



**Royston Town Council**  
**Sexual Harassment Policy**  
**Approved by Full Council 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024    Minute number 209/25**  
**Review date - November 2027**

## **Introduction**

The council is committed to providing a work environment free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. This policy outlines the council's zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and the procedures for reporting and addressing such behaviour.

## **Legal Duty to Prevent Sexual Harassment**

In accordance with the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, effective from 26 October 2024, the council has a duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. This includes:

- Implementing preventive measures such as regular training and clear communication of this policy.
- Creating a culture of respect and inclusion.
- Taking proactive steps to identify and mitigate risks of sexual harassment.

## **Definition of Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that makes someone feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated. It can include, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances.
- Inappropriate touching or physical contact.
- Sexual jokes or comments.
- Displaying sexually explicit materials.
- Sending sexually explicit emails or messages.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all employees as well as volunteers and elected officials associated with Royston Town Council.

## **Prohibited Conduct**

Sexual harassment in any form is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Making sexual propositions, innuendos, or suggestive comments
- Physical contact of a sexual nature without consent
- Sending sexually explicit messages or materials
- Creating a hostile or offensive work environment based on gender or sexual orientation.

## **Reporting Procedure**

Any employee who believes they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment is encouraged to report it immediately. Reports can be made to:

- The Chair of the HR sub-committee
- The Town Clerk

Reports can be made verbally or in writing and will be kept confidential to the extent possible. Retaliation against individuals who report sexual harassment is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **Investigation Procedure**

Upon receiving a report of sexual harassment, Royston Town Council will promptly and impartially investigate the allegations. The investigation will be conducted by the Town Clerk, or Deputy Town Clerk, and the Chair of the HR sub-committee, or another member of the HR sub-committee, who will interview the parties involved and any witnesses. All parties will be afforded due process and confidentiality to the extent possible.

## **Disciplinary Action**

If an investigation confirms that sexual harassment has occurred, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken depending on the severity of the offense and the circumstances involved.

## **Training and Awareness**

Royston Town Council is committed to preventing sexual harassment through education and training. All employees will receive training on this policy and their rights and responsibilities regarding sexual harassment prevention and reporting.

A risk assessment has been carried out and this will be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains appropriate. The risk assessment will be shared with all employees.

## **Compliance**

All employees are expected to always comply with this policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **Dignity at work**

The council has a separate dignity at work policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any ground, and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

## **Review and Revision**

This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

## **Conclusion**

Royston Town Council is dedicated to fostering a respectful and inclusive workplace where all employees can thrive. The council takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously and will take prompt and appropriate action to address them.