



# Sexual Harassment Policy

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## Introduction

At Christ Church London (CCL) we believe everyone should be treated with dignity and respect and that includes freedom from sexual harassment, feeling safe and supported, and having access to redress if such behaviour does arise.

Sexual harassment takes many forms, but whatever form it takes it is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 (EqA) as amended. We are committed to taking reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment for our congregation, and to ensure the church is safe and supportive to those who work with us. This includes employees, volunteers, contractors and third parties in all areas of our church. If you have been sexually harassed, or you have witnessed sexual harassment, we encourage you to tell us so that we can support you and take steps to resolve the situation. We maintain an open-door policy and encourage our people to come forward with any concerns in relation to sexual harassment. Everyone engaging with the church, in all capacities, is responsible for upholding the principles of this policy. You can find definitions of harassment and sexual harassment at the end of this policy.

Instances of sexual harassment or victimisation by employees, volunteers or third parties will be subject to our disciplinary procedure outlined below.

This policy is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains up to date and to monitor its effectiveness, and any changes will be implemented and communicated to all.

## Overview

Sexual harassment may be committed by a colleague or a third party (such as volunteers, contractors, or visitors). It does not need to occur in person but can also be online, including social media sites or channels (e.g. WhatsApp). Someone may be sexually harassed even if they were not the target of the behaviour. A single incident of unwanted or offensive behaviour can amount to harassment.

Examples of harassment (including those of a sexual nature) include, but are not limited to:

- physical conduct, ranging from touching, pushing or grabbing to punching or serious assault
- inappropriate personal contact, including intrusion by pestering or spying



- verbal or written harassment through jokes, offensive language, defamatory remarks, gossip, name calling, threats or letters
- sexual comments or jokes, which may be referred to as “banter”
- lewd or abusive comments
- the sending or displaying of material that is sexually graphic, pornographic or obscene, including e-mails, text messages, video clips, photographs, posters, emblems or any other offensive material
- sending sexually explicit emails, text messages or other messages, posts via online communication
- inappropriate posts or comments on or via social media commonly known as "cyber bullying"
- suggestive looks, staring or leering or sexual gestures
- propositions, coercion for sexual favours and sexual advances
- making promises in return for sexual favours
- intrusive questions about a person’s private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life
- spreading sexual rumours about a person
- unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing
- isolation, non-co-operation at work or exclusion from conversations and social activities

It should be noted that it is the impact of the behaviour that is relevant and not solely the motive or intent behind it.

**Victimisation** is subjecting someone to detriment because they have done, are suspected of doing, or intend to do, an act which is protected under discrimination and harassment laws. These are outlined below. It is not necessary for the person to have done the protected act in order for detrimental treatment to be considered as victimisation.

The protected acts are:

- making a claim or complaint under the EqA (e.g. for discrimination or harassment)
- helping someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the EqA
- making an allegation that someone has breached the EqA
- doing anything else in connection with the EqA.

Examples of victimisation may include:

- failing to consider someone for promotion or volunteer opportunity because they have previously made a sexual harassment complaint



- dismissing someone because they accompanied a colleague to a meeting about a sexual harassment complaint
- excluding someone from meetings or events because they gave evidence as a witness for another employee as part of an employment tribunal claim about harassment.

## Circumstances Which Are Covered

This policy covers behaviour which occurs in the following circumstances:

- a work situation
- a church situation or midweek church run event
- a situation occurring outside of the normal workplace or normal working hours which is related to work, e.g. a working lunch, a trip, or social functions
- outside of a work situation but involving a colleague or other person connected to the church, including on social media
- against anyone outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to your suitability to carry out the role / represent the church.

## What To Do If You Are Subject to Sexual Harassment or Victimisation

Your safety and dignity is of the utmost importance to CCL, so we encourage you to talk to us if you believe you have received unwanted conduct. Your complaint will be handled sensitively and we will work together to find a resolution.

## Informal Complaint

We recognise that complaints of sexual harassment or victimisation can be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that it may not be appropriate for you to raise the issue through our normal formal procedure. In these circumstances, you may want to raise such issues with the Head of People & Pastoral Care or the Trustee with responsibility for staff wellbeing. However, please be aware that this person cannot be the same person who will be responsible for investigating the matter if it becomes a formal complaint.

If you feel comfortable to do so, and with help from pastoral support, you may want to have an informal conversation with your harasser to explain their conduct is unwanted and that you want it to stop. If you feel unable to do this verbally then you could send a written request to the harasser.



In addition, you may also choose to raise concerns with your manager or a Service Leader in a way that is most comfortable for you. They will listen to you and take your concerns seriously if you do this, but they may encourage you to follow the reporting procedures set out below.

## Formal Complaint

Where the informal approach fails or if the harassment or victimisation is more serious, you should bring the matter to the attention of one of the Senior Leaders a formal written complaint and again, someone from the Pastoral Care team can assist you in this.

Alternatively, you may wish to raise your complaint to the Chair of Trustees or to the Head of Pastoral Care by emailing [pastoralsupport@christchurchlondon.org](mailto:pastoralsupport@christchurchlondon.org). You will be contacted within one week.

If possible, you should keep notes of what happened so that the written complaint can include:

- the name of the alleged harasser
- the nature of the alleged harassment
- the dates and times when the alleged harassment occurred
- the names of any witnesses
- any supportive evidence you may have and are willing to disclose
- any action already taken by you to stop the alleged harassment.

On receipt of a formal complaint, we will take action to separate you from the alleged harasser to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place. This may involve a temporary transfer of the alleged harasser to another work area or in the case of employees, suspension with contractual pay until the matter has been resolved. The person dealing with the complaint will invite you to attend a meeting, at a reasonable time and location, to discuss the matter and carry out a thorough investigation. The meeting will normally be held within 10 working days of receipt of your complaint. You have the right to be accompanied at such a meeting by a companion or another colleague and you must take all reasonable steps to attend. Those involved in the investigation will act in confidence and any breach of confidence may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

At the conclusion of the investigation, which will normally be within 20 working days of the meeting with you, the decision of the investigator, detailing the findings, will be sent in writing to you.

You have the right to appeal against the findings of the investigator. If you wish to appeal, you must inform one of the Senior Leaders within five working days of receiving the outcome. You will then be invited to a further meeting. As far as reasonably practicable, the church will be represented by a Senior



Leader, and/or a trustee or someone external (for example, a mediator or external HR Consultant). Following the appeal meeting, you will be informed of the final decision, normally within 15 working days, which will be confirmed in writing.

Regardless of the outcome of the procedure, we are committed to providing the support you may need. This may involve mediation between you and the other party or some other measure to manage the ongoing relationship.

You will not be victimised for having brought a complaint.

## **What to Do if You Witness Sexual Harassment or Victimisation**

If you witness sexual harassment or victimisation, you are encouraged to take appropriate action to address it. You should not take any action that may put you at risk of sexual harassment or other harm. If you feel able, you should intervene to prevent the matter continuing. If you are not able to do this, your action may include offering support to the person who has been sexually harassed and encouraging them to report the incident or reporting the incident yourself.

If reporting the incident, you should bring the matter to the attention of the Head of People & Pastoral Care by emailing [pastoralsupport@christchurchlondon.org](mailto:pastoralsupport@christchurchlondon.org). You will be contacted within 7 days if further information or support is necessary. Complaints are dealt with in confidence. Please be aware that as part of our wider safeguarding measures, the Board of Trustees will be notified of the situation but that your complaint will be held with the utmost confidentiality.

Your concerns will be handled by either the Head of People & Pastoral Care, a Service Leader or one of the Senior Leaders who will sensitively talk to the person subject to sexual harassment to determine how they want the matter to be handled.

## **Third-party Sexual Harassment**

Third-party sexual harassment occurs when a member of our congregation, employee or volunteer is subjected to sexual harassment by someone who is not an employee or volunteer with us but who is encountered in connection with the Church. This includes visitors, service users, customers, contractors, members of the public, friends and family of the congregation. We will not tolerate sexual harassment by any member of our team against a third party.

In order to prevent third-party sexual harassment from occurring, we will:



- Have our policy available on our website
- pay attention to more vulnerable people and those who might be less likely to report incidents of harassment
- allow for anonymous reporting of incidents of harassment
- make sure our people have more than one trusted person they can speak to, other than their Service Leader, if they have an issue and make sure that they know who they are

If you have been subjected to third-party sexual harassment or witness someone sexually harass a member of our team (employee or volunteer) you are encouraged to report this as soon as possible. Christ Church London will implement protective measures such as warn them about their behaviour, restrict the third party's access to church premises, issuing formal caution/warnings to the individual, report the matter to any third party personnel, terminating their interaction with the church community where necessary.

Any criminal acts will be reported to the police, and we will share information relating to the incident with our other branches and/or partners to ensure that we maintain a consistent approach.

We will not tolerate sexual harassment by any member of our team against a third party. Instances of sexual harassment of this kind may lead to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

## **Disciplinary Action**

If the decision is that the allegation of sexual harassment or victimisation is well founded, the harasser will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure up to, and including, summary dismissal if they are a staff member. If that person receives a formal warning or is dismissed for sexual harassment/victimisation, they may appeal using our disciplinary appeal procedure. In the case of volunteers, they may be asked to step down from any teams they are supporting and depending on the severity they may be asked to leave the church. Where appropriate, incidents will be reported to the police or relevant authorities.

In cases of third-party harassment or allegations, the church will follow its standard disciplinary process, which may include pastoral intervention, safeguarding procedures, and, if necessary, formal church discipline. If the behaviour persists or poses a serious risk, the individual may be asked to leave. When deciding on the level of disciplinary sanction to be applied, we will take into consideration any aggravating factors affecting the case. One example of aggravating factors is an abuse of power.



## Training

We will provide training on harassment to ensure there is a clear understanding of:

- what sexual harassment is, how it may occur and that it will not be tolerated
- expected levels of behaviour
- how they can report any incidents of having been sexually harassed or having witnessed it
- how acts of harassment will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure, which can potentially result in dismissal.

We will ensure that the Leadership Team are trained on this policy, including preventing and managing sexual harassment in the workplace and the procedure to follow if an allegation is reported.

## Definitions

***Harassment** is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct based on sex, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, religion or belief, age, race or disability which affects the dignity of anyone at work or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.*

***Sexual Harassment** is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. It also covers treating someone less favourably because they have submitted to, or refused to submit to, unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or in relation to gender reassignment or sex.*