Kingskerswell Parish Council

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Policy

Date: 5th December 2024
Agreed at Full Council Meeting: 6th January 2025

Introduction

The Parish Council is committed to providing a workplace where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. Sexual harassment is unacceptable, unlawful, and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This policy outlines the Parish Council's stance on sexual harassment and the procedures for addressing and preventing such behaviour.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define what constitutes sexual harassment.
- Provide a clear framework for reporting and addressing sexual harassment.
- Foster a workplace culture of respect, equality, and inclusion.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, councillors, volunteers, contractors, and anyone working on behalf of the Parish Council, regardless of location.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances or propositions.
- Inappropriate or suggestive comments, jokes, or gestures.
- Sending or displaying sexually explicit materials.
- Physical conduct such as unwanted touching or groping.
- Threatening behaviour, including suggesting employment consequences for rejecting advances.

Responsibilities

- **Parish Council:**
  - Promote a workplace culture free from harassment.
  - Ensure all staff and councillors are aware of this policy.
  - Take immediate and appropriate action if a complaint of sexual harassment is received.
- **Clerk/Managers:**
  - Actively monitor the workplace to identify and address inappropriate behaviour.
  - Treat all complaints of sexual harassment seriously and confidentially.
  - Facilitate access to support for individuals affected by harassment.
- **Employees and Councillors:**
  - Treat everyone with dignity and respect.

- Refrain from engaging in any form of sexual harassment.
- Report incidents of harassment promptly.

Reporting Procedure

1. **Initial Report:**
   - Any individual who experiences or witnesses sexual harassment should report the incident to the Clerk or Chair.
   - If the alleged harasser is the Clerk or Chair, the report should be made to another designated council member.
2. **Confidentiality:**
   - All reports will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Details will only be shared on a need-to-know basis to address the complaint.
3. **Investigation:**
   - A thorough and impartial investigation will be conducted promptly.
   - Both the complainant and the alleged harasser will have the opportunity to provide their accounts.
4. **Outcome:**
   - If the investigation finds that harassment occurred, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, which may include a warning, suspension, or dismissal.
   - Support will be offered to the complainant, and any necessary steps will be taken to prevent further incidents.

Retaliation

Retaliation against anyone who reports or participates in the investigation of sexual harassment is strictly prohibited. Any acts of retaliation will result in disciplinary action.

Support

The Parish Council will provide access to support services for individuals affected by harassment. This may include counselling, mediation, or referrals to external agencies.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains effective and aligned with current legislation and best practices.

Policy Approval

This Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Policy was adopted by the Parish Council on 6th January 2025.