

Cutbacks at Tate Britain, far left, and Tate Modern under the directorship of Sir Nicholas Serota have been blamed for causing friction among staff

Staff paint a grim picture of bullying culture at the Tate

By Rob Sharp
Arts Correspondent

BRITAIN'S TATE galleries are beset by allegations of bullying involving senior managers and gallery attendants, with the problem considered so serious that its trustees decided to intervene and raise their concerns with the director Sir Nicholas Serota.

Staff members across the organisation have complained of bullying by managers, prompting a directive highlighting basic employees' rights to work in a "safe" place "free from harassment or discrimination of any kind." Tate trustees, who are appointed by the Prime Minister and include the TV executive Elisabeth Murdoch, daughter of Rupert, the former BP chief Lord Browne and the journalist Lionel Barber expressed their dismay about the bullying and also about the low staff morale.

They insisted on the need for an independent monitor to be brought in to improve the situation, reporting directly to them. They also suggested leadership training and "respect" workshops.

"There have been issues at the Tate," said Alan Leighton, the chair of Prospect, one of the unions representing employees at the Tate. "There were sufficient examples of it taking place for

them to realise it was a problem. They have introduced a dignity and respect policy to attempt to deal with it."

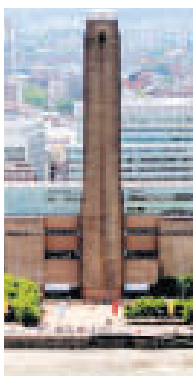
Prospect is known to have dealt with bullying cases involving senior management at the Tate.

Gallery attendants affiliated with the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), another union recognised at the organisation, said that concerns over bullying had repeatedly been raised with management.

A former employee, a gallery assistant affiliated with the PCS, said she was involved in an impending employment tribunal over unfair dismissal after experiencing bullying related to internal budget cuts last year. She said that cutbacks and replacement staff had caused extensive internal friction.

A November 2010 employee survey at the institution, the Tate's most recent, found that 13 per cent of the 586 staff surveyed had experienced bullying or harassment. Responding to the survey, Tate trustees "expressed concern about perceptions of bullying and harassment".

The trustees insisted that there should be a "zero tolerance policy" towards bullying within the organisation, with whistle-blowing policies, independent monitors and leadership training proposed as solutions. A spokeswoman for the Tate said that



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the new "dignity and respect" policy "relates to providing staff with a working environment where people feel safe and their contribution is respected and recognised, one in which they are free from harassment or discrimination of any kind".

Union representatives said Government cutbacks had put employees under further pressure. Mr Leighton said: "Government cutbacks in national museums, galleries and government departments have led to restructuring and staff reductions. Consequently, staff at all levels are being asked to carry heavier loads. This causes extra pressure which can lead to bullying and perceived bullying."

In January, the Tate brought in a research company, ORC International, to produce an "interpretative report" based on its survey of Tate employees. ORC International concluded that "the level of discrimination is in line with 2006". One staff member highlighted a "climate of disrespect" within the Tate. The institution scored well on "pride" and "sense of belonging".

The Tate's spokeswoman said the most recent staff survey had revealed the results in relation to dignity and respect issues are in line with those for similar organisations. But she added that "any instance of bullying or harassment at Tate is unacceptable".

Blood pressure testers not fit for purpose

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

UP TO one-quarter of the six million people being treated for high blood pressure in the UK may have been misdiagnosed.

The standard method of measuring blood pressure is inaccurate and should be replaced by 24-hour monitoring, using a device worn on the waist, experts advise. The recommendation, by a panel

of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (Nice), is expected to be adopted around the world – the first change to the way blood pressure is measured for more than a century.

High blood pressure affects an estimated 12 million people in the UK, one in four of the adult population and one in two of those over 60. But it remains undiagnosed in more than half of them. It is one of the most important causes of

heart disease, stroke and kidney disease and controlling it is one of the most effective ways of preventing premature death.

Traditionally, blood pressure is taken by a cuff attached to the patient's upper arm and pumped up to block the blood flow before being released slowly to measure the pressure at which blood starts to flow again.

Many patients suffer from "white coat syndrome" – their blood pressure rises because of anxiety triggered by a visit to the surgery. A more accurate measure can be obtained by monitoring blood pressure for 24 hours using a device attached to the waist that pumps up the cuff

worn around the arm every half hour and takes a reading, all of which are then averaged out.

Fewer than one in 10 patients are diagnosed in this way. The devices cost more than £1,000 and drugs prescribed for blood pressure on the NHS cost £1bn a year. Nice estimates that introducing the devices would save £10bn annually after five years.

Bryan Williams, Professor of medicine at the University of Leicester, who led the Nice panel, said: "The important recommendations in this guideline will affect the treatment of millions of people in our country. It is a step change that is likely to be replicated across the world."

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