

Domestic Abuse Policy



1.0 Introduction

Peterborough City Council has developed this policy as part of a suite to support employees' health and wellbeing at work. It covers the internal and external support available to employees experiencing domestic violence, including the appointment of an employee as a nominated point of contact, (usually the line manager), special leave provisions and signposting to external sources of advice and help.

The Council is committed to tackling all forms of violence and abuse; including violence and abuse against women and girls and domestic and sexual violence against men. All cases of domestic violence and abuse experienced by employees will be taken seriously.

The Council recognises that its employees will be amongst those affected by domestic violence and abuse, either as survivors/victims of domestic violence and abuse, friends, family or colleagues of victim/survivors, or perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse.

The Council is committed to ensuring a safe workplace and to safeguarding the health and wellbeing of employees. As such, the Council is committed to developing a workplace culture in which there is zero tolerance for violence and abuse. The council is clear that the responsibility for domestic violence and abuse lies with the perpetrator.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- support employees experiencing domestic violence;
- enable employees experiencing domestic violence to remain productive and at work;
- aid managers seeking to help team members experiencing domestic violence;
- assist colleagues of those experiencing domestic violence; and
- reinforce organisational corporate social responsibility objectives by demonstrating that the employer values, and is prepared to support, its staff during difficult periods.

3.0 Definitions

Domestic violence is defined as physical, emotional, sexual, psychological and/or financial control by one person over another who is or has been in a relationship. This includes family members. Domestic violence includes forced marriage, so-called "honour"-based violence, and female genital mutilation.

It can also occur in a range of relationships including heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender relationships. Although less prevalent, men may also be victims of domestic violence.

The misuse of domestic violence also includes the use of children to control an adult victim. Because of this, child abuse and domestic abuse can overlap.

Domestic violence is a continuing pattern of events, behaviour and coercive control.

4.0 Key Principles

Internal support

In order to support employees who experience domestic violence, the Council will:

- nominate an appointed person in the workplace as a confidential first point of contact for those experiencing domestic violence;
- offer employees experiencing domestic violence access to counselling, and publicise the availability of this support regularly through notice boards, the intranet and ongoing health and wellbeing initiatives; and
- Undertake to raise workplace awareness of domestic violence issues through a programme of regular information initiatives.

The Employee Assistance Programme is also designed to support employees.

External support

The Council will signpost external sources of help and support for employees and managers, more details can be found at the end of this policy.

Line managers' role

Line managers have a crucial role to play in enabling employees experiencing domestic violence to seek help. The organisation provides training for all managers in handling sensitive issues.

The role of the line manager is to:

- identify employees experiencing difficulties as a result of domestic violence by fostering an open management culture that enables team members to disclose sensitive issues;
- provide support in the first instance, including specific advice on the options available, but also recognise the limitations of his/her role (managers are usually not professional counsellors or experts);
- protect confidentiality in all instances (excepting the requirements of child protection and vulnerable adult protection);
- refer the individual to the appropriate internal or external source of help and support, for example the Council's Employee Assistance Programme or external agency;
- ensure that the safety of all employees in the team is protected; and
- enable the affected employee to remain productive and at work during a difficult period in his/her domestic life, for example by using the organisation's special leave policies and procedures.

Attendance

The Council recognises that those experiencing domestic violence may need to be absent from work at times and will assist them by using its special leave policies.

Individual absences can be discussed and agreed between the employee and the line manager, with HR support where appropriate.

Financial Arrangements/Contact Details

Payment to all Council employees is via BACS into the employee's bank account. In an emergency situation, where an employee wants to stop BACS payment into a joint account, the employee should contact their manager and request the payment is paid into a different bank account.

An employee can also change their bank account details and correspondence address – via their manager, employee self-service account (Myfile) or via HR. Bank details normally need to be changed before the payroll deadline to ensure that salary payment goes into the correct account.

Security and safety

The Council will aim to protect the safety and security of all employees at work, including those affected by domestic violence and their colleagues.

Employees need to disclose that they are at risk from domestic violence in order to receive this protection and the organisation will seek to enable employees to disclose such facts by generating a supportive and open management culture.

Alleged perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse

Domestic violence and abuse perpetrated by employees of Peterborough City Council will not be condoned under any circumstances. The Council requires perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse to declare any related prosecutions, and to follow the Self Disclosure Policy at all times.

All allegations of domestic violence will be investigated, and disciplinary action will be considered dependant on the circumstances. Domestic violence is a serious matter that can lead to criminal conviction. If an employee is charged with a criminal offence relating to domestic violence this may constitute a disciplinary offence.

The council may offer access to counselling and other support to employees perpetrating domestic violence who seek help from the employer.

In cases where both the victim and perpetrator are employees of the Council, appropriate action will be taken. The safety of the victim will always be prioritised and action should be taken to minimise risks. Disciplinary action may be considered against the employee who is perpetrating abuse. Action may also be taken to minimise the potential for the perpetrator to use their position or Peterborough City Council's resources to further abuse or to locate the victim. Any decisions will be taken in partnership with the victim/survivor.

Sources of help and support for people experiencing domestic abuse

National Domestic Violence Helpline - **0808 2000 247**

<http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk/>

Peterborough Rape Crisis Centre – 01733 317899

<http://www.peterboroughrapecrisis.co.uk/>

Men's Advice Line - **0808 801 0327**

www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Karma Nirvana (supporting victims of honour crimes) **0800 5999247**

<http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk/>

Broken Rainbow (LGBT domestic violence support) **0300 999 5428**

<http://www.brokenrainbow.org.uk/>

The Respect Phonenumber – 0808 802 4040

(For domestic violence perpetrators and professionals who would like further information about services for those using violence/abuse in their intimate partner relationships)

www.respectphonenumber.org.uk

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