

## Purpose

At Accordience, we believe in creating a workplace where everyone feels valued, respected, and safe. Sexual harassment has no place here, and we are committed to ensuring that all our employees are able to work without fear of harassment or intimidation. This policy outlines what sexual harassment is, our commitment to preventing it, and the steps we will take to ensure that any allegations are handled with care and fairness.

## What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal behaviour of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or that is related to gender reassignment or sex. It can take many forms, including:

- Unwanted comments or jokes: this might include making inappropriate remarks about someone's appearance, making sexual jokes, or asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life.
- Inappropriate physical behaviour: this includes actions such as unwanted touching or any form of physical intimidation that makes someone feel uncomfortable.
- Offensive images or gestures: sharing or displaying sexually suggestive images, emails, or gestures that cause offence or distress to others.
- Online harassment: sending unsolicited sexual messages, images, or comments via email, social media, or other digital platforms.

Harassment can happen between any individuals, no matter their gender, sexual orientation, or role within the company, and this policy also applies to interactions with clients, suppliers, journalists, and other third parties. Third party sexual harassment will not be tolerated. All staff are encouraged to report any third-party harassment they are a victim of, or witness, in accordance with this policy.

Any sexual harassment by a member of staff towards a third party may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## Your Rights and Our Responsibilities

Everyone has the right to work in an environment where they feel safe and respected. Sexual harassment is not only hurtful, but it's also illegal. We are committed to supporting you and ensuring that you can report any issues without fear of judgement or retaliation.

## Preventing Sexual Harassment Together

We are dedicated to maintaining a culture of respect and professionalism. Our aim is to:

- Create a culture where people feel comfortable speaking up and asking for help.
- Prevent sexual harassment through awareness and training.
- Take all reports of harassment seriously and investigate them promptly and fairly.
- Provide a clear and confidential process for employees to report any concerns or incidents.
- Ensure that no individual is subject to retaliation for making a complaint or for participating in an investigation.
- Support individuals affected by harassment through available resources, such as counselling or mediation, where appropriate.

## What We Expect from You

To help make this workplace safe and respectful for everyone, we all need to:

- Treat colleagues with kindness and respect, always.
- Be aware of how our actions may affect others.
- Speak up if we see or experience anything that doesn't feel right.

By working together, we can make sure that everyone feels respected and valued.

## Risk Assessments and Compliance with Government Guidance

In accordance with new government guidance, we will conduct risk assessments to identify and address any potential areas where sexual harassment may occur such as in the workplace or social events. These risk assessments will be reviewed regularly to ensure a safe working environment for all.

## How to Report a Concern

If you feel you have experienced or witnessed any form of sexual harassment, we want you to feel able to come forward. You can report it through any of the following ways:

- Speak to your line manager if you feel comfortable doing so.
- Contacting the relevant People Team directly to raise your concerns formally. Your written complaint should set out full details of the conduct in question including the names of the harasser, the nature of the sexual harassment, the date(s) and time(s) and any potential witnesses.

We're here to listen and help — please don't hesitate to reach out, no matter how small the concern might feel.

## How We Will Handle Your Report

If you make a report, we'll treat it with respect and confidentiality. Our goal is to:

- Investigate every concern in a fair and timely manner. This will involve speaking to all parties involved and gathering the relevant information.
- Provide updates throughout the process, so you're always kept in the loop.
- Take appropriate action to resolve the issue based on the findings, which may include disciplinary measures, mediation, or other supportive steps to address the concerns.
- Provide the opportunity of appeal if you are not happy with the outcome.

## Speak Up and Whistleblowing

In addition to the options above, you can also use the Accordience Speak Up Policy to raise concerns you may have, including those related to sexual harassment. Our Speak Up procedure is designed to protect employees who report any inappropriate behaviour or unethical conduct, ensuring that all reports are treated confidentially and without any fear of retaliation.

## Support for You

If you've experienced sexual harassment, we want to make sure you have the support you need. This could include:

- Access to confidential counselling services.
- Flexible working arrangements, if that helps you feel safe and comfortable.
- Ongoing support throughout the process, including regular check-ins.

## What Happens After an Investigation?

If someone is found to have been involved in sexual harassment, we will take the necessary steps to address the situation. This might include disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, depending on the severity of the behaviour. Any disciplinary action would follow a fair process, ensuring that all parties are given the opportunity to present their case.

## Preventing Harassment in the Future

We don't want to just react to issues — we want to prevent them. To make sure we're creating a positive workplace, we will:

- Provide ongoing training for all employees, including managers, to ensure we all know how to spot and address inappropriate behaviour.
- Regularly check in on how this policy is working and make improvements where needed.

## Standing Together Against Victimisation

We believe in treating all employees with kindness and respect. No one should face any form of retaliation for reporting harassment or supporting a colleague who has raised a concern. If we find that anyone is being treated unfairly for speaking up, we will take appropriate action to make things right.