

# **Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust Sexual Misconduct Policy**

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<b>Accountable Director</b>	<b>Chief People Officer</b>
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## Why We Have This Policy

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust have signed the NHS England [sexual safety in healthcare organisational charter](#). We are committed to a zero-tolerance approach to sexual misconduct in the workplace to create an environment where everyone feels safe. This policy commits the Trust and everyone working within it to take all reports of sexual misconduct seriously and to act on all reports. A zero-tolerance approach to sexual misconduct in the workplace is crucial to promoting a kind and caring culture.

The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 creates a duty on employers to take reasonable steps to stop sexual harassment from colleagues and third parties in the workplace. This includes protecting colleagues and people employed by other organisations, such as suppliers or visitors, from sexual misconduct.

Sexual misconduct is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature.

It can happen to anyone, but it often happens where there is a power imbalance. People in some groups can be more vulnerable than others. For example, women, black, ethnic minority, disabled and LGBTQ+ people can be more at risk. Some people will also find it more difficult to report sexual misconduct.

This policy provides information about:

- how to recognise and report sexual misconduct
- our approach to taking actions when sexual misconduct is reported, including the other policies that might be used
- the support available to people involved or harmed. More information is on page 11 and in appendix 4

## What This Policy Covers

This policy covers sexual misconduct connected to work or the workplace. Sexual misconduct can include many things, such as:

- sexual comments or jokes
- unwanted touching or kissing
- showing sexual pictures
- staring at someone in a sexual way
- asking personal questions about someone's sex life
- sexual assault or rape

Appendix 3 provides more examples.

Sexual misconduct can take place at any time and any place; for example, at social or learning events or while travelling for work. It can take place in person or online (for example, through chat messages, phone calls, voice messages, or social media).

All Trust colleagues, non-executive directors, volunteers, agency and bank workers, students and learners, contractors, secondees and interns can use this policy to report sexual misconduct.

This policy provides information about the support available and about the process used to keep people safe and manage concerns and reports.

It provides advice about what to do when someone makes a disclosure about sexual misconduct to you, and a checklist of information you need to collect when someone wants to report sexual misconduct.

## Definitions

**Sexual safety** means being free from any unwanted sexual behaviour at work.

**Sexual misconduct** describes a range of behaviours including sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, voyeurism and any other conduct of a sexual nature that is non-consensual or has the purpose or reasonable effect of threatening, intimidating, undermining, humiliating or coercing a person. Sexual misconduct can occur between people of the same or different sex and genders.

**Sexual harassment** is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which has:

- violated someone's dignity, whether that was intended or not
- created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, whether that was intended or not
- Sexual harassment can be a one-off incident or an ongoing pattern of behaviour. It can happen in person or in other ways, for example online through email, social media or messaging tools.

**Sexual violence** describes any sexual activity or act that happened without consent.

**Sexual assault** is any sexual act that a person did not consent to or is forced into, against their will.

### Disclosure

If you experience or witness sexual misconduct you may choose to tell someone at work about your experience. This might be your manager, supervisor, a colleague or anyone else you trust including a freedom to speak up guardian, a colleague from the safeguarding team, a HR colleague, or a trade union representative.

It is important that the person who receives a disclosure uses the guidance in this policy and in Appendix 10.

If you make a disclosure to someone this does not mean that you have made or must make a report.

### Report

A report is different to a disclosure. A report involves telling someone who is in a position of responsibility or authority in the organisation about sexual misconduct that has happened to you or that you have witnessed.

A report means you are requesting that the organisation makes decisions and takes actions to stop it from happening again.

Page 9 provides information about how to report sexual misconduct.

## Review Group

A review group is responsible for using the information provided by you in your report to agree what to do about sexual misconduct. Page 11 provides more information about a review group.

## Responsibilities

### Trust Board

- prioritise principles set out in the Sexual Safety Charter, and ensure they are followed by the Trust
- guide the organisational culture and set priorities relating to sexual safety
- take actions to ensure the Trust meets its legal duties to protect colleagues from sexual harm in the workplace. This will include actions to improve the environment and culture, and understanding and awareness among staff of sexual safety
- encourage, support and train managers and leaders to support the use of this policy, and to build a positive culture in their teams where people can talk openly
- regularly review data about sexual misconduct and use it to agree actions to prevent sexual misconduct and protect colleagues from it
- appoint an executive group member with responsibility for improving the sexual safety of colleagues
- appoint a lead for domestic abuse and sexual violence

### Senior Leader

- create an environment that encourages and supports colleagues to discuss and report sexual harm, without fear of retaliation or victimisation
- provide leadership to support a positive and safe culture
- ensure all colleagues are aware of issues relating to sexual misconduct, the sexual misconduct policy and how to deal with disclosures appropriately

### All Colleagues

- must act in a way that does not compromise the sexual safety of others
- should use this policy and get advice and support to report behaviour they have experienced or witnessed
- be respectful and maintain confidentiality when using this policy
- be clear that we do not accept any form of sexual behaviour described in Appendix 2 at work or linked to work
- complete the required training as outlined on page 14

### Human Resources

- promote and provide support and guidance about using this policy and other people policies
- ensure that every report is managed compassionately and support is provided to everyone involved
- use specialist advice where needed and work closely with safeguarding teams, the police and other organisations where required
- provide advice and guidance to support learning and change where it is required
- ensure accurate records are made of concerns and manage information confidentially and in line with the policy for managing records

### Managers, Supervisors and Educational Supervisors

- take every conversation and report about sexual misconduct seriously
- use this policy to support everyone who is involved in a concern or report about sexual misconduct

- speak to a member of the HR team about all reports and concerns about sexual misconduct
- maintain confidentiality, unless there is a safeguarding concern that needs to be reported
- be clear about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- role model behaviours to create a culture where people feel safe to raise concerns and feel listened to
- attend training and development to ensure they have the required skills, knowledge and confidence to recognise sexual misconduct and take action
- ensure learning and change comes from using this policy, so that future misconduct is prevented and a positive culture is fostered
- be available to support an investigation if needed
- be proactive in putting in place any reasonable adjustments or safety actions if they are required

### **Safeguarding Leads**

- provide specialist advice and support about safeguarding
- advise on safeguarding training and support
- provide guidance and make referrals in confidence to a 'person in position of trust' (PIPOT) or local authority designated officer (LADO)

### **Freedom to Speak up Guardian/Champions**

- provide appropriate support and signpost to further support to those who speak up about sexual misconduct
- assist colleagues to make a report where appropriate
- be responsible for creating a culture where colleagues feel safe to raise concerns and feel listened to

### **Trade Union Representatives**

- influence and guide organisations about the preventative actions they can take to improve sexual safety
- signpost to this policy, explain the process for reporting and the possible routes and outcomes
- support and assist colleagues to report sexual misconduct, where appropriate
- explain the options for support and help with conversations about accessing support
- provide support to their members through informal and formal processes

## **Advice and Support**

If you experience sexual misconduct, it is likely to be a distressing and isolating experience and you might not know what to do next.

Sexual misconduct can take place when there are no other witnesses. This does not change the response you should receive. You will be believed and supported.

If you can, write down what happened as soon as you can. Include dates and the order that events took place, and how they made you feel. This will help you to remember the details. It's important you speak to someone you trust, to get support and to decide what to do. This is often called a 'disclosure'.

When speaking with others, it's important that you are given the time to clearly express:

- what you need, including support
- what you want to happen next
- what you expect them to do - For example, you might discuss:
  - getting help or advice from a manager or someone else
  - this policy to decide how to report what happened
  - that you need more time before you decide what to do

You can also get advice and support from an external organisation (listed in Appendix 4).

If you decide and are ready to make a report, page 9 provides information about how to do this. Every report will be taken seriously and there is no time limit – you can make a report at any time.

## People Who Are Not Employed by The Trust

If your report is about the behaviour of someone at work, but they are not employed by the organisation, you should still make a report using this policy.

The review group will liaise with the employer of the individual and will agree on the actions to support you and to prevent it from happening again.

## Patients and Service Users

If your report is about the behaviour of a service user, patient, or a member of the public, you should speak to your manager or the person in charge as soon as possible after the event happens, if you can.

This will allow them to take actions as soon as possible using the Safeguarding Policy; for example, this could include warning a patient or service user about their behaviour or reporting a criminal act to the Police.

## Incidents Unrelated to Work

If you have been affected by a sexual safety incident, including domestic violence, that is not connected with work, the reporting process in this policy is not likely to apply. However, the impact of the incident might affect you at work. If you need support, speak to your manager or a person you trust.

Appendix 3 and 4 provides information about support, including specialist organisations you can contact to get help.

## Witnessing Behaviour

We all see things happening around us every day that we do not agree with. These things might not be happening to us, but we can choose to do something about them. This is often called being an 'active bystander'.

We can show others that we feel a behaviour is unacceptable. This will also give a voice to groups and individuals who may not feel able to challenge what is happening.

There may not always be a need to say something, and it may not always be safe to do so, but there are other actions we can take. These might include:

- asking someone to stop and being clear that the behaviour is inappropriate or unacceptable
- interrupting, diverting or distracting to allow someone to move away
- letting someone know you do not agree with what they are saying
- giving a disapproving look or not laughing at inappropriate jokes or comments
- asking someone else to help (for example, another colleague or security)
- seeking emergency help (call 999 if necessary)
- writing down what happened as a reminder for later action

You should speak to the person the behaviour was aimed at as soon as you can to give your support and to let them know that what you witnessed was unacceptable. Make sure you have a quiet and safe place to have this conversation and you have enough time to talk fully.

Appendix 3 provides information about the support available to those involved.

Talk to them about what happened. Ensure they understand the reasons for reporting and ask if they agree with reporting their experience.

If they do not agree and you are worried about them or others, you should not put their name in your report. Speak to a member of the HR team or the Safeguarding team to get advice.

## Supporting a Colleague

When someone talks to you about what they have seen or experienced, it is called a disclosure. You need to be supportive and sensitive. Appendix 10 provides advice about what to do when a colleague discloses their experience of sexual misconduct to you.

If you think urgent actions are required, it is important to be as open as possible with them about what urgent action you need to take and why.

If you believe that someone is in danger you should contact the police (call 999 if necessary) and report the incident to your line manager or the HR Team. Line managers should refer to Appendices 9, 10 and 11 for guidance in relation to receiving a report and next steps.

## How To Make a Report

It is important that sexual misconduct is reported so actions can be taken to keep people safe and to prevent it from happening again. Every report will be taken seriously.

There isn't a time limit but making a report as soon as possible will allow actions to be taken more quickly.

If you are reporting something you have witnessed, you should read page 8 and talk to the person the behaviour was aimed at before you make the report.

You can make a report yourself or you can ask the person you have disclosed to (for example, a colleague) to do this for you.

Reports may be made to:

- your manager or another manager, or a supervisor or educational supervisor. They will ask a member of the HR team for guidance
- a member of the HR team
- the Freedom to Speak up Guardian (FTSU)

A Trade Union Representative or a workplace colleague can support you to make a report.

## Anonymous Reports

If you give your name when you report sexual misconduct, the organisation will be able to complete a more in-depth investigation. Providing your details can help the organisation to support you and signpost or refer you to further support.

All reports are taken seriously. If you do not feel you can provide your name, you can report anonymously. You can also make an anonymous report via the Freedom to Speak Up Portal.

Provide as much information as possible, including the times of events and the impact they are having on you and others. This will ensure the person reading your report can understand what happened.

The steps in this policy will be followed as closely as possible using the information you provide.

## Listening To You

If you provide your name when you make a report, you will be given time to talk about what happened and discuss and agree what will happen next.

A suitable place to ensure you feel safe to talk will be agreed with you. You can bring a friend or family member, a colleague, interpreter or a trade union representative to support you.

The person you speak to will:

- ask you for information about what happened using the questions in Appendix 9
- use the advice in Appendix 10 about how to respond to a disclosure or report

If you have any notes or evidence, it's a good idea to take them with you to the meeting. If you don't have evidence this won't mean your concern is not taken seriously. During the meeting, we will also:

- discuss and agree how to manage your report
- discuss your wellbeing and the support you need and agree how this will be provided. Appendix 3 provides information about support
- agree next steps and who you should contact if you have any questions

If you are not clear how you would like your report to be managed, you might find that taking time to think about it or talking to someone you trust about your options helps.

If you decide to stop your report, your wishes will be respected where possible. Page 13 provides information about when the organisation might be required to continue to take action. If you change your mind, or the behaviour continues, you can use this policy later. There is no time limit.

## Support

The person you give your report to will talk to you about the options for accessing help and support. See Appendix 3 and 4 for further information about support available.

If you are a member of a Trade Union, they can also provide advice and support.

Support for you to continue to work will be arranged where possible, based on advice from the Occupational Health Service if necessary. This may involve using policies such as the Flexible Working Policy or Leave and Pay Policy. Examples of support could include adjustments to your role, your working hours or location, or giving you time off to attend appointments to get help and support.

All support will be reviewed with you regularly to ensure it remains helpful and to identify any additional needs you may have.

If you don't feel able or well enough to attend work, you should let your manager know via the usual procedure of absence reporting. They will provide advice about the Sickness Absence, Health and Wellbeing Policy. If it is reasonable, managers may agree to discount absence episodes related to sexual misconduct from processes to manage levels of sickness absence.

## After You Make a Report

The Trust has a duty to ensure all colleagues involved in sexual misconduct cases are supported. This includes colleagues who have concerns raised about them and those who are witnesses to sexual misconduct. Welfare support should therefore be offered to all parties involved after a report is made.

The person you made your report to will request support from a review group to decide what to do. This will be arranged as soon as possible to ensure the report is managed quickly and in line with policies and procedures.

## Review Group

The Review Group will include:

- the person you made your report to
- a member of the HR team

It might also include:

- a senior manager
- an expert, who could include:
  - a colleague from safeguarding
  - the local authority designated officer
  - any other person who can provide advice that is needed

Appendix 5 provides more information about expert advice.

The Review Group will discuss the information provided, including the harm caused to you or others, and any other information available that is important to use alongside your report. For example, if there are aggravating factors, such as abuse of power over a more junior colleague.

The review group will review and make decisions about:

- actions that need to be taken quickly to prevent possible harm to you or others involved, using the template in Appendix 8. For example, if the people involved work together, temporary changes to working arrangements may be needed
- assessments that might be needed to understand and mitigate against any further harm to you or others
- the immediate support you and others involved (e.g. witnesses) need
- which policies or procedure(s) are relevant to managing your report
- what communication is needed to protect you and others, and to notify the right people
- whether the Police or other organisations need to be contacted
- who needs to be told about the actions that have been agreed
- how you and others involved will be updated about what will happen next

The review group will use the checklist in Appendix 8 to ensure that the plans to manage the report are clear. They will also ensure a record is kept (anonymously if needed).

## Outcomes

The Review Group will ensure your views are considered when making decisions about how to manage your report. One or more of these outcomes could be agreed:

- a request for more information from you or others about what happened
- using the Disciplinary Policy to manage your report
- using the Dignity at Work Policy or Grievance Policy to manage your report (if it was raised as a grievance)
- using the Conduct, Capability, Ill Health and Appeals – Medical & Dental Policy (also referred to as MHPS Policy) if the report is about a doctor or dentist
- a referral to NHS England’s Regional Head of Professional Standards if the report is about a GP, general dental practitioner, optometrist or ophthalmic medical practitioner working in primary care and their name is included in one of the [England Performers Lists](#)
- using safeguarding policies to agree actions
- a report to the Police
- a report to the employer of the person named in the report, if they are not employed by the Trust
- no further action

## Investigations

If an investigation is needed, it will be completed using the policy agreed by the review group.

You can ask for adjustments if you need them, and they will be agreed if possible. Examples of possible adjustments include:

- a friend or family member attending meetings with you to support you, in addition to a Trade Union Representative or colleague
- using an external investigator or an investigator with specific training, skills and experience
- using an expert(s) to support the investigation

## Preventing Victimisation

Harassment or victimisation of anyone who has reported or has helped someone else to report sexual misconduct is unacceptable as is any attempt to persuade or force a colleague to not raise their concerns.

Everyone will be supported when reporting sexual misconduct, whether their complaint is upheld or not. If you believe you have been victimised, this will be taken seriously. You should report victimisation to your line manager, a member of the HR team, the Freedom to Speak up Guardian or your Trade Union Representative.

## Providing Information and Updates

You will be given the name of the person you can go to with your questions and to get advice and support. You can also raise any concerns or discuss any further needs you have with them and they will keep you updated. This will usually be the person you report your concern to and/or a member of the HR team.

Due to confidentiality, not everything that happens can be shared with you, but you will receive regular updates.

The information that can be shared with you will be shared with you. You will not normally be told about personal or confidential outcomes or actions relating to another colleague.

## Confidentiality

The information you share when using this policy will be kept confidential where possible. Everyone involved in the process will be informed of their responsibilities to keep information confidential.

This means that only people who 'need to know' will receive the information because they are, or will be, involved in the process. You will be told who will receive the information, and why. If there are safeguarding duties information may need to be shared to keep other people safe.

If you need advice or are concerned that confidentiality has not been kept you should speak to your manager, a member of the HR team or a Trade Union Representative.

Confidentiality or non-disclosure agreements will not be used to stop reporting of sexual harassment or whistleblowing.

If you haven't told your manager, it may be helpful to so they can support you and others involved. If the concern is about your manager, another manager will be asked to support you.

The person the report is about will often be told about some, or all, of the report to ensure they can take part in the investigation process.

This will always be done in a careful and planned way and will not happen without your knowledge.

Before the person is told, conversations will take place to agree how to support your wellbeing and safety and that of others.

## Involving The Police and Other Organisations

Sexual misconduct can be a criminal act dependent upon the nature. Normally, it will be your choice whether to report what happened to the Police.

If your report includes information that suggests other people are at risk, including patients or colleagues, the review group will get advice from the Safeguarding team.

They may need to share information with the Police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and / or the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding team. This might happen even if you do not wish to use this policy.

Where possible, you will be told before actions are taken and support will be provided to you throughout the process.

If a report has been made to the Police, their investigation cannot be impacted by our own investigation process. This may mean there are delays in the Trust completing an investigation process. You will be told as soon as possible if the Police ask for the process to stop or be put on hold. You will be told how long this might be for and we can discuss the support you and others involved will need during this time.

## Statutory Regulators

Sometimes, there may be a requirement to report a colleague holding a professional registration to their statutory regulator (for example, Nursing and Midwifery Council, General Medical Council, the Health and Care Professions Council) in line with their relevant professional code of conduct.

A senior manager from the relevant profession, member of the HR team or the 'Responsible Officer' for medical professionals will be responsible for reporting to professional bodies.

They may take advice from a range of individuals including the most senior person from the relevant profession within the organisation (for example, the Chief Nursing Officer) before making a formal referral.

## Preventing Sexual Misconduct

The Trust will:

- review the likelihood and risks of sexual misconduct occurring at work from colleagues, volunteers, learners and others including patients, service users and visitors
- decide the actions that can be taken to reduce risks and prevent harm
- ensure the agreed actions are implemented and managed
- update policies and procedures to clarify the law, how everyone can expect to be treated and how to make a report
- review the effectiveness of policies and training
- communicate consistently about our values and expectations for behaviour and what actions may be taken when these are not met
- communicate with patients, service users and visitors about how we expect them to treat our staff and each other
- provide guidance and support to colleagues, helping them assist others if they witness sexual misconduct
- create a culture where people feel safe to talk about and report sexual misconduct

- ensure systems are in place to respond to reports and provide timely support to all colleagues impacted by sexual misconduct

The Trust will use reports about sexual misconduct to prevent events from happening again, and to understand potential patterns and areas of concern and what is required to mitigate risks, take action, and improve the culture within teams and across the wider organisation.

## Training

It is important that everyone understands:

- what appropriate and inappropriate behaviours are
- how to use this policy
- what to do if they experience or witness inappropriate behaviours

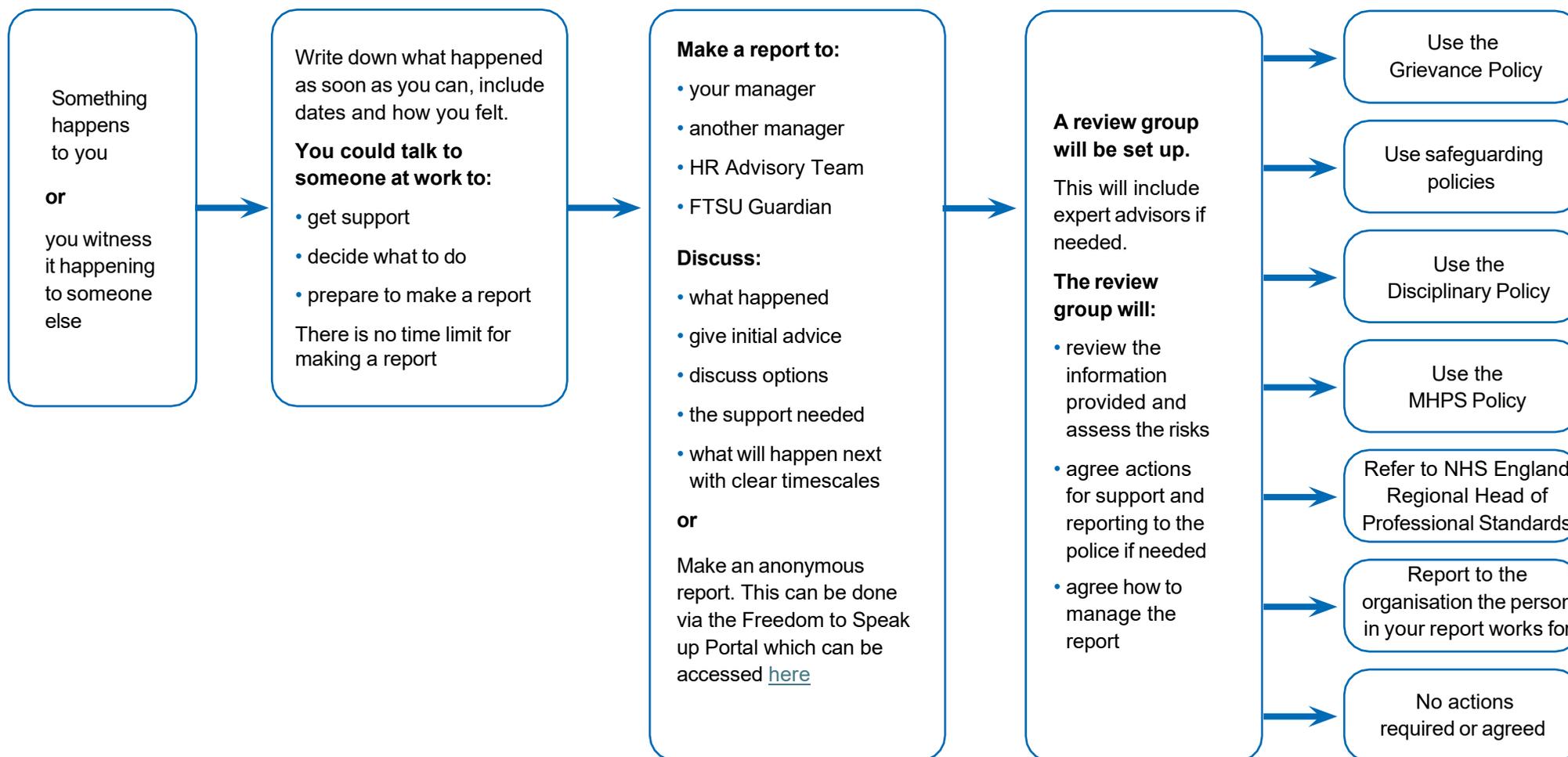
All Trust staff will be required to complete sexual misconduct e-learning via ESR. This training will provide information on:

- identifying and recognising the types of sexual misconduct in the workplace
- understanding the impact that trauma can have and how this can affect people who have experienced sexual misconduct
- understanding how to have a trauma-informed conversation and know how to support someone who has experienced sexual misconduct
- maintaining confidentiality, respecting professional boundaries and looking after your own wellbeing when someone tells you about sexual misconduct they have experienced

Feedback and experiences from those involved in using this policy will be used to create future training and ensure continuous reflection and learning across the organisation.

## Appendix 1: Process Flowchart

This flowchart summarises the steps set out in this policy for reporting and determining how to handle cases of sexual misconduct.



## Appendix 2: Examples That Might Be Reported Using This Policy

The following are examples that might be reported using this policy. They could take place at work, or in the course of your work, during online meetings or online chats, at a work event or a party:

- sexual comments or jokes, including what might be called ‘banter’
- the sharing of sexual material online (for example, sharing sexual memes or, videos by email or platforms like WhatsApp)
- sexually inappropriate behaviour on social media where colleagues are involved
- displaying or sharing sexually graphic pictures, posters or photos (or other sexual content)
- suggestive looks, staring or leering
- using power, seniority to influence others for sexual favours
- intrusive questions about a person’s private or sex life, or discussing your own sex life
- flirting, gesturing or making sexual remarks about someone’s body, clothing or appearance
- making sexual comments or jokes about someone’s sexual orientation or gender reassignment
- touching someone against their will
- sexual assault or rape

NB: This list is not exhaustive.

## Appendix 3: Support Provided by the Trust

### Health & Wellbeing Support

This includes:

- Staff Health & Wellbeing Guardian
- Wellbeing Conversation Facilitators
- Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service
- Mental Health First Aiders
- Optima Health Counselling Service
- Staff Psychological Wellbeing Service
- Chaplains
- DAWN Staff Network
- Faith and Spirituality Network
- EmBRACE Staff Network
- LGBTQ+ Staff Network
- Women's Staff Network

You can access further information about the health and wellbeing support available for staff via the [Wellbeing Matters Hub](#).

### Members of the HR Team

HR are a confidential and safe team to speak to and can offer advice and guidance about this policy and information about other services that can provide support. You can contact the HR Team by calling 01905 760410 ext. 38594 or emailing [wah-tr.hrenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.hrenquiries@nhs.net).

### Safeguarding Team

Can provide advice and support to colleagues who disclose sexual misconduct and can signpost and refer staff to external support.

### Trade Union Representatives

Can help and provide advice and support to their members about sexual misconduct at work, for example by attending meetings with you.

[Find your local Trade Union representative here.](#)

### Freedom to Speak Up Guardian

Can offer a confidential and safe place to speak about sexual safety and provide guidance and information about how to resolve concerns.

[The Freedom to Speak Portal can be accessed here](#) or you can email [wah-tr.freedomtospeakup@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.freedomtospeakup@nhs.net).

### Sexual Safety Toolkit

Further information about support and advice can be found in the Trust's Sexual Safety Toolkit, which you can access [here](#).

## Appendix 4: External Support

**ACAS:** helpline for anyone experiencing workplace related issues including sexual harassment.

**Rights of Women:** have free legal advice lines for women who have experienced domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment at work.

**Surviving in scrubs:** provide support, share survivor stories and campaign to end sexism, harassment, and sexual assault in the healthcare workforce.

**General Medical Council: What to do if you think you have been subject to sexual misconduct by a doctor:** a resource for patients and colleagues.

**Health & Care Professions Council:** sexual safety hub provides help and guidance about making a report to that organisation.

**Protect:** free, confidential whistleblowing advice.

**Equality Advisory & Support Service:** helpline to advise on issues related to equality and human rights.

**Citizens Advice:** provide information about your legal rights in the workplace if you are experiencing sexual harassment.

**Samaritans:** support for anyone who's struggling to cope, and who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure

**Getting help for domestic violence and abuse:** NHS.uk provides practical advice and help to recognise the signs and where to get help.

**Supporting a survivor of sexual violence:** advice from Rape Crisis about how to support a survivor of sexual violence.

**NHS help after rape and sexual assault:** information on the NHS website about where to find support if you have been sexually assaulted, raped or abused.

**Rape Crisis England and Wales:** 24/7 helpline that can provide immediate support if you have experienced sexual misconduct.

**Rape Crisis Scotland:** 24/7 helpline that can provide immediate support if you have experienced sexual misconduct.

**Sexual assault referral centres (SARCs):** offer medical, practical and emotional support to anyone who has been raped, sexually assaulted or abused. SARCs have specially trained doctors, nurses and support workers.

**Galop:** support LGBT+ people who have experienced abuse and violence.

**The Survivors Trust:** The Survivors Trust has 120 member organisations based in the UK & Ireland which provide specialist support for women, men and children who have survived rape, sexual violence or childhood sexual abuse.

**SurvivorsUK:** provide support to male and non-binary survivors of sexual violence, providing counselling, practical help and community on your healing journey.

**Victim Support:** provide specialist help to support victims of crime to cope and move on to the point where they feel they are back on track with their lives.

**A list of support services on the Government's website:** for victims of sexual violence and abuse.

## Appendix 5: Expert Advice

An expert may be asked to support the review group and an investigation.

All reports will be different, so a range of expertise and experience could be needed. That knowledge and expertise may include:

### Knowledge

- trauma informed interviewing and investigation techniques
- research led case reporting
- risk management
- understanding of issues impacting particularly vulnerable groups
- safeguarding

### Skills

- ability to identify types of sexual misconduct
- ability to understand impacts on vulnerable groups
- ability to undertake extensive personal interviews to elicit better information and to reduce the potential for retraumatising
- ability to overcome barriers to disclosure while supporting colleague wellbeing

### Experience of

- undertaking or advising on trauma informed, employment led investigations
- supporting individuals or teams on a trauma-informed basis
- equality, diversity or inclusion implications within sexual misconduct reports and investigations, and understanding of the vulnerabilities of particular groups
- using subject matter expertise to aid investigations and improve decision making
- managing disclosures of sexual abuse and misconduct

## Appendix 6: Links To More Help and Guidance

### **NHS England**

[Sexual safety in healthcare charter](#)

[Sexual safety charter assurance framework](#)

[E-learning on understanding sexual misconduct in the workplace](#)

[Guidance on the role of domestic abuse and sexual violence allies](#) (FutureNHS registration required)

### **NHS Employers**

[NHS Terms and Conditions Handbook section 32 Dignity at Work](#)

### **Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) guidance**

[Preventing sexual harassment at work: a guide for employers](#) [Employer 8-step guide:](#)

[Preventing sexual harassment at work](#)

### **Guidance on managing sexual misconduct**

[Advice about sexual harassment at work \(ACAS\)](#)

[Managing discrimination from patients and their guardians and relatives \(BMA\)](#)

[Managing concerns \(Nursing and Midwifery Council\)](#)

[Practitioner Performance Advice \(PPA\) \(NHS Resolution\)](#)

## Appendix 7: Record of Actions to Support Safety and Wellbeing

This should be completed by the person who receives the report in order to record risks to safety or wellbeing and decisions agreed to manage or provide support.

<p><b>Details of people involved (anonymised where appropriate):</b></p>	
<p><b>Summary of the report:</b></p>	
<p><b>Expert advice provided by:</b>  <b>Details of the advice received:</b></p>	
<p><b>Has support been offered to everyone involved?</b></p>	
<p><b>Are there safety risks? Who is impacted and how? (colleagues, patients, others) What is the severity of the impact? How likely is the impact to happen?</b></p>	
<p><b>Decisions to support safety and wellbeing:</b></p>	

<b>Communication of decision to others that need to know:</b>	
<b>Actions required to support the decision (for example, cover arrangements):</b>	

## Appendix 8: Review Group Checklist

This checklist should be completed by the review group to ensure they have completed all the relevant actions.

Checklist	Details
<p><b>Wellbeing and Safety</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has support been offered to the colleague who made the report and others involved?</li> <li>2. Are those involved safe and are there any risks that need to be managed?</li> <li>3. Has a risk assessment been completed to review and take actions to support wellbeing and safety, including actions to ensure no further harm and risks to colleagues, patients, service users or other people? (See Appendix 7)</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Fact-Finding</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you have the facts from Appendix 9 that you need?</li> <li>2. Has the colleague who made the report discussed their preferred outcome?</li> <li>3. Do those involved work for the Trust? If not, which organisation do they work for?</li> <li>4. Are there any similar live cases on file relating to the person (or people) the report is about?</li> <li>5. Do other organisations have any information that is important to know, for example, another investigation.</li> <li>6. If further information is needed, gather this information</li> <li>7. Are there any aggravating factors, such as the abuse of power over a more junior colleague that need to be taken into account?</li> </ol>	

<p><b>Agree how to Manage the Report</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is there a requirement to get specialist advice? (for example, from safeguarding or legal). If so, record their advice</li> <li>2. Following advice, is there a requirement to request advice or refer to another organisation, for example, the police, local authority designated officer (LADO), regulator?</li> <li>3. Discuss and agree if another policy should be used.</li> <li>4. Identify and agree who will take forward the management of the report, including how to refer to other organisations.</li> <li>5. If a police report or LADO referral has or is being made, get advice about when the organisation can start to manage the report?</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Communication</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify who 'needs to know' (for example, relevant managers, or other employers if one of the parties works for a different organisation)</li> <li>2. Agree who will be the key point of contact for those involved and advise them of the arrangements</li> <li>3. Agree regular review points (with everyone involved)</li> <li>4. Have decisions and next steps been confirmed to those involved (including in writing if necessary)?</li> </ol>	

**Ensuring understanding**

1. Have you ensured the colleague(s) understands the reasons for actions and for the approach to how the report will be managed?
2. Have the next steps been discussed with the colleague(s) involved (including a review of support)?

## Appendix 9: Questions To Ask When You Receive a Report

Use this list of questions to gather the information needed to understand what happened. If more than one incident took place, you may need to record each separately.

### Before you begin, check:

- they do wish to make a report
- if they need or want anyone to support them during the conversation
- they are clear about confidentiality and safeguarding processes that mean you may need to share information (for example, if there is a safeguarding concern)

### Personal details:

- Name of the person making the report
- Contact details and the best time to contact them

### Who is reporting this:

- someone who has experienced sexual misconduct
- a witness to sexual misconduct:
  - do they have consent of the person who was affected?
  - if yes, who did it happen to?
  - if no, do not ask or record information about the person affected
  - someone who has been disclosed to about sexual misconduct

### About the incident:

- Was it a single or multiple incidents?
- Where did the incident(s) happen?
  - virtually using either work or non-work equipment and through any virtual platform including, social media, email and messaging services
  - NHS premises
  - offsite, in the course of work, at a non-work event or a work event
  - unsure or other
- When did the incident(s) happen? If unsure, get rough dates or a range of dates
- Do they want to name the person whose behaviour they are reporting?
- Information about the behaviour(s) being reported (this doesn't need to be in lots of detail at this point)

### Witnesses:

- Did anyone witness this behaviour?
- Do the witnesses know this report is being made?

### Any further information the person wishes to provide? Check and discuss:

- Do they have any notes or information to help them make their report?
- Is anyone at immediate risk. Are any actions needed now?
- What support is needed? (Refer to other policies such as flexible working or special leave)
- Signpost to internal or external support (appendix 4)
- Explain that more information will be needed if an investigation takes place
- Explain the possible outcomes from the review group

### Next steps:

- Speak to a member of the HR team
- Set up a review group

## **Appendix 10: How to Respond to a Disclosure or Report of Sexual Misconduct**

It is important that everyone working in the NHS knows how to respond when someone makes a disclosure or report about sexual misconduct.

Each person will have different needs so you must ask how they want you or others to support them. Do not assume what they might need and do not dictate the process.

Many people feel a loss of control, so empowering them and validating their experience is vital to minimising trauma.

It is crucial to handle the conversation respectfully, sensitively and supportively. Your role is to listen to the person sharing their experience and agree on the next steps to take. Your role is not to provide counselling, clinical advice or offer retribution against the perpetrator.

### **Do:**

- ensure they are safe
- actively listen (without having any distractions such as your phone)
- believe and validate them
- respect confidentiality but ensure they understand you may need to share information (for example if a safeguarding concern is outlined)
- safely signpost them to support (and reporting options if they haven't reported already)

### **Do not:**

- push for details
- make assumptions
- ask why they did not say anything sooner
- be judgemental or criticise their choices
- express criticism or disbelief
- look disinterested (think about your body language)
- tell them what to do
- talk about your own experiences
- provide counselling yourself
- share their information with others unless they explicitly give you permission to do so, or there are safeguarding concerns
- ask why they did not run away or fight back
- play down or minimise their experience and the significance of what they are sharing

## **Appendix 11: Additional Guidance for Managers**

### **Promoting a Positive Culture**

As a manager you have a key role in influencing the culture within your team. This begins with behaving in a way that lets your team see that you act and manage issues (not just those about sexual misconduct) fairly and with compassion.

Your ability to recognise inappropriate behaviour and act as early as possible is important. It can help support people to speak up. This means you need to challenge behaviours that are inappropriate and be aware of situations that might be harassment. Appendix 2 provides information and examples.

It may also involve identifying underlying tensions or information that suggests unreported events or behaviours within the team.

The Grievance Policy and Dignity at Work Policy provides information about having early conversations to reach solutions between colleagues. It is important to consider whether this is appropriate before suggesting it. In some circumstances it will not be. You should never force someone to confront a colleague or try to resolve things together if they do not wish to. Ensure that you and your team complete the training to understand what sexual misconduct is and how to make a report.

### **Getting Advice and Support**

Receiving information or a report about sexual misconduct can be worrying and you might not have experienced this before.

It's important to get advice from a member of the HR team, and the Safeguarding team as soon as possible, especially if you are worried about safety.

You can do this without mentioning names in the first instance, to maintain confidentiality. It is important to remember that sometimes you may have a responsibility to escalate the report to ensure the safety of others.

If you are finding it difficult to support someone or to process information you have heard, speak to your manager or a member of the HR team who can provide advice and support.

### **Relationships at Work**

Relationships between work colleagues can happen. Sexual misconduct can happen within a range of relationships, and it is important that professional boundaries are maintained.

The relationship might not be appropriate where there is a power imbalance, when training and career progression opportunities of one party could be impacted, or when people work closely together. To discuss a relationship between colleagues, speak to someone from the HR team.

### **Receiving a Report about Sexual Misconduct**

You have an important role to ensure reports are made effectively and dealt with. Your openness, ability to listen and take actions will show that sexual misconduct is taken seriously.

Try to remain calm and listen fully when someone reports a concern about sexual misconduct to you. This may have taken a lot of courage to raise with you and could be an emotional experience for them.

You should let them know you take their report seriously and you are there to help. Appendix 10 provides guidance about how to respond and provide initial support and Appendix 9 provides a list of questions to ask and points to check and discuss.

Discuss and agree what will happen next. It is important that you understand their needs and expectations and are clear with them about the actions you are going to take. This might be difficult if they are feeling emotional or anxious and it might help to follow up later to check understanding.

If they are very upset, or they need more time to think about what to do, it might be helpful to give them some time and meet again at another time. Always check they have support and take actions to put support in place.

During the conversation, collect information about what happened and ensure they have time to discuss their views about what to do next, as it is important to respect their views.

Get advice from a member of the HR team or other professionals as soon as you can. They will support and help you to set up a review group.

### **Anonymous Reports**

Some people may prefer to report their concern anonymously. Anonymous reports will be recorded in one location and used to understand underlying concerns and trends.

It is important that anonymous reports are taken seriously. They can provide helpful information about patterns or areas of concern.

A member of the HR team will provide advice about managing anonymous reports.

### **Malicious/False Reports**

All reports should be taken seriously even if you have concerns that it could be malicious or false. It is important to follow the procedures set out within this policy when a report is made in order to collect the facts about what has been reported. If you remain concerned that the report could be malicious or false, seek advice from a member of the HR team or other professionals as soon as possible. They will support and help you to determine the most appropriate next steps.

## Supporting Document 1 - Equality Impact Assessment Tool

To be completed by the key document author and included as an appendix to key document when submitted to the appropriate committee for consideration and approval.



### Herefordshire & Worcestershire STP - Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form Please read EIA guidelines when completing this form

#### Section 1 - Name of Organisation (please tick)

Herefordshire & Worcestershire STP	<input type="checkbox"/>	Herefordshire Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	Herefordshire CCG	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	<input type="checkbox"/>	Worcestershire County Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	Worcestershire CCGs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wye Valley NHS Trust	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Name of Lead for Activity</b>	
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<b>Details of individuals completing this assessment</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Job title</b>	<b>e-mail contact</b>
	Jenni Carr-Smith	HR Business Partner	<a href="mailto:j.carr-smith@nhs.net">j.carr-smith@nhs.net</a>
<b>Date assessment completed</b>	24/11/2025		

#### Section 2

Activity being assessed (e.g. policy/procedure, document, service redesign, policy, strategy etc.)	<b>Title: Sexual Misconduct Policy</b>
What is the aim, purpose and/or intended outcomes of this Activity?	The Sexual Misconduct Policy commits the Trust and everyone working within it to take all reports of sexual misconduct seriously and to act on all reports. The Policy sets out the Trust's approach to

	<p>tackling sexual misconduct and to supporting a zero-tolerance approach to sexual misconduct in the workplace.</p> <p>The Sexual Misconduct Policy outlines how to recognise and report sexual misconduct, the Trust's approach to taking actions when sexual misconduct is reported and the support available to people involved or harmed.</p>			
Who will be affected by the development & implementation of this activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Service User <input type="checkbox"/> Patient <input type="checkbox"/> Carers <input type="checkbox"/> Visitors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Communities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other – volunteers, agency and bank workers, students and learners, contractors, secondees and interns.		
Is this:	<input type="checkbox"/> Review of an existing activity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New activity <input type="checkbox"/> Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?			
What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (Please name sources, eg demographic information for patients / services / staff groups affected, complaints etc.)	<p>National NHS Sexual Misconduct Policy framework            Trust's Sexual Safety Charter            HR data relating to previous/current sexual misconduct reports            Current HR policies            Other NHS Trust policies</p>			
Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (e.g. who and how have you engaged with, or why do you believe this is not required)	<p>Policy shared with HR Department for review and comment            Policy will be shared with Policy Discussion Group and Staff Side colleagues            Policy will be shared with Policy Working Group, which includes managers, divisional and staff group representatives and staff side colleagues            Policy will be shared with relevant Staff Networks</p>			
Summary of relevant findings	<p>People in some groups can be more vulnerable than others. For example, women, black, ethnic minority, disabled and LGBTQ+ people can be more at risk of sexual misconduct.</p> <p>This is a new policy, however no negative impact of the policy has been identified as it has been developed and implemented to ensure there is a clear process which will support all staff to safely report sexual misconduct. This is anticipated to have a positive impact on those identified in more vulnerable groups above as the introduction of this policy provides clarity on how to recognise and report sexual misconduct, what action will be taken when sexual misconduct is reported and what support is available.</p>			

### **Section 3**

Please consider the potential impact of this activity (during development & implementation) on each of the equality groups outlined below. **Please tick one or more impact box below for each Equality Group and explain your rationale.** Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group and this should be recorded. Remember to consider the impact on e.g. staff, public, patients, carers etc. in these equality groups.

Equality Group	Potential <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Please explain your reasons for any potential positive, neutral or negative impact identified
<b>Age</b>	X			<p>This is a new policy and its introduction will provide clarity on how to recognise and report sexual misconduct, what action will be taken when sexual misconduct is reported and what support is available.</p> <p>A clear policy can help to reduce the number of sexual misconduct incidents and supports a zero-tolerance approach.</p>
<b>Disability</b>	X			<p>It is recognised that disabled people may be more at risk of facing sexual misconduct. The Policy specifically recognises this to ensure that all who read/use the policy are aware of this. The introduction of this policy may have a potential positive impact as it provides clarity on how to recognise and report sexual misconduct, a clear structure as to what action will be taken when sexual misconduct is reported and sets out a wide range of support available. The policy provides extensive internal and external support and also provides links to more help and guidance, including guidance from the EHRC on preventing sexual harassment at work.</p> <p>A clear policy can help to reduce the number of sexual misconduct incidents and supports a zero-tolerance approach, which will support staff in those protected groups that are at a higher risk.</p>
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	X			<p>It is recognised that LGBTQ+ people may be more at risk of facing sexual misconduct. The Policy specifically recognises this to ensure that all who read/use the policy are aware of this. The introduction of this policy may have a potential positive impact as it provides clarity on how to recognise and report sexual misconduct, a clear structure as to what action will be taken when sexual misconduct is reported and sets out a wide range of support available. The policy provides extensive internal and external support and also provides links to more help and guidance, including guidance from the EHRC on preventing sexual harassment at work.</p> <p>A clear policy can help to reduce the number of sexual misconduct incidents and supports a zero-tolerance approach, which will support staff</p>

Equality Group	Potential <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Please explain your reasons for any potential positive, neutral or negative impact identified
				in those protected groups that are at a higher risk.
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnerships</b>	X			<p>This is a new policy and its introduction will provide clarity on how to recognise and report sexual misconduct, what action will be taken when sexual misconduct is reported and what support is available.</p> <p>A clear policy can help to reduce the number of sexual misconduct incidents and supports a zero-tolerance approach.</p>
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	X			<p>This is a new policy and its introduction will provide clarity on how to recognise and report sexual misconduct, what action will be taken when sexual misconduct is reported and what support is available.</p> <p>A clear policy can help to reduce the number of sexual misconduct incidents and supports a zero-tolerance approach.</p>
<b>Race including Traveling Communities</b>	X			<p>It is recognised that people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds may be more at risk of facing sexual misconduct. The Policy specifically recognises this to ensure that all who read/use the policy are aware of this. The introduction of this policy may have a potential positive impact as it provides clarity on how to recognise and report sexual misconduct, a clear structure as to what action will be taken when sexual misconduct is reported and sets out a wide range of support available. The policy provides extensive internal and external support and also provides links to more help and guidance, including guidance from the EHRC on preventing sexual harassment at work.</p> <p>A clear policy can help to reduce the number of sexual misconduct incidents and supports a zero-tolerance approach, which will support staff in those protected groups that are at a higher risk.</p>
<b>Religion &amp; Belief</b>	X			<p>This is a new policy and its introduction will provide clarity on how to recognise and report sexual misconduct, what action will be taken when sexual misconduct is reported and what support is available.</p>

Equality Group	Potential <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Please explain your reasons for any potential positive, neutral or negative impact identified
				A clear policy can help to reduce the number of sexual misconduct incidents and supports a zero-tolerance approach.
<b>Sex</b>	X			<p>It is recognised that women may be more at risk of facing sexual misconduct. The Policy specifically recognises this to ensure that all who read/use the policy are aware of this. The introduction of this policy may have a potential positive impact as it provides clarity on how to recognise and report sexual misconduct, a clear structure as to what action will be taken when sexual misconduct is reported and sets out a wide range of support available. The policy provides extensive internal and external support and also provides links to more help and guidance, including guidance from the EHRC on preventing sexual harassment at work.</p> <p>A clear policy can help to reduce the number of sexual misconduct incidents and supports a zero-tolerance approach, which will support staff in those protected groups that are at a higher risk.</p>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	X			<p>It is recognised that LGBTQ+ people may be more at risk of facing sexual misconduct. The Policy specifically recognises this to ensure that all who read/use the policy are aware of this. The introduction of this policy may have a potential positive impact as it provides clarity on how to recognise and report sexual misconduct, a clear structure as to what action will be taken when sexual misconduct is reported and sets out a wide range of support available. The policy provides extensive internal and external support and also provides links to more help and guidance, including guidance from the EHRC on preventing sexual harassment at work.</p> <p>A clear policy can help to reduce the number of sexual misconduct incidents and supports a zero-tolerance approach, which will support staff in those protected groups that are at a higher risk.</p>
<b>Other Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups</b> (e.g. carers; care leavers; homeless; Social/Economic	X			This is a new policy and its introduction will provide clarity on how to recognise and report sexual misconduct, what action will be taken when sexual misconduct is reported and what support is available.

Equality Group	Potential <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Please explain your reasons for any potential positive, neutral or negative impact identified
deprivation, travelling communities etc.)				A clear policy can help to reduce the number of sexual misconduct incidents and supports a zero-tolerance approach.
<b>Health Inequalities</b> (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from the unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions within societies)				N/A

#### **Section 4**

What actions will you take to mitigate any potential negative impacts?	Risk identified	Actions required to reduce / eliminate negative impact	Who will lead on the action?	Timeframe
<b>How will you monitor these actions?</b>	Whilst no negative impact has been identified as a result of implementing this policy, it is recognised that there are a number of protected groups who are at a higher risk of experiencing sexual misconduct. Alongside this policy a sexual safety dashboard is being developed in order to monitor data relating to reports of sexual misconduct on a quarterly basis. Should themes or concerns relating to protected groups be identified through this dashboard, an action plan will be developed accordingly to address this.			
<b>When will you review this EIA?</b> (e.g in a service redesign, this EIA should be revisited regularly throughout the design & implementation)	As part of the policy review process.			

#### **Section 5** - Please read and agree to the following Equality Statement

##### **1. Equality Statement**

1.1. All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to set out arrangements to assess and consult on how their policies and functions impact on the 9 protected characteristics: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage & Civil Partnership; Pregnancy & Maternity; Race; Religion & Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation

1.2. Our Organisations will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and aims to design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our service, and population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

1.3. All staff are expected to deliver services and provide services and care in a manner which respects the individuality of service users, patients, carer's etc, and as such treat them and members of the workforce respectfully, paying due regard to the 9 protected characteristics.

<b>Signature of person completing EIA</b>	
<b>Date signed</b>	24/11/2025
<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Signature of person the Leader Person for this activity</b>	
<b>Date signed</b>	
<b>Comments:</b>	