



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING

ETHICAL GOVERNANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

16 AUGUST 2017

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

DOMESTIC ABUSE WORKPLACE POLICY

Report of Director (Community Services)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To gain approval of the refreshed Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy for Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To recommend that the proposed Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy is approved by the Ethical Governance & Personnel Committee.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Home Office defines domestic abuse and violence as any incident or pattern of incidents 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
 - Emotional
- Domestic abuse is a silent epidemic, impacting 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men in their lifetimes. It can include sexual violence, stalking, honour based violence and female genital mutilation.
- 3.2 Domestic abuse not only impacts on the well-being of women and men, but it affects the **financial strength** and **success** of the organisations for which they work. **Seventy-five per cent** of those experiencing domestic abuse are **targeted at work** and it is often possible for perpetrators to use workplace resources such as phones, email and other means to threaten, harass or abuse their current or former partner (CAADV (Corporate Alliance against Domestic Violence)2012).

4.0 DOMESTIC ABUSE WORKPLACE POLICY

- 4.1 The proposed Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy has been developed in line with best practise guidance from domestic abuse professional services, in particular in line with the Corporate Alliance against Domestic Violence (CAADV) toolkit.
- 4.2 This policy is for all staff.
- 4.3 The policy supports Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's commitment to tackling domestic abuse within the workplace and its commitment to ensure the safety of its employees.
- 4.4 The policy aims to be a practical guide to employees and managers on how to effectively respond to domestic abuse within the workplace and how to support employees being affected by domestic abuse.
- 4.5 The policy, on approval, will be supported by a relevant training programme for employees and managers.
- 4.6 Within the policy the importance of using specialist services to support employees is stressed.
- 4.7 The full policy is attached at Appendix 1

5. EXEMPTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES

- 5.1 The report should be considered in open session.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [TF]

- 6.1 Training costs will be met from existing resources.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [MR]

- 7.1 None

8. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This policy supports the corporate aim of 'supporting individuals'.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1 Trade Unions have been consulted on this policy and their comments incorporated.

10. RISK IMPLICATIONS

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
No risks identified		RB

11. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 It is well documented that certain equality strands, such as pregnancy, may increase a victim's risk of harm from domestic abuse.

11.2 Domestic abuse often relies on isolating the victim: the perpetrator works to weaken the victim's connections with family and friends, making it extremely difficult to seek support from outside. Isolation can trap women anywhere. But in rural areas, the social isolation can be compounded by geographical isolation and the perpetrator can be protected by the small size of the community.

11.3 This policy covers all staff.

11.4 Training for employees and managers will highlight any potential increased risks of harm for protected equality strands and will stress the importance of referring to specialist services that are aware of these risks and deal with them effectively.

12. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data Protection implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers: Appendix 1: Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy

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Executive Member: Councillor C Boothby

Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough
Council

August 2017

Review date: August 2018

1.0 Introduction - Domestic Abuse and the Workplace

It is important to promote the understanding that everyone has the right to a life free from abuse in any form. Domestic abuse is wholly unacceptable and inexcusable behaviour, and responsibility for domestic abuse lies with the perpetrator. Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council strives to create a working environment that promotes the view that abuse against people is unacceptable.

2.0 Definition

For purposes of this policy, domestic abuse is defined as ; any incident of 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.

3.0 Policy

a) Providing information / creating awareness

The council intends to publish, maintain, and post in locations of high visibility, a list of resources for survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

b) Providing support to victims

The council intends to make support available to employees involved in domestic abuse. The council will provide support through our Managers, HR, Occupational Health and other areas of the council as appropriate. Managers will be encouraged to signpost to specialist services with consent of the victim for specialist domestic abuse support.

c) Providing support to perpetrators

It is recognised that perpetrators of domestic abuse may wish to seek help voluntarily. The council intends to provide signposting to support.

d) Providing training to managers

The council will develop a programme of training for staff to raise awareness of domestic abuse and understanding of this policy and guidance.

Managers will be trained to:

- Better identify if an employee is experiencing difficulties
- Provide support and signposting
- Discuss ways to help the person stay safe in the workplace
- Understand that they are not counsellors. Counselling is to be left to trained professionals and no one should attempt to act in place of a domestic abuse expert or counsellor. The best thing a manager can do is to refer the person to the appropriate domestic abuse resources.

e) Scope of policy: Applies to all council staff

4.0 Procedure

4.1 A Guide for Employees

a) Anti-Discrimination

The council will not discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to domestic abuse, in terms of his or her existing employment or career development.

The council is aware that domestic abuse victims may have performance problems such as chronic absenteeism or, lower productivity as a result of domestic abuse. When addressing performance and safety issues, the council will make reasonable efforts to consider all aspects of the employee's situation and / or safety problems.

b) Absence options for employees experiencing domestic abuse

The council will make every effort to assist an employee experiencing domestic abuse. If an employee needs to be absent from work due to domestic abuse, the length of the absence will be determined by the individual's situation through collaboration with the employee and their manager and a Human Resources representative and link with the Council's Attendance Management Framework and/ or the Absence Management Policy – non sickness related.

c) Safety at work

The council undertakes to ensure the safety of its employees. The council will actively provide support to employees to try and minimise the risk to their safety while at work, if they make it known to us that they are experiencing domestic abuse.

d) Providing support for employees

The council intends to make support available to employees involved in domestic abuse. The council will provide support through our Managers, HR and Occupational Health and other areas as appropriate

Their role is to:

- Be available and approachable for those employees experiencing domestic abuse
- Listen, reassure and support individuals
- Keep information confidential (subject to the requirements of child and adult protection- see council safeguarding policies)
- Respond in a sensitive and non-judgemental manner
- Discuss the specific steps that can be taken to help this person stay safe in the workplace
- Ensure the employee is aware of the options available to them
- Encourage the employee to seek the advice of other relevant agencies

4.2 A Guide for Managers

a) Anti-Discrimination

The council is aware that domestic abuse victims may have performance problems such as chronic absenteeism or lower productivity as a result of abuse. When addressing performance and safety issues the council will make reasonable efforts to consider all aspects of the employee's situation and / or safety problems.

b) Providing support for employees

Managers, and HR role is to:

- Be available and approachable for those employees experiencing domestic abuse
- Listen, reassure and support individuals
- Keep information confidential (subject to the requirements of child and adult protection- see council safeguarding policies)
- Respond in a sensitive and non-judgemental manner
- Discuss the specific steps that can be taken to help this person stay safe in the workplace
- Ensure the employee is aware of the options available to them
- Encourage the employee to seek the advice of other relevant agencies

c) Training managers to identify and respond appropriately

Managers will be trained to:

- Identify if an employee is experiencing difficulties
- Provide initial support
- Offer referrals
- Discuss ways to help the person stay safe in the workplace
- Understand that they are not counsellors. Counselling is to be left to trained professionals and no one should attempt to act in place of a domestic abuse expert or counsellor. The best thing a manager can do is to refer the person to the appropriate domestic abuse resources.

Appendix A gives options for signposting victims and perpetrators and advice to professionals.

Appendix A - Support agencies for victims or perpetrators

Victims:

It will be an individual's choice as to whether they would like to access the council's domestic abuse outreach service or another countywide/ national service. Below are some options of services that the victim or professionals could access for support:

- **Freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline**, run in partnership between *Women's Aid* and *Refuge* 0808 200 0247
- **Hinckley and Bosworth borough council's domestic abuse outreach service**. Contact Mel Diamandis on 079660202181 or 01455 255746 - for women aged 16+ suffering from intimate partner abuse.
- **UAVA- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland domestic abuse and sexual violence service**. Male or female service aged 13+ for victims of domestic abuse and /or sexual violence. Victims can call 0808 802 0028 for support and there is a business line for referrals from professionals on 0116 255 0004.

Perpetrators:

For more information on what help is available for perpetrators contact **Respect** on 0846 122 8609. The Respect phone line provides information and advice to perpetrators of domestic violence, to professionals wanting information and to the friends and family (including partners) of perpetrators who want more information on what help is available for perpetrators.
www.respect.uk.net