

KING'S LYNN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

ALSO KNOWN AS THE KING'S CENTRE

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Introduction

We recognise that the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 places a legal duty on employers to take “reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees”. We recognise that this requires employers to take and demonstrate proactive measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

Sexual harassment as defined in the Equality Act 2010 is described as “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and violates the individual’s dignity, creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment”. In reality, this is experienced in different ways, for example:

- Sexualised comments passed off as “banter” or jokes
- Sexual innuendo or suggestive comments
- Unwanted sexual advances or flirting
- Inappropriate messaging of a sexual nature
- Explicit conversations or intrusive questioning about an individual’s sex life
- Uninvited physical contact – hugging, massaging or brushing up against someone
- Stalking
- Display of offensive materials
- Requests for sexual or other favours used as a condition of employment or to affect other decisions, such as promotion or compensation

The trustees endorse the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s 8-step guide for employers regarding preventing sexual harassment at work:

1. Developing an effective anti-harassment policy (this document)
2. Engaging all staff and volunteers (this is done via Volunteer Agreements and the Code of Conduct)
3. Assessing and taking steps to reduce risk in the workplace
4. Reporting
5. Training
6. Acting on harassment complaints
7. Dealing with harassment by third parties
8. Monitoring and evaluating our actions

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/employer-8-step-guide-preventing-sexual-harassment-work>

Policy statement

We have a Code of Conduct for employees and volunteers that has been created to lay out clear guidelines about the behaviours that are expected by the church and behaviours that will NOT be condoned. This contains specific sections on harassment and bullying, and sexual conduct. In the Code of Conduct we specifically state that:

1. Church personnel must not exploit the trust placed in them for sexual gain or intimacy.
2. Church personnel, because they are in positions of power or authority, must be particularly careful to avoid sexual misconduct, including possession of or distribution of pornography. Church personnel should avoid even the appearance of sexual misconduct.
3. Church personnel should report to a supervisor or (if appropriate) to the required legal authorities any sexual conduct contrary to the policy.

All employees and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this Code of Conduct to a Trustee or member of the Leadership Team.

Employees who breach this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with their Contract of Employment.

The trustees recognise that sexual harassment may come from people attending church meetings and activities, whether they be regular attenders, guests or otherwise, and may be directed to other attendees, not just employees and volunteers. The trustees will ensure that any such harassment is investigated and challenged. Where necessary, those causing the harassment may be banned from attending future church activities.