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## Risk Assessment – Preventing Sexual Harassment

### Purpose

The aim of this risk assessment is to prevent sexual harassment during the course of employment. It considers the potential risks to all employees and workers, as well as third parties who are engaged with us to carry out services such as those who are self-employed and agency workers.

Carrying out this assessment will allow us to identify, assess and mitigate risks associated with sexual harassment in the workplace and will help to create a safe and respectful working environment and promote a positive workplace culture. It also supports Northstowe Town Council's compliance with its legal obligation of taking reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in the course of employment.

This assessment is kept under continuous review to ensure existing prevention measures remain adequate. Reviews will take place at least annually, with ad-hoc reviews taking place where circumstances require. This could be if there is a change to the demographics of the workforce or working arrangements, or where we have received complaints of sexual harassment taking place. An assessment of the risks will be carried out for each of our business locations.

An action plan will then be created and monitored on the back of this risk assessment. See our template [Action Plan – Preventing Sexual Harassment](#).

Northstowe Town Council encourages all employees and workers to inform their manager of areas in which they believe sexual harassment protection could be further improved.

## Completing the assessment

Please follow the instructions below to ensure that the assessment and accompanying action plan is completed thoroughly and accurately:

### Considerations

Considerations are the elements of potential risk. Indicate those that apply and those that don't, e.g. if some people work at night or whether there is alcohol sold on the premises, etc.

### Hazard

A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm, e.g. power imbalances, coercion, differences in cultural expectations, etc.

- **Who might be harmed:** Consider all employees and workers who could be affected by each identified hazard. This may include employees, workers, those with specific roles, or those who may have vulnerabilities, e.g. waiting staff, travel-based sales staff, bar staff, young workers, etc.
- **Level of risk:** The level of risk is determined by considering both the likelihood of the hazard occurring and the severity of its potential consequences. If in doubt, err on the side of caution.
  - **Low risk:** Indicates that the likelihood of the hazard occurring is rare and the potential consequences are minimal.
  - **Medium risk:** Indicates that the likelihood of the hazard occurring is moderate and the potential consequences could result in sexual harassment occurring.
  - **High risk:** Indicates that the hazard is likely to occur and could result in sexual harassment taking place. This level of risk requires immediate attention and action to eliminate or substantially reduce it.

## Northstowe Town Council risk assessment for the prevention of sexual harassment during the course of employment

<b>Risk assessment owner:</b>	Northstowe Town Council
<b>Assessment date:</b>	17/06/2025
<b>Assessment carried out by:</b>	Town Clerk & Deputy Clerk
<b>Work location:</b>	The Cabin, Northstowe CB24 1FD
<b>Next scheduled assessment date:</b>	February 2026
<b>Version number:</b>	1

## Potential hazards, risks and proposed actions in prevention

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
Workforce demographics:									
Is anyone required to work at night?		X							
Are there lone workers or people working in isolated workplaces?	X		Unwanted intruders entering the office.	Any Member of staff.				Locking the door to the office when alone in the building.	17/06/25

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
Is there anyone who works with just one other employee/worker?	X		Unwanted attention to colleague.	Any member of staff				Adhere to the policies and protocols of the Council, and have a clear reporting mechanism in place and make all staff aware of this.	17/06/25
Do your employees/workers interact with third parties, e.g. contractors or members of the public?	X		Unwanted attention	Any member of staff				Stay with a group of people rather than put yourself in a situation where there are only 2 people in a room.	17/06/25
Do any of your employees/workers work alone with a third party?	X		Unwanted attention	Any member of staff				Stay with a group of people rather than put yourself in a situation where there are only 2 people in a room.	17/06/25
Do you require your employees/workers to attend the workplace of a third party or attend offsite locations?	X		Unwanted attention/inappropriate actions towards members of staff.	Any member of staff				Stay with a group of people rather than put yourself in a situation where there are only 2 people in a room.	17/06/25
Are members of staff expected to socialise with third parties, e.g. at events or conferences with contractors or clients?		X							17/06/25
Do employees/workers attend offsite events?	X		Unwanted attention/inappropriate actions towards members of staff.	Any member of staff				Stay with a group of people rather than put yourself in a situation where there are only 2 people in a room.	17/06/25
Are there any employees or workers		X							17/06/25

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
who travel and work abroad?									
Are there high pressured, competitive or stressful environments within your organisation?		X							17/06/25
Is there a higher representation of one gender in your workplace?		X							17/06/25
Are there areas of power imbalances in the workplace?		X							17/06/25
<b>Vulnerable employees and workers:</b> Evidence shows that vulnerable employees and workers can be exposed to greater risk from harassment than those who are not. In this section, assess the risk of those groups that are relevant to your workplace:									
Women		X							17/06/25
LGBTQ+		X							17/06/25
Young workers		X							17/06/25
Someone with a disability (mental or physical)		X							17/06/25
Black and minority ethnic workers		X							17/06/25
Non-UK nationals, including those who may not be confident in making a complaint in English or for whom		X							17/06/25

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
English is not their first language									
Low-paid earners		X							17/06/25
Home workers		X							17/06/25
Lone workers		X							17/06/25
Agency workers		X							17/06/25
Casual workers		X							17/06/25
Those on fixed term or zero-hour contracts		X							17/06/25
<b>Policy:</b>									
Do you have a clearly written anti-harassment policy that deals with the prevention of sexual harassment?	X		Unwanted attention/inappropriate actions towards members of staff.	Any member of staff				For all staff to complete training and read policy every 6 months	17/06/25
Do you address third-party harassment in your policy and take reasonable steps to prevent it?	X		Unwanted attention/inappropriate actions towards members of staff.	Any member of staff				Adhere to the policies and protocols of the Council, and have a clear reporting mechanism in place and make all staff aware of this	17/06/25
Is your anti-harassment policy easily accessible to all employees?	X		Staff not being aware that there is a policy to cover this.	Any member of staff				To make sure all staff are aware of the policy and where to find this on NTC website	17/06/25
Do you re-circulate your policy or remind staff members of where and how to access the policy on a regular	X		Staff not being aware that there is a policy to cover this.	Any member of staff				To make sure all staff are aware of the policy and where to find this on NTC website. Policy to be looked at every 6 months.	17/06/25

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
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basis, including when changes are made?									
Do you regularly review, monitor and update your anti-harassment policy?		X	That staff are not aware of the policy.	All staff				N.B- This has just been adopted, but will be reviewed every 12 months	17/06/25
In your disciplinary policy, do you specify that sexual harassment is considered a potential act of gross misconduct and could lead to someone's summary dismissal?		X	Seriousness of Sexual Harassment not being actioned as it is not highlighted.	All staff.				Needs to be included as a specific heading in the Disciplinary Policy under Gross Misconduct.	17/06/25
Do policies on the use of IT communication systems and social media include appropriate warnings against online harassment, and how to report concerns?	X		Inappropriate material not being recognized to be offensive/harmful to other members of staff.	All staff				To make sure all staff are aware of the policy and where to find this on NTC website.	17/06/25
Do you have policies regarding proper use of social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram or X?	X		Inappropriate material not being recognized to be offensive/harmful to other members of staff.	All staff				To make sure all staff are aware of the policy and where to find this on NTC website.	17/06/25
Is there a policy for workplace relationships?		X	There is no specific policy in place.	All staff				There will need to be a Policy put in place for staff to refer to, or added to the HR Handbook.	17/06/25

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
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Do your anti-harassment policies align to all other company policies such as homeworking, lone working, and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)?		X	If not specified, vulnerable groups could be at risk.	All staff				Policies to be looked at to align wording and fill gaps	17/06/25
<b>Training:</b>									
Do you carry out EDI training that covers sexual harassment as part of the induction/onboarding process?		X	All staff will not be aware of protocols and procedures in place; there could be a lack of knowledge and understanding.	All staff				The Council will put together an Induction Pack for New and Existing Employees to complete when they start with all relevant policies, which will then need to be reviewed annually by the Council and staff.	18/06/25
Do you carry out EDI training that covers sexual harassment on an annual basis?		X	All staff will not be aware of protocols and procedures in place; there could be a lack of knowledge and understanding.	All staff				The Council will put together an Induction Pack for New and Existing Employees to complete when they start with all relevant policies, which will then need to be reviewed annually by the Council and staff.	18/06/25



Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
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Do you provide separate training to line managers (to that which is given to employees and workers)?		X	Leaders, managers and staff will not be aligned	All staff				All employees (regardless of hierarchy) to complete training annually.	18/06/25
Do you provide EDI training that is specific to your workplace and that uses case studies or scenarios that relate to your organisation?		X	Leaders, managers and staff will not be aligned	All staff				All employees (regardless of hierarchy) to complete training annually.	18/06/25
Do you provide refresher EDI training when circumstances warrant it, e.g. when there is a change in working arrangements or workforce demographics, or after receiving a complaint of sexual harassment?		X	Leaders, managers and staff will not be aligned with up-to-date knowledge or outcomes and preventative measures that may need to be implemented.	All staff				All employees (regardless of hierarchy) to complete training annually and be informed of changes that have happened or that will be implemented.	18/06/25
<b>Management structure:</b>									
Is there a higher representation of one gender in the leadership team?		X	There could be an imbalance in genders and make employees feel uncomfortable.	All staff				Review process when advertising and recruiting for vacancies, making sure that it is open to all genders and non-specific, or discriminative.	18/06/25
Are there areas of the business that have power imbalances?		X							18/06/25

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
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Are there areas of the business where company policies aren't adhered to?		X	Breaches in policies could cause legal, financial and reputational damage.	All staff				All staff are aware of the policies that are in place and where to find them (Website). N.B- a staff HR Handbook is being compiled and will have references to the policies in there.	18/06/25
Is decision making concentrated, i.e. only a few individuals at the top of the business can make decisions?	X		Autonomous decisions could be made, without consideration and discussion.	All staff				The Line manager will make day-to-day decisions where staff are involved, with staff involvement and interaction.	18/06/25
Is there an HR team, or access to an external HR outsourcing provider?	X		Employment laws not adhered to, detrimental to the Employers and Employees, abuse of all staff.	All staff				Advice and support to be available for all employees.	18/06/25
Do leaders have individual authority over recruitment practices?		X	Bias towards candidates.	Candidates				The Town Clerk (officer), and 2 Councillors from the Personnel Committee form the interview Panel.	18/06/25
Do leaders have individual authority on pay decisions?		X	Input from Line Manager is essential, to ensure the right decisions are made; potential for bias.	All staff.				The Line Manager recommends pay decisions- Council approves or declines these.	18/06/25

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Working environment:									
Do you have an IT policy that sets the rules for appropriate usage?	X		Abuse and possible data breaches, leak of GDPR information financial implications.	All staff, Council				IT policy in place, along with Data Breach Response Policy being reviewed yearly.	18/06/25
Do you monitor and address inappropriate behaviour on digital platforms?	X		Offensive, inappropriate, upsetting comments or actions	All staff.				There is a Social Media policy in place. Any inappropriate comments are removed or reported.	18/06/25
Do employees travel abroad for business?		X						N/A	18/06/25
Are there sexualised or sexist materials on display such as calendars or posters?		X							18/06/25
Is there adequate privacy or security for workers using bathrooms or changing rooms?	X		It is in breach of Health and Safety Executive Guidance- Workers must be allowed to access facilities when needed.	All staff.				There are Female and Male facilities.	18/06/25
Do you have areas that are isolated or with inadequate lighting or security?		X						N/A	18/06/25
Are there different uniform requirements between genders, or prescriptive dress codes		X						N/A	18/06/25



Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
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Outside of the workplace:									
Do staff socialise outside of the workplace?		X							18/06/25
Is alcohol available at social events?		X							18/06/25
Do you undertake background or reference checks for all workers and other people engaged at your workplace such as contractors?	X		The Council could be negligent, if no checks have taken place, and vulnerable to theft, or sensitive information being taken.	All staff/ Council.				To validate information presented by Contactors, ensuring they have the experience and skills required. All outside contractors and visitors should have access / visitor badges/passes.	18/06/25
Do you issue employee communications in advance of workplace events?		X						N/A	18/06/25
Complaint handling:									
Do you have clear and effective procedures for receiving and responding to complaints of sexual harassment?		X		All staff.				The Council will put an Action Plan in place along with a Policy.	18/06/25
Are there multiple, confidential ways for employees to report harassment?	X		If this is not clear, incidents will not get reported. Staff will be helpless.	All staff.				There are policies in place to advise employees of process and procedures.	18/06/25

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
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Are your workers able to access management who are outside of their direct reporting line?	X		The belief that no action will be taken. Fear of retaliation. A confusing or complex reporting process.	All staff.				All employees to be aware of all reporting options that are available	18/06/25
Is your workforce so small that confidentiality and confidence to raise issues may be difficult to achieve?	X		The belief that no action will be taken. Fear of retaliation. A confusing or complex reporting process.	All staff.				All employees to be aware of all reporting options that are available	18/06/25
Have there been previous cases of harassment?		X							18/06/25
Are line managers consistent at, and do they enforce disciplinary and grievance policies?	X		There could be negativity from Staff, undue stress, and staff vacancies due to lack of enforcement.	All staff				Employees /staff made are made aware of all policies and where to access them should this be needed.	18/06/25
Do you ensure prompt, thorough and impartial investigations of sexual harassment complaints?		X	Legal implications to the Council.	All staff				N.B-There has never been a case- The Council has only just adopted the Policy.	18/06/25
Are there support systems in place for victims of sexual harassment such as counselling services, or employee assistance programmes?		X		All Staff				The council to look at what support mechanisms are to be put in place.	18/06/25
Do staff report a culture of banter or casual		X							18/06/25

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
sexism which is hard to challenge?									
Do you audit your work practices to ensure they continue to remain fit for purpose and prevent sexual harassment?		X		All staff.				We have only just reviewed this to put a policy / protocol in place. To be reviewed every 12 months.	18/06/25
Other specific areas:									

N.B- Yellow Shading- To be included in Action plan for the Council.

Amber/ Medium Risk- in place because Council does not have an action plan.