

Model Domestic Violence Policy

Scope

- 1 All employees of the Company, irrespective of sex or sexuality, are within the scope of this Agreement.

Introduction

- 2 Domestic Violence is the physical, emotional, sexual or mental abuse of one person by another with whom they have or have had a close or intimate relationship. It manifests itself in destructive criticism and verbal, abuse, disrespect, harassment, threats, sexual and physical violence, psychological blackmail, economic and psychological control and deceit.

Abuse against employees happens in all societies irrespective of gender, ethnicity, class, nationality, religion, cultural background, disability, marital status, age or sexual orientation. It can have a damaging effect on the recipient's mental and physical health, resulting in poor performance and attendance at work. It is therefore a major issue.

For many victims of domestic violence there is no escape, even when they go to work. Some perpetrators of domestic violence come to the workplace searching for the victim because they are often prevented through legal injunctions from going to the victim's home. This can place the victim at serious risk of harm and is upsetting for their work colleagues.

The Company has a duty to provide a safe working environment which includes protecting employees from the risk of violent attacks and to provide support to any employee who is a victim of domestic violence.

Principles

- 3 The Company recognises that domestic violence has an impact in the workplace and will aim to encourage a positive attitude to combating domestic violence.

The Company will recognise and treat sympathetically victims of domestic violence. Support will be provided to individuals through the provision of a safe working environment, information and contact numbers for external support agencies and where appropriate counselling.

There will be an individual Central Point Of Contact in the Company whose specialism will be to support those people experiencing domestic violence and to managers who have a member of staff experiencing domestic violence.

The Central Point of Contact will assume responsibility for the promulgation of this Policy by means of:

- Publicising via the Company's newsletters and other means.
- Ensure that line managers and trade union representatives are briefed on the contents of this policy and given appropriate training on its implementation.
- Include the issue in induction courses as an ongoing health and safety issue and other training courses as appropriate.
- Posting the details of the policy and the central point of contact on Company notice boards.

Implementation

4 The Company will take the following steps to counter the effects of domestic violence, where this has been brought to the attention of management:

- Recognise and treat sympathetically the effect of abuse on an employee, which may result in stress, distraction, poor timekeeping, absence, depression or other related health problems.
- No immediate action will be taken under MFA/attendance policy for staff absent due to domestic violence.
- Support the employee in determining their own course of action at every stage.
- If necessary, special leave will be made available for employees to assist them to leave a situation of violence.
- In certain circumstances, facilitate adjustment of turns of duty for appointments such as with support agencies, solicitors, for re-housing or to alter childcare arrangements and for court appearances etc.
- Give sympathetic consideration to requests for flexible working arrangements and relocation or redeployment of staff from frontline positions if they are accessible to the public in line with the Company's Flexible Working Policy.
- Support employees who are assisting a close friend or relatives who are suffering/escaping from domestic violence.
- Provide a safe working environment by taking all reasonable steps to guard against the threat of domestic violence, which may carry over into the workplace.
- The company policy on staff name badges is that pseudonym names can be used if requested due to concerns around public facing posts. Staff can be exempt from wearing name badges or allowed to use a pseudonym if employees fear being identified by perpetrators of domestic violence.
- Wherever practicable provide a secure workplace to prevent unauthorised people entering the location.

- Where locations are accessible to the public ensure that there are systems in place for raising the alarm.
- Take appropriate action against any employee who victimises intimidates or harasses the victim, in line with the Company's Harassment and Bullying Policy.
- Take appropriate action where the victim and perpetrator may come into close contact in the workplace.
- Ensure that where workers have to work alone that they have a system in place for raising the alarm.
- Lone working should be avoided if requested by the victim.
- The Company will keep a record of any disclosure or incident related to domestic violence that occurs in the workplace that could be used in court at a later date if necessary.
- Company policy will make clear that if information is received that the perpetrator of domestic violence is an employee this will be investigated and disciplinary action may be taken against the employee.

Confidentially

- 5 The Company will undertake, in instances of domestic violence, to ensure the following measures to further protect the individual:
 - Observe strict confidentiality and no personal details shall be disclosed without the express permission of the employee.
 - Ensure that employee records of victims of domestic abuse will be confidential.

Counselling

- 6 The Company will encourage victims of domestic violence to contact the Company's Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) to gain access to a comprehensive network of experienced counsellors.

If appropriate the Company may provide the victim with details of local specialist support. This can be found through such support groups as Women's Aid <http://www.womensaid.org.uk/> or tel: 0808 2000 247, or ManKind Initiative <http://www.mankind.org.uk/> or tel: 01823 334244.