

The Ilkley Osteopathic Practice Sexual Harassment Policy

1. Purpose

The Ilkley Osteopathic Practice is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and professional environment for all patients, osteopaths, and administrative staff. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated, and all concerns will be addressed promptly and fairly.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all interactions involving:

- Osteopaths and patients
- Reception staff and patients
- Interactions between all staff members (osteopaths, receptionists, and management)

3. Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment refers to any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal, physical, or digital, that creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment. Examples include:

- Unwanted physical contact (e.g., touching, hugging, or brushing against someone)
- Inappropriate jokes, comments, or gestures
- Unsolicited sexual advances or propositions
- Displaying sexually explicit images or materials
- Inappropriate communications, such as emails, texts, or social media messages

4. Responsibilities

- All staff members are responsible for maintaining a harassment-free workplace.
- Management must take all complaints seriously and ensure proper follow-up.
- Patients must also adhere to professional and respectful behaviour expectations during their interactions with staff.

5. Reporting and Complaint Procedures

Step 1: Informal Resolution (If Appropriate)

- If the complainant feels comfortable doing so, they may address the issue directly with the person responsible, informing them that their behaviour is unwelcome and must stop.
- This step is optional and not required before making a formal complaint.

Step 2: Formal Complaint Process

If the issue persists or the individual feels uncomfortable addressing the situation directly:

- A formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the Practice Manager- Phoebe Kidd, or designated HR officer Louise Judd.
- The written complaint should include:
 - A detailed description of the incident(s)
 - Date(s), time(s), and location(s) of the incident(s)
 - Names of individuals involved
 - Names of any witnesses (if applicable)
 - Any supporting evidence (e.g., emails, messages, or other documentation)

Step 3: Acknowledgment of Complaint

- The Practice Manager or HR officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **5 business days** and begin the initial assessment.
- A confidential meeting will be arranged with the complainant to discuss the details and ensure they feel supported.

Step 4: Investigation Process

- A neutral investigator (either internal or external, depending on the situation) will be appointed to gather evidence, interview witnesses, and speak with the accused party.
- The investigation should be completed within **20 business days** unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- All parties involved will be treated with fairness and respect, and strict confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process.

Step 5: Resolution and Outcome

- Once the investigation concludes, both the complainant and the accused will be informed of the findings.
- Possible outcomes include:
 - No action if the complaint is unsubstantiated
 - Mediation or conflict resolution (if appropriate)
 - Disciplinary action (e.g., verbal/written warnings, suspension, termination)
 - In cases involving patients, refusal of further treatment and possible legal action

Step 6: Appeal Process

- Either party may appeal the decision within **10 business days** of receiving the outcome.
- Appeals should be submitted in writing, clearly stating the grounds for appeal.
- An independent reviewer will reassess the case, and a final decision will be communicated within **15 business days**.

6. Support and Confidentiality

- All complaints will be handled confidentially to the greatest extent possible.
- Staff members involved in the investigation will be reminded of their duty to maintain confidentiality.
- Support services, such as counselling or mediation, will be offered to affected individuals when necessary.

7. Retaliation Prohibition

Retaliation against anyone who makes a complaint, supports a complainant, or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Any acts of retaliation will result in disciplinary action.

8. Training and Awareness

- All staff must undergo mandatory sexual harassment training annually.
- Information for patients is available on the practice's website.

9. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every **12 months** or sooner if legal requirements change or following an incident that reveals gaps in the existing procedures.

Version 1 Produced March 2025

Authorised by

Amos J Grech-Cini
Partner Osteopath

Date