



## **#MeToo & #MenToo Research**

In late 2017, the hashtag #MeToo was popularised on social media to demonstrate against the widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment, especially in the workplace. Since then, many high-profile individuals across the corporate and media arenas have come forward citing their broad spectrum of experiences, including the film industry, politics, fashion, and finance.

A year and a half since the popular emergence of #MeToo on social media, The Equality Group - an organisation that helps companies attract, retain and develop diverse talent - has commissioned nationally representative research that delves into the tangible impact the movement has had on the UK's workplace culture. However, advancing the discussion well-beyond that of why #MeToo exists, today's data unveils what the role of men in the UK's workforce is, in bringing the existence of workplace abuse to an end.

### **Key statistics**

- 50% of women have experienced harassment in the workplace and not reported it.
- HALF of the UK workforce feel MEN should be more involved in solving #MeToo.
- 31% women feel their workplace is ineffective in resolving #MeToo.
- 44% of UK workforce feel their place of work has no measures in place to deal with harassment.
- 34% women confused as to whether incidents that made them feel uncomfortable in the workplace should have been reported.

- 34% women don't want to report incidents at work because they are worried that it will negatively impact their career progression or create an uncomfortable working environment.
- Nearly HALF of the UK workforce feel men should be more involved in providing a practical solution for the issues raised in the #MeToo movement.
- 31% feel their workplace has become WORSE, since the rise of the #MeToo movement, in addressing and resolving issues of harassment/bullying/inappropriate behaviour.

## Roundtable Notes

- Men can be living in an ignorant bliss about the issues involved with the #MeToo movement and the only way to enlighten them is to include them into the conversation.
- Businesses need to remove wooliness and grey zones surrounding what is acceptable in the workplace. Businesses need to know what crosses the line and give it hard wired specificity as this will remove individual interpretation of what does and does not count as harassment/inappropriate behaviour in the workplace.
- When we begin to address why so few women speak out it is clear that women who experience and report workplace harassment have to consider the impact that reporting the event will have on their career. How do you move past being the woman who spoke out? Will your career be negatively impacted if the person you reported is more senior than you?
- Workplaces need to increase diversity if they want to begin addressing issues of workplace culture and stamp out inappropriate behaviour - only 8% of women are on the board in venture capital yet they represent 50% of the population's voice. A masculine culture will breed in this environment and it is significantly harder for women to report #MeToo movements if they feel like no one on their management board will understand their experience.
- Men need to listen, to understand and to gauge their role in producing the solution for incidences of inappropriate behaviour both in and out of the workplace.
- What do men think of #Metoo? Men need to speak up about the movement and their place within it and this can only be done if they are included in the conversation.

- We need conversation, education, de-stigmatisation to fix #MeToo issues within the workplace.
- Why are so few companies acting if there are solutions to the problem?
  - Business believe that it is expensive, yet it is the perception of the cost that is the real inhibitor of change.
  - Companies regard solving the issues as time consuming.
  - Businesses categorise the problem as subjective, it's a grey area that isn't necessarily their fault so it is hard to address.
- The role of the bystander is incredibly important. We need to make people feel empowered to call it out – both victims of the abuse and those who witness it. If you think someone has done/is doing something wrong, they need to understand that they have both the power and the responsibility and to intercept. This is vital, especially in cases where the victim is asked to provide proof.
- Burden of proof and the idea of innocent until proven guilty is difficult in #MeToo cases in the workplace, as a lot of the time victims experience discomfort in experiences that others cannot see as it isn't directly impacting/visible to them. This needs to be removed or amended to some extent in #MeToo cases, as most of the time you won't have proof or evidence that supports your claim.
- Businesses need to have a clear understanding of what culture they want in their business and comprehend the actions that they need to take to ensure the culture is bred in the workplace. It is not enough to simply want a positive and progressive culture, you have to acknowledge your own power in creating it.
- Businesses will undeniably benefit from diversity and a positive workplace culture, so it has to become the norm rather than a nice to have.
- **It's not just you, it's not just your problem, it's all of our problem and because of that, we ALL have a responsibility to find a proactive solution.**

**Hepzhi Pemberton**, Founder of Equality Group comments:

“This data is a timely reminder of the need for more inclusive and positive workplace cultures. As a society, we should be striving to stamp out harassment, bullying and inappropriate behaviour in the workplace, and to see that both men and women are experiencing these kinds of actions at work is simply unacceptable.

While the situation has almost certainly improved, even in the last 18 months since the popularisation of the #MeToo movement, there are still a number of steps that workplaces need to take to improve their working culture. Bringing in diverse talent at senior levels, in terms of women and BAME professionals, to bring new ideas to boards and leadership teams across the country can undoubtedly change working cultures for the better.

By having role models on boards that employees at all levels can relate to, working cultures can become more transparent and accountable. This can help employees to speak up, a crucial part of changing working environments. By including men in the #MeToo conversation, we hope to build on this research to build workplace cultures that we can all be proud of.”

### **About Equality Group**

Equality Group harnesses the power of diverse leaders for Finance, Technology and Social Impact. They change the business landscape by widening the range of exceptional candidates and offering them unique leadership opportunities. Their consultancy service helps companies attract, retain and develop diverse talent, which our Executive Search service headhunts.

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