

Services directory

Sexual harassment at work

About this directory

Everyone has the right to be safe at work.

If you believe you have experienced sexual harassment at work, there are internal and external support and reporting options available to help you to get the support you need.

This Services directory provides a list of external options available; and complements information in the Sexual harassment response tool – an interactive chatbot developed by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

What is sexual harassment?

In the Victorian *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, 'sexual harassment' is defined as:

- an unwelcome sexual advance, or
- an unwelcome request for sexual favours, or
- any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature,

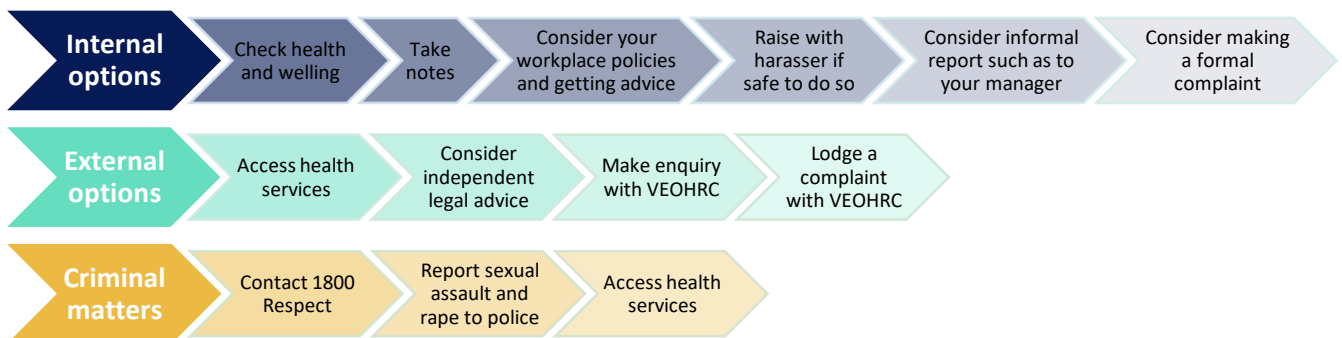
that a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would anticipate that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated by.

Sexual harassment at work is against the law. Even if you experienced one of these behaviours just once at work, it may be sexual harassment.

Deciding where to start and what help you need

If you've been sexually harassed, where you start is up to you.

There are many different ways to respond to sexual harassment depending on what happened, the impact and your needs. There may be supports and reporting options internally within your organisation and there are always external options.



In the case of sexual assault and rape, you might need to start with making a report to the police. There are external support services that can help you with making a report to police.

This directory provides contact details for **external information and support services** that you may need and to help you **report a crime**.

You may not need to use this directory if you feel most comfortable to start with internal options, such as talking to your manager about what happened.

Who can use this directory?

Sexual harassment can impact everyone in the workplace. This directory gives everyone **external support and reporting options**, for:

- those who have experienced harassment at work
- those who have seen or overheard behaviour that might be sexual harassment
- those to whom someone has disclosed that they have experienced sexual harassment
- managers and employers who want to get support for staff.

Protections against victimisation

In Victoria, people have a right to make a complaint about sexual harassment at work. Under the Equal Opportunity Act, you cannot be treated unfairly at work because you have made a complaint about discrimination or sexual harassment.

If you experience unfair treatment because you have made a complaint or acted as a witness to a complaint; you can make a *separate* complaint of victimisation. [Contact the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#) if you have been treated unfairly by your employer for reporting sexual harassment.

Important considerations when deciding your options

- It will be useful to read all of this directory before deciding your next step.
- Make sure you have all the information you need about your options before making a decision.
- Take notes about what happened as a record and to help you recall what you experienced, what you saw or what action you took.
- Familiarise yourself with the internal procedures of your organisation for reporting discrimination or sexual harassment.
- If you have reported an incident of sexual harassment, there may be management or employer obligations that guide how the report must be managed and you may not have control over the steps taken once a report is made.
- If you're not comfortable reporting the matter to your employer, you can make a complaint about workplace sexual harassment to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. It's OK if you choose to report sexual harassment externally rather than using internal reporting mechanisms.
- You may not be sure whether what you have experienced is sexual harassment. You can call our free Enquiry Line on 1300 292 153 for confidential information to assist you further.

What crosses the line when it's 'conduct of a sexual nature'?

While it might feel more obvious to identify an unwelcome sexual advance or unwelcome request for sexual favours, sexual harassment also stretches more broadly into areas of 'conduct of a sexual nature'. This includes:

- subjecting someone to *any act* of physical intimacy
- making any statement with sexual connotations to somebody, either in writing or when talking, whether in the presence of the person or not
- making any gesture, action or comment of a sexual nature in a person's presence

This covers a wide range of behaviours that are sexual in nature, even if at first you don't feel sure if what happened has crossed the line into sexual harassment.

For example, a shoulder rub, suggestive comment or intrusive question about your sex life can all be conduct of a sexual nature. It may cross the line when it is unwelcome – regardless of the intention of the harasser.

Services directory

For immediate support for sexual violence and rape, contact 1800RESPECT

Talking about sexual violence can be hard.

Trained counsellors at 1800RESPECT will listen and support you in what you feel is right for your situation. They will work with you to find the right services or support for you.

Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by phone or online chat.

National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service (1800RESPECT)

- Phone: 1800RESPECT (1800 737 7327)
- Web: 1800respect.org.au

Healthcare support

Sexual harassment has real impacts. It is always important to get support for your health and wellbeing.

Within your organisation could get referrals for health supports from human resources staff, a union delegate or a workplace contact officer. Your organisation may also provide an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that offers confidential support and counselling.

For external healthcare support, consider the following services.

General practitioner

You can speak to your GP about issues of workplace sexual harassment and ask for a referral to relevant health and counselling services. Contact your regular or a trusted GP.

Emergency healthcare support

Provides services such as post sexual assault forensic evidence gathering, relevant healthcare to prevent pregnancy, and treatment for prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

- Sexual Assault Crisis Line Phone: 1800 806 292 (24 hours) – diverts to local Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) services during standard business hours
- Email: ahcasa@thewomens.org.au
- Web: sacl.com.au

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health Information Line

Provides a telephone service specifically for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds on health topics including women's health, occupational health and safety (including sexual harassment), and women's safety and wellbeing.

- Phone: 1800 656 421

Psychological/Counselling Support

Beyond Blue

Provides free information and support to help people work through mental health issues and achieve their best possible mental health.

- Phone: 1300 224 636 (24 hours)
- Web: beyondblue.org.au

No To Violence (Men's Referral Service)

Provides confidential men's family violence telephone counselling, information and a referral service. Central point of contact for men taking responsibility for their violent behaviour.

- Phone: 1300 766 491 (for interpreter, call TIS National on 131 450)
Mon–Fri: 8am to 9pm
Weekends: 9am to 5pm
- Live Chat now (National)
Mon–Fri: 8am to 9pm
Weekends and Public Holidays 10am to 3pm
- Web: ntv.org.au

Mensline

A national phone and online support service for men that includes video counselling.

- Phone: 1300 789 978
- Web: mensline.org.au

WIRE: Women's Support Line

Free support, referral and information for all Victorian women, nonbinary and gender-diverse people. "Any woman. Any issue."

- Phone: 1300 134 130
Mon–Fri: 9am to 5pm
- Email: inforequests@wire.org.au
- Web: wire.org.au

Legal information and support

People involved in incidents of sexual harassment almost always benefit from independent legal information and advice to help them understand what happened and what options are available. You can always seek information and support outside of your organisation.

There are some situations where you should seek independent legal information and advice, such as:

- if you reported sexual harassment to your organisation and no action was taken;
- when you are unsatisfied with the outcome of a report of sexual harassment at work;
- if sexual harassment is continuing after you've reported it;
- if you are thinking about leaving your job or feel pressured to leave because of sexual harassment.

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)

Provides legal information about discrimination and sexual harassment through a free and confidential Enquiry Line and online resources.

VEOHRC also takes complaints through its free dispute resolution services.

- Enquiry Line: 1300 292 153
- Live chat: livechat.humanrights.vic.gov.au
- Hearing impaired 1800 555 660 (NRS Helpdesk)
- Interpreters: 1300 152 494
- Email: enquiries@veohrc.vic.gov.au
- Web: humanrights.vic.gov.au

Victoria Legal Aid (VLA)

Provides free legal services to support to people with legal problems, including issues of sexual harassment.

- Phone: 1300 792 387
- Mon–Fri: 8.45am to 5.15pm
- Web: legalaids.vic.gov.au

Women's Legal Service Victoria

Provides free legal services to women experiencing disadvantage who are facing legal issues arising out of relationship breakdown and violence.

- Phone (metropolitan area): (03) 8622 0600 Tues and Thurs: 5.30pm–7.30pm
- Phone (regional): 1300 133 302 Tues and Thurs: 5.30pm–7.30pm
- Web: womenslegal.org.au

Victorian Trades Hall Council Women and Equality Team

The Women's and Equality Team can provide over-the-phone advice and referrals regarding addressing issues of gendered violence in the workplace within the industrial setting. Both union and non-union members can contact the team.

- Phone: (03) 9659 3533
- Email: info@vthc.org.au

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)

Provides free legal information, referrals, advice and casework assistance to Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on a range of legal issues, including discrimination (sexual harassment).

- Phone: (03) 9418 5999 or 1800 064 865 (toll free)

Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU)

Provides free legal advice and support services to CPSU members on issues including workplace conflict, harassment and bullying. Contact through your workplace delegate or directly on:

- Phone: 8620 6369 or 1300 137 636
- Web: cpsuVIC.org

Department of Justice and Regulation – Victims of Crime

Provides free information and advice on reporting a crime, information about your rights, the court process and other services that can help you.

- Phone: 1800 819 817

Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)

A national service provider that provides support on issues of sex discrimination and sexual harassment. The AHRC also takes complaints.

- Infoline: 1300 656 419 or 02 9284 9888
- TTY: 1800 620 241
- Interpreting service (call and ask to connect to AHRC): 131 450
- Hearing or speaking impairment (call and ask to connect to AHRC): 133 677 or 1300 555 727
- Web: humanrights.gov.au

JobWatch

Provides legal information and support on employment rights related issues, including sexual harassment and discrimination.

- Phone: (03) 9662 1933 (metropolitan), 1800 331 617 (regional Victoria)
- Email: jobwatch@jobwatch.org.au
- Web: jobwatch.org.au

Fair Work Commission

The national workplace relations tribunal with power and functions to deal with anti-bullying issues upon formal lodgement of an application. The Commission also facilitates the Workplace Advice Service – a free legal assistance program to offer advice on legal issues including workplace bullying

- Phone: 1300 799 675 (not for legal advice) Mon–Fri: 9am–5pm
- General: fwc.gov.au
- Workplace Advice Service: fwc.gov.au/workplace-advice-service-request-form
- Online Lodgement Service: fwc.gov.au/disputes-at-work/how-the-commission-works/lodge-application/online-lodgment-service

Online information and reporting tools

It is important to keep notes of what happened when it is fresh in your mind. You may need these notes later to remind yourself of:

- the details of what took place
- who was present
- what was said.

You can use these notes later if you decide to get legal advice, report an incident or consult with medical advice. You can also make an anonymous report of harassment and get more information in online tools.

Sexual harassment support and response tool

A private, interactive chat that provides pathways for information on sexual harassment if:

- you have experienced harassment at work
- you've seen or overheard behaviour that might be sexual harassment
- someone has disclosed to you that they have experienced sexual harassment.

The response tool can help you understand when something at work crosses the line into sexual harassment. It shares information and advice on how to respond to help you weigh up options, and provides a directory of support services to get you the help you may need.

- Web: humanrights.vic.gov.au/resources/respond-to-sexual-harassment

Talk to Spot

Spot is a safe, anonymous way to document harassment and discrimination. Spot is a chatbot, and once you input an incident form, you can email it to yourself or keep it safely online until you need to download it.

Talk to Spot is free for individuals, even if your employer has not signed up to use this service. You can choose the option 'I found Spot by myself' to start documenting an incident and create a private report. Submitting a report to your organisation is optional.

- Web: talktospot.com/go

Sunny app

'Sunny' is 1800RESPECT's app designed for women with a disability, providing easy-to-access supports if you have experienced violence and abuse.

For women with a disability who have experienced violence and abuse, Sunny can help you to tell your story, understand what has happened, learn about your rights and find people who can help.

The app is free to download and use on your phone.

- Web: 1800respect.org.au/sunny

Support for sexual assault and reporting crime

For immediate support, you can get in touch with the free counselling service **1800RESPECT** on 1800 737 732. 1800RESPECT can help you make a complaint to the police and has qualified counsellors to provide information, support and referrals to other services.

Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)

Provides confidential support and intervention to women, children and men who are victims/survivors of sexual assault and who have experienced or been affected by sexual harassment.

You can be referred or contact your local CASA directly. CASA can provide counselling services, or link you to legal services and healthcare (including collection of forensic evidence)

- Phone: 1800 806 292 (24 hours)
- Email: ahcasa@thewomens.org.au
- Web: sacl.com.au

Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL)

Provides advice on services available in cases of sexual assault (emergency healthcare, protection services, police complaints processes).

- Phone: 1800 806 292 (24 hours) – diverts to local CASA services during standard business hours
- Email: ahcasa@thewomens.org.au
- Web: sacl.com.au
- Police/emergency contact line: (03) 8345 3494
- SACL admin line: (03) 8345 3201

National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service (1800RESPECT)

Qualified and experienced counsellors provide free telephone and online counselling, information and assistance to access other services. Open to all people in Australia affected by sexual assault and domestic and family violence (including family and friends). Available 24/7.

- Phone: 1800RESPECT (1800 737 7327)
- Web: 1800respect.org.au

Victoria Police

Many forms of sexual harassment in the workplace also constitute sexual offences under criminal law. For more information about the processes of reporting a sexual offense or sexual assault, please refer to: [Reporting Sexual Assault to Police](#).

You can call 000 or visit [your local police station](#).