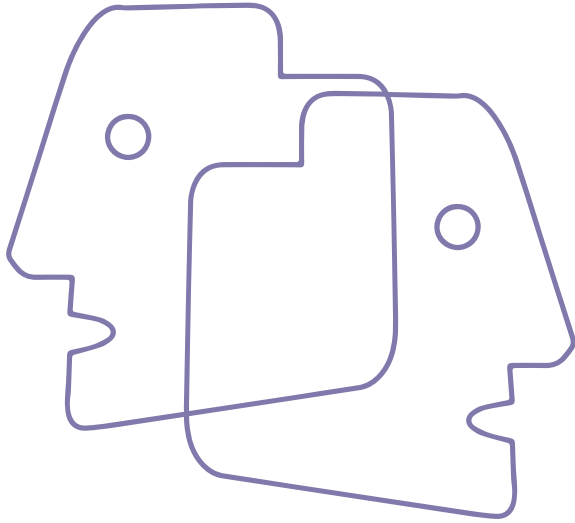




**SPEAK  
UP:  
A CALL FOR  
CHANGE**

TOWARDS CREATING A SAFE  
AND RESPECTFUL WORKING  
ENVIRONMENT FOR THE ARTS





# **SPEAK UP: A CALL FOR CHANGE**

TOWARDS CREATING A SAFE  
AND RESPECTFUL WORKING  
ENVIRONMENT FOR THE ARTS

REPORT COMMISSIONED BY IRISH THEATRE INSTITUTE AS PART OF  
ITS ARTS SECTOR **SPEAK UP** DIGNITY IN THE WORKPLACE INITIATIVE

**RESEARCHED BY** DR CIARA L. MURPHY, DR BRENDA DONOHUE, AND CONALL  
Ó DUIBHIR, WITH SUPPORT FROM DR PETER CAMPBELL AND OLWEN DAWE

**OCTOBER 2021**



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If you are affected by any of the issues raised in this report, please find details for organisations you can contact below.

**Minding Creative Minds:** 1800 814 244 [www.mindingcreativeminds.ie](http://www.mindingcreativeminds.ie)

**Rape Crisis Centre:** 1800 778 888 [www.rapecrisishelp.ie](http://www.rapecrisishelp.ie)

**Samaritans:** 116 123 <https://www.samaritans.org/ireland/samaritans-ireland>



# FOREWORD

To begin with, Irish Theatre Institute (ITI) wants to extend its deep and sincere thanks to each and every respondent for their courage to participate in the SPEAK UP arts sector survey into Dignity in the Workplace. ITI called on you to speak up and 1343 of you did so. This report is evidence that your voices have been heard. The survey was issued so that, finally, we could gather evidence and assess the level and frequency across the spectrum of harmful behaviours – bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, humiliation, victimisation, assault and sexual assault – in the Irish arts sector. Crucially, the survey asked respondents what might be done to address the behavioural deficits and lack of infrastructural supports and services for victims of harmful behaviour. This report answers those questions with a set of stark findings, robust and insightful analysis and recommendations for change, both cultural and structural.

Recommendations are only recommendations without subsequent action. The recommendations set out in this report are realistic and achievable. Some can be actioned immediately by amplifying and augmenting existing resources and by building capacity through design and implementation of essential, and, in some situations, mandatory, workplace training. Some change will take longer and will happen incrementally, namely dependable leadership, policy development and sector-wide acceptance of the need for change.

Speak Up: A Call for Change clearly illustrates that the time for change of behaviour in the arts sector has arrived. Harmful behaviour in the workplace is not the preserve of the arts, it is a societal issue as reports from other sectors have also shown in recent months and years. This report lays out the evidence that change is urgent, that harmful behaviour can and must no longer be tolerated. The arts sector needs reliable supports and a certainty that accountability and consequence will be observed institutionally, organisationally, collectively and individually.

The voices of the individuals represented in the Speak Up survey findings are the agents of change for the arts sector – their voices and first-hand experiences are what inform the recommendations. They are making A Call for Change to create a safe and more respectful working environment for the arts.

## **SIOBHÁN BOURKE, JANE DALY**

*Co-Directors, Irish Theatre Institute, Speak Up Co-Leads*

**PLEASE NOTE:** This report contains information that may prove triggering for some readers. Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, humiliation, victimisation, assault, and sexual assault are topics within this report. There is no detailed or graphic discussion of these issues. Please determine for yourself if you wish to continue reading based on this information.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is evident from the statistical analysis carried out in this study that the Irish arts sector has a significant problem. This research, which surveyed over 1300 people on their experiences of working in Ireland's arts sector, finds that the majority of respondents had experienced and/or witnessed some form of harmful behaviours (bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, humiliation, victimisation, assault and sexual assault) that undermine people's right to dignity at work.

## THE KEY FINDINGS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- There are indications that there is a culture of harmful workplace behaviours across all sectors in the arts in Ireland.
- The research found that the levels of experiencing and/or witnessing these behaviours are similarly high across all sectors of the arts.
- The majority of those surveyed have experienced (70%) and witnessed (53%) harmful behaviour.<sup>1</sup>
- The majority of these instances were reported to have taken place in the workplace.
- According to the data, the perpetrators of these behaviours were more likely to be men (67%) than women (42%).<sup>2</sup>
- Those who experience these behaviours were more likely to be women than men across the majority of categories.
- Men (55%) are slightly more likely to witness harmful behaviour than women (52%) according to the data collected.
- The data found that women were more than three and a half times more likely to experience sexual harassment than male respondents, and were more than twice as likely to experience sexual assault than male respondents.
- Freelance arts workers were more likely to face harmful workplace experiences than those who are not freelance.
- According to the respondents, the majority of perpetrators were reported to hold positions of authority.
- The data indicates that there are often no consequences for those who perpetrate harm on others in the arts sector.
- Respondents reported that often supports were not available to them, and where they were available, they were insufficient.
- Most respondents who experienced and/or witnessed the harmful behaviours analysed in this report stated that they were not comfortable seeking support in a professional setting.

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**1** The details on how these figures were reached can be found in the 'Harmful Workplace Experiences' section of the analysis on page 37.

**2** Percentages do not add to 100 as respondents could make multiple selections and are counted for each selected category.

# INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the findings of the Speak Up ACTiON survey, where over 1100 people shared their experiences of working in Ireland's arts sector.<sup>3</sup> This report centres their voices and presents a series of findings as an important starting point on the necessary journey to overhauling workplace conduct across Ireland's arts sector. The lived experiences reported in the survey demonstrate an urgent need for action. This report found that the majority of those surveyed have experienced and witnessed harmful workplace behaviours that undermine people's right to dignity at work. This is unacceptable. Irish arts workers should have the opportunity to work freely in a professional environment where harmful behaviours are not tolerated, and are dealt with in a sensitive and appropriate manner where instances do occur. It is our hope that this report will contribute to meaningful change across all sectors of the arts and we thank those who contributed their time and experiences to this research.

Speak Up & Call It Out began as an initiative in the theatre sector led by Irish Theatre Institute (ITI) following the events and revelations in relation to abuses of power in 2017/18, and in line with global calls to action. With support from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Arts Council of Ireland/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Irish theatre community, Irish theatre practitioners and stakeholders came together in 2018 to discuss and identify initiatives to bring about a much-needed cultural change and shift in attitudes to negative and harmful behaviour in the arts. This formed Phase 1: Speak Up & Call It Out.

## PHASE I

### DURING THIS PHASE, ITI HOSTED TWO EVENTS:

On the 21st March 2018, ITI hosted a large public event in Liberty Hall. The event was divided into two parts: Speak Up followed by Call It Out. It was designed for everyone working in the Irish theatre sector including actors, writers, directors, designers, technicians, production and stage managers, independent producers and administrators as well as theatre collectives and the major theatre organisations, arts centres, venues and performing arts festivals.

On the 31st October 2018, ITI hosted an event in Project Arts Centre to discuss outcomes and feedback on the implementation of the Draft Code of Behaviour for Irish Theatre subsequent to its launch at the Speak Up & Call It Out event at Liberty Hall. This

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<sup>3</sup> 1343 people responded to the survey. However, 242 of these responses (18%) only answered questions regarding their personal demographics. As these respondents failed to provide any information on the main subject of the survey they were excluded (see note in Methodology).

meeting heard from practitioners and companies who piloted the Code – sharing their experiences of its effectiveness and implementation, suitability, and value. The event concluded with the formal adoption of the Code of Behaviour by the theatre sector.

ITI continues to lead this initiative and is currently developing a number of activities to raise awareness of dignity at work issues across the arts.

## PHASE II

Phase II, named Speak Up ACTiON (2021), will deliver a range of supports for everyone working in the arts, improving practice, policy and knowledge of key issues relating to Dignity at Work. The *Dignity in the Workplace: Towards a Code of Behaviour for Irish Theatre Discussion Document* is available to download from ITI's website.<sup>4</sup>

In order to enhance the effectiveness of Phase II Speak Up ACTiON (2021), a survey was circulated to those working across the arts sector. Launched on 10th February 2021, the Speak Up ACTiON Survey was an online survey of arts workers and their workplace experiences. It gathered information from artists and arts workers on their lived experience of dignity in the workplace in the arts, with the intention of improving Irish arts workspaces and experiences for everyone. The Speak Up ACTiON Survey is a cross-arts sector initiative, recognising that issues exist across a broad range of artistic professions.

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

The survey gathered complete responses from over 1100 respondents. This report presents the results of this survey, using information drawn from this rich data set. ITI commissioned a research team to undertake the data analysis after the survey was designed and completed.<sup>5</sup>

The results of this survey will inform policy, supports, and training development in order to work towards creating a safer and more respectful workplace for all engaged in the arts in Ireland. It provides an overview of incidents, frequency, type, and context of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, and other experiences of artists and arts workers across the arts, within a self-selected sample.<sup>6</sup>

This report finds that there is a culture of harmful workplace behaviours across the arts sector in Ireland, and that gender identity and employment status are significant factors in determining the likelihood of experiencing and witnessing such behaviours. The researchers also find that there is a lack of sufficient supports in place to tackle this worrying trend.

In parallel with the survey, a suite of training tools is being developed for arts organisations to utilise, in order to build awareness of such issues and how to respond effectively to them.

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4 See <https://www.irishtheatreinstitute.ie/resources/speak-up-call-it-out/>

5 The survey was designed by Irish Theatre Institute (ITI) and Olwen Dawe.

6 The artforms included in the survey are those currently funded by the Arts Council of Ireland/An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

A picture of Irish arts workplaces emerges from the data analysed in the report. Until now, there has been no dedicated study analysing the experiences of those working in Ireland's arts sector, particularly experiences of harmful behaviour within the workplace. Internationally, research into experiences of bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment in the arts has also been relatively limited. Dr Anne Marie Quigg's 2011 publication *Bullying in the Arts: Vocation, Exploitation and Abuse of Power* indicated that two in five people working in theatres and arts centres reported being the target of a bully, while many more had witnessed bullying incidents at first hand.<sup>7</sup> This UK-based ethnological study also suggested that the arts had the highest level of bullying recorded in any single employment sector, and that many managers within the sector were not suitably trained to deal with complaints of bullying.

It appears that the imbalance of power that often exists within artistic employment relationships is at the heart of the matter. Quigg's more recent article in the April 2019 edition of *Arts Management Quarterly*, 'When Creative Becomes Coercive', describes this well when she asserts that 'Power and control are at the centre of both psychological and physical oppression... Sometimes people who hold power abuse it and sometimes those who are, or feel they are, in some way inadequate seek ways to gain more control.'<sup>8</sup> This dynamic is reflected in our own data, which finds that perpetrators of harm in Ireland's arts sector often benefit from the imbalance of power evident across the sector.

Although there is and has been a dearth of literature on the subject of workplace harm in the arts internationally, the 2017 #MeToo movement placed the reality and pervasiveness of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment in the spotlight. This global social movement against sexual harassment, abuse, and other predatory behaviours utilised the #MeToo hashtag to raise awareness of the scope of sexual harassment and abuse globally, across all professional sectors and society more generally.<sup>9</sup>

There is no doubt, however, that experiences of harmful behaviours that undermine the right to dignity at work crosscut all employment sectors and this is indicated by a series of recent studies and reports.

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7 Quigg, A-M, *Bullying in the Arts: Vocation, Exploitation and Abuse of Power*, Routledge, 2011.

8 Quigg, A-M, 'When Creative Becomes Coercive', *Arts Management Quarterly*, No. 131, p. 49, April 2019.

9 In 2006, Tarana Burke began using the term 'metoo'. This term went viral via Twitter hashtag in 2017. At the height of this movement, the focus was very much on workplace instances of harassment and abuse.





# METHODOLOGY

*Speak Up ACTION Creating a Safer Working Environment for Everyone* was an anonymous survey, and the data collected is presented in this report in an aggregated fashion. The ACTION survey was developed by Irish Theatre Institute (ITI) and Olwen Dawe, in consultation with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

## SURVEY DESIGN

The survey utilised both quantitative and qualitative questions, and was designed to garner a clear picture of:

- 1 the profile (including demographic information and relevant artform/s) of respondents to the survey;
- 2 their experiences of harmful workplace behaviours, including but not limited to bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment;
- 3 the respondents' views on how these issues could be appropriately dealt with in the future, including interventions and supports.

The survey questions utilised the same terminology as Phase I of *Speak Up & Call It Out's Code of Behaviour* with the addition of assault and sexual assault. It was also tested on a small cohort of performing arts professionals before being launched.

The survey data collected comprises a self-selected sample. This means that a call to participate in the survey was issued and people could choose whether or not they wished to take part. The ACTION survey was distributed on the 10th February 2021 via social media, Irish Theatre Institute's mailing list, and with the support of resource organisations, funders, and partners, in order to reach as many respondents as possible.

As such, the data in this report (the percentages and percentage points) is not derived from a representative sample and does not necessarily represent workers in the arts sector overall. For example, the respondents who chose to complete the survey may have found the subject of the survey more interesting or relevant to them than those who chose not to complete it. However, the responses that were provided and the analysis presented here highlight some of the many important issues and concerns facing the arts workers who shared their experiences.

## DATA PROTECTION AND PRIVACY

Due to the personal and sensitive nature of this information, every effort has been made to protect this data and to uphold respondents' privacy. All named parties were redacted before the compilation of the master data set, which researchers worked from for the analysis and reporting. Similarly, any personally identifiable information was removed from the dataset and each respondent was issued with an individual identification number, which is used to collate the information. Each researcher signed a non-disclosure agreement committing to protect the privacy of the data set as well as the information therein.

To protect the anonymity of respondents, in categories where personal or identifying information may have emerged, those values with fewer than 1% of respondents are reported as '<1%' to ensure no individual is identifiable.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This report reflects the quantitative data as well as the aggregated results of respondents' open (qualitative) responses. Our overall mixed-methods methodology strives to centre the respondent in its analysis and aims to engage with these open responses in a careful and considered way.

To enable respondents to articulate their experiences, open-ended questions were included in the survey, in addition to the closed-ended questions in which participants had to choose from a set of pre-existing categories of response. These open-ended questions asked for further information to be provided, specifically on what experiences respondents had, how these were dealt with, and how they felt dignity at work could be promoted, in addition to any further general comments relating to the survey topics. These responses provided much detailed information on individual experiences and circumstances. To facilitate reporting on these experiences in an aggregated fashion, deductive 'post-coding' was carried out, i.e., a set of categories was created reflecting the subjects and themes contained in these open responses. For each open question, a set of 'macro' categories was created, followed by a number of sub-categories (see Appendix 2). All responses were then placed into these sub-categories; as many responses covered a range of issues, each response was placed into a maximum of three separate sub-categories from the overall coding frame for each individual question. A sample of coded responses was reviewed to ensure the reliability and consistency of this process.

Throughout the report, differences between figures are expressed in terms of either percentages or percentage points. All percentages and decimals cited in this report have been rounded to the nearest whole number, with the exception of values less than one percent, which will be rounded to one decimal place. As noted above, in some instances values lower than 1.0 are presented as <1% to protect the anonymity of participants.

## EXCLUSIONS

1343 people responded to the survey. However, 242 of these responses (18%) only answered questions regarding their personal demographics. As these respondents failed to provide any information on the main subject of the survey – experiences of harmful behaviours that undermine the right to people’s dignity at work – we have excluded their responses from the analysis in this report.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, the analysis presented below is based on the 1101 respondents who provided information on their experiences of harmful behaviours in the workplace.

An analysis was not completed on Question 14, which asked about the timeframe in which the incidents took place. The phrasing of this question prevented a confident analysis of the timeline and a decision was made to exclude this question from the analysis.<sup>20</sup>

## TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this report, the term ‘respondent’ is used when referring to those who responded to the survey and whose data we have included in our analysis. The term ‘perpetrator’ is used to refer to the person(s) alleged to have perpetrated behaviours that undermine the right to dignity at work such as bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, humiliation, victimisation, assault and sexual assault. It is not intended to suggest or imply any finding of liability (civil, criminal, or otherwise).

Terminology used in the survey drew on the definitions and explanations found in Appendix 1 of *Dignity in the Workplace: Towards a Code of Behaviour for Irish Theatre Discussion Document*. This Appendix is repeated in full in this report (please see Appendix 3). This terminology will be carried throughout this report. In order to ensure ease of understanding throughout, this report will refer to the experiences outlined in the survey data as experiences of harm or experiences of harmful behaviours that undermine the right to people’s dignity at work, while remaining aware that this phrase covers a wide range of abusive and harmful behaviours and experiences. The intention of the survey was to identify information on dignity at work issues, but the findings of this report indicate that that our language needs to reflect the harm caused by these actions.

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**19** Of the 1343 responses received, 242 respondents provided only demographic information in their responses to questions 1-7. It is unclear at this point why these respondents failed to progress to the questions that addressed the main subject of the survey – negative experiences that undermine the right to dignity at work. Though a routing issue with the survey was subsequently discovered, it did not impede respondents’ progress through the survey.

**20** Respondents who answered this question are still represented in the overall survey through their responses to other questions.

# SURVEY ANALYSIS

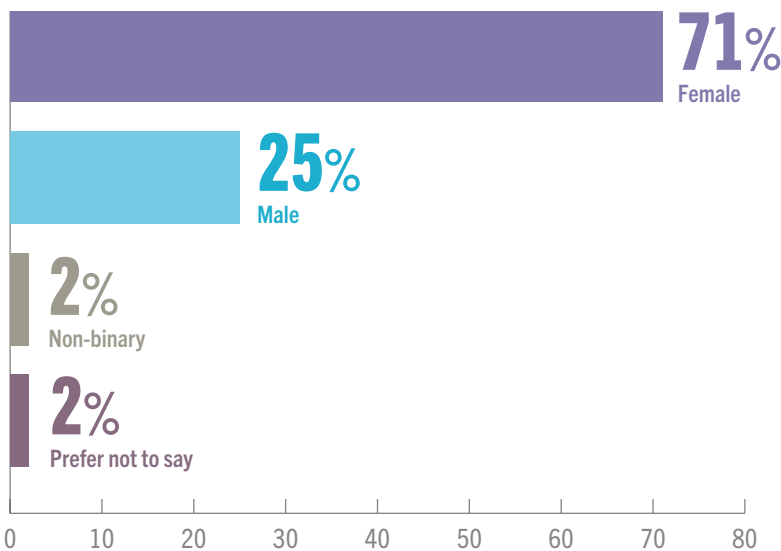
## SPEAK UP ACTION

### QUESTION BY QUESTION

#### WHO RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY?

Respondents were asked to indicate their gender from the following list: female, male, non-binary, trans, and prefer not to say (Figure 1.1). Respondents had the option to select more than one box to reflect their gender identity and experience. Based on valuable feedback from respondents, we present gender in terms of gender identity only. Therefore, female includes all respondents who identified as female, including those who also selected trans, and likewise for all male and non-binary respondents who also selected trans.<sup>21</sup> A large majority of those surveyed were female (71%), with the remainder of respondents identifying as male (25%), or non-binary (2%). As information on the demographics and size of Ireland’s arts sector is limited, it is difficult to state with confidence whether or not this gender breakdown is in line with the demographics of the arts sector generally.

**FIGURE 1.1:** GENDER BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS



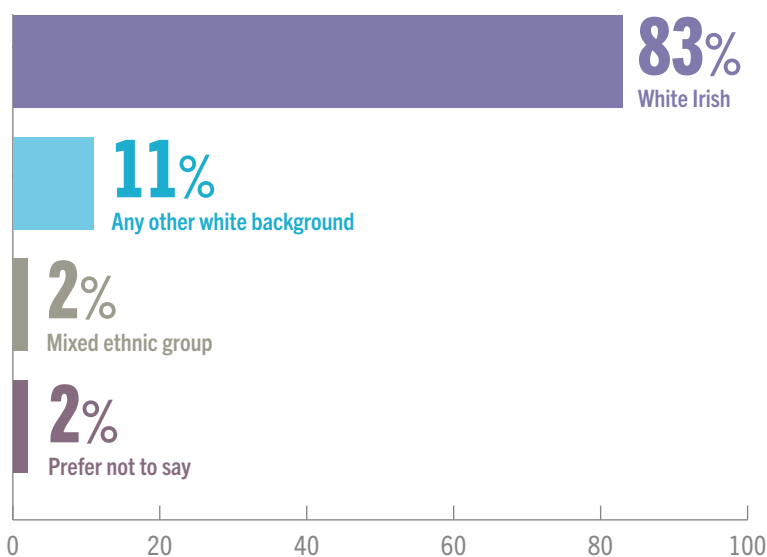
Respondents were asked to select their ethnicity (Figure 1.2). This revealed that the overwhelming majority of respondents identify as being white Irish (83%), followed

<sup>21</sup> Two responses are not included in this analysis due to multiple selections, that could not be characterised into the categories. These gender expressions/identities are not reported due to the risk of identifying individual respondents.

by those who have any other white background (11%). Other ethnic groups have low levels of representation<sup>22</sup>. The most recent CSO<sup>23</sup> and Arts Council figures on ethnicity report similar demographics, indicating that this survey reflects the dynamics of the national profile (although the percentage of Black and Traveller respondents are notably lower in this survey).<sup>24</sup> However, we acknowledge that when the findings are presented in this report, they mostly reflect a white perspective.

Some of the open responses indicated that ethnicity or racism played a part in the harmful behaviours that respondents experienced. Due to these small numbers, it cannot be reported whether there is a statistical relationship between ethnicity (particularly minority ethnicity) and how likely issues relating to dignity in the workplace are likely to arise, how they will be experienced, and whether ethnicity of victim or perpetrator are likely to impact disciplinary procedures. However, given how pervasive ethnic and race based harm is in the workplace, we recommend that further research to examine this further is urgently required.

**FIGURE 1.2: ETHNICITY OF RESPONDENTS**



Respondents were also asked whether they identify as a person with a disability (Figure 1.3). Five percent of respondents indicated that they did. A further 4% of

<sup>22</sup> The following categories had less than 1% representation and are therefore not presented in the graph: Asian or Asian Irish – Any other Asian Background; Asian or Asian Irish – Chinese; Black or Black Irish – African; Black or Black Irish – Any other Black Background; Irish Traveller; Other.

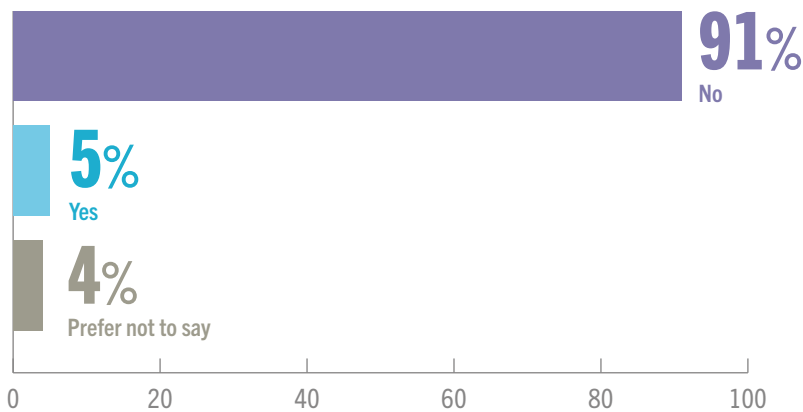
<sup>23</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp8iter/p8iter/p8e/>

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/wwwartscouncilie/Content/About/Equality,\\_Human\\_Rights\\_and\\_Diversity/Diversity%20and%20Arts%20Council%20Awards\\_March%202021.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/wwwartscouncilie/Content/About/Equality,_Human_Rights_and_Diversity/Diversity%20and%20Arts%20Council%20Awards_March%202021.pdf)

participants stated that they preferred not to say.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the majority (91%) of respondents did not report having a disability. This means that the averages for all variables mostly reflect the experiences of people who do not have a disability. Therefore, the data presented is unable to speak to any differences in the ways in which instances of negative behaviour in the workplace affect people with disabilities. Again, we recommend a more focused study on these experiences be carried out to further investigate this issue.

On the previous page, the demographic figures could be considered to reflect a largely homogenous arts sector in Ireland. However, due to the self-selecting nature of this survey, it is not possible to state this with confidence. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and the respondents were not randomly sampled.

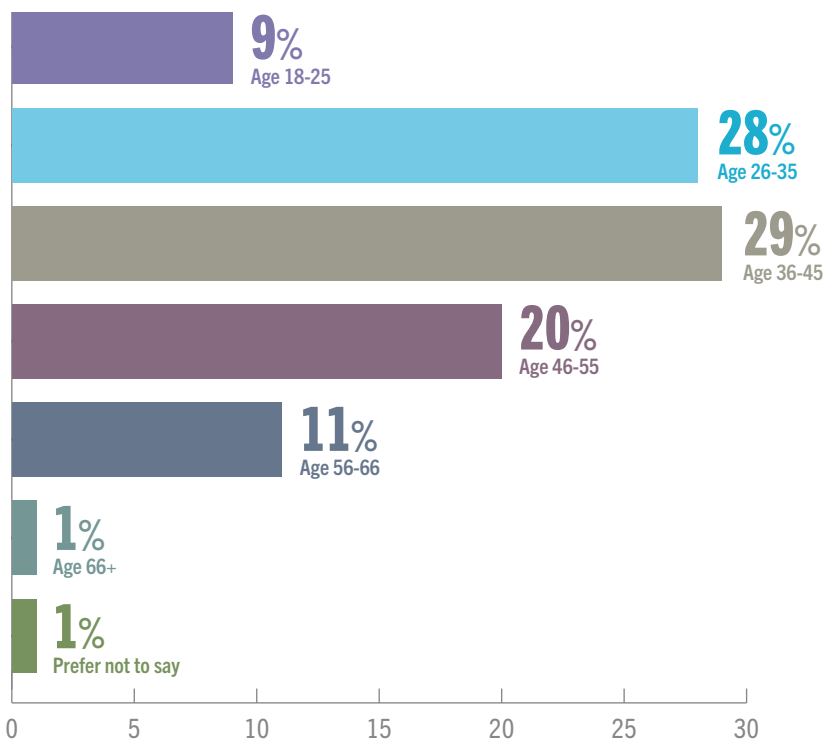
**FIGURE 1.3: RESPONDENTS WITH A DISABILITY**



Respondents were asked to select the age category they belong to (figure 1.4). There was a somewhat balanced distribution of respondents across age categories 26-35, 36-45, and 46-55, with smaller percentages of respondents indicating they belonged to the youngest and oldest categories. This suggests that the majority of respondents are at mid-career level.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> A sizeable number of respondents indicated that they preferred not to say if they had a disability (4%). Some respondents indicated in their comments that they did not agree with the phrasing of the question, which asked if they 'identified as having a disability'. The researchers recognise that terminology is very nuanced across the disabled community and acknowledge that many disability advocates prefer 'disabled people'. Further information on the reasoning behind these terminology choices can be found here: <http://nda.ie/Publications/Attitudes/Appropriate-Terms-to-Use-about-Disability/>, and here: <https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/identity-first-language/>

<sup>26</sup> The latest CSO figures available (2016) indicate that in Ireland the age of the population is: 0-14yrs (21.1%), 15-24yrs (2.1%), 25-44yrs (29.5%), 45-64yrs (23.8%), 65+yrs (13.4%). It is notable that in our data the number of those aged above 66 years (1.3%) is far lower than the percentage nationally.

**FIGURE 1.4:** AGE BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS

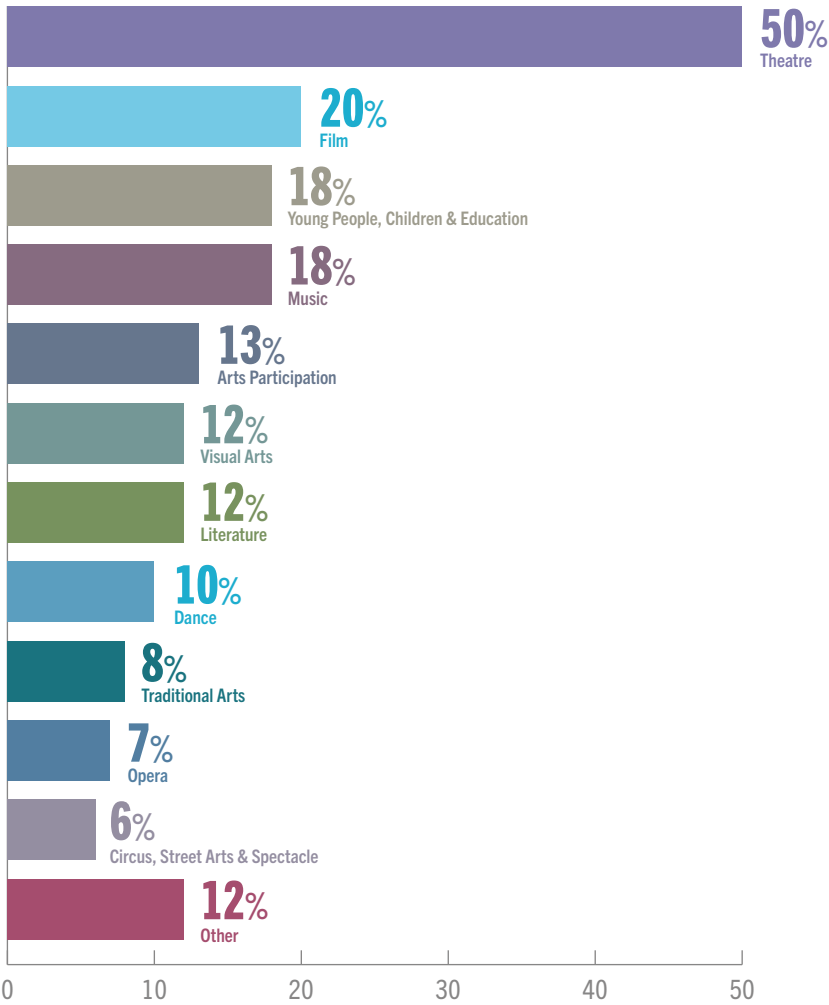
## WHAT IS THE RESPONDENTS' WORK SITUATION?

The arts industry in Ireland is a heterogeneous field that incorporates many different artistic disciplines, through multiple working styles and organisational structures. A number of questions in the survey focused on the respondents' employment situation. These questions asked about sector worked in, role, and employment status.

Respondents came from areas spanning the arts sector (Figure 1.5). Many of those who responded to the survey indicated that they worked in more than one artform. This is characteristic of a sector where many work across different areas of practice and artforms. Half of respondents worked in theatre (50%), while there was strong representation from film (20%); music (18%); and young people, children and education (18%) sectors too.

**FIGURE 1.5: BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS BY SECTOR**

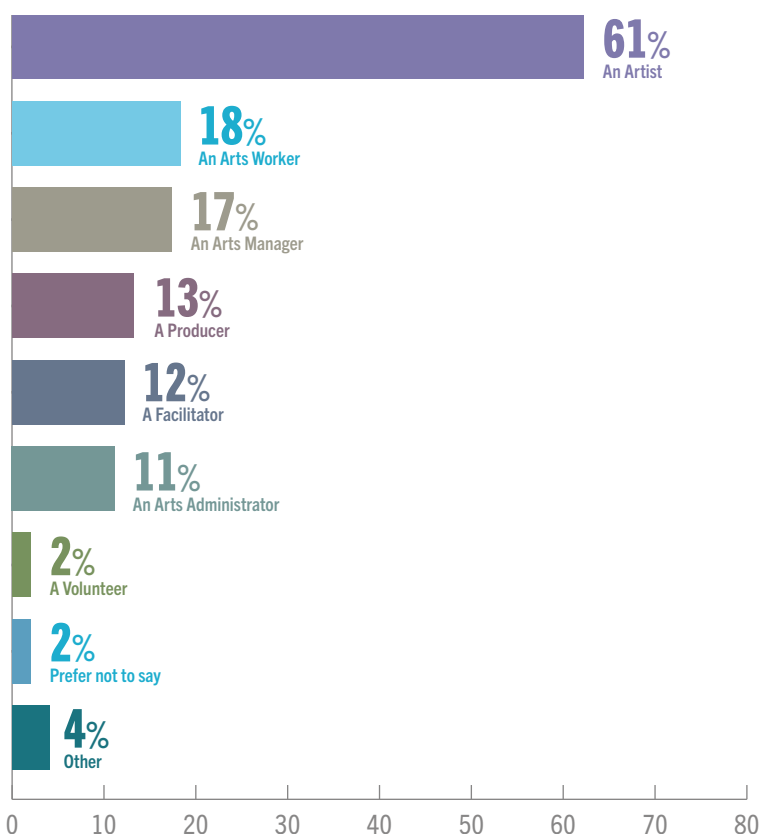
Percentages do not add to 100 as respondents could make multiple selections and are counted for each selected category.



Respondents were asked to select the role title(s) that reflect how they identify in the work they do (Figure 1.6). The majority of respondents identified as artists, with 61% choosing this descriptor to identify their working role. The next most frequent categories here among respondents were arts workers (18%) and arts managers (17%).

**FIGURE 1.6: RESPONDENTS' ROLES WITHIN THEIR SECTOR**

Percentages do not add to 100 as respondents could make multiple selections and are counted for each selected category.

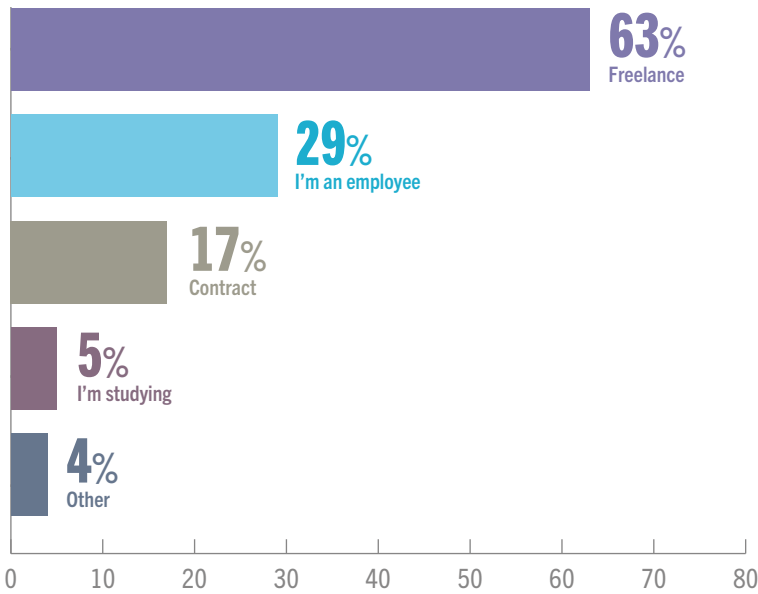


When asked to identify their employment status (Figure 1.7), the majority of respondents identified themselves as working in a freelance capacity (63%). Twenty-nine percent of respondents identified themselves as employees, while 17% were on contract. A smaller percentage of respondents were studying (5%), while 4% of respondents selected 'other', and provided a description of their work status in an open-ended response.<sup>27</sup> A further analysis of the relationship between these categories of employment and harmful workplace experiences can be on page 25.

<sup>27</sup> The category intern had less than 1% representation and is therefore not presented in the graph.

**FIGURE 1.7: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS**

Percentages do not add to 100 as respondents could make multiple selections and are counted for each selected category.



**HARMFUL WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES**

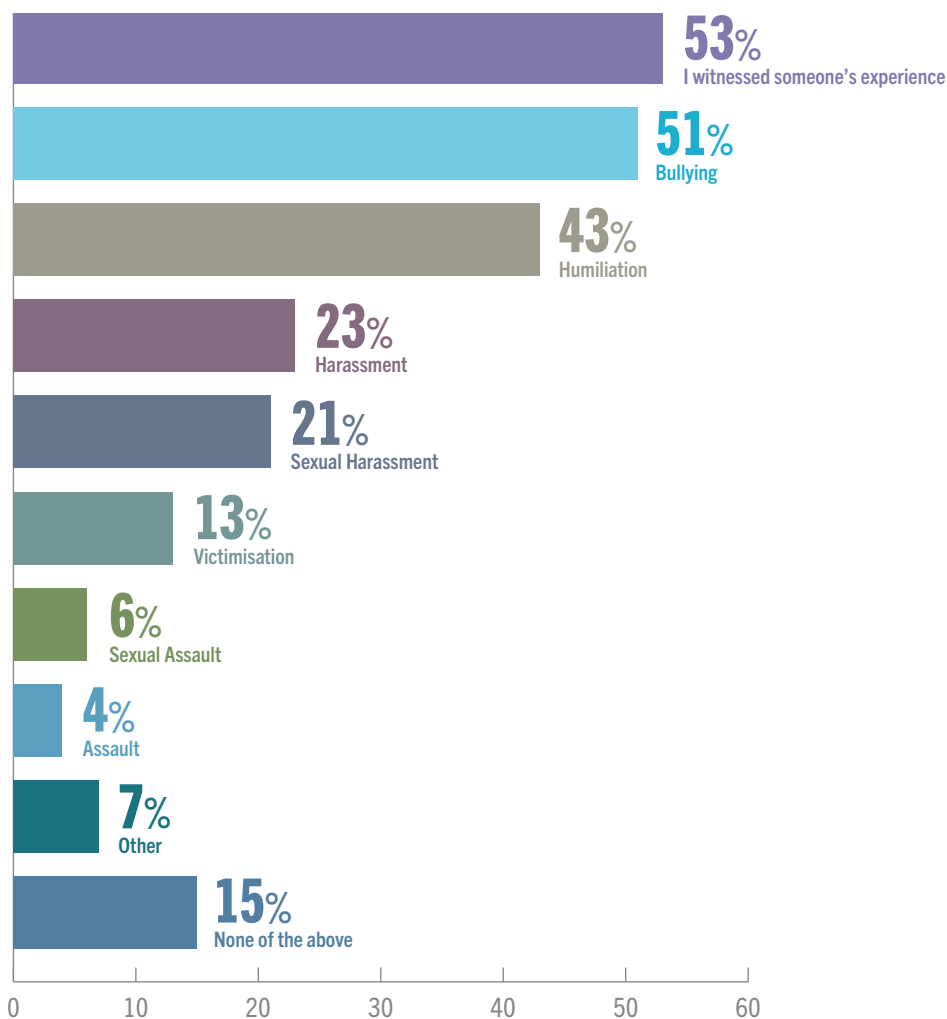
The survey asked respondents about their experiences of harmful behaviours that undermine the right to dignity at work in their workplaces, including indications of where the incidents had taken place and whether they were isolated or repeated. Figure 1.8 illustrates the percentage of respondents who experienced each type of harmful behaviour. Fifty-one percent of respondents indicated that they had experienced bullying in their working lives, while 43% had experiences of humiliation and 23% had experienced harassment. Twenty-one percent of respondents had experienced sexual harassment, while 13% stated they had been victimised. Six percent of respondents indicated that they had experienced sexual assault in a working environment, while 4% had experienced assault. Taken together, this data shows that 70% of respondents indicated that they experienced some type of harm.<sup>28</sup>

Over half of all respondents reported that they had witnessed someone else’s experiences of harmful behaviours that undermine the right to dignity at work. Only 15% of respondents indicated that they had never experienced or witnessed any such issues in the workplace. While this is a self-selecting survey and respondents with harmful experiences may have been more motivated to respond to the survey, the responses indicate a working environment where bullying, harassment, and other experiences are not exceptional and may be an accepted part of working life.

<sup>28</sup> This number is based on the number of participants who selected experiencing any type of harm, irrespective of witnessing it. The remaining 30% were people who didn’t experience any harm or only witnessed harm. It also excludes ‘other’ responses who didn’t select another harm category.

### FIGURE 1.8: TYPES OF HARMFUL WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS

Percentages do not add to 100 as respondents could make multiple selections and are counted for each selected category.



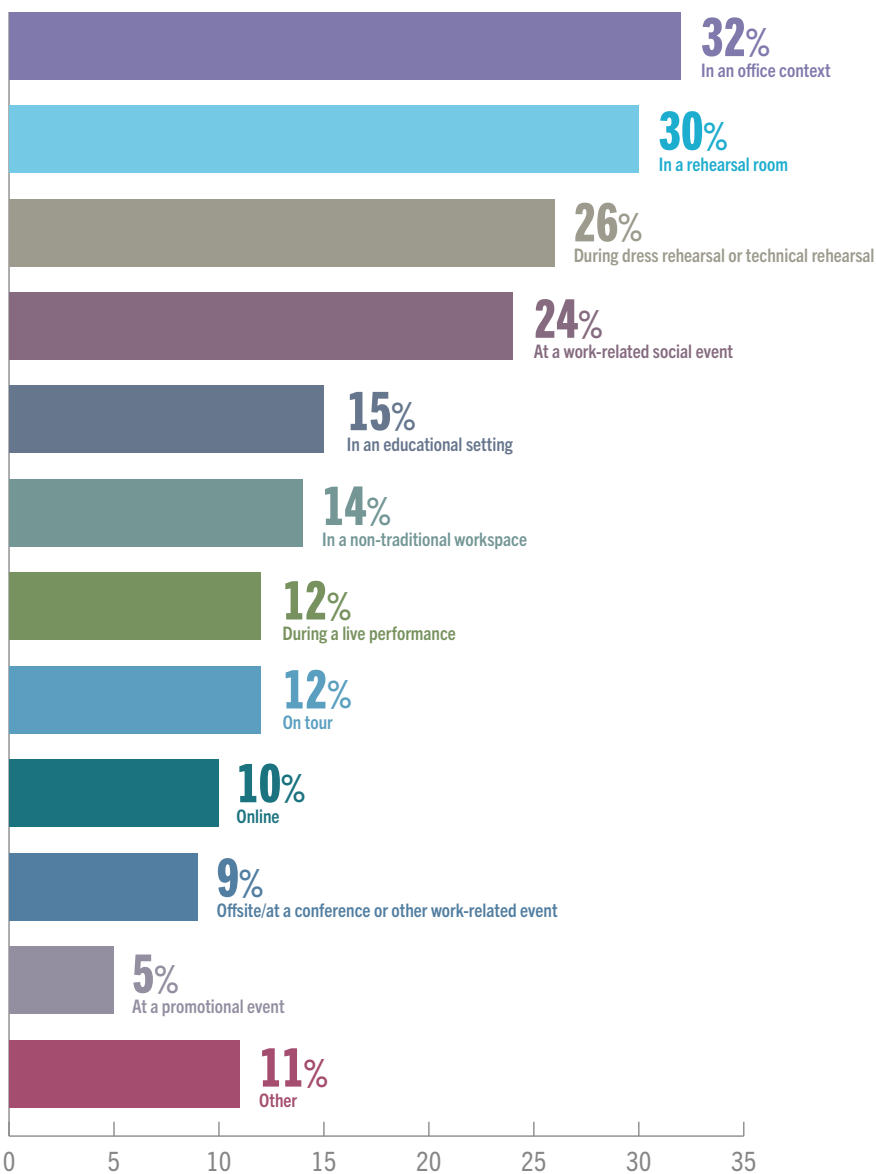
All respondents were given space to provide further comment on their responses relating to the harmful behaviours they had experienced in their workplace, of whom 35% (384 respondents) provided comment. Many respondents outlined that the incidents related to sex or gender, while age or lack of experience was a factor for some. Quite a few respondents indicated that incidents of negative behaviour were driven by those in power and that inappropriate behaviour was accepted or normalised in their work. Some respondents felt that abusive behaviour was not taken seriously, with almost as many answers indicating that negative experiences led to people leaving, avoiding or being shut out of work.

When asked about where their experiences had taken place, respondents indicated that they had taken place in a variety of settings (Figure 1.9). Thirty-two percent of

respondents located their experience within an office context, 30% said it had taken place in a rehearsal room, while 26% indicated that it had taken place during dress or technical rehearsals. In addition, 24% recounted that the experience had taken place at a work-related social event (such as an opening night or book launch).

**FIGURE 1.9:** LOCATION OF INSTANCES IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS

Percentages do not add to 100 as respondents could make multiple selections and are counted for each selected category.

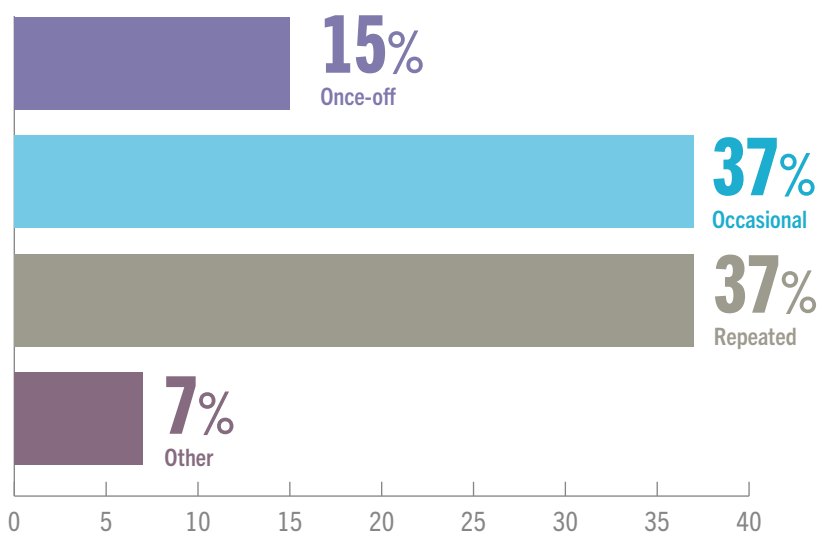


A further analysis of the ‘other’ category for this question highlighted two other notable locations where negative experiences were likely to take place: auditions (9 mentions) and online and telephone correspondence (17 mentions).

When asked about the frequency with which the events described had occurred (Figure 1.10), 37% of respondents indicated that their experiences were occasional, while 37% replied that they were repeated. Fifteen percent said that the experience was a once-off.

### FIGURE 1.10 FREQUENCY OF HARMFUL EXPERIENCES IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS

Percentages do not add to 100 as respondents could make multiple selections and are counted for each selected category.



### WHAT RESPONDENTS TELL US ABOUT THE PERPETRATORS

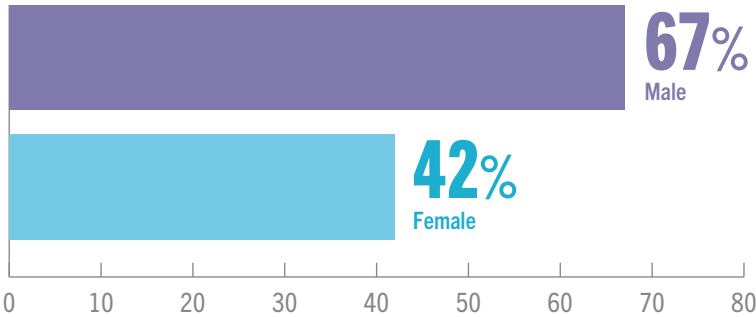
When asked about the perpetrators of these experiences of harm (Figure 1.11), 67% of respondents indicated that the aggressor was male, while 42% indicated that they were female.<sup>29</sup> This indicates that instances of negative behaviours effecting dignity in work are disproportionately perpetrated by men.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Some respondents queried the use of ‘trans’ as a gender identity in relation to this question. Transgender refers to people whose gender identity differs from that assigned to them at birth, and therefore we understand it is more appropriate that transgender people are identified by their chosen gender identities, and not based on an individual’s gender experience of being transgender or cisgender. We recommend that this approach is taken in any subsequent survey design.

<sup>30</sup> The following categories had less than 1% representation and are therefore not presented in the graph: Non Binary and Trans. The recommendation on the use of ‘trans’ as a gender identity as outlined in the preceding note should also be applied to future research on the gender of perpetrators.

### FIGURE 1.11: GENDER OF PERPETRATORS OF INCIDENTS, AS IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS

Percentages do not add to 100 as respondents could make multiple selections and are counted for each selected category.



Many of the perpetrators appeared to hold positions of authority, with 46% of respondents indicating that the perpetrator was a senior member of staff, while 33% stated that they were their manager or boss. This creates obvious difficulties in the reporting process. Thirty-eight percent of respondents indicated that the perpetrator of harmful behaviour was a colleague.

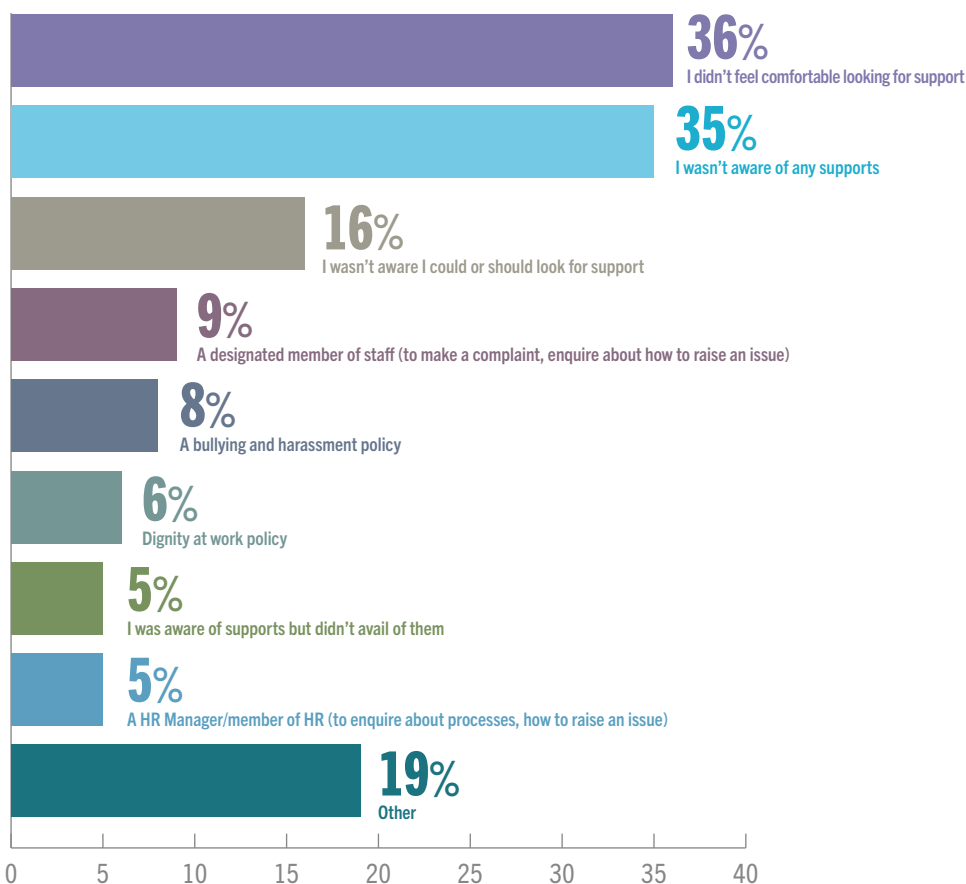
### WHAT SUPPORTS WERE AVAILABLE?

Respondents were asked to describe the supports that were available to them at the time that their experiences occurred. Figure 1.12 shows 36% of respondents stated that they did not feel comfortable looking for support to deal with their experience, while 35% were not aware of any supports. Where respondents indicated they had supports available to them, the percentages for each category are low. Just 9% of respondents had a designated member of staff as support, 8% said they had a Bullying and Harassment Policy, while 6% stated there was a Dignity At Work policy in place.

These figures seem to indicate that the level of supports available in the sector currently are insufficient, and perhaps more worryingly, that victims do not feel that they can safely access them even when they are present.

### FIGURE 1.12: SUPPORTS MADE AVAILABLE TO VICTIMS, AS IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS

Percentages do not add to 100 as respondents could make multiple selections and are counted for each selected category.



In a follow-up question, respondents were asked to give more information about how their experience(s) were dealt with. The majority of these responses make for very sobering reading. Of those who gave an open response, 38% indicated that the incident they were referring to was not dealt with in a meaningful way or that no significant consequences were incurred by perpetrators. Fifteen percent of the respondents described instances where they or the victim they witnessed were left trying to work around harmful or abusive behaviour or having to accept it.

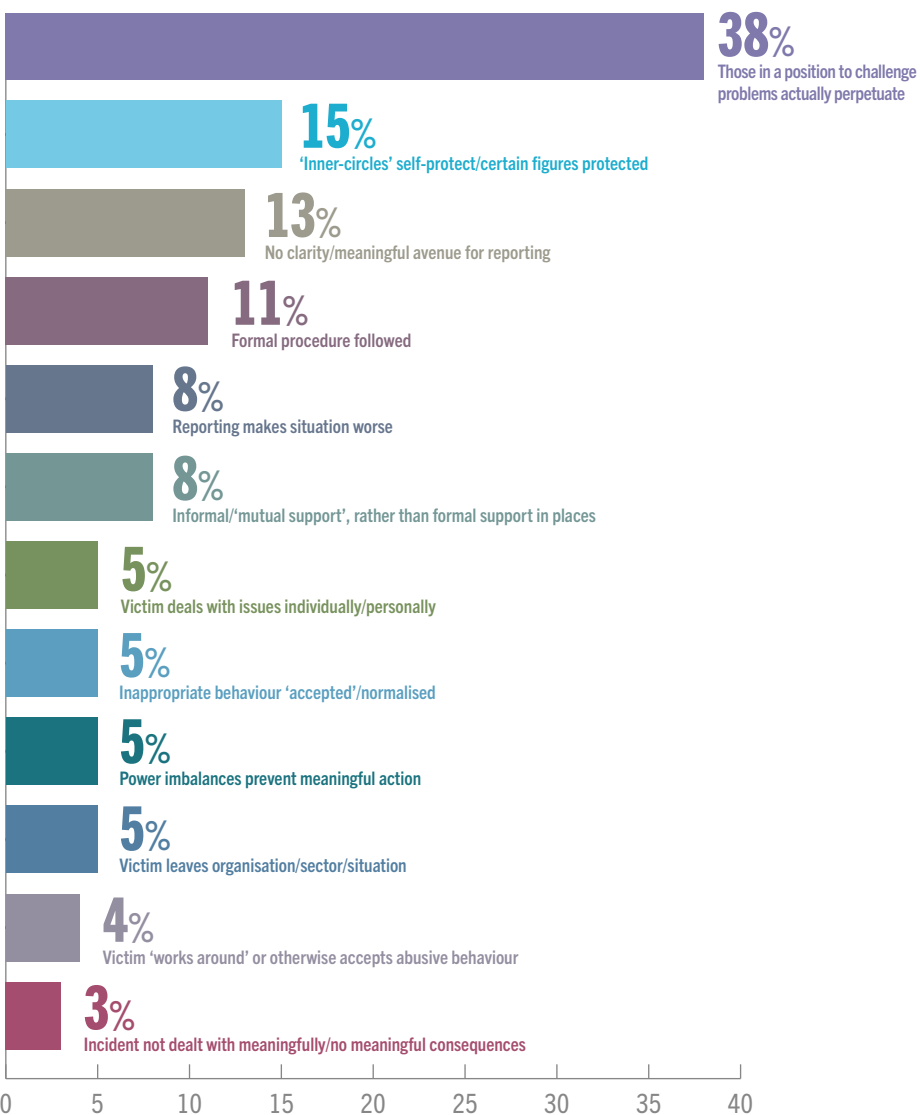
Many of the respondents who selected 'other', outlined that there were no supports at all available to them within the organisation they worked, or as a result of being an individual freelance worker. Others who could not access support within the work context sought assistance from friends or peers outside of work for. Some respondents were reluctant about seeking support, as the designated person to raise the issue with was either the perpetrator or a close colleague of the perpetrator who respondents felt were inclined to

protect the perpetrator. A small number of responses from those who witnessed incidents indicated that they “did not think” or “were unaware” that they should report it.

The following figure 1.13 shows the frequency with which the twelve most popular responses were given, as a percentage of respondents who provided comment for that question.

**FIGURE 1.13: MOST FREQUENT THEMES AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS**

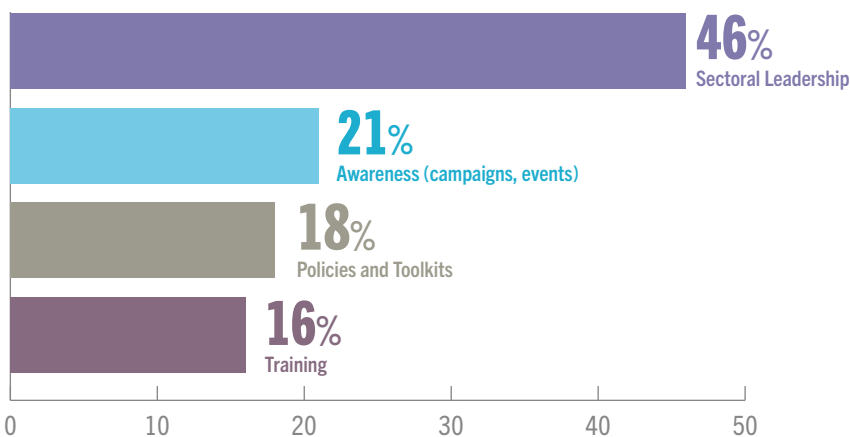
Percentage is based on 710 responses given for this item.



## FUTURE INTERVENTIONS

As one of the final questions on the survey, respondents were asked which interventions or actions they would favour to address the problem of harmful behaviours that undermine the right to dignity at work. They were asked to rank four options in order of importance from 1 – 4. Forty-six percent of respondents ranked Sectoral Leadership as the most important future intervention, while 21% ranked Awareness Development as most important (Figure 1.14).

**FIGURE 1.14** RESPONDENTS' FIRST PREFERENCE FOR SECTORAL INTERVENTION



As a follow-up, respondents were asked whether there were any other actions or interventions that they felt would promote dignity at work in the arts. One of the most common responses related to the need for greater awareness raising and education around unacceptable behaviour. Another frequent response called for an independent body or structure, where people could report dignity at work issues they had encountered, both for the purposes of receiving impartial advice and to help address issues that had occurred.

Many respondents felt that improved working conditions and less precarity would leave fewer people in vulnerable positions where they were more likely to encounter issues. Others felt that coming forward and reporting instances needed to be normalised. Some felt that this could be aided by greater accountability and appropriate action being taken on instances that are reported. Addressing power imbalances, fostering better leadership, and increasing diversity were also noted.<sup>31</sup>

## OTHER RESPONSES

Of 1101 respondents who completed the survey, 33% of participants shared further comment at the end of the questionnaire. Notable here are the respondents who indicated that a fear of blacklisting prevented them from seeking support and further detail on the power imbalances present in the arts sector which encourage this culture of negative behaviour.

<sup>31</sup> Details on the number and type of open-text responses to this question (Q.18) can be found in Appendix 2 (page 58).

# SURVEY ANALYSIS: CROSS-QUESTION ANALYSES

## GENDER AND HARMFUL WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES

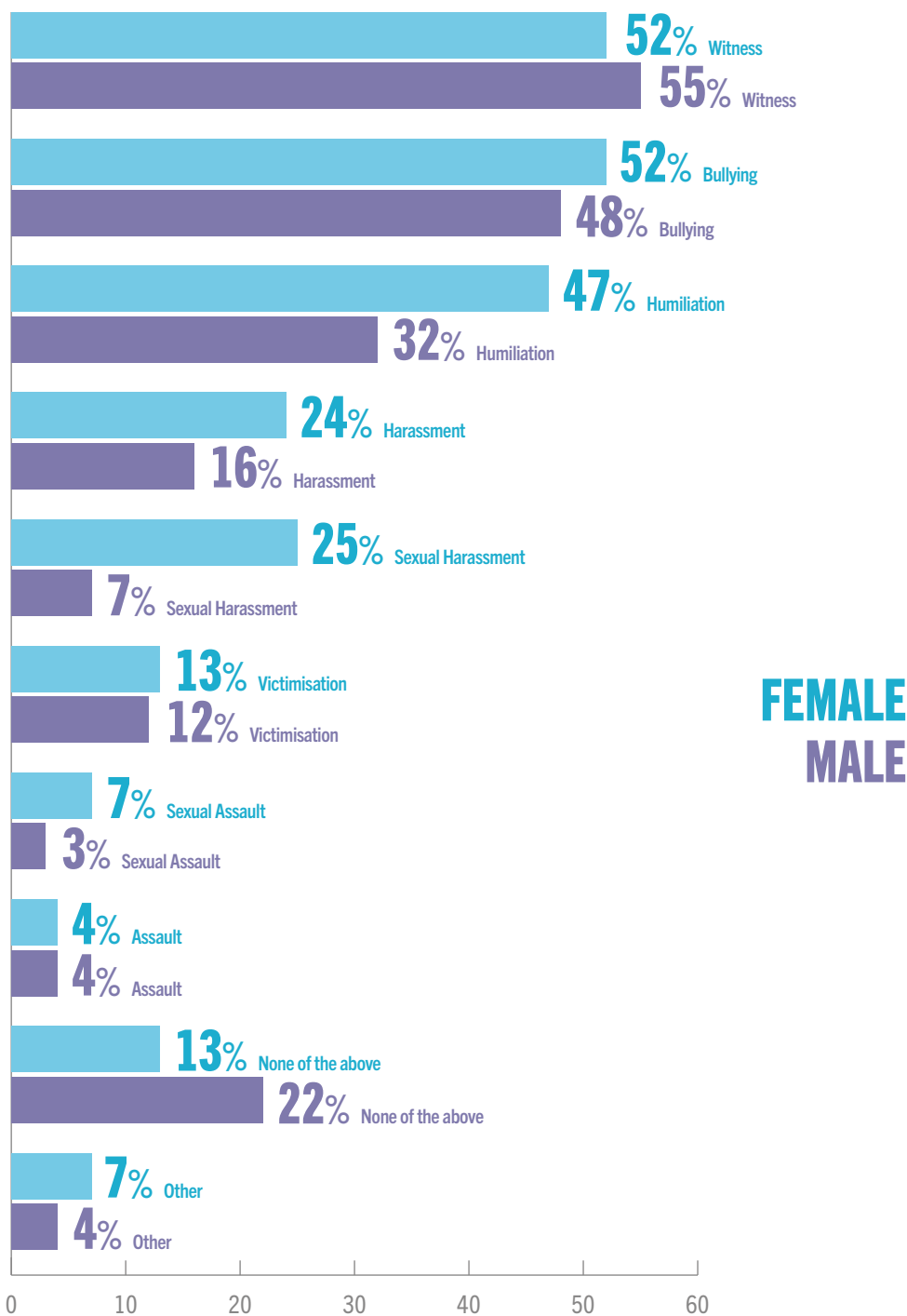
We analysed the relationship between experiences of harmful behaviours that undermine the right to dignity at work and gender (Figure 1.15). We found that those who identified as female in the demographic section were more likely than males to have experienced bullying, harassment, sexual assault, and sexual harassment. Women were more than three and a half times more likely to experience sexual harassment than male respondents, while they were more than twice as likely to experience sexual assault. Male and female respondents were similarly affected by experiences of assault and victimisation, while male respondents were slightly more likely to indicate they had been a witness to incidents (55% compared to 52% for female respondents). Male respondents were more than one and a half times more likely to state that they had no experiences of bullying, harassment, sexual assault, sexual harassment, humiliation, or victimisation than female respondents (22% compared to 13% for female respondents).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> We restricted our analysis to female and male responses as the number of respondents who identified across the other categories (Non-Binary & Prefer Not To Say) were too small to analyse with confidence.

**FIGURE 1.15** BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES BY GENDER

Due to the small number of non-binary and 'prefer not to say' responses, this table only displays the distribution for male and female respondents.



## EMPLOYMENT AND HARMFUL WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES

Sixty-three percent of respondents to the survey indicated that they work in a freelance capacity. We analysed the relationship between experiences of harmful behaviours that undermine the right to dignity at work and employment in relation to freelance status (Figure 1.16). According to this data, freelance workers were significantly more likely to experience harmful behaviours that undermine the right to dignity at work in every category. This is compared to those respondents who did not identify as freelancers. Freelancers were much more likely to experience sexual harassment (24% of respondents) than non-freelance respondents (14%), and more likely to experience humiliation (46%) compared to the general respondent cohort (38%).

In addition, freelancers were more likely to experience harmful behaviours that undermine the right to dignity at work than the general cohort. Only 13% of those who identified as working freelance indicated that they had not experienced harmful behaviours compared with 20% of those who do not work freelance. It seems that freelancer workers are more exposed to these experiences than workers in other categories.<sup>33</sup>

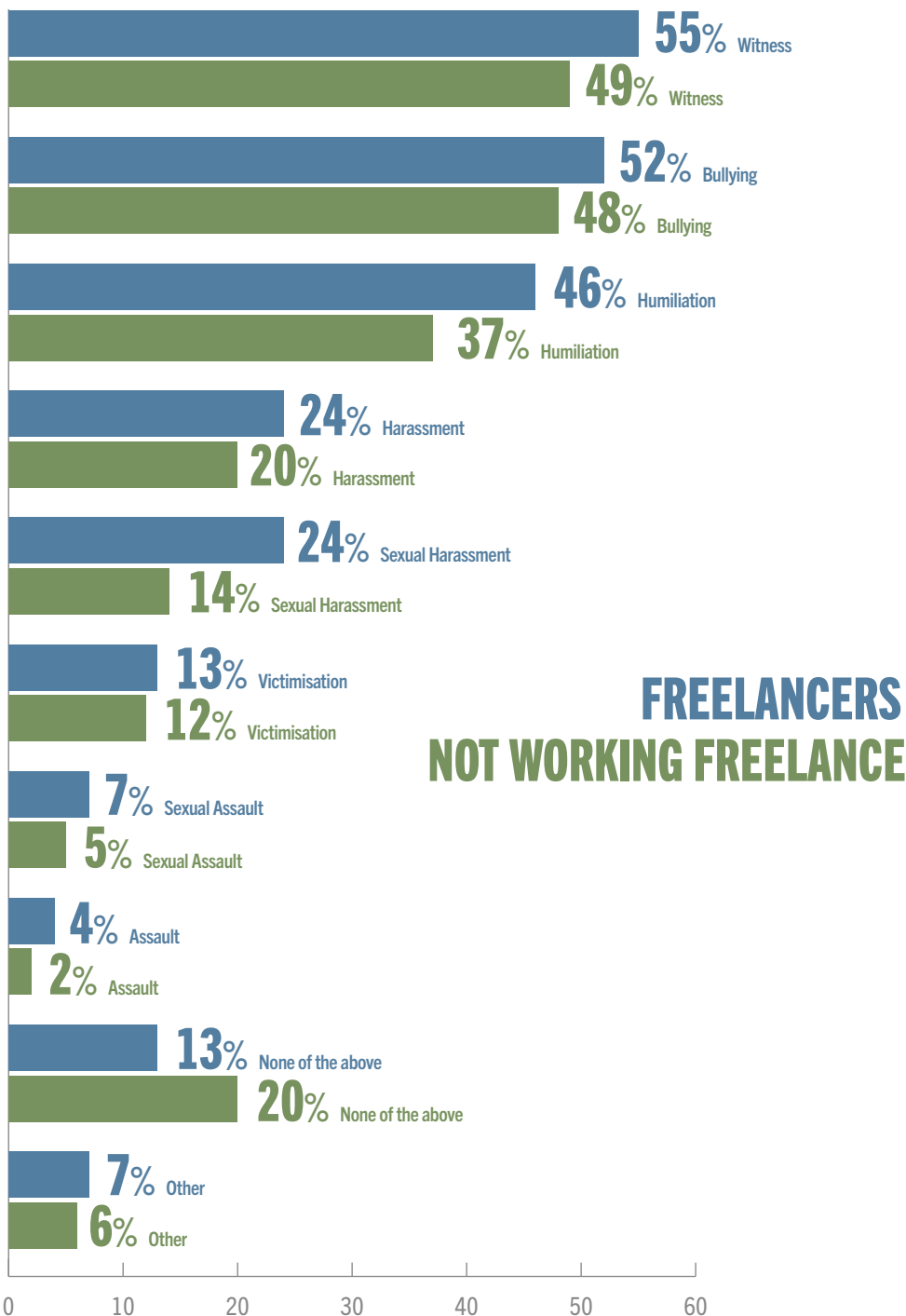
Respondents who indicated that they were contract workers, employees, students, or 'other' were not statistically significantly more or less likely to experienced harmful behaviour than those in other categories.

These findings indicate that freelance workers are more vulnerable to instances of harmful behaviours in work within the arts sector. This may relate to the increased precarity and lack of job security freelance workers face. However, it is noted that contract workers, employees and students may also face precarity.

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<sup>33</sup> Respondents who identified as freelancers may also have selected other roles in addition to their freelance status.

**FIGURE 1.16** BREAKDOWN OF NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS



In this figure, ‘freelancers’ includes all respondents who identified as working freelance, including those who work freelance and are employed or contracted for other work. ‘Not working freelance’ includes all other respondents who didn’t indicate that they worked freelance.

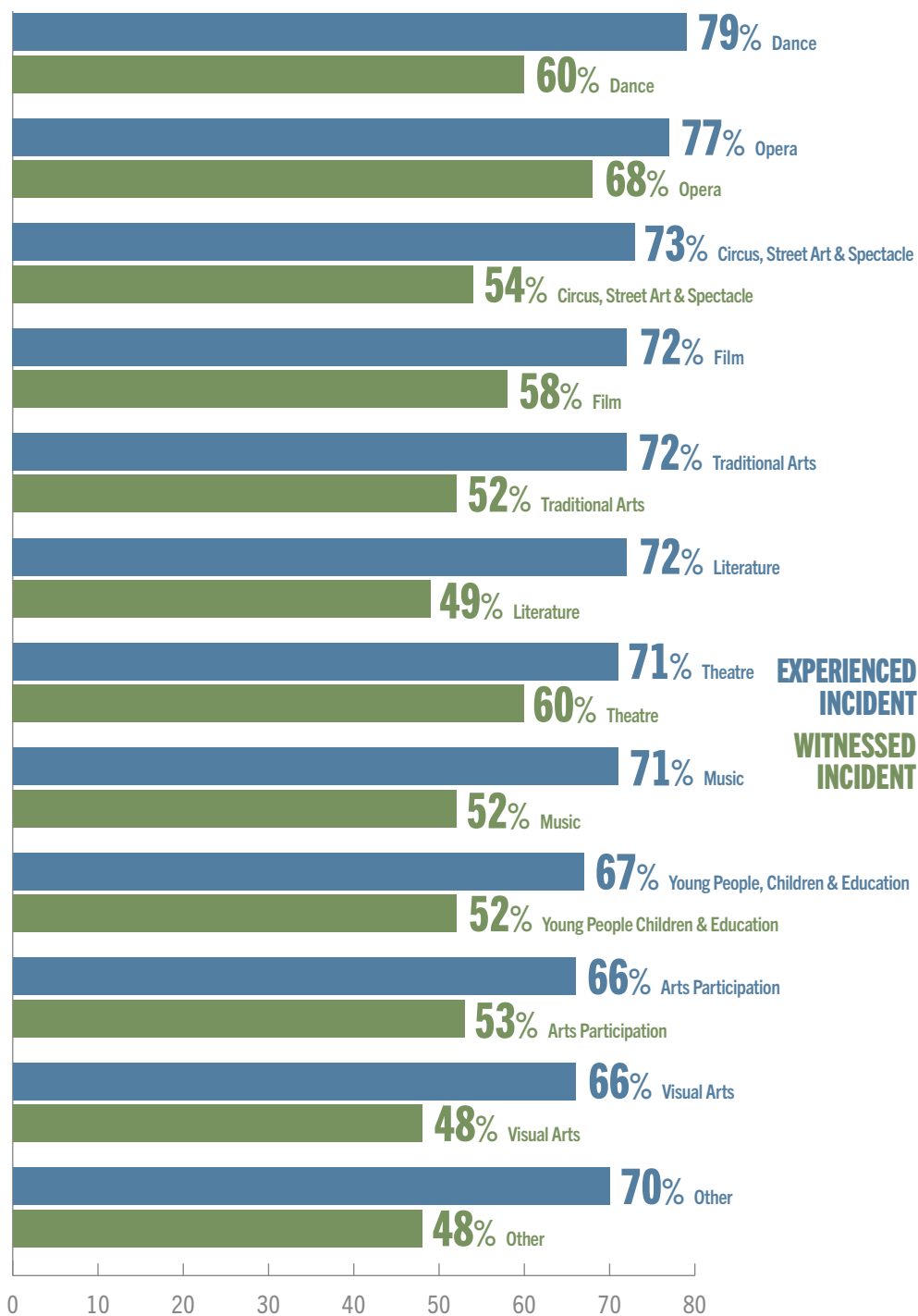
## SECTORAL EXPERIENCES OF HARMFUL WORKPLACE BEHAVIOURS

We undertook an analysis of how experiences of harmful behaviours that undermine the right to dignity at work vary across different sectors within the arts. This analysis demonstrated that there is a similar pattern of witnessing and experiencing such behaviours across all sectors (Figure 1.17). The percentages for those who experienced harmful workplace behaviours ranges from 66% for Arts Participation and Visual Arts, to 79% for Dance. In terms of those who witnessed, but did not directly experience negative harmful behaviours, these percentages range from 48% for other responses to 68% in both Visual Arts and Theatre.

Given the small number of responses in some categories and the similarity in percentages across these categories, we do not consider sector as a significant contributor to the likelihood that a person will experience or witness harmful workplace behaviour. Instead, it is clear that there is a consistent and pervasive problem across the arts sector, demonstrated by the overwhelming majority of respondents reporting that they have experienced or witnessed harmful behaviours that undermine the right to dignity at work.

Figure 1.17 demonstrates the percentages of experiencing and witnessing negative workplace behaviour by sector:

**FIGURE 1.17** BREAKDOWN OF EXPERIENCES AND WITNESSING OF NEGATIVE WORKPLACE BEHAVIOUR BY SECTOR



# CONCLUSION

This report makes for stark reading. However, for many, it is an acknowledgement of a reality that has been hiding in plain sight. There appears to be a culture of harmful workplace behaviour across Ireland's arts sector. The levels of experiencing and witnessing harm is similarly high across all sectors with the overwhelming majority of respondents experiencing (70%) and witnessing (53%) harm. These instances of harm are reported to occur in work. The above findings show that harmful workplace experiences that undermine the right to dignity at work such as bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, humiliation, victimisation, assault and sexual assault are not the exception, but rather, according to our data, are more likely to be an accepted norm in Ireland's arts sector.

Gender is also a significant factor with women more likely to experience harmful behaviour than men. Respondents indicated that harmful behaviours were perpetrated primarily by men (67%) although women were also reported to perpetrate harm (42%) at a relatively high rate. The data also showed that women are much more likely to suffer from sexual harassment and assault with women three and a half times more likely to experience sexual harassment than male respondents, and more than twice as likely to experience sexual assault than male respondents.

The number of respondents who identify as non-binary or another gender identity were too small to analyse with confidence. Efforts should be made to ensure that the intersections of these harmful experiences and those who identify outside of the gender binary are examined thoroughly through subsequent reporting. Similar challenges were faced when analysing ethnicity and disability, and efforts should be made to further analyse the relationship between workplace harm and ethnicity and disability in future research.

Precaire of employment is also a factor in this crisis. Those who identify as freelancers are more likely to have these harmful behaviours perpetrated against them. As the COVID-19 pandemic has made the sector even more precarious than before, this is of significant concern.

This report indicates that the arts sector does not have sufficient or effective enough supports to deal with these worrying trends. Most concerningly, most respondents who reported experiencing and witnessing harm stated that they were not comfortable seeking support.

What emerges from the data and personal accounts is a culture of acquiescence and acceptance evident across this survey's data which is influenced by power dynamics that allow perpetrators to have a disproportionate amount of control and power. Respondents indicated that those who perpetrate harm were very likely to be in a position of power. In the rare cases that supports exist to counteract these experiences or to deal with complaints, they are insufficient or often subverted or gatekept by perpetrators.

Ultimately, the findings in this report point to the need for a considered, multifaceted, and meaningful approach to substantive culture change across the arts. The extent of harmful behaviours reported highlights the necessity for cross-sectoral leadership and a zero-tolerance approach, alongside fit-for-purpose resources to support all those employed in the arts. The evidence is clear, now action is required, and it needs to be a top-down approach. The current situation appears to be one that fits the 'missing stair' model, whereby workplaces and arts workers have adapted to 'work around' the presence of perpetrators within, rather than adjusting the system to identify, investigate and discipline them. Respondents to the survey have indicated that harmful workplace behaviours are prevalent, accepted within the culture, and in many cases unreported due to a fear of negative consequences for the victim. Additionally, it seems that the policies and systems designed to deal with this behaviour are, at best inadequate, and at worst, work against those reporting.

# OBSERVATIONS

Based on the findings of this report and in order to promote dignity at work across the arts sector, meaningful commitment to cultural change is needed to tackle the scale of this crisis. Action, accountability, and further research is required.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

Informed by the findings of this report, the following recommendations identify where action and cross-sectoral focus is needed to transform workplace culture in the arts.

Committed and meaningful leadership, alongside accessible and sustainable sectoral supports, capacity building programmes and oversight are all key measures that must be put in place to embed the culture change required.

Dignity in the workplace is the right of every artist and arts worker. Harm perpetrated by one person on another across the spectrum of behaviours outlined in this report has a lasting impact and the supports and measures provided must respond to the range of behaviours experienced by people. These recommendations outline a shared way forward towards creating a safe and respectful working environment for everyone who works in the arts sector.

**SIOBHÁN BOURKE, JANE DALY**

*Co-Directors, Irish Theatre Institute, Speak Up Co-Leads*

## **RECOMMENDATION 1:** **DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP AND BUILD** **CROSS-SECTORAL SUPPORT FOR CHANGE**

Strong and committed leadership is needed in order to build confidence across the sector that negative behaviours will not be tolerated and that there will be consequences for those perpetrating bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, humiliation, victimisation, assault and sexual assault.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- Mobilise sectoral and institutional leaders, key talent and public figures in the arts to speak publicly about the immediate need for cultural change in their respective sectors.
- Build cross-sectoral leadership and best practice to create a zero-tolerance approach to harmful behaviour in the arts workplace.
- Publish and share widely the Dignity in the Workplace Code of Behaviour throughout the arts sector
- Create an online register to which organisations and individuals can formally sign up to the Code of Behaviour and publicly declare their commitment to its implementation.
- Encourage organisations to provide all new employees/freelance workers on arts projects/events with the employer's Dignity in the Workplace Trust Statement (see Appendix 4), as part of their induction, and read same aloud on the first day of each new employment /project.
- Develop an inter-departmental working group to ensure complementary actions and implementation measures across sectors such as Arts, Defence, Justice, Education.



## RECOMMENDATION 3: PURSUE CONSEQUENCES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

The lack of accountability for perpetrating harmful behaviours has been outlined as a significant issue for those who experience and witness them. This report indicates that respondents generally felt that incidents reported were not dealt with meaningfully, or that they ‘worked around’ the harmful behaviour. This recommendation calls for punitive consequences for Boards and organisations perpetrating or covering up negative workplace behaviours.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- Encourage Government Departments, State Agencies and funders to require organisations/institutions to come up with, implement, and report annually on effective and enforceable accountability solutions and procedures.
- Ensure that all terms and conditions of public funding overtly address the material matters for organisations that result from non-compliance with the highest standards of governance/dignity at work principles.
- Advocate that all public funding be contingent on adherence to national guidelines and processes on workplace safety and reporting.<sup>38</sup>
- Establish regular compliance checks in all public funding systems to ensure ongoing adherence to the Code of Behaviour.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> See: [https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/equality\\_in\\_work/bullying\\_in\\_the\\_workplace.html#](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/equality_in_work/bullying_in_the_workplace.html#)

<sup>39</sup> Arts Council Conditions of Financial Assistance (Clause 31): [https://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/Main\\_Site/Content/Funds/Funding-Agreement-Template.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/Main_Site/Content/Funds/Funding-Agreement-Template.pdf)

## **RECOMMENDATION 4:** **BUILD CAPACITY TO PROMOTE A DIGNIFIED WORKPLACE CULTURE**

There is significant scope to develop the capacity of the sector to promote a dignified workplace culture. Arts organisations must commit to working actively in this regard, embedding capacity building programmes and continuing professional development for employees, artists and arts workers. Boards and leaders of arts organisations, across all sectors, have a particular responsibility in championing the importance and impact of these programmes on an ongoing basis.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- Promote the Dignity in the Workplace Toolkit containing information, templates and resources for use by arts organisations including step-by-step advice on the appropriate reporting structure and process for those experiencing harmful behaviour.
- Provide a suite of dedicated training tools for arts organisations, artists and arts workers to address Dignity in the Workplace issues, starting with Bystander Training.
- Provide ‘Train the Trainer’ programmes to address sectoral capacity deficits in relevant and related areas such as Intimacy Co-ordination for Stage and Screen.
- Incorporate Dignity in the Workplace modules in all arts related youth training and accredited courses at vocational and third level.

## RECOMMENDATION 5: INVEST IN FURTHER RESEARCH

This report indicates the existence of a culture of harmful workplace behaviour in the arts sector. Without a full picture of the size and demographics of the sector, accurate and worthwhile analysis of issues – and progress – is difficult to achieve around Dignity at Work.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Undertake a study to ascertain the size and scope of Ireland's arts sector, as recently called for by the National Campaign for the Arts.
- Commission research, building on this report, in recognition that issues express themselves differently in different artforms and sectors (amateur, youth, training organisations, commercial, subsidised).
- Commission research into the experiences, terms and conditions of work in the arts in relation to ethnicity and disability.
- Commission a triennial Speak Up survey to assess progress and to identify any new measures that are required to ensure the highest standards of Dignity in the Arts Workplace.
- Research international standards, codes and practices in order to measure impact and progress in Ireland and engage in transnational research projects and collaborations.

# APPENDICES



















CODE	CODE DESCRIPTION	COUNT
<b>STRUCTURAL ISSUES</b>		
50	Informal/'mutual support', rather than formal support in places	<b>38</b>
51	Call for wider policies/structures/leadership to resolve issues	<b>3</b>
<b>OTHER</b>		
60	Incident not seen as problematic	<b>3</b>
61	Trans issues/'gender ideology' causes problems <sup>40</sup>	<b>6</b>
91	Other	<b>50</b>
96	Comment on survey itself	<b>2</b>
97	'N/A'	<b>14</b>
98	No/'No thanks'/'Not really'/'Not now', etc.	<b>21</b>
99	Text entered but not responsive to question (e.g. '-', ':', etc.)	<b>3</b>

<sup>40</sup> It should be noted that this is language pulled from open responses and aggregated according to the research methodology. It is not intended to constitute agreement with this position.















## INFORMAL PROCEDURE

In the first instance, a person who believes they are being subjected to bullying, victimisation, harassment or sexual harassment should name it and ask the person responsible to stop the offensive behaviour. If it is difficult to approach the alleged offender directly then the complainant should seek help and advice on a confidential basis from:

- Their line manager e.g. director, producer, production manager, company manager, stage manager, CEO
- The Employer's Human Resources manager or designated complaints' advisor (where applicable)
- Another trusted member of the company
- An elected Trade Union representative
- An external 'guardian' (where available) who would be available from the theatre sector/union to act in this capacity

The person to whom the complaint is made should be sensitive and non-judgmental, and should support the complainant by accompanying them to a manager/supervisor.

The manager/supervisor should then raise the issue with the alleged perpetrator(s) in a confidential, non confrontational manner. The employer, at this stage of the process, is dealing with an allegation of misconduct and must adopt a neutral position.

In many instances this informal process, which names and acknowledges inappropriate behaviour and emphasises that it's not acceptable, can result in a mutual understanding and acceptance by both the offending and offended parties. Ideally, this process will involve an apology and a declared intention not to repeat the behaviour. If this is the case, then the matter should be regarded as concluded and no further action will need to be taken except for the manager/supervisor to monitor that no negative consequence for the complainant result from having made the complaint or any repeat of the behaviour occurs.













