



Harassment Risk Assessment Reference: January 2025

Stotfold Town Council, The Greenacre
Centre, Valerian Way, Stotfold, SG5
4HG

Number	Hazard	Personnel at risk	Probability of occurrence (5)	Severity of injury (5)	Result (25)	Action taken	Probability of occurrence (5)	Severity of injury (5)	Result (25)
1	Inappropriate Comments or Jokes: Risk of inappropriate comments or likes made by elected officials, employees or public attendees what could be perceived as harassment.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Anti-harassment policy applied to all parties. Code of conduct includes respectful behaviour standard. Council has agreed Civility and Respect statement. Complaint and reporting procedure in place.	1	4	4
						Appropriate training for all employees and councillors. Reports can be made verbally and will be kept confidential where possible.			
2	Unwanted physical contact: Risk of unwanted physical contact by Councillors, employees or members of the public during meeting or events.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Code of conduct prohibits unwelcome physical contact. Training on maintaining personal boundaries provided. Complaint system accessible to all parties.	1	4	4
						Monitor and document incidents as reported.			
3	Misuse of Power Dynamics: Risk of elected officials or employees using positions of authority to exert undue influence or engage in inappropriate behaviour.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Clear hierarchy and defined reporting structures. Training to cover power dynamics and boundaries. Complaint and reporting procedure in place.	1	4	4
						Conduct regular reviews of power dynamics and conduct. Require periodic feedback surveys to gauge perceived fairness and safety.			
4	Inappropriate Digital Communication: Risk of harassing or inappropriate messages sent via council-owned email, social media or digital channels, by or to employees, councillors, or members of the public.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Established guidelines for digital communication. Staff are given Employee Handbook which includes Social Media Policy. Social Media Policy agreed by Full Council and distributed to all Councillors. Social Media Policy published on the website.	1	4	4
						Review and update digital conduct policies regularly. Provide regular training on use of social media.			

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5	Retaliation or Intimidating Post Complaint: Risk of retaliation against individuals (employees, Councillors or public, potentially leading to legal or reputational consequences.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Anti Sexual Harassment, Code of Conduct, Dignity at Work, Whistleblowing, Equality and Diversity policies disseminated to all. Mandatory training for employees and Councillors.	1	4	4
						Regular refresher training for all including specific guidance on dealing with the public.			
6	Inadequate knowledge of sexual harassment policies: Risk that Councillors, employees or public attendees do not fully understand what constitutes sexual harassment.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Clear behaviour able expectations for public attendees. Protocol on public participation in meetings published on website and emailed to all registered speakers. Complaint system open to elected officials, staff and public attendees.	1	4	4
						Additional training on de-escalation for council staff. Post conduct expectations visibly at all public meetings.			
7	Public misconduct towards elected officials and staff: Risk of harassment by members of the public towards Councillors or employees during public events or meetings.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Clear behaviourable expectations for public attendees. Protocol on public participation in meetings published on website and emailed to all registered speakers. Complaint system open to elected officials, staff and public attendees.	1	4	4
						Additional training on de-escalation for council staff. Post conduct expectations visibly at all public meetings.			
8	Physical Harassment: Physical actions intended to harm, intimidate or discomfort someone.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Provide staff training on conflict resolution and descalation techniques. Consider CCTV cameras, panic alarms. Encourage employees to work in pairs, especially in isolated areas. Develop clear protocols for responding to physical altercations including immediate reporting and investigation.	1	4	4
9	Verbal Harassment: Offensive comments, slurs or jokes creating a hostile environment.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Establish clear workplace behaviour policies prohibiting offensive language or verbal abuse. Conduct workshops on effective communication and respectful interactions. Ensure employees can report verbal harassment confidentially without fear of retaliation.	1	4	4
10	Non-Verbal Harassment: Display of offensive materials, inappropriate gestures or intimidating stares.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Prohibit displaying offensive materials and regularly monitor shared spaces. Clearly outline unacceptable gestures or visual behaviours. Use posters, newsletters or emails to reinforce respectful behaviour standards.	1	4	4

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11	Psychological Harassment: Undermining confidence through gaslighting, exclusion or persistent criticism.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Implement systems like suggestion boxes or online platforms to allow anonymous reporting. Train managers to recognise and address signs of psychological harassment promptly.	1	4	4
12	Cyber Harassment: Abusive messages or trolling on digital platforms used for work communication.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Create policies regulating the appropriate use of work email, message platforms and social media. IT controls in place to safeguard against external threats such as phishing attempts linked to harassment.	1	4	4
13	Discriminatory Harassment: Harassment based on race, religion, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Regularly educate staff and councillors about unconscious bias, cultural sensitivity and inclusivity. Include examples of prohibited behaviours in workplace guidelines. Promote diverse representation in decision making roles to foster an inclusive culture.	1	4	4
14	Bullying: Persistent hostility, public humiliation or sabotage of work.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	The Town Council has a bullying and harassment policy contained within the staff handbook. Managers hold 1-2-1s with employees to provide a safe space for concerns. Foster positive relationships through team building activities and events.	1	4	4
15	Third Party Harassment: Harassment from stakeholders or members of the public during council meetings.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Train employees on handling difficult interactions with residents or stakeholders. Set up procedures for reporting harassment.	1	4	4
16	Retaliatory Harassment: Intimidation or mistreatment of individuals for reporting misconduct, harassment or whistleblowing.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Develop a robust policy for protecting individuals who report harassment. Ensure all reports are handled discreetly and impartially. Training to prevent retaliation and promote a supportive culture.	1	4	4
17	Stalking: Persistent, unwanted attention causing distress or fear.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Provide guidance on identifying and responding to stalking behaviour. Install access controls to staff areas including key cards or visitor sign in systems. Offer support to staff seeking protective orders or legal action.	1	4	4

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18	Harassment by association: Targeting someone due to their association with a particular group or individual.	Employees, Members, Contractors, volunteers, public attendees	2	4	8	Explicitly prohibit harassment based on association with others in workplace harassment policy. Highlight the importance of respecting all forms of relationships and connections in training.	1	4	4