

Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP
Bridget West
Government Equalities Office
Sanctuary Buildings
20, Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT



1st October 2019

By email to: workplaceharassment@geo.gov.uk

Dear Minister,

CMI RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

I am writing in response to the Government consultation on tackling sexual harassment in the workplace.

CMI

CMI is the chartered professional body for management and leadership. We are dedicated to improving managers' skills and growing the number of qualified managers and leaders across the UK.

With a member community of over 130,000, CMI provides learners, managers and employers with access to the latest management thinking and practical support to help them embrace change, build diverse and high-performing teams and improve individual and organisational performance. We are a UK awarding body for management and leadership qualifications and the only body that awards Chartered Manager, the hallmark of any professional manager.

Background

CMI has been championing gender equality in the workplace since 1969 when we launched our Women in Management initiative. Fifty years later this initiative, now under the banner of CMI Women, goes from strength to strength and we have engaged with members of CMI Women, the CMI Women Committee and our regional network of Diversity & Inclusion Champions to help inform this response.

We also publish regular research on workplace practices and culture. In January 2018 we published *A Blueprint for Balance*¹ which examined employers' approaches to achieving gender balance in the workplace. This shows the scale of the challenge we face. For example, our research showed that 85% of women have witnessed inappropriate remarks and 81% of managers have witnessed some form of gender discrimination or bias. We have drawn from our *Blueprint for Balance* research in preparing this response.

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<https://www.managers.org.uk/~media/Files/PDF/Blueprint%20for%20Balance%20Broken%20Windows%20Full%20Report.pdf>

Preventing sexual harassment in the workplace

CMI supports the proposals to strengthen the laws on tackling sexual harassment. We believe these will encourage employers to be more proactive in preventing sexual harassment and provide greater protection for employees and workers. Everyone should feel safe to walk into their workplace without worrying about whom or when the next inappropriate comment or contact will be made.

However, as recognised in the consultation paper, a change in legislation is only part of the solution. More fundamentally, a change in workplace culture will be needed if we are to address the root causes of discrimination and harassment. At CMI we know that it is the actions of managers and leaders that are instrumental in changing workplace culture. Good management and leadership is key to changing behaviours and creating inclusive workplaces, and is decisive in the success or failure of efforts to tackle discrimination and harassment and create gender balance.

Given this, we would like to see greater emphasis placed on improving management skills and practices, particularly line management skills. Line managers play a pivotal role in championing change and creating balanced workplaces and without progress on the reality of line management behaviours, the rhetoric of policy makers falls flat. Managers need to learn about the behaviours and practices that make a difference. They need to be equipped and empowered to call out any discrimination or harassment and to champion change. Recent CMI research shows that one in four managers have *never* received any training on how to manage diversity or inclusion in the workplace².

Transparency is an important driver of change. To shine a spotlight on the actions that employers are taking to tackle sexual harassment, equip and empower line managers and build inclusive cultures, CMI is calling for all organisations covered by gender pay gap reporting rules to be required to publish action plans setting out the steps they are taking to deliver gender-balanced workplaces and close the gender pay gap. Organisations could also be required to report on their prevention policies.

[*A Blueprint for Balance*](#) provides case studies and sets out a series of practical actions that managers and employers can take to challenge workplace cultures that stop women thriving or failing to reach their full potential. *Create a Gender-balanced Workplace*³ also provides practical actions that employers can take to build gender-balanced workplaces.

² <https://www.managers.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/cmi-press-releases/uk-managers-ill-prepared-to-close-the-ethnicity-pay-gap>

³ Francke, A. (2019), *Create A Gender-Balanced Workplace*

Five practices that work for organisations

- 1. Address your gender pay gap.** Set a target, tie performance evaluations to achieving it, measure your progress against it, and regularly monitor and report on that progress.
- 2. Put in place a well-run and structured sponsorship programme for women.** Sponsors truly believe in the talent of their 'sponsees' and are much more likely to advocate for them when they are not in the room.
- 3. Change your recruitment and progression practices to make them more gender aware.** Set 50/50 promotion targets for men and women and adopt diversity practices for recruitment.
- 4. Use men as change agents to challenge stereotypes and set an example that it's okay to champion women.** 75% of male managers believe senior male leaders have a particular responsibility to support women's career development.
- 5. Embrace flexible working.** Measure outputs, not face time; train line managers; avoid a 'one-size-fits-all' approach; and role-model and support from the top.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet to discuss our response and share our insights and research more fully.

Yours sincerely

Jules Bennington
Policy and Public Affairs Officer
CMI