey with 14,500 respondents from HEIs, UCU found that nearly three-quarters agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I find my job stressful'. More than three-quarters of respondents employed on a full-time contract worked over 40 hours a week and more than a third worked in excess of 50 hours a week (UCU, 2013). A more recent study of working hours from UCU found that academic staff in HEIs work 50.9 hours per week on average with 83% reporting that the intensity of their work has increased in recent years, and 29% saying that their workload is unmanageable all or most of the time. The most frequently reported contributing factors were increased administrative burden, widening of duties, and the impact of restructuring and staff reduction (UCU, 2016b).

While UCU members working in higher education responding to the 2012 occupational stress survey reported higher than average levels of well-being regarding the control of their work, they report large well-being gaps with regard to demands (workload, pace of work and working hours) and role (which assesses levels of role clarity and the extent to which employees believe that their work fits into the overall aims of the organisation) compared to the mean for those working in target group industries. With regards to role ambiguity over 50% of respondents working in HE agreed that always (18%) or often (37%) "different groups at work demand things from me that are hard to combine." On the whole, UCU members employed in teaching and research roles reported lower levels of wellbeing related to demands and control than those in teaching or research only jobs (UCU, 2013).

Qualitative studies exploring bullying in research environments highlight the role that these stressors play in environments where a focus on external excellence emphasises individualistic competition and a sink or swim mentality to the detriment of staff well-being (Phipps, 2015).

Conclusion: What do we know? With what degree of confidence?

While no study we located suggests that bullying and harassment is not a serious issue in UK R&I environments, estimates of the percentage of staff and students affected vary from survey to survey, and a wide variety of survey design and a reliance on self-selecting samples means that we lack the robust data to tell us about true prevalence, reveal long-term trends, make cross-country comparisons, or to say whether bullying and harassment is worse in academia than in other sectors (Henning et al., 2017; Keashly and Neuman, 2013).

Results from both small-scale studies carried out in academic environments and meta-analyses suggest that women and ethnic minorities experience group-based harassment in greater numbers, although there appear to be smaller differences with regard to general bullying.

There is strong meta-analytic evidence from longitudinal studies linking exposure to bullying with negative mental health consequences, with meta-analytic correlational data linking it to work-related behavioural outcomes including intent to leave, lack of commitment, job dissatisfaction and absenteeism.

There is clear evidence from a number of qualitative and quantitative studies of low levels of reporting of bullying and harassment, partially explained by a number of barriers, including a lack of understanding of procedures, and fear of retaliation.

The wider literature increasingly portrays bullying and harassment as rooted in both organisational and individual characteristics. Meta-analytic evidence has identified features of the organisational environment which correlate with bullying, including high workload, job insecurity, role ambiguity and cognitive demands. Similarly, meta-analyses find that levels of sexual harassment are correlated with hierarchical environments with a perceived tolerance for harassment. However, due to the cross-sectional nature of this research it is not possible to make claims about causality.

Some researchers argue that the academic environment is uniquely structured to facilitate bullying due to its hierarchical nature and a culture of 'research superstars'. Due to the lack of comparative evidence it is not possible to assess whether the issue is particularly bad in HEIs, but qualitative and survey evidence collected from universities confirms that many of the organisational correlates of bullying and harassment identified in the previous paragraph are features of the academic environment.

Approaches to tackling bulling and harassment in R&I environments

In recent years, there has been much activity in the UK, US and Australia aimed at strengthening universities' responses to student-student sexual harassment, with some work also focusing on staff sexual harassment. This has led to major cross-sectoral reviews such as Changing the Culture in the UK (Universities UK, 2016), Equally Safe in Higher Education in Scotland (Donaldson et al., 2018; Donaldson and McCarry, 2018; McCullough et al., 2017), On Safe Ground in Australia (Australian Human Rights Centre, 2017) and Sexual Harassment of Women, Climate Culture and Consequences in the US (NASEM, 2018). These reports both provide an overview of approaches to tackling sexual harassment currently occurring in research environments and recommendations for future action. With the exception of Climate, Culture and Consequences, these reports are primarily focused on students. Tackling staff harassment is currently less of a focus in the UK (Universities UK, 2018).

There are some common themes running through these reports on the correct approach to tackling issues of sexual harassment within universities.

These are
- **Taking a whole institution approach by embedding activities across the whole campus.**
- **Recognising that tackling harassment requires a commitment from senior leadership.**
- **Improving response strategies and removing barriers to reporting by developing clear, well-signposted reporting processes and expeditious disciplinary systems.**
- **Implementing a prevention strategy by developing clear policies and codes of conduct on expected behaviour and delivering training programmes.**

To date there is a wide variation between institutions in progress towards reaching these goals (McCullough et al., 2017; Universities UK, 2018). McCullough et al. (2017) for example find that all nineteen Scottish HEIs have general policies for dignity and respect at work and study which cover bullying and harassment, but only two have distinct policies on sexual misconduct. Nine have distinct dignity and respect advisors and harassment contacts, while 12 run some form of prevention or education campaign aimed at tackling gender-based violence.

We know less about what institutions are currently doing to tackle bullying. No recent reviews of institutional approaches to tackle bullying were located. This is not to say that there is not activity and good practice focused on this issue, but that in recent years no survey of the sector equivalent to that undertaken by Universities UK has pulled it all together. The most recent cross-sectoral evidence we located came from a 2007 UCU report based on a survey sent to all HEIs and case study interviews with 22 HEIs (UCU, 2007). Interestingly UCU's recommendations from that report matched quite closely with those set out above, including the importance of senior leadership support, embedding activity as part of a wider strategy, developing clear and accessible policies and providing training.

The next section will go into more detail on the elements of these approaches as well as highlighting examples of innovative practice where they are being implemented in national and international environments. It will also draw on both the academic and cross-sectoral workplace bullying literature to understand what we know about how effective these approaches have been, and where the gaps in our knowledge are.

Improving response strategies

As set out in earlier sections, research in HEIs has found consistently low levels of reporting for bullying and harassment of all kinds, with barriers including a lack of awareness of the relevant policies or contacts to disclose to, and a high level of dissatisfaction with processes among those that do report.

In response to these findings, the majority of the twenty HEIs surveyed by Universities UK have begun to revise their reporting systems and raise awareness of processes via e.g. staff and student training, and to revise disciplinary systems to comply with the framework developed by Universities UK and Pinsent Mason on handing allegations of student misconduct which may also constitute a criminal offence (Universities UK, 2018).

Most of this work is focused on tackling student sexual misconduct, reflecting the fact that it has been driven by the recommendations of the UUK taskforce. Staff-student and staff-staff misconduct, and other forms of hate crime and harassment receive less attention. However, based on their research with student victims of staff misconduct The 1752 Group, a group of academics aimed at tackling staff-student sexual harassment, have worked with a law firm to draw up detailed guidelines for disciplinary processes in cases of staff student sexual misconduct, covering all stages of the process from disclosure to disciplinary process (The 1752 Group and McAllister Olivarius, 2018).

Some of the key elements of approaches being implemented by HEIs are set out below.

Clear and signposted policies

UCU's 2007 report highlighted that at that point, nearly all of the 22 HEIs they surveyed had a specific dignity at work policy which covered bullying and harassment. A key issue identified was making sure there was clarity about the way that this policy linked with other policies, such as disciplinary and grievance policies, as well as clearly specifying the procedures for making a formal or informal complaint and setting out sources of support for the complainant and the alleged perpetrator. The study notes that 'best practice' institutions make these policies available in a variety of formats, including via staff induction packs (UCU, 2007).

The majority of current university policies cover sexual harassment as part of their overarching dignity at work or bullying and harassment policies (McCullough

et al., 2017). However, in recent years as focus has shifted onto more specific forms of harassment, there is a preference within the grey literature for stand-alone sexual harassment policies (Australian Human Rights Centre, 2017). One issue is that many general dignity at work policies recommend that complainants attempt to resolve issues informally with the alleged perpetrator in the first instance, which is unlikely to be appropriate in many cases of sexual harassment (Bull and Rye, 2018).

Policies should provide clear and consistent definitions of various forms of bullying and harassment with examples, and summarise all university-level processes and procedures for responding to disclosures (Donaldson et al., 2018; Universities UK, 2016). Spurred on by the Universities UK recommendation, many universities are reviewing their policies in this area. A recent study by Bull and Rye found that there was considerable variation in the amount of procedural information provided by university policies on staff-student sexual harassment (Bull and Rye, 2018).

Partnership development

UCU recommend that bullying policies be developed in conjunction with trade union representatives and have input from as wide a range of users as possible including staff with specialist expertise (UCU, 2007). Similarly good practice institutions identified by Universities UK (2016) and the University of Strathclyde (McCullough et al., 2017) were developing their sexual harassment policies in conjunction with staff and student representatives and via partnership working with local external specialist organisations. At Yale University, this partnership work is institutionalised via two advisory boards, one for graduate students, and one for undergraduates who meet regularly with departmental and university wide leadership teams to share their perspectives on sexual harassment policies, procedures and programmes (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, 2018).

Lowering barriers to disclosure

Other activity is focused on making it easier for staff or students experiencing issues to make a disclosure of bullying or harassment. Reviews from Australia and The US discussing sexual harassment, and the practitioners interviewed by UCU discussing bullying, recommend developing both informal and formal reporting routes to overcome reluctance to report (Australian Human Rights Centre, 2017; NASEM, 2018; UCU, 2007). Research suggests that many targets of bullying and harassment are reluctant to follow formal pathways

due to fear of causing trouble when they simply want the behaviour to change or stop with as little long term damage as possible (Riazuddin et al., 2018; UCU, 2007). However, it is also clearly important to ensure that informality does not mean that the complainant feels that their concern is not being taken seriously.

To assist those who wish to disclose, some universities have begun to streamline the process by developing networks of 'first responders', trained individuals to act as a confidential first port of call for any concerns, and who may then give advice or assist the victim to begin the process of making a formal complaint Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC, 2018; McCullough et al., 2017). Based on their research which found that complainants were often left in the dark about ongoing, and even completed investigations,

The 1752 Group recommend that a key part of this will be identifying a named point of contact to keep complainants updated and provide them with a clear timeline (The 1752 Group and McAllister Olivarius, 2018).

Several American universities are making use of a specific online sexual assault reporting tool called Callisto, which provides users with three reporting options (Rajan et al., n.d.). First, they can lodge a secure, encrypted time-stamped record of their assault which is inaccessible to any other party but preserves evidence in case they want to take future action. Secondly, they can send the report they have created directly to their institution to begin an investigation or consultation. Thirdly they can choose to opt-in to a repeat perpetrator matching escrow system. If another user names the same perpetrator then both are notified, and the information

is sent to a university point of contact who will guide them through their options for further action. This ensures that the victim will be reporting harassment as part of a group, something which Bull and Rye found to be a facilitator of reporting in their research on staff student sexual misconduct (Bull and Rye, 2018). The EHRC report that the Ministry of Justice Design and Technology team are currently developing their own tool based on the principles of Callisto (EHRC, 2018).

Another innovation in this space is the provision for anonymous reporting which can allow victims to document harassment without formally reporting it. In the UK several universities such as KCL (Riazuddin et al., 2018) and Cambridge (Virgo, 2018) have developed their own online anonymous reporting tools that can be used by staff and students to report bullying and harassment. While some systems specify that action cannot be taken regarding individual allegations on the basis of an anonymous complaint, The 1752 Group have drawn up guidelines for disciplinary processes which recommend that anonymous reports should have this power (The 1752 Group and McAllister Olivarius, 2018).

The advantage of anonymous systems for HEIs is that they allow them to identify trends or specific areas of concern and evaluate the impact of initiatives. The advantage for victims is the ability to share their experience without having to go through the often exhausting and traumatising experience of making a formal complaint.

Institutional responses

The literature is relatively silent on disciplinary procedures, and even more so on interventions with the potential for the rehabilitation of offenders. Responding to the 2007 UCU study, some HEIs indicated that they made use of mediation procedures to deal with instances of bullying. While the respondents felt this to be useful, they agreed that it was not suitable for all cases, particularly those with a long entrenched history, or in which there was a significant power imbalance (UCU, 2007). Mediation is less mentioned in connection with dealing with disclosures of other forms of workplace misconduct, and is unlikely to be appropriate in cases of sexual harassment or other forms of group based misconduct (The 1752 Group and McAllister Olivarius, 2018).

While accountability and redress are clearly important, Alison Phipps, who has led projects examining the culture of several UK HEIs, has cautioned against the use of overly retributive punishments. Although many participants in her research called for the firing of staff or expelling of students Phipps argues that such punitive approaches are likely to 'protect the privileged at the expense of the marginalised', while similarly entrenching the idea that bullying and harassment are purely individual issues, divorced from the organisation in which they take place (Phipps, 2018a). More progressive disciplinary action, which may include a change in work responsibilities and which matches the severity and frequency of misconduct, may also increase the likelihood of subjects reporting, given that many refrain for fear of making trouble (NASEM, 2018).

Improving transparency and accountability

In response to the findings that many universities lack a centralised database of incident reports, some are beginning to develop systems to record instances of student-student sexual misconduct and store them centrally in one place. In some cases, this data is passed up through the university hierarchy. However, as this is mainly happening in response to the work of the UUK taskforce, it is less clear if centralised data relating to other forms of bullying and harassment are being collected in the same way (Universities UK, 2018).

A similar approach is employed at NASA, where instances of bullying and harassment are collated into an annual report providing anonymised details on the number of cases addressed, the time required for investigation and resolution to take place, and any actions taken in response. This report can be used as a means for leaders to monitor and evaluate the function of anti-harassment policies and procedures (NASEM, 2018).

How effective have these approaches been?

While the approaches described in the previous section are all based on evidence highlighting the deficiencies in current systems, very few of them have been subsequently evaluated. This is partly due to the fact that a lot of activity in the sector has been initiated fairly recently in response to the UUK taskforce (Universities UK, 2018), but also reflects a general lack of evaluation of interventions to tackle bullying and harassment in both the higher education (Henning et al., 2017; Keashly and Neuman, 2013) and general workplace environment (Gillen et al., 2017; Nielsen and Einarsen, 2018). In many cases no evidence on effectiveness was located. Evidence that we did locate is set out below.

Improved awareness and anonymous reporting

One difficulty is the question of how to measure success. Efforts to raise awareness of policies, to lower the barriers to reporting, and to improve recording systems will inevitable result in a larger number of disclosed instances, but cannot tell us about whether these subsequently reduce the prevalence of bullying and harassment.

On the former measure, there is some evidence to suggest that the online or anonymous reporting procedures introduced by Cambridge and by Callisto have been successful. While not giving detail about the sample size or methodology, Callisto's website notes that "survivors who visited Callisto website were 6 times more likely to report their assault to their school or the police than survivors who did not", and that since 2015, 10% of records in the escrow system have matched, thereby identifying serial perpetrators (Callisto, 2018). Cambridge University report that since the introduction of their anonymous reporting tool they have seen a large increase in reports and a spike around the time of their awareness raising campaign 'Breaking the Silence'. They have also seen a simultaneous increase in the number of people who believe that something would be done if they made a complaint (Virgo, 2018).

Mediation

Practitioners interviewed by UCU for their survey of approaches to tackle bullying at HEIs agreed that in some circumstances mediation could be an effective tool, particularly in dealing with issues at an early stage before any significant escalation (UCU, 2007). We located no evaluations of mediation schemes in the HE literature, and a 2018 Cochrane review of bullying interventions located no study from the wider workplace literature with a design robust enough for them to consider. However a systematic review and realist synthesis which incorporated studies with a broader range of designs found that disagreement exists regarding the suitability of mediation for bullying (Illing et al., 2013). A study examining the views of 327 professionals from a range of sectors with experience of mediation found that almost three quarters believed that mediation had a positive impact on organisational culture, 83% felt that it improved interpersonal relationships, but only 57% felt it produced a situation in which both parties were satisfied (Latreille et al., 2012), while Ferris (2009), a consultant with thirteen years of mediation experience reports reservations and potential risks associated with the use of mediation, including in instances of

power imbalances, in cases where the victim may be too psychologically fragile to participate, and where the alleged perpetrator may display aggression.

Another article cited by Illing et al, (2013) describes an internal mediation scheme introduced in an NHS trust in which nineteen internal mediators were trained on a 6-day accredited course. Around half of the cases related to bullying and harassment. They report that 100% of cases reached an agreement and participants indicated that if they had not been offered mediation they might have raised a grievance, gone on sick leave or left the department. However, the article gives no further details on sample, sample size or methodology (Jennings and Tiplady, 2010). All in all, the studies located by Illing provide some evidence that mediation can have a positive effect but are limited in their research designs, being mainly made up of practitioner perspective and respondent self-report and don't contain longitudinal perspectives on the effect of mediation on organisational culture or behaviour change.

Necessary but not sufficient?

While the research presented in previous sections makes clear that lowering the barriers to reporting and improving the response to such disclosures is essential, it is unlikely to be sufficient on its own to reduce the overall incidence of bullying and harassment.

Survey data across a range of workplaces shows consistently low levels of reporting by those experiencing bullying and harassment (Evesson et al., 2015). Focusing on reporting places the onus on the individual to pursue resolution. While institutions may work to remove some of the barriers to reporting and to communicate a lack of institutional tolerance for bullying and harassment, they are unlikely to be able to tackle all such reasons, including fear of professional or academic repercussions. Given the large number of university staff who currently work on short term contacts, it seems likely that only some staff will see reporting as a safe strategy.

Although in the long term increasing disclosures is no doubt essential and valuable, there are also concerns expressed by universities about how to deal with an increased volume of complaints (Universities UK, 2018) in the short-term. Research carried out in a Canadian university highlights the serious repercussions that making a complaint can have if the system is not calibrated to support the complainant. Keashly and Neuman (2013) asked university employees who reported

being bullied to indicate what responses they had tried and whether those strategies had made the situation better, worse, or had no impact. Worryingly a majority of respondents who reported interacting with official systems (talking with their supervisors, telling the union, telling HR or making a formal complaint) indicated that these strategies had made the situation worse. Similarly scholars examining sexual harassment have documented the additional negative impacts for targets of sexual harassment when they experience 'institutional betrayal' – being let down by their institutions after disclosing sexual harassment (Smith and Freyd, 2013).

Individual versus institutional responses

The evidence presented in earlier sections suggests that bullying and harassment are complex problems arising from a combination of individual and organisational factors, and yet the interventions being trialled by universities are primarily focused on the individual. Whitley and Page (2015) point out that it is currently not possible within institutional complaints processes to "name a culture or an institution as being involved in the maintenance of an environment where sexual harassment is common". As such the focus on promoting reporting and disciplinary procedures, as currently constructed, risks conceiving of bullying and harassment as an individual, as opposed to an organisational, issue. Phipps argues that this allows universities to respond to allegations by "treating a reported incident of sexual harassment as a singular, one-off event, perpetrated by a singular (and excisable) member of staff" and thus maintain their reputation (Phipps, 2018a).

An alternative approach is offered by the Grounded Action Inquiry approach taken by the 'Changing University Culture Collective', of which Phipps is a part and which consists of an examination of institutional culture through qualitative and quantitative data and sees responsibility as collectively shared between the institution and the individual. This approach has been trialled at Sussex (Phipps, 2018b) and Imperial (Phipps, 2015), but we located no evaluations.

Developing a robust prevention strategy

In recognition of the fact that it is the duty of HEIs as employers to not only respond adequately to bullying and harassment, but also to ensure a harassment free environment, many HEIs are taking steps to develop institutional prevention strategies. Again, most recent activity appears to focus on student sexual misconduct (Universities UK, 2018), but UCU research also indicated that the interventions such as codes of conduct and training have been widely used at HEIs to address bullying for a number of years (UCU, 2007).

Clear codes of conduct on expected behaviour

Many universities responding to the UCU's research on bullying indicated that they had a code of conduct setting out appropriate standards of behaviour, and that these were circulated in a variety of formats, including in staff handbooks and online.

In a study examining staff-student sexual misconduct Bull and Rye (2018) are critical of current university codes of conduct regarding staff student relationships. Their analysis suggests that they are highly variable and vague, with very few prohibiting relationships. Australia has gone one step further than the UK in this respect and four representative bodies have adopted guidelines on relationships between academics and the research students they supervise. The guidelines advise that such relationships are unacceptable and that in circumstances where they occur alternative supervisory arrangements should be found (Times Higher Education, 2018).

In the US two professional associations have taken steps to strengthen their policies in response to issues of sexual harassment. The American Geophysical Union (AGU) has changed its definition of research misconduct to incorporate sexual harassment arguing that "these actions violate AGU's commitment to a safe and professional environment required to learn, conduct and communicate science" (AGU, 2017). While the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) does not include sexual harassment under the umbrella of research misconduct, it has passed a new policy stating that "harassment, sexual or otherwise, is a form of misconduct that undermines the integrity of society meetings. Violators of this policy will be subject to discipline." The AAAS policy provides clear details of how to report violations and allows those who are found to have violated professional ethics to be stripped of their membership (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, 2018).

Training

Training is a popular preventative measure being undertaken at many universities. Long-standing interventions include general diversity training, and specific dignity at work/ bullying and harassment training aimed at staff, managers, and in some cases the institution's governing body (UCU, 2007) and sexual harassment training, which is widely used in U.S. universities (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, 2018).

Bystander training for sexual harassment is a newer, but increasingly popular intervention (McCullough et al., 2017; Universities UK, 2018). Originating in the US, Public Health England have now developed their own bystander training for use in UK universities, The Intervention Initiative, which consists of eight 60-90 minute sessions delivered by trained facilitators (Fenton and Mott, 2018). These programmes are designed to empower trainees with the resources to intervene, as bystanders, in instances of sexual harassment or assault.

What do we know about how effective these have been?

Codes of conduct

No studies were found evaluating the introduction of codes of conduct in the sectoral literature and a 2018 Cochrane systematic review found no studies from the wider workplace literature with robust enough design to consider. However, Illing et al.'s (2013) realist synthesis, which examined a wider range of studies, found one descriptive case study of the introduction of a code of conduct into an ambulatory surgery centre in the US. All staff members signed the code and violators who failed to revise their behaviour after three attempts at engagement were dismissed. The authors report a reduction in staff turnover, an increase in staff satisfaction with a healthy work environment, and no additional reports of "lateral violence" (an alternative term for bullying), but provide no data, sample, or methodology (Dimarino, 2011).

Evidence on bystander training

The effectiveness of bystander training has been evaluated by a growing body of evidence, almost entirely conducted with students in the US.

A recent systematic review and meta-analysis was carried out by Jouriles et al. (2018) on studies of bystander training administered to undergraduates. To be included in the meta-analysis the studies needed to include a control group of any type and 24 studies met the criteria. They found that students who participated in bystander programmes reported greater pro-social attitudes and beliefs about sexual violence compared to control groups, and also reported engaging in more bystander behaviour at follow up. However, these positive effects were small and the meta-analysis found that they diminished over time. Longer programmes were found to have greater effects than smaller programmes. A general limitation with this literature is a reliance on self-report measures of programme effects and the short time frame of follow up in the studies (very few more than two months and none more than twelve). As universities choose to opt in to running bystander programmes rather than having them randomly assigned no study to date has tested whether bystander programmes actually impact on sexual violence prevalence rates.

Another recent systematic review and meta-analysis with stricter inclusion criteria regarding eligible control groups (Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs), quasi-randomized RCTs or controlled quasi-experimental designs) analysed fourteen studies with undergraduate populations and tested whether the effects of bystander programmes differed depending on the timing of the programme (during the early years of university versus later on) (Kettrey and Marx, 2018). They found that bystander training had a medium sized significant effect on trainees' confidence in their ability to intervene and their self-perceived likelihood of intentions to intervene and a small significant effect on reports of actual intervention measured from 4.3 to 25.8 weeks later. Their moderator analyses indicated that these effects were larger in the early years of college than in the later years.

Although the outcome measures used by these studies are imperfect the fact that they do consistently show positive change on a variety of cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural variables, coupled with the inherent difficulty of measuring changes in community level victimisation means that they have strong potential in tackling sexual harassment among students.

Since these reviews only cover bystander interventions tested with undergraduate student populations it is uncertain whether the observed effects would hold with staff, or in relation to other forms of bullying and harassment. In their review of the workplace bullying literature Branch et al., (2013) conclude that this is a promising area for future research. Illing et al.'s (2013) realist synthesis found four descriptive papers discussing the role of bystanders and providing anecdotal evidence for their importance in challenging bullying behaviour, but none implemented or evaluated a specific intervention. They also highlight several barriers including fear of becoming a target, lack of status, inexperience, fear of causing embarrassment or making things worse.

Sexual harassment training

A 2018 study by Roehling and Huang examined 60 papers studying the effectiveness of sexual harassment training, almost all of which were carried out in the US. Half made use of experimental or quasi-experimental designs to test a training intervention, while the rest use survey data, either cross-sectional or longitudinal, or case study designs. Half of the experimental and quasi-experimental studies were carried out with undergraduates, while public sector populations, including university employees, were also well represented. Studies typically measured trainees' reactions, attitudes and knowledge acquisition and the authors conclude that the studies show training can be effective in increasing knowledge of policies and behaviours that constitute sexual harassment, but that it is not clear to what extent this knowledge is retained or affects behaviour (Roehling and Huang, 2018). Meta-analyses of diversity training (including sexual harassment training) by Kalinoswki et al. (2013) highlight how rare it is to evaluate trainings for their effect on behaviour change. Bezrukova et al.'s (2016) meta-analysis of 260 studies on diversity training with almost 30,000 adult participants found that changes in cognitive learning – the extent to which a trainee acquires knowledge about diversity issues – persisted over time but found no long-term effect on attitudinal learning – changes in the trainees' attitudes on diversity.

There is also evidence to suggest that in some cases harassment training can have a negative effect by activating gender stereotypes, particularly in the case of mandatory training (Tinkler et al., 2015). This suggests that while training may play a role in increasing knowledge about sexual harassment in the workplace there is a need for more research to understand if it is effective in changing behaviour, and for attention to be paid to the organisational context (more information on this below).

Conflict management training

We found no evaluations of conflict management training in university settings and so sought evidence from the wider literature. A 2018 Cochrane study found only one study with a design robust enough to warrant inclusion (Gillen et al., 2017). Hoel and Giga (2006) used a randomized control trial design to test a thirty-minute policy communication session, three hour stress management training and a three hour negative behaviour awareness training in various combinations across five UK public sector organisations, taking pre and post intervention measurements with a negative behaviour and experiences questionnaire. Feedback from participants in the sessions was positive but post-intervention measures six months after training found that bullying victimisation did not change significantly compared to the baseline measure.

Illing et al.'s (2013) realist synthesis, which considered studies with a wider range of designs, found only one further study directly measured the impact of conflict management training on rates of bullying. Leon-Perez et al. (2012) delivered conflict management training to intermediate managers (42 participants) in a Spanish manufacturing organisation. Participants reported a significant increase in their conflict management success and surveyed employees reported a significant reduction in the number and intensity of interpersonal conflicts but a non-significant decrease in negative acts. The other studies located by Illing suggest that trainees often feel positive about training. In a study of a conflict management training intervention conducted with a small sample of nurses (20) 89% of trainees reported that they were able to effectively apply the techniques learnt (Evans and Curtis, 2011). A pre-post evaluation of a two day conflict resolution programme for doctors (57) and academic health faculty (45) found that one year later trainees reported that they had applied the skills learnt to work and experienced improvements in their relationships with co-workers (Zweibel et al., 2008). However, the response rate was only 23%.

These studies were all of a very low quality, with small self-selecting samples and no control groups, but they do illustrate that conflict management training may be somewhat effective in developing conflict management skills, although there is no clear evidence that bullying is reduced. Illing et al.'s synthesis of the literature strongly suggests that there are several key contextual factors which affect the success of training interventions, including the number and composition of trainees. They suggest that for training to be effective it must be delivered to a critical mass of staff and should involve managers and leaders.

Institutional versus individual responses

Research set out in earlier sections identified bullying and harassment as being produced by an interaction of personal and organisational issues, but both codes of conduct and the majority of trainings described in the previous section are targeted at the individual. We were unable to locate any trialled interventions in the sector which focused on tackling the organisational enablers of bullying and harassment (including strong power imbalances) or the organisational motivators (such as high workload and role conflict) mentioned in the sectoral and cross-sectoral research. However, some literature from the wider workplace bullying literature, and recommendations from the recent National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine Report provide promising routes for further action (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, 2018).

Civility, Respect and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW)

In their 2017 Cochrane review of interventions to prevent bulling in the workplace (Gillen et al., 2017) the authors found only five studies with designs robust enough to include. Two of these were large controlled before and after studies with 2969 participants examining a multi-component organisational intervention called CREW and its effect on workplace civility and co-worker and superior incivility (Leiter et al., 2012; Osatuke et al., 2009).

The Cochrane authors note that bullying and incivility are often used interchangeably but that incivility is generally considered to be at the lower end of the continuum of abusive behaviour in the workplace (Mannix-McNamara et al., 2014). Discussing their decision to include these studies in a review of anti-bullying interventions the Cochrane authors noted that "the included studies measured civility using a scale that averaged answers on eight questions concerning respect, cooperation, conflict resolution, co-worker personal interest, co-worker reliability, anti-discrimination, value differences, and supervisor diversity acceptance. We regarded these behaviours as the inverse of incivility and therefore an indirect measure of bullying victimisation."

CREW. is designed to enable work units to identify their strengths and areas for improvement with regards to civility, and consists of the identification of internal facilitators, self-report surveys and facilitated group work based on the survey findings.

The meta-analysis of the studies conducted by the Cochrane teams showed a 5% increase in civility compared to the baseline score, although they classified the evidence as very low quality (Gillen et al., 2017). One of the studies also reported a small decrease in self-reported incivility experienced from supervisors, but not in self-reported incivility experienced from co-workers, or in self-reported incivility perpetration (Leiter et al., 2012).

It remains an open question whether such an intervention would be effective in reducing levels of more severe behaviour, such as bullying and harassment, however the results do suggest that complex interventions focusing on organisational change have the potential to tackle issues of workplace misconduct.

Focusing on leadership and managers

The practitioners interviewed by UCU (2007) identify the key role that managers and other leaders play in shaping the organisational environment, either via management styles that could develop into, or be perceived as bullying, or laissez-faire styles that allow incidents to pass unchallenged. A challenge for managers in academic environments is that they are typically selected on the basis of academic achievements with little management training and respondents to the UCU study and the NASEM report both recommend training for leaders designed to cultivate self-awareness and empathy (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, 2018; UCU, 2007).

This is supported by the realist synthesis of academic literature by Illing et al. (2013) who identify a high degree of consensus between the academic literature and their interviews with experts from the field that "a major issue in tacking workplace bullying starts at the organisational level with a focus on leadership and management". Thus, preventative interventions should be focused first at leaders and managers. Rayner and McIvor interviewed 12 experts in bullying and harassment, and 34 practitioners about their experience implementing interventions to reduce workplace bullying, and held 11 focus groups across the UK with employees, HR professionals and trade union employees. They found that organisations which were successful in managing and reducing bullying saw the occurrence of bullying as a result of a negative work environment, assuming organisational responsibility, rather than individual blame (Rayner and McIvor, 2008).

Changing faculty reward structures

In recognition of the challenges created by reward structures focusing solely on individual performance the NASEM recommend altering faculty evaluation structures to include those that focus on

"co-operation, respectful work behaviours and professionalism, rather than solely on individual level teaching and research performance metrics… where faculty members act as leaders and engage in their research or teaching with teams… there may be opportunities for rewarding collaborative, respectful and professional behaviour (e.g. including cooperative metrics, soliciting feedback from subordinates and trainees within regular review processes)" (NASEM, 2018)

NASEM highlight NASA as one place where this approach has been adopted. Managers and supervisors in NASA are "considered not only as receivers and decision makers of allegations of harassment, but also as leaders who take action to prevent harassment in the workplace and are accountable under the agency's annual performance review system."

Although we found no evaluations of interventions which took this approach some of the evidence considered by Illing et al. (2013) in their realist synthesis provides some support. In their study gathering practitioner and expert opinion (detailed further above) one of Rayner and McIvor's key findings was that in organisations with lower workplace bullying managers were strongly focused on staff well-being, and effective people management was afforded status as a core activity along with a focus on task performance. Because of this focus by managers, when bullying did occur it was 'nipped in the bud'. The authors therefore suggest that "leaders and managers who possess good interpersonal, communication, and conflict management skills should be selected and promoted to demonstrate the value the organisation places on active management of bullying" (Rayner and McIvor, 2008).

Diffusing Power Structures

Another as yet untrialled organisational intervention suggested by the literature on the antecedents to bullying and harassment is to take steps to diffuse the power structure within HEIs. The NASEM report suggests that this could be done both via cultivating egalitarian leadership styles which create a culture of openness and value all perspectives, and via structures that broaden out responsibility for students and early career researchers, such as mentoring networks, committee based advising and departmental responsibility for trainees. Funding power could also be diffused if institutions or departments take on responsibility for preserving the work of a research team even if the Prinicipal Investigator (PI) is removed (NASEM, 2018).

Motivating change & transparency

It is clear that there is much to be done to tackle bullying and harassment in HEIs. However, fear of reputational damage can often stand in the way of attempts to address the issue. This was an issue noted by practitioners interviewed by UCU who felt that "one reason for not implementing a dignity-at-work initiative was the fear that this would lead to an increase in complaints, and that this, in turn, would result in bad publicity" (UCU, 2007) and is likely to be even more so in the current climate. Indeed, the response in the press to a recent initiative introducing an anonymous reporting system at Cambridge University highlights the risks run by university attempting to make change – with headlines reading 'Cambridge university admits "significant" sexual misconduct problem'.

It is thus essential not only for universities who are making an effort to improve their institution to receive support from the wider sector and funding councils, but also for steps to be taken which incentivise this change, while avoiding measures which promote symbolic, rather than substantive compliance.

Legislation

Some jurisdictions have specific legislation which encourages efforts to tackle campus sexual assault either via interpretation or design. The most well-known of these is the US's Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 which prohibits sex discrimination in any education programme or activity receiving federal funding. Subsequent case law held that sexual harassment may amount to sex discrimination under Title IX and that students may seek monetary damages from universities that have been 'deliberately indifferent' to known acts of student-on-student sexual harassment. A recent report by the Women and Equalities Select committee recommended that the government place similar legal obligation on universities in the UK (Women and Equalities Committee, 2018), although the government is yet to respond. While in the UK universities, as public bodies, have legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 to ensure that women are free from sexual harassment, there are no specific legal obligations on them to deal with sexual harassment (Long and Hubble, 2018).

It should be noted that the recent consensus study report produced by the National Academies of Science Engineering and Medicine was critical of Title IX, arguing that it had incentivised organisations to create policies, procedures and training that focus on symbolic compliance in order to avoid legal responsibilities (NASEM, 2018). Organisations have reduced liability when they can demonstrate that they have exercised reasonable care to prevent sexually harassing behaviour. This has led to the expansion of sexual harassment training as a means of demonstrating such reasonable care, while disincentivising thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of this training, or any other policies and procedures.

More recently legislation in the US and Canada has been introduced which requires universities to implement specific programmes. In the US the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (2013) requires universities to offer primary prevention and awareness programmes, including bystander training and training on sexual misconduct and related offences for all incoming students and new employees (Maloney, 2011). In Canada most provinces have introduced bills to require universities to create, implement and periodically review a policy on sexual violence (Australian Human Rights Centre, 2017).

Other legislation has been targeted at increasing transparency. The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act requires all institutions receiving federal funds to report crimes near or on campus, including sexual assaults (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, 2018).

Funder Policies

In the past few years an increasing number of funders have begun to incorporate conditions relating to bullying and harassment into their grant conditions.

In 2018 three large funders announced policies clarifying their expectations of the organisations they fund around bullying and harassment and reserving the right, in instances where these expectations are violated, to remove funding. Introduced in May 2018, Wellcome's policy (Wellcome, 2018b) requires that grantee organisations have a policy in place that clearly sets out the standards of behaviour it expects from staff and their procedures for responding to complaints, including a first point of contact. They also expect that grantee organisations will investigate allegations in a timely and fair manner and tell the Wellcome's director of grants about any allegations of bullying or harassment that are upheld once the full internal process is complete.

Wellcome set out a series of escalating potential sanctions for individuals against whom an allegation is upheld, from a letter of reprimand, requiring that the organisation monitor the way the person manages staff, withdrawal of grants and the barring of applications for future grants. They also state that they may level sanctions against organisations who don't respond to complaints promptly and objectively, including by not accepting grant applications for a limited period of time.

In October 2018 Cancer Research UK (CRUK)introduced a similar policy but provided more detail on what they expect grantees' policies on bullying and harassment to consist of. This included many of the interventions discussed in the preceding sections — first points of contact, routes of formal and informal escalation, whistle-blower protection, offers for resolution such as mediation or training and appropriate sanctions for misconduct. CRUK ask that these policies be readily available, form part of induction processes, that grantees take reasonable steps to implement them, and provide evidence to CRUK of setting out these steps as part of grants management audit processes (Cancer Research UK, 2018).

CRUK may sanction organisations if it feels that there has been institutional level failure to respond to complaints, carry out disciplinary processes or uphold conduct standards, by carrying out ongoing monitoring of a host institution's policies and practices, suspending grants or not accepting new grant applications.

CRUK's policy also includes a clause mandating that grantee institutions not enter into agreements (such as NDAs) which may prevent them from telling funders about allegations of bullying and harassment.

In the US the National Science Foundation (NSF) has similarly adopted a policy which requires grantees to notify NSF of any findings of sexual assault against a PI (Principal Investigator) or Co-I (Co-Investigator), as well as the placement of the PI or Co-I on administrative leave relating to a harassment or sexual assault investigation (NASEM, 2018).

While inevitably the focus of discussion of these policies in the sector and general press has been around the potential for the execution of the threat to remove funding in cases of bullying or harassment (which was actioned by Wellcome in 2018), there is also the potential for these polices to act as catalysts for cultural change if they lead to the uptake of effective policies and interventions.

It is still an open question whether they will produce the desired culture change or whether they will provide incentives for institutions to focus on symbolic rather than substantive compliance (as critics of Title IX charge it has done) whilst also deterring whistle-blowers from reporting workplace misconduct for fear of jeopardising a grant that funds their own work.

An early incarnation of this sort of approach came in 2011 when the National Institute for Health Research made it a requirement that a programme or department have a silver level Athena SWAN award to be considered for Biomedical Research Centre funding. This link to funding has been credited with the rapid dissemination of the scheme in the UK, as it provided a powerful motivational link for institutions to achieve the award and therefore to investigate and tackle issues related to diversity (primarily gender equality) (Ovseiko et al., 2017). While evaluations to date have noted many positive impacts of Athena SWAN including a greater appreciation of caring responsibilities and increased space to discuss issues of gender equality (Caffrey et al., 2016; Ovseiko et al., 2017) they also report that the link with funding created such strong incentives to receive the award that it risked doing so at the risk of sweeping issues under the carpet, and therefore at the expense of achieving substantive change (Ovseiko et al., 2017).

Similar worries surround a forthcoming Irish initiative. Science Foundation Ireland, the Irish Research Council and the Health Research Board have announced that from the end of 2019 they will require all HEIs to have Athena SWAN Bronze in order to be eligible for research funding. By the end of 2023 they will be required to hold silver level accreditation (Science Foundation Ireland, n.d.). Recent reporting has suggested that this funding link is being used to 'bully' women involved in a long-running dispute with a university who failed to achieve the bronze award (*THE*, 2017).

When one of Athena SWAN's early champions, Professor Athene Donald, wrote a blogpost worrying that Athena SWAN had become a victim of its own success, partly as a result of its growing importance (Donald, 2018), she received a large number of comments highlighting similar concerns and the functioning of perverse incentives in action.

"My experience of Athena SWAN is that it rewards the departments that make quick superficial changes that paper over their problems, and penalises the departments that take an honest look at themselves and work to tackle the roots of the problem."

Conclusion: What do we know? With what degree of confidence?

Approaches taken

Due to a series of recent cross-sectoral reviews we know a lot about what HEIs are doing to tackle student sexual harassment, but much less about activity to tackle harassment and bullying among staff. Approaches have been focused on increasing reporting and improving response strategies as well as implementing prevention strategies.

Effectiveness of approaches

Very few of the approaches being taken by HEIs have been subsequently evaluated, although they are based in evidence highlighting current deficiencies. In terms of our understanding of the efficacy of current approaches this review reaches a similar conclusion to two recent reviews of the literature on bullying and harassment in academic environments (Henning et al., 2017; Keashly and Neuman, 2013), one of which concluded that "'what we know' is more theoretical than practical in nature because of the limited number of studies designed to systematically evaluate the efficacy of bullying interventions" (Keashly and Neuman, 2013).

There are also difficulties with measuring effectiveness when baseline measures of the prevalence of bullying and harassment are lacking. When no evidence was found evaluating the specific interventions being implemented in HEIs we drew on evidence contained in wider syntheses of the bullying and harassment literature. The main conclusions and strength of these conclusions are set out below.

Improving reporting and response

- **Improved awareness and anonymous reporting:** We found a descriptive report that an online reporting system increased the likelihood of reporting of sexual assault (Callisto, 2018) and another indicating that an anonymous reporting system combined with an awareness campaign had increased the number of incidents of bullying and harassment reported (Virgo, n.d.). These are promising but the reports are purely descriptive and provide no further details.

- **Mediation:** There were mixed views on the effectiveness of mediation based on the findings of a number of studies drawing on practitioner perspective both from within and without HEIs. One case study on the use of mediation in cases related to bullying and harassment in the NHS reported positive results in terms of the number of cases reaching agreement, but we have no evidence of the effects of mediation on the prevalence of bullying or harassment (Jennings and Tiplady, 2010).

Preventing bullying and harassment

- **Codes of conduct:** Only one descriptive study evaluated outcomes related to the introduction of a code of conduct in the context of a surgery centre in the US. The authors report positive impacts on turnover, staff satisfaction and bullying incidents but provide not data, sample or methodology (Dimarino, 2011).

- **Bystander training:** The effectiveness of bystander training is supported by a growing body of evidence. Two recent meta-analyses of studies with robust designs confirm that it has a small but significant effect on trainees' attitudes towards sexual harassment, reported intention to intervene and later self-reported rates of intervention (Jouriles et al., 2018; Kettrey and Marx, 2018). However, while the relationship between training and these outcomes is well supported, there is an overreliance on self-reporting and as yet no evidence of its effect on the prevalence of bullying or harassment. All the data we located came from undergraduate populations.

- **Sexual harassment training:** An up-to-date narrative literature review of sexual harassment training concluded that due to the significant limitations of many studies examining sexual harassment it is difficult to reach a conclusion about its effectiveness. Although in general the studies show that training increases knowledge about sexual harassment, it is not clear to what extent this is retained or implemented (Roehling and Huang, 2018).

- **Conflict management training:** Illing et al.'s realist synthesis located a number of studies indicating that conflict management training participants felt positive about training and reported making use of their training, but these were of low quality, with small self-selecting samples, low response rates and no control groups (Illing et al., 2013). One RCT found that six months after a training intervention bullying incidents were not reduced compared to a baseline measure (Hoel and Giga, 2006).

- **CREW:** Two very low quality studies link a long-term organisational intervention to increases in workplace civility but it is not clear to what extent these findings are transferable to bullying and harassment (Leiter et al., 2012; Osatuke et al., 2009).

- **Focusing on leadership and managers:** This approach is supported by practitioner consensus identified in a number of studies in academic (UCU, 2007) and non-academic environments (Rayner and McIvor, 2008), but we found no evaluated interventions.

- **Changing faculty reward structures:** This approach is supported by practitioner views on what good practice workplaces look like (Rayner and McIvor, 2008), but not evaluated interventions.

Motivating change and transparency

It's too early to say what effect recent efforts to motivate change by funders have had. However, qualitative evaluations of similar schemes linking funding to Athena SWAN awards and analysis of US legislation highlight the importance of ensuring that any motivated changes are truly substantive as opposed to symbolic.

Where are the gaps in our knowledge?

This review of the literature has uncovered a number of gaps in our knowledge relating to all three of the primary questions that this study sought to address. This section highlights these gaps and as yet unaddressed challenges.

Understanding bullying and harassment

Gaps

- **Measures and prevalence:** We lack a clear standardised definition and measure of bullying and harassment (Branch et al., 2013; Gillen et al., 2017; Halim and Riding, 2018; Henning et al., 2017). Current research both in academic settings and beyond makes use of a wide range of different measures and is reliant on small self-selecting samples and case study designs. This means that although studies point to the existence of a significant problem with bullying and harassment in HEIs we do not have a clear idea of prevalence, how it compares to other environments, and whether it is getting worse. It also means that we lack the base-line data to understand where best to target interventions or to evaluate their effectiveness. Relying on data collected by universities themselves is problematic due to the low levels of reporting and wide variety in the ways that these incidents are recorded. National surveys of the sort being pioneered

in America and Australia to monitor sexual harassment among students may go some way to filling this gap.

- **Populations:** Much of the recent grey literature and activity around the sector has focused on students, with undergraduates particularly well-represented. There has been less focus on all types of bullying and harassment among staff. Although studies in the grey literature did consider the experiences of staff from different groups, including BME and LGBT staff we found little evidence on the experiences of staff with disabilities and most studies treat the academic and wider workforce as a homogenous group so that it was not possible to see whether the issues differed significantly by career stage or contract type.

- **Perpetrators:** The studies we located in HEIs investigated bullying and harassment from the perspective of those who experienced it and so we uncovered no evidence about those who perpetrate it beyond their relationship to the target. This reflects a wider gap in the workplace bullying literature (Keashly and Neuman, 2013). This is an important oversight and would provide valuable evidence on potential interventions for the management of bullying behaviour.

Why does bullying and harassment occur?

- **Untangling cause and effect:** A number of features of the work environment have been linked to the occurrence of bullying and harassment but an overreliance on cross-sectional designs has left us uncertain whether these correlates are predictors, consequences, or both, resulting from reciprocal changes in the work environment (Henning et al., 2017; Nielsen and Einarsen, 2018).

- **How do bullying and harassment stop?** Relatedly the reliance on cross-sectional research means that we have little understanding of why bullying and harassment might stop or examples of cases where satisfactory resolutions were reached beyond some descriptive studies focusing on mediation from the wider workplace literature (Branch et al., 2013).

What approaches to prevent and address bullying and harassment are being trialled?

Gaps in our knowledge

We have little recent cross-sectoral evidence on approaches to tackle bullying and harassment among staff. Recent work has focused on students and particularly on sexual harassment.

Unaddressed challenges

Despite all of the caveats implied by the knowledge gaps identified in the preceding section, the findings of the research from both the academic and wider literature on bullying and harassment suggested the following broad grouping of challenges.

- Firstly, challenges in responding to the problem — including a lack of clarity around unacceptable behaviours and procedures and inaccessible, complex and lengthy procedures.

- Secondly, challenges in preventing the problem. These include the presence of organisational enablers of harassment such as power imbalances and perceptions of low cost to the perpetrator and organisational motivators, such as competition for jobs, job insecurity, high workload and role conflict.

These suggest that tackling bullying and harassment involves organisational change. However, many of the approaches that we located are currently framed with the individual as the centre of analysis.

Fomenting normative and cultural change at an institutional level

Although much work is being done to improve organisational procedures and policies around reporting and response these still rely on individuals coming forward and naming specific perpetrators. Less evident are systematic attempts to examine organisational cultures (although see Phipps 2015, 2018b).

Prevention efforts have not yet got a grip on organisational motivators or enablers While efforts to raise awareness and promote reporting are important, interventions have not yet attempted to tackle structural power imbalances which mean that for some people reporting is inevitably high cost and for others powerful incentives exist to overlook bad behaviour. While there is some indication that efforts to increase reporting are effective, we don't yet know if the negative consequences associated with reporting have been mitigated, how to protect targets from retaliation or what forms of response produce the best outcomes for complainants.

Perhaps because of a recent focus on students there was also little discussion of interventions to tackle the structural factors in the academic environment that have been linked to bullying such as high workloads, job insecurity, competition and role conflict. Some of these clearly arise from supra-institutional pressures to do with the structure of academic careers and external systems of evaluation.

Promoting substantive rather than symbolic change

Another set of challenges relates to confidentiality and secrecy in the context of concerns about institutional reputations. This provides a barrier for organisations to honestly evaluate and comes to terms with this issue, especially given heightened press attention. An identified gap is in interventions to support HEIs to drive forward this change. Recent funder policies setting out what they expect from grantee in their grant conditions has the potential to generate cultural change if they lead to the implementation and evaluation of programmes but there is also the danger that they provide further incentives for symbolic compliance.

What do we know about how effective these approaches have been?

There is a general lack of evaluation of the efficacy of policies and programmes dealing with bullying and harassment in research environments (Henning et al., 2017; Keashly and Neuman, 2013). This reflects a similar lack of evaluation in the wider workplace bullying literature (Gillen et al., 2017; Nielsen and Einarsen, 2018), the early stage of development of a lot of university initiatives (Universities UK, 2016), and the fact that we lack the robust prevalence data that we could use to measure success.

Appendix: methodology

Research method

This rapid evidence review was commissioned as part of UKRI's comprehensive long-term Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy to inform their approach to bullying and harassment in the research and innovation sector.

The review sought to provide an overview of

1) current challenges with respect to bullying and harassment in the research and innovation landscape in the UK and internationally

2) an overview of approaches to prevent and address bullying and harassment in research and innovation; and

3) an assessment of the existing evidence for the effectiveness of those approaches and where the main gaps in knowledge in this area are.

To provide a comprehensive overview of the literature on this topic in a short time-frame a rapid evidence assessment (REA) approach was adopted.

The aim was to be a review of reviews so where possible we relied on existing syntheses of the literature.

PICO (Population – Intervention – Comparison – Outcome) Framework

A PICO framework was used and search terms were developed iteratively through a series of scoping exercises, beginning with those employed by Cochrane and Henning (2017) and Gillen et al. (2017). These were agreed with UKRI and stakeholders prior to running the final searches. Searches were supplemented by 'pearl-growing techniques' including following up on the references of key texts, and papers subsequently referencing them.

PICO framework	Scope	Indicative search terms
Population	Staff and students in research and innovation environments	staff or personnel or work* or employee* or lecturer* or administrator* or tutor* or teacher* or student* or researcher
Phenomena of Interest	Harassment and bullying	bullying OR bully OR bullie* OR harassment* OR intimidat* OR aggression* OR "personality clash" OR "horizontal violence" OR mobbing
Context	Research and innovation environments	university OR college OR faculty OR academy OR institute OR department OR higher OR tertiary

Grey Literature Search Strategy

It was anticipated that a large amount of evidence for the review would be contained within grey literature. Grey literature was identified using a four-pronged search strategy.

1. Simple Google searches using the terms generated by the PICO model. The first hundred hits were screened for relevance
2. Custom Google searches of the websites of key R&I organisations
3. Emails to selected experts to identify any reviews we may have missed
4. Identifying additional sources via the reference lists of already identified studies

To identify UK Grey literature the following websites were searched as part of stage 2 of this process

- The websites of the top 40 companies named most frequently as project partners by Universities as identified by the Dowling Review of Business-University Research Collaborations
- The website of the Association of Medical Research charities and all of its members with research spend over £1mILLION
- The websites of the seven research councils, Innovate UK, and the devolved higher education funding councils
- The website of Department of Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and BEIS research partner organisations, Ministry of Defence (MOD), Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), NHS England PHE and devolved departments
- University membership organisations and trade unions
- The websites of 108 member organisations and professional associations
- Websites of specific lobbying groups such as The 1752 Group.

Due to time constraints the international grey literature was limited to targeted searches of grey literature from Australia, Canada and the US. For each country the websites of government funders were searched, as well as universities, trade unions and member organisations.

Cross-sectoral grey literature search strategy

To identify potential cross-sectoral comparisons custom searches were made of the websites of large national and international grant making bodies as well as relevant public bodies such as The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and ECHR.

Academic literature search strategy

Due to the short time frame searches of the academic literature were limited to relevant meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and literature reviews. These were identified using Embase, Google Scholar, Scopus and the Cochrane library. Reviews covering both R&I and other workplace environments were included.

Evidence quality criteria

The review took a pragmatic approach towards evidence assessment. Much of the literature is purely descriptive and it was agreed early on with UKRI that the aim should be to preserve as much information as possible. We therefore include all relevant evidence in the review but provide assessments of the rigor of this evidence within the main text.

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List of abbreviations

ACAS — Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
AGU – American Geophysical Union
BEIS — Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
BME – Black and minority ethnic
CRUK — Cancer Research UK
DHSC – Department of Health and Social Care
ECU – Equality Challenge Unit
EHRC – Equality and Human Rights Commission
FOI – Freedom of Information
HE – Higher Education
HEFCE – Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI – Higher Education Institution
HSE – Health and Safety Executive
ILO – International Labour Organization
LGBT – Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
MOD – Ministry of Defence
NASA — The National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NASEM — The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
NDA — non-disclosure agreement
NIHR – National Institute for Health Research
NUS — National Union of Student
PI – Principal Investigator
R&I – Research and Innovation
REF – Research Excellence Framework
RSC – Royal Society of Chemistry
SEM – Science, Engineering and Medicine
THE – Times Higher Education
TRS – Theology and Religious Studies
TSR – The Student Room
UCU – University and College Union
UKRI – UK Research and Innovation
UUK – Universities UK