

Report on Sexual Harassment Prevention: Compliance and Next Steps

Meeting date: August/September MSMTM 23.09.2025

Report by: Lynn Balfour, Head of Business Support

Purpose of report

To update the Senior Management Team (SMT) on next steps to ensure compliance with the legal duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

Recommendations for SMT:

- (i) Note the below report and activity it sets out.
- (ii) Discuss and agree on next steps, particularly the best way to deliver the related training.
- (iii) Consider whether this report should be published in full.

Report

Background

As of 26 October 2024, the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 came into effect in the UK. This legislation introduces a new legal duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, including harassment by third parties such as clients, customers, or service users.

Compliance with this law is not optional. Employers who fail to take appropriate preventative measures may face enforcement actions and increased compensation liabilities in employment tribunal claims. Visible and proactive efforts are critical not just for legal compliance, but to demonstrate a commitment to a safe and respectful workplace culture.

Progress to Date

To date we have taken the following actions in response to the new legislation:

- Updated the Employee Handbook to reflect changes in law.
- Rolled out mandatory sexual harassment prevention training for all managers.

Remaining Compliance Requirements

To fully meet our legal obligations, we must now:

- Roll out sexual harassment prevention training to all staff, not just managers.
- Conduct a sexual harassment risk assessment to identify and mitigate areas of concern.
- Identify and update all relevant key documents.

Proposed Next Steps

To ensure compliance and build on our progress, the following steps are proposed:

a) Staff Training

Purchase and implement e-learning sexual harassment prevention training modules from either Breathe or WorkNest. Funding is available within the existing training budget.

b) Internal communication

SMT to send a communication to all staff reinforcing the importance of this initiative and outlining expectations and next steps (Draft in VC 236383)

c) Visibility and awareness

Launch a short internal awareness campaign, including posters in communal areas to keep the issue visible and reinforce a culture of respect in OSIC.

d) Risk assessment

Conduct a formal risk assessment to identify potential exposure to sexual harassment risks across different roles, teams, and working environments in OSIC.

e) Action plan

Develop and implement an action plan based on findings from the risk assessment, which may include further updates to policies, procedures, and support mechanisms.

Resources

To deliver the mandatory training to staff, training will need to be purchased. There are two options for consideration, using either WorkNest or Breathe.

WorkNest is a recognised supplier which has successfully delivered training to OSIC before and has a good understanding of the organisation's structure and needs around this type of training. This pre-recorded option is the most cost effective option offered by WorkNest. It can be tailored to the organisation and include other types of harassment prevention at no additional cost.

WorkNest Option 4 60-minute pre-recorded staff awareness session on sexual harassment at work including videos	The impact and potential consequences of sexual harassment at work The difference between harassment and banter Examples of what amounts to sexual harassment Raising concerns when witnessing or experiencing harassment Roles and responsibilities in preventing sexual harassment at work	£950 plus VAT (£1140) for unlimited internal use for six months (will capture new staff joining the organisation following planned recruitment rounds).
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The Breathe HR System has a system add-on for learning and development. Breathe is a recognised supplier to our organisation although training has not been delivered through this platform. It offers a pre-recorded e-learning module option is the most cost effective and the quickest to implement. It is bitesize yet compliant, and unlike WorkNest, Breathe will record completion and compliance and record this on the staff record, removing the need for following up from the BST. This option is available for as long as we have the subscription, so will cover any new staff joining or those unable to complete the training within the recommended timeframe.

Breathe option 1 30-minute pre-recorded staff awareness session on sexual harassment at work	The training course comprehensively covers all the information required under the recent legislative changes. It ensures staff are fully informed and compliant with the updated legal requirements.	£432 for unlimited internal use of 40 training courses as part of the Breathe module (will capture new staff joining the organisation following planned recruitment rounds).
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The decision about the purchase of training is closely linked to the records management and systems discussion forming part of this meeting.