

Bullying is rife at British Airways, union survey claims



Almost 50 per cent say they have been victims  
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Publication date: 10 January 2011  
Source: PM Online

Almost 50 per cent of British Airways staff say they have been bullied or victimised at work, according to a confidential survey of 1,905 BA staff conducted by the union Unite.

The survey, taken in November 2010 during a climate of entrenched industrial hostilities, found that 49.9 per cent said they had been bullied while another 27 per cent said they had witnessed others being bullied. Of those reporting bullying, 50 per cent said that those responsible were senior managers, 29 per cent identified line managers and 22 per cent pointed the finger at employees of the same grade.

Nearly 40 per cent of respondents said they had reported the bullying, but of those, two thirds said no action was taken by the company. More than 85 per cent of the cases of bullying involved more than one person doing the bullying.

According to Unite, the situation is the result of BA's "macho management" during a tense, ongoing industrial dispute over pay and conditions, "which has pitched colleagues against one another".

Allegations of BA's union-busting and the imposition without negotiation of a new workforce on poorer terms and conditions are central to the dispute.

Tony Woodley, Unite's general secretary, said: "BA management's urgently needs to do a corporate u-turn and sit down with Unite representatives to address this bullying epidemic. That begins with lifting the sanctions imposed on over 6,000 cabin crew who took action last year and immediate agreement that a third party will analyse those cases where workers have been disciplined or dismissed, often on the flimsiest of pretexts."

However, in a statement responding to the survey BA said it "utterly refutes Unite's claims".

"As a responsible company we do not tolerate the bullying or harassment of any of our 40,000 colleagues. The company has an established disciplinary process that is consistent across the airline, has been in place for many years and has been agreed with all of the airline's recognised trade unions, including Unite."

A union ballot of cabin crew for renewed industrial action closes on Friday 21st January.

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