



## Sexual Safety of NHS staff and patients

# Sexual Safety of NHS staff and patients: **timeline**

**July 2022** : Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Programme established

**June 2023** : Letter from Steve Russell– outlining specific work with ICBs to support discharge of responsibilities

3 priority areas of focus:

1. Supporting our staff
2. National Leadership
3. Improving data collection

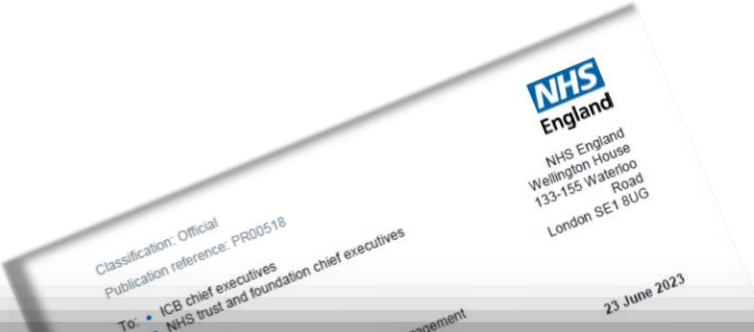
Chief Executives of ICBs and trusts to:

**13<sup>th</sup> July 2023** – Deadline to appoint Domestic Abuse and Violence leads [Executive member and designated operational lead]

- Review policies and support – including data collection and analysis, dedicated sexual safety policies.
- Sign up to DASV Future Collaboration Platform

**4<sup>th</sup> September 2023**: Sexual safety in healthcare – organisational charter launched [BHFT are listed as signatories]

**July 2024**: Expected that signatories will implement all ten commitments.



**“Any abuse is unacceptable, and I know you will share my determination to keep staff and patients safe. It is therefore timely that we redouble our efforts to ensure that every part of the NHS takes a systematic zero-tolerance approach to tackle this issue which encompasses prevention, support and decisive action against perpetrators..”**

Steve Russell, Chief Delivery Officer, NHS England

# Context

A UNISON study of members working in health in 2019, 'It's Never Ok' found that nearly one in ten (8%) respondents had been sexually harassed in the previous year. Of these, nearly a third (31%) said the harassment was frequent or regular, and more than one in ten (12%) said it occurred daily or weekly. The vast majority (81%) of those harassed identified as female. (2)

There is a risk that tolerating sexualised behaviour creates a culture where sexual harassment is more likely to occur. The 2019 LRD report, '*Reducing the likelihood of sexual harassment at work*' shows that if sexualised behaviour and sexual objectification of women is perceived to be tolerated in the workplace, there is more likely to be an occurrence of sexual harassment. (3) page 24)

Less than one in 10 NHS trusts has a dedicated policy to deal with allegations of sexual assault and harassment, an investigation has found. (1)

Studies also acknowledge that Sexual harassment is linked with power - either through the abuse of power by the perpetrator who feels more powerful than the target, or when the perpetrator feels powerless and uses the sexual harassment as a means of disempowering the target. (4) (2023, Page 13)

(1) <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/nhs-trusts-missing-sexual-assault-policies/>

(2) [UNISON Sexual Harassment is a Workplace Issue](#) (Feb 2020, page 5)

(3) [Labour Research Department Tackling Sexual Harassment at Work \(2019\)](#)

(4) [Sexual Harassment in the workplace](#) (2023, page 18)

# Sexual Safety of NHS staff and patients: charter

Organisations across the healthcare system need to work together and individually to tackle unwanted, inappropriate and/or harmful sexual behaviour in the workplace. We all have a responsibility to ourselves and our colleagues and must act if we witness these behaviours. **As signatories to this charter, we commit to a zero-tolerance approach to any unwanted, inappropriate and/or harmful sexual behaviours towards our workforce.** We commit to the following principles and actions to achieve this:

1. We will actively work to eradicate sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace.
2. We will promote a culture that fosters openness and transparency, and does not tolerate unwanted, harmful and/or inappropriate sexual behaviours.
3. We will take an intersectional approach to the sexual safety of our workforce, recognising certain groups will experience sexual harassment and abuse at a disproportionate rate.
4. We will provide appropriate support for those in our workforce who experience unwanted, inappropriate and/or harmful sexual behaviours.
5. We will clearly communicate standards of behaviour. This includes expected action for those who witness inappropriate, unwanted and/or harmful sexual behaviour.
6. We will ensure appropriate, specific, and clear policies are in place. They will include appropriate and timely action against alleged perpetrators.
7. We will ensure appropriate, specific, and clear training is in place.
8. We will ensure appropriate reporting mechanisms are in place for those experiencing these behaviours.
9. We will take all reports seriously and appropriate and timely action will be taken in all cases.
10. We will capture and share data on prevalence and staff experience transparently.

**These commitments will apply to everyone in our organisation equally. Where any of the above is not currently in place, we commit to work towards ensuring it is in place by July 2024.**

## NHS Frimley – Compliance with Sexual Safety in Healthcare Charter

1. We will actively work to eradicate sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace.		Named Executive Lead in place - attended national Executive training/ briefing
2. We will promote a culture that fosters openness and transparency, and does not tolerate unwanted, harmful and/or inappropriate sexual behaviours.		Frimley values and culture supports openness in all forms but no specific strategy on Sexual Safety.
3. We will take an intersectional approach to the sexual safety of our workforce, recognising certain groups will experience sexual harassment and abuse at a disproportionate rate.		<p>We have a proactive Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan in place which includes intersectionality, but no specific focus on internal sexual harassment at work.</p> <p>A sexual safety in healthcare workshop was included in Oct 2023 as part of the EDI event. It is a starting point but evidently not a complete solution.</p>
4. We will provide appropriate support for those in our workforce who experience unwanted, inappropriate and/or harmful sexual behaviours.		Usual support routes – eg line manager, employee assistance in place but no specific signposting re sexual safety issues.
5. We will clearly communicate standards of behaviour. This includes expected action for those who witness inappropriate, unwanted and/or harmful sexual behaviour.		<p>No communication strategy in place on this matter from ICB perspective.</p> <p>Staff briefing presentation planned for Dec 2023.</p>
6. We will ensure appropriate, specific, and clear policies are in place. They will include appropriate and timely action against alleged perpetrators.		People experiencing sexual harassment would need to use grievance/ disciplinary and FTSU routes, but this is assumed rather than openly stated. Grievance policy does not proactively mention sexual safety.
7. We will ensure appropriate, specific, and clear training is in place.		Apart from workshop held as part of EDI event, no training in place.
8. We will ensure appropriate reporting mechanisms are in place for those experiencing these behaviours.		No specific reporting mechanism in place – but people can report via FTSU/ Grievance routes
9. We will take all reports seriously and appropriate and timely action will be taken in all cases.		No formal commitment in place to confirm this.
10. We will capture and share data on prevalence and staff experience transparently.		Question to be included in staff survey - we need to prepare for and publicise this.

## Records of Sexual Safety Cases

Data gathered by the HR team confirms that Frimley NHS has a very small number of employment cases, and the majority are resolved informally. It appears that none of these include complaints or implications of sexual harassment.

Type of case	Number of cases (since 1 July 2022)	Formal/ informal	Sexual harassment elements?
Grievance	3	Informal	Not evident
Grievance/ FTSU	2	Grievance element informal	Not evident
FTSU	6		Not evident
Appeal	1	Formal – flexible working	Not evident
Disciplinary	0	N/A	Not evident

### Progress so far:

- Sexual Safety focused meeting with Just Culture group
- Review of our own data
- Exec lead appointed and attended Sexual Safety training/ briefing
- Sexual Safety workshop as part of EDI events (XX attended)

### Signatories in our system

- Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Frimley Heath NHS Foundation Trust

### Experience & Policy: Sexual Safety of Staff

[includes lived experience account]

Charlie Phillips & Dipen Rajyaguru

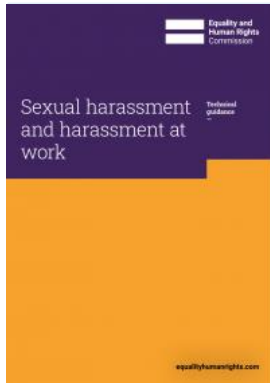
5<sup>th</sup> October 2023

12:30 – 14:00

*This session shares a lived experience story of Sexual Assault, and its' impacts. It then considers Sexual Assault and harassment in the wider context of an organisation.*

*Speakers will share examples of practical actions including a campaign, establishing a charter, education and training of staff. Discussion about how to create safe environments for reporting and supporting staff who are victims will also be shared.*

# Sexual Safety at work: insights beyond NHS



Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010

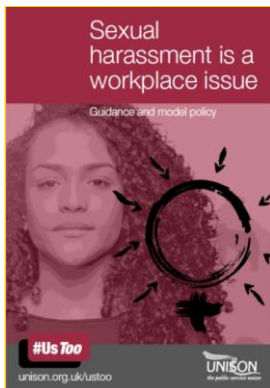
**Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance** offers a legal explanation and practical examples of how to tackle and respond effectively to harassment, including:

- definition and examples of harassment and victimisation
- the effect of harassment in the workplace
- your responsibilities as an employer
- how to prevent and respond to harassment

**Wales TUC toolkit** - Adopting a Trauma informed approach

Highlights important of responding appropriately, with empathy and centring the needs of the person disclosing.

- Focus on the impact that the experience has had, rather than the experience itself.
- Listen, validate, support.
- Give options, not advice. Victims deserve to be able to make informed choices and have the
- option of being at the centre of decision-making about their case.



**UNISON: Sexual harassment is an urgent workplace issue** includes guides and model policies

Highlights greater impact on certain groups:

- 2016 research found that more than half of all women polled have experienced some form of sexual harassment
- Black, LGBT+, younger or disabled workers and those with insecure work arrangements.
- Young women are particularly wary of reporting sexual harassment due to fear of losing their job
- Seven out ten LGBT workers experienced at least one type of sexual harassment at work

# Sexual Safety of NHS staff and patients: **next steps**

## 1. Get our own house in order

- Sign NHS England charter
- Staff briefing on Sexual Safety commitments
- Update our own policies

## 2. Support NHS Trusts across the system

- Collate list of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive and Operational leads across Frimley
- Encourage remaining organisations to sign up to charter
- Map progress across System partners (using checklist on slide 4)
- Engagement with relevant Health and Wellbeing boards
- Identify good practice policies
- Identify gaps and embed into Frimley action plans

## 3. Influence and enable system partners to engage with the Charter

- Through Just Culture, Civility and Respect meetings, share Charter commitments
- Share good practice across NHS and wider system
- Develop mechanisms for regular progress checks
- Create a community of practice to sustain best practice.

# Addressing Domestic Abuse: A Comprehensive Approach

## Introduction:

- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. Children are seen as victims and not as bystanders
- Domestic Abuse includes Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage and FGM

## 10 Key Initiatives

### 1. Pathfinder toolkit & Domestic Abuse Act 2021

- recommends an ICB lead for Domestic Abuse (D.A) and Whole Health project to coordinate a response to D.A

### 2. ICB Safeguarding Team

- has a dedicated D.A lead in place

### 3. Board Involvement

- D.A lead actively participates in Executive Board meetings in East Berks and NE Hants

- Co-Chair for Slough D.A Partnership Board with Police

### 4. Health Collaboration

- D.A lead Chair of the D.A Health only Group

focusing on:

~ Involves eight health providers

pathway

~ Supportive policy, procedures and

~ Frontline staff training

~ Sharing best practice

~ Identifying gaps

~ Data Collection

~ D.A Champions Scheme

- Task and finish group to look at how we capture the voice of the survivor

- Links with local Sexual Assault Referral Centre

## 10 Key Initiatives (continued)

### 5. Policy Implementation

- The ICB has a robust 'Domestic Abuse Support for Staff' Policy
- Committed to developing the Sexual Safety at work directive
- Aligning D.A work with the Serious Violence Duty, Prevent Duty, VAWG Strategy and Suicide Strategy

### 6. Health Advocacy

- Health Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (HIDVA) in place
- Covers Wexham and Frimley Park Hospitals for patient and staff, as well as D.A training
- Commissioned by Frimley Health Foundation Trust with contribution from ICB

### 7. Community Focus

- Diverse Communities Group meeting initiated by ICB with statutory, community and voluntary sectors attending
- Focus is on overcoming barriers that the diverse community face when accessing D.A services
- Represents the ICB on DHR/DSR panels across Frimley



### 8. Workplace Network Engagement

- ICB is a proud member of the Employment Initiatives on Domestic Abuse (EIDA) network.
- Demonstrates commitment to addressing domestic abuse in the workplace.

### 9. Training

- Level 1 mandatory for all staff e-learning safeguarding adults and children has a D.A element
- Level 2 e-learning and face to face offered by ICB to staff and Primary Care has a D.A element
- Level 3 face to face offered by ICB to staff and Primary Care
- D.A specific e-learning module available to all ICB staff
- preparing to deliver lunch time bite sized training to ICB and Primary Care staff

### 10. Communications

16 days of activism 24th Nov – 10th Dec 2023

- White Ribbon Day 25th November 2023
- sharing resources, external training, rapid reads and toolkits
- sharing social media campaigns across the ICS