

WORKPLACE GUIDE ON DOMESTIC ABUSE FOR STAFF AND MANAGERS



Human Resources & Organisational Development
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SHSCT WORKPLACE GUIDE ON DOMESTIC ABUSE

FOR STAFF AND MANAGERS

This Guide should be read in conjunction with SHSCT Workplace Policy on Domestic Abuse.

The purpose of this Guide is to provide information to all staff in relation to their role and responsibility in addressing concerns and supporting colleagues in circumstances arising from domestic abuse in the workplace.

1. DEFINITION

Domestic violence and abuse as set out in the Government's Strategy Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland, A Seven Year Strategy, DHSSPS & DOJ, March 2016, is defined as:

The definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse is:

'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member'

Domestic violence and abuse is generally recognised as a pattern of behaviour which is characterised by the exercise of coercive control and the misuse of power by one person over another. The behaviour is usually frequent and persistent and is used to harm, 'punish' or frighten the victim.

Domestic violence and abuse occurs within an intimate relationship or a family. A *family member* could include but is not limited to; mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, whether directly or indirectly related, including in-laws and step-family. While often associated with being in a marriage or partnership it can include violence and abuse by any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim, and may include same-sex or young/teenage relationships (Stopping

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland, A Seven Year Strategy, March 2016).

This Guide recognises that domestic abuse occurs regardless of social class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, religion or age. It is therefore applicable to both men and women, regardless of the source of the domestic abuse. It is not necessary to be living in the same house as the perpetrator to be a victim of domestic abuse; non-cohabitating partners and ex-partners can be victims or perpetrators of abuse.

2. IDENTIFYING DOMESTIC ABUSE

On a day to day basis managers and colleagues should be alert to changes in behaviour that may signal that an employee may be experiencing difficulties at home or at work. There is no simple way to know whether or not the employee is experiencing domestic abuse but there are signs that you can look out for. Possible signs of domestic abuse include:

- High absenteeism rate without explanation
- Uncharacteristic depression, anxiety, distraction or problems with concentration
- Repeated injuries, unexplained bruising or explanations that do not fit the injuries displayed
- Individual being the victim of vandalism or threats
- Changes in quality of work performance for no apparent reason
- Receipt of repeated upsetting calls/faxes/emails
- Obsession with time, avoiding breaks or socialising outside work
- Needing regular time off for appointments
- Changes in the dress attire e.g. excessive clothing
- Increased hours being worked for no apparent reason

It is important to note that the above list is not exhaustive.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

All staff should respect a colleague's right to confidentiality in relation to the disclosure of domestic abuse.

Staff, however, should be aware that total confidentiality might not always be possible, particularly in circumstances where there is a risk to a child or vulnerable adult or where there is threat to life or serious injury. Advice should always be sought from the Employee Relations Department who will liaise with Child Protection Services or Safeguarding Adults.

4. SUPPORTS TO EMPLOYEES WHO EXPERIENCE DOMESTIC ABUSE

This Guide sets out the range of support options available to staff in supporting colleagues who experience domestic abuse. These include support from Line Managers, Occupational Health, HR Employee Relations Department, Inspire, Trade Unions and Voluntary Organisations.

A) Line Manager Support

Responsibilities of the Line Manager

A Line Manager has a responsibility to address any concerns regarding a member of staff who may be subjected to domestic abuse. Individuals experiencing domestic abuse suffer a broad range of physical and emotional consequences and it may be the case that some people do not display any visible signs of abuse. It is important not to make assumptions but to talk sensitively to them about any concerns. Often victims are vulnerable and may be too emotional to raise the issue themselves.

Line Managers are not expected to provide counselling to employees, but rather to signpost staff to the agencies that have the expertise to assist and provide support to employees. Managers should create an environment where employees feel able to discuss any concerns in relation to domestic abuse in the knowledge and assurance that it will be dealt with confidentially.

Where domestic abuse is suspected or known;

1. The Line Manager should contact Employee Relations Department for advice before any discussion with the staff member takes place, if it is possible to do so.
2. The Line Manager has a responsibility to raise the issue directly with the employee concerned, if they have a concern for their wellbeing.

3. Signs of abuse should not be ignored, but Line Managers should not pressurise employees into disclosing any personal information that they do not feel comfortable sharing.

How a Line Manager Should Approach the Issue

Where a Line Manager has a concern in relation to Domestic Abuse they should:

1. Take time to talk to the employee ensuring any discussions take place in private.
2. Provide a sensitive and non-judgemental approach whilst respecting the employee's circumstances in relation to the domestic abuse.
3. Reassure the employee regarding confidentiality.
4. Respect the confidentiality of the individual concerned, although total confidentiality might not be possible and should not be promised. Information should only be disclosed with the express permission of the individual unless there is a legal requirement to the contrary. Employees should be made aware that total confidentiality might not always be possible, particularly in circumstances where there is a risk to a child or vulnerable adult or where there is threat to life or serious injury. If this is the case the employee must be informed regarding any notification to Social Services.
5. Discuss whether or not the employee feels safe in the work place, and where appropriate discuss measures to prioritise safety in the workplace.
6. Provide details of the support services that are available (Appendix 1).
7. Recognise that an employee may need some time to decide what to do and may try many different options during this process.
8. Be aware and accept, that the individual may not be ready to take action to leave their abuser, but might just want someone to talk to about their situation.
9. Where an employee does not disclose domestic abuse and the manager remains concerned, they should explain that if the employee ever has issues that they wish to raise confidentially that the manager is always available. Alternatively they may wish to seek support via Trust Occupational Health, Employee Relations, Inspire or Trade Union representative.
10. Contact Employee Relations, Occupational Health or a senior manager if there is a reasonable concern regarding the immediate safety of the individual.

Protective measures for the Line Manager to consider

- Identifying a work contact for support and an emergency contact should the manager be unable to contact the employee, including contact during periods of absence.
- Where reasonably possible consider a temporary change in work location/arrangements.
- Review working times and patterns.
- Review office layout, if applicable, to ensure that the employee is not visible from reception points or ground floor windows.
- Agree with the employee what to tell colleagues e.g. Reception staff and how they should respond should the abuser ring or call at the workplace.
- Diverting telephone calls.
- Diverting emails to a separate folder.
- Allow special leave or flexible working arrangements to facilitate any practical arrangements that are required e.g. seeking legal advice, attending counselling sessions or to attend court.
- Consider whether the employee wants to change the payment arrangements (e.g. where the abuser applies financial pressure or has access to their finances).

B) Other Employee Support

As employees we all have a duty of care to our colleagues where there is a suspicion or concern that someone we work with is experiencing abuse. Where you feel able to, you should raise the matter with the employee or manager concerned in a sensitive and non-judgemental way. Be a good listener but do not make assumptions. You should make the employee aware of the Policy and encourage or assist them to speak to their Line Manager, Human Resources, Occupational Health or Trade Union Representative.

Alternatively you may seek advice from Employee Relations, Occupational Health or Trade Union Representative.

All staff should be aware of their limitations in providing support to employees who experience domestic abuse. It is important that you do not promise more than you are

able to provide. It is also important that staff have an awareness of their own well-being.

5. PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

The Trust exercises a zero tolerance policy on abuse in the workplace.

Where a Line Manager is aware of any staff member who may be perpetrating abuse, the matter should be discussed with Employee Relations. With regard to perpetrators of domestic abuse, the Trust may take a number of actions which may include:

- Consider disciplinary action against any employee who uses time, property or the resources to abuse a partner or family member.
- Take actions as appropriate to minimise the potential for a perpetrator to use their position or resources to find out the whereabouts or other details of their partner or ex-partner.

The Trust recognises that it can have a role in encouraging and supporting employees address offending/problematic behaviour of all kinds and will treat any allegation or conviction on a case by case basis.

Appendix A
As at October 2021

Resources Available for Victims of Domestic Abuse
24-HOUR DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE HELPLINE 0808 802 1414

Group	Centre Address & Contact	Refuge/Safe Accommodation & contact person	Website Address
Armagh Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid	53 William Street Portadown, Craigavon 02838 397979		www.womensaidarmaghdown.org
Newry Mourne & Down Women's Aid	7 Downshire Place, Newry, BT34 1DZ 02830 250765	02830 267174 Lynne Lodge	www.womensaidarmaghdown.org
Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne, Newtownabbey Women's Aid	2 Cullybackey Road, Ballymena 02825 632136	02825 639301 Virginia House Nicola Newbury	www.womens-aid.org.uk
North Down & Ards Women's Aid	18 Bingham Street, Bangor, BT20 5DW 02891 273196	02891 463608	www.ndawomensaid.org
Causeway Women's Aid	23 Abbey Street, Coleraine, BT52 1DU 02870 356573	02870 358999 Kate McCluskey	www.womensaidni.org
Fermanagh Women's Aid	27a High Street, Enniskillen, BT74 7DQ 02866 328898	02866 328898 Mary McCann	www.fermanaghwomensaid.com
Mid-Ulster Women's Aid	27 Old Coagh Road, Cookstown, BT80 8QG 02886 769300	02886 769040	www.womensaidni.org
Omagh Women's Aid	27 Market Street, Omagh BT78 1EL 02882 241414	02882 245998	www.omaghwomensaid.org
Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid	30 Adelaide Park, Belfast, BT9 6FY 02890 666049	02890 745295 Liz Brogan 02890 662385 Noelle Collins 02892 668142 Siobhan Graham	www.belfastwomensaid.org.uk

Group	Centre Address & Contact	Website Address
Men's Advisory Project (MAP)	5th Floor Glendinning House 6 Murray Street Belfast BT1 6DN 02890 241929 info@mapni.co.uk	www.mapni.co.uk
Police Service Northern Ireland	Police Headquarters Brooklyn 65 Knock Road Belfast BT5 6LE Call the Police 101 In an emergency always call 999 Non-emergency 02890 650222	www.psni.police.uk
Adult Protection Gateway Team	Ashleigh House St Luke's Site, 77 Loughgall Road Armagh, BT61 7NQ 028 3756 4424 adultsafeguard.team@southerntrust.hscni.net	
Childcare Gateway Team Brownlow	Brownlow H&SS Centre Legahory, Craigavon BT65 5BE 02837 560707 Central telephone number: 02837 567100	www.southerntrust.hscni.net/service/child-protection-gateway-service/
Childcare Gateway Team (Newry)	Dromalane House Dromalane Road Newry BT35 8AP 02837 564700	www.southerntrust.hscni.net/service/child-protection-gateway-service/
Childcare Gateway Team (Armagh & Dungannon)	'E' Floor South Tyrone Hospital Carland Road Dungannon BT71 4AU 02837 565345	www.southerntrust.hscni.net/service/child-protection-gateway-service/
Craigavon Area Hospital Social Work Dept.	02837 560941 02837 560942	www.southerntrust.hscni.net/service/social-work-service/
Daisy Hill Hospital Social Work Dept.	02830 835000	www.southerntrust.hscni.net/service/social-work-service/
Hourglass (Formerly Action On Elder Abuse Northern)	0808 808 8141	https://wearehourglass.org/ni/
Community Advice Agency	<u>Belfast</u> 0300 123 3233 <u>Newry Mourne & Down</u> 0300 303 0306 <u>Banbridge</u> 02840 622201 <u>Craigavon/Lurgan</u> 02838 361181 <u>Armagh</u> 02837 524041	www.citizensadvice.org.uk/nireland/

Group	Centre Address & Contact	Website Address
Homelessness – Simon Community	24-26 Arthur Street, Belfast, BT1 4GF 0800 171 2222	www.simoncommunity.org
Housing Rights, Belfast	Housing Rights The Skainos Centre 239 Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 1AF 02890 245640	www.housingrights.org.uk
24 hour Victim Support line	1st floor Albany House, 73-75 Gt Victoria St, Belfast BT2 7AF 02890 243133 ongoing support Mon–Fri 9am-5pm 0808 168 9111 24hr support line	www.victimsupportni.com
Law Society (legal and local solicitor advice)	The Law Society of Northern Ireland 96 Victoria St, Belfast, BT1 3GN 02890 231614	www.lawsoc-ni.org/contact
The Northern Ireland Council for Racial Equality (NICRE)	7 Rugby Road Belfast BT7 1PS 07710 767235	https://nicre.org/about-us/
NEXUS	59 Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 6SA 02890 326803 38 Clarendon Street, Derry, BT48 7ET 02871 260566	www.nexusni.org
Rape Crisis Centre	02890 329002 24hr helpline 1800 778 888 NI 0800 024 6991	www.rapecrisishelp.ie www.rapecrisisni.org.uk
Disability Action	Portside Business Park 189 Airport Road West Belfast, BT3 9ED 02890 297880	www.disabilityaction.org
ChildLine - NSPCC	0800 1111	www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/childline/

Group	Centre Address & Contact	Website Address
Samaritans	5 Wellesley Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6DG Local: 0330 094 5717 Free: 116 123 162 Thomas Street, Portadown, BT62 3BD Local: 0330 094 5717 Free: 116 123 19 St Colman"s Park, Newry, BT34 2BX Local: 0330 094 5717 Free:116 123	www.samaritans.org/
Parenting NI	Unit 3 Hawthorn Office Park 39a Stockman's Way, Belfast, BT9 7ET 02890 310891 Parents Helpline: 0808 801 0722	www.parentingni.org/
GP Out of Hours	Lurgan Road, Craigavon Area Hospital, Out of Hours Centre, BT63 5QQ 02838 399201	www.saucs.org.uk/showpage.php?page=patient1
Rainbow Project	Belfast LGBT Centre 1st Floor 23-31 Waring Street Belfast BT1 2DX 02890 319030	www.rainbow-project.org
Rainbow Project	Orlan House 20 Strand Road Derry BT48 7AB 02871 283030	www.rainbow-project.org
PIPS Hope & Support	50 Mill Street Newry BT34 1AG 02830 266195 Lifeline 0808 808 8000 Flat 17 Mount Zion House Edward Street Lurgan, BT66 6DB	www.pipshopeandsupport.org
PIPS	281 Antrim Road Belfast BT15 2HE Local: 02890 805850 Free: 0800 088 6042	www.pipscharity.com

Group	Centre Address & Contact	Website Address
Inspire Workplaces	Inspire Workplaces, Central Office, Lombard House, 10-20 Lombard Street, Belfast, BT1 1RD Helpline : 0800 389 5362 Central Office : 02890 328474	www.inspirewellbeing.org/workplaces
SHSCT Occupational Health Department	Pinewood Villa, Longstone, Loughgall Road, Armagh, BT61 7NQ 028 3756 4800 Email: Occupational.health@southerntrust.hscni.net	www.southerntrust.hscni.net
SHSCT Human Resources Department	Siobhan Hynds Deputy Director HR Services Hill Building, St Luke's Hospital Site, Armagh, BT61 7NQ 02837 564111 or 07585 327540	
Trade Union Representatives	<u>Royal College of Nursing (RCN)</u> 0345 772 6100 or 02890 384600 Email ni.board@rcn.org.uk <u>Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA)</u> 02890 661831 Email : info@nipsa.org.uk <u>Northern Ireland Association of Social Workers (NIASW)</u> 02890 648873 <u>Unison</u> Direct 0800 085 7857 Belfast HQ 02890 270190 Craigavon Branch Office 02837 566794 <u>SHSCT TU Side Secretary</u> 028 3756 4315 or 07920 875570	www.rcn.org.uk/northernireland www.nipsa.org.uk www.unison-ni.org.uk
SHSCT Chaplains	A Chaplain can be contacted via Switchboard: Craigavon Area Hospital 02838 334444 or Daisy Hill Hospital 02830 835000	