

## UPSE Responds to Workplace Harassment, Bullying, and Violence Survey Results

The Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees (UPSE) has released the results from their workplace harassment, bullying, and violence survey. Karen Jackson, UPSE President, said “I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to our members for their courageous participation in this important initiative. The insights shared were invaluable, despite the difficult nature of the questions and the upsetting experiences described. We are encouraged by the strong response rate, with 18.6% of our membership completing the survey, 77% of whom identified as female. The data reveals a significant concern within our workplaces that we must address together.”

Key findings from the survey include: - **66%** of respondents reported seeing or experiencing personal harassment in the workplace. - **23%** have encountered or witnessed sexual harassment. - **48%** reported experiencing or observing abuse of power. Of particular note, only **34%** of those who experienced harassment or bullying chose to report these incidents. The reasons for this hesitance are troubling, as many cited fears of retribution and a belief that their complaints would not lead to any meaningful action. Of those who did report, a mere **25%** noted that their supervisor or manager investigated the situation, and only **27%** of these individuals received any form of feedback regarding the outcomes. The survey also asked members to provide suggestions about how to foster safer work environments. Members emphasized the need for enhanced accountability from management, better recourse for incidents, and the establishment of safe reporting channels with clear, transparent policies that will protect their confidentiality.

In light of these findings, UPSE is taking decisive steps forward. Jackson said “UPSE aims to establish a working group comprised of members and employers who will examine the survey data and work towards effective solutions. Additionally, we will launch a campaign aimed at raising awareness about the prevalence of workplace harassment, bullying, and violence. In the spirit of Pink Shirt Day, we have collaborated with the Government of PEI on a new *Respectful Workplace* policy effective February 26, 2025. The new policy will replace the government’s pre-existing policy entitled: *The Prevention and Resolution of Harassment in the Workplace*. We all need to recognize that harassment and bullying are prevalent in the workplace, and having a clear policy for our members to reference is an important step in addressing these concerns.”

Jackson stressed that “the safety and dignity of every member in our workforce is our top priority. We must strive to create a culture where everyone feels empowered to speak up and where accountability is non-negotiable. Together, we can work towards a workplace that is not just free from harassment and violence but is also inclusive and supportive for all. Thank you once again to our members for your honesty and bravery in sharing your experiences. It's only through your voices that we can initiate real change.”

