

**Training
Resource**
preventing
sexual harassment

A black and white photograph of a woman's profile on the left side of the page. She is looking towards the right. In the background, there is a large, stylized graphic of an eye with long, dark eyelashes.

Why are we talking about sexual harassment?

Isn't the law protecting us already?

Yes, but new legislation requires employers to be doing all they can to prevent sexual harassment occurring.

So, let's do a recap to make sure we've got it covered!

What does the law protect?

Let's take a moment to recap on discrimination law...

“Currently the law protects 9 different characteristics. What are they?”

- Race
- Age
- Disability
- Marital status
- Pregnancy & maternity
- Religion & beliefs
- Sexual orientation
- Gender re-assignment
- And, of course, gender (ie Sex)

What does the law protect us from?

As a worker, you have a right to:

- Fair practices and behaviour in the workplace
- Fair allocations of workloads
- Equal access to benefits and conditions
- A workplace that is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying at work
- Competitive merit-based selection processes for recruitment and promotion
- Fair processes to deal with work-related complaints and grievances

If you feel you are being treated differently [and it is related to one of the 9 characteristics](#), this is legal discrimination.

Zooming in on sexual harassment

Sex (or gender) is one of the 9 characteristics.

Definition of Sexual harassment:

“conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for an employee”.

Some examples

Sexual harassment includes a really wide range of behaviours, such as:

- Sexual comments or noises – for example, catcalling or wolf-whistling.
- Sexual gestures.
- Leering, staring or suggestive looks. This can include looking someone up and down.
- Sexual ‘jokes’.
- Sexual innuendos or suggestive comments.
- Unwanted sexual advances or flirting.
- Sexual requests or asking for sexual favours.
- Sending emails or texts with sexual content – for example, unwanted ‘sexts’ or ‘dick pics’.
- Sexual posts or contact on social media.
- Intrusive questions about a person’s private or sex life.
- Someone discussing their own sex life.
- Commenting on someone's body, appearance or what they’re wearing.
- Spreading sexual rumours.
- Standing close to someone.
- Displaying images of a sexual nature.
- Unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature – for example, brushing up against someone or hugging, kissing or massaging them.
- Stalking.
- Indecent exposure.
- Taking a photo or video under another person's clothing – what is known as 'upskirting'.

How do we prevent it

As an organisation, we have always taken allegations of harassment very seriously and take a very strong position against any discriminatory behaviour.

You should monitor your own behaviour:

- Where alcohol is involved, boundaries and judgement can be clouded.
- Always remember your obligation to treat others with respect.
- Be accountable : whether or not your intent to offend is irrelevant – you should be aware of your actions and how your behavior may be interpreted.

Raise your awareness:

- If you are witnessing someone else's behaviour and you feel uncomfortable **or**
- If you are at the receiving end of what you feel is inappropriate behaviour...

SPEAK UP. We cannot help if we are not aware. The company will be supportive and sensitive.

It can happen outside the office

At events, external client meetings, lunches or parties...

We all still have the right to be protected against harassment.

If your client, candidate, colleague or anyone else on an external work-related event is inappropriate, you should **SPEAK UP.**

What to do

Staff Handbook: You will always find a copy of our equal opportunities policy in the staff handbook.

If you experience sexual harassment:

Raising a complaint

- Talk to someone first informally before determining whether you wish to make an informal or a formal complaint.
- In the first instance we recommend you speak to a Director or member of the HR team for guidance on how to handle the situation.
- All Directors are aware of their obligations to actively take any action required to prevent sexual harassment.

Grievance process. The staff handbook details our grievance policy which should be used if you feel the informal route has not resolved it or if it is too serious to deal with informally.

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