# Young gay people face alarming level of sexual harassment at work



A recent study highlights the pervasive issue of sexual harassment faced by LGBTQ+ young people in the workplace, revealing significant statistics that mostly go unreported or overlooked. Conducted by researchers from Western Sydney University, the University of Sydney, and the Australian National University, the landmark study included over 1,000 LGBTQ+ individuals aged between 14 and 30, with alarming findings that 77% have experienced workplace sexual harassment.

The research outlines that this harassment spans a variety of sectors, with the most commonly reported being accommodation and food services, retail trade, and financial and insurance services. A significant number of incidents were perpetrated by men, typically older than their victims, with co-workers comprising 46% of the harassers and clients or customers being responsible for 31% of the reported cases.

The types of harassment reported include unsolicited sexually suggestive comments, intrusive inquiries about personal identities and lives, and unwelcome sexual jokes targeting LGBTQ+ identities. Particularly concerning are the threats made towards some individuals, with around 30% of participants reporting threats of sexual violence aimed at "fixing" their gender or sexual diversity. This phenomenon appeared to affect young women and those identifying as trans masculine disproportionately, as well as trans individuals overall, who experienced harassment at a rate of 80%.

The study also delves into how perceptions of sexual harassment do not often extend to LGBTQ experiences, with many young people expressing uncertainty about whether their experiences constituted harassment due to the traditional, heterosexual lens through which sexual harassment is often viewed. Additionally, a lack of awareness and understanding among colleagues and managers regarding the intersections of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia further complicates the issue.

Young people, particularly those in casual and low-paying jobs with minimal security, were notably more vulnerable to workplace sexual harassment, with feelings of helplessness regarding their ability to report incidents due to fears around job security. The statistics reflect that LGBTQ+ young people with multiple marginalised identities, particularly those with disabilities, reported even higher rates of harassment, exemplified by experiences shared by participants detailing derogatory jokes tied to their identities.

Cultural climates within workplaces also play a crucial role. The research suggests that environments where homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are commonplace contribute to a culture of silence around reporting harassment. For example, participants cited direct instances of biphobia and homophobia in their workplaces, emphasising the normalisation of such prejudiced behaviours.

Despite the prevalence of harassment, the majority of LGBTQ+ young people—75%—did not report their experiences, primarily due to perceptions of reporting mechanisms as unsafe and unconfidential. Of those who did report, many were dissatisfied with the outcomes, citing inadequate measures taken against perpetrators.

The study illustrates the mental health consequences of workplace sexual harassment on LGBTQ+ young people, with 80% reporting adverse effects on their mental health and 42% developing negative feelings about their identities. Furthermore, over half indicated that their careers were detrimentally impacted, with some experiencing financial repercussions, including loss of shifts or being let go.

To address these significant issues, the researchers advocate for more robust prevention strategies and policies in workplaces that specifically consider LGBTQ+ experiences. This includes fostering confidential reporting mechanisms and tailored approaches to combat discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, race, and disability.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.anrows.org.au/media-releases/lgbtq-young-people-sexual-harassment/> - Corroborates the finding that 77% of LGBTQ young people have faced workplace sexual harassment and details the sectors and types of harassment.
* <https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2024/12/05/77--of-lgbtq-young-people-have-faced-workplace-sexual-harassment.html> - Supports the statistics on workplace sexual harassment across various sectors and the types of harassment experienced by LGBTQ young people.
* <https://www.anrows.org.au/media-releases/lgbtq-young-people-sexual-harassment/> - Details the perpetrators of harassment, including co-workers and clients or customers, and the age and gender dynamics involved.
* <https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2024/12/05/77--of-lgbtq-young-people-have-faced-workplace-sexual-harassment.html> - Explains the specific types of harassment, such as unsolicited comments, intrusive questions, and unwelcome sexual jokes targeting LGBTQ identities.
* <https://www.anrows.org.au/media-releases/lgbtq-young-people-sexual-harassment/> - Highlights the threats of sexual violence aimed at 'fixing' gender or sexual diversity, particularly affecting young women and trans individuals.
* <https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2024/12/05/77--of-lgbtq-young-people-have-faced-workplace-sexual-harassment.html> - Discusses how traditional views of sexual harassment often overlook LGBTQ experiences and the lack of awareness among colleagues and managers.
* <https://www.anrows.org.au/media-releases/lgbtq-young-people-sexual-harassment/> - Addresses the vulnerability of young people in casual and low-paying jobs and their fears around job security when reporting incidents.
* <https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2024/12/05/77--of-lgbtq-young-people-have-faced-workplace-sexual-harassment.html> - Details the higher rates of harassment experienced by LGBTQ young people with multiple marginalised identities, including those with disabilities.
* <https://www.anrows.org.au/media-releases/lgbtq-young-people-sexual-harassment/> - Explains how cultural climates in workplaces, including homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia, contribute to a culture of silence around reporting harassment.