Employment Rights Act 2025 – strengthen protection from harassment

From 30 October 2026, the Employment Rights Act 2025 strengthens protections from harassment. Employers must take "**all reasonable steps"** to prevent sexual harassment and not permit the harassment of their employees by third parties. The third party harassment covers all types of harassment under the Equality Act 2010, including sexual harassment and harassment related to protected characteristic apart from pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership. It also expands whistleblowing protection to disclosures of sexual harassment from 6 April 2026.

Local action will be key. If someone raises a concern, listen without judgement, consider any immediate risk and seek advice. You are not expected to manage a complex concern alone.

Across NHSG, managers and supervisors should check where risks could arise. Staff may face sexual harassment from patients, relatives, visitors, contractors or others they meet at work. Everyone has an important role to play in preventing sexual harassment and creating a workplace where inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated.

Set clear expectations, identify where risks could arise and address inappropriate conduct early.

Find information about recognising, preventing, responding and accessing support and advice to sexual harassment on the Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Staff are encouraged to access e-Learning modules in Turas: Preventing and responding to sexual harassment, Responding to a disclosure of rape or sexual assault, and Gender-based violence learning resources.

Updated guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

On 30 October, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published the updated guidance on harassment at work, and also updated 8-step guide for employers on preventing workplace sexual harassment.

No one should be expected to deal with a concern alone. Support includes:

If you need…	Contact…
Initial support within your service or department	Your line manager or another appropriate manager
Informal support, information and signposting if you have, or are considering raising, a whistleblowing concern	Confidential Contacts (Speak Up Ambassadors)

NHS Grampian online anonymous reporting of discrimination, harassment or prejudice incident	NHSG Online Reporting
To raise a concern about wrongdoing, patient safety, working conditions or workplace culture	NHSG Whistleblowing NHSG Speak Up NHSG Speak Up 8 Ways We Listen
Advice if you believe that you or a colleague has experienced bullying or harassment Guidance on HR policies, terms and conditions, casework or other employment matters	HR Hub O1224 552888
Trade unions and professional organisations	Contact your Trade Union Rep How to join (Intranet)
Confidential, inclusive emotional, spiritual or bereavement support, regardless of faith or belief	Spiritual Care (Intranet)
Specialist advice and support about health, wellbeing or work-related concerns	Occupational Health Services (Intranet)
Staff health and wellbeing portal	We Care
Scotland-wide online resources that provides free mental, physical and wellbeing support for everyone working in health and social care.	National Wellbeing Hub
NHS healthcare following rape or sexual assault, including access to a forensic medical examination where appropriate	NHS Scotland Sexual Assault Response Co-ordination Service
Confidential support relating to domestic abuse or forced marriage, including support for family members, friends, colleagues and professionals	Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline
Free, confidential and culturally sensitive support for Muslim and Minority Ethnic women, including support relating to domestic abuse	Amina - The Muslim Women's Resource Centre
Confidential information, emotional support, safety planning and refuge support for women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse	Grampian Women's Aid
Advice on managing risks involving work-related violence, aggression or staff safety	Prevention and Management of Violence and Aggression (Intranet)
Information about asking Police Scotland whether someone has a history of domestic abuse	Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland
Confidential support for anyone aged 13 or over affected by sexual violence, including survivors and people supporting them	Rape Crisis Scotland

For more information, please contact Equality and Diversity
gram.equalitydiversity@nhs.scot