

Domestic Abuse Policy Overview



#YOUARENOTALONE

FIND SUPPORT AT: [GOV.UK/DOMESTIC-ABUSE](https://gov.uk/domestic-abuse)

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Definition of Domestic Abuse

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or 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. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional”

Including honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

The Rationale

- ❖ Southwark Council believes that everyone has the right to a life free from violence, abuse or assault in any form
- ❖ One of a number of health and wellbeing concerns relating to the impact of COVID-19 is that incidences of domestic abuse are increasing and that escape routes could be cut off & people may feel isolated from their support network.
- ❖ We have a duty of care for the health, safety and wellbeing of their staff and are in a position to create a safe and supportive workplace environment.
- ❖ Many of those experiencing Domestic Abuse are targeted at work & there is a clear business case for supporting.
- ❖ Supporting staff – providing flexibilities for staff to remain in work & be well at work

The Highlights

- ❖ Help recognise the signs of domestic abuse;
- ❖ Support employees experiencing domestic abuse;
- ❖ Enable employees experiencing domestic abuse to remain productive and at work;
- ❖ Aid managers seeking to support team members experiencing domestic abuse;
- ❖ Assist colleagues of those experiencing domestic abuse; and
- ❖ Demonstrating that the council values, and is prepared to support, staff during difficult periods.

Internal & External Support you can turn to

Internal

- ❖ Line Manager, other manager/trusted colleague
- ❖ Trade Union rep
- ❖ Employee Assistance Programme

External

- ❖ Call 999 if it's an emergency or you're in immediate danger.

Contact any of the following organisations to get help and advice about domestic abuse:

- ❖ Freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run by Refuge
0808 200 0247; www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- ❖ Galop (for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people)
0800 999 5428; www.galop.org.uk
- ❖ Men's Advice Line
0808 801 0327; www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Practical Workplace Support for Staff

Consider putting in place a Stress Risk Assessment in collaboration with the individual

Agree with the employee what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if the abusive partner/ ex-partner telephones or visits the workplace

Consider allowing an individual to change work patterns or workload and allow flexible or more flexible working and/or special leave to facilitate any practical arrangements

Agree special leave for individuals to facilitate any practical arrangements. Examples include:

- attending court; attending mediation;
- meeting or calling a solicitor;
- viewing properties;
- meeting teachers at school;
- talking to their bank or getting advice from domestic violence organisations

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

Line Managers' Role

- Foster an open management culture. (Domestic Abuse Discussion Prompts) & be sympathetic and non-judgemental;
- Provide support in the first instance, including specific advice on practical workplace support for people experiencing domestic abuse. See *Domestic Abuse Discussion Checklist* which can facilitate this and must be used.
- Protect confidentiality in all instances except where to do so would leave children of the relationship at risk of harm or place a vulnerable adult at risk of significant harm/danger;
- Refer the individual to the appropriate internal or external source of help and support;
- 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 special leave policies and procedures.