

Introduction

Wm Lee Ltd recognises the right of every employee to be able to attend work and to perform their duties without being subjected to any form of sexual harassment. We have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of sexual harassment and are committed to ensuring all members of staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. We understand that experiencing inappropriate behaviour can impact the mental and physical health of those affected, both in their personal and working life, as well as having a negative impact on our workplace culture and productivity. We will treat all allegations of sexual harassment seriously and will deal with them in accordance with this policy. Wm Lee Ltd is fully committed to its obligation to eliminate sexual harassment in the workplace.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Wm Lee's position on sexual harassment and to document the process which is to be followed should any grievance arise.

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual Harassment is a specific form of harassment, and it can often be subtle, indirect, or even unintentional. Sexual harassment includes unwanted or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other verbal, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual nature. It also covers any third-party harassment where a person is harassed by someone who does not work for the Company, such as a visitor or client.

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all employees, workers, agency workers, contractors, apprentices, job applicants, and volunteers.

It applies to sexual harassment by members of our staff as well as third parties and it covers all areas of the business.

Responsibility for this policy

The board of directors has overall responsibility for this policy but has delegated responsibility for managing its implementation to the HR Manager. Any suggestions for change should be reported to the HR Manager.

Day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the policy sits with the HR department, line managers and supervisors. If you have any questions about this policy, you should direct them to HR or your line manager/supervisor in the first instance.

All managers and supervisors are expected to lead by example, conducting themselves in accordance with this policy and ensuring that those they manage do the same. Supervisors and managers should ensure that staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them under this policy and take action when any behaviour falls below the required standards.

It is the obligation and responsibility of every employee to ensure the workplace is free from sexual harassment.

What type of behaviour amounts to sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment means any unwelcome sexual advance, unwelcome request for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated. Sexual harassment could be in the form of unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against you or unwelcome touching.
- Suggestive comments or jokes
- Insults or taunts of a sexual nature
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (even if the harasser perceives the conduct as harmless, or the conduct has not been unwelcome in the past)
- Lewd or suggestive comments or gestures, including offensive comments or gestures about appearance or dress, innuendo, leering and whistling
- Intrusive questions or statements about your private life
- Sending or displaying material of a sexual nature that some people may find offensive, pornographic, (including "pin-ups", graffiti, emails, text messages, video clips and/or images sent electronically or posted online)
- Accessing sexually explicit internet sites
- Inappropriate advances on social networking sites
- Requests for sex or continued suggestions for social or sexual activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome
- Suggestions or threats by managers or supervisors that sexual favours could affect someone's job security or prospects
- Behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.

Behaviour that is based on mutual attraction, friendship and respect is not sexual harassment.

Sexual interaction that is invited, mutual or consensual is not sexual harassment because it is not unwanted. However, sexual conduct that has been welcomed in the past can become unwanted.

A single incident can amount to sexual harassment. It is the impact of the conduct and not the intent of the action that determines whether sexual harassment has taken place.

A person may be sexually harassed even if they were not the intended target. For example, a person may be sexually harassed by pornographic images displayed on a colleague's computer in the workplace.

Although, statistically, women are more likely to experience or report sexual harassment, it can happen to anyone. Sexual harassment does not always occur in plain sight. It can happen in-person and online, and outside of as well as during working hours. Regardless of when and how it occurs, Wm Lee Ltd will consider any sexual harassment involving employees as a workplace issue and will take action in line with our disciplinary policy accordingly.

The Company's position on sexual harassment

We believe that a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion is vital to supporting the wellbeing of our people and we are committed to providing a safe and respectful workplace for all members of our staff. Accordingly, we will not tolerate sexual harassment of any kind: whether at work (on or away from our premises), during any situation related to work (including on business trips, at social functions or on social media), or against anyone outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to your suitability to carry out your role. Any such conduct will be treated as a disciplinary offence, which may in appropriate circumstances lead to dismissal.

In addition, we will not tolerate any retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person who has been involved in bringing a complaint of sexual harassment. Retaliation against or victimisation of a person who has made a complaint of sexual harassment will constitute a disciplinary offence, which may in appropriate circumstances lead to dismissal.

We will take proactive steps to prevent all forms of sexual harassment of our people, including by third parties (for example our customers, self-employed contractors, suppliers, visitors to our premises and delegates at work conferences and/or members of the public). Non-exhaustive examples of measures we are committed to taking include:

- Ensuring that all new starters receive training on equality, diversity and inclusion issues, including anti sexual harassment training, as part of their induction process
- Requiring all employees to attend training on equality, diversity and inclusion issues, including anti sexual harassment training
- Providing focused training for line managers so that they understand how to implement this policy effectively and their role in preventing sexual harassment from occurring in the workplace (including by third parties)
- Conducting regular risk assessments to determine reasonable measures that can be implemented to minimise the risk of exposure to sexual harassment, including by third parties
- Monitoring our organisational culture via measures such as exit interviews and return-to-work meetings. We will take active steps to address any issues that are identified as part of our process of ongoing monitoring and review
- Ensuring that our zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment is effectively communicated, including to relevant third parties

There is no justifiable reason to sexually harass someone else. We will take appropriate action in relation to any allegations of sexual harassment, including by third parties.

We will treat all allegations seriously, irrespective of the seniority of the alleged perpetrator, whether the conduct is a one-off act or a repeated course of conduct, and whether it appears the conduct was undertaken deliberately or not.

If you are a victim of or witness to sexual harassment, we encourage you to report it without delay in accordance with this policy. This will enable us to take appropriate action and provide support.

We will investigate any allegations in a timely manner, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. Where, following investigation, the evidence indicates that this policy has been breached, we will usually take action under our disciplinary procedure (which could result in a disciplinary sanction up to and including dismissal).

You should also be aware that if a court or tribunal finds that you have sexually harassed someone you could be personally liable to compensate the victim. In some circumstances the treatment may also amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

False accusations of sexual harassment can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Accordingly, false allegations or actions which are made in bad faith will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Individuals who make allegations of sexual harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result.

What should you do if you are being sexually harassed?

If you are being sexually harassed by a colleague: Informal resolution

Wm Lee Ltd strongly encourages any employee who feels they have been sexually harassed to take immediate action. You may be able to resolve the situation yourself by explaining clearly to the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable, that you consider it to be contrary to our policy and that it must stop.

Alternatively, you could speak with your manager or another colleague to seek guidance on how best to resolve the issue.

If the above approach does not work or if you do not want to try to resolve the situation in this way, or if you are being sexually harassed by your own manager, you should raise the issue with the HR Manager. They may try to resolve the situation informally by telling the alleged perpetrator(s), without prejudging the matter, that: there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a fellow employee; such behaviour is contrary to our policy; and the continuation of such behaviour could amount to a serious disciplinary offence. It may be possible for the HR Manager to have this conversation with the alleged perpetrator(s) without revealing your name, if this is what you want. They will also stress that the conversation is confidential.

In certain circumstances we may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The HR Manager will discuss this with you if it is appropriate.

If your complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator(s) will not generally be subject to any disciplinary sanction. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as where your concern involves a serious allegation of sexual harassment, or in cases where the behaviour has occurred before) we may decide to investigate further and take more formal action notwithstanding that you raised the matter informally. We will consult with you before taking this step.

If you are being sexually harassed by a colleague: Formal complaint procedure

If informal resolution is inappropriate or unsuccessful, you should make a formal written complaint about the sexual harassment to the HR Manager. If the matter concerns that person, you should refer it to the Managing Director. A formal complaint may ultimately lead to disciplinary action against the perpetrator(s).

Your formal complaint should include the following details: the name of the alleged perpetrator(s); the nature of the sexual harassment; the dates and times the sexual harassment occurred; the names of any witnesses; and any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally.

As a general principle, the decision whether to progress a complaint is up to you. However, we have a duty to protect all staff and may pursue the matter independently if, in all the circumstances, we consider it appropriate to do so.

You will be invited to a meeting to consider your complaint and to discuss any suggestions you have for how it may be resolved. The meeting will normally be held within five working days of your formal complaint being raised. At the meeting, you may be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union official, who must also respect the confidential nature of the meeting.

We will then conduct an investigation into your complaint. The investigation will be carried out by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the complaint. It may be necessary to interview witnesses as part of the investigation. If so, we will stress to them the importance of confidentiality.

The alleged perpetrator(s) will normally need to be told your name and the details of your complaint in order for the issue to be investigated properly. However, we will carry out the investigation as promptly, confidentially and sensitively as possible.

Where you and the alleged perpetrator(s) work in proximity to each other, we may consider it inappropriate for you to continue to do so while the complaint is being investigated and during any consequent disciplinary proceedings. This may necessitate that one or both parties be suspended on full pay or transferred to an alternative role on a temporary basis.

After the investigation, we will meet with you to consider the complaint and the findings of the investigation. At the meeting, you may be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union official, who must also respect the confidential nature of the meeting.

After the meeting we will write to you to inform you of our decision and to notify you of your right to appeal to a more senior manager if you are dissatisfied with the outcome.

If you wish to appeal, you should put your appeal in writing explaining the reasons why you are dissatisfied with our decision. If you submit an appeal, you will normally be invited to attend a meeting to consider it. Where practicable, the appeal meeting will be conducted by a manager who has not been previously involved in the case and is senior to the individual who conducted the previous meeting. They may ask anyone previously involved to be present. You have the right to bring a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting. We will write to you after any appeal meeting to confirm our final decision. Following this stage, there will be no further right of appeal.

Where the alleged perpetrator is an employee and the evidence gathered in the investigation indicates that a disciplinary offence has been committed, our disciplinary procedure will usually be instigated and a disciplinary meeting under that procedure will be arranged to deal with the alleged disciplinary offence. In accordance with that procedure, the alleged perpetrator will be provided with relevant evidence about the allegations against them and will be given a full opportunity to respond.

Where the investigation indicates that a disciplinary offence has been committed, aggravating factors, such as abuse of power over a more junior colleague, will be taken into account in deciding what disciplinary action to take.

Alternatives to disciplinary action may be considered in some instances. Where the investigation indicates that no disciplinary offence has been committed, both you and the alleged perpetrator will be informed in writing.

Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the individual concerned (for example, we will consider whether mediation and/or counselling, or a change of duties, working location or reporting lines would be appropriate in the circumstances).

We retain the discretion to choose whether to hold meetings in person or remotely, as appropriate, depending on the circumstances. If a meeting is to be held remotely:

- we will ensure that all participants (including, if applicable, any permitted person that you choose as a companion) can access the necessary technology and materials
- we ask you to inform us if you have a disability or other accessibility issue that could affect your ability to use video conferencing technology so that we can consider any reasonable adjustments
- you must not have anyone else in the room with you during the meeting (other than your permitted chosen companion, if applicable, if they are attending from the same physical location as you).

If you are being/have been sexually harassed by a third party (such as a customer, supplier or visitor to our premises)

If you are being sexually harassed by a third party, such as a customer, supplier, or visitor to our premises (or when visiting a customer or supplier's premises or other location in the course of your employment), please raise this with your immediate manager or HR without delay. We will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you. We will consider what action may be appropriate to protect you and anyone involved pending the outcome of the investigation, bearing in mind the reasonable needs of the business and the rights of that person. Where appropriate, we will attempt to discuss the matter with the third party. We will also seriously consider any request that you make for changes to your own working arrangements during the investigation. For example, you may ask for changes to your duties or working hours to avoid or minimise contact with the alleged harasser.

Third-party harassment can result in legal liability and will not be tolerated. All staff are encouraged to report any third-party sexual harassment they are a victim of, or witness, in accordance with this policy.

If any third-party sexual harassment of staff occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include warning the harasser about their behaviour, banning them from our premises, reporting any criminal acts to the police and sharing information with the Castings group if appropriate.

Any sexual harassment by a member of staff against a third party may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

If you witness sexual harassment

Staff who witness sexual harassment are encouraged to take appropriate steps to address it. Depending on the circumstances, appropriate steps could include intervening where you feel able to do so; supporting the victim to report the incident; reporting the incident on the individual's behalf; and/or co-operating with any investigation. All witnesses will be provided with appropriate support and will be protected from victimisation.

Your rights and responsibilities

- You have the right not to experience sexual harassment at work and to be treated with dignity and respect.
- You have a responsibility to comply with this policy and to help us to implement it.
- You have a duty not to sexually harass anyone at work (including third parties with whom you come into contact at work) and not to help anyone else do so.
- You also have a duty to treat others with dignity and respect.

How can we all help prevent sexual harassment?

We all have a shared responsibility to help create and maintain an environment free of sexual harassment. You can do this by:

- Considering how your own behaviour may affect others, and amending it accordingly
- Being receptive, rather than defensive, if asked to modify your behaviour
- Treating your colleagues with dignity and respect
- Taking a stand if you think inappropriate comments, jokes or behaviour is occurring
- Making it clear to others if you find their behaviour unacceptable
- Intervening, if possible, to stop sexual harassment and giving support to others
- Reporting sexual harassment or potential sexual harassment in the appropriate manner to either your line manager, or HR.

Risk assessments and ongoing monitoring

We recognise that we have a proactive duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of our staff during the course of their employment (including with respect to third parties) and we take this duty seriously. We will take active steps to help prevent the sexual harassment of all staff, in accordance with the risks identified in our risk assessment(s) and will keep these under regular review.

We will consult with trade union representatives about the action we propose to implement as part of our compliance with the preventative duty.

We will monitor the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of sexual harassment we receive to ensure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, and workforce training is targeted where needed.

Confidentiality, data protection and record keeping

We aim to deal with complaints of sexual harassment sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of the individuals involved. All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with a complaint under this procedure. Details of any investigation and the names of the person making the complaint, and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action.

Conducting investigations and formal meetings under this procedure involves us processing the personal data of the employees concerned. We use this personal data in order to investigate and deal with complaints of sexual harassment. Our legal grounds for doing so are that it is necessary:

- to comply with our legal obligations (e.g. to investigate and deal with sexual harassment complaints in accordance with our duty of trust and confidence to our employees; to ensure a safe working environment under health and safety laws)
- for the performance of the employment contract (i.e. to investigate and deal with sexual harassment complaints in accordance with our duty of trust and confidence to our employees)
- in our legitimate interest to deal effectively with sexual harassment complaints, whether you are the subject of them or are otherwise connected to the issues raised.

Special category data¹ and data relating to criminal convictions or offences may occasionally need to be processed under this procedure – for example, where an employee asserts that they are being sexually harassed because of their race or sexual orientation, or where an employee requires a reasonable adjustment to the procedure to accommodate a disability. Our additional legal grounds for using such data are that this is necessary: to exercise legal rights/comply with legal obligations in relation to employment; and to establish, exercise or defend legal claims.

Where we take witness statements from employees with information about the complaint being investigated under this procedure, such statements will be treated confidentially and will only be shared with individuals who need to be involved in the process. This will ordinarily be: HR; the person/people conducting investigations; and the managers conducting any formal meeting or appeal. In addition, if in the course of the procedure it becomes apparent that misconduct has taken place which requires investigation under our disciplinary policy, witness statements taken under this procedure may be used in any subsequent disciplinary procedure and may therefore be shared with the person/people conducting investigations and hearings, as well as the employee whose conduct is the subject of disciplinary proceedings, to enable them to prepare for the hearing and respond to the allegations against them.

We will keep records of complaints dealt with under this procedure in accordance with the criteria set out in our main employee privacy notice.

More general information, including details of who your personal data is shared with, your rights under data protection law and who you should contact if you have any concerns, is contained in our main employee privacy notice, which can be accessed via <https://www.wmlee.co.uk/financial-data-protection-info/> or a copy can be obtained from the HR department.

¹ i.e. personal data that reveals racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, physical or mental health conditions, sex life or sexual orientation, biometric data that is used to identify an individual, or genetic data

Further support

We understand that anyone affected by, or involved with, a complaint of sexual harassment may feel anxious or upset and we will do what we can to provide appropriate support. Confidential counselling is available on request/via our employee assistance programme for anyone affected by, or accused of, bullying or harassment. Please contact the HR department for details or alternatively you may contact them direct on 0800 0920987 quoting 71718.

Support and guidance can also be obtained from our onsite Mental Health First Aiders and your trade union and the following external services:

- The Equality Advisory and Support Service (www.equalityadvisoryservice.com).
- Protect (www.protect-advice.org.uk).
- Victim Support (www.victimsupport.org.uk).
- Rape crisis (www.rapecrisis.org.uk).
- Rights of women (England and Wales) (www.rightsofwomen.org.uk).

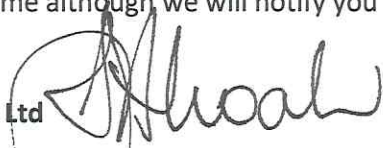
Review

We will review this policy at regular intervals or as the need arises in consultation with recognised trade unions. We will monitor its effectiveness and implement any changes that may be required.

Status of this policy

This policy does not give contractual rights to individual employees. The company reserves the right to alter any of its terms at any time although we will notify you in writing of any changes.

Signed on behalf of Wm. Lee Ltd



DATE: 13 Dec 2024

Signed on behalf of Unite the Union



DATE: 11-12-24

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