

## Domestic Abuse and Workplace Response Policy

### Section 1 – Introduction

#### 1.1 National overview

Incidents of domestic violence and abuse are common both nationally and locally and have a serious impact on those who experience it, their home, work and family life and the wider community.

- > Domestic abuse affects 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men in their adult lives.
- > 2 – 3 women are killed every week by partner or ex-partner.
- > Only 35% of incidents are reported.
- > Domestic abuse can affect the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, the Disabled community and male victims.

#### 1.2 Domestic Abuse

- > Domestic violence locally accounts for more than a 1/3rd of all violent crime including serious sexual assaults.
- > Data collected over 5 years indicates in excess of 5,500 incidents annually are reported to the Police.
- > The repeat incident rate of 38.7% (2007-08) is three times that of other crimes.
- > A local survey carried out with GP surgeries in Ipswich and Babergh indicated 25 –27% of female patients had experienced domestic abuse.
- > Children were ordinarily resident in over 45% of all domestic violence and abuse incidents reported to the Police.
- > Over 50% of referrals to Social Care Services involve domestic abuse.
- > Over 65% of Adult Safeguarding referrals are categorised as domestic abuse.

Despite an increase in reporting locally, domestic abuse including violent assault remains significantly under reported.

#### 1.3 Our Strategic Response to Domestic Abuse

1.3.1 The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) places a statutory requirement on the Responsible Authorities – the County Council, Police, District and Borough Councils – to work in partnership with other agencies including the NHS and the voluntary sector to tackle crime and disorder. This includes all forms of domestic abuse.

1.3.2 Our County Council's produces an annual Strategic Assessment with recommendations for each District/Borough Community Safety Partnership; domestic abuse is a key priority. In addition the Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategy has been implemented supported by a delivery plan summarising the scope and range of activities. Implementing the Domestic Abuse Policy and Workplace Response in an integral part of the strategy and delivery plan.

- 1.3.3 This underpins the aim for a Safer Suffolk/Norfolk by integrating domestic abuse as part of the County Council's service commitment to partners in acknowledgement that this is a cross cutting issue.
- 1.3.4 The Trust and the Local Authorities support a multi-agency Domestic Violence & Abuse Forum that has a wide membership from the statutory and voluntary sector. The Forum provides a strategic framework to support local forums and collective and individual work by agencies to ensure domestic abuse is not tolerated.

#### **1.4 What is Domestic Violence and Abuse?**

- 1.4.1 Domestic violence is a generic term to describe a range of violent and non-violent but abusive behaviours, some of which are criminal offences. It encompasses a wide range of abuse, the most serious resulting in death.
- 1.4.2 Domestic violence involves a pattern of assaults and coercive behaviours that can take a number of forms, such as physical assault, sexual abuse, rape, threats and intimidation. It may include pressure tactics, isolation, harassment, and control of finance and/or activities. These patterns include a variety of tactics carried out in multiple and sometimes daily episodes.
- 1.4.3 For the purpose of this policy, domestic violence is defined as:

“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners, or are family members, regardless of gender”.

In this definition family members include mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, in-laws and stepfamily.

- 1.4.4 Domestic abuse occurs across all society. Those who experience violence and abuse and those who are violent and abusive come from all backgrounds, irrespective of social class, income, and level of education, occupation, age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- 1.4.5 *The terms domestic violence and domestic abuse are used interchangeably throughout this policy.*

## **Section 2 - Domestic Abuse Policy**

### **2.1 The Purpose of the Policy**

- 2.1.1 The Consortium Trust is committed to ensuring the personal safety and well-being of all employees. Domestic abuse is recognised as a widespread problem that can affect any of our employees as well as adults and children who use our services.
- 2.1.2 Incidents of domestic abuse can seriously damage the work environment by increasing the risk of death, injury and other health related problems, absenteeism and create an additional risk of violence at work. Despite the consequent effect on employee performance it can remain largely a hidden problem and an unreported crime.

## **2.2 The Aims of the Policy**

- 2.2.1** This Policy and Guidance for Academy Heads, Managers and Supervisors outlines the Trust’s responsibilities and response towards those employees experiencing domestic violence and other forms of abuse and to those employees who are perpetrators of violence and/or abuse. The Trust is committed to a policy of zero tolerance towards abusers and to address the issue of domestic abuse for staff who are victims and for the children, young people and the vulnerable adults, whom we serve.
- 2.2.2** The aim of this policy is to provide a framework to ensure that those staff who experience and disclose any form of domestic abuse receive an effective and reliable response that places their safety at the centre of any intervention. It also applies to the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults when an employee is found to be a perpetrator of domestic abuse whether that includes violence or not.
- 2.2.3** In acknowledgement of the serious nature of this issue, we are committed to a positive approach that promotes well-being for employees, that both supports and retains productive employees and is aimed ultimately to save lives.
- 2.2.4** Academy Head’s, managers and supervisors should work together with the recognised Trade Unions throughout the investigation process (where members are involved).

## **2.3 Policy Statement**

- 2.3.1** We are committed to promote the understanding that everyone has the right to live free of abuse, that violence in any form is unacceptable and will not be condoned, tolerated or ignored.
- 2.3.2** In support of this, it is our policy that every employee who is experiencing or has experienced domestic abuse can raise this issue, with the knowledge that we will treat the matter sensitively and confidentially and that all employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- 2.3.3** We will offer assistance and information to those staff who disclose they are experiencing domestic abuse and where their welfare and safety is under threat, we will be proactive in taking appropriate steps to provide a safe and supportive workplace.

## **2.4 Principles of our Commitment**

**2.4.1** The Trust is committed to the principles of a comprehensive workplace response to domestic abuse. In summary we undertake to:

- > Provide accessible and confidential ways of seeking support in the workplace for those employees experiencing domestic abuse.
- > Support and enable employees experiencing domestic abuse to make safe choices.
- > Take the strongest measures with employees who are perpetrators in line with our commitment to zero tolerance of abuse.
- > Provide access, in work time, to counselling, programmes and courses to support survivors of domestic abuse.
- > Take all practicable measures to ensure a safe working environment for those experiencing violence, threats, intimidation and other forms of abuse, which could be carried over to the workplace.
- > Take account of any additional barriers employees may face in disclosing domestic abuse or seeking support due to their age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- > Provide training and guidance to Academy Heads, managers, trade union representatives and staff to raise their awareness of domestic abuse and how to support employees who are victims through safety planning and other available resources.
- > Provide information to existing and new employees about domestic abuse and domestic abuse services and the support available.
- > Not to discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to domestic abuse, in terms of his or her existing employment or career development.

## **2.5 Scope of the Policy**

**2.5.1** This policy applies to all Schools and services provided by the Trust.

**2.5.2** The requirements outlined within this Policy provide a coordinated and effective standard of response across all Trust activities.

## **2.6 Consultation Process**

**2.6.1** The policy was reviewed by the Joint Consultative Committee, Well-being Forum and throughout the Trust at staff and Governance levels.

## **2.7 Other Policies and Procedures**

**2.7.1** This policy will be underpinned by other Trust policies and procedures to ensure the protection of children and vulnerable adults, employee's health and safety and disciplinary procedures where appropriate. The following are an indicative list of the main policies supporting the Domestic Violence Policy.

- > Appraisal and Capability
- > Dignity in the Workplace
- > Grievance
- > Employee Wellbeing (details found in the staff handbook)
- > Drug and Alcohol
- > Lone Working (details found in the staff handbook)

## **Section 3 - Guidance for Academy Heads, Managers and Supervisors**

### **3.1 Responding to Victims and Abusers**

A positive approach will both support and retain productive employees and will save money and lives.

**3.1.1** Academy Heads, Managers and Supervisors at all levels have a direct responsibility for the health and safety of their staff and have an essential role to ensure the Trusts commitment towards those employees experiencing domestic abuse. This policy and guidance introduces practical steps to support those experiencing domestic abuse and taking the strongest action against perpetrators; The Trust expect it to be implemented effectively.

### **3.2 Legal Liability & Responsibilities**

It is imperative that domestic abuse is recognised as being serious, preventable and an important issue that cannot be ignored. When domestic abuse affects an employee while they are at work, it is covered by health and safety legislation.

**3.2.1** Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, employers have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees at work. Domestic abuse will inevitably have a significant impact on the victim at work who may become withdrawn, anxious or show some of the other signs and symptoms commonly associated with difficulty coping even if there are no clear indications that they are a victim of abuse, including violence. Injuries can be hidden and denied. Managers and Academy Heads have responsibilities under the Trust's health and safety policy to support staff with problems outside of work that have an impact in the workplace as well as the explicit responsibilities outlined below. The Trust has a toolkit on stress and wellbeing to assist managers in this respect, found on the Well-being page of the Trust website.

There is a possibility that a perpetrator of domestic abuse may stalk a victim and may harass, follow or try to find a victim while they are at work. This situation is covered by the council's guidance on violence at work "Managing violence at work policy and toolkit" (\*) If the victim has disclosed that (s) he is a victim of domestic abuse to their manager, the manager must consider the risk of violence to the victim during working hours under a violence at work risk assessment since this situation will be covered by health and safety at work legislation. Section 4 of this policy document includes some specific issues that need to be considered.

(\*) The Trust has adopted this toolkit and will refer to it as required.

**3.2.2** All Academy Heads and Managers are responsible to:

- > Promote a culture where domestic abuse can be disclosed
- > Ensure appropriate measures are taken to reduce risks.
- > Ensure all employees, new appointees, trainees and applicants are aware of this zero tolerance policy and the Trust's Principles of Commitment

**3.3 Responding to Victims - Minimum Standard of Response**

Abusive behaviour is the responsibility of the abuser. No proof of violence is needed and a statement from the victim must be enough for them to be given support and information on protection and help.

**3.3.1** Academy Heads, Managers and Supervisors must be prepared to respond to direct requests for help from employees. The line manager may not be the first person approached for advice or help and in some cases another manager, colleague or Trade Union representative may be involved. Anyone approached for support must take a believing and non-judgemental approach. You will be expected to:

- > Listen, reassure and take seriously what is being disclosed and respond in a sensitive and supportive way.
- > Ensure the employee is aware of the framework of support within the Trust and appropriate and up to date information is readily available – leaflets, details of help lines, crisis and support services.
- > Actively support the employee by ensuring they are aware of the options that may be open to them while respecting their right to self-determination.
- > Encourage safe choices, which may include offering to assist with arranging crisis /safety planning if appropriate.
- > Ensure all discussions take place in privacy and are kept confidential in all but the most exceptional circumstances (section 3.6)
- > In all cases ensure that the employee's safety and well-being is prioritised 3.4 Awareness and Disclosure.

Taking a responsive and enabling approach is fundamental to re-assure those members of staff who experience abuse that the workplace is a safe and supportive place to disclose and seek assistance.

**3.4.1** Academy Heads, Managers and Supervisors must be alert to changes in an employee's behaviour and work performance that may indicate possible abuse when it has not been disclosed, as well as for other non-related reasons. These can include:

- > A lack of concentration, difficulty coping with work
- > Increased or unexplained absence
- > Minimisation of injuries (for example bruising with dubious explanation)

**3.4.2** Raising these issues with an employee who may be already vulnerable requires great sensitivity. Male managers raising this with female employees should always suggest a female manager could be involved instead, if that is the employee's preference.

**3.4.3** Employees who experience any form of domestic violence and/or abuse may find it difficult to confide in others or seek help and may be subjected to threats and intimidation to prevent them disclosing.

### **3.5 Performance, Attendance and Workloads**

Once domestic abuse has been identified Academy Heads, Managers and Supervisors must be ready to ensure appropriate help and support is provided and monitor the situation sensitively for any signs of escalation.

**3.5.1** Academy Heads, Managers and Supervisors may become aware of the possibility of a domestic abuse situation without a disclosure by the employee, through monitoring absences or where performance is affected. If this is the case both the absence, performance and the Academy Heads, Managers or Supervisors concerns should be raised at the same time by following the steps below and those outlined in 3.3

- > Find a private space to talk and ensure there are no interruptions.
- > Identify the attendance / performance problems.
- > Be understanding and explain that sometimes 'personal issues' can interfere with performance and be a cause of non-authorised absences.
- > If there are clear signs of abuse, sensitively encourage the employee to discuss what may be the problem.

**3.5.2** Whether or not domestic abuse is disclosed at this time, liaise with HR regarding performance improvement / capability proceedings to ensure any decisions are fully informed and HR is consulted and fully aware of the situation before any course of action is considered.

**3.5.3** Any employee coping with domestic abuse may need time off work to make personal arrangements and seek specialist advice. Academy Heads, Managers and Supervisors must adopt a flexible approach and together with the employee make all reasonable adjustments to both work volume and attendance.

### **3.6 Confidentiality**

Disclosing any information can significantly increase the risk to an employee who is a victim of abuse. Precautions must be taken by managers and supervisors to avoid this occurring.

**3.6.1** If an employee discloses abuse, they must be reassured that this will be kept strictly confidential except in exceptional circumstances, but will include any essential communication with HR and in some cases the Head of Service. The employee must be fully consulted about any communication and their agreement sought. As well as being worried about their own safety issues employees may be concerned that their disclosure could appear on their work records, affect their employment or career progression. Employees must be re-assured this will not happen.

**3.6.2** The exception is where children, young people or vulnerable adults may be at risk when information can be shared confidentially in the interest of the child, young person or vulnerable adult whose welfare is paramount. This must be explained to the employee who may require additional support.

**3.6.3** Security of personal information, including payroll records, is paramount to ensure addresses and other information is kept strictly confidential. Individual's personal confidentiality relating to their sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion and beliefs must be ensured in the implementation and use of this policy.

### **3.7 Issues of Diversity**

Recognising and understanding diversity issues will enable fair and open practices when responding to domestic abuse.

**3.7.1** The Trusts commitment to challenging discrimination and creating equality of opportunity means ensuring our policies are sensitive and responsive to the needs of all our staff. We are committed to non-discrimination against victims of domestic abuse in all aspects of our business operations.

**3.7.2** Perceived or actual reactions, isolation and barriers related to age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation that may compound an employee's experience of domestic violence. These issues can create fears about asking for help and this should be recognised without assumptions about what action is appropriate being made on these grounds.

The Trust operates a zero tolerance approach to domestic abuse and will always hold perpetrators fully responsible and accountable for their actions. There is no excuse for violence or abuse and any form of abuse is viewed as a serious and disciplinary matter.

**3.8.1** The Trust will always take action with those employees who are perpetrators of violence and/or abuse in line with our zero tolerance policy. Disciplinary action, including grounds for gross misconduct where appropriate, will be considered. Where safety issues and risk is identified towards a victim or child, young person or vulnerable adult the abuser may work with, this will include reporting to other authorities.

**3.8.2** Domestic violence and abuse is a crime covered by a number of criminal offences that can lead to a conviction. In addition any acts of violence or abusive behaviour by an employee against a current or former partner or other person will be considered as misconduct outside work, which can also lead to disciplinary action in work, whether or not it leads to a criminal conviction.

**3.8.3** In all cases there will be an investigation under disciplinary procedures to establish whether abuse has occurred during work time or using workplace resources. In most cases there will be a disciplinary hearing to establish if disciplinary action should be taken. In cases where the perpetrator is an employee and employed with children or vulnerable adults, an investigation under disciplinary procedures should take place, whether or not the abuse occurred at the work place or using workplace resources. Confidentiality must be maintained throughout these investigations.

**3.8.4** To ensure continued high standards of safe practice employees proved to be perpetrators will be referred to the appropriate safety/professional body.

**3.8.5** Included within the scope of this policy:

- > Employees who are perpetrators and who misuse Trust workplace resources – phones, faxes, email or other means to threaten, harass or abuse a current or former partner or any other person.
- > Any form of violence, threats or harassment, or other forms of abuse of any employee by their partner, ex-partner, or someone with whom they have had a close relationship who is also an employee.
- > Any employee who intentionally misuses their authority or position to enable abuse to continue or encourages others to do so, or assists a perpetrator to locate or carry out acts of violence or abuse, or protects the perpetrator.
- > Any action or incident that brings the Trust into disrepute and impacts on the high standards of conduct the Trust expects from all employees.



### **3.9 Duty of Care**

**3.9.1** The Trust has a duty of care to ensure the safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult involved in any activity or interaction for which an employee of the Trust is responsible.

**3.9.2** This duty of care extends to all adults employed, commissioned or contracted to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

**3.9.3** Employees who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults are in a position of trust and are responsible for ensuring their own actions conduct or behaviour is of the highest standard.

**3.9.4** Any employee who is alleged or proved to be a perpetrator of domestic abuse will be investigated to consider if they have misused their position of trust. Disciplinary or legal action may be taken.

**3.9.5** Managers dealing with these issues must consult with Head of Service (People) and follow other appropriate policies where appropriate for example

### **3.10 Key Points for Academy Heads and Managers**

**3.10.1** Academy Heads and Managers may be informed of an incident of domestic violence or abuse by the Police, Children's & Young Peoples Services or other sources or through disclosure by the employee themselves. In all cases follow the key points outlined when interviewing an employee when domestic abuse has been disclosed.

- > Make the employee aware of the zero tolerance approach to domestic abuse operated by the Trust and that any incident will be treated seriously
- > Inform the employee that domestic violence and forms of abuse are a crime that may lead to criminal conviction and other forms of legal proceedings
- > Make clear that Police action may follow if evidence indicates a crime has been committed
- > Carry out an investigation to consider:
  - Has the abuse taken place during work time or using workplace resources?
  - Is it appropriate for the employee to carry on with their normal duties?
  - Is there is a conflict of interests?
  - What disciplinary action should be taken?
  - Should the employee be re-deployed?
  - Are there criminal proceedings?
  - Have the abusers actions resulted in a criminal conviction?
  - Have the actions of the employee resulted in gross misconduct?
- > The employee may try to justify their actions and/or blame the victim or work or other personal circumstances. It is important Academy Heads and Managers avoid any approach that could be perceived as collusion with the actions of the employee; domestic abuse is a choice and solely the responsibility of the abuser.
- > Ensure the employee is unable to use their position to find out details about the whereabouts of the victim, through databases, personnel files or contact with other agencies.
- > Inform the employee of any perpetrator help lines or perpetrator programmes available.

- 3.10.2** If there has been no disclosure of domestic violence but the Academy Head, Manager, Supervisor or colleague suspects that it may be an issue, it is only possible to address any performance issues that come to light. In these circumstances advice must be sought from Head of Service (People), all enquiries will be strictly confidential
- 3.10.3** Academy Heads and Managers must ensure all those employed within the school/establishment are clearly and regularly informed about this policy and other information relating to domestic violence.

## **Section 4 - Guidance for Academy Heads, Managers and Supervisors**

### **4.1 Workplace Safety and Procedures**

Any incident of abuse that takes place in the workplace is damaging and potentially dangerous for both the abused employee and their colleagues.

The effects of violence and abuse do not remain in the home when the victim comes to work. As well as an increase in health related and performance problems there can be an additional risk of targeted threats, intimidation and violence initiated by the abuser towards the victim while they are at work. Any incident is likely to disrupt the work environment and affect other employees as well as impacting on service provision. In some cases the police and other agencies will be involved.

### **4.2 Workplace Safety Measures**

All reports of threatening or violent conduct must be taken seriously. The victim should be included in evaluating these threats and any decision regarding possible intervention.

- 4.2.1** There are a number of measures that can be taken to improve the safety of an employee at their workplace including school premises, or where their duties may take them outside the workplace. As the Trust business operations involve schools, a number of different premises and sites, Academy Heads and Managers may need to undertake a locality risk assessment to minimise any risk and also take account of operational requirements.
- 4.2.2** This may involve other employees taking precautions and/or the involvement of the respective Head of Service. Any proposed measures or actions should be agreed as part of a safety plan with the employee.
- 4.2.3** Abusers can be resourceful in gaining access to buildings or information additional protective measures could include:
- > Improving building security – changing security numbers, restricting access to authorised personnel only, reinforcing security procedures.
  - > Ensuring reception and other staff are aware they should not divulge any information or personal details about employees, or give information about an employee's whereabouts.
  - > Making a plan to prevent abuse occurring - agreeing how responsible staff and/or security personal should respond if the abuser attempts violence, intimidation or threats to an employee.
  - > Reviewing the workstation position of an employee, away from public access if appropriate and predetermining an escape route if appropriate.
  - > Setting up a system for employees affected by abuse to check in /out.
  - > Offering an alternative workplace or temporary relocation, varying work times, work patterns or changes in specific duties. Working from home may not be a safe option.
  - > Assisting the employee to vary their route to and from work.

### **4.3 Safety Planning with Employees Experiencing Abuse**

Assisting an employee to make a safety plan at work may be the only way this can take place.

- 4.3.1** One of the most important steps anyone experiencing domestic abuse can take is to make a safety plan that covers both work and home. This can only be fully effective if those experiencing domestic abuse are enabled to make safe choices and are supported in their consideration of the risks and appropriate options for themselves and any children.
- 4.3.2** In response the Trust will signpost to domestic abuse measures (tools) based on the safety of victims which are being widely used by the NHS, Police, Probation Service, Women's Aid and other agencies, as well as by our own staff. Safety and crisis planning booklets providing information and advice for victims of abuse are available from the Community Safety Unit.
- 4.3.3** Leaving an abusive partner is often not the safest option and without full knowledge of the situation it is unsafe to pressurise the victim to make any decisions that might not be right for them. However, in a crisis assisting an employee to find safe accommodation in a refuge or elsewhere can be helpful to alleviate the effects of traumatic events. Follow up is essential.
- 4.3.4** Using any of these approaches can only be safe and effective if those with responsibility for employees have a developed understanding of domestic abuse and are familiar with how safety planning and other methods should be introduced.

If Academy Heads, Managers are uncertain how to proceed information and advice is available from the Community Safety Unit Domestic Abuse Manager.

### **4.4 Information and Advice for Employees**

Managers and supervisors can help a victim by encouraging self-empowerment to begin and continue.

- 4.4.1** Each case is individual and those employees experiencing abuse will have a range of needs including those for information and signposting.
- 4.4.2** Displaying posters and having leaflets available is important part of the Trusts proactive approach to domestic abuse and can be effective in both providing information and support in the workplace.

### **4.5 Personal Safety**

Be aware of your own and the victim's safety - domestic violence abusers are often unpredictable and can view any intervention as a threat.

- 4.5.1** In the interests of personal safety anyone supporting the employee experiencing abuse should not put themselves or the employee at risk. Any meetings should take place in Trust premises or public buildings. Meetings should not take place at the home of the employee.

### **4.6 Reporting and Monitoring**

Any incident should not be minimised or ignored, as it will form part of a wider pattern of abuse.

- 4.6.1** A record must be kept of threatening or violent incidents in the workplace and any acts of harassment including abusive/persistent phone calls, text messages, e-mails and other forms of intimidation. All documentation should be treated as sensitive and confidential and only shared within safety and legal requirements.

- 4.6.2** Following completion of documentation, the Academy Head or Manager in consultation with Head of Service (People) will evaluate all reports (there may more than one), and involve the employee to assess their personal risk and the risk to the organisation.
- 4.6.3** Employees should be encouraged to make their own self-assessment of risk supported by their manager and/or Head of Service (People) Employees must also be considered in the overall process of risk and made aware and approve the contents of any report. Where a risk is determined the police may need to be involved. It should be decided who should monitor and revise any safety plan together with the employee. In all situations Academy Heads, Managers and Supervisors should continue to generally monitor the situation and maintain close contact with the employee and Head of Service (People).
- 4.6.4** The employee should be encouraged to keep their own records both of work and home incidents. All records are important and can be used as evidence in police proceedings or if an employee wants to apply to the court for an injunction.
- 4.7 Post Incident Action**  
Assess the response to the incident and review procedures where appropriate.
- 4.7.1** Time should be allocated following an incident to review what has occurred and complete an incident report. This will include the Academy Head, Manager, HR, the employee concerned and a Trade Union representative if requested. This will focus on:
- Documenting the incident.
  - Supporting the employee to cope with the traumatic event. Special leave, counselling and other domestic violence support services should be made available in addition to any medical service.
  - Holding the abuser responsible through supporting prosecution. The police may require witness statements and any evidence within the law. The Trust can strengthen the case by reporting the incident as criminal damage, trespass or other appropriate offence.
- 4.8 Training for Academy Heads, Managers, Supervisors and Staff**  
Information about training is available from the Community Safety Unit
- 4.8.1** The Trust is committed to raising the level of awareness of domestic violence with all staff and supports this commitment by providing training and information for managers, supervisors and staff.
- 4.8.2** To respond effectively requires those who are in continuous contact with employees who may be victims, to be able to recognise different forms of abuse; understand the nature and dynamics of abusive relationships and adopt safe practices for intervention at an appropriate level.
- 4.8.3** Managers should identify their own and employees training needs to ensure any training is relevant to their work location and can be applied within the work setting. Training is offered at different levels relative to the needs of job.

## Section 5

# Guidance for Managers and Supervisors

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why does the Trust need to have a policy on domestic abuse?**

As an employer the Trust has a responsibility to provide a safe and effective work environment that responds to our employee's needs. When looking at any issue affecting our employees and the workplace, cost, safety, liability and productivity is considered, domestic abuse is no different.

### **Why is domestic abuse different to other violence at work?**

Domestic violence occurs between people who have had, wanted to have, or are in a close, intimate, family or other type of relationship irrespective of the length of that relationship. This makes it different to that of other risks and assaults which may in occur the working environment. Generally one or more of the following apply:

- > Victims are emotionally involved with the abuser.
- > Victims are sometimes financially dependent.
- > Victims may live, or may have lived with the abuser.
- > There are rarely other witnesses.
- > Abusers exercise power and control over the victim.
- > There is a significant risk of repeat assaults which are likely to increase in severity.

### **Why is domestic abuse between adults our business?**

The standard response from management when faced with the question of domestic abuse in their workplace is that 'it does not happen here'. One of the factors that make it so difficult to address domestic abuse in its many forms is the 'hidden' nature of the offending. Research shows fellow employees often know what is happening in their colleague's lives, as the workplace is the most common place where victims talk about their experiences. The problem for management is what to do with this information.

### **How can domestic abuse in the workplace be defined?**

Domestic abuse in the workplace includes any behaviour that interferes with an employee's capacity to safely and securely perform their duties for the Trust. It applies to wherever and whenever those duties take place and includes other work related activities, for example travelling and parking.

It can involve actual violence, the threat of violence, sexual and psychological abuse and includes conduct ranging from harassment by repeated telephone calls, e-mails and faxes at work, to the abuser stalking the employee from place to place, on their journey to and from work and attending the workplace to harass and intimidate. Threats and intimidation will not be isolated incidents or 'one offs' but part of an overall pattern of abuse.



Non-violent types of abuse include emotional and financial abuse that may result in an employee being prevented from getting to work and/or denied money for day-to-day needs. The employee may be pressurised by their abuser to change jobs or even give up work completely.

### **What can be the effect on an employee?**

In addition to physical injury and other health problems, employees can suffer less visible effects and be subject to self-harming, depression and sleep deprivation. They may be intentionally isolated and belittled by their abuser, low morale, diminishing self-esteem, fear, guilt, anxiety are commonplace. These effects contribute towards lateness, absenteeism, poor performance and impact on career progression. An employee's confidence and abilities are likely to be undermined by their experiences of abuse and this can be reflected in their performance of work activities.

### **Is the employee more or less 'at risk' while at work?**

Employees can be particularly vulnerable while at work as this may be the only place the abuser knows where they can be found. It is likely the abuser will already know working hours, telephone numbers, colleagues and even security entry systems. Despite this the workplace can be a safe and supportive place if essential steps are taken to protect and support the employee through making a plan for their safety and other appropriate measures.

### **Why doesn't the victim just leave?**

The victim is mostly controlled through fear – fear of violence, fear relating to children, separation, of the unknown, etc. For example if the victim tries to leave or leaves the relationship they can be at greater risk of harassment, injury and life threatening situations. Often it will be difficult to leave because the abuser's initiates stringent routines and controls extending to restricting access to friends or relatives, financial constraints or childcare responsibilities. Frequent intimidation will include threats to harm children, relatives, harm to pets and selective damage to property. Under these circumstances it is not surprising research indicates victims will make many attempts before they leave an abusive relationship.



## Document Control

### Changes History

Version	Date	Amended By	Details of Change
V2	02/04/2020	Principal/CEO	Routine review, updated terminology

### Approval

Name	Job Title	Signed	Date
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	Principal/CEO	Electronic signature	09/01/2017
Dawn Carman-Jones	On behalf of the Trust Board	Electronic signature	09/01/2017

**END OF DOCUMENT**