



Spotlight on... language

The Considerate Constructors Scheme's '**Spotlight on...**' initiative focuses on different areas associated with improving the image of construction, and raises awareness among registered sites, companies and suppliers about the issues and how to help.

Through taking action to tackle the topics highlighted, everyone within the industry can play an important role in making a difference, and ultimately improving the image of construction.



Spotlight on... language

Spotlight on... language focuses on inappropriate, offensive and foul language used in the construction industry and how it could cause offence to both the workforce and the public.

A CITB survey, conducted earlier in 2014 and answered by over 500 construction professionals, revealed that sexist, racist, and homophobic language is unfortunately still prevalent on sites and in the construction industry in general.

The survey discovered that:

- 61% had heard sexist language at work in the past year, and 14% said they heard it once a week or more
- More than half (53%) of respondents had heard racist language at work in the past 12 months and 14% claimed to have heard racist language at least once a week
- Almost half (48%) of workers had heard homophobic language in the past year, while 13% had heard it at least once a week
- 51% reported hearing ageist language in the past 12 months, with 11% claiming to hear it once a week or more

How the issue is being tackled

The use of inappropriate language is often included as part of the larger topic of equality and diversity which is covered under legislation. The Equality Act 2010 came into effect in October 2010 to help effectively tackle discrimination. There are also a number of UK organisations and campaigns that provide advice and guidance on how to tackle the topic of language.

Most construction organisations will have policies, procedures and company values in place that detail their expectations with regard to employee behaviour and conduct, including the use of inappropriate, offensive and foul language. It is vitally important that these expectations are cascaded throughout the company and particularly at site level, where site management staff are responsible for implementing these rules over a large, diverse workforce and often over an extensive site area.

What to do now

Please visit the Scheme's website www.ccscheme.org.uk to find a wealth of advice and useful information, case studies and links to other organisations and bodies which will enable anyone to find out more about language, and help prevent its misuse.

The Scheme will continue to update the website as new information and case studies are identified. If you would like to share how you tackle inappropriate, offensive and foul language, please contact the Scheme by emailing enquiries@ccscheme.org.uk