



# Ross-on-Wye Town Council

## Action Plan – Preventing Harassment

### Purpose

The key purpose of this action plan is to prevent harassment including sexual harassment from occurring during the course of employment. The activities listed within it have all been identified through the completion of a risk assessment which considered all of our working practices, including our policies and procedures.

A further aim of this action plan is to strengthen relevant employment policies and reporting mechanisms and to foster a workplace culture of responsibility and awareness, all of which are fundamental in preventing harassment of all kinds.

By implementing the actions that have been identified through the risk assessment process, it supports Ross Town Council's compliance with its legal obligations.

Please also refer to our template **Risk Assessment – Preventing Harassment**.

### Completing the action plan

Please follow the instructions below to ensure that the action plan is implemented, monitored, and amended timely and accurately:

#### **Preventative steps**

Record the results of the risk assessment by listing all of the activities identified and provide detailed information for its effective completion. This should include those who are to be responsible, the resources required (such as people, budget, and time), and timeframes for completion.

#### **Monitoring**

The monitoring of the action plan is fundamental in the prevention of sexual harassment. It enables the tracking of progress, detects any issues early, provides meaningful data to aid decision making, facilitates accountability and transparency, and allows for continuous improvement, all of which will lead to the successful implementation of each action point and therefore remove, or significantly lower, the risk of harassment and sexual harassment occurring.



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## Action plan for the prevention of harassment during the course of employment

<b>Action plan owner:</b>	Carla Boyles, Town Clerk
<b>Action plan date:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> October 2025
<b>Work location:</b>	Ross-on-Wye Town Council
<b>Date of risk assessment this action plan aligns with:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
<b>Next scheduled risk assessment date:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> February 2027
<b>Version number:</b>	02

## Action plan for the prevention of harassment during the course of employment

<b>Risk assessment result</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Resources (people, budget, time)</b>	<b>Time frame for completion</b>	<b>Monitoring</b>
All employees who work at night have access to communication tools to reduce risk of harassment or isolation.	Maintain OK Alone access for Amenities team and ensure all Amenities staff are trained to use it.	Managers/Supervisors/Event Coordinators	OK Alone, which tracks their location during check in hours if there is an SOS or missed check in	Ongoing	System notifies if Amenities team not logged in.



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	<p>Managers/ Supervisors to keep updated rota and record of staff locations</p> <p>Evening meetings</p>		<p>Volunteer induction at events.</p> <p>Reminders for volunteers to notify Managers/Event Coordinators if any deviation from the plan.</p> <p>A building check should always be undertaken prior to being left alone with door locked/secured after the check is complete. Staff may ask to be accompanied by a colleague or councillor when leaving the premises and locking up after an evening meeting.</p> <p>See Health &amp; Safety Policy and Handbook for further information.</p>		
<p>All lone workers (amenities staff, office staff, home workers)</p>	<p>Maintain use of OK Alone system for amenities staff.</p>	<p>Managers</p>	<p>OK Alone, which tracks their location during check in</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>System notifies if Amenities</p>



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are accounted for and supported to reduce risks of harassment or isolation.	<p>Ensure Managers/Supervisors record who is on site and when; ensure buildings are locked securely when staff are working alone.</p> <p>Staff working from home remain aware of harassment prevention policies and have access to reporting mechanisms.</p>		<p>hours if there is an SOS or missed check in</p> <p>Bookings Calendar</p>		team not logged in.
All staff working alone in offices or buildings are safe and accounted for.	<p>Ensure Managers/Supervisors know who is on site and when; ensure buildings are locked securely when staff are working alone.</p>	Managers	Keep Bookings calendar updated with working hours.	Ongoing	Timesheets checked against calendars.
All employees working with just one other employee/worker are aware of prevention policies and have access to reporting mechanisms.	<p>Ensure employees are aware of reporting procedures and confidential support channels.</p> <p>Encourage regular check-ins with a manager or to monitor wellbeing.</p> <p>Implement clear behavioural expectations and remind staff of policies</p>	Managers	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and staff feedback.



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	<p>around harassment and professional conduct.</p> <p>Provide access to support systems such as counselling or Employee Assistance Programmes (e.g., WorkNest).</p> <p>Encourage open communication and peer accountability to maintain a professional and respectful environment.</p>				
<p>Employees interacting with or working alone with third parties, e.g. contractors or members of the public, shall be aware of prevention policies and have access to reporting mechanisms.</p>	<p>Avoid situations where employees are left isolated with contractors or members of the public where practicable. If lone interaction with third parties is unavoidable, ensure employees are logged, checked in on, and have immediate communication tools.</p> <p>Require sign-in, ID badges, and supervision for all external parties.</p>	<p>Managers</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>



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	<p>Zero tolerance policy for harassment of any kind.</p> <p>Establish a simple, confidential process for employees to report harassment, with reassurance that reports will be taken seriously.</p> <p>Restrict offenders.</p>				
<p>Employees required to attend the workplace of a third party or attend offsite locations shall be aware of prevention policies and have access to reporting mechanisms.</p>	<p>Ensure someone is aware of who is on site and the location of each worker at all times.</p> <p>Establish a simple, confidential process for employees to report harassment, with reassurance that reports will be taken seriously.</p>	<p>Operations Manager</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>
<p>Employees will occasionally be expected to attend offsite events and will be aware of prevention policies and have access to</p>	<p>Ensure someone is aware of who is on site and the location of each worker at all times.</p> <p>Establish a simple, confidential process for employees to report</p>	<p>Manager</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>



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reporting mechanisms.	harassment, with reassurance that reports will be taken seriously.				
Employees may experience periods of high pressure, although environments are not usually competitive or stressful we are aware there may be periods where this is felt amongst the employees.	<p>Promote a positive workplace culture.</p> <p>Train managers to recognise early signs of harassment, stress-related behaviours, or inappropriate “banter,” and to intervene quickly.</p> <p>Make zero-tolerance policies on harassment highly visible.</p> <p>Hold senior staff to the same standards as everyone else, no tolerance for misuse of authority.</p> <p>Communicate that reporting harassment will not affect performance reviews, promotions, or opportunities, whilst providing safe, confidential, and</p>	Manager	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and staff feedback.



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	accessible ways for employees to report concerns without fear of retaliation.				
There is a higher representation of one gender in our workplace, the Officers are all female (6) and the Amenities Operatives are male (3).	Reinforce that all employees are treated with equal respect and that inappropriate behaviour toward any gender will not be tolerated.	Manager	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and staff feedback.
We considered the following vulnerable employees: Women, LGBTQ+, Black and minority ethnic workers, young employees, someone with a disability (mental or physical), black and minority ethnic workers, Non-UK national including those who may not be confident in making a complaint in English or for whom English is not their first	<p>Provide safe, confidential ways for employees to report verbal harassment without fear of retaliation.</p> <p>Zero tolerance policy against harassment of any kind against any employee, vulnerable or otherwise.</p> <p>Provide EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) awareness training.</p> <p>Managers and supervisors to challenge inappropriate comments immediately.</p>	Manager	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and staff feedback.



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<p>language, low-paid earners, home workers, lone workers, agency, casual and those on fixed term or zero-hours contracts.</p>	<p>Provide safe, confidential ways for employees to report verbal harassment without fear of retaliation. Ensure home workers know how to safely report harassment, including online or remote reporting channels.</p> <p>Establish clear guidelines for work-related communications, including appropriate use of video calls, emails, and chat apps.</p> <p>Schedule routine contact with managers or colleagues to reduce isolation and provide opportunities to report concerns.</p> <p>Ensure Manager's knows their location at all times and establish scheduled check-ins. Amenities team have OK Alone.</p>				
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	<p>Train lone workers on personal safety, harassment prevention, and reporting procedures.</p> <p>Ensure lighting, visibility, and security measures reduce opportunities for harassment.</p> <p>Have clear protocols for responding to harassment or assault incidents, including rapid intervention and support.</p>				
<p>In the employee handbook, there is a clearly written anti-harassment policy that deals with the prevention of sexual harassment.</p>	<p>Regular training and awareness on preventing harassment.</p> <p>Clear communication of the policy.</p> <p>Consistent enforcement.</p>	<p>Manager</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>
<p>In the employee handbook, third-party harassment is addressed and there</p>	<p>Clear contractual obligations.</p>	<p>Manager</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>



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are reasonable steps to prevent it.	<p>Pre-engagement briefing with third parties advising them of our policy.</p> <p>Escalation procedures.</p> <p>Consequences for non-compliance.</p>				
The anti-harassment policy is in the employee handbook that everyone is given a copy of, at their induction.	<p>Include sexual harassment awareness and policy explanation in induction programs and refresher training for all staff.</p> <p>Provide training to all employees of how to access the Handbook on Worknest.</p> <p>Accessible formats.</p> <p>Encourage managers to discuss the policy periodically and check staff understanding, particularly in high-risk or remote teams.</p>	Manager	Policies circulated regularly.	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>December 2025</p>	Review any reports and staff feedback.
We re-circulate the anti-harassment policy annually and	Re-circulate the anti-harassment policy	Manager	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and



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whenever updated and remind staff members of where and how to access the policy on a regular basis, including when changes are made.	annually and whenever updated.  Include a read-and-acknowledge system (e.g. digital sign-off) to confirm staff have reviewed updates.			December 2025	staff feedback.
We schedule annual policy reviews, or sooner if there are changes in law or significant workplace changes.	Annual policy reviews or sooner if significant workplace changes.	Manager	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and staff feedback.
In the disciplinary policy, we specify that sexual harassment is a potential act of gross misconduct and could result in summary dismissal.	Explicitly state in the disciplinary policy that sexual harassment is a potential act of gross misconduct and could result in summary dismissal.	Manager	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and staff feedback.
We ensure IT and social media policies explicitly prohibit online harassment and cyberbullying.	Include clear guidance on reporting inappropriate digital behaviour (internal contacts, escalation routes).	Manager	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and staff feedback.



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	<p>Circulate policies to all staff and require acknowledgement of receipt.</p> <p>Provide training on digital conduct, including case studies/scenarios relevant to the organisation.</p>				
<p>There are policies regarding proper use of social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram or X?</p>	<p>Explicitly prohibit sexual, sexist, or inappropriate comments, images, or messages.</p> <p>Clarify that misconduct on external platforms (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, X, etc.) may still fall under the disciplinary policy.</p> <p>Train staff on professional boundaries when using social media for work purposes.</p>	<p>Manager</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>
<p>There is currently no policy for workplace relationships.</p>	<p>Consider implementing policy for workplace relationships.</p>	<p>Town Clerk/Personnel Sub-Committee</p>	<p>Personnel Sub-Committee to review and conclude whether to implement a</p>	<p>December 2025</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>



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			policy - scheduled for December 2025.		
All anti-harassment policies should be reviewed to ensure they align to all other company policies such as homeworking, lone working, and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)?	<p>Ensure anti-harassment policy is explicitly cross-referenced with homeworking, lone working, and EDI policies.</p> <p>Review all related policies annually to ensure consistency in language and procedures.</p> <p>Include remote/online harassment in both the anti-harassment and homeworking policies.</p> <p>Ensure lone-working procedures include clear reporting routes and safeguarding measures for harassment.</p> <p>Provide training to managers on integrating policy application</p>	Manager	Operations Manager to review policies – scheduled for December 2025.	December 2025	Review any reports and staff feedback.
Annual EDI training is provided annually that	Annual EDI and Sexual Harassment Training.	Manager	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and



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<p>covers harassment and sexual harassment.</p>	<p>Regular Refreshers and Reminders.</p> <p>Clear Policies and Procedures.</p>				<p>staff feedback.</p>
<p>managers receive separate training on harassment and EDI awareness.</p>	<p>Consider providing separate training for Managers; to teach line managers how to recognise, prevent, and respond to sexual harassment.</p> <p>Regular Refreshers.</p>	<p>Town Clerk</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>December 2025</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>
<p>Refresher EDI training will be provided if and when circumstances warrant it.</p>	<p>Targeted refresher training.</p> <p>Ensure all employees are informed of changes in working arrangements, workforce composition, or lessons from complaints.</p> <p>Train managers to identify risks in new working arrangements and address issues proactively.</p>	<p>Manager</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>



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<p>There is a higher representation of one gender in the leadership team, female.</p>	<p>Promote gender diversity in leadership.</p> <p>Make harassment policies clear and impartial, emphasising zero tolerance.</p> <p>Provide harassment, sexual harassment and EDI training for all leaders that addresses unconscious bias.</p> <p>Track representation and harassment incidents by gender.</p>	<p>Manager</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>
<p>Worknест is our external HR provider.</p>	<p>Outsourced HR handles investigations impartially and consistently.</p>	<p>Town Clerk</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>
<p>The Town Clerk has individual authority over recruitment practices.</p>	<p>Ensure all hiring follows formal policies and procedures.</p> <p>Provide guidance on avoiding bias and harassment during interviews or assessments.</p>	<p>Town Clerk</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>



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<p>There is an IT policy that sets the rules for appropriate usage.</p>	<p>Provide a clear IT policy that includes acceptable use of email, messaging, internet, and social media and specify consequences for breaches relating to harassment.</p>	<p>Town Clerk</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>
<p>Inappropriate behaviour is monitored and addressed on digital platforms.</p>	<p>Maintain accessible methods for employees to report digital harassment.</p> <p>Ensure employers know the procedure for reporting inappropriate conduct.</p> <p>Monitor IT systems for policy breaches while respecting privacy.</p> <p>Periodically review reported issues and outcomes to ensure accountability.</p> <p>Include guidance on acceptable digital behaviour in harassment,</p>	<p>Manager</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>



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	<p>EDI and sexual harassment training.</p> <p>Address both internal (employee) and external-facing (councillor) interactions.</p>				
There is adequate privacy or security for workers using bathrooms or changing rooms.	Maintain locks, partitions, and clear signage to ensure safe use of facilities.	Manager	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and staff feedback.
Staff are known to socialise outside of the workplace.	<p>Ensure your harassment policy covers conduct at work-related social events, even outside working hours.</p> <p>Include scenarios about work-related socialising in training, making clear boundaries still apply.</p>	Manager	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and staff feedback.
Alcohol is available at social events.	Ensure your harassment policy covers conduct at work-related social events, even outside working hours.	Manager	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and staff feedback.



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	Include scenarios about work-related socialising in training, making clear boundaries still apply.				
Reference checks are completed for all workers and other people engaged at your workplace such as contractors.	<p>All employees undergo reference checks to verify previous conduct and suitability.</p> <p>For larger contracts, references are requested to ensure contractors meet professional standards.</p> <p>New employees receive training as part of onboarding.</p>	Manager	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and staff feedback.
There are clear and effective procedures for receiving and responding to complaints of sexual harassment.	Clear procedures detailed in both the employee handbook and the member/officer protocol.	Town Clerk	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and staff feedback.
There are multiple, confidential ways for employees to report harassment.	Workers can approach several managers or supervisors outside their direct reporting line, if necessary. Failing that, the	Town Clerk	Policies circulated regularly.	Ongoing	Review any reports and staff feedback.



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	<p>Town Clerk and WorkNest are also accessible.</p> <p>Staff are assured that complaints are handled confidentially, reducing fear of retaliation.</p>				
<p>Line managers are consistent and they enforce disciplinary and grievance policies.</p>	<p>Line managers follow the council's disciplinary and grievance guidelines consistently.</p>	<p>Managers</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>
<p>All harassment complaints would receive prompt, thorough and impartial investigations.</p>	<p>All complaints are taken seriously and investigated quickly.</p> <p>Investigations are structured, detailed, and evidence-based, following council disciplinary and grievance procedures.</p> <p>WorkNest ensures investigations are fair and unbiased.</p>	<p>Managers</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>



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Zero-tolerance policy will reinforce a strong organisational stance against harassment, making clear that support is always available.

<p>There are support systems in place for victims of harassment.</p>	<p>Provide access to support services for confidential advice and wellbeing support.</p> <p>Clear reporting procedures to ensure employees know how and where to report harassment, including anonymous options if appropriate.</p> <p>Awareness and communication are important to regularly share information about available support systems, contact details, and confidentiality assurances.</p> <p>Training for managers and staff to equip managers to handle disclosures sensitively and train staff on</p>	<p>Managers</p>	<p>Policies circulated regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>
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	<p>recognising and preventing harassment.</p> <p>Provide a designated and trained individual or team responsible for managing cases and ensuring victims are supported.</p> <p>Encourage regular check-ins with staff to identify early signs of stress or disengagement.</p> <p>Follow-up support ensures employees who raise issues are checked in with after initial reporting to prevent isolation and ongoing harm.</p>				
<p>Work practices are audited to ensure they continue to remain fit for purpose and prevent harassment.</p>	<p>Annual policy reviews ensure documents reflect current law and guidance (ACAS, EHRC, HSE).</p> <p>Manager and staff refresher training keeps everyone updated on</p>	<p>Managers</p>	<p>Policies reviewed regularly.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Review any reports and staff feedback.</p>



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	<p>policy changes and reinforces expectations.</p> <p>Maintaining an audit trail of reviews, updates, and staff communications demonstrates due diligence.</p> <p>Assigning responsibility to a named individual or team ensures accountability for driving and recording updates.</p>				
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