



# GEMM Circles

## Anti-bullying in museums

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#SticksAndStones

# Approach

Your presence here is welcomed

Your presence here does not assume you have been a target of bullying

Your presence here does not assume you have been a perpetrator

Your presence here does not assume you have been a by stander

All contributions are in confidence

Please disclose only what you feel comfortable disclosing or nothing at all

No content will be shared or attributed following discussion

Please do not share content outside this session - **other than the  
research and resources**

# Definitions

‘Bullying is offensive, abusive, malicious, insulting and/or intimidating behaviour that occurs on more than one occasion’

Anne-Marie Quigg, ‘Bullying in the Arts’ 2010.

‘Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient’

Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, ACAS

# Definitions

- Sustained
  - Malevolent
  - Detrimental
  - Conscious
- 
- A target is someone who has experienced bullying
  - A perpetrator is someone who has bullied a target
  - A by stander is someone who has witnessed **bullying behaviour**.
  - **Bullying behaviour** is a negative behaviour that has detrimental impact.

# Bullying behaviours

**Bullying behaviour** is a negative behaviour that has detrimental impact

- minimising role and contribution - downplaying suggestions and ideas
- limiting access to essential information
- being overly critical of work without justification and/or micromanagement
- undermining in public and private - spreading rumours
- controlling contact with professional colleagues - forbidding contact
- behaving aggressively
- unnecessarily and constantly changing priorities
- humiliating staff
- projecting blame, being used as a scape goat or the reason for poor work
- not responding to emails, questions, or phone calls.

# Background

#MeToo #BlackLives Matter

No sector immune and little research within the arts  
Creates, endorses and perpetuates exclusion

To raise the profile of 'bullying' and bullying behaviours

To signpost information and provide advice online

To undertake some 'preliminary research'

To publish the research findings and recommendations



## MA to carry out research on bullying in museum sector

Yosola Olorunshola, 14.05.2019

Understanding and tackling bullying in museums

The Museums Association (MA) is launching a sector-wide research project into bullying in museums.

The research will gather responses via an online survey, set to launch in the coming months. The results will be published in early 2020 alongside recommendations on creating a healthy organisational or team culture, where bullying is not tolerated and can be addressed effectively.

The initial results will inform a workshop at this year's MA Conference in Brighton (3-5 October) entitled "Sticks and Stones: bullying in the museum sector".



### 'Sticks and Stones': Bullying in Museums Resources

We know that research in this area can be emotional. We appreciate that even talking about it can, for those who have personally experienced, or even those who have witnessed bullying, bring those experiences and feelings back to the surface.

We want to support you and we hope that by signposting the following you will be able to seek out additional help and guidance as required:

Your own organisation - depending on the size, you may have an occupational health service or an employee assistance programme in place providing access to health care professionals, counselling and other resources.

Outside your organisation there may be other networks and resources to help:

#### Bullying UK (Part of Family Lives)

Helpline: 0808 800 2222  
<https://www.bullying.co.uk/bullying-at-work/bullying-at-work/>  
<https://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/what-is-cyberbullying/>

#### National Bullying Helpline

Tel: 0845 22 55 787  
<https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/>

#### .Gov

<https://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment>

#### ACAS - Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service

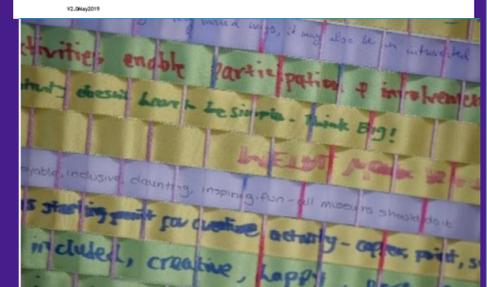
Helpline: 0300 123 1100  
Bullying <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1864>  
Discipline and Grievances at Work <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2179>  
Early Conciliation Notice (has to take place prior to Tribunal)  
<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=406>

#### Citizens Advice

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/discrimination-at-work/checking-if-it-discrimination-if-youre-being-harassed-or-bullied-at-work/>

Your trade union - whether you are a member of PCS, Unison, UCU or Prospect they are likely to have guidance and access to specific support, for example lawyers that could help. See for example:

<https://www.prospect.org.uk/help-at-work/support-advice/bullying-harassment>  
<https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/knowledge/discrimination/bullying-and-harassment/>  
<https://www.ucu.org.uk/bullying>  
<https://www.pcs.org.uk/resources/health-and-safety/hazards-and-health-a-to-z/bullying-guidance-for-members>



## Sticks and Stones: bullying in museums

The bullying questionnaire is now closed

No sector is free from cases of bullying and this includes museums. Up until now there has been little, if any, research undertaken into bullying within the sector.

In May 2019 the Museums Association (MA) launched Sticks and Stones, a research project to tackle the issue. We received a huge response from people interested in getting involved or who wished to share their experiences.

We have since developed a number of resources to further this research and provide baseline information about the nature, scale and impact of bullying.

# Content Warning

# Sticks and Stones: Bullying in Museums



## Sticks and Stones: Bullying in Museums

### Executive Summary

#### Introduction

People make museums, and that includes everyone - staff, freelancers, trustees, volunteers and of course, our communities. We have long acknowledged that museums need a workforce that is more diverse and representative of our communities - in order to achieve that we also need a workforce that is supported, respected, and rewarded fairly. This research highlights that there is, unacceptably a significant issue of bullying in the sector. It is an issue that we need to address openly, collectively and urgently for the sector's wellbeing.

Sharon Heal, Director, Museums Association

#### Background

The Sticks and Stones research project was developed as part of the Museums Association's (MA) commitment to wellbeing and equality in the sector to raise the profile of issues of 'bullying' and bullying behaviours therein, signpost online information and support and undertake preliminary research.

Research participation was high with a profile representative of the workforce and sector, enabling us to confidently make a number of recommendations for the sector and beyond.

#### Commitment

Everyone within the sector must reflect on these findings and recommendations and puts them into practice.

Creating a culture where those that work in and with museums feel and know they are in a safe environment and are fully enabled to meet their maximum potential is a priority, addressing needs across the whole of the museums sector:

- attracting and retaining the best diverse talent - by supporting and nurturing all staff

<sup>1</sup> Where bullying was defined as - 'offensive, abusive, malicious, insulting and/or intimidating behaviour that occurs on more than one occasion.' Anne-Marie Quigg, 'Bullying in the Arts'

Recommendations	Organisations	Line Managers	Colleagues	Targets	Perpetrators
Ensure all leaders, managers, staff, volunteers <sup>1</sup> and freelancers actively participate in relevant training, including induction, difficult conversations, and health and safety and managing investigations.	✓	✓			
Engage with recognised trade unions and other groups.	✓	✓			
Look for support from employee assistance programmes or occupational health providers and external mediation or investigation organisations.	✓	✓			
Establish support groups and networks, including mental health first aiders, and champions.	✓				
Lead and be a role model for professional behaviours and management practice.	✓	✓	✓		
Be open, visible and available to all individuals within your team.		✓			
Read all relevant policies and understand how they relate to your role and the organisation you work in or with.		✓	✓	✓	✓
Implement relevant policies transparently, consistently and professionally.	✓	✓			
Participate in relevant training and development, including good management practice, health and safety and managing investigations.		✓	✓	✓	✓
Create a team culture of collaboration, cooperation and transparency, articulating appropriate team behaviours.		✓			

<sup>1</sup> Trustees are included as volunteers.

# Sticks and Stones – key findings

Targets were most likely to be bullied by their direct line manager

Most common bullying behaviours were:

- minimising role and contribution
- limiting access to essential information
- being overly critical of work without justification
- undermining individuals in public

25% of respondents felt they were being bullied as a result of a protected characteristic

Most common being **gender**, followed by age and disability

# Sticks and Stones – key findings

Bullying had negative impacts in both work and home domains and affected psychological and physical health, 95% and 75% of respondents respectively

As a result of being bullied 44% of respondents stopped working with the organisation and 11% left the sector

There was a lack of awareness of and trust in formal policies and procedures

Only 13% of respondents raised a formal grievance and only 8% of respondents had a facilitated meeting with a manager or participated in mediation

90% of all respondents were not satisfied with the outcome of actions taken

# Sticks and Stones – gender findings

Targets were most likely to be bullied by their direct line manager

25% of respondents felt they were bullied as a result of a protected characteristic with the most common being **gender**, followed by age and disability

70% of respondents, 357 people, identified as female

15% of respondents identifying as female, 53 people, cited their gender as the focus of their bullying

# Sticks and Stones – gender findings

## Tentative language

- *Not really though he is fairly misogynistic*
- *Possibly because I am a blonde woman.*

## Perpetrators both male and female

- *I was always bullied by another woman who would never pick on male colleagues.*
- *I do believe that at the very heart of the matter, it's because I am a young woman that he wants to control.*

## Pregnancy and maternity

- *I think unreasonable demands were 'stepped up' in order to manage me out of the organisation when I was pregnant.*

## Intersectionality reported frequently as a function of Social Power Theory – around lower level jobs and lack of power

- *Myself and others who were targeted were all young women between the ages of 20-30 or divorced/single women over the age of 50*

# Sticks and Stones – recommendations

- for the sector and organisations, including funders
- for line managers or leaders, including trustees
- for targets
- for peers or colleagues
- for perpetrators

## 28 recommendations:

- have a bullying policy and procedure that is highlighted to staff
- understand the impact of bullying and offer or signpost support where applicable
- ensure bullying, bullying behaviours and good practice are covered in training and development

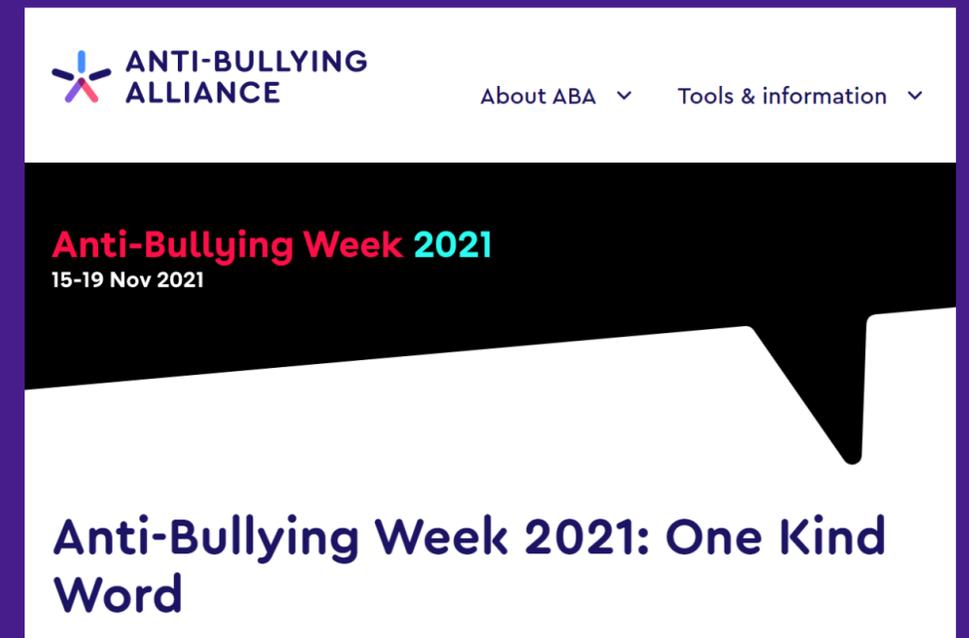
# Success?

- To raise the profile of 'bullying' and bullying behaviours - ✓
- To signpost information and provide advice online - ✓
- To undertake some 'preliminary research' - ✓
- To publish the research findings and recommendations - ✓

## Communication and dissemination phase

Focus on Anti-Bullying Week – blogs, sessions, signposting

Anecdotal feedback that the research has helped people gain help and bring cases against the perpetrator.



# How can you help? How can we help each other?

- Please signpost the research and our Wellbeing Hub – open source content <https://www.museumsassociation.org/careers/wellbeing-hub/>
- Read the recommendations and reflect on your own professional practice
- Continue the conversation with your colleagues and your teams
- Share your experiences, good practice and provide case studies
- Continue the research in your organisation – e.g. staff survey
- Be available and supportive

## ...be friendly and supportive - West Wing quote...

This guy's walking down the street when he falls in a hole. The walls are so steep he can't get out.

A doctor passes by and the guy shouts up, 'Hey you. Can you help me out?'

The doctor writes a prescription, throws it down in the hole and moves on.

Then a priest comes along and the guy shouts up, 'Father, I'm down in this hole can you help me out?'

The priest writes out a prayer, throws it down in the hole and moves on.

## **...be friendly and supportive**

Then a friend walks by, 'Hey, Joe, it's me can you help me out?'

And the friend jumps in the hole.

Our guy says, 'Are you stupid? Now we're both down here.'

The friend says, 'Yeah, but I've been down here before and I know the way out.'



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