

Immediate Response Plan

Example

The Immediate Response Plan (IRP) provides a structured approach for first responders to reports of sexual harassment to assess the nature of the situation, provide support to the people involved, ensure safety, and effectively de-escalate if required. This approach can be effective to create an informal 'space' where support can be provided and discussed, and victims confidentially start to explore reporting or resolution options.



Immediate Response Plan

Workplace safety planning considerations

The considerations below are prompts only and are designed to assist you in your conversations with employees.

Understand the immediate safety concerns and risks:

Do you currently feel unsafe in the workplace?

What are your safety concerns?

What would be helpful to you right now?

How would you like us to help?

When implementing any workplace adjustments, ensure relevant employees are advised that:

Everyone's health and safety in the workplace is paramount

The employer is not judging guilt, nor siding with either employee

Adjustments are temporary until the dispute is resolved or the workplace has obtained more information to further assess the situation

They can contact a nominated support person (or employee assistance provider). You should ensure different support contacts for each party

All parties should be informed of all internal and external support services available to them



**Understand the appropriate level of confidentiality:
(to ensure agreed action plan is compliant with their wishes)**

Does the respondent know about your concerns?

Have you confided in any other employees?

If no, is there a trusted person in the organisation they can reach out to?

Is there anyone else in the organisation that might know about the issue and may disclose information about the issue?

What can be communicated to colleagues, if anything, if enquiries are made?

Would you feel comfortable if I reach out to HR to make sure all support options are made available to you? Nothing will be recorded.

Brainstorming actions that can be taken:

**Steps that can be taken to physically separate the employees, such as:
(ensuring that changes made do not unnecessarily disadvantage the victim)**

Move or transfer one employee to a different working location

Implement a work from home arrangements

Change work schedules (start & finish times)

Discuss the possibility of an employee voluntarily using their leave balance

Steps that can be taken to reduce communication

Implementing rules around communication, such as a directive that email is only for work purposes and a manager is copied in

Adjusting responsibilities to minimise the need to interact, such as moving an employee onto a different project (permanently or temporarily)



Steps to ensure safety in the workplace

Do you have the contact details for security?

If allocated desks, do you feel comfortable with your current location?

Support/allocation of time to talk to EAP or make the most of other support services.

Below is an example of the documentation recording the IRP and associated actions, using a fictional case study.

Sexual Harassment – Workplace Support Program

Scenario:

Min made a report of sexual harassment to her leader, Martin. She told Martin that for the last 2 weeks a new team member, Khan, has been sexually harassing her in the office almost every time she walks past his workstation or saw him at the printer or lunchroom. She says that she can't cope anymore. At the time Min made the report, she was unsure of her options and said she just wanted the behaviour to stop. Min also requested to work from home (WFH) for the next few weeks, so she could have some time out of the office away from Khan and get some counselling. Martin agreed to the temporary WFH arrangement, which could start the next day, and encouraged Min to take the rest of the day off, if she wanted to. Martin wanted to ensure Min was feeling supported and was not feeling isolated or segregated from her colleagues or the workplace while WFH, so implemented twice weekly check points.

The same day, Martin spoke with Alex in HR and they followed in the IRP to immediately support Min and document their support through the IRP document.

After being provided some space to reflect on the situation and the variety of options available for resolution, the next day, Min decides that she would like HR to act and that she is prepared to participate in any investigation or enquiries needed.



Date of plan:	16/11/2021
Plan review date:	16/12/2021
Check in frequency:	Twice weekly check-ins on Wednesday and Fridays for a period of 4 weeks (ad hoc check-ins as required)
Location and time of check ins:	Zoom meeting at 4.30pm (meeting room 6 if Min is in the office) – <i>check-in venue should be private and non-intimidating</i>

Agreed actions	Responsible	Date
First conversation		16/11/2021
Min will take rest of the day off work (no input of leave required)	N/A	
Min will work from home (WFH) for a temporary period of 2 weeks	N/A	17/11/2021 – 1/12/2021
Arrange IT set up for WFH – courier to Min’s home	Martin	16/11/2021
Arrange IT set up for WFH arrangement (maintain confidentiality and prepare for questions)	Martin	16/11/2021
Notify Alex (HR) and Louise (Health & Safety)	Martin	16/11/2021
Send EAP information to Min	Martin	16/11/2021
Close monitoring of Khan pending determination of next steps	Martin	16/11/2021
First check-in (17/11/2021)		
Change finish time to 4pm twice a week (Monday and Thursday) for two weeks to allow time for Min to attend counselling (per Min’s request)	Martin/Min	18/11/2021
Continue working from home	Min	N/A
Organise meeting between HR and Min regarding formal complaint	Martin	17/11/2021

Second check-in (21/11/2021)



Review the sexual harassment policy to consider if you would like to make a report and how you would like to do that.	Min	No time frame
Review the sexual harassment policy to consider if you would like to make a report and how you would like to do that. Continue WFH	Min	From 10/01/2022
Third check-in (1/12/2022)		
While investigation is underway, return to workplace	Min	From 22/01/2022
Arrange for Louise Chatter to reach out to Min	Martin	17/01/2022
Fourth check-in (8/12/2021)		
Continue check ins for another 2 weeks while investigation is underway	Min/Martin	From 01/02/2022

Supports involved:

Employee has consented for information to be shared with:

Name	Role/Relationship
Alex Kovich	HR Manager (workplace complaints)
Louise Chatter	Work, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager