



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICY - GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES

1. Aim of the policy

- 1.1 To demonstrate the school and City Council's commitment to challenging the crime of domestic violence and abuse.
- 1.2 To equip head teachers and managers with the knowledge to recognise, address and help prevent domestic violence/abuse. Domestic violence may have a negative impact on victims/survivors performance and attendance at work.
- 1.3 To provide guidance to head teacher and managers on possible action against colleagues who are alleged perpetrators.
- 1.4 To provide a safe and effective environment for survivors including those who may have left the perpetrator and may be vulnerable to being tracked to work and put at risk.
- 1.5 To assist and support colleagues who are victims or survivors of domestic violence and abuse and want help in addressing associated problems.
- 1.6 To enable colleagues to feel supported and confident in approaching their managers for help, so they can continue to be a productive member of the team.
- 1.7 To safeguard children or vulnerable adults cared for by colleagues who may be at risk of domestic abuse (children can be at risk of abduction in the workplace)
- 1.8 To address any safeguarding issues related to the workplace role of a perpetrator.
- 1.9 To raise awareness of the extent and nature of domestic violence and abuse.

2. Definition

- 2.1 Domestic violence is defined by the Home Office as 'any incident or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.'
- 2.2 Domestic abuse also includes Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage, and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
- 2.3 Domestic violence or abuse predominantly affects women, irrespective of age, class, disability, ethnicity or sexuality; it also affects men including in same sex relationships. Domestic abuse is linked to child abuse, adult abuse and also affects animals.
- 2.4 Domestic violence/abuse refers to the abuse of power, typically in conjunction with the use of coercive and controlling behaviours in a close or intimate relationship. Domestic violence is not consensual. Domestic violence/abuse takes many forms:



- Physical violence/abuse can include kicking, beating, stabbing, burning, drowning, suffocation which often leads to severe and possibly permanent injury or death.
- Sexual abuse can include rape, sexual assault, sexual degradation often in conjunction with physical violence/abuse.
- Psychological abuse can include bullying, intimidation, isolation, threats to kill or harm children, family members or friends, sleep deprivation.
- Emotional exploitation can include limited or denied access to visit family, friends, seek assistance, ostracism.
- Verbal abuse can include repeated telephone calls, swearing, shouting, and degradation.
- Financial abuse can include deprivation of financial resources to pay bills, seek medical attention, purchase staple household items and food.

2.5 Domestic violence is usually perpetrated to women by their male partner or ex partner, although other relationships may be violent or abusive. Domestic violence includes violence to men by their female partners or ex-partners. Domestic violence also happens in same sex relationships. Domestic violence affects children and young people living with a perpetrator. Domestic violence/abuse tends to increase in frequency, severity and risk over time.

2.6 Men can experience a broad range of physical, emotional and financial abuse and have children used against them. It is important to note that domestic violence against men can be perpetrated in same sex relationships and by family members in the context of forced marriages and honour based violence.

2.7 Domestic violence occurs across all races, classes, nationalities, religions, cultures, sexualities, ages and abilities. There may be additional issues or barriers faced by these groups concerning access to services. The school/City Council endeavours to provide as much advice and support as possible however would wish to refer individuals to specialist services where required and appropriate.

3. Extent of domestic violence

3.1 Incidents of domestic violence are common and have serious impacts on those who experience it. Studies consistently demonstrate the prevalence of domestic violence, with an estimated 1 in 10 women experiencing domestic violence each year and 1 in 4 women experiencing it at some point in their lives. The effects of domestic violence are damaging and often permanent. Enduring domestic violence destroys self-confidence and can result in serious injury or death.

3.2 Reports to the police from the domestic violence 'day to count' Sept 2000 (Stanko) found that 8% of calls related to violence perpetrated by women against men, 7% were perpetrated to men by men, 6% were perpetrated by women to women and 89% were to women by men.

3.3 The British Crime Survey 2001 highlighted that 1:7 men experience domestic violence in their lifetime (compared to 1:3 for women). Scottish Crime Survey (2000) found that 50% of men who identified as male victims had perpetrated severe abuse to their partners. National best practice has been developed to



enable true male victims to be identified and supported, without putting at risk the true victims of males who claim to be victims.

- 3.4 There is on average one domestic violence related homicide of women per year in Nottingham and two women are killed every week in the UK. The homicide statistics illustrate the gendered nature of domestic violence and abuse.
- 3.5 Home Office statistics show that at least 101 women died in 2009 at the hands of a husband, boyfriend or ex-partner, up from at least 72 the year before.
- 3.6 The proportion of the total number of female homicide victims who were killed in [domestic violence](#) incidents also rose, from 35% to 53%. whilst male victims of their partners fell from 8% to 7%.
- 3.7 Despite this, its effects and costs within the workplace remain largely hidden and unidentified by most employers. Research has shown that significant proportions of women who experience domestic violence have to take time off work. Many other women also report symptoms that have a long-term effect on their work performance, such as depression, anxiety and stress.
- 3.8 The City Council has signed up to the national Domestic Abuse Risk Identification Checklist. This can be found on Carefirst, Castle or the NDVF website. The checklist assists in identifying whether a survivor is at High Risk, Medium Risk or Standard Risk of homicide or injury. Where a survivor is at High Risk a referral should be made to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference through the Police Domestic Abuse Support Unit. The checklist is also used to identify the level of risk of any children or vulnerable adults.

4. Identifying the issue

- 4.1 Head teachers/managers should be alert to signs which may indicate that a colleague is experiencing domestic violence. This may include visible bruising, loss of self-confidence/esteem, depression, stress, anxiety, out of character conduct, fatigue due to lack of sleep, loss of concentration, reduced morale/motivation, and deterioration in physical health,. It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and that one victim of domestic violence/abuse may react differently from another. These effects, if not resolved, can contribute towards lateness, increased absenteeism, decreased work performance, and the ability to hold down a job or progress a career.
- 4.2 If a head teacher/manager is concerned about a colleague experiencing domestic violence, he/she has a duty of care and the responsibility to raise it with the individual sensitively and in private.
- 4.3 It is for the colleague to decide that they are a victim of abuse and whether to take action.



5. Impact on the workplace

5.1 Behaviour in the workplace

- 5.1.1 Due to the prevalence in society of domestic abuse, it is likely that at least 1 in 10 of employees may be survivors of domestic violence. It is also likely that City Council may employ perpetrators.
- 5.1.2 Survivors employed by the City Council who are experiencing domestic violence/abuse may receive repeated, harassing and intimidating telephone calls, e-mails, text messages or unannounced visits. Children who experience or witness domestic violence/abuse at home and who are at risk may also attend the City Council's care and/or childcare facilities. If there are concerns about the child's safety, the school should contact the City Council's Children and Adults Department for advice as needed.
- 5.1.3 Perpetrators may be using the organisation's facilities such as telephones or e-mail to threaten, harass or abuse their victim. A colleague may also intentionally misuse his/her authority to assist in perpetrating acts of domestic violence/abuse or locate his/her victim.

5.2 Workplace safety

- 5.2.1 Employers have obligations to provide a safe and effective work environment that responds to employees' needs.
- 5.2.2 The City Council recognises the vulnerability of employees experiencing domestic violence/abuse, particularly if they have recently left the relationship. Survivors are at greatest risk of homicide at the point of separation or after leaving a violent partner. As a result, it is crucial that care is taken to ensure that systems containing colleague personal information such as contact telephone numbers and private addresses, be kept confidential and secure.
- 5.2.3 Personal safety must be taken into consideration and the Police called if the survivor, children, relatives or work colleagues are at risk at work or the perpetrator approaches the colleague in a threatening manner.

5.3 Employers' legal liability

- 5.3.1 Employers have a duty of care under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, to ensure, where reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare of their employees.
- 5.3.2 The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1992 also requires employers to assess the risk of employees experiencing violence/abuse and in accordance, make arrangements for their health and safety by effective planning, organisation and control. For example survivors may develop a personalised workplace safety plan with their line manager, or Trade Union representative.
- 5.3.3 Colleagues should remember that they are not alone and there are agencies, which can and want to help.



5.3.4 By working to eliminate risks related to domestic violence/abuse in the workplace, the City Council is better able to create a safer working environment for its employees.

6. Guidelines for managers and colleagues

6.1 These guidelines offer support on how to deal with and assist a colleague experiencing domestic violence or who is a survivor of domestic violence. Head teachers/managers can seek advice from their HR advisor or Trade Union representative. In addition, they may seek advice from agencies such as Women's Aid Integrated Services. Employees should be given the opportunity to talk to a manager or work colleague of the appropriate gender if they so request.

6.2 Advice to head teachers/managers supporting colleagues who are victims and survivors of domestic violence/abuse:

- Be alert to the possibility of colleagues experiencing domestic violence/abuse.
- Be aware that employees may find it difficult to approach their manager and may want support from a colleague or trade union representative.
- Approach colleagues in an understanding manner, explaining that they are not alone. Acknowledge that it takes strength and trust to speak about the issue.
- Listen, provide private space to talk and do not pressurise the colleague.
- Give a positive message that domestic violence is a crime and no one should have to live with it.
- Reassure the colleague that the discussion will be kept in confidence, except in the case of an adult or child protection concern. Head teacher may have to seek advice from the Children and Adults Department or the appropriate adult or child protection unit.
- Always believe the colleague.
- Give the colleague advice about contacting other agencies.
- Ask the colleague what they want to do and respect their decision.
- Be prepared to offer the same standard of support however many times the colleague wants to talk about it and however many occasions they leave the relationship and returns. Abusive relationships are very hard to leave.
- It is not appropriate to offer to negotiate or 'peace make' between the colleague and their abuser.
- Practical responses to domestic violence/abuse must protect confidentiality.
- Participate in domestic violence training.
- Ensure the workplace environment is conducive to a high level of sensitivity, support and understanding.

7. Raising the issue as a colleague

7.1 The school/City Council can offer support to colleague experiencing domestic violence/abuse. The issue can be raised directly with:

- Your head teachers or line manager, or
- Trade Union representative
- PAM Assist (Employee Assistant Programme)



7.2 In a situation where you are uncomfortable raising it with your manager, raise the issue directly with another manager or a more senior manager within your work area.

7.3 The following agencies can also help you to raise the issue:

- Women's Aid Integrated Services 24 hour free phone help line - 0115 9476490
- Rape Crisis - 0115 9410440 or the Topaz Centre (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) - 0845 600 1588
- Men's advice line - 0800 8010327

7.4 Nottingham Victim Support offer support to men who are standard or medium risk victims of domestic violence and Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum offer support to men who are at high risk of domestic violence.

7.5 Raising the issue of domestic violence with your line manager will make them aware that it could be impacting upon your work performance and on your health and safety in the workplace and enable them to provide practical support.

8. Help available from Nottingham City Council

8.1 Confidentiality

8.1.1 The consequences of breaching confidentiality could have a serious effect on the colleague experiencing domestic violence. It is important not to underestimate the danger or assume that the fear of violence is exaggerated. However, if the alleged perpetrator is a City Council employee, the manager may have to disclose certain information to another more senior manager.

8.1.2 Disclosure of any information (including addresses and telephone numbers) will only occur with the employee's permission, except in the case of an adult or child protection concern. Changes of work location will not be disclosed.

8.1.3 Record keeping will be confidential (notes relating to domestic violence will be kept in a sealed envelope marked for manager's attention only.)

8.1.4 Unauthorised disclosure of information will be taken seriously and may be dealt with under the school's Disciplinary Procedure, as detailed in the People Management Handbook for Schools (PMH4S).

8.1.5 Checks will be made with the colleague regarding the safest way to communicate with them (e.g. letters not sent or phone calls not made to their home address).

8.2 Housing issues

8.2.1 If the head teacher/manager is aware that one of their colleagues who is a survivor or perpetrator of domestic violence / abuse is a tenant or lives with a tenant of Nottingham City Homes (NCH) they should inform NCH's Director of Housing. It is possible that NCH is already investigating or taking tenancy action regarding the domestic violence / abuse.



8.3 Financial support

- 8.3.1 Colleagues are able to request a pay advance, which will be dealt with promptly and treated sympathetically. Head teachers should contact their pay roll provider to arrange a pay advance where this is agreed.
- 8.3.2 If the salary payment method is problematic, then the colleague can request a different method of payment.
- 8.3.3 Additional advice and support can be sought from the Council's Welfare Rights Service and Revenue & Benefits service including assistance and advice on debt management or reducing housing costs.

8.4 Safety at work

- 8.4.1 The responsibilities of employers, employees and others for the health and safety of persons at work are defined by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Where a colleague is verbally abused or threatened at work they can make a complaint in line with the school's Grievance Procedure.
- 8.4.2 If a colleague feels threatened by their abuser either at work or arriving/leaving work, relocation can be considered (this could be to another site or with in the same building).
- 8.4.3 Requests should be made to the head teacher. All requests will be dealt with promptly and sympathetically.
- 8.4.4 Phone calls by the abuser can be 'fielded' by an appropriate member of staff if requested by the colleague.
- 8.4.5 Access to buildings can be made safer by ensuring reception colleagues are aware of security information (e.g. photos, car registration numbers of abuser).
- 8.4.6 In exceptional circumstances, redeployment in to another post may be considered.
- 8.4.7 Head teachers should record incidents of threats or abuse that occur at work (e.g. phone calls, faxes, emails and visits) including recording if other colleagues witness the abuse. The Violence to Staff form and Violence database can be obtained from the school's safety advisor.
- 8.4.8 The school can consider taking out an injunction if a perpetrator affects the health and safety of a colleague. The school's legal advisor or the Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Officer (based in Community Protection) will be able provide more information on this issue
- 8.4.9 The system for recording a colleague's whereabouts during the day and contacting them if the work requires visits outside the office should be strengthened if they feel that they may be at risk.



8.5 Special and Emergency Leave

- 8.5.1 An employee experiencing domestic violence is able to request special leave from the school's governing body, as detailed in the PMH4S.
- 8.5.2 Colleagues may request paid time off during the day to attend appointments such as meeting solicitors, arranging re-housing or meeting with support agencies. Head teachers should treat these requests sympathetically.
- 8.5.3 Colleagues may also request unpaid leave when paid leave is exhausted.
- 8.5.4 Leave will not have any adverse effect on the colleague's employment record.

8.6 Flexible working arrangements

- 8.6.1 If a colleague feels that it would be helpful to temporarily alter their working hours, (e.g. reduced hours or job share) or change work times, patterns or locations, a request should be made using the Flexible Working Request Policy (detailed in the PMH4S). This request should be responded to promptly and treated sympathetically.

8.7 Self referral to advice agencies

- 8.7.1 Appendix 1 contains an up-to date list of help-line numbers. This information is also available for colleagues via the Domestic Violence Intranet site. Whilst the manager may contact the advice agency on the colleague's behalf, in most circumstances they should be supported to do it themselves. A telephone and private office should be made available to the colleague for this purpose.

8.8 Health and wellbeing

- 8.8.1 Colleagues experiencing domestic violence may be more vulnerable to stress at work. Reference should therefore be made to the school's policies and procedures for supporting employees with stress. If appropriate and with the colleague's consent, the manager can refer the individual to the Employee Wellbeing Team.

8.9 Access to counselling services

- 8.9.1 Colleagues can access support from PAM Assist. Colleagues can have up to six face to face counselling sessions in addition to telephone counselling which is available 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- 8.9.2 Colleagues can self refer and receive free counselling during work time.
- 8.9.3 PAM Assist can offer legal guidance and also provide information on other organisations that may be able to offer a more appropriate or specialised form of support.

9. Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection

9.1 Children

- 9.1.1 Children and young people are equally likely to be victims of domestic violence. The Children's Act 1989 places a legal obligation upon a Local Authority to disclose any harm or risk of harm suffered by a child or young person. Therefore, if a child or young person is subject to domestic violence in a colleague's



household, the City Council has a duty to respond if there is a reasonable concern regarding that child or young person's safety.

- 9.1.2 Although the City Council acknowledges that confidentiality is essential, where information is disclosed that leads a manager to believe that a child or young person has suffered harm or is at risk of suffering harm, they have a duty to inform the Children and Adults Department. They should seek the victim's agreement to do this. However a manager may inform the Children and Adults Department without the victim's consent if concerns about a child or young person's welfare remain.

9.2 Vulnerable Adults

- 9.2.1 Where a vulnerable adult is at risk of domestic abuse a referral should be made to the Adult Contact Team based at Mary Potter Joint Service Centre

10. Dealing with perpetrators of domestic violence

- 10.1 The City Council recognises that both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence may be working for the school or Council. Guidelines for dealing with perpetrators are outlined below:

Perpetrator and victim both employed at the City Council

- The City Council as a major local employer regards domestic violence as unacceptable. Domestic violence may lead to criminal convictions.
- If both partners are employees of the City Council, the victim/complainant has the right to raise the issue through the school or Council's Resolution and Grievance Procedure. The alleged perpetrator will be dealt with according to the Disciplinary Procedure.
- The school/City Council should provide advice, guidance and support to the complainant, as appropriate and necessary with particular attention to the complainant's health, safety and security in the workplace.
- When domestic violence/abuse is disclosed, the alleged perpetrator must be informed that such conduct outside of work may breach the school/City Council's Code of Conduct. This may lead to disciplinary action as violence; deliberate harassment and deliberate discrimination are regarded as 'gross misconduct'.
- Perpetrators may be dismissed for gross misconduct. Where gross misconduct is alleged or suspected, a colleague may be suspended on full pay, pending further investigation.

Factors to consider during the investigation:

- The nature of the conduct;
- The nature of the perpetrator's role at work and the extent to which it involves contact with other colleagues or the public.
- The conduct may make certain job duties inappropriate and justify the decision to offer redeployment for example, it would not be appropriate for a perpetrator



of domestic violence to be providing services to vulnerable adults and children thus a change of duties or a transfer would be needed in such a situation.

- The Council will do all it can to support perpetrators who genuinely wish to change their behaviour. Perpetrators can access PAM Assist as well as information from the Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum.

Colleague as perpetrator, victim is not employed at the City Council

- Where it becomes known that a colleague is perpetrating domestic violence via a direct complaint from the victim to the City Council, the City Council's Disciplinary Procedure should be implemented. Disciplinary action should be taken against colleagues involved in gross misconduct, such as acts of violence including physical assault, threat of physical assault or harassment of a member of the public.

Colleague as victim, perpetrator is not employed at the City Council

- Where a school/City Council colleague has experienced domestic violence, the school/City Council should provide advice, guidance and support as detailed in this policy.

11. Consultation

11.1 This policy has been the subject of consultation with the following organisations:

- Nottingham City Council Domestic Violence Policy Officer
- Nottingham City Council Health & Safety Advice Team
- Nottingham City Council Employee Wellbeing team
- Nottingham City Trade Unions (Unison, GMB & Unite)
- Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum
- Women's Aid Integrated Service
- Rape Crisis and the Topaz Centre

12. Organisational initiatives

12.1 The following summary highlights the range of activities supported by the City Council with the aim of raising the profile of domestic violence-

- Develop a zero tolerance policy towards domestic violence/abuse.
- Review existing policies to identify ways to improve and promote workplace safety.
- Develop commitment to ongoing support.
- Specific training for managers dealing with employees who are survivors or perpetrators
- Identifying domestic violence/domestic abuse during attendance management, performance appraisals and supervision meetings
- Using "prompts" to help identify domestic violence/domestic abuse or encourage disclosure
- "Incidents" reporting through the Health and Safety violence reporting process
- Educate and train employees on domestic violence/abuse issues as well as how and where to seek assistance.
- Make resources, brochures and information readily accessible and available in the workplace. Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum is commissioned



to provide 'black and red' domestic abuse information cards in 17 community languages. you can access this card on 9623237 or admin@ndvf.co.uk

- Provide access to and information regarding City Council counsellors and support schemes.
- Establish appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing employees' situations.

13. Review of policy

- 13.1 This policy will be reviewed on a periodic basis in consultation with the Domestic Violence Officer or a Domestic Violence specialist from the voluntary or statutory sector and the Trade Unions.

14. Publicity

- 14.1 Domestic violence information is available on the domestic violence intranet site. This includes the text from the Free from Fear domestic violence information card, which is available from Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum. The domestic violence policy is included in the PMH. All new colleagues will be made aware of the policy through the induction process and articles in Impact. Colleagues should be periodically updated on the policy through team meetings.
- 14.2 For further information about domestic violence services locally please see www.ndvf.org.uk or www.wais.org.uk for information about domestic violence nationally please see www.womensaid.org.uk or www.respect.org.uk.