

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
Joint Agreement on
Domestic Abuse

This Agreement is made between

Surrey County Council

UNISON, a registered Trade Union.

This agreement comes into force on:(DATE)

This agreement will be reviewed on:(DATE)

Signed on behalf of (THE EMPLOYER)..... Date.....

Signed on behalf of UNISON Date.....

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this agreement is to support and help staff who are victims or survivors of domestic abuse.
- 1.2 This agreement covers all employees, and Surrey County Council will additionally offer support to agency and contract staff as far as possible.
- 1.3 This agreement will be supported by Surrey County Council on domestic abuse and a more detailed guidance drawn up by Surrey County Council for managers to use.

2. Principles

- 2.1 Surrey County Council is committed to working with UNISON to ensure support is available for staff who are victims or survivors of domestic abuse.
- 2.2 Surrey County Council recognises the scope of domestic abuse and its share of responsibility for the well-being of staff. One-in-four women and one in six men have or will suffer from domestic abuse, and nearly a quarter of all violent crime is domestic violence.
- 2.3 This agreement is part of Surrey County Council's commitment to family friendly working, and seeks to benefit the welfare of individual members of staff; retain valued employees; improve morale and performance; and enhance the reputation of Surrey County Council as an employer of choice.

3. Definition of Domestic Abuse

- 3.1 For the purposes of this agreement, domestic abuse is physical, sexual, mental, verbal or emotional abuse by a partner, ex-partner, family member or extended family member, or person co-habiting.
- 3.2 Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse including women, men, people in same sex relationships or the trans population. It often has a dramatic impact on individuals, who frequently hide the circumstances, and on others including their children.

4. General measures

- 4.1 Surrey County Council will inform all staff of the issue and what support is available using notice boards, the intranet, staff briefings, inductions and other means. This includes internal support, and local and national external organisations like Womens'Aid (www.womensaid.org.uk, 0808 2000 247).

- 4.2 Surrey County Council will remind staff of the importance of not divulging personal details of other employees, such as addresses, telephone numbers or shift patterns.
- 4.3 Staff suffering from domestic abuse may report or disclose it to a union representative, a line manager, or colleague. Surrey County Council and UNISON will provide multi agency training for all managers and UNISON representatives on domestic abuse and appropriate responses. This will also be included in induction for new employees. Line managers and union representatives will not counsel victims, but offer information, workplace support, and signpost to other organisations.
- 4.4 HR staff trained in domestic abuse issues can also be an additional confidential contact for staff. HR will provide guidance for line managers and union representatives who are approached by staff who are being abused.

5. Individual support

- 5.1 Surrey County Council and UNISON representatives will work cooperatively to help staff suffering domestic abuse.
- 5.2 Surrey County Council will respond sympathetically, confidentially and effectively to any member of staff who discloses that they are suffering from domestic abuse, except where maintaining confidentiality poses additional risks to the individual, or others.
- 5.3 Line managers may offer employees suffering from domestic abuse a broad range of support. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - Time off for relevant appointments, including with support agencies, solicitors, to rearrange housing or childcare, and for court appointments.
 - Temporary or permanent changes to working times and patterns
 - Changes to specific duties, for example to avoid potential contact with an abuser in a customer facing role or if they are a fellow employee.
 - Redeployment or relocation
 - Measures to ensure a safe working environment, for example changing a telephone number to avoid harassing phone calls.
 - Supporting the personal development of victims and survivors.

- 5.4 Line managers will respect the right of staff to make their own decision on the course of action at each stage, subject to any children/vulnerable adults or others involved being kept safe.
- 5.5 Other sources of help include: occupational health, employee assistance and specialist domestic abuse outreach providers as detailed on Snet.

6. Confidentiality and record keeping

- 6.1 All records concerning domestic abuse will be kept strictly confidential. Absences related to domestic abuse will be handled in a sensitive manner.
- 6.2 Information will only be disclosed with the express permission of the individual, unless there are legal requirements to the contrary (for example domestic abuse is frequently linked to child neglect, and where a risk to children or vulnerable adults is identified the employer's responsibility for public protection may lead them to notify social services. If this happens, the individual will be informed of it).

7. Other Issues

- 7.1 Surrey County Council's policy on domestic abuse includes support for perpetrators seeking help to change their behaviour. However perpetrators who present a serious risk to others may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.
- 7.2 If a victim of domestic abuse and their alleged abuser are both employed by Surrey County Council, incidents at work will be dealt with under either the Domestic Abuse Policy or Bullying and Harassment Policy. If necessary, and in consultation with UNISON, work may be rearranged to ensure the safety of the person suffering abuse.
- 7.3 Abuse of provisions in this agreement is a serious disciplinary offence, and will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Domestic Abuse Policy - everybody's business

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Introduction

Domestic Abuse should be a concern for all SCC employees – it is not a “private matter”. More than 1 in 4 women and around 1 in 6 men have experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16. Women are more likely than men to experience longer periods of partner abuse, repeat victimisation and injury or emotional effects as a result of the abuse. On average in England and Wales 2 women a week are killed by their partners or ex-partners. In 2009/10 Surrey Police dealt with 12,349 incidents of domestic abuse.

This means that most people at some point will probably know someone at work or a friend or family member who may be suffering from domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is a secret crime that occurs behind closed doors and isolates victims. While there may be an understandable reluctance to become involved in other people’s personal relationships the risk of violence and aggression escalating if no intervention is made should be recognised. However, any intervention needs to be carefully thought through to ensure it does not unintentionally increase risks.

Surrey County Council’s Stance on Domestic Abuse

Surrey County Council (SCC) has a zero tolerance approach with regards to domestic violence. The Council has identified reducing the impact and incidence of domestic abuse as a key priority in its community safety strategy. The Council has a leadership role in raising awareness of domestic abuse across Surrey and setting standards as an employer on how best to support employees experiencing domestic abuse in making positive changes. As many survivors of domestic abuse come into contact with public sector services, it is vital that our staff are trained in recognising the signs of domestic abuse and understanding the impact it has on service users and their children. By encouraging staff to signpost survivors to support services we have the potential to reduce the harm caused by domestic abuse in Surrey.

What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse is best described as the exercise of power and control by one person over another or others. This is likely to involve one or more of the following, the use of physical and/or emotional abuse or violence, including undermining of self confidence, sexual violence or the threat of violence, by any person, who is or has been in a close relationship with the victim, including abuse of parents or adult children. This policy is therefore applicable whatever the nature of the intimate relationship.

Domestic abuse can go beyond actual physical violence. It can also involve emotional abuse, destructive criticism, pressure tactics, disrespect, breaking trust, isolation from friends, family or other potential sources of support, control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone, and stalking. It can also include abuse inflicted on, witnessed by or threatened against children. It should be remembered that any children within the household or linked to relationships will be adversely affected by seeing or hearing such abuse and may be injured as part of the abuse or as a result of intervening during episodes of abuse.

Domestic abuse occurs in all social classes, cultures, and age groups whatever the sexual orientation, mental or physical ability. Once it has started it often becomes more frequent and more violent.

It has extreme consequences for victims across a whole range of outcomes, including physical and mental health, self-harm, alcohol or drug misuse, homelessness and in extreme cases, suicide or murder. Its impact on child development is significant and in Surrey domestic abuse is a factor in over half of the cases where children were subject to a child protection plan.

Domestic abuse can affect the morale, health, wellbeing and self-confidence of an employee, which in turn can impact on their performance at work.

Domestic abuse is a gendered issue, with the majority of perpetrators being men and the majority of those experiencing abuse being women. Nationally, it is accepted that women are more likely to be more seriously impacted by their experience of abuse. However domestic abuse can also be perpetrated by women in any form of relationship and does also happen in same sex and bi-sexual relationships and amongst the trans population. Vulnerable adults, including those with a physical or learning disability, mental health problem or older people may be particularly vulnerable to domestic abuse and find it difficult to voice their problems.

Who is covered by this policy?

The principles and standards described in this policy apply to all employees, agency workers, contractors and their staff whilst working for, or on behalf of, the Council.

Principles of the Policy

SCC is committed to:

- A zero tolerance approach towards incidences of domestic abuse
- Ensuring that any employee who experiences domestic abuse can raise the issue at work, without fear of stigma or victimisation, and will receive appropriate support and assistance.
- Responding sensitively and effectively to those needing help and support, including perpetrators
- Creating a safer workplace for all including those affected by domestic abuse and their colleagues.
- Ensuring all line managers are aware of domestic abuse and its implications in the workplace.
- Raising community awareness of domestic abuse through the use of its varied communication channels.
- Reinforcing the fact that there is no excuse for domestic violence and the victim should not feel responsible for the abuser's behaviour
- Understanding that working with domestic abuse issues is difficult and challenging and can raise difficult emotions for all those involved

Guidance for employees

SCC encourages all employees to do something if they or a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating abuse. Employees can seek help from one of the agencies listed as sources of information and support at the end of this policy. As there is also a range of things a manager can appropriately do to offer information and support, an employee may also choose to speak to their line manager about their concerns in confidence. Alternatively, they can speak to a Trade Union representative or to human resources. All employees should be made aware of this policy in their induction and can access further training on domestic abuse.

Victims must recognise that domestic abuse has a potentially detrimental impact on employment. In the UK, in any one year more than 20% of employed women take time off work because of domestic violence, and 2% lose their jobs as a direct result of the abuse. If your manager is aware of the problems you are facing they will be more able to offer appropriate and sympathetic support. Victims also often under-estimate the extent of personal danger they or their children are in, which is why they may need the non-judgemental support of colleagues, their managers or a specialist service to help them assess their situation and make suitable safety plans.

Whether or not the abuser is prosecuted, those who experience domestic abuse have rights under the civil law. Injunctions or court orders for protection against further abuse (a non-molestation order) and/or to keep the abuser away from the home (an occupation order) may be applied for in either the magistrates' family proceedings court or in the county court.

The homelessness legislation also enables those who are unable to return home because of violence or abuse to apply for emergency accommodation on grounds of homelessness. Specialist support agencies can offer help with accessing free legal advice. The police also have specially trained officers locally who are experienced in dealing with complex domestic abuse cases. Victims should always contact the police on 999 in situations of immediate threat or danger.

Employees who disclose experiencing abuse can be assured that the information they provide is confidential and will not be shared with other members of staff without their permission. Where domestic abuse in a same sex relationship is disclosed, due regard will be paid to the double disclosure of sensitive information. The Council recognises that employees experiencing domestic abuse normally have the right to complete confidentiality. However, in some extreme circumstances this right may have to be overruled, for example to protect children or vulnerable adults or where the employer needs to act to protect the safety of employees. As far as possible, information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis. Improper disclosure of information i.e. breaches of confidentiality by any member of staff will be taken seriously and may be subject to disciplinary action.

The number of cases in which domestic abuse is disclosed as a factor will be monitored in HR as part of its confidential HR case monitoring systems. Success for this policy will be difficult to measure as some staff may seek help for themselves or family members with domestic abuse issues without the Council's knowledge. An increase in the number of staff disclosing that domestic abuse is a factor in HR casework will be seen as reflecting an increase in confidence in the organisation's ability to support staff in difficulty. The Council will also consider asking staff whether they have experienced or sought help to deal with any domestic abuse or stalking issues in the confidential Staff Survey to try and ascertain

the size of the problem in the workforce. The Council will work with Trade Unions to encourage staff to disclose domestic abuse as a factor in HR casework.

Why should I worry about domestic abuse?

As you never know when a domestic abuse issue will arise in your team, all managers must undertake domestic abuse awareness training so they are able to respond in a sensitive manner. Once a manager is aware of a domestic abuse issue there are lots of things they can do to support employees. An employee is probably more likely to feel able to share difficult and personal information about their life if they have found their manager to be approachable and supportive about other issues. Adopting a sensitive management style and being appropriately and sensitively open about any difficulties in your own personal life may help to increase the likelihood of employees feeling able to disclose their difficulties.

It is important not to be judgemental if employees find it difficult to make a positive change in their situation; they may be struggling with reconciling pressures from family, children, financial and housing issues as well as the abuse and control of a partner. They may be concerned about how a disclosure will affect their employment opportunities. Managers should address the issue positively and sympathetically and ensure that the employee is aware of the support and assistance available. The aim of any intervention should be to reduce risk, support positive change and thereby to empower employees to be able to carry out their duties effectively.

Why is domestic abuse in the workplace an issue?

Incidents of abuse and stalking that occur in the workplace require clear and effective employer responses because they are very damaging and potentially dangerous for those being abused and for their colleagues. Exposure to domestic abuse or stalking can have a profound impact on employees and can result in:

- Employee absenteeism and turnover
- Lost productivity
- Stress
- Employees developing difficulties with self-harm, addiction or mental health
- Workplace violence that threatens the safety of all employees
- Negative impact on other staff

Identification of domestic abuse at an early stage can lead to appropriate help and information being offered, which can reduce repeated work absences or the resultant burden on colleagues, and can ultimately reduce and prevent the extent of domestic abuse experienced.

How do I know if there is a domestic abuse problem at work?

There are various ways by which the problem of domestic abuse experienced by employees may come to light:

- The employee may confide in their colleagues/manager.
- A colleague may inform their manager that a particular employee is suffering from domestic abuse.

- It may come to light as a result of enquiries into a drop in performance or a significant change in behaviour.
- It may reveal itself as the background to poor attendance or presenteeism – where victims prefer to be at work rather than at home.
- You may be contacted confidentially by the police or another service to tell you that someone in your team may be perpetrating domestic abuse against another individual or employee

Below are some indicators of potential domestic abuse.

The employee:

- Is uncharacteristically depressed, anxious, distracted, lacking in concentration, self-confidence or self-esteem
- Displays changes in the quality of work for no apparent reason
- Is receiving or making repeated upsetting telephone calls/faxes/emails
- Displays increased absenteeism or lateness and/or with unusual explanations
- Repeatedly requires time off for appointments
- Displays repeated injuries or unexplained bruising
- Displays unusual use of alcohol or other substances
- Avoids lunch breaks or socialising outside work
- Excessive 'clock-watching' or anxiety about leaving work on time
- Is nervous on arrival and when leaving work
- Is reluctant to leave work at the end of the working day
- Begins to isolate themselves at work
- Wears excessive clothing

It is essential to understand that any of the above may arise from a range of circumstances of which domestic abuse may be one. If you suspect an employee is being affected by domestic abuse, you need to raise this possibility with them in a sensitive way, starting with what you have observed of their behaviour. You may then be able to explore, in a sensitive way, if there are any problems at home or in their relationships and stating that you or an appropriate other within the organisation would be happy to support them in dealing with them and in finding other sources of help.

If approached by an employee, managers need to be prepared to listen, to be sensitive and non-judgemental in order that the most appropriate help can be offered.

How do I approach this sensitive issue?

- Routinely display domestic abuse related materials in the workplace, indicating local services and sources of help, for example ensuring toilet stickers, leaflets and help cards are available both publicly and discreetly
- Ensuring privacy for any conversations about the issues – using an office or room where interruptions can be avoided.
- Respecting and protecting confidentiality in all instances (except where there are safeguarding issues or risks to other staff)

- Being patient – a member of staff experiencing domestic abuse may need time to decide what to do, and may try different short and long term options during the process. They have the right to make informed decisions about their own future and circumstances, including staying within an abusive partner.
- Understanding why someone might be reluctant to leave an abusive partner or to report the abuse to the police.
- Discuss with the member of staff measures to improve their personal safety
- Ensuring that the safety of all employees in the team is protected
- Enabling the affected employee to remain productive and at work during a difficult period in their domestic life
- Reassuring victims that domestic abuse is unacceptable and may be a crime. It is not their fault; the perpetrator has to take responsibility for their actions
- Seek advice and information in confidence from your local specialist domestic abuse services.

Managers must understand that they are not counsellors or domestic abuse specialists. Counselling and more in-depth specialist support is to be left to trained professionals and no one should attempt to act in place of a domestic abuse expert or counsellor.

What assistance can be provided to employees?

Managers can provide support by signposting sources of support, which are listed separately but include:

- Employee assistance - Contact 0800 243 458 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year: for financial, legal and practical advice as well as counselling services
- Domestic abuse outreach services including services for perpetrators
- Adult safeguarding service: for vulnerable adults: 0300 200 1005
- Children's safeguarding: if you are worried about a child then phone 0300 200 1006
- Occupational Health Service
- Trade Union representatives
- Human resources

An employee who is a victim of domestic abuse may require additional leave of absence when attempting to seek help or leave an abusive relationship. Leave requests may be made in relation to appointments with support agencies, welfare agencies, legal advisors, housing agencies, to attend relevant court hearings, or perhaps to arrange for suitable childcare. The length of the absence needed will be determined by the individual's situation through collaboration with the employee, their line manager and the relevant HR Relationship Team. Employees, and line managers are encouraged to first explore paid leave options, e.g. flexitime/TOIL that can be arranged to help the employee cope with the situation without having to take a formal unpaid leave of absence.

However, depending on the circumstances it may be necessary to:

- Allow for short periods of special leave, flexi leave or annual leave
- Agree to the use of temporary flexible working patterns (change of hours or change of workplace) so the employee can seek protection, go to court, look for new housing, or enter counselling.

- If a victim has to relocate, managers should make reasonable allowance for different travel to work arrangements, e.g. having a longer journey to work or to school before the working day.
- Help them to change their bank account details for payroll

Where domestic abuse has been reported, line managers will need to treat unplanned absences and temporary poor timekeeping sympathetically. Absence directly related to domestic abuse will be treated in a sensitive and sympathetic way. It is possible that employees suffering from domestic abuse may use alcohol or drugs to help them cope with their situation, the reasons for an employee presenting with a drug or alcohol problem therefore need to be explored.

Employees affected by domestic abuse may find coping with making changes overwhelming and struggle to maintain their performance at work. It may be appropriate to offer changes to specific duties, for example to avoid potential contact with an abuser in a customer-facing role or if their abuser is a work colleague. In exceptional circumstances, employees may have to be redeployed, if alternative arrangements cannot easily be made

Any special arrangements that are agreed with an employee, either temporary or permanent, should be recorded and the details of the agreement maintained confidentially, with other members of staff only being informed of the details on a "need to know" basis.

Managers should discuss and agree with the employee what to tell colleagues, including how they should respond if the perpetrator telephones or calls at the workplace.

Guidance for managers

How does this fit with my general health and safety duties as a manager?

The Council has a duty of care to all its employees. It is committed to taking all reasonable steps to minimise the risks to safety of its employees while at work, if they are known to have experienced domestic abuse

Managers will need to identify what actions can be taken to increase the employee's personal safety as well as address any risks there may be to colleagues, taking into account the duty of care for all employees.

Once a manager is made aware of domestic abuse, they should discuss with the employee whether there is any risk to the employee or to their colleagues whilst at work. If it is agreed that there could be a risk, the manager should seek advice from the Health and Safety team in carrying out a risk assessment and taking action to minimise the risks in the workplace. This could include such measures as additional security measures at the entrance to the building or interception of telephone calls. Changes to the office layout could be considered to ensure that the employee is not visible from reception points or from ground floor windows.

Physical security can be very important in cases of domestic abuse. Great care must be taken to ensure that employees' personal information, for example home addresses or telephone numbers, are not given out to individuals, either work colleagues or individuals from outside the workforce, who are not properly authorised to have it, whoever they claim to be. The Data Protection Act clearly prohibits improper disclosure of such information, and it is particularly important to help to ensure that employees and their families are safe

at home, travelling to and from work and when carrying out their duties. Giving out such information to those not authorised to have it could put individuals at risk.

When an employee discloses domestic abuse/violence, managers should encourage their employee to contact a specialist support agency that can undertake a DASH (Domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, and honour based violence risk assessment – www.dashriskchecklist.co.uk) and make appropriate referrals where necessary.

The Council's Guidance on Aggression and Violence (published in the Health & Safety Manual) will apply to most situations of abuse in the workplace. It also provides guidance to help individuals minimise risks from violence outside work activities.

Why should I worry about someone in my team perpetrating domestic abuse?

Conduct outside work (whether or not it leads to a criminal conviction) may have employment implications. Harassment and intimidation by anyone who also works for the Council will be viewed seriously as will circumstances where an employee has used workplace resources such as work time, telephones, or e-mail to harass their current or former partner. In such circumstances the Council will investigate the facts and decide whether the disciplinary procedure will be started. Depending on the circumstances and the nature of the employee's job, a disciplinary hearing may result in disciplinary sanctions up to and including dismissal.

All employees should be made aware in induction that domestic abuse is a serious matter that can lead to criminal convictions and have serious employment implications. It must be made very clear to all employees that the Council views the use of violence and abusive behaviour by an employee, wherever this occurs, as a breach of the organisation's Code of Conduct for disciplinary purposes.

Perpetrators may intentionally misuse their job-related authority – or groom colleagues to do so - to negatively impact on domestic abuse victims. By spreading rumours or manipulative behaviour they may influence others to assist them in locating their partners, in perpetrating acts of domestic abuse or to protect themselves. It is important that the public has high levels of trust in our employees and managers should be concerned about perpetrators bringing the organisation into disrepute by misusing workplace information and resources, and their authority, to carry out domestic abuse.

When managers become aware of violent or abusive behaviour on the part of their employee/s they may have to decide on one or a combination of the following actions depending on the nature (seriousness and complexity) of the case:

- Encouraging them to seek help from a specialist agency if they are starting to exhibit obsessive or unhealthy controlling behaviours in their relationships
- Insisting they seek help from a specialist agency if the obsessive or controlling behaviour continues
- Disciplinary action by the employer in cases of misuse of resources, authority or harassment
- A police investigation of a possible criminal offence especially when violence or the threat of violence has occurred.

How can I help a perpetrator or stalker to overcome their problem?

An employee who is a perpetrator or stalker may approach their manager about their own behaviour, or more likely be made aware of it by someone else. You should offer advice about the services available to perpetrators of domestic abuse as detailed under Sources of Help and Advice. Managers are advised to seek guidance from their Relationship Teams in this matter – detailed risk assessments will have to be undertaken to ensure that the health and safety of colleagues and service users is protected in this case.

Managers are also advised to be in continuous dialogue with such an employee – to understand the level of progress being made in terms of the employee overcoming their problem. If perpetrators do not seek help it is likely this pattern of behaviour will repeat itself in the future, even if the immediate issue is resolved. Perpetrating sexual abuse is linked to other factors, which may be an issue at work such as alcohol abuse, anger management, stress and obsessive behaviour.

What if the victim and the perpetrator both work for us?

Given that many people meet their partners at work, it is quite likely that this situation may arise. In cases where both the victim and the perpetrator of domestic violence work in the organisation, extra care needs to be taken to protect the victim. In addition to considering disciplinary action against the employee who is perpetrating the abuse, action may need to be taken to ensure that the victim and perpetrator do not come into contact in the workplace. Action may also need to be taken to minimise the potential for the perpetrator to use their position or work resources to find out details about the whereabouts of the victim. This may include a change of duties for one or both employees or withdrawing the perpetrators access to certain computer programmes or offices. A perpetrator, who may be very charismatic or manipulative, may also “groom” work colleagues through lies and misinformation to take their side or act on their behalf against a victim.

However, it is also recognised that in certain circumstances, those experiencing and perpetrating domestic abuse in a relationship may choose to seek solutions jointly, and in such situations appropriate support should be given. In particular a victim may be concerned that if their partner or ex-partner loses their employment through a disciplinary process then this will adversely affect their financial position and that of any children involved and so increase the likelihood of violence against them. Managers must remain alert to the fact that they are not specialists in this area and that victims and perpetrators need specialist advice to make safe decisions about any joint interventions. Managers should not attempt to mediate or agree to pass messages or property between the parties as this may increase levels of risk, imply collusion and undermine the victim.

When might the Disciplinary Policy be used?

Employees may be subject to investigation under the Disciplinary Policy in the following circumstances:

- If they have committed a criminal offence, or serious evidence of assault/harassment
- If they are involved in domestic abuse related incidents that occur in the workplace or during work time, including making threatening telephone calls or misuse of the computer network
- If an employee’s activities outside work have an impact on their ability to perform the role for which they are employed, or are likely to bring the Council into disrepute. This

is particularly relevant for those who work with the public, with children or vulnerable adults

- If a colleague is found to be assisting an abuser in perpetrating the abuse, for example, by giving them access to facilities such as telephones, email or fax machines then they will be seen as having committed a disciplinary offence.
- If an employee discloses confidential information about another employee or service user
- If it becomes evident that an employee has made a malicious allegation that another employee is perpetrating abuse, perhaps in relation to a custody battle, then this will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and action will be taken.

What can I do to prepare and support myself for dealing with domestic abuse issues at work?

All managers are encouraged to undertake the multi-agency training on "What is domestic abuse?" to deepen their understanding of the issue. You also need to raise awareness in your team by ensuring that they are made aware of this policy in induction and can access training in domestic abuse if this is appropriate to their role. You could also approach your local Specialist Domestic Abuse Service and arrange for them to speak at one of your team meetings. Support for you in dealing with these issues is available from HR Relationships Teams, employee assistance and local support services. The STARS programme also has courses for managers in managing disciplinaries, having difficult conversations, coaching skills, ending harassment and bullying and managing performance and absence.

Working with domestic abuse issues is difficult and may cause you to reflect on issues and emotions in current and past relationships. If you feel unable to cope with the issues raised in a case it is important that you seek help yourself, perhaps raising it with your line manager, before the situation becomes unmanageable. You might also feel that there should be more you can do to resolve the situation but it is important that you recognise the limits of your responsibility and the individual responsibilities of the others involved in the case.

Related support

- Domestic abuse training
- Disciplinary policy
- Code of conduct
- Ending Harassment and Bullying
- Drug and alcohol policy
- Employee assistance
- Occupational health
- STARS training for managers

Domestic Abuse: Sources of Help and Advice

- **999 - Emergency services**
Victims should always call the police on 999 if they or another family member are at immediate risk of harm.
- **Tel:0808 2000 247 - Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline**
The Helpline service provides support, information and a listening ear to women and children experiencing domestic violence and plays a pivotal role in assisting women and children to access a place of safety in a women's refuge. The Helpline is a member of Language Line and can provide access to an interpreter for non-English speaking callers. The Helpline can also access the BT Type Talk Service. The 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline will also refer male callers who require help to appropriate support groups.

Local Surrey Domestic Abuse Services

- **Surrey Domestic Abuse Helpline (24 hour confidential service)**
Tel: 01483 776822
- **DA Outreach Services**
Confidential community-based support service for women who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse. Help includes telephone support, drop-in home visits, support with letter writing/form filling, signposting to other agencies and aftercare support for women who have been re-housed in the area:
- **East Surrey Domestic Abuse Services (ESDAS)**
Provides specialist outreach and associated services to anyone living or working in Reigate and Banstead, Mole Valley and Tandridge. Tel: 01737 771350
- **Your Sanctuary**
Provides specialist outreach and associated services to anyone living or working in Woking, Runnymede and Surrey Heath. Tel: 01483 776822
- **North Surrey DA Outreach**
Provides specialist outreach and associated services to anyone living or working in Epsom & Ewell, Elmbridge and Spelthorne: Tel 01932 260690
- **South West Surrey DA Outreach**
Provides specialist outreach and associated services to anyone living or working in Guildford and Waverley: 01483 577392
- **Social Services Emergency Duty Team**
Tel 01483 563317
- **Surrey Police (non-emergency)**
Tel 08451 252222
- **Victim Support**
Tel 0845 38 99 52
- **Adult safeguarding service: for vulnerable adults**
Tel 0300 200 1005
- **Children's safeguarding: if you are worried about a child**
Tel 0300 200 1006
- **Broken Rainbow Helpline**
This is a UK-wide specialist confidential service for lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people experiencing homophobic or transphobic domestic abuse. This

helpline can be accessed anonymously. Staff offer information, support and advice as well as referrals to other services as necessary.

Helpline Number (Survivors): Tel 08452 604460 Check website for opening hours.

Website: www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

Email address: mail@broken-rainbow.org.uk

- **Men's Advice Line**
www.mensadvice.org.uk

Legal Rights

- **Right of Women (ROW)**
Rights of Women is a not-for-profit organisation committed to informing, educating and empowering women on the law and their legal rights.
website: www.rightsofwomen.org.uk
Email: info@row.org.uk
ROW Legal advice line: Tel: 0207 251 6577. Textphone: 0207 490 2562.
ROW also runs a Sexual Violence legal advice line: Tel 020 7251 8887. Textphone: 020 7490 2592.
- **Community Legal Services**
Tel: 0845 345 4345, www.clsdirect.org.uk
The CLS is part of the Legal Services Commission
Tel 020 7759 0317/8/ 0800 085 6643
www.legalservices.gov.uk
Email: family@legalservices.gov.uk

Services available to perpetrators of domestic abuse

- **Respect**
This is the UK association for domestic violence perpetrator programmes and associated support services. Domestic violence is most often perpetrated by men against women, but does also occur in same sex relationships and in a small number of cases from women to men. Because of this, the Respect Phonenumber will specialise in providing services to male perpetrators, but will also be available for female perpetrators and those in same sex relationships.
Tel: 0845 122 8609 www.respect.uk.net
Email: info@respectphonenumber.org.uk
Web: www.respectphonenumber.org.uk
- Union Contacts [LINK]

SCC's support services

- Confidential Employee Assistance Helpline: (24 hours/7 days a week) [link]
- Occupational Health service [Link]
- For advice on child protection or vulnerable adult issues: Contact My Helpdesk who will refer you to the source of advice [LINK]
- Surrey's Domestic Abuse advice on the web.
- In an emergency please dial 999

