



REPORT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Overview of Research on Sexual Harassment in the
Nordic Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Industry



REPORT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT
IN HOTEL, RESTAURANT AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Nordic Union - HRCT
Kampmannsgade 4
DK 1790 Copenhagen K
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Author: Kristjan Bragason

Telephone [+45 88 921 354](tel:+4588921354)
Email nordisk.union@3f.dk
Website www.nordichrct.org



SUMMARY

Sexual harassment should not be taken lightly. While some may see the behaviour associated with sexual harassment as harmless horseplay, others see it as violation of their dignity. The social partners should give priority to issues of third-party violence and harassment in their efforts to improve workplace conditions, as sexual harassment may have negative consequences not only for the direct victims but also for their families and co-workers, as well as for organisations and society at large.

The first step towards addressing the issue is to identify the problems and highlight their serious nature. Trade unions play a key role in this process along with employers and public authorities. This publication provides an overview of the issue and identifies the responsibility of each actor in terms of combatting sexual harassment in the workplace. It includes definitions of sexual harassment and risk factors and describes consequences and costs. It also presents statistics and references to recent studies on sexual harassment in the tourism sector conducted in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Last but not least, it contains a checklist for workplace prevention and some tools that can be used in future work.

Although extensive information is available on the subject, there is still a need for more knowledge, greater awareness and increased recognition of the serious and damaging consequences of verbal and non-verbal harassment, threats and physical violence, and of ways of countering such behaviour. In recent years, the Nordic trade unions in the hotel, restaurant, catering and tourism sector have put sexual harassment high on the agenda by gathering evidence, organising conferences, participating in public debates and working on prevention strategies.

A key finding from data contained in this report is that third-party sexual harassment is endemic across the tourism industry. Sexual harassment affects both men and women in the industry but has a greater impact on women. Young women in insecure jobs with frequent customer contact are most vulnerable. An analysis of risk factors relative to sexual harassment shows that many of the factors at play are related to the work environment: alcohol consumption, the tipping culture, irregular working hours and the notion that the customer is always right. Harassment can take many forms: verbal, non-verbal and physical. It has worrying consequences for individuals,

organisations and society as a whole. The documented prevalence of sexual harassment reflects abuse of power and is a structural issue.

It can be something of a challenge to measure the prevalence and different forms of third-party harassment and compare study results or statistics between countries. Terms, definitions and classification of concepts, as well as the methods of measurement used differ between countries and researchers. It is therefore important to be critical when comparing data from different studies and statistics. It is always important to look at how the phenomenon measured is defined and at the method of measurement applied. One problem in relation to third-party harassment seen in many countries is underreporting of incidents. There may be many reasons for this: some employees still think that harassment is part of the job, and differences between countries may reflect cultural differences as to what kind of behaviour is perceived as negative, aggressive or hostile.

1 INTRODUCTION

Ask any woman about sexual harassment at the workplace and she is likely to have personally experienced or witnessed such harassment. All workers have the right to work without facing sexual harassment, but too many workers sadly do not enjoy this basic freedom, human right and dignity. All efforts must be made to eradicate sexual harassment.

The tourism sector, ie the hotel, restaurant and catering industries, is one of the most important sectors in the Nordic region, employing around half a million workers and growing rapidly. Sexual harassment is a widespread problem in the tourism industry. The industry needs

systemic change in order to realise its full potential and become an attractive industry to work in.

In recent years there has been growing awareness among Nordic trade unions in the tourism sector of sexual harassment being a serious health and safety problem. On 8-9 June 2015, the **Nordic Union of Hotel, Restaurant, Catering and Tourism Workers** and its member organisations hosted a conference in Reykjavik, Iceland, on the subject of sexism and sexual harassment in the tourism sector.

The aim of this report is to provide information and strategies for how to raise

awareness about sexual harassment in the workplace and on how to eradicate it. Employers and workers have a shared responsibility for health and safety at work. However, the main responsibility for preventing any form of harassment lies with employers, who have a statutory duty to provide a safe working environment and safeguard the health and safety of their employees.

At the end of this report there are some guidelines and a checklist for trade unions and their workplace representatives that can help them develop strategies and policies to prevent sexual harassment at work.

2 WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

There are different understandings of what constitutes sexual harassment at work because of individual, institutional and regional differences in definitions and perceptions of the concept. A common feature of the definitions is that they are recognised as gender-based discrimination and violence that offends, humiliates or degrades the victims. In its most

simple form sexual harassment can be explained as follows:

SEXUAL HARASSMENT is defined as unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature, creating a discriminatory and offensive environment and therefore constituting a health and safety problem.

2.1 SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMES IN MANY FORMS

Sexual harassment can take a variety of forms. It includes both physical violence and subtler forms of violence such as coercion or the creation of a hostile or unpleasant environment. It is always the individual that is exposed to sexual harassment who determines if they think the behaviour is discriminatory or offensive.

FIGURE 1: DIFFERENT FORMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

VERBAL FORM	NON-VERBAL FORM	PHYSICAL FORM
Unwanted pressure for sexual favours	Unwanted sexual looks or gestures	Actual or attempted rape or sexual assault
Unwanted sexual teasing, jokes, remarks or questions	Whistling at someone	Unwanted deliberate touching, grabbing or pinching
Personal questions about social or sex life	Making sexual gestures	Unwelcome hugging, kissing, patting or stroking
Sexual comments about a person's clothing or looks	Hanging up posters/calendars with a sexual content	Unwanted leaning over or cornering
Inappropriate invitations to go out on dates	Sexually explicit material via text messages, emails or social media	

3 PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORK

Various studies indicate that sexual harassment at work is a common problem, but there seems to be a lack of reliable general statistics at EU level that allow comparisons between countries, sectors and workplaces.

A report from the **International Trade Union Confederation** indicates that around 50% of women workers in the industrialised world have been sexually harassed.¹ Similar findings have been

presented by the **European Commission** in a 2010 report on violence against women and again in a more recent report from the **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights from 2014**. The rate of women workers reporting some form of sexual harassment or unwanted sexual behaviour in the workplace throughout their working life was as high as 50%. There are huge regional differences, with women in Northern Europe reporting a much higher incidence of

sexual harassment at work than women in Southern Europe. Does this mean that sexual harassment is a greater problem in Northern Europe than in Southern Europe? Probably not; it is more likely that women in the Nordic countries are more aware of and have lower tolerance of the issue, while some behaviour related to sexual harassment is more acceptable or taboo in other societies.^{2 3}

4 SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

The tourism sector embraces a large number of different organisations and workplaces, including hotels, motels, campsites, restaurants, bars, clubs, cafeterias, canteens and other catering establishments, as well as travel agencies, information offices, conference centres and exhibition halls. Sexual harassment, including unwanted attention or intimidation of a sexual nature, appears to be experienced widely in the industry. Waiters and other frontline staff seem to be the occupational groups most prone to sexual harassment, with almost half of

all respondents in that category reporting such experiences. Among the most common acts of harassment are sexually suggestive comments and obscene language and jokes.⁴

A recent survey conducted by **ROC** among 688 workers in the restaurant industry in 39 US states suggests that sexual harassment is widespread and experienced by all types of workers. The report on the survey concludes that sexual harassment is endemic across the restaurant industry and is experi-

enced by both women and men, but that the heaviest impact is borne by women, transgender people and tipped workers. The research finds that 60% of women have experienced sexual harassment, and over half of them say they experience it on at least a weekly basis. The highly sexualised environment in which restaurant workers work impacts every major workplace relationship, with restaurant workers reporting high levels of harassing behaviour from restaurant management, co-workers and customers.⁵

¹ ITUC, 2008

² European Commission, 2010

³ FRA, 2014

⁴ ILO, 2003

⁵ ROC, 2014

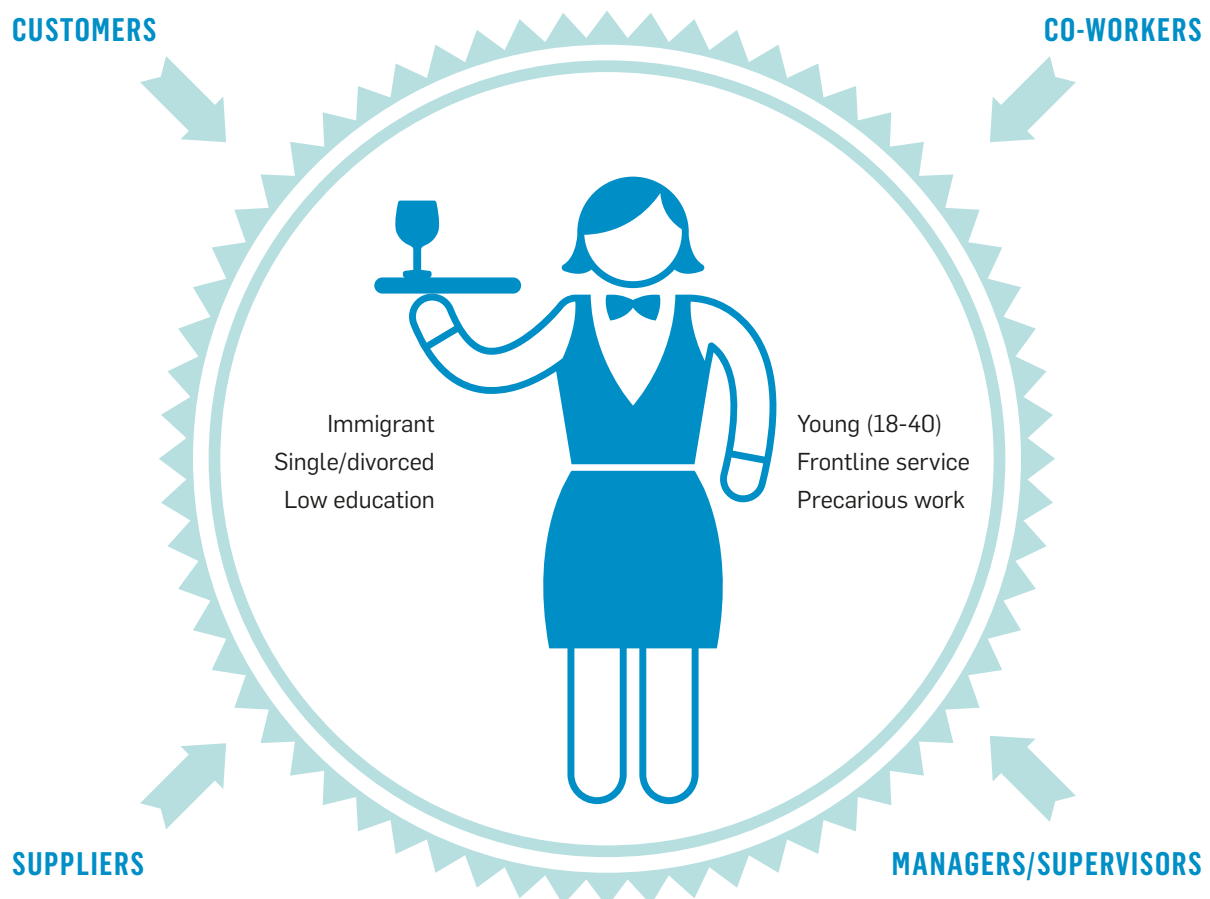
5 WHO ARE THE VICTIMS AND HARASSERS?

Sexual harassment affects people regardless of age, relationship, ability, physical appearance, background or professional status. Sexual harassment does not affect women alone: men can also be victims. However, women are more vulnerable due to their position in the labour market and see harassment as a greater threat than men.

Sexual harassment can be perpetrated by co-workers, supervisors/managers, customers or suppliers, and it usually takes the form of suggestive remarks and requests for sexual favours and compromising invitations. The harasser may be of the same sex as the victim.

Most complaints about sexual harassment in the tourism industry are made by staff employed in frontline positions, where the harasser is frequently the customer. The victims often have characteristics that make them vulnerable in the labour market and therefore unlikely to report sexual harassment out of fear of losing their job.

FIGURE 2: TYPICAL VICTIM VS HARASSER



6 WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES AND COSTS?

Sexual harassment at work can have serious consequences and costs, which can be divided into societal, organisational and individual costs.

There are great individual and cultural differences in how workers perceive and experience various forms of sexual harassment. That can explain why many

workers in the hotel, restaurant and tourism industry seem to cope well with unwanted sexual behaviour while others always see it as offensive.⁶

FIGURE 3: CONSEQUENCES AND COSTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

SOCIETAL	ORGANISATIONAL	INDIVIDUAL
Gender inequality	Absenteeism & sickness	Poor physical & mental health
Wage gap	High rate of staff turnover	Stress & depressions
Benefits & welfare cost	Low productivity	Low self-esteem
Healthcare & medication cost	Low morale & motivation	Embarrassment & shame
Lower GDP	Compensations & legal cost	Annoyance & anger
	Loss of goodwill & reputation	Low work satisfaction
		Family issues
		Income losses

7 WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS IN THE TOURISM SECTOR?

Various causes of the high incidence of sexual harassment in the tourism industry have been identified, including:

- » Long and irregular working hours, including evenings, nights and public holidays.
- » Precarious working conditions and the impact of financial power. Customer-employee relations in an industry where customers are paying for a service and may therefore believe they have the right to treat employees as inferior.

- » Tipping, especially where workers rely on their customers for their income.
- » A high degree of social contact attracts sociable, energetic and outgoing people to the industry. General hospitality is frequently misjudged and perceived as an invitation to make sexual advances.
- » 'The customer is always right' mentality.
- » Employees may be encouraged to flirt or use their sexuality to generate

income and customer satisfaction, for example by wearing revealing uniforms.

- » Alcohol and drugs create a hostile environment and intoxicated customers, which may lead to misbehaviour and foul language.
- » A sexualised environment may encourage customers to treat employees in certain service occupations as sex objects rather than workers.

⁶ ILO, 2003

8 SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE NORDIC TOURISM SECTOR

Various statistics are available on sexual harassment in the Nordic countries, such as reported cases, European-based health and safety studies, and studies on violence against women. It is difficult to compare the results, as it is unclear whether they all measure the same thing, and unfortunately only a few of the available studies focus on specific sectors, such as tourism.

To examine the incidence of unwanted sexual behaviour and sexual harassment in the tourism industry we have gathered information and research from member organisations. The findings from all the Nordic countries indicate that sexual harassment is widespread and experienced by all types of hotel, restaurant, catering and tourist workers.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS:

- » Similar results in all the Nordic countries, although the statistics are not all fully comparable.
- » The tourism industry is highly exposed to sexual and moral harassment behaviours on the part of customers, and frontline staff in restaurants and bars are especially exposed.
- » Alcohol is a serious risk factor, and workers in occupations where alcohol is served are most vulnerable to sexual harassment.
- » Many workers experience harassment more than once a month.
- » Young women are most likely to experience sexual harassment, but men frequently experience it as well.
- » Employees with temporary or part-time contracts are more vulnerable to sexual harassment than those with full-time contracts.
- » Verbal comments are the most common form of sexual harassment.
- » The majority of workers find sexual harassment offensive, although around 35% do not find it so.
- » Women tend to see sexual harassment as more offensive than men do.
- » Sexual harassment causes absenteeism from work.
- » Many victims never report sexual harassment.



8.1 DENMARK

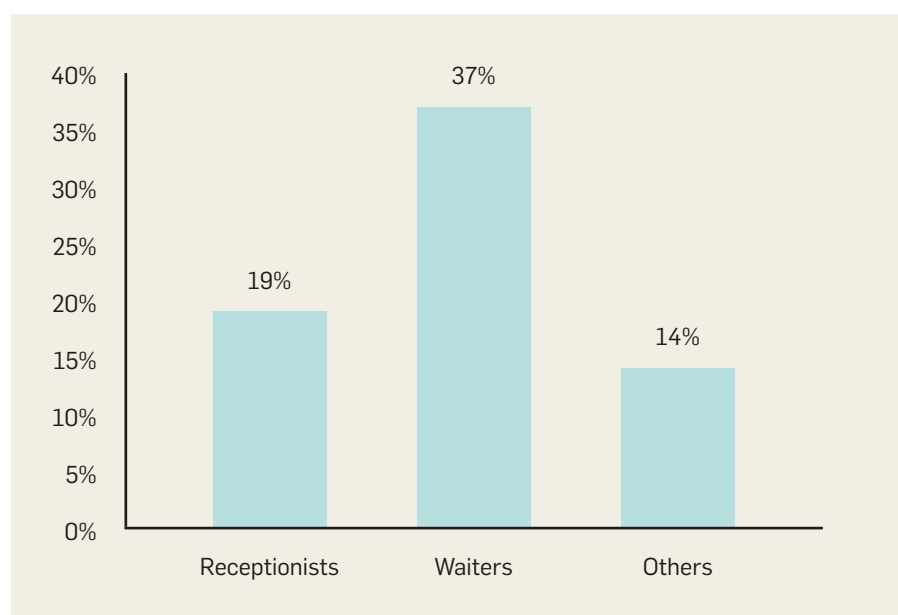
In early 2015 the **United Federation of Danish Workers (3F)** conducted a survey on sexual harassment among 1650 members in the hotel and restaurant industry in Denmark. A total of 500 frontline workers with daily customer contact, such as waiters, receptionists and hotel cleaners, answered the questionnaire.⁷

The survey showed that 24% of all the respondents had experienced sexual harassment in the preceding twelve months: 27% of the women and 19% of the men. Certain professions such as waiters were more vulnerable, with 37% of them having been sexually harassed by customers.

MAIN FINDINGS IN DENMARK:

- » Around 25% of the respondents had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months.
- » Woman workers (27%) experienced sexual harassment more frequently than male workers (19%).
- » Around 30-35% of young workers had witnessed or personally experienced sexual harassment by customers.
- » More than 45% of waiters had experienced sexual harassment by customers.
- » Verbal comments were the most common form of sexual harassment, but around 53% had experienced unwanted or inappropriate touches.
- » More than 50% of those who had experienced sexual harassment thought it was degrading. For female workers, the percentage was around 60%.
- » Around 56% of the workers reported sexual harassment to their supervisors. Male workers were more likely to report.

FIGURE 4: SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY OCCUPATION (DENMARK)



⁷ 3F, 2015

8.2 FINLAND

In April 2015 **PAM** (the Finnish Service Workers Union) conducted a survey on sexual harassment among its members in the Finnish service sector (retail, tourism, security, cleaning and hairdressing). The union received responses from 580 members, of whom 140 worked in the tourism sector.⁸

The main findings were that 38% of members had experienced sexual harassment by customers: 45% of the women and 16% of the men. Certain professions such as bartenders, waiters and

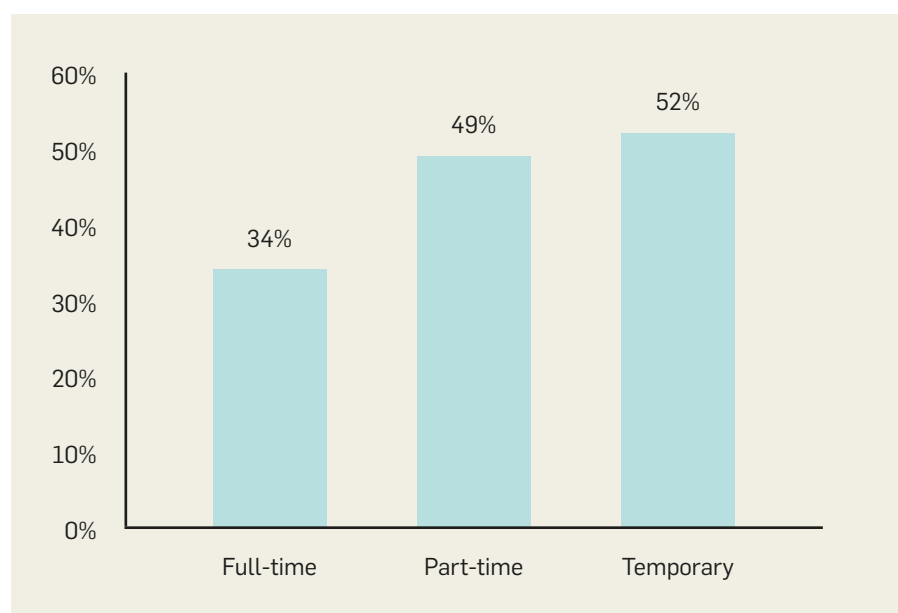
hotel cleaners were particularly exposed to sexual harassment, as were workers who did not have fixed employment contracts.

According to the report, many of those who experience sexual harassment found it difficult to ask for support, particularly in cases where the harasser was a co-worker. In addition, the research shows that many managers and supervisors do not take the problem seriously. Only 25% of those who had reported sexual harassment felt that their manager or supervisor took action.

MAIN FINDINGS IN FINLAND:

- » Around 38% of members in the private service sector had experienced sexual harassment: 45% of female workers and 16% of male workers.
- » Approximately 50% of all workers in the tourism sector had experienced sexual harassment by customers (most common among young workers and waiters/bartenders).
- » Verbal comments and gestures were the most common form of harassment, but more than 40% had experienced unwanted or inappropriate touches.
- » Part-time and temporary workers were more vulnerable to sexual harassment than workers with fixed full-time contracts.
- » Workers with fixed employment contracts were more likely to report sexual harassment or tell the harasser to stop than workers with part-time, temporary or zero-hour contracts.
- » Around 60% found sexual harassment very or somewhat offensive (men found it less offensive).
- » Less than half of the victims had reported sexual harassment to their supervisor, mainly because they did not find it offensive.
- » The majority of workers discussed their sexual harassment experience with co-workers.
- » Only 25% of workplaces had a policy on how to assist workers that had experienced sexual harassment.

FIGURE 5: SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT



⁸ PAM, 2015

8.3 ICELAND

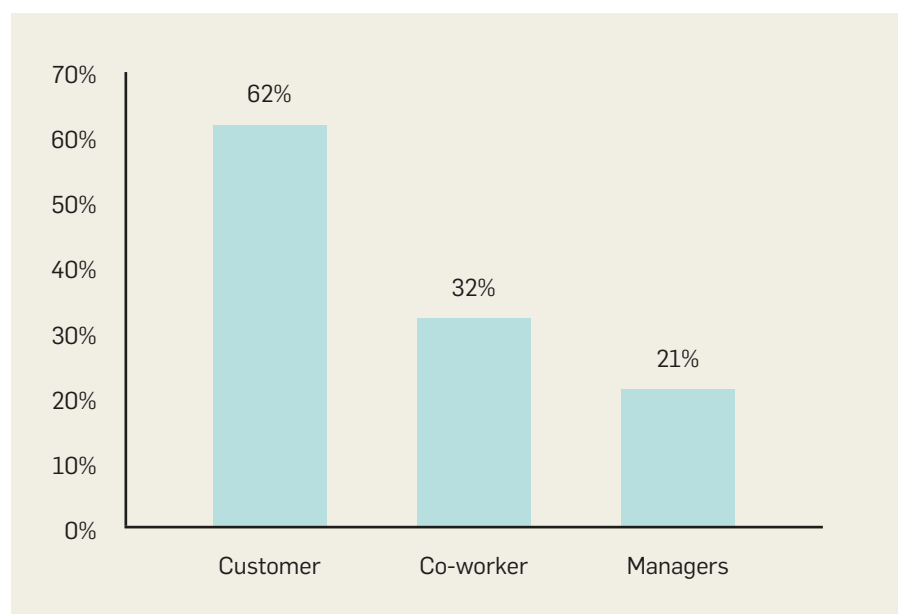
In March 2015 the Federation of General and Special Workers (SGS) in association with the Institute for Gender, Equality and Difference at the **University of Iceland** conducted a study on the frequency and consequences of sexual harassment among 1500 workers in the service and tourism industry in Iceland. Responses were submitted by 900 workers, of whom 235 worked in the tourism industry.⁹

The main findings were that around 41% of the respondents in the tourism industry had experienced sexual harassment at some point in time: more than 50% of the women and 26% of the men. Workers below the age of 25 were especially vulnerable. Women were more likely than men to be sexually harassed by a manager/supervisor and experience threats.

MAIN FINDINGS IN ICELAND:

- » Around 41% of all workers in the hotel, restaurant and tourism industry had experienced sexual harassment: 50% of female workers and 26% of male workers.
- » Harassment was most common among waiters and bartenders at restaurants, bars and cafés, with 55-60% in that group having been sexually harassed.
- » Young workers were most vulnerable, and the majority of those who had experienced sexual harassment were below the age of 24.
- » Verbal comments and/or unwanted sexual looks and gestures were the most common form of sexual harassment in Iceland.
- » Women were more likely to be harassed by co-workers and managers, while men were more likely to be harassed by customers.
- » Women were more likely to feel threatened or violated by harassment than men.
- » Around 32% had witnessed sexual harassment in the workplace.

FIGURE 6: THE TYPE OF HARASSER (ICELAND)



⁹ SGS, 2015

8.4 NORWAY

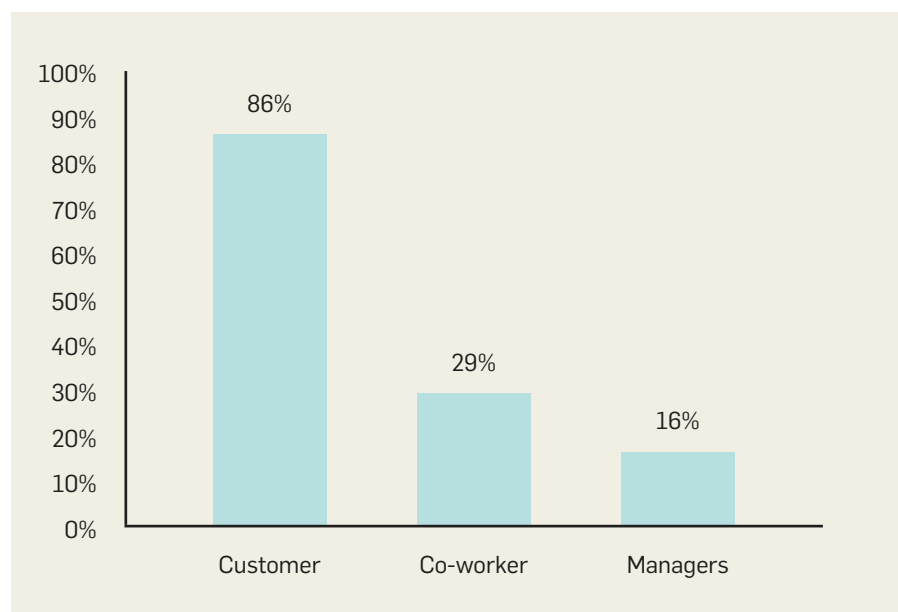
In January 2014 the **FAFO** research institute published a study on working conditions in the hotel and restaurant sector in Norway. In this study around 800 workers answered questions about sexual harassment at work. The main findings were that 20% of the female workers in the industry had experienced some form of sexual harassment in the preceding 12 months, mainly by customers.¹⁰

According to the National Institute of Occupational Health (**STAMI**) 2015 report on occupational health and safety, around 24% of waiters and bartenders said they had experienced sexual harassment at work, compared with an average of 5% for the total workforce.¹¹

MAIN FINDINGS IN NORWAY:

- » Around 17% of all workers in the hotel and restaurant sector had experienced sexual harassment in the preceding 12 months.
- » Around 20% of female workers in the hotel and restaurant sector had experienced sexual harassment in the preceding 12 months.
- » Customers were the main perpetrators.
- » Young workers were more likely to be harassed than older workers.
- » More than 5% of the workers who had been sexually harassed had been absent from work due to the harassment.

FIGURE 7: THE TYPE OF HARASSER (NORWAY)



¹⁰ FAFO, 2014
¹¹ STAMI, 2015

8.5 SWEDEN

There are very few Swedish studies of the extent of sexual harassment of workers in the hotel, restaurant and tourism industry.

However, according to occupational health and safety reports in Sweden published by the Swedish Work Environment Authority (**Arbetsmiljöverket**) in 2014, around 13% of **female workers** in the hotel and restaurant industry had experienced third-party sexual harassment in the preceding 12 months and 6% had been harassed by managers or co-workers. Young women employed on short-term contracts in blue-collar professions were more

likely to experience sexual harassment than other workers, even though no statistics for the sector are available.

A study conducted by the newspaper **Svenska Dagbladet** in 2013 among 317 women aged 17-56 working in bars and restaurants in Stockholm and Gothenburg showed that more than 65% of the women working in the industry had experienced some form of sexual harassment during their working lives and a majority had been harassed more than once. Most of those women had been harassed by customers.

MAIN FINDINGS IN SWEDEN:

- » Around 11% of all workers in the hotel and restaurant sector had experienced third-party sexual harassment in the preceding 12 months.
- » Around 13% among female workers in the hotel and restaurant sector had experienced sexual harassment in the preceding 12 months.
- » Around 15% of all workers had been sexually harassed by their managers or co-workers.
- » The majority of women working in bars and restaurants in Stockholm and Gothenburg had experienced sexual harassment during their working lives.
- » More than 14% of all young women employed in blue-collar jobs at the age of 16-29 had experienced third party sexual harassment compared with 7% of all women.
- » Part-time and temporary workers were more vulnerable to sexual harassment.
- » Blue-collar workers were more likely to experience sexual harassment than white-collar workers.
- » Less than 30% of those who had experienced sexual harassment had received information or assistance from their employers about what to do.
- » Many victims never reported sexual harassment.
- » Sexual harassment seems to be a recurring issue, as many of those who had experienced it had been sexually harassed more than once.

¹² SCB/Arbetsmiljöverket, 2014

¹³ Svenska Dagbladet, 2013

9 HOW TO STOP SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE?

Sexual harassment is a widespread problem in the tourism industry. A systemic change is necessary for the industry to realise its full potential and make it an attractive industry to work in.

While legal and organisational responses to sexual harassment have evolved rapidly in recent years, the stereotyping of harassers and targets has not kept pace with changing workplace realities. Many still view the typical harassment scenario as one involving a sleazy male boss and a powerless female worker. Effective prevention strategies must go beyond this stereotyping in order to better reflect the diversity of sexual harassment at the workplace.

According to EU and national law in the Nordic countries, both employers and workers have obligations with regard to health and safety at the workplace. The main responsibility for preventing sexual harassment lies with employers, who according to legislation have to provide their employees with a safe working environment and ensure their workers' health and safety. However, in practice, a joint approach to health and safety is usually most successful.

Social partners in the tourism industry at the Nordic and European level need to join forces in an effort to address the problem, raise awareness, and create safe working environments. The first step is to work towards a common understanding about the issue and develop joint guidelines, recommendations and strategies on how to prevent sexual harassment in the industry.

9.1 EMPLOYERS

There are several measures that all employers should take to stop sexual harassment at work. The following measures would help make the working environment safe, increase job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover:

- » Zero-tolerance policies: Employers must show strong support for their employees by means of written policies that clearly set out employee rights and express zero-tolerance of sexual harassment in the establishment.
- » Communication: Managers must make sure that all workers know which policies are in place regarding zero-tol-

erance towards sexual harassment. Good communication is crucial, and such information should be part of the induction training of new workers.

- » Response and action plan: Every workplace should have clear guidelines about how to manage sexual harassment cases. It is important that complaints are acted upon immediately after they have been brought to the employer's notice.
- » Education and training: It is necessary to train all staff including managers on what is considered sexual harassment and how to address it. Training empowers workers and provides them with the necessary tools to address the issue while maintaining a sense of control and confidence.
- » Alcohol and drug policies: Companies in the hotel and restaurant industry need to have clear policies on alcohol and drugs and on how to deal with intoxicated customers.



9.2 TRADE UNIONS

Sexual harassment at the workplace is an issue that trade unions should actively engage in. Trade unions have a great responsibility for their members and must put sexual harassment on the agenda as it is a serious health and safety issue as well as a gender equality issue, especially in our sector. They can do so in various ways:

- » Lobbying for improved legislation: Trade unions should actively seek to influence governments and other public authorities and encourage them to review existing sexual harassment legislation, exposing inconsistencies and gaps in implementation.
- » Take up cases: Trade unions need to take sexual harassment cases to court in order to demonstrate the consequences to the harasser and establish a clear employer liability.
- » Raising awareness and train trade unions representatives: Trade unions must actively raise awareness among their representatives and provide them with training that enables them to handle and prevent sexual harassment at the workplace.
- » Negotiating with employers on the issues: It is important to include provisions on how to prevent sexual harassment at work in collective agreements.
- » Influence vocational schools' curriculum: Trade unions should emphasise the importance of including psychosocial risks as part of the health and safety curriculum at hotel and restaurant schools.
- » Encourage more research on the issue within the sector: Currently there is a lack of research at Nordic level on sexual harassment in the hotel and restaurant sector.

9.3 LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC POLICIES

The legal system should have laws in place that define, prohibit and punish sexual harassment, and there should be a court system that treats harassment victims fairly. Laws that protect workers from sexual harassment may reflect different perspectives of sexual harassment. Laws may treat sexual harassment as discrimination based on sex, as an offence against personal dignity, or as an issue of health and safety at work. In the Nordic countries, sexual harassment laws and regulations seem to incorporate all of those perspectives.

In the Nordic countries, there are long-standing and relatively systematic policies and legislation in place to prevent and deal with violence and harassment at the workplace. Policies, regulations and law have been adopted by governments, public authorities and tripartite initiatives including the social partners.

Legislation and policies in the Nordic countries are generally fairly similar, but there tend to be some national variations which have to be taken into account. The following legislation includes provisions on sexual harassment:

- » Gender equality law
- » Discrimination law
- » Occupational health and safety law
- » Criminal law

Proving sexual harassment claims can be difficult, given that the harassment frequently occurs without witnesses. As a result, a high burden of proof such as 'beyond any reasonable doubt' can prove particularly obstructive to sexual harassment claims.

The Nordic countries need to review ex-

isting legislation and policies dealing with sexual harassment so as to make laws and policies more relevant and efficient, especially in terms of:

- » The types of harassment covered (verbal)
- » The identity of the perpetrator (third-party harassment)
- » The scope (cyber harassment)
- » The level of sanctions and penalties
- » The duration of legal procedures
- » The burden of proof for incidents

10 CHECKLIST - WORKPLACE PREVENTION

Workplace prevention is a crucial factor in trade unions' fight against sexual harassment in the tourism sector, as experience shows that it can be difficult to stop it by means of legislation and court cases alone. The advantage of workplace mechanisms over legislation is that they are primarily preventative. Rather than being confined to responding to sexual harassment, they are intended to ensure that it does not happen. Effective workplace policies protect employees by discouraging potential harassers by identifying, reducing, mapping and mitigating sexual harassment.

Unfortunately, there is no single perfect prevention strategy. Workplaces vary in size and there are many types of workers employed as well as different corporate cultures and resources. The aim of this

checklist is to provide some practical information and to support trade union representatives in their work. In spite of various differences with regard to sexual harassment faced by workers in the Nordic tourism sector, the key element of good prevention practice is common to all work environments. These elements are:

10.1 POLICIES AND ACTION PLANS

All workplaces in the Nordic tourism industry should have written policies and guidelines that make it clear that sexual harassment is not tolerated. The purpose of such policies and guidelines is to highlight and prevent sexual harassment

The first step in developing an effective policy on sexual harassment is to devise a policy statement which prohibits sexual harassment and perhaps also defines

the conduct to which it applies. Policy statements also often contain a statement of intention, for example that sexual harassment will be eradicated or that the policy will be strictly enforced.

Be sure your policy applies both to third parties, such as customers and suppliers, and to employees. The policy should be sent out to all employees once a year as a reminder that the workplace does not tolerate sexual harassment.

Many employers currently have a policy statement that defines and condemns harassing behaviour, but both law and societal norms evolve over time, so be sure to review your organisation's anti-harassment policy on an annual basis.



10.2 COOPERATION

A policy on sexual harassment prevention requires input from a broad cross-section of the employer's workers and managers. This group should prepare recommendations for the development and implementation of a policy and associated programmes that suit the particular work environment.

Trade unions should encourage their union representatives in workplaces to play an active role in the prevention of sexual harassment at work. Close cooperation between employers and worker representatives is fundamental to the implementation of effective policies and guidelines.

10.3 CLEAR DEFINITION

Before starting the implementation of strategies against sexual harassment it is important to have a clear definition of what managers and workers are talking about when discussing sexual harassment at work.

10.4 RISK ASSESSMENT

Does sexual harassment happen at your workplace? Prior to developing a prevention programme, companies in the Nordic hotel and restaurant sector should analyse and evaluate the current risks of sexual harassment at their workplace. Through risk assessment it is possible to determine the nature and extent of the problem. A number of factors need to be considered:

- a) Workers/occupations at risk
- b) The source of abuse
- c) Work processes
- d) The working environment
- e) The level of commitment

10.5 TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION

Many workers are not familiar with the policies on sexual harassment that apply at their place of work. Training and communication are therefore some of the most important proactive measures that can be taken to ensure effective implementation of sexual harassment policies in practice.

Enterprises should adopt procedures for information and training of managers and staff. Many organisations provide training in two stages, the first stage being to provide information about the content of the policy and the next being effective use and enforcement. Such training should include an overview of the workplace's anti-harassment policy, including disciplinary consequences. Examples of unacceptable behaviour should be given, as some people are unaware of the harassing nature of their own words and actions. All newly-hired employees should receive basic information about sexual harassment as part of their initial orientation.

Many trade unions have material that they can distribute at workplaces in order to raise awareness and explain how to address sexual harassment at work.

Although a large amount of information is available, there is still a need for further knowledge, greater awareness and better recognition of the serious and damaging consequences of sexual harassment, especially in third-party relations. Appropriate information to customers, suppliers and clients that sexual harassment will not be tolerated is also an important part of the enterprises' communication plans.

10.6 REPORTING AND FOLLOW UP

Organisations should develop a harassment complaint and follow-up procedure based on clear and well communicated channels for complaints. The complaint procedure should specify:

- a) Actions to be taken
- b) Clear mechanisms of support to victims
- c) Quick and transparent response and sanction procedures

10.7 EVALUATION

The final element in designing an effective enterprise-level policy on workplace sexual harassment is to ensure that it is monitored and that the results are evaluated. Through these processes, the employer can assess whether the policy is effectively implemented and put the lessons learned into practice.

11 FURTHER READING AND REFERENCES

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WHO ARE WE?

The Nordic Union for Workers in the Hotel, Restaurant, Catering and Tourism Sector (NU HRCT) is a federation of trade unions in Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. All the member unions represent workers in the HRCT sector and have signed collective agreements with employers in the sector.

MEMBER UNIONS

NU HRCT comprises seven unions in the five Nordic countries with a total membership in excess of 100,000.

www.nordichrct.org

THE MEMBER UNIONS ARE

Palvelualojen ammattiliitto (PAM).

With 230,000 members working in the service sector, of which 34,500 in the HRCT area, PAM is one of the largest trade unions in Finland. www.pam.fi

Hotell och Restaurang Facket (HRF).

HRF represents 30,000 members working in the HRCT industry in Sweden.

www.hrf.net

Fagligt Fælles Forbund (3F) is one of the largest trade unions in Denmark, representing 310,000 members working in several different sectors. Membership in the HRCT sector totals 12,300.

www.3f.dk

Fellesforbundet is the largest private-sector union in Norway, representing 150,000 members, of whom 8,000 work in the HRCT sector.

www.fellesforbundet.no

Unionen is the largest trade union in Sweden, representing more than 570,000 white-collar staff, of whom 6,700 work in the HRCT sector. www.unionen.se

Starfsgreinasamband Íslands (SGS)

is the largest trade union in Iceland, representing 50,000 workers in several sectors, of whom 4,000 work in the HRCT sector. www.sgs.is

Matvælasamband Íslands (MATVÍS)

represents 1,600 skilled workers in the HRCT and food sector in Iceland, of whom 1,200 work in the HRCT sector.

www.matvis.is





Nordic Union - HRCT
Kampmannsgade 4
DK 1790 Copenhagen K

Telephone [+45 88 921 354](tel:+4588921354)
Email nordisk.union@3f.dk
Website www.nordichrct.org

