

SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL

Subject : Dignity at Work policy
Committee : Personnel Committee
Date : 25 November 2024
Author : Tracy Adams, Head of HR

Agenda Item: 12

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 introduces a proactive duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. While previous legislation focused on employer responses to reported incidents, this new law prioritises prevention, requiring measures to reduce the likelihood of harassment occurring.
- 1.2. Employers who fail to demonstrate reasonable preventative measures may face increased penalties in tribunal cases, including a potential 25% increase in compensation if found liable. Additionally, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) now has the authority to enforce compliance, which includes investigating harassment reports that may not have been raised directly with the employer.
- 1.3. The Council's Dignity at Work policy has been updated to reflect these changes.

2. Background

- 2.1. Key updates to the policy include:
 - 2.1.1. References to behaviour at work-related social events and on social media.
 - 2.1.2. A requirement for all managers to complete and implement risk assessments focused on identifying and controlling potential sexual harassment risks within their teams.
 - 2.1.3. Expanded definitions of harassment, sexual harassment, and victimisation, alongside a clear description of actions that may be taken. This section includes considerations for third-party harassment, with actions tailored to the nature of the work with external parties.
 - 2.1.4. The introduction of an anonymous reporting channel for raising harassment concerns, including sexual harassment. Managers of teams that don't regularly use IT systems will be asked to consider alternative anonymous reporting options suitable for their teams.
 - 2.1.5. Clear guidance on the procedure following a formal grievance.
 - 2.1.6. A section outlining support available for individuals involved in harassment cases.

3.Recommendation:

3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

3.1.1 Agrees to the revisions suggested in the Dignity at Work policy and associated actions

4 **Wards Affected:** All

5 **Background papers:**

Dignity at Work policy – tracked changes document

6 **Implications:**

6.1 **Financial:** Failure to consider the changes required under the new *Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023* may result in a potential uplift if a claim were successful at tribunal.

6.2 **Legal:** the above legislation was introduced on 26 October 2024.

6.3 **Personnel:** This policy applies to all staff as well as third parties, including individuals who do not work directly for SCC.

6.4 **Environmental Impact:** None.

6.5 **Equalities Impact Statement:** Sexual harassment protections apply to all gender identifies equally.