

## **Sexual Harassment in the workplace**

A new piece of legislation, the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010 Bill) Act 2023, will come into force in October 2024, having recently received Royal Assent.

The Act will have various implications for employers, who will now have to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. Initially, employers were expected to also prevent sexual harassment to its employees by third parties such as contractors or suppliers, however this was removed from the final bill.

If employers do not take reasonable steps, then under the Act, the Employment Tribunal will have the power to increase any compensation award by up to 25%. Whilst there is no strict definition of “reasonable steps”, it is thought that this will include specific training and carrying out in depth and unbiased investigations into any reports of sexual harassment.

What should employers do?

Employers need to be aware of the updated Act, and ensure that they have the correct and necessary processes in place to actively prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. Whilst the Act will not come into play until late next year, employers should already be looking to eradicate sexual harassment at work, whether that be through training, a culture change or updating workplace policies as failure to do so could result in large penalties.

If you would like us to review any policies or provide training on how the behaviours expected at work or how to run an investigation, please get in touch with a member of the team on 01752 663295.