

Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy

Policy Statement

Serenta is committed to providing a working environment where everyone is treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. We are committed to preventing sexual harassment and fostering a workplace where staff feel safe, valued and supported.

Serenta operates a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Any form of sexual harassment is unacceptable and will be dealt with promptly, fairly and appropriately.

In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, Serenta will take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees during the course of their work.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote a respectful, safe and inclusive working environment where sexual harassment is not tolerated. It aims to ensure that all employees understand what constitutes sexual harassment, know how to report concerns, understand how those concerns will be managed, and feel confident they will be protected from victimisation for raising genuine concerns. This policy also supports Serenta in meeting its legal responsibilities.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Serenta Homecare whenever they are working on behalf of the organisation. This includes work undertaken in clients' homes, the office, training sessions, work-related social events and all forms of work-related communication, including telephone calls, emails, text messages, social media and video calls.

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

The behaviour does not need to be intended to cause offence. The impact on the individual is what matters, and a single incident may amount to sexual harassment.

Examples of sexual harassment include unwanted flirting, sexual jokes or comments, repeated requests for dates after refusal, inappropriate touching, hugging or kissing without consent, staring or leering, sexual gestures, comments about a person's appearance, displaying or sharing sexual images, sending inappropriate emails or messages, making

sexual comments on social media, asking intrusive questions about someone's sex life, suggestive remarks or innuendo, and any other unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature.

Third-Party Sexual Harassment

As our employees work within people's homes and community settings, they may occasionally experience inappropriate behaviour from clients, family members, visitors, contractors or members of the public.

Employees are not expected to tolerate sexual harassment as part of their role. Any incident should be reported immediately to a Line Manager or the Registered Manager and recorded in accordance with Serenta's Incident Reporting Policy and Procedure.

Where appropriate, Serenta will take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of further incidents. This may include reviewing care plans and risk assessments, increasing staffing levels (for example, implementing a 2:1 staffing ratio), liaising with health and social care professionals, or considering alternative ways of delivering support.

Responsibilities

Everyone within Serenta has a responsibility to contribute to a respectful working environment.

Employees are expected to treat others with dignity and respect, maintain professional boundaries, behave appropriately at all times, report incidents promptly, support colleagues who raise concerns and cooperate fully with any investigation.

Managers are responsible for promoting a respectful workplace culture, taking all concerns seriously, responding promptly and sensitively to reports, maintaining confidentiality wherever possible, ensuring appropriate action is taken, reviewing risks, implementing preventative measures and providing appropriate support to affected employees.

Reporting Sexual Harassment

Employees should report concerns as soon as possible to their Line Manager, the Registered Manager, Freedom to speak up guardian or, where the concern relates to their Registered Manager, directly to a Director.

Reports may be made verbally, in writing or through the incident reporting process where the concern relates to a client.

Where there is an immediate risk, employees should remove themselves from the situation where it is safe to do so and notify management immediately.

Investigation

All reports of sexual harassment will be taken seriously and investigated fairly, promptly and sensitively. Information will be treated as confidential wherever possible and shared only with those who need to know.

Investigations may involve speaking with those involved, obtaining witness statements, reviewing relevant documentation, examining CCTV footage where available and seeking advice from HR where appropriate.

Protection from Victimisation

Serenta is committed to ensuring that no employee suffers any detriment for reporting sexual harassment in good faith, supporting another employee or providing evidence during an investigation.

Any victimisation of an individual who raises a genuine concern may itself result in disciplinary action.

Confidentiality

Information relating to reports of sexual harassment will only be shared with those who need access to the information in order to investigate and manage the matter appropriately.

Support Available

Employees affected by sexual harassment will be offered appropriate support based on their individual circumstances. This may include welfare meetings, management support, referral to Occupational Health where appropriate and signposting to external support services.

False or Malicious Allegations

Serenta encourages all employees to report genuine concerns without fear of reprisal. However, any employee found to have knowingly made a false or malicious allegation may be subject to action under the Disciplinary Policy.

Training

Serenta is committed to preventing sexual harassment through awareness, education and continuous improvement. All employees will receive access to this policy and complete sexual harassment training as part of their induction, with refresher training every three years. Staff are also expected to follow Serenta's Professional Boundaries Policy and Procedure. Reported incidents will be reviewed to identify learning opportunities and strengthen preventative measures where required.

Breaches of this Policy

Failure to comply with this policy may result in informal management action, formal disciplinary action or dismissal where appropriate. Where behaviour constitutes a criminal offence, Serenta may also refer the matter to the Police or other relevant external agencies.

Monitoring and Review

Serenta will monitor reports of sexual harassment to identify trends, emerging risks and opportunities to improve the safety and wellbeing of employees.

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner where there are changes in legislation or organisational practice.

Document Control:

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Staff

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