

A detailed botanical illustration in a sketchy, line-art style covers the entire page. The background is a textured, light brown paper. The illustrations include various flowers and plants in shades of orange, red, green, and blue. Some flowers have multiple petals, while others are more complex or abstract in shape. The lines are thin and delicate, giving the impression of a hand-drawn sketch. The overall composition is dense and artistic, with the text centered in the middle of the page.

Navigating sexual harassment at work

A guide to support freelancers and individuals



Introduction

Welcome to the guide for freelancers and individuals tackling sexual harassment at work.

This guide has been produced to help those experiencing or witnessing sexual harassment in the workplace to navigate their options, and minimise the negative impact harassment can have on their personal wellbeing.

It has been shaped by the Harassment in the Performing Arts Working Group, a short-term, independent Working Group convened by the Federation of Scottish Theatre (FST). Many individuals took part in focus groups to inform the content of the guide. It is underpinned by what they told us, by other research and current legal advice. Everyone who contributed to its development is an experienced professional freelance worker or employee in the performing arts, coming from a range of different backgrounds. Our shared vision is to end sexual harassment in the industry.

The work builds on a public campaign, **Sexual Harassment in the Performing Arts**, launched in May 2022 by Stellar Quines, supported by FST. This guide shares additional information and we hope you find it useful.

A note about language: we use the word ‘employer’ throughout the guide. This decision was taken to reflect the language that is used by the key organisations we signpost to, such as ACAS. Everything in this guide should be regarded as good practice whether you are employed or contracted as a freelancer.

This guide will be used as a pilot for the sector, beginning in 2023. After consulting with those using the guide, it will be reviewed and adapted accordingly in future years.

We welcome any feedback you have about the guide (including external links, which were correct at the time of publishing but could have been changed since then). Please contact us by emailing feedback@scottishtheatre.org.

How to use this guide

This guide has been created to help people navigate the different options available to them when experiencing or witnessing sexual harassment. We do not expect people to read the whole guide. It is designed to dip in and out of the sections that feel most relevant for your situation. The contents page is hyperlinked and there are helpful links throughout which lead you to other relevant sections or further external information sources. We explore common concerns throughout the guide.

Even though the guide is designed specifically with sexual harassment in mind, it has been created taking an intersectional approach. A lot of the support and advice offered in the guide can be applied to other forms of harassment people experience at work. Allow yourself to take what you need from it.

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1

What is sexual harassment at work?

1. Definitions

WHAT

* NOTE

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates your dignity.

Definitions

Sexual Harassment is unwanted conduct (verbal, non-verbal or physical) of a sexual nature that has the intent and/or effect of violating a person's dignity.

Sexual Harassment creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for people experiencing harassment and those that witness the harassment.

- It can happen offline and online.
- It can be a one-off incident or a pattern of behaviour.
- You can be impacted by something that is not directly aimed at you.
- It can still be harassment even if the behaviour was not intended to offend.

NEXT STEPS

What do I do next?

If you are unsure that what you are experiencing or witnessing is sexual harassment then read the next section (**Section 2**), which covers some of the behaviours we see in sexual harassment cases.

If you want to know what action you can take about your situation then turn to **Section 3**.

2

How to identify sexual harassment

1. Who can experience sexual harassment?
2. Where does it take place?
3. What behaviours does sexual harassment include?

WHO

Who can experience sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment can be experienced by anyone no matter their age, ethnicity, position of power, physical appearance or sexual orientation, and it can be experienced by people of all genders.

WHERE

Where does it take place?

Sexual harassment can happen anywhere.

In the performing arts, it can happen in the rehearsal room and backstage, company offices, during audition processes, on set, in green rooms, in theatre bars and cafés, at formal events, in digs and in various other venues that we find ourselves in due to our work.

It is also useful to know that if you go for a drink with colleagues at the end of the day and harassment takes place, this would normally be considered an extension of your workplace. Anything that is unacceptable in a rehearsal room or office is still unacceptable in the bar after work.

* NOTE

Going out with colleagues after work is normally considered an extension of the workplace.

WHAT

What behaviours does sexual harassment include?

Sexual harassment can take many forms, below are some recognisable and less recognisable behaviours that may create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Recognisable behaviours

- Sexual comments, 'jokes' and innuendos.
- Suggestive looks, staring or leering.
- Making comments about your appearance.
- Sexual gestures.
- Using excuses to touch you (moving past you and putting hand on lower back).
- Fetishising and/or exoticising a person's race, cultural heritage, gender identity or disability.
- Making promises in return for sexual 'favours'.
- Unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing.
- Sending unsolicited pictures of a sexual nature.
- Downloading and viewing pornographic materials, even if they do not send them to you personally.
- Sending sexually explicit texts, DMs, emails to or about you.
- Sexual assault.



Less recognisable behaviours

- Following you outside work.
- Sexual posts or contact on social media.
- Photographing or filming you without your consent.
- Spreading false rumours about your sex/love life or that of others.
- Asking intrusive questions about your sex/love life or graphically discussing their own.
- Asking 'curious' questions about the sex/love lives of disabled people or people from the LGBTQIA community.
- Commenting or spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation.
- Asking personal questions about a trans and/or gender non-conforming person's genitalia.

This list is not exhaustive so if you feel you are being sexually harassed but don't see your experience listed above, please still seek support.

You may be looking for support while the harassment is happening or you may be looking for support after the harassment has ended. Both are valid. Regardless of how much time has passed, you still have a right to seek support.

NEXT STEPS

What do I do next?

If you don't feel ready to report sexual harassment in the first instance then it can be helpful to keep a diary.

There is more information on this on [pg 11](#). This can act as both a tool for understanding your experience and its impact, and a record if you decide to report.

The next section ([Section 3](#)) explores the different actions you can take.

3

When sexual harassment happens to you

1. Navigating your situation
2. Visual options guide



Navigating your situation

There can be many barriers to speaking up when we feel uncomfortable with someone's behaviour at work. If you are being sexually harassed, it is important to know that there is support available, and that you deserve support. This section lays out your options in a visual guide, which is best viewed on a computer screen. There are links in each section, which you can follow for more information.

YOU MAY CHOSE TO FOLLOW ONE OR MORE OF THESE OPTIONS.

EXPLORE ALL THESE OPTIONS FURTHER IN SECTION 4.

IF YOU ARE BEING SEXUALLY HARASSED AT WORK YOU CAN...*

*FOLLOW THE ARROWS FOR OPTIONS.

SEEK EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Contact a helpline for emotional support (e.g. Breathing Space, Rape Crisis Scotland).

Seek information and advice from unions and support organisations (see [pg 27](#) for details).

In some cases it might be appropriate to speak with Police or if worried about a young person, the NSPCC.

CONFIDE IN A TRUSTED PERSON

Speak to a friend, union rep or colleague you trust.

Share how they can best support you (e.g. listen, be a witness).

CHALLENGE THE BEHAVIOUR

If safe, speak directly to the harasser and tell them to stop their behaviour. See [pg 10](#) for tips on how to do this.

Ask an ally or line manager to ask the harasser to stop. Consider reporting informally.

REPORT FORMALLY

Ask to see a company's complaints procedure (See [ACAS](#) if none available).

Submit formal complaint and take part in an investigation.

REPORT INFORMALLY

Keep a record of all incidents (see [pg 11](#) for more details).

Share concerns with an approachable or designated staff member.

PRACTISE SELF CARE

Sometimes you might not be ready or feel able to chose one of the other options, whatever choice you make, please try and prioritise your wellbeing.

See our self care suggestions on [pg 29](#).

4

Explore your options further

1. Things to consider
2. Confide in a trusted person
3. Seek external support
4. Challenge the behaviour
5. Keep a record
6. Consult company procedure

WHAT

Things to consider

Things to consider when thinking about what to do next:

- What support do I have around me?
- Are there clear policies and procedures I can follow?
- Do I have the energy or capacity to deal with making a complaint?
- What else is happening in my life that might be impacted by this decision?
- What additional support would I need to take action?
- Am I putting my own wellbeing first?

Once you have considered the above questions, there are some options available to you.

HOW

Confide in a trusted person

This could be:

- A friend
- A colleague you trust
- A union rep or a line manager
- A Guardian (if available)¹
- An ally²

Talking to someone can help you understand your situation better, and give you some support when you need it.

You don't have to wait for something to happen. If you know there is a scenario coming up where you will feel uncomfortable, talk to someone about your concerns in advance.

EXAMPLE

"I am worried about a meeting/event next week, as someone is coming who makes me feel uncomfortable – can you help me navigate the situation?"

- 1** The Guardian programme was originally devised by The Old Vic Theatre in London. Guardians are trained to offer confidential support for workers to share concerns. If the organisation you work for has Guardians, you should be made aware of this.
- 2** An ally is someone who can support you in a way that works for you. This will be different for everyone but you might want an ally to be a witness, to help you source policies, to support you to ask the harasser to stop, or just to listen. Having an ally can give you confidence to take steps to end the harassment.

HOW

Seek external support

Remember, you can seek external support, advice and information at any point.

The entertainment unions **Equity** and **Bectu**, **Citizens Advice**, **ACAS** (the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service), and **Rape Crisis Scotland** are a few organisations that might be able to help.

The **Scottish Women's Rights Centre** has a great **guide** to Sexual Harassment in the workplace, which contains information which applies to all genders.

Remember, the impact of sexual harassment does not end when the harassment ends. You may need to seek support in the future too.

You deserve support.

See **pg 29** for more details and links to support.

HOW

Challenge the behaviour

Approach your harasser

- If you feel able and it's safe to do so, ask the harasser to stop or change their behaviour.
- Ask an ally to be a witness before approaching your harasser.
- Be specific about what behaviour is upsetting you.
- Be clear that you want the behaviour to stop.

EXAMPLES

"Could you stop touching my back."

"I feel uncomfortable when you do [particular behaviour], please don't do it again."

"I find the comments you make about my body offensive and degrading. I'm asking you to stop doing that."

CONCERN

You might be worried that speaking out will alter the dynamic of the room. Have you considered it might alter it for the better? If you feel uncomfortable with a behaviour, there is a chance you are not the only one in the room who feels this way.

HOW

* USEFUL LINKS

For advice on the risks of recording, or secretly recording the harassment please see [ACAS](#).

WHAT

* NOTE

Different policies and procedures may apply to different categories of workers (i.e. employees, freelancers, volunteers).

Keep a record

Whether you decide to report or not keeping a record of your harassment is a good idea:

- Note all incidents, including: dates; times; names; witnesses; impact on you and any action you take. For example, if you go to your GP, a counsellor or another service because of the harassment, then make a note of this, too.
- Keep copies of any messages the harasser sends.
- Keep screenshots of any online messages.
- Keep a record of all conversations you have with the company about the harassment.

Having a written record of the harassment can be a great reflection tool, which allows you to view the bigger picture and spot patterns.

Consult company procedure

It is advisable to seek out the company policies and procedures and read the relevant documents before you decide what to do next. If you feel unable to ask to see these yourself, consider asking a trusted person to seek them for you.

CONCERN

People often say they didn't report harassment as they didn't know what the process was. All companies should and most companies will have a written document, which lays out their complaint process, including who to contact. Ask to see it. If they don't have one, look at ACAS to understand what an **example grievance procedure** looks like.

There are a few documents that different organisations might use to prevent and address unwanted behaviour in the workplace.

These include:

- Code of Conduct
- Grievance Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Bullying & Harassment Policy

Many organisations will have one of the above, some may have more than one. Some very small organisations, or companies drawn together to deliver a particular project, may not yet have any.

You can ask to see any of these documents and ask who to report issues to at any point, including when signing your contract. You don't have to wait until there is a problem.

If your complaint is being made retrospectively, your employer or the company who contracted you should still take it seriously.

If the organisation has these documents:

Read the relevant policies or documents and decide if you wish to follow the procedures laid out in them. You may want to discuss this decision with a friend, colleague or external support service.

If the organisation does not have these documents:

If this the case, you can consult the [ACAS \(Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service\) grievance procedure](#).

* A NOTE ON PRECARIOUS WORK ENVIRONMENTS

Freelancers can often find themselves in situations where they are working without contracts or in environments where there is little to no formal structure. You always have options. Start with prioritising your safety. Work out what boundaries you can put in place to create a safer working environment for yourself. If other people are unwilling or unable to support and respect

these boundaries then find an ally who can reinforce them with you.

If you are in a situation where there is no way of stopping the harassment you are experiencing, reach out to a helpline for a safe space to explore the impact this is having on you and discuss options. Occasionally the best option is to walk away from a project.





5

Consider the different reporting options

1. Informal or formal reporting?
2. Outcomes from raising a formal grievance
3. Reporting criminal behaviour

HOW

Informal or formal reporting?

You can choose to report informally or formally to your employer or the company that contracted you. You do not have to report informally first, and there is no obligation to escalate an informal complaint to a formal complaint. Most companies would prefer to deal with behaviour through informal conversations initially.

Exceptions to this might be if you informally report a behaviour which the company regards as gross misconduct. Gross misconduct can lead to immediate dismissal. Different companies may have different definitions of what constitutes gross misconduct.

There is no legal time limit for raising an internal grievance. Some organisations may choose to implement their own time limit, this should be clearly stated in their policies. However there are strict time limits for making an employment tribunal claim. See [pg 18](#) for more details on this.

CONCERN

People shared with us that they worry about the negative impact reporting might have on the harasser. Any negative consequences that result from someone's unacceptable behaviour are their own responsibility and not yours.

* NOTE

Informal reporting means having a casual, non-official and private chat with your employer.

* NOTE

Organisations may need to breach your confidentiality if they feel your complaint is so serious it needs formal investigation.

Informal Reporting

Informal reporting means having an informal and confidential chat about your experience with the company you are working with.

Depending on whether you are employed or freelance, you should **first** approach your line manager, or the person who contracted you, and ask to have an informal chat. If you do not feel comfortable doing that, try and find someone else you feel comfortable talking to, such as the Deputy Stage Manager, Company Manager, or someone working in Human Resources (HR) for the company. Some companies have a trained designated person to support you in these situations.

Freelancers often aren't clear who their line manager is or may not, officially, have one. In this case, approach someone who works for the company and who you feel comfortable talking to.

If you feel able, it is best to share the problem as soon as possible. Companies would often rather have the opportunity to act and stop the unwanted behaviour before it escalates. This route may not feel appropriate if you are reporting a very serious issue.

* USEFUL LINKS

More advice from ACAS about raising a problem at work [here](#).

What to expect and raising a grievance [here](#).

ACAS [grievance template](#).

ACAS advise that, if an informal meeting is set up, it's a good idea to:

- Check the ACAS website for information about your problem and how it might be dealt with.
- Prepare what you want to say, for example, how to explain what you're unhappy about.
- Think about what you'd like your employer to do.

CONCERN

Approaching a company to share what is happening to you can be more nerve-racking if you already experience other forms of harassment such as racism, ableism or transphobia. If it feels impossible, consider if there is an ally who you could ask to report for you or support you to do so yourself.

Formal Reporting

If an issue cannot be resolved informally, or it is an issue too serious to be resolved informally, then you can submit a formal report. This is called raising a formal grievance.

A grievance procedure is a formal way for you to raise a problem or a complaint with your employer or company.

ACAS states that the 'employee' can raise a grievance if:

- They feel raising it informally has not worked.
- They do not want it dealt with informally.
- It's a very serious issue, for example sexual harassment or **'whistleblowing'**.

Remember the organisation you work for should have a grievance procedure and it should be accessible to you. If they do not, follow **ACAS's template**.

Remember that you should be kept informed of the outcome of any complaint you make and you have a right to appeal any decision you are not satisfied with.

* NOTE

Formal reporting means submitting an official report when an issue cannot be resolved **INFORMALLY** or is very serious.

WHAT

Outcomes from raising a formal grievance

After the grievance meeting, the company should send you a letter explaining their decision. They might:

- Uphold (agree with) the grievance in full.
- Uphold parts of the grievance and reject others.
- Reject the grievance in full.

If the company upholds your grievance in full or in part, they must explain what they will do to resolve the problem.

If you're not happy with the decision, or the company does not do what they promised to fix it, you have the right to appeal.

* NOTE

If you have already reported to the Police check [ACAS](#) for further information.

Reporting criminal behaviour

If you disclose that you have been the victim of a rape or sexual assault, the company might want to explore whether you want to report it to the Police. They should not put pressure on you to do so, and should respect and support any decision you make.

There may be a rare occasion when the company feels they need to report what has happened despite your wishes. For example, if there was an on-going risk to your safety, the safety of others, or if you are legally defined as a vulnerable adult. You should be informed that the company is going to do this before they do so.

If the company makes a report to the Police against your will then you can call the Rape Crisis Scotland helpline for support and advice.

NEXT STEPS

What do I do next?



Remember there is no right or wrong decision when it comes to dealing with harassment. The decision is personal to you and your circumstances at the time.

If you are unsure about what to do, talk it through with someone.



6

Additional actions

- 
- 
- 1. Pursuing an employment tribunal**
 - 2. Approaching the board**
 - 3. Reporting to the Police**
 - 4. Contacting the NSPCC**
 - 5. Reporting to funding bodies**

WHO

* USEFUL LINKS

ACAS guidance on tribunal timelines.

Valla - support with employment issues.

* USEFUL LINKS

If you have also been the victim of a hate crime you have a range of options available to you, including using a third party reporting centre.

Pursuing an employment tribunal

If raising a formal grievance does not resolve the problem, you might be able to make a claim to an employment tribunal. Be aware that there is a time limit for bringing a claim to an employment tribunal.

Bear in mind that time limits run from the date of the incident the grievance relates to, not the date the grievance is raised or concluded.

For information and advice about support taking your claim to a tribunal see the ACAS guidance. You may also find [Valla](#) – a new online platform for getting support with employment issues helpful.

Approaching the board

The board of an organisation is responsible for ensuring the company meets its legal and charitable obligations. Depending on the circumstances, you might wish to approach the board of the organisation. Some boards have a nominated person who deals with any safeguarding or grievance issues. If it is not clear who this is then approach the chair. This should normally only be done if you cannot approach anyone else within the organisation first, as the board usually deal with appeals so would not normally be involved before due process was followed first.

Reporting to the police

If you have been the victim of a criminal act such as sexual assault or rape then you may feel you want to report it to the Police. This is a difficult and personal decision. Rape Crisis Scotland can support you to explore your options and your local Rape Crisis Centre can provide an advocacy worker who can also support you, whether you are considering reporting or have already reported.

Contacting the NSPCC

If you are worried about a child or young person then contact a trained helpline counsellor for help, advice and support.

help@nspcc.org.uk or **0808 800 5000**.

Reporting to funding bodies

While Creative Scotland does not have a regulatory role regarding the practice of those working in the creative sectors and cannot investigate individual allegations of unacceptable behaviours, they actively encourage those experiencing harassment to seek support, consider the grievance or reporting route that is right for them and, where

necessary, to raise concerns with the board. In such cases, Creative Scotland will expect to see strong leadership from the organisation in response to issues raised.

In funding agreements, they state that organisations should adopt inclusive policies and practices regarding Equalities and Diversity. This includes ensuring dignity at work. They also reserve the right to stop paying funds to, reduce funding, or ask funding to be returned if an organisation does not meet the ethical and governance standards expected in managing public money.

For more information on Creative Scotland's role in tackling harassment in the performing arts please see the [Dignity at Work Policy](#). Other funders may have similar policies so it is worth checking websites or contacting them for this information.

* USEFUL LINKS

For advice on making disclosures on social media please see [this blog](#).

Using social media

It can be tempting to use social media to share your story. Whilst it can be a place to seek solidarity with others with similar experiences, we advise that you use caution when doing so. Some things to consider before posting include:

- Check your employer's social media policy initially before posting about a work related incident.
- Did you know that posting on-line is considered publishing under the law?
- Remember you can't control how quickly things spread and they can go further and faster than you might imagine.
- Even if you do not name your harasser in an online post, if they are identifiable then a defamation action may still be raised against you.

Defamation laws are complex. The Scottish Women's Rights Centre have produced a useful blog post exploring this issue further.

NEXT STEPS

What do I do next?

You may reach a point where you have exhausted all the available options. There may be times when you do not get the response you deserve. In these circumstances, it is important to prioritise your own wellbeing.

Achieving acknowledgement and accountability is only one part of recovering from harassment. It can be exhausting trying to seek accountability for the actions against you.

When considering how you recover, it can be helpful to focus on the things you can control, such as reaching out to friends and family and using self-care tools. Be gentle with yourself as you recover from this.

7

What happens afterwards?

1. After reporting
2. Post-harassment

WHEN

* USEFUL LINKS

ACAS

Scottish Women's
Rights Centre

Citizens Advice

After reporting

Once you have submitted a report, the company should be transparent about what happens next. This includes keeping you informed on:

- The limits to confidentiality within the organisation.
- The expected timeline for any investigation into your complaint.
- What they can do to help you feel safer at work whilst the investigation takes place.
- Prompt updates about the outcome of your complaint.

If you are dissatisfied with the result of the investigation you could:

- Appeal the decision.
- Consider pursuing an employment tribunal. (**Remember there is a time limit for this.**)
- Seek advice from an external agency (ACAS, Scottish Women's Rights Centre, Citizen's Advice).

Some options may not be available to all categories of workers (i.e. employees, freelancers, volunteers).

Post-harassment

The impact of sexual harassment often lasts longer than the harassment itself. It can impact people for weeks, months and even years later.

If you are struggling to recover from what happened to you, this is natural. It is important to be gentle with yourself and try not to beat yourself up for how this is affecting you.

When you feel ready, reach out and seek support to help you process your experience.

You deserve support.

Please see our support resources on [pg 29](#).



How to help stop sexual harassment



- 1. Influence 'the room'**
- 2. Speak up**
- 3. Support the person experiencing harassment**
- 4. Keep a record**
- 5. Request the company policy**
- 6. Other support you can give**

WHO

This section is for ‘bystanders’ or ‘allies.’ While you may not be the person experiencing harassment, you may want to take responsibility for helping to create an environment where harassment is less likely to occur, or assist in situations where it has happened.

HOW

Influence ‘the room’

At the beginning of a creative project or even a meeting or gathering, here are some things that anyone leading the process can do:

- Lead by example.
- Respect your colleagues and their boundaries.
- Create your own working agreement and ground rules specific to any group at the start of a creative process.
- Consider displaying agreements anywhere appropriate, e.g. rehearsal room, wings, green rooms. Refer back to them as necessary.
- Encourage the use of the **Equity Safe Spaces statement** or an equivalent.
- Normalise asking others for consent before touching them or trying something that might make someone uncomfortable.
- Do not assume that what feels comfortable for one person will feel comfortable for another.
- Normalise bringing in an intimacy co-ordinator.
- Pause and consider the different lived experiences amongst colleagues before asking any questions or making requests of them. Think about how these might be received and whether they are reasonable or necessary.
- Be prepared to reflect and take ownership where mistakes are made.

Speak up

If you hear or see inappropriate comments or behaviour, speak up. You can do this both privately and publicly. You can speak to the harasser directly or raise concerns with the company.

‘**Calling someone in**’ can be an effective method and involves:

- Inviting someone into a learning moment through their own choice.
- Helping someone to understand why their behaviour is harmful and encourages them to change it.
- Asking someone to choose to commit to learning and improving their behaviour.

'Calling someone out' can also be effective if you see behaviour that is actively causing harm to someone, or if someone is resistant to being called in. You might need to:

- Set a hard boundary around the behaviour.
- Insist the person take the moment to learn and improve.
- Highlight the behaviour in front of a group of peers to emphasise that the behaviour is out of step with the group and non-negotiable.

Both can be done with patience and compassion. It can be easier to speak up when we focus on the behaviour and not the person enacting the behaviour.

* USEFUL LINKS

More examples of calling out and calling in behaviour.

EXAMPLES OF SPEAKING DIRECTLY TO A HARASSER

"Mate, when you said that thing to ### about their body earlier, that was a bit off. It might make people uncomfortable, so don't do that again."

"I noticed you use the word ###. I don't know if you know but folk don't really use that word anymore. It could be offensive to some people in the room."

"You have been asked more than once not to ###. If it continues, I will report it."

Don't be afraid to pre-empt potential scenarios:

"I've noticed that there is a lot of physical contact coming up in the scenes we are working on next. Can we speak about where everyone's boundaries are in relation to this?"

Support the person experiencing harassment

- Check in with them regularly and ask them what they need.
- Ask if you can do anything to support them.
- Try not to leave someone on their own with a harasser.
- Signpost them to advice, information and support. See [pg 27](#) and [pg 29](#) for suggestions.
- Research and share options with them.

* NOTE

You can raise a grievance if you have concerns about someone's past behaviour.

Keep a record

- Dates, times and witnesses to incidents.
- Behaviour observed.
- Impact you have noticed or know about.
- Any interventions made.

Request the company policy

This should be accessible. If it isn't, ask to see the company policy on sexual harassment or bullying and harassment. You might find these in the company handbook. You may need to ask a line manager, the producer or stage manager for a copy.

Other support you can give

- Help the person experiencing the harassment to make an informal or formal complaint if they wish to do so.
- Offer to be a witness if reporting any behaviour you have seen.
- Seek consent from the person before escalating on their behalf.
- Use the company complaint process to record a concern if you are aware of a member of a company who has harassed someone in the past. In these instances, often all you can do is raise awareness with the company and allow them to implement safeguarding steps as required.

NEXT STEPS

What do I do next?

Consider which of the approaches above feels most suited to your situation. Speak with the person being harassed and listen to how they are feeling about it. Remember, your wellbeing matters too. Seek support for yourself if you need to.



9



Information, advice and external support



- 1. Unions**
- 2. Organisations**
- 3. Further resources**

WHO

There are many organisations out there that can provide you with support, advice, information and advocacy. We have included the three most useful places to get you started but for an up to date list please use the further resource lists at the end.

Unions

Members can contact their local union representative for support.

Non-members can:

- Download the [Equity Safe Space Statement](#)
- Access the [Equity for Women Toolkit](#)
- Read Bectu's [A workplace guide to dealing with sexual harassment](#)
- Directors might wish to contact professional trade organisation [Stage Directors UK](#).

Organisations

[ACAS – Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service](#)

[Scottish Women's Rights Centre](#)

People of all genders may find their guide, [Information and Support for Anyone Experiencing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace](#), useful.

Further resources

Federation of Scottish Theatre: [Combating Abuse Page](#)

Stellar Quines Theatre Company: [Sexual Harassment – Further Support](#)



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Emotional support and self care

1. Mental health helplines

2. Apps

3. Breathe bubbles

4. Peer support



Being sexually harassed can take a toll on your mental health. This section shares tips and resources to help you manage your wellbeing during and after a period of harassment.

Mental health helplines

Emotional support is given by trained listeners who provide a safe, supportive and non-judgemental space to explore how you are feeling.

Samaritans

116 123

A listening ear open 24hrs every day.

Breathing Space

0800 83 85 87

Opening times:

Weekdays: Monday – Thursday 6pm-2am

Weekends: Friday 6pm – Monday 6am

Provide listening, information and advice for people in Scotland feeling low, stressed or anxious.

Shout

Text Shout to **85258**.

Shout is a free 24hr text support service.

Rape Crisis Scotland

08088 01 03 02

Text: **07537 410 027**

E-mail: support@rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

Opening times:

5pm - midnight – free to call

Emotional support for survivors of all genders, who have experienced any form of sexual violence, including sexual harassment.

Can [signpost to local centres](#), including ones with specific support for those with a learning disability. Friends and colleagues worried about someone can also use the helpline. Support resources [available on-line](#).

LGBT Health & Wellbeing

0300 123 2523

E-mail: helpline@lgbthealth.org.uk

Online chat is also available during helpline hours. See [website](#) for opening times.

Online resources

Bloom Online Support for trauma survivors

[Bloom courses](#) offer free tailored information, tools, and affirming words to help us cope with trauma. They encourage us to learn, reflect, and process what we've been through and how it may have affected us—all in a safe and empowering space.

Resources available in multiple languages.

Courses include: Healing from Sexual Trauma, Managing Anxiety, Creating Boundaries, Reclaiming Resilience in your trauma story.

Self-Injury Support

[The site](#) includes resources for those who are struggling, including specific resources for Women from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups.

Apps

Mindfulness

There are many free or paid mindfulness apps available, including Serenity, Insight Timer, Headspace and Calm.

Mendu

A journalling app for marginalised women. Described as a companion to talk through problems with, right now.

Happiful

The app from the magazine of the same name. Aims “to give people access to wellness support at their fingertips.”

Breathe bubbles

Breathe bubbles are visuals which help you to regulate and slow down your breathing. They are useful tools when you are feeling anxious. Each linked example shared has a slightly different rhythm & visual style and soundscape – find your favourite.

[Calm Breathe – 4 stages](#)

[Triangle Visual Breathe](#)

[Box Breathing](#)

[Shout UK 4-7-8 Breathing exercise](#)

Peer support

Persistent and Nasty

Persistent and Nasty runs regular coffee mornings which provide a safe space for freelancers to engage in these conversations, seek peer support and feel supported by their community.

For details about the coffee mornings keep an eye on the P&N socials or get in touch with **Elaine** or **Louise** at persistentandnasty@gmail.com



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End note

1. The bigger picture

2. The HiPA Working Group



The bigger picture

This guide is one contribution to the sector's vision to end sexual harassment in the industry.

We hope it will leave those experiencing harassment with greater clarity around their experiences, and feeling better informed about their choices. Allies, we hope, will leave with some practical tools to help stamp out sexual harassment in the industry.

We know that sexual harassment is only one form of harassment experienced in the sector. We have tried to reflect intersectional experiences throughout this guide but we know that work needs to be done to end sexism, ableism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and xenophobia in the sector too.

There are wider changes happening across the full cultural sector and we welcome the creation of the Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority (CIISA). You can read more about CIISA on the [SOLT website](#).

This guide has been heavily informed by multiple focus groups of freelancers and

industry workers of various lived experiences. The Harassment in Performing Arts Working Group are grateful for the time and input of everyone who has fed into and fed back on this guide. We look forward to seeing and feeling the changes across the sector in the future.

The Government is supporting the [Worker Protection \(Amendment of Equality Act 2010\) Bill](#) which will introduce a mandatory duty on employers to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their employees. This is a real step change and a boost for all who are seeking to tackle sexual harassment at work.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (ECHR) are to publish a statutory code of practice on preventing sexual harassment at work. Once published, all sexual harassment policies will need to be considered in light of this code.

Take care of yourselves and each other.

The Harassment in Performing Arts (HiPA) Working Group

The HiPA Working Group was convened by FST in late 2021 as an independent, time-limited Working Group existing to respond to the needs of the performing arts sector in Scotland (organisations and individuals), in providing practical guidance in dealing with harassment and abuse.

The Group aimed to:

- Create a best practice template for dealing with complaints of harassment;
- Investigate the viability of creating a framework for investigating harassing behaviours to ensure transparency and

consistency with how complaints are dealt across the sector, with the ambition that this becomes the 'go to' tool for decision making around harassment cases;

- House these actions and ambitions within an accessible and easy-to-use guide and toolkit.

For further information on the Group or FST's work in this area, please contact hello@scottishtheatre.org

