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The Worker Protection Act 2023:

Five 'reasonable steps'
towards compliance

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Employers need to take action to comply

From 26 October 2024, employers will have a duty to take 'reasonable steps' to prevent sexual harassment of their workers in the course of their work.

While the detail of the legal requirement has yet to be established, we would encourage employers to take the following five steps to protect themselves, as well as their employees.



1. Conduct a risk assessment

Start by reviewing existing policies and processes related to sexual harassment.

This includes assessing the effectiveness of current reporting procedures, identifying potential risks within the workplace and considering how these risks can be mitigated.

A thorough risk assessment will help you identify gaps in your current approach and develop strategies to address them.



2. Develop and communicate a Prevention of Sexual Harassment policy

Your employees should be in no doubt about what constitutes sexual harassment and what to do about it.

Having a well-defined policy is essential.

This policy should outline the organisation's zero-tolerance stance on sexual harassment, define what constitutes harassment, and provide clear guidance on how employees can report incidents.



3. Education & training

Education and training is a critical component of preventing sexual harassment.

It leaves no room for doubt or for excuses.

Employers should provide regular training for all employees, with additional, specialised training for those responsible for implementing policies and handling complaints.



4. Foster a culture of inclusivity & respect

Creating a workplace culture that promotes inclusivity and respect is key to preventing harassment and abuse of any kind.

Senior management should lead by example, always modelling acceptable behaviour and clearly communicating the organisation's commitment to a harassment-free workplace.

Regular communications from leadership can reinforce the importance of maintaining a safe and respectful work environment.



5. Ensure thorough investigation & appropriate action

Employers must ensure that all complaints of sexual harassment are thoroughly investigated, and appropriate action is taken in response.

This includes taking disciplinary action against perpetrators and providing support to victims.

A robust investigation process and response not only addresses individual incidents but also sends a strong message that harassment will not be tolerated.



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Don't know where to start?
We can help

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Take these 'reasonable steps' towards compliance

For organisations that don't yet have anything in place, we have designed a sexual harassment risk-mitigation pack to help. It contains:

- A sexual harassment risk assessment form and a free, optional two-hour online session to walk you through it
- A fully editable Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy template
- An employee e-learning course
- A manager e-learning course

The pack costs £1,295 + VAT for organisations of up to 100 employees.



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Additional casework support

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Sexual harassment complaints

Your casework support partner

As a full strategic and operational HR service provider and expert, independent, objective third-party, we help organisations resolve the cases that are too sensitive to handle internally.

From investigations and mediation to disciplinary and grievance cases, we mitigate risk by finding legally robust, humane and fair solutions to potentially difficult and damaging situations.



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If you have any questions, need advice and guidance about specific complaints or are a company with more than 100 employees, please do not hesitate to contact Victoria on **07988 276402** or email **peopleandchange@seymourjohn.com**

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