

MODEL – DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

1. Introduction

XX University/College is committed to heightening awareness of domestic abuse and providing guidance and support for employees and management.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's campaign, 'Domestic abuse is your business – break the silence' sets out why action is needed in the workplace.

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/da_employers_pack.pdf

2. Policy statement

- 2.1 XX University/College is committed to promoting zero tolerance of domestic abuse against and by its entire staff and will ensure that the working environment promotes the view that any form of domestic abuse is unacceptable and that such abuse will not be condoned or made the subject of humour in any form.
- 2.2 The university/college recognises that every employee who is experiencing or has experienced domestic abuse has the right to raise and discuss the issue with their line manager and/or Human Resources department, in the knowledge that the matter will be dealt with sensitive, non-judgemental, confidential and effective manner.
- 2.3 We acknowledge that domestic abuse:
 - Is a crime, is disruptive and socially harmful
 - May have an impact in the workplace and that the university/college has responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its staff and learners
 - Can affect an individual's performance

- Does not discriminate on the basis of sex, class, race, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, marital status or sexual orientation and therefore the policy is applied to all university/college employees.

3. Objective

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that those employees seeking assistance, whether survivor or alleged perpetrator, are confident that their situation will be dealt with seriously and sensitively
- Assist and support employees experiencing domestic abuse
- Aid managers in seeking to help team members experiencing domestic abuse
- Assist colleagues of those experiencing domestic abuse

4. Definition

4.1 Domestic abuse involved a variable combination of physical, sexual, financial, emotional and psychological abuse within the context of a relationship.

It can also include isolation from friends, family or other potential sources of support. The abuse can be actual, threatened or attempted.

4.2 Domestic abuse can occur between partners irrespective of sex. It also occurs between other family members, for example parents, grandparents, siblings and extended family. It generates a complex set of needs for those affected.

5. Employees experiencing domestic abuse

5.1 The university/college respects the employee's right to privacy in the event that they do not wish to inform the university/college that they have experienced, or are experiencing, domestic abuse.

5.2 Employees who make it known that they are experiencing domestic abuse will be treated in a supportive and sympathetic manner. They will not be judged by other employees and will be encouraged to help themselves out of their abusive circumstances, having due regard for their personal safety, and that of any children or vulnerable adults in the household.

5.3 Employees can seek advice, support and counselling services from their line manager or Human Resources department. Alternatively, employees can contact the university/college Occupational Health Service for confidential advice. Trade union representatives should also be able to provide advice and support.

- 5.4 Employees should be encouraged to discuss any issues of domestic abuse with their line manager. The effects of domestic abuse can impact on an employee's standard of work or attendance. This will be taken into consideration with regards to any formal policies or procedures, including performance management or disciplinary procedures.

6. Managers' responsibility

- 6.1 Managers should appreciate how difficult it may be for an employee to discuss his/her personal circumstances and should always offer support in a sensitive and non-judgemental fashion. They should remember that signs of abuse will often not be visible and that an individual may leave their abusive environment only to return again some time in the future.

- 6.2 Where a manager suspects that an employee is experiencing domestic abuse, they should:

- Contact their Human Resources department for advice before any discussion takes place with the employee
- Ensure that any discussion about the employee's situation, or with the employee, takes place in private
- Handle the situation with care and sensitivity. Employees should never feel pressurised into disclosing personal information that they do not feel comfortable sharing. Be aware that the employee may need some time to decide what to do.
- Respect confidentiality
- Understand that the employee may not wish to discuss any details with their line manager and may prefer to involve a third party, such as a trade union representative, colleague or someone from an outside agency
- Find out what the employee wants and whether a manager or another agency can help them achieve it; find out what support is available and explore these options with the employee. Be honest and realistic about what can be offered
- Be aware of any additional issues faced by the employee due to their protected characteristics
- Introduce and encourage employees to contact the support services available, workplace and/or external (see Appendix 1 for relevant support agencies contact details), but avoid taking on a counselling role themselves
- Be aware that in many cases there would also be the involvement of police

7. Employees who are alleged perpetrators or perpetrators of domestic abuse

- 7.1 Domestic abuse perpetrated by employees will not be condoned under any circumstances nor will it be treated as purely a private matter. The university/college recognises it has a role in encouraging and supporting employees to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds.
- 7.2 If an employee approaches their line manager or another manager in the university/college about their abusive behaviour, the university/college will provide them with information about the services and support available to them and will encourage the perpetrator to seek support and help from an appropriate source.
- 7.3 The university/college will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of a domestic abuse related offence on a case by case basis with the aim of reducing risk and supporting change in behaviour.
- 7.4 An employee who is cautioned or convicted of a criminal offence in relation to domestic abuse may be subject to the university/college disciplinary procedure. The university/college also reserves the right to consider the use of the disciplinary procedure should an employee's activities outside work have a detrimental impact on their ability to perform their role for which they were employed and/or be considered to have brought the university/college into disrepute.
- 7.5 If a colleague is found to be knowingly assisting an abuser in perpetrating abuse, for example, by giving them access to facilities such as telephones or email, then they will be seen as having committed a disciplinary offence.
- 7.6 If it becomes evident that an employee has made a malicious allegation that another employee is perpetrating abuse, then this will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and action will be taken under the university/college disciplinary policy.
- 7.7 In cases where both the survivor and the alleged perpetrator or perpetrator of domestic abuse work in the same institution, the university/college will take appropriate action (see Ensuring Employees' Health and Safety). The harassment procedure will be used promptly if abuse takes place at work.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 Once an employee has confided in their line manager or a member of the Human Resources department that they are experiencing domestic abuse, they should be reassured that this information will be kept confidential.
- 8.2 Correspondence between the university/college and the employee should be discussed and agreed regarding safe contact numbers and addresses.

8.3 Confidentiality can only be broken in the following circumstances:

- With the consent of the individual
- If it is required by law
- If it is unequivocally in the public interest where failure to disclose information may expose the individual or others to the risk of death or serious harm. In such circumstances information should be disclosed promptly to an appropriate person or authority
- If it will prevent a serious risk to public health and serious crime
- If a child is involved

9. Ensuring employees' Health and Safety

9.1 The main responsibilities of employers, staff and others for the health, safety and welfare of persons at work are defined in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

9.2 Where an employee advises that they are experiencing or are at risk of experiencing domestic abuse an attempt should be made to assess whether there is a threat to their personal safety during working hours. A risk assessment should be documented and any mitigating actions identified/implemented.

9.3 Such actions could include:

- Improving security measures such as changing security codes
- Determining who is on site by checking ID badges of staff and learners
- Reminding reception/switchboard staff not to divulge information about staff, especially personal details such as addresses, telephone number of work patterns
- Offering temporary or permanent changes in the workplace, work times and patterns, helping to make the employee less at risk at work, and on their journeys to and from work. This could include changes to the office layout to ensure the employee is not visible from reception or from ground floor windows.
- Offering changes in specific duties or redeployment to another post
- Agreeing what to tell other staff and how they should respond if the abuser rings or calls at the workplace. Consider providing colleagues with a photograph of the abuser and other relevant details such as car registration number, which may help to maintain security in the workplace

- Making sure that any systems for recording staff whereabouts during the day are adequate and if the work requires visits outside the university/college premises, considering how risks can be minimised (for example changing duties or allowing a certain colleague to accompany them on certain journeys)
- Recording any incidents in the workplace, including persistent phone calls, emails or visits to a member of staff by their partner/ex-partner; details of any witnesses should also be recorded. The university/college could also apply for an injunction if the actions of the alleged perpetrator impinge on the health and safety of other members of staff

10. Options to provide leave for employees experiencing domestic abuse

- 10.1 The university/college has a special leave policy which has provisions to allow for some paid or unpaid leave to deal with situations of domestic distress, at the manager's discretion. Managers should deal sympathetically and consistently with requests from employees who have disclosed they are experiencing domestic abuse, for reasonable time off.
- 10.2 Employees will be entitled to special leave to attend civil or criminal court hearings as a witness. They will also be entitled to special leave if they are required to attend court to seek an injunction against a perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse.
- 10.3 Managers must record applications for special leave in accordance with the university/college special leave policy. The applications should be kept securely to ensure confidentiality.
- 10.4 Managers should be sympathetic and creative in exploring options with staff where it is necessary for them to arrange appointments during the normal working day. These appointments may include: arranging re-housing, appointments with support agencies (Social Services, Women's Aid, counsellors etc.), and meetings with solicitors, making alternative childcare or education arrangements.
- 10.5 Managers should consider requests for financial loans from staff facing difficulties as a result of their situation.

11. Implementation

To achieve the aims and objectives of this policy, the university/college will:

- Publicise the policy
- Enable staff to attend relevant training
- Publicise contact details of local support agencies

APPENDIX 1

Where to go for help

National Organisations

Aanchal Women's Aid

A women's organisation that assists women affected by physical as well as mental, financial, sexual and emotional domestic abuse. The helpline for Asian women experiencing domestic violence provides support to women whose languages include: Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Tamil and Urdu.

T: 08454 512 547 helpline 24 hours

E: info@aanchal.org.uk

W: www.aanchal.org.uk

Broken Rainbow

A helpline for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic violence.

T: 0300 999 5428 (Monday and Thursday 10am - 8pm);

Tuesday and Wednesday 10am to 5pm

(1pm – 5pm Tuesday is a Trans specific service)

E: help@brokenrainbow.org.uk

W: www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

Chinese Information and Advice Centre

The Chinese Information and Advice Centre (CIAC) provide free information, advice and support to

disadvantaged Chinese people living in the UK. They support women and children who are survivors of, or at risk of domestic violence.

T: 020 7 462 1281 – Domestic violence line

E: info@ciac.co.uk

W: www.ciac.co.uk

Not for profit organisations that works to protect girls and young women who are at risk from female genital mutilation (FGM)

Daughters of Eve

T: 07983 030 488

W: www.dofeve.org

Forward UK

T: 020 8960 4000 (09:30 – 18:00 Monday to Friday)

W: www.forwarduk.org.uk

End Violence Against Women Coalition

A coalition representing seven million individuals and organisations across the UK who believes that they can and must create a world free from the threat and reality of violence against women.

T: 020 7 033 1559

E: admin@evaw.org.uk

W: www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk

Home Office

Official government web pages about domestic violence

W: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/domesticviolence/index.htm

W: www.thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk

Jewish Women's Aid

Jewish Women's Aid is the only specialist organisation in the UK supporting Jewish Women affected by domestic violence.

T: 0808 801 0500 (9.30am – 9.30pm Monday to Thursday)

W: www.jwa.org.uk

Karma Nirvana

Karma Nirvana is a UK registered Charity that supports victims and survivors of Forced Marriage and Honour-Based Abuse.

T: 0800 599 9247

E: email form available on the contact page of the website

W: www.karmanirvana.org.uk

Men's Advice Line

The Men's Advice Line is a confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic violence from a partner or ex-partner (or from other family members).

T: 0808 801 0327

E: info@mensadviceline.org.uk

W: www.mensadviceline.org.uk

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

National charity safeguarding children

T: 0800 028 3550

E: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

W: www.nspcc.org.uk

Network for Surviving Stalking

A national UK charity representing stalking victims and their families

T: 0808 802 0330 (9:30-4pm weekdays (except Wednesday 1-4pm))

E: advice@stalkinghelpline.org

W: www.stalkinghelpline.org

Rape Crisis – England

Rape Crisis is a national charity and the umbrella body for a network of independent member Rape Crisis organisations.

T: 0808 802 9999 (12 - 2.30pm - 7 - 9.30pm)

W: www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Refuge

Opened in 1971, Refuge became the world's first safe house for women and children escaping domestic violence.

T: 0808 2000 247

W: www.refuge.org.uk

Refuge Crisis Line (London wide)

T: 0870 599 5443

Respect

Respect has been supporting male survivors of domestic violence since 2007 when they took over the management of the Men's Advice Line.

T: 0808 801 0327

E: info@mensadvice.org.uk

W: www.respect.org.uk

Southall Black Sisters

A not for profit organisation set up in 1979 to meet the needs of black (Asian and African Caribbean) and minority ethnic women.

T: 020 8 571 0800

W: www.southallblacksisters.org.uk

Turkish Cypriot Women's Project

Offers help with emergency housing, children, injunctions against violent partners, welfare benefits, health care matters and other issues related to domestic violence. It provides a free service for any Turkish-speaking women living in London.

T: 020 8 340 3300

E: info@tcwp.org.uk

W: www.tcwp.org.uk

Women's Aid - (run in partnership with Refuge)

Women's Aid is the key national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children. We support a network of over 300 dedicated specialist domestic violence services across the UK.

T: 0808 2000 247

E: helpline@womensaid.org.uk

W: www.womensaid.org.uk

White Ribbon Campaign UK

The White Ribbon Campaign was launched in Canada in 1989 following the unprovoked murder of 14 women at a university campus. It is recognised as the world's largest effort of men and boys working together to end men's violence against women and girls.

T: 01422 886 545

E: info@whiteribboncampaign.co.uk

W: www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk

Scotland

Rape Crisis - Scotland

T: 08088 01 03 02 (Every day 6pm – midnight)

W: www.rapecrisisScotland.org.uk

Scottish Women's Aid

Offering a 24/7 telephone service, Scottish Women's Aid is the lead organisation in Scotland working towards the prevention of domestic abuse.

T: 0800 027 1234

W: www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk

Shakti Women's Aid

Based in Edinburgh, Shakti has been working since 1986 to offer support, advocacy and information to all black and minority ethnic women, children and young people experiencing or fleeing domestic abuse.

T: 0131 475 2399

W: www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation

T: 0800 917 1414

W: www.niwaf.org

Rape Crisis – Ireland

T: 1800 778888 (24 hour helpline)

Wales

Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline

Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline is a confidential free support and information service for women, children and men in Wales who are experiencing or who have experienced domestic abuse and or sexual abuse and violence.

T: 0808 8010 800 W:

W: www.wdah.org.uk

Welsh Women's Aid

Welsh Women's Aid is the national umbrella organisation representing local Women's Aid Groups situated throughout Wales. Their member groups provide direct services for women and children who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse.

T: 0808 8010 800

W: www.welshwomensaid.org

Black and Asian Women Stepping Out (BAWSO)

Black and Asian Women Stepping Out is a specialist service provider, providing practical and emotional support to people affected by domestic abuse and other forms of violence, including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, human trafficking and prostitution, primarily from BME communities.

T: 0800 731 8147 (24/7 telephone service)

W: www.bawso.org.uk

APPENDIX 2

Recognising that an employee may need help

It is not always easy to recognise that an employee is experiencing domestic violence and may require some assistance. Certain indicators such as a sudden change in behaviour, depression, inability to concentrate, obvious injuries or regular but unexpected absence from work may be indicative of a variety of problems, of which domestic abuse may be one.

Warning Signs

- Comes to work repeatedly with injuries.
- Unusual number of calls from home and strong reaction to the calls.
- Late for work and needing to leave early.
- Secretive about home life.
- Frequent absenteeism.
- Emotional reactions such as tearful, angry, depressed, nervous, confused.
- Partner exerts unusual amount of control over their life.
- Partner makes demands over their work schedule.
- May be extremely passive or aggressive.
- May seem chronically depressed or depressed in cycles.
- May isolate them at work.
- Uncharacteristic lateness.
- Inappropriate or excessive clothing.
- Repeated or unexplained injuries.
- Depression or anxiety.
- Difficulty in concentrating.
- Changes in quality of performance.

These are just a few characteristics. Different people will react in different ways. A more important sign is when an individual behaves in a way that is unusual for her or him.

Those who suffer domestic violence at home are often targeted at work; they may receive unwanted telephone calls or text messages or be assaulted on their way into or out of work. However, it is unlikely, in the first instance, that employees experiencing domestic abuse will inform other members of staff of their situation, or approach their manager with problems.

It is far more likely that the manager will become aware of the situation through associated issues such as sickness absence monitoring or poor performance.

As with other welfare issues, identifying that an employee is experiencing difficulties at an early stage will lead to appropriate help being offered, and allow that employee to deal with their situation far more effectively.