

# Addressing Domestic Abuse at Work

Standards and Guidance



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# Introduction

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**As part of our commitment to a safer and more supportive organisational climate and to the prevention and reduction of domestic abuse, this policy sets out the Councils commitments to its employees, and clear guidance for managers.**

We know that domestic abuse, sexual violence, and stalking present unique issues for our workforce. We also know that these are workplace issues as the impact presents several challenges for employees and managers.

The purpose and aims of this policy are to:

- Create a supportive and productive work environment that helps employees to avoid the use of violence in any context
- Institutionalise responsive policies and procedures to assist employees who are affected by violence, including the provision of training on this policy to employees and management
- Take disciplinary action to hold alleged perpetrators of violence accountable for their behaviour
- Provide immediate assistance and support to victims of violence, such as information and referrals to community resources, to facilitate safety and support for victims and fellow employees.

The Policy applies to all employees directly employed by the Council and is recommended to schools with delegated authority for staffing matters, as “Best Practice”.

The Council funds many services provided by different organisations across different sectors and is in a position of influence to encourage all partners to explore how they can improve their Safeguarding practices by being better prepared to support victims of domestic abuse, challenge perpetrators and Safeguard children.

Tools are available in the appendix to help with developing domestic abuse at work policies for businesses, community and voluntary sector organisations.



WE RECOGNISE THAT THERE ARE DIFFERING VIEWS ON THE USE OF THE WORDS VICTIM AND/OR SURVIVOR. THROUGHOUT THIS DOCUMENT WE WILL BE USING THE WORD VICTIM, IN RECOGNITION OF THE FACT THAT A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC ABUSE IS A VICTIM OF A CRIME. HOWEVER, WE UNDERSTAND THAT MANY VICTIMS PREFER THE TERM SURVIVOR, TO PLACE FOCUS ON THEIR STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE RATHER THAN THE CRIME COMMITTED AGAINST THEM. WE HAVE NOT USED THE TERM VICTIM/SURVIVOR FOR READABILITY BUT ENCOURAGE YOU TO READ THIS TERM AS APPROPRIATE, ACCORDING TO YOUR PREFERENCE.

# Definitions

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We are adopting the cross governmental definition of domestic violence and abuse:

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*"Any incident 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. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional."*

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

**Coercive behaviour** is an act or pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.

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The definition includes issues of concern to black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities such as so called 'honour-based violence', female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. It should be understood that these forms of abuse can be experienced by anyone, for example: a white woman experiencing 'honour-based violence' at the hands of a BME husband or family member.

Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, and grandparents, whether directly related, in laws or stepfamily.

Whatever form it takes, domestic abuse is rarely a one-off incident, and should instead be understood as a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which the abuser seeks power over their victim. Typically, the abuse involves a *pattern* of abusive and controlling behaviour, which tends to get worse over time. The abuse can begin at any time, in the first year, or after many years of life together. It may begin, continue, or escalate after a couple have separated and may take place not only in the home but also in a public place or workplace.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone regardless of their background. The figures show that women are impacted more often and at higher risk, but we know that men can also experience domestic abuse, as can people from LGBT backgrounds. Children are also affected, both directly and indirectly and there is also a strong correlation between domestic violence and other forms of violence that are set out in international law as Violence Against Women and Girls (or VAWG).

# Why is domestic abuse a workplace issue?

The Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) sets out that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6-7 men will experience domestic abuse. The CSEW uses a capping system to capture domestic abuse reporting. Research has shown that when this cap is removed, violence against women and girls increases by 70%. Based on this research we can estimate how many employees are potentially affected by domestic abuse:



The controlling nature of most domestic abuse perpetrators means that the abuse is rarely confined to home life alone. Research by Sylvia Walby in 2010 found that one-third of all incidents are happening in the workplace – in parking lots, grounds and offices. Many people meet their partners in the workplace, which increases the potential for there to be both victims and perpetrators in the workplace.

The direct cost of domestic abuse to UK business is around £1.9 billion per year, excluding lost productivity and performance. The human and emotional costs to individuals affected by the issue are huge. A Home Office report in 2009 found that 20 per cent of victims of domestic abuse had to take a month or more off work in the previous year due to the abuse. Other research has found that 56 per cent of abused women arrive late for work at least five times a month and 53 percent miss at least three days of work a month.

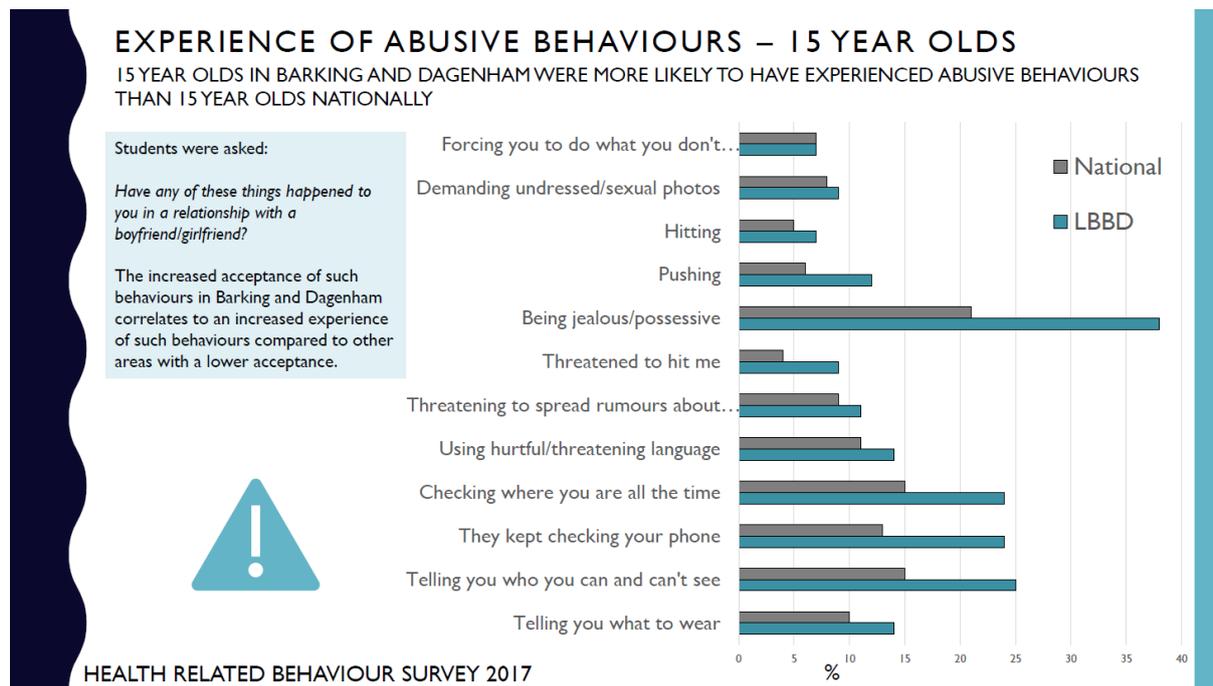


It is often possible for those who use abusive behaviours to use workplace resources, such as phones or email, to threaten, harass or abuse current or former partners. For others, the workplace can be a safe haven and provide a route away from harm.

[Public Health England, Domestic Abuse: A toolkit for employees](#)

In 2013 the Trade Union’s Congress (TUC) conducted a workplace survey about how domestic violence impacts working lives. 80% of respondents were women. Over 40% of respondents had experienced domestic violence themselves. Nearly all respondents (99.4%) said they thought that domestic violence impacts on the work lives of employees. Ultimately domestic abuse impacts working lives and productivity as well as the domestic sphere.

Barking and Dagenham has particularly high levels of acceptance for domestic abuse compared to other areas as measured through our school health survey: 26% of young people reported that hitting a partner was ok in some situations. This increased acceptance correlates to an increased experience of abusive behaviours as seen below (excerpt from a local priority review into domestic abuse):



Around half of our employees also live in the borough and may therefore be exposed to similar social messaging. This tolerance for abusive behaviours has led to the Council planning to launch a commission specifically to explore the normalisation of abuse locally. If we want to create positive change in the borough relating to domestic abuse, then we also need to create change internally.

**Domestic violence and abuse is a real issue for our employees, and we are fully committed to putting in place measures that support employees to be safe, access specialist help, and recover from their experiences.**

# Indicators

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It is not always easy to detect when an employee or colleague is experiencing domestic abuse. Abuse is often associated with physical violence, but it may also be emotional or psychological – and potentially be less visible.

Victims often feel shame and are likely to have experienced blame from their perpetrators, and from messages promoted in the media and throughout society, often referred to as victim-blaming. The stigma associated with being victimised can often lead to victims not feeling able to disclose or ask for help.

The indicators below may point towards a problem with domestic abuse, but they could also be the result of a different issue such as ill health.

Managers should be looking out for these issues more generally as an indicator that something might be wrong, without assuming it will be related to domestic abuse.

The more supportive atmosphere an employer can create, the more likely employees are going to feel comfortable disclosing experiences of domestic abuse.



## Work productivity

- Change in the person's working patterns, for example, frequent absence, lateness or needing to leave work early
- Reduced quality and quantity of work: missing deadlines, a drop in usual performance standards
- Change in the use of the phone/email, for example, a large number of personal calls/texts, avoiding calls or a strong reaction to calls/texts/emails
- Spending an increased number of hours at work for no reason
- Frequent visits to work by the employee's partner, which may indicate coercive control



## Changes in behaviour or demeanour

- Conduct out of character with previous behaviour
- Changes in behaviour such as becoming very quiet, anxious, fearful, tearful, aggressive, distracted or depressed.
- Being isolated from colleagues
- Obsession with leaving work on time
- Secretive regarding home life
- Worried about leaving children at home



## Physical Indicators

- Visible bruising, single or repeated injuries without explanation
- Change in the pattern or amount of makeup used
- Change in the manner of dress, for example clothes that do not suit the climate which may be used to hide injuries
- Substance use/misuse
- Fatigue/sleep disorders/lethargy
- Frequent bouts of sickness, particularly related to digestive or immune health



## Other Indicators

- Partner/ex-partner stalking employee in or around workplace or on social media
- Partner/ex-partner exerting unusual amount of control or demands over work schedule
- Isolation from family/friends.
- Continuity issues such as regularly being late, or seeming to be unable to keep to time (not knowing what time of day it is, or what day in the week etc.)
- May be overly compliant – agreeing to everything you suggest for example.

# Why don't they leave...?

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“Why do they stay?” is the question inevitably asked in any discussion of abuse. It is sometimes asked in a scornful way, as if to imply that leaving is a simple option. As anyone who has left an intimate or familial relationship knows, leaving – even under ideal circumstances – is difficult.

Although it is much more difficult for victims to leave a relationship than it is for people who are not being abused, the fact is they do leave. Some leave after many years of extensive abuse; others leave quickly. This is a question that is explored in some depth through local training offers, with a focus on what decades of research have told us: being abused has a massive impact on the way our brains work. Some practical reasons why a victim might not be prepared to leave include:

<p>Fear of retaliation is one of the main reasons people stay. Perpetrators will often make threats to harm the victim, their children or their pets. They sometimes threaten to hurt themselves too.</p>	<p>Other threats include having children taken away, exposing the victim in some way (as an addict, mentally ill, or in the context of LGBT relationships by outing them).</p>	<p>When an abused person loses hope of having a violence free relationship, they begin to feel a terror similar to that suffered by prisoners of war. The notion of freedom loses its meaning. Day to day survival becomes their main concern.</p>
<p>Traditional gender roles can mean that victims feel like they are not able to live up to expectations society has set for them. To disrupt marriage and family, and to break the commitment to the relationship violates the basic value system of many people.</p>	<p>Financial abuse is often used as a tool to stop victims leaving. This can be compounded for people who are not able to work, or not able to work full time.</p>	<p>Often perpetrators will indulge the victim by buying gifts, providing affection or treating the children which can confuse the victim. Often victims contextualise this as a demonstration of the perpetrators love for them, and their remorse for being abusive.</p>
<p>The stigma of a ‘failed relationship’ may be more frightening than being abused.</p>	<p>Many victims do not feel they will be believed, or that bridges have been burned with friends and family, so they don't feel able to reach out.</p>	<p>Isolation is a tool used to abuse people, and many victims are systematically cut off from sources of support.</p>
<p>Leaving is expensive and housing can feel unsustainable as a single person, particularly when there are children involved.</p>	<p>Some victims do not understand budgeting and as a result of not having been allowed financial independence which creates additional barriers</p>	<p>Victims often have no reliable way to validate their thoughts and feelings. They experience blame, shame and dehumanisation which impacts their perception of what is happening</p>

# Expectations on managers and supervisors

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**THE ROLE OF A 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. THE FOLLOWING PAGES PROVIDE SOME PRACTICAL STEPS TO ASSIST EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE**

Managers need to remember that those dealing with domestic violence often want to stay in work because they see the workplace as a safe place, and by taking simple proactive steps the organisation can help them to disclose what is happening in their homes.

The Council has a duty of care to its employees and will take all steps which are reasonably possible to ensure their health, safety and wellbeing. The requirements in relation to domestic abuse are wide-ranging and may manifest themselves in many different ways, such as:

- ensuring a safe work environment;
- protecting employees from bullying or harassment, either from colleagues or third parties;
- protecting employees from discrimination;
- providing communication channels for employees to raise concerns.

It is important to create a safe environment for employees to disclose domestic abuse, where domestic abuse is not tolerated or condoned, and we are committed to challenging negative attitudes which uphold the normalisation of violence and abuse.

When an employee reports domestic abuse to their line manager, this must be treated sympathetically and in confidence. It is important to be clear that the line manager's role is not to advise employees on dealing with domestic abuse but to:

- Provide a sensitive and non-judgemental approach with emphasis on belief and validation
- Ensure that confidentiality is respected as far as possible
- Recognise that the employee may need some time to decide what to do and may try several different options during this process.
- Discuss measures to prioritise physical, emotional and psychological safety in the workplace
- Be aware of what support is available and explore these options with the employee.
- Managers should keep a written note of discussions as they may be required as evidence, including filling out an accident/incident form (where there has been an incident in the workplace), which should be stored confidentially and in lines with the GDPR.
- Recognise that some victims may or may not want to speak to someone from their cultural background for differing reasons.

# The role of Human Resources (HR)

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Domestic abuse can often present in complex ways as a result of how it impacts all areas of a victim's life. For this reason, it is important for managers to be able to reach out for help from colleagues in Human Resources who will be able to provide advice and guidance around how managers should best support employees in relation to the workplace.

Human Resources are also responsible for creating and maintaining policies which help ensure the safety of employees and can hold employees to account where they are found to be in breach of the Employee's Code of Conduct. They also commission the boroughs Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) where employees can access support, advice and guidance.

Several policies should be considered alongside this document:

## **Employees' Code of Conduct:**

Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects well on Council at all times. Unreasonable language, acts of violence, threatening behaviour or verbal abuse to colleagues, managers, service users, the public or elected Councillors will not be tolerated. It should be understood that this includes perpetrating domestic abuse or sexual violence, and where this is evidenced will be dealt with as gross misconduct.

## **Sickness, Absence and Reporting Arrangements:**

Deliberate failure to obey reasonable instructions or to follow the Council's sickness absence and reporting arrangements can face disciplinary action. For the purposes of this document, we encourage managers and employees to communicate regularly to ensure disciplinary procedures are not initiated, and so that managers can best support employees with accessing help.

## **Council Disciplinary Procedures**

Failure to follow the provisions in the Employee's Code of Conduct would normally be considered a fundamental breach of contract and gross misconduct. Discrimination, bullying and harassment also fall under this procedure, and are classed as gross misconduct and will be dealt with accordingly.

## **Managing Performance at Work Procedure**

The procedure intends to help and encourage employees to improve unsatisfactory performance, where this is due to genuine capability issues. Domestic abuse indicators may well present as a change in work performance

## **Healthy Workplace Charter**

Domestic abuse has an impact on health and safety, mental health, physical health and attendance management – strands under the Healthy Workplace Charter.

## **Health and Safety**

An accident/incident report form must be filled out for all types of hazardous incidents that happen at work including violence and aggression. When completed the manager should submit the form via the HR portal.

# What can managers do?

**The aim of starting a conversation in this area is to be supportive to employees rather than to encourage disclosure. Many people dealing with domestic abuse will never feel comfortable disclosing it to their employer as they may not even be ready to admit it to themselves.**

A dedicated manager helpline (Manager Assist: 0800 298 2021) provided by the Employee Assistance programme can support managers to develop soft skills to help them with having conversations such as this.

If a manager suspects that an employee is experiencing domestic abuse, they should facilitate a conversation to discuss the issue on a general level and identify and implement appropriate support. Begin by asking indirect questions, to establish an empathetic relationship with the employee. Be patient, offering support to encourage disclosure.

Below are some examples of questions or prompts that could be used:

- How are you doing at the moment?
- Your wellbeing is important to me and I have noticed that you seem distracted/upset at the moment – are you ok?
- If there is anything you want to talk to me about at any time I am here to support you
- Is everything all right at home?
- You don't have to tell me anything, but please know that I would like to support you if and when you are ready.
- What support do you think might help? What would you like to happen? How can I help that to happen?

## Disclosure

**If an employee discloses that they are experiencing domestic abuse it can be challenging for the manager/colleague too. The following guidance may help:**

- Suggest that you go somewhere quiet and comfortable, away from the office/desk if possible
- Acknowledge the courage of the employee and how difficult it must be to talk
- Confirm the confidentiality of the disclosure. As a guide for managers, any information should only be disclosed to anyone else if it is absolutely necessary in providing help and support and with the prior agreement of the person who has disclosed. Exceptions to that are if the manager believes there is an imminent threat to life, harm of children, or threat against the employer or other employees. At that point, a manager should contact the police or make a safeguarding referral as appropriate. See page 12 for more information.
- Have an open posture. Reach towards them but be sensitive that they may feel threatened by invasion of personal space
- Be prepared for them to be upset and tearful
- Do not be judgemental.
- Avoid language that indicates blame or fault (“Why don't you leave?” / “How can you let this happen?” / “Why haven't you told anyone before?”)
- Allow plenty of time and space for them to speak
- Following disclosure, contact HR for a debrief while respecting the individual's confidentiality as far as is safe to do so.

### **Examples of practical workplace support for people experiencing domestic abuse:**

- Agree with the employee what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if the abusive partner/ ex-partner telephones or visits the workplace
- Allow an individual to change work patterns or workload and allow flexible or more flexible working or special leave to facilitate any practical arrangements
- Agree special leave for individuals to facilitate any practical arrangements. At the discretion of HR and chief officers, the employee can request up to 10 days paid leave
- Ensure that the employee does not work alone or in an isolated area
- Agree flexible working hours to enable individuals (or their children) to attend health appointments resulting from the abuse, such as seeing a counsellor. This may be needed for some time after the abuse has stopped
- If the abuser has an employees' work email and telephone details, consider diverting their phone calls and emails to help shield them from their abuser
- Notify reception and security staff if the abuser is known to come to the workplace
- Provide a copy of any existing orders against the abuser and a photograph of the abuser to reception and security staff
- Keep a record of any incidents of abuse in the workplace, including persistent telephone calls, emails or visits to the employee
- Check that employees have arrangements for getting safely to and from home
- Review the employee's next of kin information (with their consent)
- Review content of personal information, such as temporary or new addresses, bank or health care details
- Ask individuals to supply you with an up to date emergency contact number for a trusted friend or family member
- Where practical, consider offering a temporary or permanent change of workplace, working times/ patterns
- Move the employee out of public view, ensuring that they are not visible from reception points or ground floor windows
- Where practical, offer changes in specific duties, such as not expecting the employee to answer telephones or sit on reception

### **Understanding Confidentiality:**

Staff members who disclose that they are or have experienced or witnessed abuse, should know that the information they provide may be confidential. Employees who are addressing their patterns of behaviour and have sought support from the Council should also know that the information they provide may be confidential. There are, however, some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be assured such as when there are concerns about children or vulnerable adults, where high risk has been identified, or where the employer needs to act to protect the safety of members of the public, including other employees.

**In line with information sharing legislation, including the Data Protection Act and GDPR, only proportionate, relevant and accurate information will be shared with third parties. These decisions will be made on a case by case basis and all decisions to share information, and the rationale used, will be recorded appropriately. Managers should ensure that understanding confidentiality is addressed when supporting employees.**

# Dealing with alleged perpetrators

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**Employers have a duty of care to support employees dealing with domestic abuse, and a key aspect of doing so is to be proactive about dealing with any employees who use abusive behaviours.**

**Managers should also be aware of indicators that an employee may be using abusive behaviour These can include:**

- Negative comments made by the abuser about a partner or family member (and women/men in general)
- Jealously or possessiveness
- Expressing anger and blaming their partner/family member for issues
- Constant text messaging or telephoning a partner/family member
- Repeated injuries (scratches, bite marks, bruised knuckles, injuries to wrists and forearms, which could be the consequence of their partner defending themselves)

Managers who feel that domestic abuse may be an issue should have the confidence to discuss this with the employee. When doing so, they should ensure that their own safety is not compromised. For example, they should talk to HR first, and request support.

The information that the manager and organisation gathers will be the basis for its decision about how best to engage with an alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse. Employees who are taking action to address their behaviour in an open and transparent fashion will be offered support to do so and will be able to access paid leave. This will not be at the detriment of the person experiencing domestic abuse – or the safety of other employees.

Managers should keep a confidential record of a disclosure and any action/decisions that they have taken. Good records may subsequently help in any legal proceedings or disciplinary hearing involving the perpetrator.

It is important to remember that it may not be possible to assess whether someone is a perpetrator based solely on their outward behaviour. Many alleged perpetrators conceal their abuse by behaving pleasantly to most people.

**Reduce the risk for people dealing with domestic abuse:** The safety and wellbeing of the person experiencing abuse (and any family members, particularly children) is an urgent priority. Consider what support can be provided to them in the workplace, or externally. Make links with specialist agencies, if relevant.

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*Employees found to have committed domestic abuse (i.e. caution, criminal prosecution, disclosure, injunction etc), either inside or outside of work, or have used Council facilities and equipment, including e-mail, and mobile devices, or social media to threaten, bully or harass employees, or clients will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.*

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**Reduce the risk to other employees:**

Consider what potential impact the alleged perpetrator's behaviour may have on other employees. Assess the risk and take appropriate action to reduce or eliminate the risk. Care must be taken at all times with regard to the disclosure of information about potential victims to the alleged perpetrator. For example, information about where they are, how they can be contacted or when they are going home.

**If the alleged perpetrator is targeting an employee:**

Steps must be taken to mitigate further risks to the victim and other employees. These may include reassigning duties/ roles and restricting the alleged perpetrator's access to information about the person they are targeting (including computer programmes). Some actions may require co-ordination between the managers of the alleged perpetrator and of the person they are abusing. This should be done in consultation with the person experiencing abuse and with guidance from HR.

Sometimes the person experiencing abuse and the alleged perpetrator may choose to seek solutions jointly; their decision should be respected and supported if it is safe to do so. An employee who uses abusive behaviour may no longer be able to carry out certain duties and may require redeployment. For example, it would be inappropriate for a perpetrator of domestic abuse to be providing advice or services to vulnerable men, women and children and/or the public.

In exploratory discussions with an employee who has used abusive behaviours about potential support at work, managers should observe the following principles:

- Be clear that abuse is always unacceptable and that it may constitute criminal behaviour.
- Ensure their own safety is paramount
- Be clear that abusive behaviour is a choice
- Be respectful
- Be positive about the possibility of choosing to stop. It is possible for perpetrators to change if they recognise that they have a problem and take steps to change their behaviour
- Be aware that on some level the alleged perpetrator may be unhappy about their behaviour
- Be aware that domestic abuse is about a range of controlling behaviours not just physical violence
- Help the alleged perpetrator to be aware of the potential cost of continued abuse. This could include: arrest; prison; loss of their relationship, long term physical and emotional damage to their partner and children; loss of contact with children; being sacked from work; loss of their home; financial losses; damage or loss of relationships with family and friends.

Couples therapy, anger management, and mediation for alleged perpetrators are not always appropriate ways to get help when there is domestic abuse in a relationship. People who are using abusive behaviours can call the Respect Helpline for advice and support to change on 0808 802 4040.

# Support Available for Employees

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There are several services that are able to provide support to employees experiencing domestic abuse in the borough. There are many regional organisations that can provide specialist help too, and union members can access legal support through their union too. Information about these can be found here and at the end of the document:

**Refuge Charity** is working alongside Barking and Dagenham Council to transform the responses to domestic and sexual violence within the borough.

The service offers community-based support for any victim of domestic, sexual or gender-based violence for as long as it's needed. Both women and men can access this service. The team isn't just there to respond to crisis situations, but to help victims recover and rebuild their lives

The support package will include one-to-one support from our highly trained IGVA team; group work; peer support and specialist support for those with extra needs.

**Call:** **0300 456 0174 (local service)**  
**Call:** **0808 2000 247 (24/7 national helpline)**  
**General enquiries:** [BDAdvocacy@refuge.org.uk](mailto:BDAdvocacy@refuge.org.uk)  
**Website:** <https://www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/our-services/one-stop-shop-services/barking-and-dagenham/>

**Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)** offers employees a little extra support to manage life's everyday challenges; both work and personal. The EAP is available by telephone, email, instant messaging and online, and provides free, confidential information and support including counselling. Employees are able to contact the service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

This service can provide good quality support in relation to domestic abuse and can connect victims with counselling. This can also be useful for colleagues and managers to help them with their own experiences of supporting someone who is an abuse victim.

**Call:** **0800 243 458**  
**Website:** [www.workplaceoptions.co.uk](http://www.workplaceoptions.co.uk)

**Respect** is a domestic abuse organisation who work with perpetrators and male victims of domestic abuse. Male victims can contact the Men's Advice Line and perpetrators of any gender may call the Respect phonenumber for support:

**Men's Advice Line:** **0808 8010 327**  
**Respect Phone Line:** **0808 802 4040**  
**Website:** [www.workplaceoptions.co.uk](http://www.workplaceoptions.co.uk)

## Governance

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Accident and incident reporting forms are reported to the assurance group which supports the Workforce Board. The Workforce Board are also responsible for authorising this document and for reviewing it.

## Learning support and awareness

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The Council recognises that in order to create consistent messaging we need to ensure domestic abuse is well understood by managers and employees, and that there is access to learning to support this. As a result, there will be a training package delivered that will raise awareness of domestic abuse and opportunities to challenge abusive behaviours open to all employees across the council.

Learning opportunities will include:

- An online e-learning package that can assist people who are enduring, or using domestic abuse, and can also assist colleagues/managers who are concerned about someone.
- Access to domestic abuse awareness raising sessions, for employees and managers.
- Advocate training which is more intensive training to allow for key people up and down the workstream to be able to act as an advocate or 'champion' for people who need domestic abuse support. The idea is not to train people to provide support directly but to be able to facilitate good signposting and referral into specialist support.
- Higher level strategic training for workforce board members, occupational health, human resources, operational leads, etc.

There will also be a communications campaign targeting employees in different service areas and taking into account that not all employees have roles where they have access to digital communications systems.

A calendar of events will also help to raise the profile of domestic abuse across the workforce, as well as with our resident populations.

## Specific commitments

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New employment legislation has been introduced in the Philippines, Australia and most recently in New Zealand which grant victims of domestic abuse the right to 10 days paid leave. Barking and Dagenham Council follows suit and commits to 10 days (70 hours) paid leave for employees experiencing domestic abuse. We commit this for alleged perpetrators as well as for victims, as we know that a whole system approach also means creating opportunity for people using abusive behaviours to be challenged safely.

This crucial time will allow women and men to leave their abusive partners safely, get the help, protection and support they need knowing their livelihood is secure. It will also allow space for people questioning their own abusive behaviours to seek support to change. This will be managed on a discretionary basis by Directors, with their decision making supported by the HR team.

Additionally, there is a clear expectation that managers will make reasonable adjustments for employees who need to access support during work hours, such as counselling or advocacy, or behaviour change programmes.

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*The Council's move to New Ways of Working, which includes the use of personal technology, flexible working hours and remote working means that it should not prove difficult to explore how to resource workloads around this type of support. It also makes it easier to identify 'safe havens' – safe areas for employees to work which may or may not include homeworking.*

*It should be noted that sometimes, where the workplace is a safe place for an employee in need of support that it should be built into a support plan. This may include the use of quiet rooms for when a moment is needed to reflect.*

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*Our final commitment is to continue to raise the profile of domestic abuse and how it impacts on individuals, families and communities, whilst ensuring relevant support is in place.*

*The workforce should be seen as a community - one we are all part of - and we are invested heavily in supporting employees to be safe and supported at all times, including when experiencing domestic abuse.*

*In this way we know that our workforce will be able to take forwards a strength and resilience into their work as they serve the Barking and Dagenham community too.*

**Human Resources will automatically update the arrangements to comply with any changes to legislation and / or ACAS guidance and notify employees of the amendments.**

# Useful contacts and links

## LINKS TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

For related documents and resources please visit the Council website at:

**[www.lbbd.gov.uk/domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence](http://www.lbbd.gov.uk/domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence)**

For access to all Council policies, including the Employee's Code of Conduct please access the HR portal on the Council Intranet page. If you do not have access, please ask your manager for assistance.

**Public Health England** has created a toolkit for employers which can assist organisations in setting up their own domestic abuse policies:

**[HTTPS://WELLBEING.BITC.ORG.UK/ALL-RESOURCES/TOOLKITS/DOMESTIC-ABUSE-TOOLKIT](https://wellbeing.bitc.org.uk/all-resources/toolkits/domestic-abuse-toolkit)**

**Hestia's Everyone's Business** is a new cross partnership programme putting employers at the heart of tackling domestic abuse and providing them with the tools they need to recognise and prevent domestic abuse, be prepared to receive disclosures and actively respond and support employees experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse:

**[HTTPS://WWW.HESTIA.ORG/EVERYONESBUSINESS](https://www.hestia.org/everyonesbusiness)**

## Local Contacts

Human Resources Lead	<a href="https://lbbd.sharepoint.com/sites/HRSD/Pages/Service-Catalogue.aspx">https://lbbd.sharepoint.com/sites/HRSD/Pages/Service-Catalogue.aspx</a>
Refuge Charity (LBBD domestic and sexual violence service)	0300 456 0174
Ashiana Network (Specialist counselling for women who have experienced violence)	020 8539 042
Barking and Dagenham Intake and Access Team (adult social care and safeguarding)	0208 227 2915

Barking and Dagenham Emergency Duty Team	0208 594 8356
Barking and Dagenham Housing Advice Service	020 8724 8323
Barking and Dagenham Council for Voluntary Services	: 020 8532 7300
Carers of Barking and Dagenham	0208 593 4422
Citizen's Advice Bureau	020 8507 5969
DABD	020 8215 9630

### Regional or National Contacts and Helplines

Action on Elder Abuse	0808 808 8141
Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Violence	07768 386922
Ascent Hun Helpline (Hub for London services)	0808 802 5565
Migrants Resource Centre	advice@migrants.org.uk
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	0300 555 1035
Childline	0800 11 11
Civil Legal Advice	0345 345 4345
DeafHope	07970 350366 (text) 020 8772 3241 (voice/minicom)
East London Rape Crisis Centre (ELRC)	0207 683 1210
Faith Action	0845 094 6350
Forced Marriage Unit (office hours)	0207 7008 0151
Forced Marriage Unit (out of hours)	020 7008 1500
Forward UK (female genital mutilation specialist support)	020 8960 4000
Galop (LGBT specialist support for domestic abuse, hate crime and sexual violence)	0207 704 2040
IMECE	0207 354 1359
Jewish Women's Aid	020 8445 8060
Kiran Project	020 8558 1986
Men's Advice Line	0808 801 0327
National Association for People Abused in Childhood	0808 801 0331
National Domestic Violence Helpline	0808 2000 247
National Stalking Helpline	0808 802 0300

North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT – Mental Health)	0300 555 1200
NSPCC	0808 800 5000
Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service	0207 840 8960
RAMFEL	020 8478 4513
Relate	0300 100 1234
Respect	0808 802 4040
Rights of Women	020 7251 6577
Samaritans	116 123
Sexual Violence Legal Advice Line	020 7490 2562
Shelter	0808 800 4444
Shpresa	020 7474 6829
Southall Black Sisters	020 8571 9595
St. Luke’s (Adults Substance Misuse)	020 8595 1375
Subwise (Young People’s Substance Misuse)	020 8227 5019
Victim Support (England and Wales)	08 08 16 89 111
Victim Support (Northern Ireland – Foyle)	028 7137 0086
Victim Support (Northern Ireland – Belfast)	028 9024 3133
Victim Support (Scotland)	0345 603 9213
Welsh Women’s Aid	0808 80 10 800
Women’s Aid	0808 2000 247
Women’s Trust Counselling	020 7034 0303/0304

