

PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION'S STAND ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE

Compliments from the Public Services Commission

A safe and healthy working environment is a fundamental principle and a right that employers must enforce. It is in this light that Article 24 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana enjoins the government to ensure that every person has the right to work under satisfactory, safe and healthy conditions.

The Public Services Commission (PSC) implores Heads of Public Service Organisations to provide enabling environment needed for public servants to achieve organisational, professional and personal goals based on high values, ethics, integrity and service-oriented culture.

The PSC is also committed to maintaining a workplace free from sexual harassment which is a form of workplace discrimination. All employees are required to work in a manner that prevents sexual harassment in the workplace.

Sexual harassment as defined in section 10.3.12.0 of the Human Resource Management Policy Framework and Manual (HRMPF&M) is any unwelcome comment or conduct of a sexual nature that may detrimentally affect the work environment or lead to adverse job-related consequences for the victim of the harassment.

Examples of sexual harassment in section 10.3.12.2 of the HRMPF & M includes:

- i. a person in authority asking an employee for sexual favours in return for being hired or receiving promotions or other employment benefits;
- ii. sexual advances with actual or implied work-related consequences; unwelcome remarks, questions, jokes or innuendoes of a sexual nature including sexist comments or sexual invitations;
- iii. verbal abuse, intimidation or threats of a sexual nature; leering, staring or making sexual gestures;
- iv. display of pornographic or other sexual materials; offensive pictures, graffiti, cartoons or sayings;
- v. unwanted physical contact such as touching, patting, pinching or hugging; and,
- vi. physical assault of a sexual nature.

The costs of sexual harassment can be very high. Efficient and productive output cannot be delivered if people cannot work with dignity. Sexual and other forms of harassment can adversely affect organisational and work performance (ILO, 2013). Victims of sexual harassment may suffer from psychological and behavioural changes, and stress related physical and mental illness.

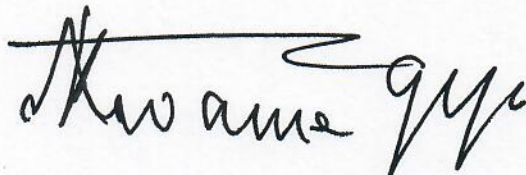
In Ghana, harassment is a serious offence under the Criminal Offences Act 1960(Act 29) as amended by Act 2012 (Act 849) and Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651). Therefore, all employees have a legal right to a workplace free from sexual harassment.

The PSC **will not** trivialize any form of harassment within the Commission and public service of Ghana as a whole.

To demonstrate the seriousness the PSC attaches to sexual harassment and its related offences, the Commission will strictly investigate and sanction any employee found culpable of harassing another employee at the Workplace. The Commission also implores management of other public service organisations to do same.

The Commission, therefore urges employees/victims to report any form of Sexual harassment to management. Victims are also assured of protection from the Commission and Management.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kwame Agyeman', with a horizontal line above it.

PROF. VICTOR KWAME AGYEMAN, ESQ
CHAIRMAN, PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION