

Domestic Abuse Policy

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Domestic Abuse Policy

Principle: The service is committed to providing high quality and comprehensive support to employees/volunteers experiencing domestic abuse and ensuring that clients are not adversely affected by the personal circumstances of staff.

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to inform employees/volunteers how and when to access this support.

Applies to: All employees/volunteers at the service.

Definition: Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- Emotional

Procedure:

Policy statement:

1. {COMPANY NAME} will support employees/volunteers experiencing domestic abuse as comprehensively, sensitively and practically as possible. This means:
 - a. Doing everything reasonable to enhance their safety at work.
 - b. Coming to temporary working and leave arrangements which meet the needs of the employee's specific situation, including suitable return to work interviews as may be necessary.
 - c. Actively encouraging individuals to access appropriate support.
2. This will be done in a way that is guided and shaped as far as practicable by the employee in question. These considerations will be mirrored in the service's employment policies in the Employee Handbook addressing other life crises.
3. Employees/volunteers suffering from domestic abuse should feel free to approach their line manager or CEO:
 - a. To discuss any changes to their place or pattern of work that might be necessary.
 - b. To review their safety in the workplace and to request to be signposted or referred onwards to an outreach, legal or Domestic Abuse service.
4. Fellow employees/volunteers may report their anxieties to their line manager or CEO who will instigate a meeting with the employee in question to explore the matter further. All disclosures and reported concerns will be treated as strictly confidential.
5. All employees/volunteers will be made aware of the domestic abuse policy as part of their induction process. The policy will also be included in the employment handbook for all employees/volunteers to refer to should they so wish.

Providing support for employees/volunteers:

6. The IDVA service will provide support to employees/volunteers suffering domestic abuse through their line manager or CEO. Line Manager and CEO role is to:

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- a. Be available and approachable for those employees/volunteers experiencing domestic abuse.
- b. To ensure the employee is aware of the options and information available to them.
- c. To discuss the specific steps that can be taken to help this person stay safe in the workplace. This could include flexible working hours, working from home or other flexible working arrangements for a limited period. It could also include enhanced security arrangements such as changing locks or providing a mobile phone.
- d. Keep information confidential (subject to child and adult protection responsibilities).
- e. To discuss ways that the service can be flexible while the employee takes steps to address the situation.
- f. To consider paying the employee in advance if the employee has a sudden shortage of funds.
- g. To review the appropriateness of the approach agreed by an individual and their line manager and CEO at regular intervals.

Managers:

7. The service will ensure that the line managers and CEO are competent to respond in the first instance and put in place/signpost to other support as appropriate.

Leave arrangements:

8. Managers will strive to come to a special leave arrangement which will allow the employee to attend all appointments, court dates, moving days etc. which may relate to their situation.
9. Necessary, unplanned leave to take care of children/dependents will be viewed as **dependency leave (in line with current policy)** rather than included in special leave arrangements.
10. All leave must be agreed in advance with the line manager/CEO wherever possible and be signed off by the line manager/CEO before it is due to be taken.
11. No disciplinary actions will be brought against an employee who is unexpectedly detained from work due to a situation arising from domestic abuse. In this situation, the employee must inform their line manager or CEO as soon as reasonably possible.

Emotional and practical support:

12. **Should the employee wish to seek alternative IDVA or outreach/floating support services, where possible they will be signposted on to a suitable local service by their line manager/CEO and allowed the necessary time off to attend appointments/sessions. Longer-term outreach/floating support will not fall under the special leave policy, detailed above in 'Leave arrangements', and employees/volunteers will have to follow normal procedures for informing their line manager/CEO of any appointments booked.**

Respecting past experiences:

13. It may be that the employee experiencing domestic abuse will find certain tasks more emotionally challenging than other members of staff. Where these tasks are not crucial to their role, their line manager/CEO will consider whether a redistribution of tasks would be fair/practical and also whether any additional support might be needed, e.g. supervision or debriefing sessions. If these tasks are crucial to the role, then special leave arrangements will be considered.

Perpetrators:

14. Where an allegation of abusive behaviour is made to the service against a member of staff the CEO (or an appropriate appointee) will discuss the allegations with the

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employee where it is safe to do so and will decide in consultation with the Trustee Board and with a legal advisor how to proceed.

15. In general services:
 - a. Will not operate a culture of disbelief.
 - b. Will recognise the practical limits to the extent of any investigation which can be undertaken by the service.
 - c. Will retain confidentiality unless it is duty bound to make reports.
 - d. Will support staff who make or are subject to allegations.
 - e. May suspend staff pending investigation according to their contract and employment law.
 - f. Will treat unsubstantiated complaints or malicious complaints as disciplinary matters.
16. Conviction of an employee for any offence which occurred within a context of the perpetration of domestic abuse will be considered as bringing the service into disrepute and as such will constitute gross misconduct.
17. Failure of an employee to disclose relevant charges when brought or court appearances will be disciplinary matters.

3 Related policies and procedures: {COMPANY NAME} Employee Handbook with date

4 Where to find further information

If you require further information on this policy or procedure then please speak with your Manager in the first instance.

5 Policy Owner

This policy is owned and maintained by the CEO. All policies are agreed by the board of Trustees.

6 Policy Review Date

Date Last reviewed: 22/3/2021

Date of Next review: 22/3/2023