

## If you've been sexually harassed at work

If you've experienced sexual harassment at work, you can make a complaint to your employer.

Your employer should:

- take your complaint seriously
- handle it fairly and sensitively

It's best to make a complaint as soon as possible. But if you make a complaint a long time after something happened, your employer should still take it seriously.

### Make a note of what's happened

It's a good idea to make a note of what's happened. This should include dates, times and names, including any witnesses.

Writing things down can be especially helpful if you find talking about the experience distressing.

### If you recorded what happened

There are risks involved with making recordings, for example on your phone. This is a complicated area of the law.

If you make a sexual harassment complaint to your employer, a recording might not be allowed as evidence. For example if:

- your employer has a policy workers must not make recordings at work without permission
- your employer has a policy that making a secret recording at work is a disciplinary issue
- your secret recording breaks data protection laws

If your complaint leads to an employment tribunal, the tribunal might allow a recording as evidence in some circumstances. It will depend on your reasons for making it. A possible example might be that you made it because there was no other way to get evidence. But the tribunal will decide on a case-by-case basis.

### Getting advice on your options

You do not have to make a sexual harassment complaint. It's up to you to decide. However, your employer cannot deal with the problem if they do not know about it.

You might want to talk to someone to help you decide what to do. This could be:

- someone you trust at work, for example someone you work with or a manager
- a trade union representative, if you're a trade union member
- someone at work who's trained to advise people who are considering making this kind of complaint
- [specialist advice](#)

## Making a complaint

If you want to try and resolve the problem informally, you can [talk with your employer](#) or someone senior at work.

You can [raise a grievance](#) if either:

- talking with your employer does not resolve the issue
- you feel the problem is too serious to deal with informally

A grievance is where you make a formal complaint to your employer.

## Check your employer's policy

Your employer might have their own policy on sexual harassment. If they do, look at the policy to check what you should do. It might tell you who to send your complaint to, for example someone in your organisation with specialist training.

You might also want to speak to a trade union representative, if you're a member. They may be able to support you in making a complaint.

## If the problem is not resolved

If your problem is not resolved by trying informal or formal steps, you might be able to make a claim to an employment tribunal.

There are strict time limits for making a claim. In most cases, you have 3 months minus 1 day from the date of the most recent sexual harassment.

If the time limit has passed, you can still make a claim to an employment tribunal. It's up to the judge to decide whether they will accept your claim. They will consider:

- if there's a good reason for you taking more than 3 months
- if it's fair to the employer to allow your case to go ahead

Find out more about:

- making a claim to an [employment tribunal](#)
- [employment tribunal time limits](#)

## When to get specialist advice

It's a good idea to [get specialist advice](#) if:

- your complaint involves sexual assault or rape
- you believe your employer is not dealing with your complaint because it's about someone powerful or influential
- it's 3 months or more since the sexual harassment happened and you're considering making a claim to an employment tribunal

## When it's a crime

If you've been sexually assaulted or raped at work, you can get [specialist help and support](#).

You should seriously consider reporting it to the police. However, nobody can force you to report it. It's your choice.

If you choose to tell your employer, they should:

- talk with you about whether you want to report it to the police
- support you if you choose to report it

In most cases, your employer should go along with your decision. However, your employer might feel they need to tell the police in some circumstances. For example if there's an ongoing risk to your safety or the safety of others.

If your employer is going to tell the police, they should:

- talk with you about it first
- let you know when they've reported it to the police

### **If it's been reported to the police or it's going through a court**

If there's a criminal process, it might affect how your employer deals with your complaint. You should ask your employer if you have any questions about this.

## **Protection from victimisation**

It's against the law for you to be victimised because you've made a sexual harassment complaint.

Victimisation is when you're treated less favourably as a result of being involved with a discrimination or harassment complaint.

Important: From 6 April 2026, sexual harassment will become a 'qualifying disclosure' under whistleblowing law. This means whistleblowers making a sexual harassment disclosure will be protected from detriment and unfair dismissal.

[Find out more about victimisation](#)

## **Contact the Acas helpline**

If you have any questions about sexual harassment at work, you can [contact the Acas helpline](#).

Related content

[Asking your employer questions about discrimination](#)