Domestic Abuse Policy

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Introduction and Definition

Introduction

The organisation recognises the seriousness of domestic abuse and the impact it has on the lives and wellbeing of those affected. Domestic abuse occurs in every social class and across all age groups, regardless of gender, sexuality, disability, race or religion. This policy addresses domestic abuse issues affecting employees and contributes to the delivery of the Domestic Abuse Strategy.

This policy aims to raise awareness and encourage employees who are experiencing domestic abuse, to report the issue and seek the appropriate support available to them. The policy also encourages perpetrators to stop their actions and seek appropriate support.

We believe that all forms of domestic abuse are unacceptable and we are committed to providing a safe and secure working environment for all employees. We want to ensure any employee who experiences domestic abuse can raise the issue at work without fear of stigmatisation or victimisation.

Employees may also be the perpetrators of domestic abuse. They must be aware that domestic abuse is a serious matter that can lead to criminal conviction and will not be tolerated by the organisation. Conduct outside of work can also lead to an investigation and disciplinary action against an employee because of its employment implications, however, if a perpetrator requires support to change their behaviour, managers should look to facilitate where possible.

This policy applies to all employees whether temporary or permanent. The principles of this policy also apply to employees seconded from partner agencies, agency workers, external contractors, consultants and volunteers. In these circumstances the situation will be handled jointly with any partner agency involved.

Definition

The Wigan Borough's Domestic Abuse Strategy defines domestic abuse as: "*Any incident of abuse or threatening behaviour perpetrated in order to exercise power and maintain control over another person.*"
This abuse can include but is not limited to coercive, physical, sexual, economical, psychological, social, or emotional in nature and be used between persons who are; family members, intimate partners, ex-partners or those who share parental responsibility for a child. It also includes forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Confidentiality and Right to Privacy

We respect an employee's right to privacy and recognise the importance of maintaining confidentiality.

In some cases it may be advisable to share some information with colleagues/ services but this will always be following discussion and agreement with the employee.

When there is an immediate safeguarding concern, it may be necessary to disclose certain information to relevant services and the reasons why must be explained to the employee. This could occur when there are concerns about children or vulnerable adults or where the employer needs to act to protect the safety of employees..

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The Key Principles

We recognise that each case of domestic abuse will be different, so we have designed a range of tools to support staff and managers. Whilst the action taken will depend on the circumstances and individuals wishes, we will ensure that we follow three key principles in all cases.

Care

- Be **courageous** - don't be afraid to "ask the question" - its better to ask and get it wrong than to do nothing.
- Be **courageous** - don't be afraid to speak out.

BeWell

Consider

- We are all **accountable** for being available and approachable in order to support a colleague experiencing domestic abuse, if they choose to disclose to you.

Be Safe

This policy strongly links to, and encourages, our **Be Kind** behaviour.

Enable

- Encourage the use of support systems (such as Domestic Abuse Champions) and the **positive** impacts they can have.

Believe

The **most** important thing is that you listen and believe what the person has to say.

Safety

Safety issues will be discussed and reviewed in consultation with the employee. Managers will also consider the safety needs of the employee's colleagues and put into place any further safety measures that may be required. Please see the *Domestic Abuse Guidance Document* for more details.

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All Employees:

- Be available and approachable
- Listen, make time, don't judge - allow them to tell in their own time
- Respect the individuals right to confidentiality (unless there is an imminent safeguarding risk)
- Explore individual wishes
- Don't push for a solution - they may not want one straight away
- Be open to considering workplace adjustments
- Be aware of and access support services when needed
- Trust a colleague or your manager with your personal situation so that they can support you

Managers (additional things to consider):

- Treat each case individually
- Facilitate time out to access support
- Consider the impact the situation may have on the employees absences and safety and provide the appropriate support

HR & OD

- Provide advice and guidance to managers and employees on the application of policy and any other employment related issues
- Provide tools and training for managers
- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy
- Consult with trade union colleagues on the policy and take a partnership approach to supporting attendance

Trade Unions

- Provide feedback on the effectiveness of the policy.
- Work in partnership to explore options, support and solutions for members.
- Click here for Trade Union contact information.

Partnership working under The Deal

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Awareness of a Problem

Disclosure from a **third party**

Disclosure directly from **employee**

Arrange a conversation with the employee at the earliest opportunity to explore the situation

Find suitable space to listen and agree what support the employee would like

Non -Disclosure

Disclosure

Consult the **Domestic Abuse Toolkit** and consider the use of ***DASH*** (also found in the Domestic Abuse Toolkit)

Contact the **PSR Hub** for advice 0161 856 7041 - available during office hours if needed

Reinforce that you are there to support them and that there is a wealth of information available on the Hub if they do have any issues.
Any immediate safeguarding risks should still be reported.

Is anybody at **High Risk** of harm or imminent danger?

Yes

No

High Risk:

- Call Police on 101 or in an emergency call 999
- Phone the Adult's duty team on 01942 828777
- Phone the Children's duty team on 01942 828300
- Refer to MARAC (further guidance in Domestic Abuse Toolkit)

- Respect confidentiality
- Keep a record
- Consider alternative work arrangements
- Maintain regular contact

For further guidance and the definitions of abbreviated terms, please refer to the Domestic Abuse Guidance document and/or Domestic Abuse Toolkit.

Further Information

Useful Links

Further advice and support is available from HR & OD Services.

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) contains useful information and contact details for internal resources and external help and support services. Contact details of organisations you may find particularly useful are available on the intranet.

If you do not have access to the intranet, please ask your manager for a copy of the above information or alternatively, contact HR & OD Services.

Click here to be taken to the Domestic Abuse Page on the Government website.

Click here to be taken to the Domestic Abuse intranet page; where the Policy, Guidance, Useful Contacts and Champion information can be found.

More information and support can be found within the **Domestic Abuse Guidance** document. The following topics are included:

⇒ Spotting the Signs

⇒ Support (including useful contacts)

⇒ What can the victim hub do?

⇒ What can I do as a manager?

⇒ When an abused employee and the alleged perpetrator work for the organisation.

⇒ Perpetrators in the organisation

By clicking on the image of the guidance document front cover, to the left, you will be taken straight to the document.