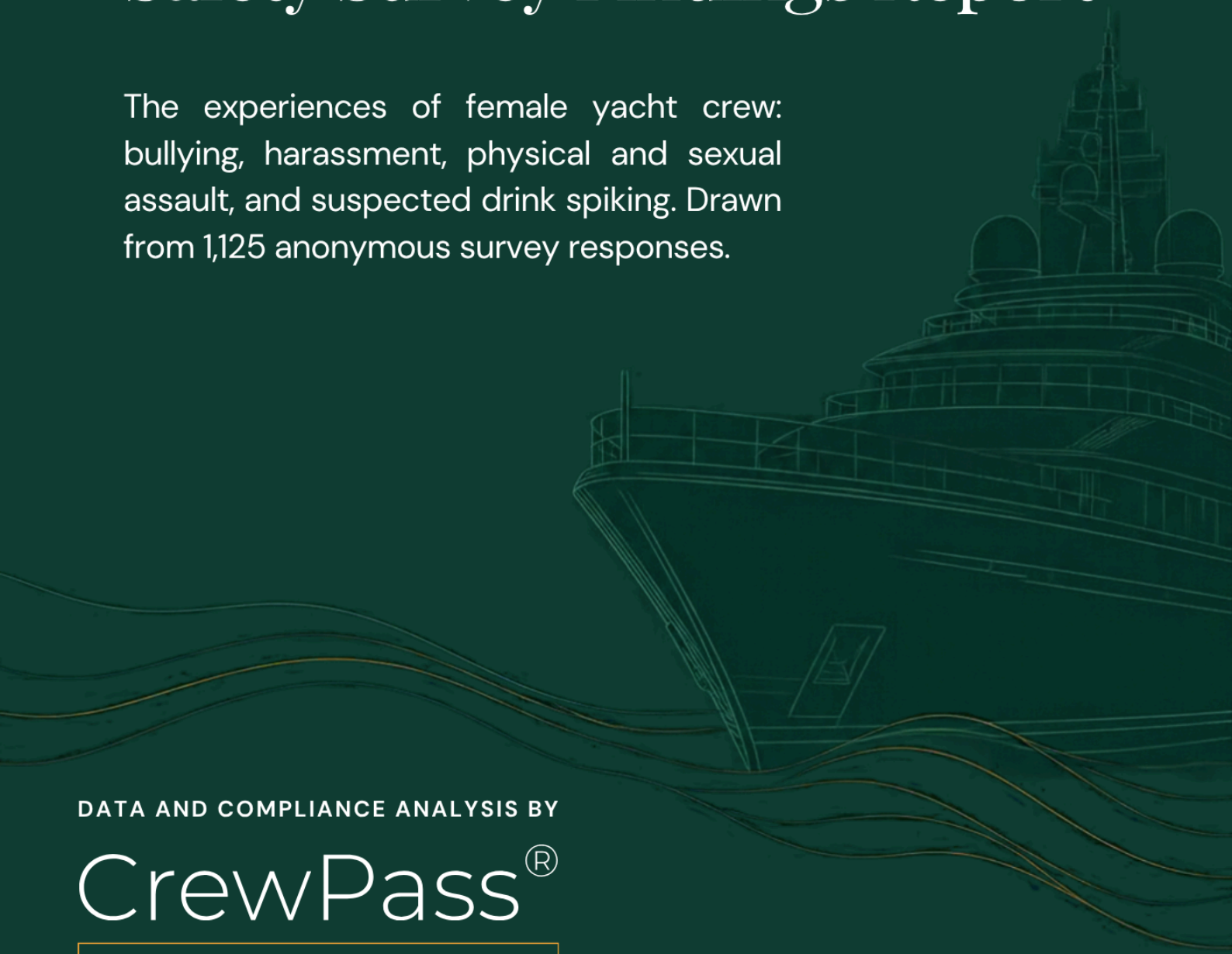
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SECURITY · SUPPORT · STRENGTH

Female Yacht Crew
SAFETY SURVEY

FINDINGS REPORT · DATA AS AT 1 JULY 2026 · PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2026

Female Yacht Crew
Safety Survey Findings Report

The experiences of female yacht crew: bullying, harassment, physical and sexual assault, and suspected drink spiking. Drawn from 1,125 anonymous survey responses.



DATA AND COMPLIANCE ANALYSIS BY

CrewPass®

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November 2026

A NOTE ON SENSITIVITY

This report covers sensitive and potentially distressing experiences. Please read with care.

The following pages present findings on bullying, harassment, physical and sexual assault experienced by women working aboard vessels in the yachting industry, including suspected drink spiking.

While presented without graphic detail, some findings may be difficult to read, particularly for those with similar experiences.

Please take breaks whenever needed. Free and confidential support is available 24 hours a day. Details can be found on page 36.

CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT – 24 HOURS A DAY

YachtCrewHelp, ISWAN's 24-hour crew support helpline
Free and confidential, 24/7

Telephone +44 (0)203 713 7273 · Email help@yachtcrewhelp.org
Alternatively, you can contact Safer Waves confidential email support: support@saferwaves.org (replies within 3 working days).
Safer Waves is a UK charity for seafarers affected by sexual harassment.

If you are in immediate danger, contact your local emergency services.

ISWAN
YachtCrewHelp

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The Reason Why

This survey was developed in the wake of a loss that deeply affected the yachting community.

Paige Bell, a 20-year-old stewardess from South Africa, lost her life while working on board a superyacht. Her death affected me deeply, both personally and professionally. Having spent many years working alongside women in this industry, I believe everyone who chooses a maritime career in the yachting industry deserves the opportunity to work in a safe environment where they feel protected, respected, and supported.

This report does not address the circumstances surrounding Paige's death or the vessel on which she worked. Those matters are for the courts.

Her death did, however, reinforce the importance of understanding the experiences of women working across our industry. For years, women have trusted me with their stories, and I felt it was time to bring these experiences together to create a clearer picture and a stronger foundation for meaningful progress.

In developing this survey, we consulted Dr Kate Pike, Associate Professor Emeritus at Solent University, Southampton, Director of Field Research and a maritime researcher with 23 years of experience, specialising in the social sciences and with an extensive portfolio of published work. She generously reviewed the survey questions and provided professional input, although not in an official capacity.

Callisto, a US-based organisation supporting survivors of sexual assault, was also consulted, and its team helped ensure the questions were appropriate and carefully considered. We are grateful for their valuable input. Callisto has since closed following the loss of its funding.

Through the support of many across the yachting industry, more than 1,100 women were able to access the survey and chose to participate and share their experiences. We are incredibly grateful for their trust and willingness to contribute. Every figure in this report represents a person whose experience deserves to be heard and considered.

This research is an opportunity for the entire industry to come together around something we all have an interest in: creating professional, respectful, and safe working environments. Everyone in the yachting industry, from owners and shoreside support teams to captains and crew, has a role to play in shaping a culture where people can thrive, develop their careers and feel confident that their safety and wellbeing matter.

Our intention is to encourage informed discussion, support further research and help turn these findings into practical, positive steps towards a stronger industry.

To everyone who took part, thank you. Your willingness to share your experiences, perspectives and voices has made this research possible. We recognise the trust involved in contributing to a subject that can be deeply personal, and we hope this work honours that trust by helping move the conversation forward.

At its heart, this is about building an industry where people and businesses can thrive together, supported by a culture of professionalism, mutual respect and care. With a shared commitment, we can continue building an industry that values its people as much as the exceptional standards it strives to deliver.

Cherise Reedman
Founder, Yacht Pearls of Wisdom

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Who produced this report

The survey and this publication are the intellectual property of Yacht Pearls of Wisdom. The survey was developed by Cherise Reedman, Conrad Empson, and Marién Sarriera, who contributed to the project from its inception. CrewPass provided the technical infrastructure for the project, including the development and hosting of the survey, as well as the data processing and compliance analysis.

Cherise Reedman — Founder, Yacht Pearls of Wisdom

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www.yachtpearlsofwisdom.com

Cherise Reedman is a former Chief Stewardess and the founder of Yacht Pearls of Wisdom, established in 2021 to share the lived experiences and insights of former female crew with women currently working in the yachting industry. Through this work, she aims to help women make more informed career choices and navigate their transition out of the industry more smoothly. It has grown into a support network, advocacy organisation and community for women in yachting, built on three pillars (Security, Support and Strength). That community comes across in its events, at the yacht shows and through The Superyacht Laundry Podcast, and the organisation is guided by a seven-member advisory board of industry professionals. Cherise commissioned this survey after many accounts of harassment, sexual assault and rape at sea came to her attention, and because earlier crew surveys were designed for all crew and could not capture what is particular to women. Its purpose is to give the industry evidence it can act on, and to support her work with institutions to improve regulation of female safety and crew welfare.

Conrad Empson — Founder, CrewPass

CrewPass®

www.crewpass.co.uk

Conrad Empson founded CrewPass in 2021, having worked as a bosun. CrewPass is a compliance platform for yacht crew and their employers, offering verified crew profiles, document checks, background checks, and fleet-wide compliance tracking. CrewPass built and hosted the survey and carried out the data and compliance analysis. A compliance platform is a sound party to have handled the data because checking figures against stated standards and keeping the method auditable is its everyday work.

Marién Sarriera — Founder, Yachts Mermaids

YACHTS Mermaids

www.yachtsmermaids.com

Marién Sarriera has 20 years of experience in yachting. She began her career as a Chief Stewardess before founding Yachts Mermaids, a platform supporting yacht crew development alongside shoreside services for yacht owners, captains, and management teams. As a seafarer advocate, a contributor to the Superyacht Alliance's Raising the Bar Think Tanks, and host of UNCENSORED on Yachting International Radio, she has spent years championing crew welfare, professional standards, and positive change across the superyacht industry.

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A note on the numbers, before you read them

Three disciplines shape every figure in this report.

They are worth stating up front, because they explain why these percentages may differ from a quick first pass over the same data.

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1. Every percentage states its denominator.

A survey like this has a natural funnel: many people start, fewer finish, and each question is answered by a different number of respondents. Reporting "71% recorded bullying" means nothing unless you know 71% of whom. Throughout, we are explicit about the base for each figure, and we deliberately do not mix them.

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2. The survey branches.

The detailed follow-up questions (how often, where, who was responsible, whether it was reported) were only shown to people who said "yes" to that experience. So context and reporting figures are calculated over the people who actually saw those questions, not over everyone. A naive count that divides every answer by the total would understate these figures, sometimes badly.

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3. "Recorded" means what respondents told us.

The survey is anonymous and responses are unverified, so this report describes what respondents recorded. It does not adjudicate any individual account, and it does not claim to measure the whole female crew population.

A NOTE ON THE QUOTATIONS

The quotations come from the 216 women who left a comment in the survey's optional free-text field. They are lightly edited only for spelling and grammar, stripped of first names, vessel names, company names, or identifying details, and attributed by role and department only.

The result is a set of figures that are conservative and internally consistent.

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Executive Summary

1,125 survey responses from women in yachting.
926 answered the core experience questions.
216 respondents left a written comment.

85%

85% of women who answered recorded at least one form of harm.

791 of 926 recorded at least one form of harm (85.4%)

71%

Bullying was recorded by 71% of respondents, and sexual harassment by 61%.

657 recorded bullying, of 925 who answered

56%

More than half of recorded sexual harassment incidents fell within the last three years.

Sexual harassment incidents, at minimum, fell within the last three years

63%

Authority figure responsible

In 63% of sexual harassment and sexual assault cases, the person responsible held a senior position on board.

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Executive Summary (continued)

35%

58% did not report or were unable to. Where action was recorded, 18% recorded appropriate action.

260 of 745 who reached the reporting questions reported

Of the 745 women who reached the reporting questions, 260 (35%) reported and 432 (58%) did not report or tried but were unable. Of the 324 who recorded what action was taken, 58 (18%) recorded appropriate action, 164 (51%) recorded no action, and 57 (18%) recorded retaliation.

2.8/5

Safety when reporting was rated 2.8 out of 5 on average.

average sense of safety when reporting

On a five-point scale, the average rating for how safe it felt to report was 2.8 out of 5 (54% rated it 1 or 2), and for how well the person was treated afterwards, 2.6 out of 5 (61% rated it 1 or 2).

40%

Culture, distrust and fear were the top reasons for not reporting.

171 of 432 non-reporters recorded that it felt normalised

Of the 432 who did not report or were unable to, the four reasons selected most often were that it felt normalised in the culture (171, 40%), they did not trust the process (160, 37%), fear of retaliation (158, 37%) and the person had power over them (148, 34%). Multiple selections were allowed.

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Executive Summary (continued)

74%

74% disagreed that their yacht had clear, enforced policies.

376 of 511 disagreed or strongly disagreed

Asked to rate the statement "My yacht had clear policies that were enforced" (base 511), 212 strongly disagreed and 164 disagreed (74%). Mean 2.18 out of 5. The question asked about the respondent's own yacht.

66%

Only 16% recorded no lasting impact; 37% accessed no support.

442 of 673 recorded anxiety or stress

Of the 673 who answered the wellbeing question, only 109 (16%) recorded no lasting impact. 442 (66%) recorded anxiety or stress and 373 (55%) reduced confidence. 249 (37%) accessed no support, and 91 (14%) accessed professional counselling or therapy.

52%

What respondents said would help most.

351 of 675 selected stronger consequences for perpetrators

Crew have established routes for raising concerns: through the chain of command, the management company or Designated Person Ashore, the flag state and the police. This report sets out how respondents used those routes, what happened when they did, why many did not, and what crew say would help. It does not assess how well any route works, and those routes remain open to anyone who needs them.

> *"The advice we were given was to stay quiet, because captains and managers could easily ruin your chances of getting another job with a bad reference. A lot of it was brushed off as 'boys will be boys', and you were made to feel like ending up in a situation like that was just bad luck."*
>
> CHIEF STEWARDESS • 10+ YEARS INTERIOR

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SECTION 01

Sample and Methodology

Stage	Count
Total responses	1,125
Consented (age 18+ and understood)	1,122
Worked on a yacht (680 currently, 362 previously)	1,042
Answered the experience questions (primary base)	**926**
Marked complete	681
Reached the reporting questions	745
Opted in to be contacted (separate, unlinked file)	38

Source. An anonymous online survey of female yacht crew, using tick-box and rating-scale questions with one optional free-text field. The survey was built and hosted by CrewPass and is owned by Yacht Pearls of Wisdom. Responses are stored without any identifying information; respondents could skip any question and stop at any time, and gave explicit consent to participate.

Responses. Of the 1,125 total responses, 681 are marked complete, but many more progressed substantively: 745 reached the reporting section and 687 recorded a submission timestamp. Rather than discard partial responses, this analysis uses each question's own answered base, so a woman who answered the experience questions but stopped before the impact section is still counted in the prevalence figures.

Eligibility. 680 were currently working on board and 362 had previously worked on board (1,042 eligible in total). 53 said they had never worked on a yacht and were routed out of the experience questions. 926 respondents went on to answer the core experience questions.

Anonymity and the contacts file. 38 respondents opted in to be contacted with information or support. Their contact details are held in a separate, unlinked file by design, so that no testimony can be traced back to an individual. They are treated here only as a count.

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Sample and Methodology (continued)

Denominators, stated on every figure.

- Prevalence is over those who answered each experience question (roughly 911 to 925). "Prefer not to say" is included in the base.
- Incident context is over those who said "yes" and were shown the follow-up questions.
- Reporting is over the 745 who reached the reporting questions; sub-questions use their correct branch base.
- Impact and industry are over those who answered those sections (673 and 675).

Small-cell suppression.

Any cell with fewer than five responses is suppressed and shown as "<5". Cross-tabulations built on very small groups (for example, engineering and medical, each with fewer than 20 women) are flagged as too small to read reliably. The live admin dashboard displays all counts unsuppressed; the suppression here is an added safeguard for a public document.

Data integrity.

Before analysis, the dataset was de-noised of developer and QA test submissions. A small number of genuine respondent responses (12) that had been accidentally captured in a development environment were migrated into the production dataset and are included here; they are tagged and auditable.

LIMITATIONS, STATED PLAINLY.

This is a self-selecting sample, so the prevalence figures should be read as prevalence among women who engaged with this survey, not among all female crew. Responses are anonymous and unverified. Because reporting was asked once per respondent rather than once per incident, a specific report cannot be tied to a specific experience type; where we cross-reference the two, we say so. What gives the findings weight is their consistency: the same patterns recur across questions, across departments and ranks, and between the tick-box answers and the written comments. They are findings about these respondents, not estimates for the whole female crew population.

Other evidence. ISWAN's YachtCrewHelp 2025 Annual Review records a similar difference in what women and men seek help with. Women contacting the helpline raised abuse, bullying, discrimination, harassment or violence in 18.9% of cases, against 2.5% of men. ISWAN attributes this to "power hierarchies, role distribution and gender norms in yachting, rather than differences in individual resilience". Helpline figures record contacts, not prevalence, and are not comparable with this survey's.

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SECTION 02

Prevalence: how widespread the harm is among respondents

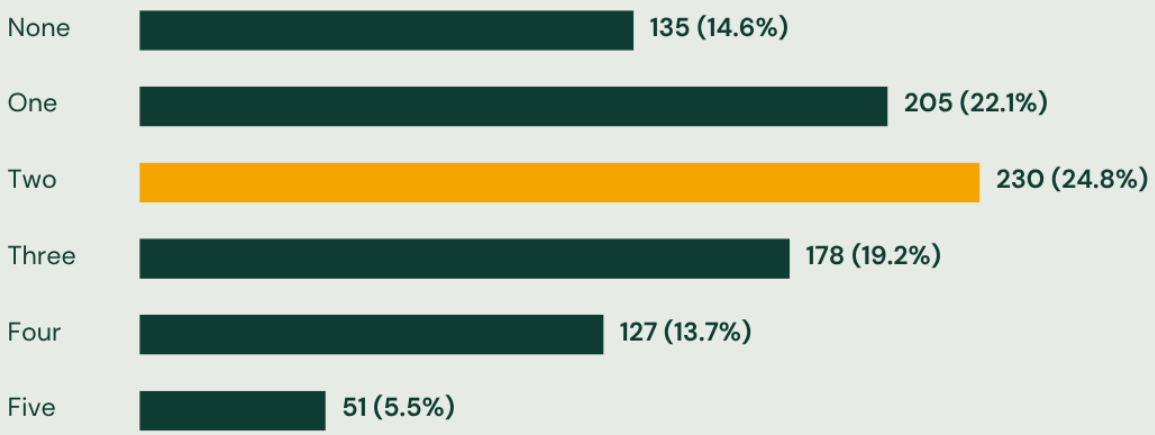
Each figure below is the number of women who answered that question and recorded that experience, with the percentage of that question's base. Bullying and sexual harassment were recorded by a majority, and nearly one in three women recorded sexual assault. Figures describe the women who answered this survey, not female yacht crew as a population.

Experience	Yes	No	Prefer not to say	Base	% yes
Bullying	657	256	12	925	**71.0%**
Sexual harassment	561	331	23	915	**61.3%**
Sexual assault	284	601	27	912	**31.1%**
Physical assault	237	654	25	916	**25.9%**
Suspected drink spiking	223	674	14	911	**24.5%**

MULTIPLE HARMS ARE COMMON

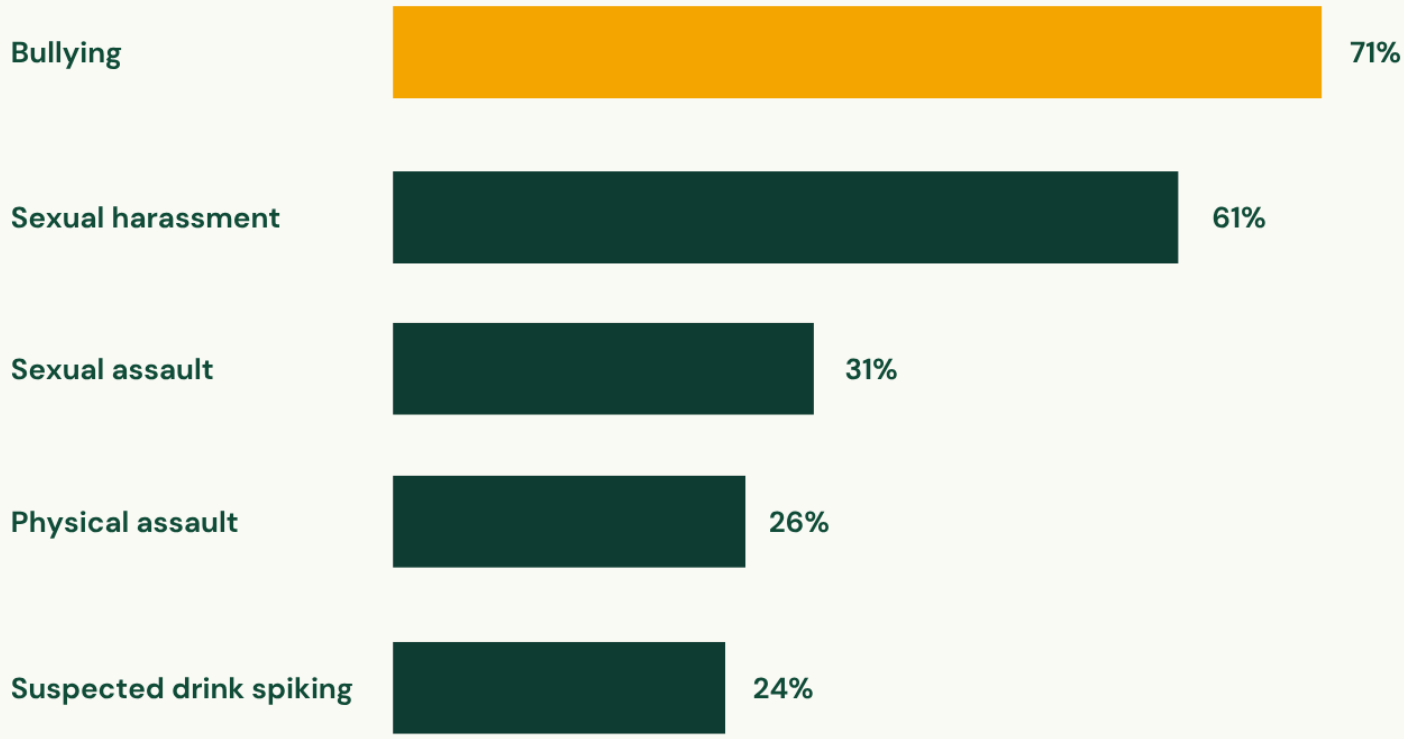
Three in four women who recorded any harm recorded more than one type. Of the 926 who answered the experience questions, 791 (85.4%) recorded at least one type and 586 (63.3%) recorded two or more; of the 791 who recorded any harm, 586 (74%) recorded two or more. 178 (19.2%) recorded three types and 51 (5.5%) recorded all five.

Number of harm types recorded (base 926)



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Prevalence of reported experiences



Base: women who answered each question (911–925).

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Harms Overlap

Sexual assault rarely appeared without sexual harassment. Of the 284 women who recorded sexual assault, 273 (96%) also recorded sexual harassment, 232 also recorded bullying, and 140 also recorded physical assault. Of the 237 who recorded physical assault, 211 (89%) also recorded bullying.

WOMEN WHO RECORDED BOTH

	Bullying	Physical assault	Sexual harassment	Sexual assault	Suspected drink spiking
Bullying	**657**	211	449	232	185
Physical assault	211	**237**	202	140	89
Sexual harassment	449	202	**561**	273	164
Sexual assault	232	140	273	**284**	91
Suspected drink spiking	185	89	164	91	**223**

The diagonal is the total for each harm. The survey recorded whether each harm type occurred, not when, so these figures show co-occurrence only and carry no sequence.

If prevalence is instead calculated over all 1,125 submissions, or over the 681 completed responses, the percentages shift because the denominator changes, even though the count of women affected does not. For example, 657 women recorded bullying: that is 71% of the 925 who answered the question, 58% of all 1,125 submissions, or 96% of the 681 completed responses. This report uses the "answered the question" base throughout. That choice is the likely main source of difference between these figures and an analysis using a different denominator.

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SECTION 03

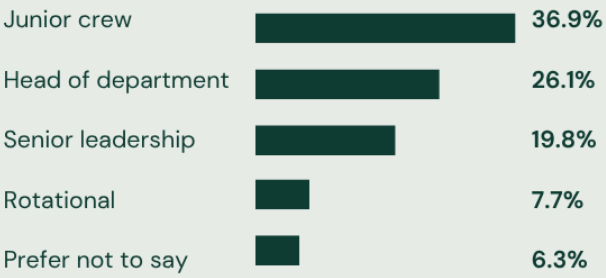
Who is affected

The women who answered the experience questions come from every department, level of seniority, length of service and age band. They skew towards the interior department (61.7% of respondents) and towards junior crew (36.9%). Figures describe respondents to this survey and are not weighted to the industry.

Department
Base 926



Seniority at the time
Base 926



Years in yachting
Base 926



Age at the time
Base 926



Harm was recorded across departments. Sexual harassment was recorded by 71% of galley respondents (of 83, small base), 63% of interior (of 564), and 51% of deck (of 164). Sexual assault: galley 40% (of 83, small base), interior 32% (of 560), deck 27% (of 165). Engineering and medical are too small to report by department; see the suppression note.

Bullying was recorded by a majority in every seniority group: senior leadership 78% (of 182), junior crew 71% (of 342), head of department 69% (of 242), and rotational crew 68% (of 71). The gap between the highest and lowest figures sits within the combined margin of error for those bases.

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SECTION 04

Incident Context

The follow-up questions were shown only to women who said "yes" to a given experience. The figures below are calculated over those who answered each follow-up, with the base stated. For bullying, physical assault, sexual harassment and sexual assault, the largest share of recorded incidents occurred on board. For suspected drink spiking, the largest share occurred off the vessel.

Where the incident occurred

Experience	On board	Both on and off	Off the vessel	Base
Bullying	62%	26%	10%	**625**
Physical assault	73%	14%	8%	**218**
Sexual harassment	65%	24%	9%	**484**
Sexual assault	65%	19%	14%	**235**
Suspected drink spiking	28%	10%	62%	**178**

"Prefer not to say" is omitted, so rows may not total 100%.

How recent were the incidents

Experience	Within last 3 years	Within last 12 months	Base
Bullying	61.6%	27.8%	**633**
Sexual harassment	56.2%	23.9%	**489**
Sexual assault	54.9%	21.9%	**237**
Physical assault	50.0%	19.1%	**220**
Suspected drink spiking	48.3%	17.2%	**180**

The last-12-months figures are included within the last-3-years figures.

For sexual harassment and sexual assault, at least 56% and 55% of recorded incidents fell within the last three years, and 24% and 22% within the last twelve months. Recent incidents were recorded for every harm type.

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Who was responsible

For sexual harassment and sexual assault, the person responsible was someone in a senior position on board (a captain, head of department, owner or guest) in 297 of 473 sexual harassment cases and 142 of 226 sexual assault cases, 62.8% in each. We group these three because each holds power over a crew member's work, references or continued employment: the captain and head of department through the chain of command, and owners and guests through their status on board. Captains were the largest single category in both (150 of 473; 69 of 226). The figures are scoped to sexual harassment and sexual assault only.

Person responsible	Sexual harassment (base 473)	Sexual assault (base 226)
Captain	150 (31.7%)	69 (30.5%)
Head of department	86 (18.2%)	48 (21.2%)
Owner or guest	61 (12.9%)	25 (11.1%)
Captain, head of department, or owner or guest	297 (62.8%)	142 (62.8%)
Peer crew	99 (20.9%)	53 (23.5%)
Multiple people	56 (11.8%)	15 (6.6%)
Unknown, shore-side, or prefer not to say	21 (4.4%)	16 (7.1%)

For bullying (base 597), the three largest categories were heads of department (151), peers (139) and captains (137). For suspected drink spiking (base 176), the person responsible was recorded as unknown in 43% of cases, consistent with the off-vessel setting.

> *"I know so many women of all ranks and departments who have been physically assaulted by their captains that I find it hard to trust anyone not to be capable of it."*
>
> — HEAD OF DEPARTMENT • GALLEY

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Full grid of all entries

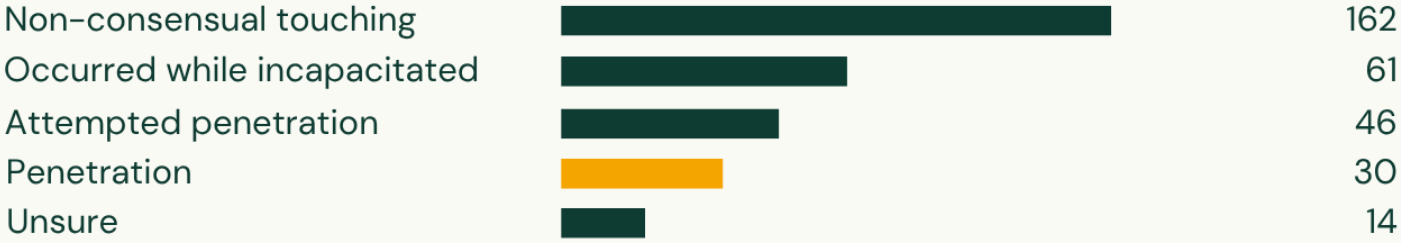
Bullying: subtypes (base 649)



Sexual harassment: subtypes (base 497)



Sexual assault subtypes (base 239)



Physical assault: subtypes (base 232)



Suspected drink spiking: substance (base 185)



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SECTION 05

Reporting: what respondents recorded

This section maps what respondents recorded against the routes available to crew under existing arrangements: an internal route, through the chain of command and then the management company or Designated Person Ashore (DPA), and an external route, through the flag state and the police. These routes are set by each vessel's onboard complaints procedure, the complaint procedures required on vessels covered by the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC, 2006), the DPA role under the ISM Code where it applies, and flag-state reporting arrangements. This section sets out what respondents recorded about reporting. The survey was not designed to measure how well any route works, and none of the figures that follow should be read as a judgement on any route. These routes remain available to anyone who needs them, and confidential support is available at any time (page 36).

These obligations are being strengthened. Amendments to the MLC adopted in 2025, expected to come into force on 23 December 2027, explicitly address violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault. From 1 January 2026, STCW training requirements (IMO Resolution MSC.560(108); in the UK, MGN 718) also cover them. Private yachts not operating commercially generally fall outside the MLC, and some smaller or private vessels have no management company or DPA at all.

THE ESTABLISHED REPORTING ROUTES

Internal route — The chain of command.

Concerns are raised with a head of department or the captain, following the vessel's onboard complaints procedure, and the management company may be involved. Where the captain is the person concerned, the route runs to the management company or Designated Person Ashore (DPA). Crew who belong to a union can also contact it.

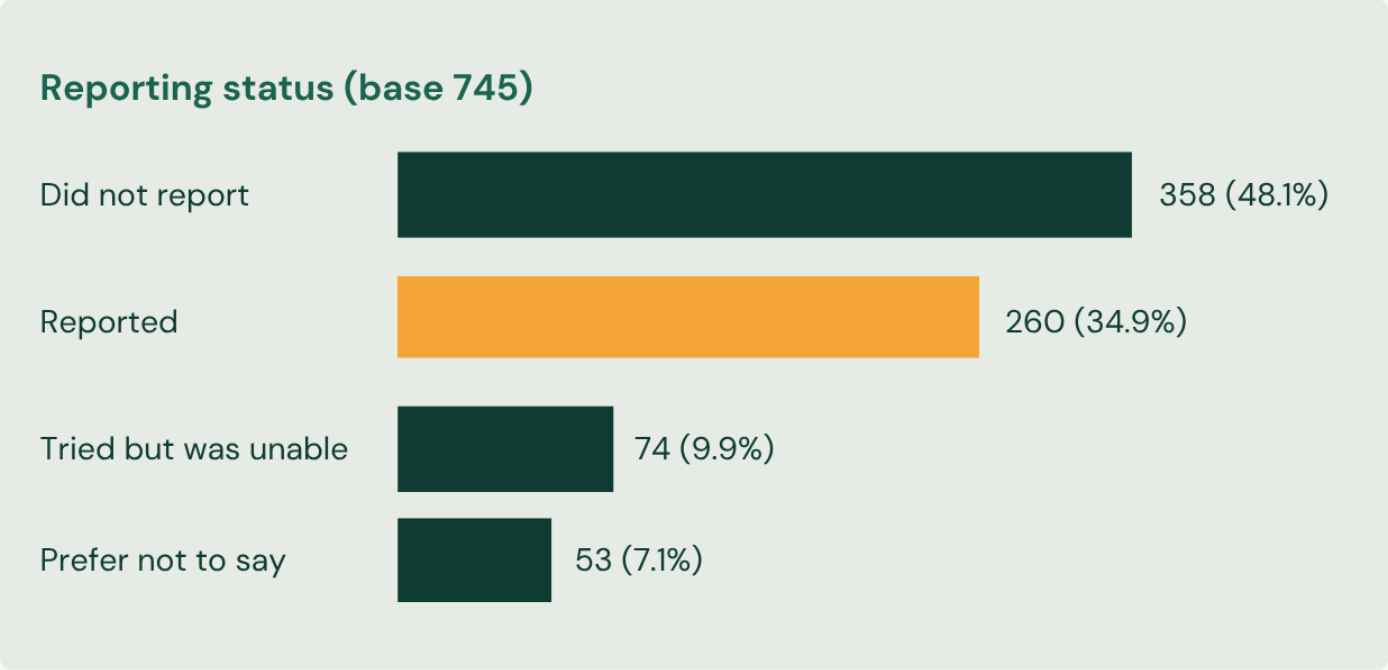
External route — The flag state and the police.

Where conduct is illegal, or the internal route is unavailable, crew can report to the flag administration, which usually permits confidential reporting, and, for assault, to the local police.

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Whether respondents reported

Of the 745 women who reached the reporting questions, 260 (34.9%) reported, 358 (48.1%) did not report, 74 (9.9%) tried but were unable, and 53 (7.1%) selected prefer not to say. Fewer than four in ten reported.



Reporting did not rise with seniority. Junior crew 36%, head of department 30%, senior leadership 37%, rotational crew 39% (bases 52 to 286; the rotational figure rests on a small base). Heads of department, often the first port of call for others, reported least (30%). Among the 219 who recorded sexual assault and reached the reporting questions, 41.6% reported, and 54.3% did not, or were unable to. For sexual assault, more did not report than reported.

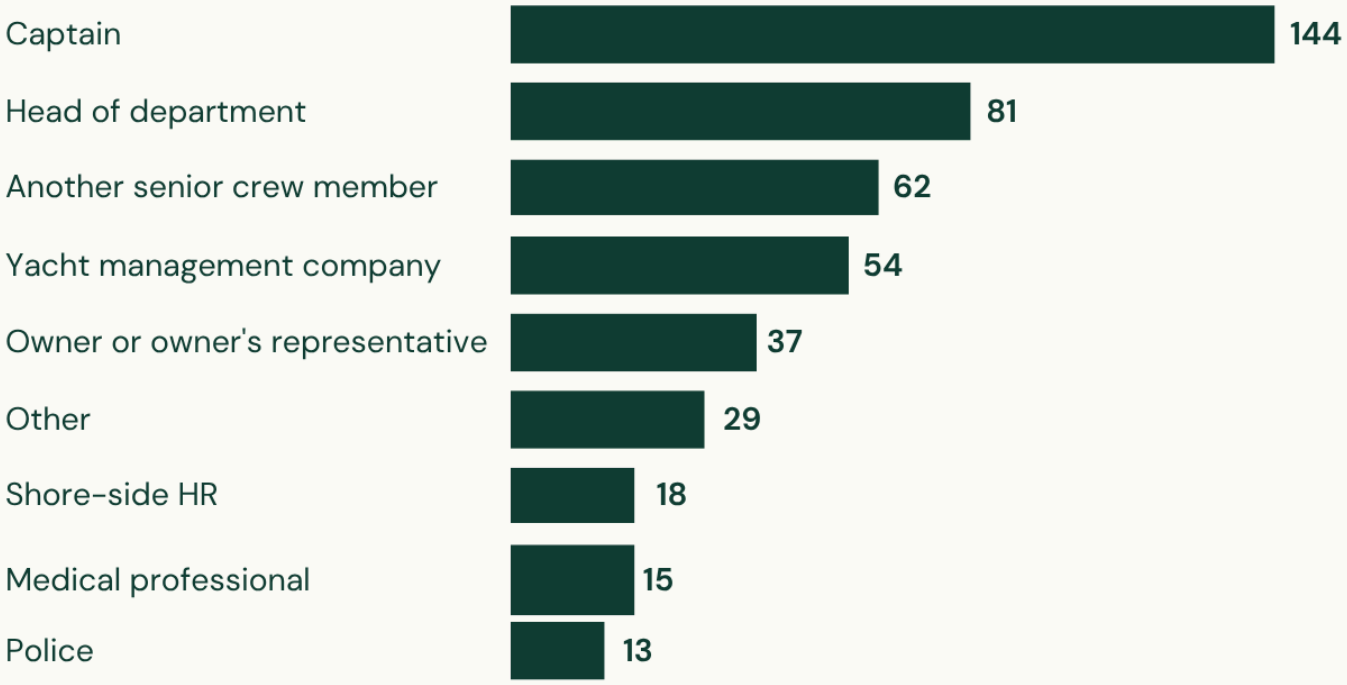
Where someone in a senior position was involved, 39.5% reported (base 461); where only a peer was involved, 40.7% reported (base 59, small base). Reporting rates were similar regardless of who was responsible.

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Who they reported to

Of the 260 who reported, with multiple selections allowed, the captain was selected most often (144, 55%), followed by head of department (81, 31%), another senior crew member (62, 24%) and the yacht management company (54, 21%). The first two sit within the chain of command. 18 (7%) selected shore-side HR, 15 a medical professional and 13 (5%) the police. Recipients outside the vessel were selected less often. Because multiple selections were allowed, selecting the captain does not mean no other channel was used. Not every incident would call for the police, which is the route for illegal conduct. Of the 260 who reported, 164 (63%) recorded at least one experience of sexual assault, physical assault or suspected drink spiking; because reporting was asked once per respondent, a report cannot be tied to a specific incident.

Recipient (base 260, multiple selections)



"I spoke to the chief stew, who told me this wasn't uncommon from the engineer. Then the captain called me in and told me I must not initiate relationships with the crew on board. I told him about the incident and that I had not initiated anything, and his response was that he and the engineer went to school together, so he knows him very well. That was it. No recourse, no nothing."

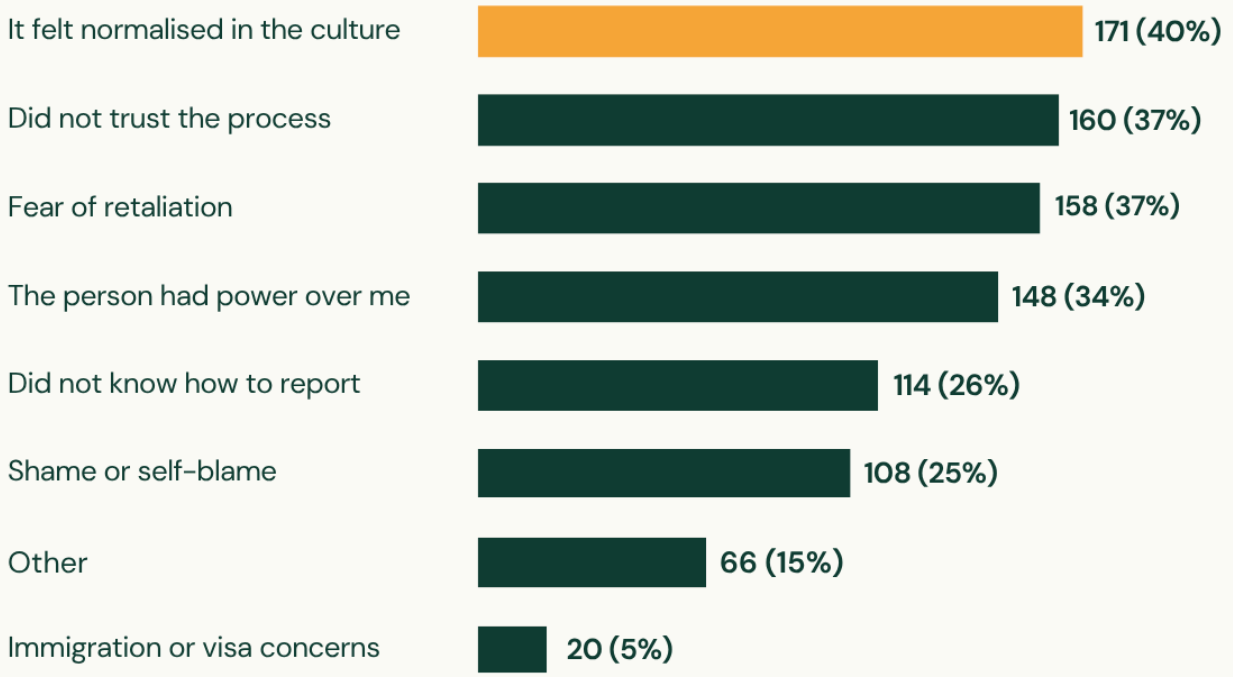
— JUNIOR CREW • GALLEY

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Why they did not report

Base 432, comprising those who did not report and those who tried but were unable. Multiple selections were allowed, so shares do not total 100%.

Reason (base 432)



114 respondents (26%) recorded that they did not know how to report. This is a finding the industry can act on directly by making sure every crew member knows the established routes, including confidential reporting to the flag administration, before they need them. Other evidence: ISWAN reports that crew raising and/or harassment with its helpline "worried about career consequences and felt unsure where to turn".

> *"Comments like that, you don't always see as harassment or bullying, but they do have a lasting effect on your confidence. And we need to know we can speak to someone about it, and that action can be taken."*
>
> — JUNIOR CREW • INTERIOR

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What happened when they did report



Of the 324 who recorded what action was taken, 164 (51%) recorded no action, 96 (30%) some action but insufficient, and 58 (18%) appropriate action. 57 (18%) recorded retaliation and 16 (5%) were asked to stay silent or sign an NDA. Where it worked, 58 of the 324 (18%) recorded appropriate action — one account of the internal route working as intended appears in Section 07.

> ***"The owner tried to sleep with me. He paid me out as hush money when I quit the next day."***
> — HEAD OF DEPARTMENT • INTERIOR

> ***"I personally reported this to management. Nothing has been done because the person is an owner's hire."***
> — HEAD OF DEPARTMENT • DECK

How reporting felt. On a one-to-five scale, the mean for how safe it felt to report was 2.84 (base 263) and the mean for how respondents were treated afterwards was 2.64 (base 253). 54% rated safety 1 or 2, and 61% rated their treatment afterwards 1 or 2.

OUTCOMES

Of the 659 who recorded an outcome, 305 (46%) left that vessel and 293 (44%) remained on it. Outcomes were not linked to individual incidents, so the figures are not paired.

Outcome (base 659, multiple selections)	Respondents	Share of 659
Left that vessel	**305**	46%
Remained on the vessel	**293**	44%
The other person was removed	**67**	10%
Prefer not to say	**57**	9%*
Ongoing impact	**50**	8%*
Left the yachting industry	**48**	7%*
Moved to another vessel	**29**	4%*

** Calculated from the counts (base 659). Multiple selections were allowed, so shares total more than 100%.*

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Six figures on reporting, each with its own base

The figures below are drawn from different groups of respondents. Each carries its own base and they are not a sequence. The 55% and 5% figures are both over the 260 who reported, and the 51% and 18% figures are both over the 324 who recorded what action was taken.

63%

The person responsible was someone in a senior position

SEXUAL HARASSMENT 473 AND SEXUAL ASSAULT 226

35%

Recorded the incident (260 respondents)

THE 745 WHO REACHED THE REPORTING QUESTIONS

55%

Selected the captain as a recipient of their report (144)

THE 260 WHO REPORTED

5%

Selected the police as a recipient of their report (13)

THE 260 WHO REPORTED

51%

Recorded that no action was taken (164)

THE 324 WHO RECORDED WHAT ACTION WAS TAKEN

18%

Recorded retaliation after reporting (57)

THE 324 WHO RECORDED WHAT ACTION WAS TAKEN

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Points arising from the data

Each point below states a figure with its base, followed by an open question for the industry to consider. The questions are put to the reader; the survey does not answer them, and none of the points is a judgement on how well any reporting route works.

#	What the survey recorded	Open question for the industry
1	The person responsible was someone in a senior position in 63% of sexual harassment cases (base 473) and 63% of sexual assault cases (base 226).	How can every crew member always have a route to raise a concern that does not depend on the person the concern is about?
2	Of the 260 who reported, 13 (5%) selected the police and 18 (7%) shore-side HR.	How can every crew member know that flag administrations usually accept confidential reports?
3	Of the 324 who recorded what action was taken, 164 (51%) recorded no action and 58 (18%) recorded appropriate action.	What would a recorded, reviewable outcome for every reported concern look like in practice?
4	Of the same 324, 57 (18%) recorded retaliation and 16 (5%) recorded being asked to stay silent or sign an NDA.	How can protection against retaliation be made enforceable rather than stated?
5	198 of 675 (29%) selected anonymous reporting, and 238 (35%) independent investigation outside the chain of command, among what would have helped most.	What form of confidential reporting would meet crew expectations while still allowing an incident to be investigated? This point reports the finding only; no recommendation will be made until specialist survivor-support organisations have been consulted.
6	114 of 432 non-reporters (26%) did not know how to report, and 171 (40%) recorded that it felt normalised.	How can reporting routes be made known to every crew member before an incident occurs?

Limits of this section. The survey did not ask about the effectiveness of any reporting route. Recorded incidents span many years, and many pre-date recent regulation. Reporting was asked once per respondent rather than once per incident. Each figure above carries its own base; the figures are not cumulative and are not drawn from a single group of respondents.

Other evidence. ISWAN's 2025 review of its yacht crew helpline notes that "less formal HR infrastructure, limited union representation and fewer regulated pathways into employment" can leave crew "without clear routes to advice, support or resolution when problems arise". It records that yacht crew contacting the helpline were referred to external services in 18% of cases, compared with 7% of Seafarerhelp cases.

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"Certain captains, especially on small boats, rule over the whole crew, and often there is no management company either. So who do you complain to? In yachting they know they are untouchable. If the woman complains, she is the problem, so she either leaves or is let go as 'not suited to the position'. When one woman leaves the boat, the next one comes. Rinse and repeat."

— SENIOR LEADERSHIP • GALLEY

"I reported to the Designated Person Ashore, who was the owner's son, which meant no intervention. I was sacked on the spot for bringing up the bullying and crew welfare, and told I was negative and causing drama."

— SENIOR LEADERSHIP • DECK

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SECTION 06

Impact and Support

Of the 673 who answered the wellbeing question, only 109 (16%) recorded no lasting impact.

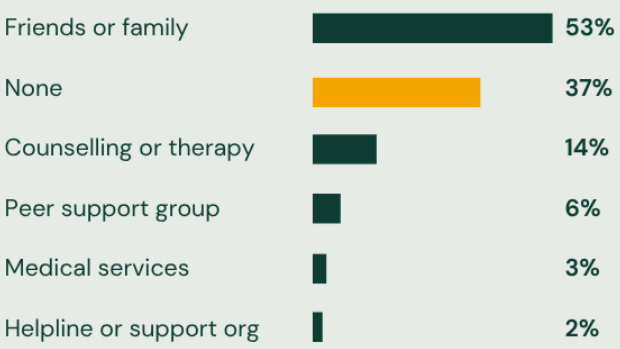
Lasting effect on wellbeing (base 673, multiple selections)



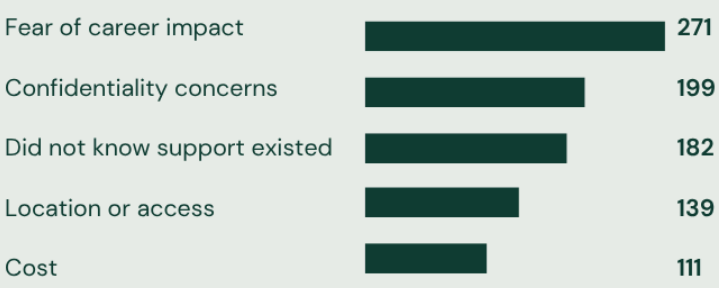
Of the 673 who answered, 249 (37%) accessed no support. 358 (53%) accessed friends or family and 91 (14%) accessed professional counselling or therapy. More women reached no support than reached any professional service. Support accessed and barriers to support were asked as two separate questions and are not cross-tabulated. The barriers selected most often were fear of career impact (271), confidentiality concerns (199) and not knowing support existed (182).

Other evidence. ISWAN reports that around half of crew contacting its helpline about abuse or harassment described significant effects on their mental health, including "persistent anxiety, low mood, sleep difficulties".

Support accessed (base 673, multiple selections)



Barrier to support (base 673, multiple selections)



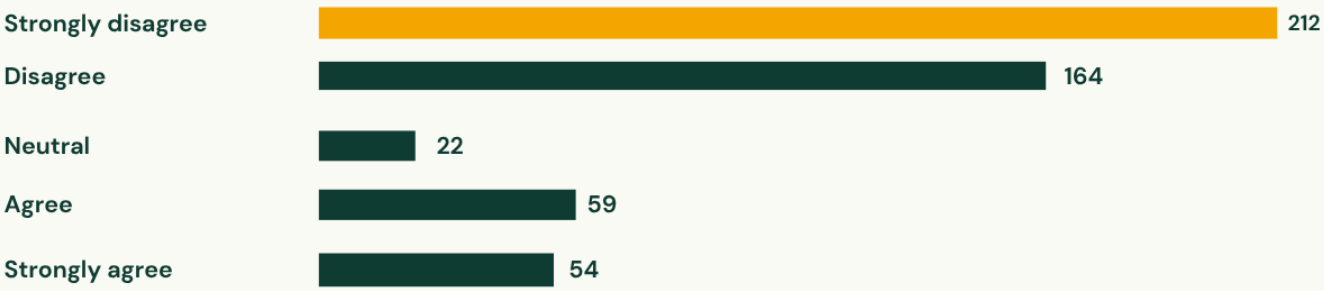
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SECTION 07

Industry and Prevention

Asked to rate the statement "My yacht had clear policies that were enforced" (base 511), the mean was 2.18 out of 5. 212 respondents (41.5%) strongly disagreed and 164 (32.1%) disagreed, together 74%. 113 (22%) agreed or strongly agreed. The question asked about the respondent's own yacht.

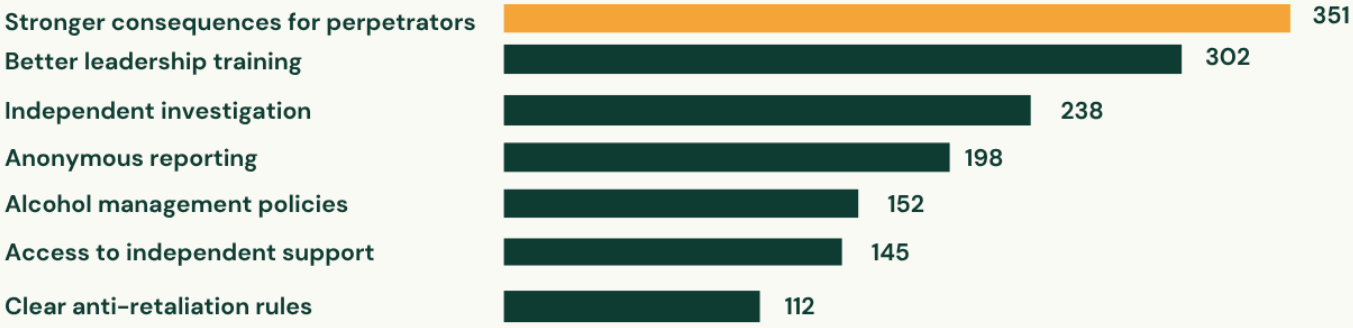
Response (base 511)



What crew say would help most

Respondents could select up to three options (base 675). The options selected most often were: stronger consequences for perpetrators (351, 52%), better leadership training (302, 45%), independent investigation outside the chain of command (238, 35%) and anonymous reporting (198, 29%). Alcohol management policies (152), access to independent support (145) and clear anti-retaliation rules (112) followed.

What would have helped most (base 675, up to three choices)



WHAT GOOD CAN LOOK LIKE

"I eventually decided to tell the captain, and he immediately reported it to the owner, and the guest was never allowed back. It was handled very well. I just wish there had been better boundaries, so the situation would never have happened."

– JUNIOR CREW • INTERIOR

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SECTION 08

Cross-tabulations

Cross-tabulations are collected here for reference. Only cells and groups that survive suppression are shown. Figures marked "small base" carry a wider margin of error.

Cross-tabulation	Figures
Reporting rate by seniority	Junior 36%, head of department 30%, senior leadership 37%, rotational 39%. Reporting does not rise with rank.
Reporting among sexual assault respondents	Of 219 who recorded sexual assault and reached the reporting questions, 41.6% reported and 54.3% did not or were unable to.
Reporting rate by person responsible	Someone in a senior position involved: 39.5% reported (base 461). Peer only: 40.7% (base 59, small base). Reporting rates were similar whoever was responsible.
Sexual harassment prevalence by department	Galley 71% (of 83, small base), interior 63% (of 564), deck 51% (of 164). Engineering and medical suppressed, base under 20.
Sexual assault prevalence by department	Galley 40% (of 83, small base), interior 32% (of 560), deck 27% (of 165). Engineering and medical suppressed.
Bullying prevalence by seniority	Senior leadership 78% (of 182), junior crew 71% (of 342), head of department 69% (of 242), rotational 68% (of 71).

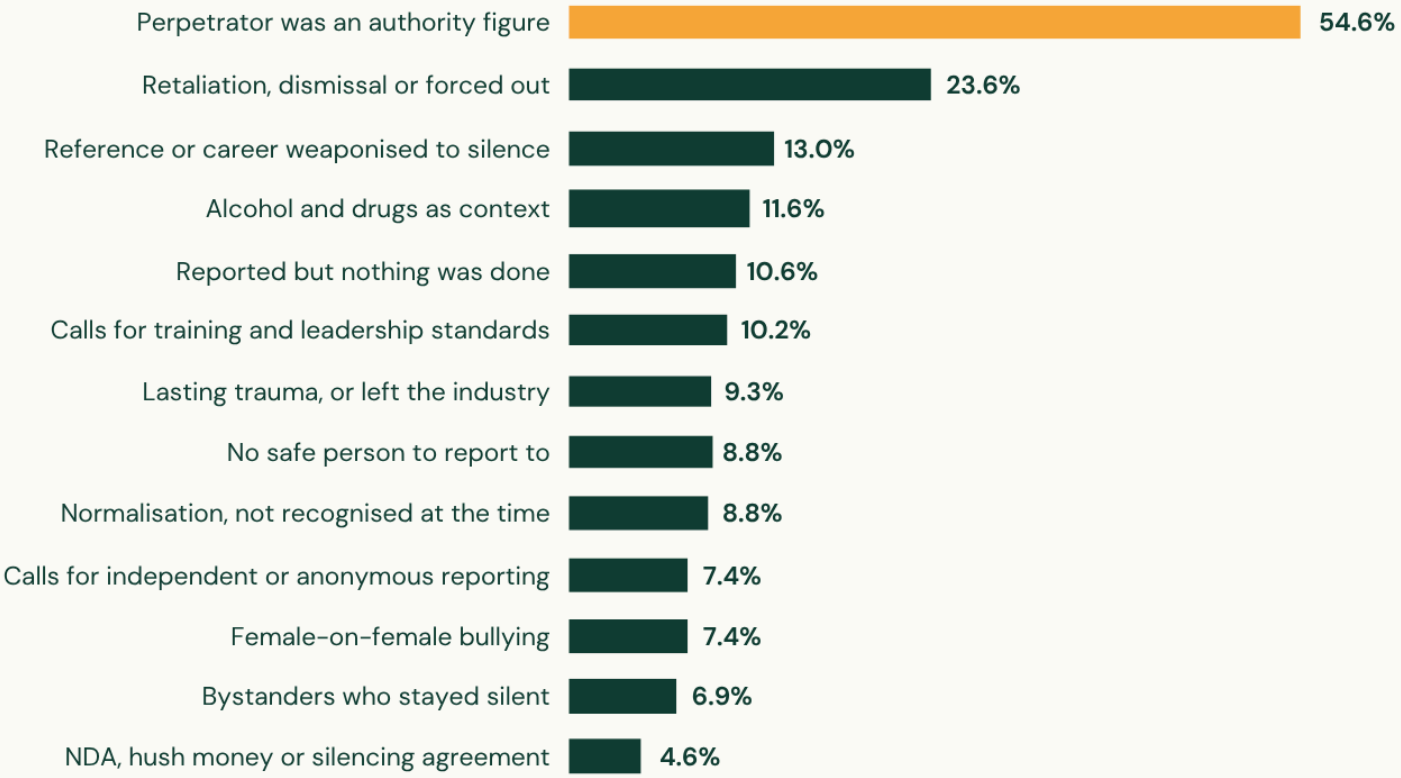
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SECTION 09

In their own words: themes from the testimony

216 respondents left a written comment in the survey's single optional free-text field. The comments were coded thematically using keyword-assisted coding across all 216, and the weights below are conservative lower bounds. The testimony is illustrative of what respondents chose to write; it is not representative of respondents as a whole, and the comments were not cross-tabulated against any tick-box answer.

Recurring theme (base 216 comments)



The largest theme (54.6%), a person in a senior position as the source of harm, mirrors the tick-box finding in Section 04. Two themes are not covered by the tick-box questions: the use of references or career prospects to silence (13.0%), and the situation on smaller, privately owned or unmanaged vessels, where one respondent described "the captain is the law". As themes in what respondents chose to write, they are illustrative, not measured.

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"The fear of reporting was largely because others would say I should have known better than to be drinking with my captain. All alcohol does is let the perpetrator work that angle, to take advantage and then use the alcohol as their defence."

— SENIOR LEADERSHIP • INTERIOR

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SECTION 10

Objectives for the future

YACHT PEARLS OF WISDOM'S POSITION — NOT A SURVEY FINDING

The five objectives below are Yacht Pearls of Wisdom's position. They are not survey findings. Each is paired with the figures that prompt it.

They are put to the industry as shared work. Yacht Pearls of Wisdom and the industry are on the same side of this problem.

1. A consistent, professional standard for handling reports, across the industry. Every reported concern has a recorded, reviewable outcome; protection against retaliation is enforceable, not only stated; and every crew member knows the routes before an incident occurs, building on existing regulation, including the MLC and the new STCW training requirements.	164 of 324 (51%) recorded no action; 58 (18%) appropriate action. 57 (18%) recorded retaliation and 16 (5%) being asked to stay silent or sign an NDA. 114 of 432 non-reporters (26%) did not know how to report.
2. Independent reporting routes, separate from the chain of command, so that no crew member's route depends on the person the concern is about, and every crew member knows that flag states usually operate a confidential reporting mechanism.	Someone in a senior position was responsible in 62.8% of sexual harassment and of sexual assault cases. 238 of 675 (35%) selected independent investigation outside the chain of command. 13 of 260 reporters (5%) selected the police and 18 (7%) shore-side HR. On anonymous reporting (198, 29%) this report records the finding only; no recommendation will be made until specialist survivor-support organisations have been consulted.

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Objectives for the future (continued)

3. Guidance, training and support for captains as well as crew, building on the new STCW training requirement, so that a captain who receives a complaint has training and independent advice to draw on.	144 of 260 reporters (55%) went to the captain. 302 of 675 (45%) selected better leadership training.
4. A resourced, independent HR or welfare function reachable from every vessel, whatever its size, flag or management arrangement.	18 of 260 reporters (7%) selected shore-side HR. 145 of 675 selected access to independent support. "No safe person to report to" appears in 8.8% of the 216 written comments.
5. Treat this as a gap in the reporting structure, not a behaviour problem alone. There is no reliable structure in place for dealing with or reporting incidents. Addressing behaviour without the structure leaves the next woman on the same route.	376 of 511 (74%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their yacht had clear, enforced policies. 171 of 432 non-reporters (40%) recorded that it felt normalised.

> *"In a perfect world, all yachts, regardless of flag or charter status, would have an independent third-party system, so the crew has a separate entity to resolve issues without retaliation. That would have helped me speak out."*
>
> — SENIOR LEADERSHIP • INTERIOR

How these objectives are met is for the industry to work out together. Yacht Pearls of Wisdom will use this report to start that work, beginning with the most serious harm (see "What happens next").

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SECTION 11

How this analysis was done

This report was produced using the live production dataset, accessed directly in read-only mode, with no changes made to any records. Before analysis, the dataset was de-noised of developer and test submissions so that every figure reflects a genuine respondent. Twelve real responses that had been accidentally recorded in a development environment were migrated into the production dataset and are included, tagged and auditable.

Stated denominators.

Every percentage is tied to an explicit, stated base. Bases are never mixed within a figure.

Branching respected.

Context and reporting figures are calculated only over the women who actually saw those questions.

Small cells suppressed.

Any cell below five is shown as "<5" to protect individuals; small groups are flagged, not read.

Auditable & reproducible.

The full underlying figures, with their denominators, are in the appendix and the accompanying data files.

OWNERSHIP AND ANALYSIS

The survey and this publication are the intellectual property of Yacht Pearls of Wisdom. CrewPass provided the technical infrastructure, including the development and hosting of the survey, as well as the data processing and compliance analysis.

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What happens next

FORWARD-LOOKING — NOT A FINDING

This section sets out intent, not evidence. Nothing on this page is a survey finding. Everything preceding it is drawn from the data with its base stated; what follows is a statement of the work Yacht Pearls of Wisdom intends to take forward.

The next phase of work

Yacht Pearls of Wisdom will use this report to focus first on the most serious incidents, including rape, and on how they are handled on board. The first step is to hold three roundtables: one with management companies, one with captains, and a third bringing together representatives of both groups, flag states, and other industry organisations. To agree shared processes and procedures for responding to, recording and reporting these incidents. The objectives in Section 10 are the frame for that work, and the roundtables are set out on the next page.

The survey asked about sexual assault, including follow-up questions on penetration and attempted penetration. Under widely used definitions, including those of the US National Sexual Violence Resource Center and the FBI, penetration without consent is rape. The findings in this report on sexual assault prevalence, on reporting rates and on the action recorded afterwards are what prompt this next phase of work. No claim is made here about how any individual incident was handled.

Specific proposals are not committed to in this report. Any recommendation on reporting mechanisms, on the treatment of rape as a medical emergency, or on provision on board will be developed with specialist survivor-support input before it is published.

FIND SUPPORT HERE

This page names the most serious harm covered by this report. If you have been affected by anything in it, the support details are set out in full on page 36. Free and confidential support is available 24 hours a day on +44 (0)203 713 7273 or at help@yachtcrewhelp.org. If you are in immediate danger, contact your local emergency services.

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Crew reporting roundtables

Forward-looking — Not a finding

A SHARED APPROACH

The roundtables give the industry an opportunity to agree a shared approach to the most serious incidents on board, built around two commitments: supporting every person harmed, and supporting the crew on board to respond to the highest possible standard.

HOW THE ROUNDTABLES WILL RUN

The roundtables run in three stages. One roundtable will be held with management companies, including Designated Persons Ashore, and a separate roundtable with captains, so that each group can speak openly. Representatives from both will then join a third roundtable with flag states and other industry organisations, to see whether a general consensus can be reached on a process and how to move it forward. Input will be sought from specialist survivor-support organisations, crew welfare and telemedical providers, insurers, and crew, including survivors who choose to take part.

WHAT THE ROUNDTABLES AIM TO AGREE

- A first-response protocol for the immediate period following a disclosure, so the response does not depend on who happens to be on board.
- Reporting routes that never require the person harmed to report to the person concerned.
- How incidents are recorded, so a confidential, reliable record exists whatever the person later decides.
- Non-retaliation in writing, for crew who report and for crew who support a colleague.
- Access to care, including therapy and time off, that does not depend on a police report or a completed investigation.
- Clear, separate roles for the captain, the management company and shore-side support, so no single person carries the response alone.

A PROPOSAL FOR DISCUSSION: RAPE AS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

One proposal the roundtables will test is to classify rape on board as a medical emergency first, rather than as a disciplinary or HR matter. Vessels already have a well-rehearsed structure for medical emergencies: immediate care, contact with a telemedical provider, a written record and clear escalation ashore. Applying that structure to rape could give captains and crew a familiar sequence to follow from the first minutes, while leaving the person harmed in control of whether and when to report, and keeping open the option of preserving evidence if they later choose to. Whether this classification works in practice will be tested with clinicians and survivor-support specialists before it is recommended.

WHAT COMES OUT OF IT

The aim is a draft framework and practical tools, such as a first-response protocol card for captains and crew, shared with the industry for comment before anything is published. Progress will be reported back to the crew who took part in this survey.

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IF YOU HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY ANYTHING IN THIS REPORT

ISWAN YachtCrewHelp

You are not alone. Support is free, confidential, and available at any time.

YACHTCREWHELP · ISWAN'S FREE, CONFIDENTIAL 24-HOUR CREW HELPLINE

+44 (0)203 713 7273

help@yachtcrewhelp.org

If you are in immediate danger, contact your local emergency services.

Crew can also make a confidential report to the flag administration of their vessel.

Safer Waves offers confidential email support to seafarers who have experienced sexual harassment, sexual assault or gender discrimination at sea: support@saferwaves.org

Female Yacht Crew
SAFETY SURVEY

Reference: International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN), YachtCrewHelp 2025 Annual Review. London: ISWAN, 2026.

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APPENDIX

Data tables

All figures with their denominators. Codes are shown as human labels. Cells below five are suppressed as "<5". The complete machine-readable set is in figures.csv (347 rows) and figures.json.

A1 Sample funnel

STAGE	COUNT
Total responses	1,125
Consented (age 18+ and understood)	1,122
Worked on a yacht (currently or previously)	1,042
Answered the experience questions	926
Marked complete	681
Reached the reporting questions	745
Opted in to contact (separate file)	38
Accidentally-in-dev responses included	12

A2 Prevalence (base = answered each question)

EXPERIENCE	YES	NO	PNTS	BASE	% YES
Bullying	657	256	12	925	71.0%
Sexual harassment	561	331	23	915	61.3%
Sexual assault	284	601	27	912	31.1%
Physical assault	237	654	25	916	25.9%
Drink spiking (susp.)	223	674	14	911	24.5%

A3 Number of harm types (base 926)

TYPES	COUNT	SHARE
None	135	14.6%
One	205	22.1%
Two	230	24.8%
Three	178	19.2%
Four	127	13.7%
Five	51	5.5%

At least one: 791 (85.4%). Two or more: 586 (63.3%).

A4 Harm co-occurrence (experienced both)

	BULL.	PHYS.	HAR.	S.ASSLT	SPIKE
Bullying	657	211	449	232	185
Physical	211	237	202	140	89
Harassment	449	202	561	273	164
Sexual assault	232	140	273	284	91
Spiking	185	89	164	91	223

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Data tables (continued)

A5 Demographics (base 926)

DEPARTMENT

Interior	571
Deck	167
Galley	83
Engineering	17
Other	15
Medical	5
Prefer not to say	<5

SENIORITY AT THE TIME

Junior crew	342
Head of department	242
Senior leadership	183
Rotational	71
Prefer not to say	58

YEARS IN YACHTING

3 to 5 years	242
10+ years	230
6 to 10 years	192
1 to 2 years	142
Less than 1 year	113
Prefer not to say	<5

AGE AT THE TIME

25 to 34	421
18 to 24	258
35 to 44	167
45 to 54	50
55+	12
Prefer not to say	8

A6 Who was responsible

SEXUAL HARASSMENT (BASE 473)

Captain	150
Peer	99
Head of department	86
Owner or guest	61
Multiple	56
Prefer not to say	10
Unknown	8
Shore-side	<5

Someone in a senior position: 297 (62.8%).

SEXUAL ASSAULT (BASE 226)

Captain	69
Peer	53
Head of department	48
Owner or guest	25
Multiple	15
Prefer not to say	10
Shore-side	<5
Unknown	<5

Someone in a senior position: 142 (62.8%).

BULLYING (BASE 597)

Head of department	151
Peer	139
Captain	137
Multiple	96
Unknown	31
Owner or guest	18
Prefer not to say	17
Shore-side	8

A7 Location (on / off vessel)

EXPERIENCE	ON BOARD	OFF VESSEL	BOTH	PNTS	BASE
Bullying	386	64	164	11	625
Physical assault	159	17	31	11	218
Sexual harassment	317	45	114	8	484
Sexual assault	153	33	45	<5	235
Suspected drink spiking	49	110	17	<5	178

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Data tables (continued)

A8 Reporting (base 745)

REPORTING STATUS

Reported	260	34.9%
Did not report	358	48.1%
Tried but was unable	74	9.9%
Prefer not to say	53	7.1%

REPORTED TO (BASE 260)

Captain	144
Head of department	81
Another senior crew member	62
Yacht management company	54
Owner or owner rep	37
Other	29
Shore-side HR	18
Medical professional	15
Police	13
Prefer not to say	<5

WHY DID NOT REPORT (BASE 432)

Felt normalised	171
Did not trust the process	160
Fear of retaliation	158
Person had power over me	148
Did not know how to report	114
Shame or self-blame	108
Other	66
Immigration or visa concerns	20
Prefer not to say	12

A8 Reporting (continued)

HOW SAFE FELT REPORTING (BASE 263, MEAN 2.84)

1	69
2	74
3	13
4	44
5	63

HOW TREATED AFTER (BASE 253, MEAN 2.64)

1	69
2	86
3	14
4	35
5	49

ACTION TAKEN (BASE 324)

No action	164
Some action, but insufficient	96
Yes, appropriate action	58
I experienced retaliation	57
Asked to stay silent or sign NDA	16
Prefer not to say	5

OUTCOME (BASE 659)

Left that vessel	305
Remained on the vessel	293
Other person was removed	67
Prefer not to say	57
Ongoing impact	50
Left the yachting industry	48
Moved to another vessel	29

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Data tables (continued)

A9 Impact and support (base 673)

WELLBEING EFFECTS

Anxiety or stress	442
Reduced confidence	373
Sleep disturbance	224
Career impact	190
No lasting impact	109
Physical injury	50
Prefer not to say	42

SUPPORT ACCESSED

Friends or family	358
None	249
Professional counselling or therapy	91
Peer support group	39
Medical services	22
Helpline or support org	15
Prefer not to say	18

BARRIERS TO SUPPORT

Fear of career impact	271
Confidentiality concerns	199
Did not know support existed	182
Location or access	139
Cost	111
Prefer not to say	81

A10 Industry (base 675)

CLEAR POLICIES ENFORCED (BASE 511, MEAN 2.18)

Strongly disagree	212
Disagree	164
Neutral	22
Agree	59
Strongly agree	54

WHAT WOULD HAVE HELPED MOST

Stronger consequences for perpetrators	351
Better leadership training	302
Independent investigation	238
Anonymous reporting	198
Alcohol management policies	152
Access to independent support	145
Clear anti-retaliation rules	112
Prefer not to say	31

A11 Recency

EXPERIENCE	LAST 3 YRS	LAST 12 MO	BASE
Bullying	61.6%	27.8%	633
Sexual harassment	56.2%	23.9%	489
Sexual assault	54.9%	21.9%	237
Physical assault	50.0%	19.1%	220
Drink spiking (susp.)	48.3%	17.2%	180

End of report

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