

Durham Diocesan Board of Finance (DDBF)

Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy

Date of Approval by Bishop's Council: March 2025

Policy Owner: Head of HR

Next Review Date: March 2027

Policy Author: Nicole Davies., HR Advisor

1. Policy Statement

1.1. This policy applies to employees of the DDBF, and should be read in conjunction with the Complaints Procedure which can be found on the Diocesan website, and the Staff Handbook.

1.2. The DDBF is committed to providing a safe environment for its employees free from discrimination on any ground and from harassment at work including sexual harassment. The DDBF will operate a zero-tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment in the workplace, treat all incidents seriously and promptly investigate all allegations of sexual harassment. Any person found to have sexually harassed another will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment. All complaints of sexual harassment, including by third parties, will be taken seriously and treated with respect and in confidence. No one will be victimised for making such a complaint.

2. Definition of Sexual Harassment

2.1. Sexual Harassment, as defined by the [Equality Act 2010](#), is when a person engages in unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical that creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment.

2.2. Sexual harassment can involve one or more incidents and actions constituting harassment may be physical, verbal and non-verbal. Examples of conduct or behavior which constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

2.3. Physical Conduct

- Unwelcome and/or inappropriate physical contact including patting, pinching, stroking, kissing, hugging or touching;
- Physical violence, including sexual assault;
- The use of job-related threats or rewards to solicit sexual favours;

2.4. Verbal Conduct

- Comments on a worker's appearance, age, private life etc.;
- Sexual comments, stories, jokes;
- Sexual advances;
- Repeated and unwanted social invitations for dates or physical intimacy;
- Insults based on the sex of the worker;
- Condescending remarks;

2.5. Non-verbal Conduct

- Display of sexually explicit or suggestive material;
- Sexually suggestive gestures;
- Sending sexually explicit messages; or
- Whistling or Leering.

2.6. Anyone can be a victim of sexual harassment, regardless of their gender or the gender of the harasser. The DDBF recognises that sexual harassment may occur between people of the same gender.

3. Procedure for Dealing with Alleged Sexual Harassment

3.1. If you believe that you have been the subject of sexual harassment, where appropriate, you should, in the first instance, ask the harasser to stop the behaviour, as it is unacceptable to you. The DDBF recognises that sexual harassment may occur in unequal relationships (i.e. between a manager and junior employee) and that it may not be possible for the victim to inform the alleged harasser.

3.2. You should report the incident to your manager as soon as possible to enable the DDBF to deal with the matter. If you are unable to report the incident to your direct line manager, you should report the incident to another senior manager, the Head of Human Resources, or the Diocesan Secretary, or if this is not appropriate, you can report the incident to the Vice Chair of the DDBF. The DDBF understands the importance of ensuring that senior personnel of both genders are available for the purpose of making any sexual harassment report. You can choose to either raise the problem informally or raise a grievance or formal complaint.

3.3. If you decide to make a formal complaint you should make this in accordance with the DDBF Grievance Procedure as soon as possible after the incident occurred. You will be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for filing the complaint or assisting with an investigation. Retaliating against a member of staff for complaining about sexual harassment is a disciplinary offence, as set out within the Staff Handbook.

4. Third Party Sexual Harassment

4.1. Third party sexual harassment refers to sexual harassment towards an employee instigated by someone not employed in or who is outside of the workplace. Legislation confirms that employers must take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment by third parties. The DDBF is committed to protecting employees from sexual harassment in the workplace by third parties.

4.2. The term ‘Third Party’ refers to someone who an employee may interact with as part of their role but who is not employed by the DDBF. Some examples of third parties include:

- Parishioners and Church Officers;
- Clergy (who are not employees of the DDBF);
- Employees of parishes, National Church Institutions or partner organisations; and
- Contractors.

This list is not exhaustive and may include other groups.

4.3. If you believe you have suffered sexual harassment from a third party, you should report the incident to your manager as soon as possible to enable the DDBF to deal with the matter. If you are unable to report the incident to your direct line manager, you should report the incident to another senior manager, the Head of HR or the Diocesan Secretary. To raise a concern about a member of the clergy, or an external contractor, please see the Complaints Procedure on the Diocesan website.