

NEXT STEPS

The Joint Working Group, which was set up to consider and agree actions required as a result of the outcomes of the Survey on Sexual Harassment and Sexist Behaviour, have undertaken an initial assessment of the Survey results. The Group have identified a number of key strands of work which they will take forward in order to address the issues identified and to influence cultural change within the Parliament.

In summary these are:

- The survey established that it is predominantly women who have experienced sexist behaviour and sexual harassment and that the perpetrators are predominantly men. The survey was also clear that people aren't always clear about what they can do – whether they've experienced such behaviour or witnessed it. We will establish a comprehensive programme of education and development for those working within the Parliament and within Regional and Constituency offices. Prevention of the behaviours highlighted in the survey is paramount and we will ensure that the education and development programme gives everyone an understanding of our zero tolerance approach and will seek to address both unacceptable behaviour and lack of confidence in reporting.
- Specific training will be provided for those who manage people. This will include early intervention and prevention techniques and ensure managers are equipped to respond appropriately to those who experience sexual harassment.
- The survey has highlighted a lack of confidence in our policies and reporting procedures. People were asked what they thought would help encourage staff to report incidents and the single most common suggestion was for the reporting process to be confidential/anonymous. We have taken this feedback on board and we will put in place improved reporting procedures and policies that are accessible, transparent, fair and confidential and take into account the ongoing Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee review of the Code of Conduct for MSPs.
- Whilst we have taken some steps to ensure support is available for those who have experienced sexual harassment through the establishment of a confidential helpline, we will determine if additional measures are required.
- We will put in place mechanisms which will enable us to monitor and review our progress and to ensure that a change in culture is happening as a result of the work we are doing.

What we will do now is undertake further engagement with stakeholders to produce a more detailed action plan. A key part of this will be setting up focus groups to dig deeper into what the survey is telling us particularly around the lack of confidence in our policies and reporting procedures. We will act on what the survey is telling us and take the necessary time to ensure our changes are robust and sustainable.