

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY – NON STAFF

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy sets out the Biochemical Society's commitment to preventing sexual harassment and victimisation across all Society-related activities, including events, social functions, online spaces and interactions involving third parties. It confirms a zero-tolerance approach, explains what sexual harassment and victimisation can look like, and makes clear that concerns will be treated seriously, investigated promptly and handled sensitively.

- **Purpose:** to help prevent sexual harassment, promote dignity and respect, and provide a clear framework for raising and responding to concerns.
- **Scope:** applies to employees, workers, agency workers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, trustees, committee members, delegates, speakers, sponsors and others involved in Society activities.
- **Reporting and support:** anyone experiencing or witnessing harassment is encouraged to raise concerns with Biochemical Society staff or by contacting info@biochemistry.org, with support available to help individuals feel safe.
- **Action:** the Society may investigate complaints, take steps to remedy upheld concerns, prevent recurrence, remove individuals from events, and take membership-related action where appropriate.
- **External reporting:** where behaviour may constitute a criminal offence, individuals are not prevented from contacting the police and may be supported to do so.

POLICY

The Biochemical Society is committed to providing a working environment that is free from sexual harassment and ensuring that everyone in our business is treated and treats others with dignity and respect. We will take active steps to help prevent the sexual harassment of all our staff, trustees, committee members, delegates, speakers, sponsors, and volunteers including by third parties such as suppliers, customers and clients.

The Society operates a zero-tolerance policy in respect of any form of sexual harassment or victimisation of anyone. All allegations of sexual harassment will be treated seriously, investigated promptly and dealt with sensitively. If any sexual harassment occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again.

If you feel that you have been or are experiencing sexual harassment, you are strongly encouraged to raise this, in accordance with this policy. This will enable us to take appropriate action and provide support.

This policy covers sexual harassment which occurs both in and outside of an event, such as social functions or on social media. It applies to all employees, workers, agency workers, consultants, contractors, volunteers and interns.

Sexual harassment occurs where a person engages in unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of either violating another person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature in the past.

Conduct may amount to sexual harassment even if it is unintended and the person doing it is unaware that they might cause offence. Conduct does not need to be sexually motivated in order to be sexual in nature and can be from someone of the same or a different sex.

Sexual harassment can take a number of forms. The below are some examples to help you recognise and avoid it. This list is not exhaustive:

- intrusive enquiries into an individual's private life;

- reference to their sexuality or physical appearance;
- unwanted body touching or physically molesting a person;
- standing too close;
- excessively lengthy handshakes;
- unwanted brushing against another's body;
- indecent exposure;
- obscene, suggestive or offensive communications, including electronic mail;
- pornographic or offensive posters, handouts or screensavers;
- sexual jokes or anecdotes;
- leering or staring;
- unwanted sexual compliments or excessive flirting
- sexual assault.

Sexual harassment can be a one-off event and does not need to be directed at a person. It can be witnessed or overheard. Sexual conduct that has been welcomed in the past can become unwanted, and it is not necessary for an individual to expressly object for behaviour to be unwanted.

For the avoidance of doubt, being under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substances is not a defence or mitigation to allegations of sexual harassment.

Victimisation includes subjecting a person to a detriment because they have done, or are suspected of doing or intending to do, any of the following protected acts:

- a) bringing proceedings under the Equality Act 2010.
- b) giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Equality Act 2010.
- c) doing any other thing for the purposes of or in connection with the Equality Act 2010.
- d) alleging that a person has contravened the Equality Act 2010.

Victimisation can take a number of forms. This list is not exhaustive:

- denying someone an opportunity because you suspect that they intend to make a complaint about sexual harassment.
- excluding someone because they have raised a grievance about sexual harassment.
- failing to promote someone because they accompanied another staff member to a grievance meeting.
- dismissing someone because they gave evidence on behalf of another staff member at an Employment Tribunal hearing.

Raising Concerns

If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, please contact a member of Biochemical Society staff immediately. If you are at a face to face event staff can be identified through their branded name badges, alternatively you can contact the Team by emailing info@biochemistry.org

Staff will be happy to help participants contact venue security or local law enforcement, provide escorts, or otherwise assist those experiencing harassment or intimidation to feel safe at the event.

The Biochemical Society reserves the right to remove any individual from the event if they break this Code of Conduct. No reimbursement of event or associated costs will be made. If you are also a Biochemical Society member, the society can take action to remove your membership. This action will be conducted in accordance with Biochemical Society rules.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Members can make complaints regarding a breach of the code of conduct by another member of any membership category using the **complaints management process**

Harassment by Third Parties

The Society does not tolerate sexual harassment against our staff by third parties, including but not limited to our suppliers, clients and commercial partners. Third party sexual harassment can result in legal liability and, if you experience sexual harassment by a third party while at or in connection with your work, you are strongly encouraged to follow the reporting procedure outlined in this policy. Complaints will be promptly investigated in line with this policy and ensure that we take appropriate action to remedy any upheld complaint and prevent it from happening again.

Speaking to the police

There can be an overlap between behaviour that constitutes sexual harassment and criminal offences, including sexual assault, indecent exposure, stalking and offensive communication. Nothing in this policy should prevent you from contacting the police, if you consider that appropriate. In certain circumstances we may advise you to report a matter to the police. In such circumstances we will help you to liaise with the police and give you support throughout the process