

### 1. Purpose

This policy sets out the organisation's legal obligations and operational standards for preventing sexual harassment in the workplace, in line with changes introduced by the **Employment Rights Act 2025**, effective **30 October 2026**. It applies to all employees, workers, contractors, volunteers, and anyone interacting with our staff.

### 2. Legal Context

From **30 October 2026**, employers must take **all reasonable steps** to prevent sexual harassment. This strengthens the previous requirement to take "reasonable steps".

Additionally, employers become liable for harassment of staff by **third parties** (e.g., customers, clients, service users) unless **all reasonable steps** were taken to prevent it.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) may take enforcement action, and Employment Tribunals may increase compensation awards by up to **25%** where an employer has failed to meet the preventative duty.

### 3. Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is **unwanted conduct of a sexual nature** that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. A single incident can be sufficient.

### 4. Employer Duties from 30 October 2026

The organisation must demonstrate proactive, organisation-wide prevention measures. "All reasonable steps" means:

- Taking **every** step that is reasonable for the organisation's size, structure, and risk profile.
- Focusing on **prevention**, not only responding to incidents.
- Applying measures across the **whole organisation**, not only to individuals involved in previous incidents.
- Protecting workers from **online and in-person** sexual harassment.

### 5. Third-Party Harassment

We must prevent harassment by customers, clients, patients, learners, or any external party our staff interact with. Liability applies across **all protected characteristics** (e.g., sex, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation).

## 6. Required Organisational Measures

To comply with the strengthened duty, the organisation will:

### 6.1 Risk Assessment

- Conduct regular assessments of sexual-harassment risks, including lone working, client interactions, power imbalances, social events, and online communication.

### 6.2 Policies and Procedures

Maintain this written policy, ensuring reviews are completed at least annually, or sooner if legislation or EHRC guidance changes., in conjunction with the organisation's **Bullying and Harassment Policy**, covering colleague and third-party harassment across all protected characteristics. Compliance will be monitored through audits, incident analysis, and staff feedback.

### 6.3 Training & Awareness

- Provide mandatory induction and refresher training for all staff.
- Provide enhanced training for managers and designated complaint-handlers.

### 6.4 Reporting & Support

- Ensure clear, confidential reporting routes.
- Provide timely, impartial investigation processes.
- Offer support to anyone experiencing or witnessing harassment.

### 6.5 Evidence & Record-Keeping

- Keep documented evidence of risk assessments, training completion, policy reviews, and preventative actions.

## 7. Responsibilities

- **Senior Leadership:** Ensure compliance, resourcing, and monitoring.
- **Managers:** Model expected behaviours, act on concerns, and support staff.
- **All Staff:** Uphold standards, complete training, and report concerns promptly.

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