**Risk Assessment: Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace**

**Purpose:**
This risk assessment is intended to identify, assess, and mitigate risks related to sexual harassment in the workplace. It aims to ensure compliance with the new duty to take proactive and anticipatory steps to prevent sexual harassment, including by third parties.

**1. Workplace Overview**

* **Business Name:**
PreciseHR (example)
* **Location(s):**
Remote-first operations with occasional client site visits and contractor interactions.
* **Number of Employees:**
[Insert number]
* **Sector:**
Human Resources Consultancy
* **Date of Assessment:**
[Insert date]
* **Assessor Name:**
[Insert name]

**2. Identifying the Risks**

**A. Internal Risk Factors**

* **Workplace culture:**
Lack of clear communication around unacceptable behaviour may result in inappropriate conduct going unreported.
* **Power dynamics:**
Managers and senior staff may have a level of authority that could discourage junior employees from reporting concerns about harassment.
* **Remote working environment:**
Employees may feel isolated, which can make them vulnerable to inappropriate online communication, including emails or chat messages.

**B. External Risk Factors (Third Parties)**

* **Client interactions:**
Employees interacting with clients during consultancy visits or calls may be at risk of harassment by those third parties.
* **Contractor interactions:**
Freelancers and contractors working with employees or visiting client sites may present risks, especially if no clear policies are in place.

**3. Assessing the Risks**

**A. Internal Risks**

| **Risk** | **Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)** | **Impact (High/Medium/Low)** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Lack of clear reporting channels for harassment | Medium | High | May lead to underreporting or unaddressed incidents |
| Authority imbalance between managers and junior staff | Medium | Medium | Could discourage junior staff from raising concerns |
| Remote work leading to online harassment | Low | High | Online tools could be used for inappropriate communication |
| Cultural insensitivity or misunderstandings | Low | Medium | May lead to inappropriate comments or behaviour |

**B. External Risks**

| **Risk** | **Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)** | **Impact (High/Medium/Low)** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Client harassment during site visits or calls | Low | High | Employees may feel uncomfortable reporting client behaviour |
| Contractor harassment during site visits | Medium | Medium | If not covered by policies, contractors may not understand behavioural expectations |

**4. Risk Mitigation Measures**

**A. Reasonable Steps to Reduce Internal Risks**

1. **Sexual Harassment Policy:**
	* Develop and communicate a clear sexual harassment policy outlining what constitutes inappropriate behaviour and the reporting procedure.
	* **Risk Reduced:** Lack of clear reporting channels.
2. **Training and Awareness:**
	* Provide mandatory training on sexual harassment, focusing on behaviours that are unacceptable and how employees can report concerns.
	* Conduct this training at onboarding and through periodic refresher sessions.
	* **Risk Reduced:** Authority imbalance, cultural misunderstandings.
3. **Fostering a Supportive Culture:**
	* Create an environment where employees feel safe raising concerns without fear of retaliation. Ensure anonymity in reporting if needed.
	* Use pulse surveys or regular feedback opportunities to gauge employee experiences and flag concerns early.
	* **Risk Reduced:** Underreporting and cultural insensitivity.
4. **Remote Work Protocols:**
	* Set clear standards for online communications, including appropriate conduct during video calls, emails, and instant messaging.
	* Provide training on cyber safety and respectful digital communication.
	* **Risk Reduced:** Online harassment during remote working.

**B. Reasonable Steps to Reduce External Risks (Third Parties)**

1. **Clear Communication of Expectations to Third Parties:**
	* Share the organisation’s zero-tolerance stance on harassment with all clients and contractors. Ensure this is documented in contracts and site rules.
	* Place visible notices in any shared workspaces to emphasise behavioural expectations.
	* **Risk Reduced:** Client and contractor harassment.
2. **Pre-Site Visit Briefings:**
	* Before employees attend client sites, provide them with guidance on what to do if harassment occurs and how to escalate such issues.
	* **Risk Reduced:** Harassment during site visits.
3. **Incident Reporting and Support:**
	* Ensure there is a clear mechanism for employees to report third-party harassment immediately, with a follow-up process to protect the employee.
	* Provide support services (e.g., counselling) to any employee affected by harassment.
	* **Risk Reduced:** Fear of reporting harassment by third parties.

**5. Monitoring and Reviewing the Risks**

* **Regular Reviews:**
This risk assessment will be reviewed quarterly to ensure continued relevance. New risks may be identified, and mitigation measures will be updated accordingly.
* **Incident Monitoring:**
All reported incidents of harassment will be logged, and the actions taken to address the situation will be recorded. These logs will be used to refine the risk assessment and improve prevention strategies.

**6. Conclusion**

The new anticipatory duty requires employers to proactively manage the risk of sexual harassment. By implementing the reasonable steps outlined in this risk assessment, the organisation will significantly reduce the likelihood of harassment occurring, both internally and through interactions with third parties. Regular reviews will ensure that these steps remain effective in maintaining a safe and respectful working environment.

**Approved by:**

**Date:**
[Insert signature and date]