



# Employee Domestic Abuse Policy

<b>Document title</b>	Employee Domestic Abuse Policy
<b>Document version</b>	1.2
<b>Department</b>	Communities
<b>Title of Author</b>	Marice Hawley
<b>Date document approved</b>	
<b>Review cycle</b>	3 years
<b>Date of next review</b>	07/01//2029

## Contents

1. Purpose .....	3
2. Scope .....	3
3. Policy .....	3
3.1 Principles .....	3
3.2 Employees Experiencing Domestic Violence and Abuse .....	4
3.3 Responding to Domestic Abuse .....	4
3.4 Recording Information .....	6
3.5 Safety at Work .....	7
3.6 Responsibilities .....	7
3.7 Training .....	9
4. Related Policies, Standards and Guidelines .....	10
5. Terms and Definitions .....	10
6. Enforcement .....	11
7. Review .....	11
8. Appendices .....	12
Appendix 1 .....	12
Domestic Abuse Organisations and Contacts .....	12

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This policy applies to Broxtowe Borough Council (BBC).
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to enable the support of employees experiencing problems at work arising from domestic violence and abuse. It will ensure confidentiality and sympathetic handling of situations at work arising from domestic violence and abuse and removes fears of stigmatisation at work for employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse. It will provide guidance for managers on how to support survivors of domestic violence and abuse and on how to deal with perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse. It will raise awareness and understanding amongst all employees in the workplace of the effects of domestic violence and abuse. The Council also does additional awareness raising for employees through both mandatory and additional training, through the dissemination of literature and resources around domestic abuse and through regular awareness raising campaigns both internally and externally.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to those employees that are directly employed by BBC and for whom BBC has legal responsibility. For those covered by a letter of authority/honorary contract or work experience this policy is also applicable whilst undertaking duties on behalf of BBC or working on BBC premises and forms part of their arrangements with BBC. As part of good employment practice, agency workers are also required to abide by BBC policies and procedures, as appropriate, to ensure their health, safety and welfare whilst undertaking work for BBC.

## **3. Policy**

### **3.1 Principles**

- 3.1.1 BBC is committed to promoting zero tolerance of domestic violence and abuse. It will ensure that the working environment promotes the view that domestic violence is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. BBC acknowledges that domestic abuse is a serious issue within our society and affects many people's lives and we have a responsibility for health, safety and welfare at work. Employees or line managers who are approached by another employee experiencing domestic abuse are expected to follow the good practice outlined in this policy.
- 3.1.2 Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviour characterised by the misuse of power and control which commonly includes physical, psychological, emotional and sexual abuse. Within BBC there may be those who have

experienced or are experiencing domestic violence, and those who may be perpetrators of violence.

- 3.1.3 We recognise that domestic abuse can negatively impact employees and that as an employer we have a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of employees at work, and seek to provide support to those affected.

## **3.2 Employees Experiencing Domestic Violence and Abuse**

- 3.2.1 It is understood that victims of domestic violence and abuse may feel unable to talk to anyone about their situation. They may be afraid or worried about the consequences that this may have for them, their family, home, job or income.
- 3.2.2 Employees have the right to work in a supportive and confidential environment that does not discriminate against or stigmatise people who are experiencing domestic abuse (whether physical or emotional). Employees are not obliged to inform anyone at work about their domestic situation but there are support mechanisms available such as their line manager, human resources representative, trade union representative, Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programme. In addition, there are a number of people within the BBC that can offer support and advice in relation to domestic abuse, child protection and safeguarding of adults and children. Employees are therefore encouraged to speak to someone at work if they feel their personal situation is affecting work, specific details are not necessary but a joint approach to problem solving to resolve work issues is essential.
- 3.2.3 Employees who raise concerns will be treated with respect and dignity and BBC will provide a supportive environment.
- 3.2.4 Employees are assured of confidentiality however there may be some circumstances where, in order to safeguard the employee, this may be breached and a disclosure made to the relevant agency.

## **3.3 Responding to Domestic Abuse**

- 3.3.1 Managers should respond promptly sympathetically and confidentially to an employee who has disclosed domestic violence and abuse. If an employee alleges abuse, they should be believed for the purposes of safeguarding and support.

- 3.3.2 Managers should also provide support to an employee who discloses they are the perpetrator of domestic violence or abuse and are seeking help. Managers should inform the HR Team and signpost the employee to the relevant Domestic Abuse support organisation to discuss entry into a perpetrator programme.
- 3.3.3 Managers should provide a private space to enable the employee to talk and should assure them of their confidentiality unless there are child protection issues which must be reported. The manager should ask the employee what they want to do, if anything, and respect their decision.
- 3.3.4 The employee should be asked if they want to report the abuse to the police and if they need to see their GP for medical attention. This is again up to the employee. If the employee is injured, they should be encouraged to seek medical attention to have the injury/injuries assessed, treated and documented. In some circumstances a decision may be made to report an incident to the police where a crime has been committed or to refer to a Multi- Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) where it is believed an individual is at risk. A Domestic Abuse, Stalking or Honour-based violence Risk Assessment Checklist (DASH-RIC) can be filled out by the police, or a qualified Domestic Support worker were warranted
- 3.3.5 The manager should provide information, not advice, about domestic violence and abuse support services or helplines and also information about workplace support such as occupational health services, counselling services and the Employee Assistance Programme.
- 3.3.6 The employee should be offered the same standard of support on all occasions no matter how many times the same employee comes forward. Because of the nature of persistent domestic violence and abuse, victims often find it very difficult to leave abusive relationships. A record will be maintained on the number of times an employee comes forward as repeat incidents and escalation of seriousness are risk factors which may require referral to MARAC.
- 3.3.7 Managers should assist employees to make contact with support services. (see Appendix 1)
- 3.3.8 It is important to remember that pressuring employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse to leave the abuser is not helpful. In most cases the employee will want to remain in their home and be safe. In many cases violence escalates after an attempt to leave and therefore managers and colleagues aware of an individual's circumstances should be extra vigilant particularly with regard to absence from work. Leaving the situation either temporarily or permanently is a step that should be planned carefully with support from a specialist.

3.3.9 The employee can be offered special leave to enable them to take time off work in order to visit solicitors, banks, schools, support agencies etc. consideration given to extended leave should it be required to flee violence.

3.3.10 The Council recognises and wishes to support any employees experiencing or suffering from Domestic Abuse. The Council has the discretion to approve up to ten working days paid leave (pro rata for part time employees) to attend related medical, legal, housing etc appointments in relation to their case.

#### 3.3.11 **Good Practice Guidelines**

- Do take up training for yourself and your team to raise your awareness of domestic abuse and if necessary, risk assessment
- Do give priority to ensuring the employees immediate safety
- Do ensure that the employee understands the confidentiality policy
- Do be sensitive and believe what the employee is telling you
- Do find out what the employee wants and see if you can help to achieve it
- Do help to explore ways of maximising the employee's safety.
- Do give up to date information on what other agencies have to offer
- Do place the responsibility for the violence with the perpetrator. The violence is not the employee's fault
- Do take personal responsibility for ensuring that appropriate information and support is offered
- Do use open questions
- Do always allow time for the person to talk
- DO NOT ignore your intuition if you suspect an employee is being abused
- DO NOT ask her/him what she/he did to provoke the violence
- DO NOT just focus on what she/he alone can do in the situation
- DO NOT assume the perpetrator's age or gender
- DO NOT share your own experiences
- DO NOT act as a go-between, between victim and perpetrator

### **3.4 Recording Information**

3.4.1 Consent must be gained from the employee to share any information, except in cases where there is a legal requirement to do so, and employees should be made aware that absolute confidentiality may not be possible in such circumstances. Managers will record a summary of any discussions that take place about domestic violence together with any actions agreed or outcomes. The record should then be passed to HR to be held confidentially. This information may be required as evidence in any potential legal action within the criminal or civil justice system or in any

internal review but should not under any circumstances, be used to the detriment of an employee who has experienced abuse.

3.4.2 If a manager is unsure how to approach a domestic abuse or related situation, then they should take further confidential advice from their human resources representative.

3.4.3 Offering relevant training to the abused employee, where appropriate.

3.4.4 Any records must be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

### **3.5 Safety at Work**

3.5.1 The Council will protect the health, safety and welfare of all employees at work, including those employees directly or indirectly affected by domestic abuse. This includes situations where the perpetrator of the abuse is harassing the employee at work, for example, turning up at the Council's business premises unannounced, constantly telephoning, e-mailing or texting the employee during the working day or harassing the employee's work colleagues. Advice and information will be provided around safety in the home where possible.

### **3.6 Responsibilities**

<b>HR Manager</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Maintain an overview of the policy in regard to ratification, implementation and review</li><li>- Support managers and employees with queries relating to the policy and procedures</li><li>- Ensure all cases of domestic violence and abuse are treated sensitively and in confidence in line with this policy</li><li>- Sourcing of relevant awareness training in relation to domestic violence and abuse.</li><li>- Facilitating access to the relevant support systems available such as occupational health, counselling and the Employee Assistance Programme.</li><li>- Ensuring the policy and procedure is reviewed and updated as required.</li><li>- Collation of reported data relating to domestic abuse as necessary for annual reporting.</li></ul>
-------------------	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Solicit advice from the Head of Communities and Community Safety and the Senior Communities Officer for Violence and Domestic Abuse where necessary for information about available services or help with referrals for external support.</li> </ul>
<b>Senior Management Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide a strategic overview for domestic abuse</li> <li>- Nominate and maintain a champion on the board who will support and advise the board on its key responsibilities</li> <li>- Ensure there is a robust process in place for escalating concerns externally or through named non-executive directors if the alleged perpetrator might be in the Senior Management Team or another senior member of the organisation.</li> </ul>
<b>Line Managers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring they understand and adhere to their obligations in relation to this policy with awareness and ability to apply it effectively. The role of the manager is not to deal with the abuse itself but to make it clear that employees will be supported and to outline what help is available, from where and to escalate as appropriate.</li> <li>- Line Managers should be trained to spot common signs of possible domestic abuse in employees, such as unexplained injuries, being distressed, uncharacteristic deterioration of work performance, unexplained periods of time off work, receiving numerous calls from partners/ex-partners, frequent visits at work by a partner/ex-partner, appearing unable to have autonomy outside of their relationship or appearing uncharacteristically timid or appeasing in front of their partner/ex-partner</li> <li>- Work with employees who are experiencing domestic abuse to manage attendance and be understanding that the situation may affect attendance and performance in the short or long term. See the Council's Leave Policy for further guidance.</li> <li>- Enable employees to remain at work where possible and potentially consider if a return to office working is appropriate in instances where the employee is working from home and the home environment is unsafe.</li> <li>- Ensuring this policy is applied fairly to all with sensitivity towards age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity,</li> </ul>

	<p>race, religion or belief and sexual orientation – in line with the Council’s existing policy for Equalities and Diversity. Maintaining the confidentiality of any information relayed to them concerning cases of domestic violence and abuse. Managers are strongly advised to contact HR regarding any disclosures of domestic abuse.</p>
<b>All Employees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being aware of the policy and informing their line manager or Human Resources regarding any concerns or suspicions that a colleague may be a potential or actual victim, or a perpetrator of domestic abuse.</li> <li>- In the course of their duties employees may have contact with customers and or/colleagues about whom they form concerns. In these circumstances support should be sought from their line manager/HR</li> <li>- Employees who may be affected by colleagues or customers experiencing domestic should also seek support where necessary through the same channels listed within this policy.</li> <li>- Complete Mandatory training as and when required.</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational Safeguarding Leads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offer advice and support to HR on domestic abuse issues</li> <li>- Advise on training needs and provide oversight of delivery via statutory and mandatory training requirements.</li> <li>- A requirement of the Domestic Abuse Bill is to produce an annual report of the prevalence of domestic abuse within the organisation, using anonymised data collected via the HR team.</li> <li>- Where it is assessed that there is a safeguarding issue for any children due to domestic abuse, appropriate safeguarding referrals will be made and information shared in line with current legislation.</li> </ul>

### 3.7 Training

Domestic abuse is one of the key priorities of the Council, which has a statutory duty to respond to domestic abuse under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Council provides Domestic Abuse Training via its e-learning platform. This training is mandatory for all employees across the Authority. This course provides an overview of domestic abuse; what it means, what the warning signs are and where to go for advice, if you are concerned about someone who may be affected by domestic abuse.

To complete the training, an assessment is required with a mandatory pass rate. The HR and Learning and Development Team, with input from the Head of Communities will ensure that e-learning is up to date and in line with legislative changes and periodically review the audience that the training is rolled out to. Re-certification is required from time to time. Further training may be arranged for relevant Officers, which could include webinars, face to face training or other mediums as and when appropriate.

#### **4. Related Policies, Standards and Guidelines**

- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012
- Government Strategy to tackle Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- Home Office 'Domestic Violence & Abuse'  
(<https://www.gov.uk/domesticviolence-and-abuse>)
- Draft Domestic Violence Bill 2018
- Domestic Violence Bill 2019
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Broxtowe Borough Council Leave Policy

#### **5. Terms and Definitions**

5.1 Broxtowe Borough Council applies the Domestic Abuse Bill statutory definition of domestic abuse as “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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” ([Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#))

5.2 Whilst the majority of abuse is perpetrated by men against women, domestic violence may also be carried out by women against men and within same sex relationships. Abuse can be perpetrated by partners, ex-partners and family members, including children under the age of 18, adult children or siblings.

5.3 Such abuse may be actual or threatened and can manifest itself in a variety of ways including physical violence, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual violence and abuse, financial control, controlling or coercive behaviour and abuse, and the imposition of social isolation or deprivation.

5.4 Controlling behaviour can be a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

5.5 Coercive behaviour can be an act, or a pattern of acts, of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victims.

5.6 Domestic abuse occurs in all groups and sections of society and may be experienced differently, due to, and compounded by, race, sexuality, disability, age, religion, culture, class or mental health. This definition includes all nuances of domestic abuse for example “honour based” abuse (HBA), forced marriage (FM) and female genital mutilation (FGM) as well as adolescent to parent/carer abuse and elder abuse.

5.7 Domestic abuse can have a devastating impact on children exposed to it in their own home. Under the statutory definition of domestic abuse, a child who sees or hears, or experiences the effects of domestic abuse and who is related to the person being abused or the perpetrator, is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse.

5.8 The impact of domestic abuse can range from loss of self-esteem to loss of life.

## **6. Enforcement**

Any **user** or **administrator** found deliberately contravening this policy **may** be subject to disciplinary action and, where appropriate, legal action.

## **7. Review**

This document will be reviewed annually as a minimum or wherever there may be a change of influencing circumstances.

## **8. Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Domestic Abuse Organisations and Contacts**

##### **Refuge**

**0808 2000 247** (24-hour helpline)

Advice on dealing with domestic violence.

[www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

##### **Rape Crisis**

**0808 500 2222** 24/7 Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Line

[www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)

##### **Victim Support**

**0808 168 9111** (24-hour helpline)

<http://www.victimsupport.org>

##### **Childline**

**0800 1111** for Childline for children (24-hour helpline)

**0808 800 5000** NSPCC Helpline for adults concerned about a child (24-hour helpline)

Children's charity dedicated to ending child abuse and child cruelty.

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

##### **Broxtowe Women's Project**

**01773 719 111** Domestic Abuse Helpline

Broxtowe based women's support charity

<https://broxtowewomensproject.org.uk/>

##### **Juno Women's Aid**

**0808 8000 340** 24hr Helpline

National Women's aid charity

<https://junowomensaid.org.uk/>

##### **Equation**

**0800 995 6999**

Domestic abuse charity for men

<https://equation.org.uk/>