

EXECUTIVE - 1 FEBRUARY 2018

DOMESTIC ABUSE WORKFORCE POLICY

Executive Summary

Domestic abuse may happen behind closed doors but it has far reaching consequences and is known to have an impact on the working lives of those living with an abusive partner. The scale of the problem is huge. In the UK, in any one year, more than one in five victims of domestic abuse take time off work because of abuse and two per cent lose their jobs as a direct result of the abuse.

By implementing a Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy (Appendix 1), Woking Borough Council will be providing support and protection for its employees who may be the target of domestic abuse, as well as raising awareness of the issue amongst all employees. It also provides guidelines on how to manage employees who are perpetrating domestic abuse.

Reasons for Decision

To recommend to Council that the Domestic Abuse Workforce Policy be adopted.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND to Council That

the Domestic Abuse Workforce Policy, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted.

This item will need to be dealt with by way of a recommendation to the Council.
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Background Papers:

None.

Sustainability Impact Assessment
Equalities Impact Assessment

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 All organisations have a legal responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees, but the obligation in the case of domestic abuse is wider. By raising awareness of the issue and supporting those enduring abuse, employers are helping to prevent it in the wider community.
- 1.2 Domestic abuse may happen behind closed doors but it has far reaching consequences and is known to have an impact on the working lives of those living in an abusive relationship. The costs of domestic abuse to employers can be huge. It contributes to sickness absence, bad time keeping and lack of productivity. In the UK, in any one year, more than one in five victims of domestic violence take time off work because of abuse and two per cent lose their jobs as a direct result of the abuse.
- 1.3 75% of domestic abuse victims are targeted at work by telephone calls and emails. Individuals who have left an abusive partner are especially vulnerable at work as the workplace is easily identified as a place of contact by perpetrators. 56% per cent of abused women arrive late for work at least five times a month, 28% leave early at least five days a month and 53% miss at least three days of work a month.
- 1.4 The Council is not expected to perform a counselling service, as there are many professional groups who are specifically trained to deal with this. However, it can play an important supporting role, including adopting this policy, providing advice and support, raising awareness among the workforce, providing a listening ear and signposting to specialist services. The Council's flexible working arrangements are available so that employees are able to have time off work or the opportunity to work flexibly to enable them to seek protection, go to court, seek housing or arrange childcare.
- 1.5 The policy provides advice and guidance on how to recognise and support employees who are victims of domestic abuse and how to manage employees who are perpetrating domestic abuse.

2.0 Implications

Financial

- 2.1 No implications.

Human Resource/Training and Development

- 2.2 To ensure employees are aware and competent in dealing with and/or identifying incidents of domestic abuse it is good practice for managers and staff to undergo training. This includes:
 - new and existing managers – various training courses are provided by Surrey County Council;
 - HR Staff (they may have a specific role in supporting and signposting employees and managers). Training and awareness sessions provided by SCC and yourSanctuary;
 - all employees receive information on domestic abuse as part of the mandatory e-learning safeguarding training and annual awareness raising campaigns.

- 2.3 Employees that work directly with victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse will undertake more specialist training relevant to their job. This will be identified through team induction and the annual PDR process.

Community Safety

- 2.4 The provision of a Domestic Abuse Workforce Policy helps the Council fulfil some of the statutory requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Domestic abuse is one of the key priorities of the current Safer Woking Partnership Plan 2017/20, it has been for many years and is expected to be in the next plan for 2018/21.

Risk Management

- 2.5 The Council has a legal responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees.

Sustainability

- 2.6 Sustainability Impact Assessment has been completed.

Equalities

- 2.7 Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

3.0 Consultations

- 3.1 CMG, Unison, Community Safety Team.

REPORT ENDS

EXE17-084

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Domestic Abuse Workforce Policy

Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to improve the work of the Council by making sure that it does not discriminate against any individual or group and that, where possible, it promotes equality. The Council has a legal duty to comply with equalities legislation and this template enables you to consider the impact (positive or negative) a strategy, policy, project or service may have upon the protected groups.

		Positive impact?			Negative impact?	No specific impact	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative how can it be mitigated? (action) THIS SECTION NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED AS EVIDENCE OF WHAT THE POSITIVE IMPACT IS OR WHAT ACTIONS ARE BEING TAKEN TO MITIGATE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS
		Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality	Good relations			
Gender	Men	✓	✓	✓			Providing help and support to employees experiencing domestic abuse & manage employees who are perpetrating domestic abuse.
	Women	✓	✓	✓			“
Gender Reassignment							“
Race	White	✓	✓	✓			“
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	✓	✓	✓			“
	Asian/Asian British	✓	✓	✓			“
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	✓	✓	✓			“
	Gypsies / travellers	✓	✓	✓			“
	Other ethnic group	✓	✓	✓			“

		Positive impact?			Negative impact?	No specific impact	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative how can it be mitigated? (action) THIS SECTION NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED AS EVIDENCE OF WHAT THE POSITIVE IMPACT IS OR WHAT ACTIONS ARE BEING TAKEN TO MITIGATE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS
		Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality	Good relations			
Disability	Physical	✓	✓	✓			“
	Sensory	✓	✓	✓			“
	Learning Difficulties	✓	✓	✓			“
	Mental Health	✓	✓	✓			“
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian, gay men, bisexual	✓	✓	✓			“
Age	Older people (50+)	✓	✓	✓			“
	Younger people (16 - 25)	✓	✓	✓			“
Religion or Belief	Faith Groups	✓	✓	✓			“
Pregnancy & maternity			✓				“
Marriage & Civil Partnership			✓				“
Socio-economic Background			✓				“

The purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment is to improve the work of the Council by making sure it does not discriminate against any individual or group and that, where possible, it promotes equality. The assessment is quick and straightforward to undertake but it is an important step to make sure that individuals and teams think carefully about the likely impact of their work on people in Woking and take action to improve strategies, policies, services and projects, where appropriate. Further details and guidance on completing the form are [available](#).

Sustainability Impact Assessment

Officers preparing a committee report are required to complete a Sustainability Impact Assessment. Sustainability is one of the Council's 'cross-cutting themes' and the Council has made a corporate commitment to address the social, economic and environmental effects of activities across Business Units. The purpose of this Impact Assessment is to record any positive or negative impacts this decision, project or programme is likely to have on each of the Council's Sustainability Themes. For assistance with completing the Impact Assessment, please refer to the instructions below. Further details and guidance on completing the form are [available](#).

Theme (Potential impacts of the project)	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No specific impact	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative, how can it be mitigated? (action)
Use of energy, water, minerals and materials			✓	
Waste generation / sustainable waste management			✓	
Pollution to air, land and water			✓	
Factors that contribute to Climate Change			✓	
Protection of and access to the natural environment			✓	
Travel choices that do not rely on the car			✓	
A strong, diverse and sustainable local economy			✓	
Meet local needs locally			✓	
Opportunities for education and information	✓			Raise awareness about domestic abuse
Provision of appropriate and sustainable housing			✓	
Personal safety and reduced fear of crime	✓			Providing help and support to employees experiencing domestic abuse
Equality in health and good health	✓			Providing help and support to employees experiencing domestic abuse
Access to cultural and leisure facilities			✓	
Social inclusion / engage and consult communities			✓	
Equal opportunities for the whole community			✓	
Contribute to Woking's pride of place			✓	