

CN: sexual harassment in the workplace, sexual violence

A large crowd of people is gathered for a protest in front of a grand, classical building. Many individuals are holding large red flags with the slogan 'PUTTING WORKERS FIRST' and a circular logo. Some people are also holding smaller yellow signs that say 'KILL THE BILL'. The scene is filled with energy and a sense of collective action.

Safety & Dignity at Work Organising Pack

WWW.YOGATEACHERSUNION.CO.UK

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Sexual harassment - a union issue?

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1 out of 2



Women have experienced Sexual Harassment at work

4 out of 5



Don't report Sexual Harassment to their employer

Source: *Still just a bit of banter?* TUC Report , 2016



1%



Report to their union reps

Source: *Still just a bit of banter?* TUC Report , 2016



"Since forming the Yoga Teachers' Branch, whose original focus was around pay and precarity, we've recorded over 30 disclosures of sexual abuse and violence. This ranges from grooming and coercion by celebrity and well-established teachers, stalking by students, to rape, and in the most extreme cases, trafficking and torture."

ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT
WORKING GROUP - YTU, IWGB



IW*GB

Direct correlation between casualisation and SH

- Laws provide little protection for many
- Less likely to be union members and have employment rights
- Work in isolation. Safeguarding and avenues for reporting are often inadequate or non-existent

Source: *Still just a bit of banter?* TUC Report , 2016



Part of a Wider Societal Issue



Though the tools used by perpetrators may differ from one industry to another, Sexual Harassment and Abuse exists throughout society and no industry or workplace is immune.



Women (particularly young women and women with disabilities), non-binary people, LGBTQI, Black and people of colour are the most common targets of sexual harassment by perpetrators who are most commonly men of a higher status



FOR SUPPORT PLEASE
REFER TO OUR
SIGNPOSTING PAGE:

<https://yogateachersunion.co.uk/support>

FOR GUIDANCE ON
REPORTING PLEASE
REFER TO OUR ASH
LANDING PAGE:

<https://yogateachersunion.co.uk/safety-and-dignity-at-work>



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**WHAT CHANGES
DO YOU
WANT TO SEE?**



”

I want to give a voice to people who have suffered sexual harassment in yoga settings and in all industries. I want silencing and secrecy to become things of the past.

I want people to know how organisations can manipulate and harm others by mis-representing yoga. My yoga is mine, my belief is mine, no one should think they can make it about them or use it for their agenda...

”

...I want all people to feel, and be, safe practicing and teaching yoga. I'd love an Anti Sexual Harassment policy and code of conduct to be on the wall in all yoga venues, so that others can be better informed and protected than I was.

- Miranda

Demand #1

We need every venue to
have a clear, visible
sexual harassment policy

”

I want someone to take responsibility
for this.

I want it to be a clear process for
someone who has gone through this
kind of thing

.

I want all people to receive better
education on how they might hold a
power advantage over someone else,
and take responsibility for it.

- Femke



Demand #2

We need the awarding bodies to make trainings on consent and sexual harassment mandatory.



Pedagogical relationships should come with certain responsibilities. Students' education should not be derailed by teachers' romantic and sexual appetite.

The yoga industry, including teacher trainings, should centralise boundaries between teacher/student - as is found in psychotherapy training.

- Gillian

Demand #3

We need the awarding bodies and membership organisations to implement clear reporting mechanisms, so when something happens we have somewhere to turn.



Accountability

Clear reporting structures

Better awareness of rights and
access to legal support where
needed

Collective strength and power

To feel safe

- Laura

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Call to Action



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It has taken 20 years for me to talk about it publicly. At the time I saw it as just a 'relationship gone wrong', but I now see that he was my teacher, and also my employer and that this relationship was abusive.

GILLIAN

It seems every angle gets blocked, puts the victim at risk, and/or protects the offender. ...Who takes responsibility for this?

FEMKE

I thought I was imagining it.

ANONYMOUS



A bright, minimalist room with white walls, two windows, and a potted plant. The room is empty except for the text overlay.

**Does your place of
work/practice have a
clear, visible SH policy?**

- Download a
poster and policy
and email them



I thought about reporting the sexual harassment I received from a BWY Teacher to the BWY and even discussed with the perpetrator what would happen if I did.

He told me nothing would happen, no one would be interested. When I looked at the BWY website and could find no clear avenues to report, I was led to believe that he was right and this wasn't something that would be taken seriously.

- ANONYMOUS

**Are you a member of
IYN, BWY or YA?**

- Use our template letter and demand clear reporting mechanisms





We're still at such early stages of our collectivising journey. The lessons are steep, the challenges great,

But then, we have this incredible strength, confidence and knowledge building within this group of survivors who are supporting each other and exploring every avenue possible to dismantle this current imbalance of power and in doing so beginning to collectively realise the safety and dignity we deserve, and have always deserved.

- Laura

it filled me with hope that finally we
can actually do something about this.
And I feel safe now because of the
strength in numbers

SUPI

Organising around the
issue of sexual
harassment and respect
at work has not been
easy but it has been
empowering

GEORGIE

The YTU has been the first
glimmer of hope. I hope that
by sharing testimonies,
education and **by**
organising, we can put an
end to a culture of abuse
in our industry as a whole.

ELISE



I want all people to receive better education on what these power dynamics feel like when you're in it, and how to assertively remove yourself from unsafe relationships early on.

FEMKE

Organising around these issues feels empowering. So many of us have our voices silenced, or silence ourselves, in different ways.

We are all powerful change-makers and we all deserve to be heard.

MIRANDA

As a survivor...taking action and working towards change is part of the healing process.

ANONYMOUS





**We, the workers, ARE the
Union
Add your voice
AGM on 28th July**

