

# SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND BULLYING PREVENTION AND ACTION POLICY

APRIL 2025



Royal College  
of Surgeons  
of England

ADVANCING SURGICAL CARE


# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. The policy statement  | 3  |
| 2. What is sexual misconduct?  | 5  |
| 3. Criminal acts   | 6  |
| 4. Sexual harassment   | 6  |
| 5. What is 'unwanted conduct'?   | 7  |
| 6. Examples of sexual misconduct   | 8  |
| 7. When does this policy apply to College staff members?   | 9  |
| 8. What if the alleged perpetrator is not a College member or non-member in a College appointed or elected role, volunteer, intern, student or trainee | 10 |
| 9. Preventing sexual misconduct  | 10 |
| 10. Responsibilities of managers and those in a Council role (outlined in the standing rule of Council 14.1)   | 11 |
| 11. Sexual Misconduct Support Officers   | 12 |
| 12. Reporting mechanisms (non-employees)   | 13 |
| 13. Reporting mechanisms (employees)   | 14 |
| 14. Investigations   | 14 |
| 15. Sanctions  | 15 |
| 16. Use of language  | 15 |
| 17. Further information and support services   | 16 |
| 18. Appendix 1: Sexual misconduct reporting flowchart  | 19 |

# 1. The policy statement

- 1.2 The Royal College of Surgeons of England (hereinafter “the College”) is committed to providing an inclusive, supportive and safe environment for everyone who works here, and for all members and fellows (and potential members) when providing and/or undertaking education or training, assessment or participating in any other activities under the auspices of the College.
- 1.3 Scope: This policy applies to all members and non-members in a College appointed or elected role, including exam candidates, course participants, event attendees, and others attending College events. It complements the standards of behaviour expected of all surgical team members set out in [Good Surgical Practice](#).
- 1.4 This policy will apply to any unwanted conduct that occurs in the course of a person’s work and which is perpetrated by a College member or non-member in a College appointed or elected role, volunteer, intern, student or trainee and which takes place at their place of work, including in their home while working from home, on their commute, or at/while travelling to a place which is not their place of work if they are there for any reason related to their work, including for a work-related social event, business trip, training session or conference.
- 1.3.1 For issues concerning staff members, see the staff handbook on the College’s intranet or contact the HR Team.
- 1.5 For issues concerning members and non-members who are not members of staff of the College, this policy should be read in conjunction with the [Code of Conduct](#).
- 1.6 The aim of the Policy is to prevent sexual misconduct, sexual harassment and bullying and respond to incidents that may arise, and take action to effect long-term change by:
- educating all those who are associated with the College about sexual misconduct, sexual harassment and related forms of bullying and harassment and their role in developing a culture free from such behaviours;
  - fostering an environment that supports the dignity and respect of all and is free from any form of discrimination, bullying, harassment, and violence, including gender-based violence;
  - where misconduct does occur, providing appropriate processes and procedures (see section 15) for dealing with it to ensure it is properly managed. In cases involving alleged wrongdoing on the part of staff members, the Disciplinary Policy will apply;
  - capturing learning to help create an environment free from such behaviours;
  - monitoring progress in achieving an environment free from such behaviours; and
  - building continuous improvement into our culture.



- 
- 1.7 Everyone has a part to play in being aware of, preventing and dealing with sexual misconduct, sexual harassment and other forms of bullying and harassment. This Policy sets out the expectations for the behaviour of all groups, as well as outlining what the College can do to protect all those associated with it from such behaviours. It is supported by the Executive Director Team within the College, up to and including the Chief Executive, and by Council and Trustee Board. All those in leadership positions within the College will be visible champions of this Policy.
- 1.8 The College will not tolerate any form of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, bullying or other forms of harassment in the workplace and in relation to any associated activities undertaken by or on behalf of members of the College and non-members in a College appointed or elected role. The College will treat all incidents seriously and take any appropriate action at its disposal promptly.
- 1.9 There is no time constraint around reporting an incident of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, bullying or other form of harassment under this Policy.
- 1.10 Sexual misconduct including harassment perpetrated by College members and non-members in an appointed /elected role will amount to a breach of the College's Code of Conduct and may result in the removal of the individual's College membership and/or reporting by the College to the individual's employer, the GMC/GDC and/or any other associated professional organisation of which they are a member and withdrawal of role.
- 1.11 No one will be victimised for making a complaint of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, bullying or other form of harassment or for helping another person to make such a complaint. This means that anyone who makes such a complaint or who helps someone to make such a complaint, for example by giving evidence or information, will not suffer any detriment because of their actions. No one will be subject to disciplinary action or to any other detriment simply because their complaint is not upheld.
- 1.12 The Chief Executive of the College has overall responsibility for this policy. This Policy has been developed in partnership with College Council and the Working Party on Sexual Misconduct in Surgery with whom the College will conduct regular and ongoing consultation regarding the continuing relevance and effectiveness of this policy and any associated activities. Where the Policy requires to be updated to make it more effective, such amendment will be subject to consultation with Council and the revised policy will be communicated to all employees, members, and non-members in a College appointed or elected role, including exam candidates, course participants, event attendees, and others attending College events and others to whom it applies by email and added to the College website and intranet.
- 1.13 While this Policy does not form part of any contract of employment or contract to provide services and may be amended at any time as set out above, all College staff and all members and non-members in a College appointed into College roles will be made aware of this Policy and will be expected to comply with it. This Policy will be communicated to all College staff, members, non-members in College appointed roles and others to whom it applies on a regular basis using a variety of methods, including induction, training, information and publicity, team briefings, meetings and in-house publications.



## 2. What is sexual misconduct?

- 2.1 Sexual misconduct is an umbrella term used to describe sexual harassment and other unlawful behaviours, such as sexual assault and rape, and is defined as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature.
- 2.2 Sexual misconduct is often a manifestation of power imbalances and frequently occurs within unequal relationships within workplace or educational settings, for example between a longstanding examiner and a new member of staff, or a trainer or examiner and a student or trainee. It frequently arises as the result of sexism and power inequalities between women and men. In cases where sexual misconduct is found to have occurred, such abuses of power will be taken into account in deciding what disciplinary action to take.
- 2.3 It is also recognised that certain vulnerable or minority groups may be more at risk from sexual misconduct. Where a person has more than one protected characteristic\*, this may increase the risk of them experiencing sexual misconduct. This is because multiple categories of identity, such as gender, race, sexuality, trans status, religion and disability, can interact in ways that create complex systems of oppression and power which can result in harassment and other misuses of power based on a combination of different aspects of a person's identity. This is referred to as intersectionality.

*\*Protected characteristics – it is against the law to discriminate against any one of these:*

- age
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation



## 3. Criminal acts

- 3.1 Some relevant behaviours are classified as criminal acts and, if reported to the police, will be dealt with in accordance with criminal law. Criminal behaviours include:
- assault as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003;
  - rape as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003;
  - distributing private and personal explicit images or video footage of an individual without their consent as defined by the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015;
  - voyeurism as defined by the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019;
  - indecent exposure as defined by Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- 3.2 An individual experiencing such behaviour is not required to report it to the police, although may of course choose to do so. Whether the individual wishes to make a report to the police or not, they should be offered relevant support with signposting to a [sexual assault referral centre](#) (SARC) where they will be able to access specialist services.

## 4. Sexual harassment

- 4.1 Sexual harassment is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010 in respect of employment and the provision of services, including education. It occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or the effect of:
- violating the person's dignity, or;
  - creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Unwanted conduct that has one of these effects can be harassment even if the effect was not intended. A single one-off event or a series of incidents can amount to sexual harassment. A person can be affected by sexual harassment even if the conduct is not targeted at them.
- 4.2 It is also unlawful to treat someone less favourably because they have either submitted a complaint of sexual harassment or have rejected such behaviour.
- 4.3 Anyone can be a victim of sexual harassment, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation or gender identity or that of the harasser. Sexual harassment may also occur between people of the same sex. We recognise that sexual harassment often arises as a form of violence against women and girls. Sexual harassment can also be a form of violence targeted at men and those with non-binary gender identities.
- 4.4 Under international law, sexual harassment constitutes a breach of a person's human rights.
- 4.5 Sexual harassment can give rise to a civil action through the courts and tribunals where it occurs in a workplace or educational setting.

## 5. What is 'unwanted conduct'?

- 5.1 Unwanted conduct covers a wide range of behaviour which is unwanted or unwelcome.
- 5.2 Types of behaviours which constitute sexual misconduct include, but are not limited to:

### **Physical conduct**

- unwelcome physical contact including patting, pinching, stroking, kissing, hugging;
- fondling or inappropriate touching;
- physical violence, including sexual assault and rape;
- the use of job-related threats or rewards to solicit sexual favours.

### **Verbal conduct**

- mimicry;
- sexualised comments on an individual's appearance, age, private life, etc.;
- sexual comments, stories, jokes or pranks;
- sexual advances;
- repeated and unwanted social invitations for dates or physical intimacy;
- insults based on the sex of the individual;
- sending/sharing sexually explicit messages/images (by any medium);
- coercion;
- covert emotional abuse like gaslighting.

### **Non-verbal conduct**

- creating or displaying sexually explicit or suggestive material or imagery;
  - posts about a targeted individual or unwanted contact on social media;
  - sexually suggestive gestures or expressions;
  - wolf whistling;
  - leering;
  - predatory behaviour.
- 5.3 The effect of such behaviour and whether it is unwanted should be considered from the point of view of the person who experiences the behaviour (the "recipient").
- 5.4 Other forms of sexual behaviour, such as engaging in a consensual sexual act, which although not unwanted, is still inappropriate in the workplace or in work-related or educational settings. Such behaviour is prohibited and will be categorised as sexual misconduct.



## 6. Examples of sexual misconduct

- 6.1 The following examples are intended to provide illustrations of the types of behaviours that will constitute sexual misconduct. They are not exhaustive – there are many more examples of such behaviour. Importantly, sexual misconduct, including harassment, can arise in various forms and to different degrees. As part of the review process for this policy, we will ensure that the specific examples given in this policy are updated so as to reflect the specific environments in which our staff, members, fellows and non-members in a College appointed/elected role operate, taking account of the types of work and related activities undertaken.

Certain types of harassment may be linked to more than one aspect of the recipient's identity. This is intersectional harassment. Examples that illustrate this are included here.

### EXAMPLE ONE

A black surgical trainee (examinations candidates) overhears two senior surgeons (examiners) discussing whether she would be willing to have sex with them. They express the view that she would be “really easy to get into bed” because “black women love sex”.

- 6.2 Some forms of sexual harassment are clear violations of a person's dignity:

### EXAMPLE TWO

A registrar adds a link to their email signature to a promotional video for a rock band. In the video, scenes of a sexual nature are portrayed by actors. Every time they send an email to their colleagues and to their contacts outside the organisation, this link is received.

- 6.3 Sexual harassment does not have to be targeted at one individual:

### EXAMPLE THREE

A surgical care practitioner believes that her male colleague uses the fact she is in a wheelchair as an excuse to make physical contact with her. She feels the situation is complicated by the practicalities and power dynamics of needing support from others with certain tasks. She wants to report the issue but thinks he may not realise he has been doing this.

- 6.4 Sexual harassment does not have to be intentional:

### EXAMPLE FOUR

A dental trainee's body is repeatedly referred to by two of her colleagues. These comments are made in front of her over several months. She does not voice any objection to the comments, sometimes laughing at them and, on one occasion, she responds by making equally offensive comments about one of her colleagues.

- 6.5 It is not necessary for the recipient to say that they object to the behaviour for it to be unwanted:

#### EXAMPLE FIVE

Two Consultants become friendly, often having lunch together and occasionally meeting up outside of work. One Friday night, after a few drinks at the pub, they kiss and agree to meet again the following weekend. On the Monday morning, one takes the other to one side and explains that they regret what happened and would like to keep their relationship professional. The colleague who wishes to keep the relationship going texts and emails the other several times a day over the next week, expressing their affection and upset at the 'change of heart' and repeatedly asking to meet up outside of work despite this request being repeatedly refused.

- 6.6 There may be circumstances in which a course of conduct is not unwanted in the earlier stages but, at some point, 'oversteps the mark' and becomes unwanted.


#### EXAMPLE SIX

A group of faculty are chatting over lunch about the finale of a TV show that they have all been watching. The TV show is popular though it is renowned for being sexist and sexually explicit at times. Those engaged in the conversation are all comfortable talking about the show and the sexual content, focusing on scenes depicting lesbian activity. However, others who sit in the lunch space feel uncomfortable. They are worried that the group may try to involve them in the conversation as they do not want to talk about a show that they find misogynistic, homophobic and degrading to women. They do not think anyone needs to be discussing it at work. They are also worried that, if they voice that view, they will be judged by the group who like the show.

- 6.7 There may be circumstances where behaviour feels appropriate to those involved but causes concerns for others who may see or overhear it, even if nothing is targeted at them. This could still amount to sexual harassment in breach of this policy.

## 7. When does this policy apply to College staff members?

This policy will apply to any unwanted conduct that occurs in the course of a College staff members work and which is perpetrated by a College member or non-member in a College appointed or elected role, volunteer, intern, student or trainee and which takes place at their place of work, including in their home while working from home, on their commute, or at/while travelling to a place which is not their place of work if they are there for any reason related to their work, including for a work-related social event, business trip, training session or conference.



## 8. What if the alleged perpetrator is not a College member or non-member in a College appointed or elected role, volunteer, intern, student or trainee

The sexual harassment of College staff, or member or non-member in an appointed/elected role will not be tolerated, whether caused by those who work at the College or third parties, including customers, suppliers, clients or visitors to our premises. Any instance of work-related sexual harassment should be reported in line with the College Staff Handbook regardless of who the alleged perpetrator is.

We act in accordance with the EHRC's Guidance on third-party sexual harassment and employer's liability available here:

[https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/sexual\\_harassment\\_and\\_haassment\\_at\\_work.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/sexual_harassment_and_haassment_at_work.pdf)

On occasions where the perpetrator is not a member of the College or in an appointment role, we may share the information with the perpetrator's employer, an independent provider, the GMC/GDC or the police.

## 9. Preventing sexual misconduct

9.1 The College has a number of clear duties to take preventative actions in respect of sexual misconduct perpetrated by or against its staff and those who represent it or who carry out functions on its behalf, for example as members or fellows.

9.2 The common law duties:

In relation to its members and non-members in a College appointed role, the College has a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that people who are not its employees are not exposed to risks to their health and safety by coming into contact with the College and/or those representing it or acting on its behalf. This includes volunteers and service users. As a registered charity, the College also has a statutory duty of care to ensure that visitors to its premises will be reasonably safe when using those premises.

9.3 The College also has a common law duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harm to anyone who has a 'relationship of proximity' with it. This will include volunteers, contractors, third parties or members of the public.



## 10. Responsibilities of managers and those in a Council role (outlined in the standing rule of Council 14.1)

- 10.1 All those with line management responsibility or leadership positions for those in Council roles must ensure that all staff members and those in Council roles are aware of this policy and understand their own and the College's responsibilities. Targeted training on sexual harassment will be provided to all managers and those in Council roles.
- 10.2 Managers and those in leadership positions in Council roles have a particular duty to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect within their area of responsibility.
- 10.3 To discharge this duty, they must:
  - always challenge any unacceptable or questionable behaviour that they become aware of even if they are not directly affected;
  - be aware of behaviour and language that can cause offence including jokes and banter, and if necessary, remind workers of the expected standards;
  - respond to complaints of sexual harassment swiftly, sensitively and objectively using specified procedures.
- 10.4 The focus in dealing with complaints should be to understand what has happened and address that proportionately, acknowledging failing and accepting fault and blame where appropriate.
- 10.5 Ensure that this policy is followed.
- 10.6 A Sexual Misconduct Support Officer and/or suitably trained member of HR will assist any line manager and those in leadership positions in Council roles in dealing with complaints of sexual misconduct.
- 10.7 All complaints of sexual misconduct must be dealt with in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy.
- 10.8 In terms of their own behaviour, managers and leaders are expected to be exemplars to others. Any inappropriate behaviour or response to such behaviour or abuse of a manager's position of power will serve to condone harassment and will be considered a serious breach of this Policy and be managed under the Disciplinary process for staff or standing rules of Council.
- 10.9 A line manager's or those in leadership positions in Council roles failure to implement this Policy actively within their area of responsibility or to fail to deal with sexual harassment when they become aware of it could constitute a breach of this policy and their employment contract or the standing rules of Council and disciplinary action may be taken.

# 11. Sexual Misconduct Support Officers

- 11.1 The College will appoint a small number of sexual misconduct officers from across the staff team and those in appointed or elected roles. The sexual misconduct support officers will play a crucial role in the College by providing support and guidance to individuals affected by sexual misconduct.
- 11.2 The main role of a Sexual Misconduct Support Officer is to:
- provide empathetic assistance and support to targets with complaints of sexual harassment;
  - explain the procedures for making a complaint and the potential outcomes;
  - establish the main details of any complaint;
  - help the worker to decide what they want to do;
  - pass the complaint to an appropriate manager for action if the worker decides to take the matter further.
- 11.3 We will ensure that Sexual Misconduct Support Officers receive special training in carrying out their role using a trauma-informed approach. Sexual Misconduct Support Officers will discuss cases in complete confidence and will not divulge information to any other person without the agreement of the individual making the report, save in cases where there is a serious risk to health and safety and sharing with appropriate parties is considered necessary in which case this will be done in a minimal way using anonymous/non-identifiable information whenever possible. Sexual Misconduct Support Officers will have sufficient time within their roles to carry out their duties.
- 11.4 An individual who makes any disclosure to a Sexual Misconduct Support Officer about sexual misconduct is under no obligation to take further action. Individuals who have been the recipients or targets of sexual misconduct are not obliged to refer their complaints to the Sexual Misconduct Support Officer(s), and any such disclosure is made voluntarily.
- 11.5 When information is shared with the Sexual Misconduct Support Officer, it will be kept confidential at that point (save in cases where there is a risk to health and safety and sharing with appropriate parties is considered necessary, as explained above). The Sexual Misconduct Support Officer will explain the possible next steps and what may happen next with information, the safeguards in place, who it is kept confidential from and the circumstances in which it may be shared.
- 11.6 A list of Sexual Misconduct Support Officers can be found by contacting the RCS England Chief Executive office at [chiefexcutive@rcseng.ac.uk](mailto:chiefexcutive@rcseng.ac.uk).

## 12. Reporting mechanisms (non-employees)

- 12.1 It is important that any concerns are reported as you may be the first to formally raise something that has been occurring for some time.
- 12.2 There are different ways in which you can report such behaviour (please see [Appendix 1](#) for a Process Flowchart). These different methods recognise that each individual who experiences sexual misconduct, sexual harassment and bullying will have different needs and might desire different outcomes. You should choose the reporting mechanism(s) that you feel most comfortable with.
- 12.3 We retain the right to investigate concerns that we become aware of even if these are based on anonymous reporting or complaints are withdrawn. Our ability to investigate and take action may be restricted in these circumstances, and we will act with respect and empathy towards any person who has raised a concern but no longer wishes to be involved in the process. As an employer, we may still pursue matters if it is appropriate and proportionate to do so. This is important to ensure that we can tackle concerns about potential sexual harassment within the organisation.
- 12.4 Sexual Misconduct Support Officers**
- 12.4.1 An informal discussion with a Sexual Misconduct Support Officer can be a useful first step in talking about what has happened. See section 11 for details of the Sexual Misconduct Support Officer role and confidentiality rules.
- 12.4.2 This may be followed by a formal report. There is no obligation to make a formal report, but as outlined below, for legal reasons, formal action to address specific incidents will normally only be taken once a formal report has been received.
- 12.5 Informal reporting**
- 12.5.1 If a person chooses to report sexual misconduct informally, they can do so by:
- contacting a Sexual Misconduct Support Officer (as outlined in 12.4 and section 11);
  - emailing the Chief Executive Office of the College at [chiefexecutive@rcseng.ac.uk](mailto:chiefexecutive@rcseng.ac.uk) or by phone at **020 7869 6096**.
- 12.5.2 Although the wishes of the complainant to keep the report on an informal footing will be adhered to wherever possible, there may be some circumstances where the report is of such a serious nature that the College will need to take action because of the high immediate risk to the safety of the complainant, or others with whom the perpetrator may come into contact with. In such situations, the College will put in place appropriate safeguards, such as instigating a formal investigation with the suspension of the perpetrator's role.



## 12.6 Formal reporting

- 12.6.1 If informal action does not stop the sexual misconduct or a formal report is made, a formal procedure should be initiated (please see section [Appendix 1](#) for a Process Flowchart).
- 12.6.2 A person who believes that they have experienced sexual misconduct and who decides, whether after discussions with a Sexual Harrassment Support Officer (SHSO) or not, to formally report it should, in the first instance, report the alleged act or acts to the Chief Executive of the College at [chiefexecutive@rcseng.ac.uk](mailto:chiefexecutive@rcseng.ac.uk) or by phone at **0207 869 6096** or **via our online form**. Where possible, the person making the report should set out in writing details of the complaint including dates and times of the alleged incident(s) and an account of the behaviour. They should also include what their desired outcome is; SHSOs can support workers in establishing this.
- 12.6.3 All complaints will be handled and investigated in a timely and confidential manner. The complainant will be invited to a meeting with the person to whom the report is made or a nominated senior leader from the College. The complainant can decline the meeting, or the nominated senior leader and an alternative will be sought. This meeting will be formally recorded and agreed as factually correct by all in attendance. Following this initial meeting, the person to whom the complaint is made will instigate an investigation to be undertaken by another person, 'the Investigator,' and will then step back from the process.

# 13. Reporting Mechanisms (employees)

These are managed through the staff handbook and the HR team.

# 14. Investigations

The College has powers to carry out its own investigations into certain types of alleged behaviours related to the terms and conditions of membership of the College, including dishonesty, misrepresentation or withholding information, and other breaches of this Code. In cases of alleged sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and all other forms of bullying and harassment, the College has powers to carry out its own investigations where the alleged perpetrator is a College member or specified non-member and the alleged misconduct took place on College premises and/or the individual was acting in their capacity as a College appointed or elected role-holder. The College will reserve the right to report allegations of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and all other forms of bullying and harassment made against a member or specified non-member, to the alleged perpetrator's employer so that, where appropriate, an investigation can be conducted under the terms of employment. For the purposes of such investigations, the College will cooperate fully with the relevant Investigating Officer.

## 15. Sanctions

1. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct notification requirements may result in the immediate withdrawal of membership or appointed/elected role.
2. If, following an investigation by the College itself, or on the basis of a completed investigation by an employer, the GMC/GDC, any other regulatory body or associated professional organisation, a member or specified non-member is found to be no longer in good standing with the College, membership of the College or appointed/elected role will be withdrawn.
3. If the College is the body responsible for the investigation, related information, including the findings and any applicable sanctions, may be communicated to the individual's employer, the GMC/GDC and/or any other associated professional organisation of which they are a member or specified non-member.
4. Where an investigation by the GMC/GDC, any other regulatory body or associated professional organisation or an employer is ongoing, the College will withhold taking any action until the investigation is completed and the outcome is known.
5. Any member or specified non-member who finds themselves to be no longer in good standing with the GMC/GDC, any other regulatory body or whose membership or fellowship of an associated professional organisation is withdrawn following a disciplinary hearing will have their membership of the College or appointed/elected role withdrawn.

## 16. Use of language

If at any time during your involvement in a sexual misconduct matter you have concerns about the language or terminology used, please raise this promptly so that agreed language can be identified and used.

# 17. Further information and support services

## Internal support and partner organisations

### Confidential Support and Advice Service (CSAS)

If you are experiencing problems in your work or personal life, or are seeking legal and financial information and guidance, you may benefit from confidential support and advice from a trained counsellor. Please call the helpline\* on 0800 028 0199 for advice available 24/7.

Your call will be answered by a [Health Assured](#) counsellor who will ask you for your name and your organisation. For the latter, please state that you are a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

In addition to emotional support, if you feel you would also benefit from peer-to-peer professional support, then the counsellor can arrange for you to be referred to an appropriate surgical colleague who will be able to offer confidential and impartial advice. We hope that by talking through your difficulties, especially at an early stage, it may help to ease the burden, to reduce any feelings of isolation and anxiety, and to point the way towards a solution.

*\*Please note that this service is available to UK and Republic of Ireland residents only.*

### Trade Union representatives

Provide advice and support to their members when they have issues at work.

### Domestic abuse and sexual violence allies (DASVAs)

These are employees who have had additional training on DASV to provide peer support to employees who are impacted by workplace sexual misconduct and/or domestic abuse. They can support colleagues to navigate internal and external support services and advise on how to access organisational HR and OD processes and how to report an incident.

### Freedom to Speak up Guardians (FTSU)

You can speak up to FTSU Guardians about anything that gets in the way of patient care or affects your working life.



## External support

**ACAS**: helpline for anyone experiencing workplace related issues including sexual harassment.

**Rights of Women**: have free legal advice lines for women who have experienced domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment at work.

**Surviving in scrubs**: provide support, share survivor stories and campaign to end sexism, harassment, and sexual assault in the healthcare workforce.

**General Medical Council**: what to do if you think you have been subject to sexual misconduct by a doctor: a resource for patients and colleagues.

**Health & Care Professions Council**: sexual safety hub that provides help and guidance about making a report to that organisation.

**Protect**: free, confidential whistleblowing advice.

**Equality Advisory & Support Service**: helpline to advise on issues related to equality and human rights.

**Citizens Advice**: provide information about your legal rights in the workplace if you are experiencing sexual harassment.

**Samaritans**: support for anyone who's struggling to cope, and who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure.

**Getting help for domestic violence and abuse**: NHS.uk provides practical advice and help to recognise the signs and where to get help.

**Supporting a survivor of sexual violence**: advice from Rape Crisis about how to support a survivor of sexual violence.

**NHS help after rape and sexual assault**: information on the NHS website about where to find support if you have been sexually assaulted, raped or abused.

**Rape Crisis England and Wales**: 24/7 helpline that can provide immediate support if you have experienced sexual misconduct.

**Rape Crisis Scotland**: 24/7 helpline that can provide immediate support if you have experienced sexual misconduct.

**Sexual assault referral centres (SARCs)**: offer medical, practical and emotional support to anyone who has been raped, sexually assaulted or abused. SARCs have specially trained doctors, nurses and support workers.

**Galop**: support LGBT+ people who have experienced abuse and violence.

**The Survivors Trust**: provide survivor-led resources and practical tools to help people affected by sexual violence and abuse and their supporters navigate their journey of healing.

**SurvivorsUK**: provide support to male and non-binary survivors of sexual violence, providing counselling, practical help and community on your healing journey.

**Victim Support**: provide specialist help to support victims of crime to cope and move on to the point where they feel they are back on track with their lives.

**A list of support services on the Government's website**: for victims of sexual violence and abuse.

# 18. Appendix 1: Sexual misconduct reporting flowchart

