



Domestic Violence Policy

Introduction

The Company recognises that its employees are its most important asset and it is committed to providing the support and assistance necessary to ensure their health, safety and well-being at work. This policy covers the internal and external support available to employees experiencing, or involved in, domestic violence. Everyone has the right to live free from violence in any form and the responsibility for violence lies with the perpetrator.

Employees who are suffering from domestic violence are more likely to be absent from work, work inefficiently and have poor productivity levels. In addition, there is a risk both to the employee, other employees and the business if a violent partner or ex-partner presents at the workplace.

For the purposes of this policy, domestic violence is any incident, or pattern of incidents, of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (including stalking) between adults who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members. It applies equally to men and women and covers psychological, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, as well as physical abuse.

Aims of the policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- Support employees experiencing domestic violence and promote their health, safety and well-being at work;
- Offer support to employees who recognise that they are the perpetrators of domestic violence and want to seek help to address their behaviour;
- Enable employees experiencing domestic violence to remain productive, efficient and at work;
- Aid line managers seeking to help staff who are experiencing domestic violence; and
- Assist colleagues of staff who are experiencing domestic violence.

Advice and counselling

It is the Company's intention to deal constructively, compassionately and sympathetically with cases of domestic violence. In order to support employees, the Company will:

- Nominate (name) as a first point of contact for those experiencing, or perpetrating, domestic violence. Any discussions will be strictly confidential as far as possible, unless the employee agrees otherwise.
- Provide professional counselling with independent, trained counsellors through an external advice help line. This is an entirely confidential service and any discussions an employee has with an external counsellor will be strictly confidential unless the employee agrees otherwise. All employees are encouraged to make use of this service if they are the victims, or the perpetrators, of domestic violence. For further information, please contact (name).
- Endeavour to identify employees with possible domestic violence issues at an early stage.
- Undertake to raise workplace awareness of domestic violence issues.
- Offer information and guidance and actively encourage employees to seek appropriate external help and support, including assisting with referrals to appropriate authorities and agencies, such as the police, Refuge, Women's Aid and the National Domestic Violence Helpline.

Line manager's role

Line managers have an important role to play in enabling employees experiencing domestic violence to seek help and support. The Company provides training for managers in handling sensitive issues, including domestic violence. The role of the line manager is to:



- Identify employees experiencing difficulties as a result of domestic violence, for example, employees coming to work with unexplained injuries or who appear distressed or have unexplained periods of time off work or show an uncharacteristic deterioration in work performance.
- Provide initial help and support, including advice on the options available for the employee, but also recognising the limitations of their role in that they are not professional counsellors.
- Protect confidentiality as far as possible, unless the employee agrees otherwise.
- Refer the employee to appropriate internal and external sources of further help and support, for example, the Company's first point of contact, the Company's external advice help line and external agencies.
- Discuss measures to prioritise safety at work and ensure that the health and safety of all employees is protected.
- Enable the employee to remain productive, efficient and at work.
- Recognise that the employee may need some time to decide what to do and may try many different options during the process.

Confidentiality

Where an employee has discussions with their line manager, an alternative line manager or the Company's first point of contact about domestic violence issues that they are experiencing or are involved in, confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible. However, in some instances, disclosure may need to be made to other members of the management team and/or external authorities or agencies in order that appropriate further help and support can be provided to the employee, but this will always be subject to prior discussion with the employee and only with their express agreement.

Performance and attendance

The Company recognises that those experiencing domestic violence may have difficulties with their performance because of the domestic violence and/or may need to be absent from work from time to time. It will assist them in this regard by being sensitive in its approach and/or using its special leave policies and procedures.

Safety at work

The Company will protect the health, safety and well-being of all employees at work, including those employees affected by domestic violence and all other employees. This includes situations where the perpetrator of the violence is harassing the employee at work, for example, turning up at the workplace unannounced, constantly telephoning/e-mailing/texting the employee during the working day or harassing the employee's work colleagues.

Employees need to disclose to the Company that they are at risk from domestic violence in order to receive this protection and the Company therefore actively encourages employees to disclose such facts. Other employees should also disclose to the Company if they are being harassed by a work colleague's current or former partner or family member.