athona

Sexual Harassment Training

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Who is this training for?

- This training is aimed at all staff who could potentially experience or witness indicators of sexual harassment, including those working in education, health, local authorities, and any other role that comes into contact with the public.

- This training is provided at induction and annually thereafter.

- The training may also be useful for members of the public or businesses, although they are not the primary audience.

What is this training for?

- Sexual harassment can happen to anyone, anywhere and at any time.

- As of 26th October 2024 changes have been made to The Equality Act 2010 to re-enforce protection for employees at work by enforcing employers to take action against sexual harassment.

- This training provides clear and up-to-date information on the key facts and helps staff who may not routinely come across sexual harassment recognise the signs and respond so that any cases can be reported.

- Information about training and other awareness-raising resources can be found on the https://www.acas.org.uk/sexual-harassment website under "sexual harassment."

What is Sexual Harassment?

- Sexual Harassment is unwanted attention that can make person(s) feel uncomfortable, threatened or offended even if words or actions were not said or done with intent.
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- This could be a one-off incident or a series of ongoing patterns of behaviour.
- This can occur in person, online, on social media, over the phone or other types of communication platforms.
- Whilst some may consider this “workplace banter” or joking; your actions or words can be misconstrued and can still be considered sexual harassment.
- Sexual Harassment doesn’t always have to come in a direct form and can be a culture of behaviour that involves multiple people.

What does the Law say?

- The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from sexual harassment and harassment related to 'protected characteristics,' such as sex.

- As of 26th October 2024, the Worker Protection Amendment to the Equality Act 2010 will be reinforced to ensure that employers take appropriate steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

- Harassment involving words or comments related to a person's sex, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment falls under the 'protected characteristics,' making it a form of 'general' harassment. However, this does not mean that both types of harassment cannot occur simultaneously.

Who can experience Sexual Harassment?

- Sexual harassment can be experienced by anyone, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. It can also be perpetrated by anyone, irrespective of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

- Sexual Harassment can be carried out by anyone you come into contact with at work including;

- Colleagues
- Managers
- Individuals in higher positions
- Candidates or clients

Forms and Signs of Sexual Harassment

This can take many forms, including:

- Coercing someone into sexual relations through pressure, manipulation, or threats, or offering rewards in exchange for sex.
- Making sexual comments or jokes about someone's sexual orientation or gender reassignment.
- Using offensive words or comments.
- Displaying or sharing sexual images.
- Engaging in sexual violence, including rape, or threatening such acts.
- Making references to someone’s body, such as clothing or appearance.
- Using demeaning or humiliating behavior or language.
- Asking intrusive questions about someone’s private life.
- Stalking, including online stalking.
- Making sexual gestures, such as simulating sexual acts.
- Giving unwanted sexual attention, whether verbal or physical.
- Unwanted touching, such as placing a hand on someone’s knee or hugging them.
- Telling sexually offensive jokes.

Impact of Sexual Harassment

Impacts of sexual harassment may include:

- Lack of self-esteem and confidence
- Feelings of intimidation or distress
- Depression and/or anxiety
- Fear and a sense of unsafety
- Negative effects on work, home life, and sleeping patterns

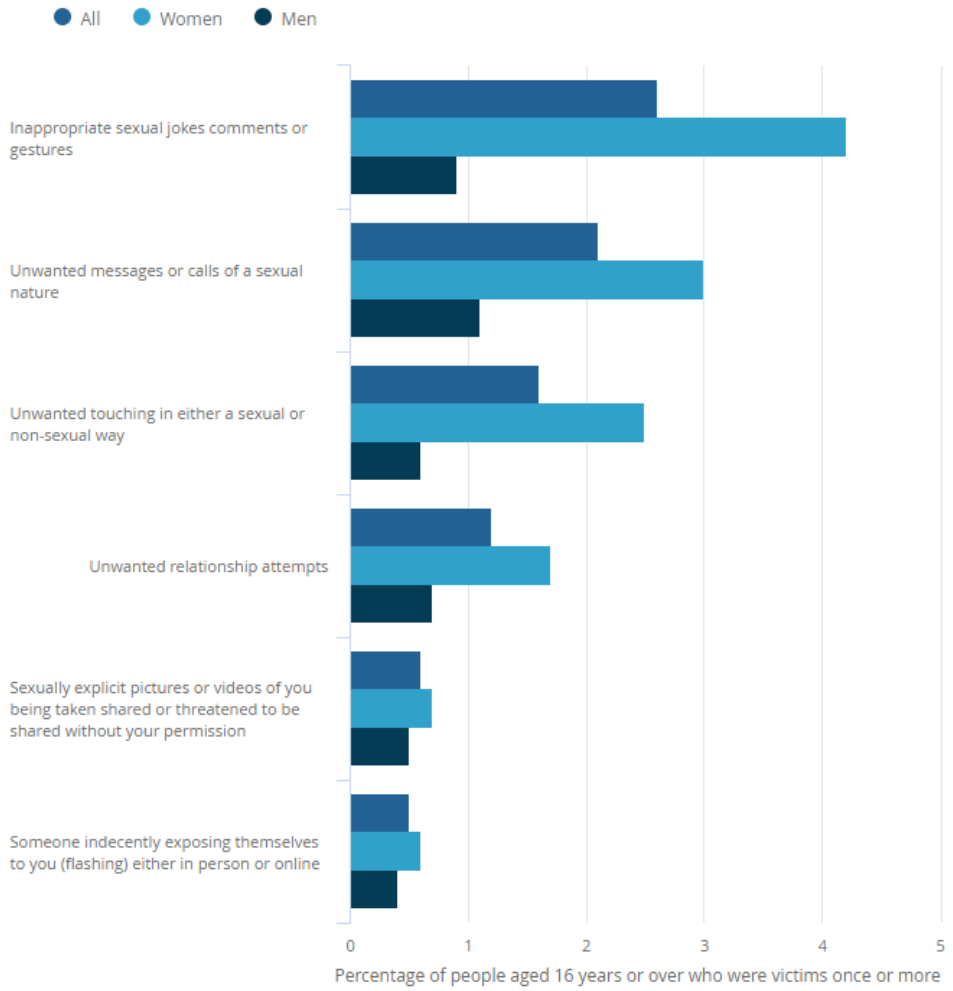
Did you know?

- A quarter (26%) of those who had experienced sexual harassment said they had experienced harassment at their place of work.
- Three-quarters (75%) of victims of harassment experienced this behaviour in person, whereas approximately one in five experienced it online (21%).

(2023 – Office of National Statistics)

Figure 5: Inappropriate sexual jokes, comments or gestures were the highest reported experience of sexual harassment

Prevalence of sexual harassment experienced in the last year for people aged 16 and over, by sex and type of harassment, England and Wales, year ending March 2023



What to Do If You Feel or Have Witnessed Sexual Harassment?

If you feel as if you have experienced sexual harassment within the workplace then you should report this in writing to your line manager or Human Resources. You should include:

- **Details of the incident(s) or behaviour(s):** Provide a much detail as possible, including dates, times, and location.

- **Name(s) of the individual(s) involved**

- **Name(s) of any witness(es)**

All employees are expected to comply with Athona's Policy on Sexual Harassment in the workplace, which can be found on the Athona Hub under HR Information and Documents. All reported cases of sexual harassment will be thoroughly investigated, and any breaches will lead to appropriate disciplinary action.

Links to further information:

- https://www.acas.org.uk/sexual-harassment
- https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/manager-guide-tackling-sexual-harassment/#what-is-sexual-harassment
- https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/51/contents
- https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/experiencesofharassmentinenglandandwales/december2023#:~:text=Experience%20of%20sexual%20harassment,compared%20with%20men%20(3%25).

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