

# Key Strategies for Tackling the Sexual Harassment of LGBT+ Colleagues at Work

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# Sexual harassment at work – behaviours

- Indecent or suggestive remarks
- Questions, jokes, or suggestions about a colleague's sex life, sexuality or identity
- The display of pornography in the workplace
- The circulation of pornography (by email or on whatsapp, or sharing inappropriate videos and images for example)
- Unwelcome and inappropriate touching, hugging or kissing
- Requests or demands for sexual favours
- Any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating working environment.

# Sexual harassment in the workplace – what our research tells us

- Around seven out of ten (68 per cent) LGBT+ workers reported experienced at least one type of sexual harassment at work.
- Almost one in eight LGBT+ women (12 per cent) reported being seriously sexually assaulted or raped at work.
- Almost half (47 per cent) of LGBT+ workers have heard comments of a sexual nature at work about LGBT+ colleagues.
- Over a quarter (27 per cent) of LGBT+ workers reported receiving unwelcome verbal sexual advances in the workplace.

# Sexual harassment in the workplace – what our research tells us

LGBT women are:

- More than twice as likely to report unwanted touching (35 per cent of women compared to 16 per cent of men).
- Almost twice as likely to report experiencing sexual assault. More than one fifth (21 per cent) of women compared to 12 per cent of men.
- Almost twice as likely to experience serious sexual assault or rape. Around one in eight women (12 per cent) compared to one in fourteen (7 per cent) of men.

# Sexual harassment in the workplace – what our research tells us

- Two thirds (66 per cent) of those who were harassed did not report it.
- One in four (25 per cent) of those who did not report the harassment being silenced by fear of 'outing' themselves at work.
- Union members were more likely to report their experiences of sexual harassment to their employer and say it was taken seriously and dealt with satisfactorily.

*Taken from our research 'Sexual Harassment of LGBT People in the Workplace' available at [https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/LGBT\\_Sexual\\_Harassment\\_Report\\_0.pdf](https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/LGBT_Sexual_Harassment_Report_0.pdf)*

# Preventing sexual harassment in the workplace

## The preventative duty

- The preventative duty is a legal duty on employers to take all reasonable steps to prevent and tackle sexual harassment in their workplaces.
- Responsibility for third party harassment has also been reintroduced.

# Preventing sexual harassment in the workplace

## Toolkit

- Risk Assessments.
- Climate surveys.
- Explicit commitment through anti-sexual harassment workplace policy.

## Other measures

- Training programmes.
- Safe reporting routes.
- Diversifying the workplace.
- Ongoing work, not just a one off tick box exercise.

# Writing inclusive policies

- **Be clear who is covered.** You should include employees, casual workers and agency workers, freelancers, and third parties. You should use gender neutral and inclusive language.
- **Define Sexual Harassment** and provide a broad range of examples of it, specific to your work environment, including examples of harassment rooted in homophobia, biphobia or transphobia.
- **Set out safe reporting routes** that are accessible to all those covered by the policy, the specific processes for receiving and responding to reports of sexual harassment, as well as what steps will be taken to remedy or prevent harassment from occurring again. Consider the role of any LGBT+ network/affinity group.



# Training

- **Communicate consistently** about your organisation's zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, what constitutes sexual harassment, and your workplace policy.
- Pay particular attention to **induction and onboarding** processes, including for agency workers and freelancers and self-employed contractors.
- Training should be **developed with specialists** as well as experts from within your own organisation, including trade union reps.
- Training should be **mandatory and repeated regularly**.

# Useful links

- <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/still-just-bit-banter>
- <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/sexual-harassment-lgbt-people-workplace>
- <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/sexual-harassment-disabled-women-workplace>
- <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/not-part-job>
- [Preventing Sexual Harassment | TUC](#)

The logo consists of the letters 'TUC' in a bold, sans-serif font. Each letter is white with a light blue gradient and features a white arrow pointing in a specific direction: the 'T' points up, the 'U' points down, and the 'C' points right.

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