

SECamb Member Survey 2024-25

GMB union have sought to survey its membership within South East Coast Ambulance Service about the working environment, working culture and other matters, such as management spending and budgeting. To date almost 900 members have completed the survey.

The top 5 issues reported were as follows:

- Discrimination towards female staff
- Sexual Harassment
- Bullying
- Members being scared to speak out
- The “Boys’ Club” culture which produces a ‘toxic’ working environment

The full results of the survey are as follows:

1. Do you think spending on corporate or executive events should be a financial priority over spending for front line/staff services?

85% said no

2. Have you been refused overtime, education or training (i.e. CPD, TRIM, Clinical Education) due to financial constraints on trust?

71% said yes

3. Have you taken time off work due to a work-related issue?

54% said yes

4. If yes, what was this issue?

40% due to stress

27% due to Injury

20% due to mental health

5. Did you feel supported by the Trust

51% said no

6. Do you feel the Trust followed their processes correctly?

Here are a few examples:

- *No, but I feel most management have their own personal processes they use over the trusts.*
- *Makes me feel like they aren't even sure of the trust processes themselves*
- *No. HR and management will twist any policy to support their narrative/agenda.*

7. Do you feel you are treated differently in comparison to those in management/HR and leadership roles?

85% said yes

8. Do you feel the Trust treats you with the same value as more senior roles/other non-front-line departments?

89% said no

9. Do you feel the Trust follows their own values of Courage, Kindness and Integrity?

84% said no

10. Have you raised a grievance about any unfair treatment within SECAMB?

32% said yes

11. Did you receive a satisfactory outcome if you raised a grievance within SECAMB?

79% said no

12. Do you feel the process was followed appropriately and fairly?

80% said no

13. Have you experienced or witnessed any of the following?

Bullying: 25.6% experienced it / 19.4% witnessed it

Disability Discrimination: 12.3% experienced it / 10.8% witnessed it

Sexual Harassment: 6.3% experienced it / 17.2% witnessed it

Sexual Discrimination: 8% experienced it / 13.9% witnessed it

Racism: 2.6% experienced it / 16% witnessed it

Inappropriate Conduct: 16% experienced it / 26% witnessed it

14. Please give details of any of the above and if applicable specify what sort of inappropriate conduct you may have encountered:

“As a female paramedic I have been gender discriminated before on jobs, men implying I am unable to do the job as well as then due to my height and stature.”

“Bullying behaviours from line manager, 111 staff being treated differently to other members of staff within the trust. SLT having no respect for staff and there being no work life balance.”

“Freedom to speak up poorly managing sexual assault and harassment in the workplace with the well-being team often being unreachable with the Trust failing to act on multiple complaints the perpetrator allowed to continue working within the trust.”

“Having inappropriate far right-wing photos and paraphernalia on display during teams meetings.”

“People are treated differently depending on who they are. Indirect disability discrimination seen where a member of staff couldn’t have a reasonable adjustment in Rota to care for their disabled husband, and inappropriate sexual behaviour towards young female staff.”

“Sharing of graphic sexualised images within what’s app groups.”

“There seems to be a culture of inappropriate conduct, perpetuated by middle management level. This includes racism and sexual discrimination. When flagging cases of sexual harassment, it is common to be fobbed off, and no procedures followed. A “quiet chat” is the most that ever happens.”

“Staff are regularly sent into dangerous environments with no regard to their safety.”

“I have been sexually harassed at work - by a manager who also constantly makes inappropriate comments to all other females.”

15. Do you feel you regularly work or are expected to work outside of your job evaluated role duties?

57% said yes

16. Do you feel confident that the Trust would support and protect you if you needed to raise an issue at work (including behaviours/whistleblowing)?

80% said no

17. Do you believe the Trust does everything it can to keep you safe at work, including psychological and emotional safety?

83% said no

18. Do you have concerns about the culture within SECamb?

74% said yes

19. Is there any other information you wish to add?

“It doesn't feel the culture will ever change and only seems to be getting worse. The trust will not admit if they have done wrong and instead double down and insist, they are behaving in the correct way. They take no accountability, and Local managers do not show courage, even when they can see staff have been treated unfairly, they accept it.”

“It's very male dominant, and their approach leaves you feeling management OTL and above is a very toxic environment. When we used to have just a station officer and COM It was much nicer, and the managers offices were more approachable. They certainly are not now, feel intimidated.”

“Team leaders are bullies and when you complain to senior managers nothing gets done. There is a boys club so it's who your friends with gets you by, if you're not in the CLUB your life is terrible meaning you have to watch your back and be careful who you talk to about any discriminatory matters.”

“The trust approach of moving people who have had issues raised against them at one station (including bullying or sexual in nature) to another station is not a solution or protecting staff at the new station they have been moved to.”

“SECamb has signed this new sexual charter for zero tolerance however since they have signed it I know of several cases that have been swept under the carpet with Trust policy not being followed, managers have simply learnt how to manipulate the system and close ranks.”