



Workplace Harassment Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the standards, reporting routes and response framework adopted by the firm to prevent and address bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, victimisation, retaliation and third-party harassment in the workplace and in the course of work.

It is intended to promote a safe, respectful and inclusive working environment, support the dignity of all personnel and assist the firm in complying with its legal and regulatory obligations in England and Wales. The policy is also designed to provide practical guidance for issues arising in legal practice settings, including dealings with clients and other external parties.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all personnel of Kirwans, including partners, consultants, solicitors, trainee solicitors, paralegals, legal executives, secretarial and administrative staff, reception staff, managers, supervisors, temporary staff, agency workers, contractors, volunteers, interns and job applicants, so far as applicable.

It applies to conduct in the office, at client premises, in court or tribunal buildings, at police stations, prisons, conferences, networking or business development events, training sessions, work-related social events, recruitment processes, business travel, remote hearings, video meetings, telephone calls, email, messaging platforms and social media where there is a sufficient connection to work.

This policy applies to conduct by colleagues and by third parties encountered in the course of employment or work for the firm.

3. Policy Statement: Zero Tolerance

Kirwans has zero tolerance for bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, victimisation and retaliation. No one working for or with the firm is expected to tolerate conduct of this kind on the basis that it is part of the job, a feature of legal practice, necessary to preserve a client relationship or justified by the seniority, influence, commercial importance or status of the person responsible.

The firm will take complaints and concerns seriously, respond promptly and fairly, and take appropriate action where concerns are substantiated or where protective steps are reasonably required. A person who raises a concern, supports another person, provides evidence, declines to participate in inappropriate conduct or asks for the conduct to stop must not suffer retaliation for doing so.

The firm is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and third-party harassment and to maintaining systems that enable personnel to report concerns safely and confidently.

4. Definitions

Harassment related to protected characteristics means unwanted conduct related to age, disability, gender reassignment, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national

origin), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. In deciding whether conduct has that effect, relevant matters include the person's perception, the other circumstances of the case and whether it was reasonable for the conduct to have that effect.

Sexual harassment means 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. It can be a one-off incident or repeated behaviour.

Bullying means offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power, that undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures another person. Bullying may be verbal, non-verbal, physical, written or online. Bullying may not always relate to a protected characteristic, but it is still prohibited by this policy.

Victimisation means subjecting a person to a detriment because they have done, or are believed to have done, a protected act, such as making or supporting a complaint under discrimination law, raising allegations of harassment or giving evidence in connection with a complaint.

Less favourable treatment following harassment includes treating a person less favourably because they rejected or submitted to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or conduct related to sex or gender reassignment.

Retaliation, for the purposes of this policy, includes any reprisal, hostility, exclusion, disadvantage, threat, pressure or adverse treatment because a person has raised a concern, reported misconduct, requested support, acted as a witness or participated in an investigation, whether or not the issue ultimately results in formal findings.

5. Examples in Legal Practice Settings

Examples of prohibited conduct in a legal practice context may include derogatory comments, intrusive questions, slurs, mocking or mimicking, unwanted touching, sexual remarks, jokes or images, persistent invitations after refusal, hostile messages, intimidation, shouting, deliberate humiliation, threats to work allocation or career prospects, exclusion from meetings, or retaliatory treatment after a complaint.

The conduct may arise in client meetings, case conferences, court or tribunal attendance, dealings at police stations or prisons, witness conferences, mediations, networking events, recruitment events, remote hearings, video calls, telephone calls, voicemail messages, email correspondence, instant messaging systems or social media interactions connected with work.

Examples particularly relevant to legal practice include a client making sexual comments to a fee earner, counsel or an opponent using racist or sexist language during a conference, a witness sending abusive messages after a hearing, repeated demeaning treatment of junior staff by a supervisor, or inappropriate comments made at a work-related social or networking event.



6. Third-Party Harassment

For the purposes of this policy, third parties include clients, prospective clients, counsel, experts, consultants, costs professionals, opponents, litigants in person, witnesses, court users, suppliers, contractors, recruitment agents, outsourced service providers, event attendees, building or venue personnel and members of the public.

In the context of Kirwans, third-party harassment can occur in person, online, by telephone, by correspondence or through social media.

Kirwans will not require an affected person to continue dealing personally with an alleged harasser merely because the person is an important, high-value or longstanding client, a referrer, a senior professional contact or otherwise commercially significant. Client confidentiality and legal professional privilege do not prevent the firm from taking lawful and proportionate steps to protect its personnel.

Any incident or pattern of inappropriate third-party conduct will be considered carefully and responded to proportionately, including through immediate protective steps, review of engagement arrangements, reporting or escalation where appropriate, and monitoring of the effectiveness of the firm's preventive arrangements.

7. Responsibilities

Partners are responsible for setting the tone from the top, allocating resources, approving preventive controls, supporting reporting routes, ensuring appropriate action is taken, and promoting a culture in which concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for maintaining respectful working environments, identifying risks, acting promptly on concerns, escalating issues appropriately, implementing interim protective measures where necessary, preserving relevant evidence, maintaining appropriate records and supporting affected personnel.

All personnel are responsible for treating others with dignity and respect, complying with this policy, not engaging in prohibited conduct, cooperating with preventive measures and investigations, and reporting harassment, bullying, sexual harassment, victimisation, retaliation or inappropriate third-party conduct that they experience, witness or otherwise become aware of.

Anyone with responsibility for clients, suppliers, recruitment relationships or event arrangements must take reasonable steps to reduce foreseeable risk, including by using appropriate conduct expectations, reviewing terms of engagement or supply where needed, and supporting practical controls for higher-risk situations.

8. Prevention and All Reasonable Steps

Kirwans is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and third-party harassment. This includes maintaining a documented harassment risk assessment covering internal and external risks and reviewing that assessment periodically and after incidents or material changes in working arrangements.

Preventive measures may include:

- assessing foreseeable risks in different teams, work types, locations and events, including internal and third-party risks;
- maintaining clear and well-publicised reporting routes with more than one option for raising concerns;
- providing training relevant to legal practice;
- putting in place documented preventive controls for higher-risk situations, such as lone meetings, off-site attendance, hearings, networking events and work involving distressed, aggressive or otherwise high-risk individuals;
- reviewing engagement terms, client care documentation, supplier terms, contractor arrangements and event expectations where appropriate to set conduct standards and support intervention;
- responding promptly and proportionately to incidents, near misses and complaints, including by implementing interim protections and reviewing whether controls need strengthening; and
- monitoring trends, reviewing incidents and evaluating whether the firm's measures are effective in practice.

The firm will keep preventive controls under review and adjust them where monitoring, incident data, staff feedback, complaints, exit information or changes in work patterns show that further measures are reasonably required.

9. Reporting Concerns

Any person covered by this policy is encouraged to report concerns as early as possible, whether the concern relates to a single incident, repeated behaviour, a pattern of low-level conduct, retaliation or a risk of third-party harassment.

Reports may be made to any of the following internal contacts:

- Partner
- Practice Director
- COLP, COFA
- A different manager where the person raising the concern would be more comfortable using an alternative route.

A report may be made verbally or in writing. A person reporting a concern does not need to use particular legal terms or to decide at the outset whether they want an informal or formal route. Where a concern is reported to a manager who is implicated in the issue, unavailable, or not the preferred contact, the concern should be escalated to another reporting route without delay.

If there is an immediate risk to safety, the individual should seek urgent assistance from a partner or manager, where appropriate, contact emergency services or the police.

10. Investigation, Confidentiality and Records

The firm will assess reported concerns promptly and decide whether the matter is best addressed informally, formally or through immediate protective action pending further enquiries. Informal steps may be appropriate in some cases, but they will not be required

where the conduct appears serious, where there is a power imbalance, where the reporter does not want informal engagement, or where there is a continuing risk.

A formal investigation will normally involve appointing an appropriate investigator, defining the issues, gathering relevant evidence, interviewing the parties and witnesses where appropriate, considering documentary and electronic material, reaching findings on the balance of probabilities and recommending action.

Confidentiality will be respected so far as reasonably possible, but absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because information may need to be shared with those who need it for safeguarding, investigation, regulatory, legal or management reasons. Everyone involved must handle information sensitively and avoid unnecessary disclosure.

The firm will keep appropriate records of reports, risk assessments, interim measures, investigations, decisions, outcomes, follow-up actions and monitoring. Records will be retained in accordance with applicable data protection obligations and the firm's record-keeping arrangements.

Retaliation, victimisation or other adverse treatment because a person has raised or supported a concern is prohibited and may itself result in disciplinary action.

11. Immediate Protective Measures and Response to Third-Party Misconduct

Where appropriate, Kirwans may implement immediate protective measures before an investigation is concluded. The purpose is to reduce risk, protect affected personnel and preserve the integrity of any enquiry; it is not to predetermine the outcome.

Depending on the circumstances, the firm may:

- give a clear warning that the conduct is unacceptable and must stop;
- restrict contact so that communications pass through a designated partner, supervisor or team member;
- require supervised meetings or attendance by two firm representatives;
- move meetings to a remote-only format where appropriate;
- change the personnel dealing with the matter or support the affected individual in ceasing direct contact;
- end a meeting, hearing preparation session or call if conduct is abusive or inappropriate;
- change the location, timing or format of a meeting to improve safety and oversight;
- restrict or control access to the firm's premises;
- review and invoke conduct expectations in engagement terms, supplier terms or event conditions where appropriate;
- report the matter to the third party's employer, instructing solicitor, regulator, venue or other responsible body where justified;
- report potentially criminal conduct to the police where appropriate; and
- decline or terminate a retainer, or suspend or end another business relationship, subject to the firm's professional obligations and any applicable court rules.

Where the misconduct involves a client or other third party, the firm will consider its professional duties, duties to the court, regulatory obligations and the interests of affected personnel when deciding on the appropriate response. The firm may decline new instructions



or terminate an existing retainer where that is a lawful and professionally proper response to serious or repeated misconduct.

12. Consequences for Breaches by Staff

A breach of this policy by a member of staff may result in informal management action, mandatory training, written warnings, reassignment of supervisory responsibilities, removal from client-facing work, suspension, demotion where contractually and legally permissible, or dismissal for misconduct or gross misconduct, depending on the seriousness of the conduct and all the circumstances.

Where appropriate, the firm may also take steps required by professional regulation, report matters externally, or adjust working arrangements to protect others. Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, victimisation, retaliation and deliberate failure by a manager to act on a reported concern are all capable of amounting to serious misconduct.

13. Support for Affected Personnel

Kirwans will take reasonable steps to support personnel affected by harassment or related misconduct. Support may include a private discussion about options, adjustments to reporting lines or work allocation, temporary changes to contact arrangements, supervision or accompaniment at meetings, time away from a difficult environment where appropriate, signposting to medical or counselling support, and practical support during any investigation or follow-up process.

The firm will seek to minimise avoidable disruption for the affected person and will consider ongoing support needs after the immediate issue has been addressed.

14. Training and Monitoring

The firm will provide training on this policy and on acceptable standards of conduct. Managers and supervisors will receive additional training on identifying concerns, responding appropriately, implementing interim protections, handling reports sensitively, avoiding retaliation and escalating issues properly.

The firm will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through incident and complaint data, risk assessment review, feedback from personnel, lessons learned from investigations and post-incident review. Preventive measures will be updated where monitoring indicates that further steps are reasonably required.

15. Review

This policy takes effect on 30 October 2026 and will be reviewed at least annually, and sooner if there is a relevant legal, regulatory or operational change, a serious incident, or monitoring indicates that amendments are needed.

The annual review will consider whether the firm's risk assessment, reporting routes, training, engagement terms, supplier terms, preventive controls and response measures remain effective and appropriate for Kirwans.



Appendix 1 — Partner and Manager Checklist: Immediate Response to a Report of Harassment

Partners and Managers should take the following immediate steps when receiving a report or becoming aware of a possible incident:

1. Listen, take the concern seriously and thank the person for raising it.
2. Check whether there is any immediate risk to safety and take urgent protective action if needed.
3. Ask what support the person needs immediately and whether they feel able to continue working safely.
4. Clarify the basic facts without pressing for unnecessary detail at the first conversation.
5. Preserve relevant evidence, including messages, emails, notes, CCTV details or witness information where available.
6. Do not promise absolute confidentiality; explain that information will be shared only as needed.
7. Consider whether interim steps are required immediately, such as changing contact arrangements, ending meetings, restricting access or moving to supervised or remote-only contact.
8. Make a clear written note of the report, the time and date, actions taken and next steps.
9. Monitor for retaliation and check in with the reporting person after the initial report.

Effective date: 30th October 2026
Review date: 29th October 2027
Version: 1.0