

**APTUS VALUE HOUSING FINANCE INDIA LIMITED****POLICY ON PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE****A. COMMITMENT:**

Aptus Value Housing Finance India Limited (hereinafter referred to as “Aptus”) is committed to provide a work environment that ensures every woman employee is treated with dignity and respect and afforded equitable treatment. Aptus is also committed to promote a work environment that is conducive to the professional growth of its women employees and encourages equality of opportunity. Aptus will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment and is committed to take all necessary steps to ensure that its women employees are not subjected to any form of harassment.

**B. SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all categories of employees of Aptus, including permanent management and workmen, temporaries, trainees and employees on contract at its workplace. Aptus will not tolerate sexual harassment, if engaged in by customers or any other business associates. The workplace includes:

- (a) All offices or other premises where Aptus’s business is conducted
- (b) All company-related activities performed at any other site away from the Aptus’s premises.
- (c) Any social, business or other functions where the conduct or comments may have an adverse impact on the workplace or workplace relations.

**C. DEFENITION:**

- (a) “Act” means The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and the rules framed there under.
- (b) “Aggrieved Person” means a person in relation to work place whether employed or not, who alleges to have been subject to any act of sexual harassment by the Respondent.
- (c) “Company” means Aptus Value Housing Finance India Limited.
- (d) “employee” means a person employed at a workplace for any work on regular, temporary, ad hoc or daily wages basis, either directly or through an agent, including a contractor, with or, without the knowledge of the principal employer, whether for remuneration or not, or working on a voluntary basis or otherwise, whether the terms of employment are express or implied and includes a co-worker, a contract worker, probationer, trainee, apprentice or called by any other such name;
- (e) “Internal Complaints Committee” means a committee constituted by Aptus as per this Policy;

- (f) "Respondent" means a person against whom the aggrieved person has made a complaint.
- (g) "Sexual Harassment" includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behavior (whether directly or by implication) such as:
  - (i) Physical contact and advances; or
  - (ii) A demand or request for sexual favors; or
  - (iii) Making sexually colored remarks; or
  - (iv) Showing pornography or other offensive or derogatory pictures, cartoons, representations, graphics, pamphlets or sayings; or
  - (v) Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non - verbal conduct of sexual nature.
- (h) "workplace" includes any department, organization, undertaking, establishment, enterprise institution, office or branch unit. Any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment including transportation provided by the employer for undertaking such journey.

#### **D. INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE:**

Every complaint received shall be forwarded to Internal Complaint Committee formed under the policy for redressal. The investigation shall be carried out by Internal Complaints Committee constituted for this purpose.

The composition of the Internal Complaints Committee shall be as given below

1. Presiding Officer shall be a woman employed at a senior level at workplace from amongst the employees;
2. Two Members from amongst employees preferably committed to the cause of women or who have had experience in social work or have legal knowledge;
3. One member from amongst non-governmental organisations or associations committed to the cause of women or a person familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment:

At least one-half the total members of the Committee have to be women. The Presiding Officer and every member of the Internal Complaints Committee shall hold office for such period, not exceeding three years, from the date of their nomination as may be specified by the employer.

#### **POSH committee members**

- |                    |   |                                  |
|--------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Mrs. Gayathri V | - | Presiding officer POSH committee |
| 2. Mrs. Anu S      | - | Member POSH Committee            |
| 3. Ms. Ranjitha S  | - | Member POSH Committee            |
| 4. Mr. Srikanth N  | - | Member POSH Committee            |
| 5. Mrs. Kamala S   | - | External member POSH committee   |

## E. COMPLAINT REDRESSAL MECHANISM

Any aggrieved person may make, in writing, a complaint of sexual harassment at workplace to the committee giving details of the sexual harassment meted out to her/him within a period of 3 months from the date of incident and in case of a series of incidents, within a period of 3 months from the date of last incident, which may be extended for a further period of 3 months, if circumstances warrant such extension in the opinion of the Internal Complaints Committee, for reasons to be recorded in writing.

1. The Presiding Officer or any Member of the Internal Complaints Committee can render reasonable assistance to the person for making complaint in writing, in case they are unable to do so.
2. On receipt of complaint, the Internal Complaint Committee shall decide the place and time for hearing the complaint and shall intimate the date, time and place of hearing to the Complainant and Respondent. The Internal Complaints Committee shall follow principles of Natural Justice while handling such complaints.
  - (i) Where the aggrieved person is unable to make a complaint on account of their physical incapacity, a complaint may be filed by:
    - a) a relative or friend; or
    - b) a co-worker; or
    - c) an officer of the National Commission for Women or State Women's Commission; or
    - d) any person who has knowledge of the incident, with the written consent of the aggrieved person.
  - (ii) Where the aggrieved person is unable to make a complaint on account of their mental incapacity, a complaint may be filed by:
    - a) a relative or friend; or
    - b) a special educator or
    - c) a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist; or
    - d) the guardian or authority under whose care they are receiving treatment or care; or
    - e) any person who has knowledge of the incident jointly with any of the above.
  - (iii) Where the aggrieved person for any other reason is unable to make a complaint, a complaint may be filed by any person who has knowledge of the incident, with their written consent.
  - (iv) Where the aggrieved person is dead, a complaint may be filed by any person who has knowledge of the incident, with the written consent of their legal heir.

3. Internal Complaints Committee on receipt of such written complaint, may, if require ask the aggrieved person to furnish additional information about the alleged harassment.
4. The Complainant or person authorized on their behalf as per above provision, shall make a complaint to the Internal Complaints Committee through following mode:
  - (i) Copy of complaint along with supporting documents and names and address of witness shall be sent to Internal Complaints Committee at [posh@aptusindia.com](mailto:posh@aptusindia.com).
  - (ii) On receipt of such complaint, Internal Complaints Committee shall provide a copy along with supporting documents of such complaints to the Respondent within 7 working days.
  - (iii) Respondent shall file reply within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint along with list of documents, names and addresses of witnesses.
  - (iv) Internal Complaint Committee shall investigate in detail into the matter of the complaint. The Internal Complaint committee shall have the right to call the person against whom the complaint is made or any other witnesses as when necessary.
  - (v) During the enquiry process, the Complainant and the respondent shall refrain from any form of threat, intimidation or influencing of witnesses.
  - (vi) The Committee will conduct enquiry in accordance with the principles of natural justice and will ensure to give both parties, the aggrieved as well as the respondent, a right to be heard and present their case before the Committee.
  - (vii) The Committee shall ensure confidentiality during the enquiry process and will ensure that sufficient care is taken to avoid ant retaliation against the witnesses.
  - (viii) Internal Complaint Committee shall have the right to terminate the enquiry or give ex-parte decision on the complaint, if the Respondent or complainant remains absent for 3 consecutive hearings, without sufficient cause, provided that such termination or ex-parte Order may not be passed without giving a notice in writing, 15 days in advance, to the party concerned.
  - (ix) The Internal Committee must complete its investigation within a period of 90 days.
  - (x) The parties shall not be allowed to bring any legal practitioner to represent them in their case at any stage of the proceedings before the Internal Complaints Committee.

(xi) For conducting the enquiry the quorum of the Internal Complaints Committee shall be of 3 members including the Presiding Officer.

5. The Internal Committee may before initiating an inquiry, and at the aggrieved person's request, attempt to settle the matter through conciliation. However, Internal Complaints Committee shall ensure that:
  - (a) Monetary settlement will not be made as a basis of conciliation.
  - (b) Where a settlement has been arrived, the settlement terms shall be signed by both the parties and shall be provided with a copy of it.

Where, a settlement is arrived as mentioned hereinabove, no further enquiry shall be conducted by the Internal Complaints Committee.

6. The Internal Complaints Committee may during such investigation may exercise the power of a civil court, vested in it, in respect of:
  - (a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person and examining him under oath;
  - (b) requiring discovery and production of documents;
  - (c) any other prescribed matter.
7. During such enquiry, upon written request by the aggrieved person, the committee may at its discretion recommend:
  - (a) to transfer the aggrieved person or the respondent to any other workplace;
  - (b) grant leave to the aggrieved person of up to three months which is in addition to leave to which she is otherwise entitled.

Provided, the aggrieved person has to tender justified reason for such transfer or leave, such as threat to work in the workplace.

#### **F. ACTION:**

1. The Committee shall on completion of the enquiry provide a report of its findings within 10 days from the date of completion of the enquiry and such report shall be made available to the concerned parties.
2. If the allegation against the respondent has not been proved, the Committee may recommend that no action needs to be taken in the matter.
3. If the Internal Complaints Committee arrives at the conclusion that the allegation against the respondent has been proved, or if such complaint is proved to be false or malicious, it shall recommend to take action for sexual harassment as a misconduct and this may include:
  - (a) Counseling,
  - (b) Warning,
  - (c) Written apology to the complainant,
  - (d) Withholding of promotions / increments,

- (e) Transfer from present location,
- (f) Suspension,
- (g) Termination / dismissal from employment,
- (h) Any other action that the employer may deem fit.

4. Such action will be taken within 60 days of the receipt of report.

#### **G. AWARENESS**

1. All employees shall have access to this Policy at any given point of time and clarification related to this Policy shall be addressed by the HR team.
2. A brief shall be given to all existing employees regarding the features of this Policy immediately on formulation of the Policy and to new employees in the Company during their initial Induction.
3. The Company shall display the notice showing the name of the Internal Complaints Committee members at its every establishment at a conspicuous place.

#### **H. MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS**

1. If the Internal Complaint Committee comes to a conclusion that the allegation against the respondent is malicious or the aggrieved woman or any other person making the complaint has made the complaint knowing it to be false or the aggrieved woman or any other person making the complaint has produced any forged or misleading document, it may recommend to the employer to take action against the woman or the person making the complaint.
2. While deciding malicious intent, the committee should consider that mere inability to substantiate a complaint need not mean malicious intent. Malicious intent must be clearly established through a separate inquiry.

#### **I. CONFIDENTIALITY**

The identity of the complainant, respondent, witnesses, statements and other evidence obtained in the course of inquiry process, recommendations of the committees, action taken by the employer is considered as confidential materials and will not published or made known to public or media. Any person contravening the confidentiality clauses is subject to disciplinary action as prescribed in the Act.

#### **J. APPEAL**

Any party not satisfied or further aggrieved by the implementation or non-implementation of recommendations made, may appeal to the appellate authority in accordance with the Act, within 90 days of the recommendations being communicated.

#### **K. LEGAL COMPLIANCE**

The Internal Complaint Committee shall in each calendar year prepare an annual report

with the following details and shall submit the same to the District Officer (as defined in the Act)

- (a) Number of complaints of sexual harassment received during the year
- (b) Number of complaints disposed off during the year
- (c) Number of cases pending for more than 90 days
- (d) Number of workshops or awareness program against sexual harassment carried out
- (e) Nature of action taken by the employer or District Officer