



Domestic Abuse Policy

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This is a new policy and the date reflects the date that this was agreed		

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Library recognises that nationally domestic abuse is a widespread problem that should not be tolerated and which should be treated with the same level of seriousness as any other form of harassment, violence or abuse.
- 1.2 The Library has made this policy provision since if any staff do experience domestic abuse, this can impact on their health, morale, wellbeing and confidence and can also affect their ability to work and thus have a detrimental impact on the workplace. The policy aims to support employees who experience such abuse and to provide guidance to managers and employees about appropriate actions to take with signposting to internal and external sources of support.
- 1.3 In the context of this policy, the Library will seek to create a working environment that (a) supports and promotes the view that everyone has the right to live free from abuse in any form which includes domestic abuse and (b) conveys a clear message to perpetrators that this is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- 1.4 The Library is also aware of workplace safety in terms of domestic abuse victims potentially being targeted whilst at work. The Library values its staff and service users and recognises the duty of care required to ensure both their health and safety and their ability to conduct their business in a comfortable, safe and non-threatening environment.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff.
- 2.2 This policy will apply wherever an employee experiences abuse within a domestic situation e.g. whether men to women, women to men, men to men, women to women, whatever the nature of the abusive relationship (for example an intimate or family relationship).
- 2.3 This policy does not affect the rights of any individual to take independent action following abuse or an assault, for example by contacting the Police or their Union.
- 2.4 Equally it may be appropriate in extreme circumstances for the Library to request police support, e.g. where there is considered to be a real risk to an employee.

3. DEFINITION

- 3.1 Domestic abuse is defined as any incident of violence, abuse or threatening behaviour between adults who are, or who have been, intimate partners or family members. Abuse can take a variety of forms, not only physical but also psychological, sexual, emotional, social, financial and intimidation and neglect.

4. LEGISLATION

- 4.1 There is currently no employment legislation covering what an employer should provide in terms of handling instances of employees experiencing or being affected by domestic abuse. However, statistics show a clear concern on the detrimental effects such behaviour can have on an employee and on their ability to work, the effects on the organisation indirectly and also with the possibility of disruption to other employees

and the business if an abusive partner presents at the workplace

5. GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURE

5.1 The Library, as an employer, accepts it has an important role to play in galvanising efforts to tackle this abuse and wants to ensure that the Library managers and colleagues:

- know how to deal with/ help employees who are victims of abuse and can support and enable them to remain productive and at work where possible,
- can assist colleagues of those experiencing domestic abuse,
- reinforce corporate social responsibility objectives by demonstrating that the employer values, and is prepared to support, staff during difficult periods,

5.2 Also the Library needs to plan for workplace safety since nationally 75% of domestic abuse victims are targeted at work, which can range from harassing phone calls, to abusive partners appearing at work, to physical assault. Victims are particularly vulnerable at work when they have attempted to leave the abusive situation as the workplace is often then the only place they can be located.

5.3 The Library recognises that line managers have a crucial role to play in enabling and encouraging employees experiencing domestic abuse to seek help by;

- fostering an open management culture that enables team members to disclose sensitive issues and raising awareness of domestic abuse confidentially and with confidence
- using existing management tools to help encourage and identify employees experiencing difficulties as a result of domestic abuse e.g. through 1-1 discussions in performance appraisal, – welcome back discussions after sick leave or supervisory sessions.
- operating the procedures in this policy for handling instances of domestic abuse.
- providing a sensitive and non-judgemental approach
- recognising that the employee may need some time to decide what to do and may try many different options in this process
- understanding that employees may not wish to approach their line manager and may prefer to involve a third party.

5.4 Equally, the Library recognises the limitations of the line manager's role in that they are not professional counsellors or experts. (The same applies for any colleagues who are assisting). However they can appropriately provide some support in the first instance in giving specific advice on the options available which are to;

- Refer the employee to this policy as a source of information and advice,
- In the case of a colleague, encourage the employee to consider if it would be appropriate and they would feel comfortable to notify the line manager so that there is understanding and support for any personal / work difficulties.
- Refer the employee to consider the services of the Library's confidential employee assistance programme (or if preferred an external agency see section 7).

5.5 The Library will seek to enable employees to disclose such facts by generating a supportive and open management culture and by respecting the need for confidentiality. An employee may inform a manager or colleague directly that they are experiencing domestic violence or abuse e.g. by notifying in confidence

- 5.6** If the line manager is aware of the employee experiencing domestic abuse important steps can be taken to ensure;
- the affected employee is more enabled to remain productive and at work during a difficult period in his/her domestic life.
 - that the safety of all employees in the team as well as the individual concerned is protected as much as possible.
 - advice and sources of information are made known to the employee at the earliest opportunity.

6. INTERNAL SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE

- 6.1** An employee who experiences, or has been affected by domestic abuse may not wish to discuss their situation with their manager, but they are encouraged to do so since if the manager is aware of the abuse they would, for instance, be able to support the employee and to minimise possible disruption to the service / colleagues caused by dealing with the employees situation
- 6.2** Employees who are experiencing domestic abuse, or have been affected by colleagues who they know are experiencing domestic abuse can contact either their Line Manager, or the HR Business Partner / HR advisor.
- 6.3** Alternatively, the Library can offer the Employee Assistance Programme EAP as a confidential first point of contact available to all employees experiencing domestic abuse. (The EAP is fully confidential as long as there is no immediate serious threat of harm, provides access to professional counselling, and has a helpline 24 hours a day and 365 days a year).

This service also extends to other employees who are affected by domestic abuse or have concerns e.g. such as employees who are:

- perpetrating domestic violence or abuse and are seeking help; and;
- have been affected by colleagues who they suspect or know are experiencing domestic violence or abuse and need advice and support

If the line manager is aware, they may be able to provide access to telephone or face to face counselling during working hours through the Employee Assistance Programme if required (with consideration of work colleagues and the service needs)

- 6.4** The Line Manager and / or Business Partner should be able to provide support and maintain confidentiality within the workplace being mindful of the employee's, team, service and individual needs. This may include;
- Providing information
 - Consideration of facilitation of time off work (in consultation with the relevant Line manager)
 - If an incident occurred in the work place, reporting the incident with the employee's consent (see section 6.2). For the reporting of incidents involving Library readers or non readers (such as the general public and visitors) see Section 8 - Prevention and Management of Abuse to Staff at Work Policy.
- 6.5** Employees experiencing domestic abuse may need to be absent from work at times (e.g. to consult lawyers or look at making alternative living arrangements); Individual absences can be discussed and agreed between the employee and the line manager,

with HR support where appropriate. Other working arrangements may need to be considered to support or protect the employee such as temporarily reducing hours, working more flexibly, assistance to manage their workload or transfer to alternative work or work location. (This needs to be consistent with the special leave policy – under [Section F of Staff Handbook](#).)

6.6 If the employee is being denied access to their finances by their partner, then changes to their pay arrangements could be considered with crucially an appropriate date agreed to for the change in case it causes difficulties and has repercussions e.g.;

- the employee can choose to alter their pay arrangements using HR self service to change the account into which their salary is paid.
- if the employee is seeking alternative accommodation and / or is in financial difficulties then consideration of personally requesting financial support from The Charity for Civil Servants might be an option.

Employees can contact The Charity for Civil Servants at <https://www.foryoubyyou.org.uk/contact-us> or on 0800 056 2424.

6.7 For managing attendance in relation to Domestic Abuse please see Section 13.8 of the Managing Attendance Guidelines.

7. MANAGING WORK PLACE SAFETY

(See also Section 10 - [Prevention and Management of Abuse to Staff at Work Policy](#))

7.1 The Library will protect the safety and security of all employees at work, including those affected by domestic abuse and their colleagues. The line manager should work with the employee to minimise any risk to themselves or colleagues and consideration may be given to;

- identifying an emergency contact person should the manager be unable to contact the employee
- changing the employees work arrangements e.g.
 - telephone number
 - offering temporary or permanent changes to location or schedule (e.g. away from visible, front line or public areas to a more secure area / or arranging varied start and finish times)
- changing keypad numbers on entry systems
- discussing with the employee what is appropriate to share with other members of staff to prevent any tensions about the employee's attendance, work performance, or altered work arrangements.
- reminding relevant staff not to divulge personal information about employees
- if there are abusive phone calls / letters at work look at screening these with the employees consent and identifying whether these can be saved as evidence
- review of parking arrangements and possibility of escorted exit / entrance to the building
- with the employees consent, advising colleagues on a need to know basis as a situation develops.
- agreeing the workplace response if the perpetrator of abuse contacts the work place
- notifying and recording changes to next of kin and also to emergency contact information

7.2 More serious actions may be required for safety and security where the situation is deemed a real threat to the employee, other employees or service users or the public etc for instance where behaviour is likely to;

- Prejudice the safety of staff or a member of staff believes they are no longer able to undertake their duties properly as a result of fearing for their safety
- Be in breach of codes of conduct or Conditions of Library Use
- Contravene legal requirements around harassment, bullying, discrimination etc.
- Prejudice the safety of other service users
- Result in damage to property or collection material

If more serious actions are required for safety and security this may result in discussions with the Line Manager and HR (and through HR to Risk Management) about additional measures to be put in place such as;

- with permission providing a photograph of the perpetrator to the manager, reception area, and security staff.
- setting up procedures for alerting security staff and / or the police, and;
- providing instructions about what to do if the perpetrator gains unauthorised access to the workplace etc.
- this may mean it is necessary that other relevant employees are informed of safety concerns even if the employee wishes them not to be informed where the need to address safety and security has to take precedence.

7.3 The Library will consider taking internal or external action against the aggressor, subject to other relevant policies and legal advice, where non-physical assault or abusive behaviour is serious (as defined under 8.2 above).

8. DEALING WITH AN EMPLOYEE WHO IS A PERPETRATOR OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

8.1 Many of the behaviours used in domestic abuse are criminal offences and will be treated with the same level of seriousness as any other form of harassment, violence or abuse. Domestic abuse is illegal and conduct outside of work, whether or not it leads to a criminal conviction, may have employment implications, especially if the conduct has a work connection.

8.2 If an employee has used Library resources such as work time, telephones, or email to harass or intimidate their current or former partner, the Library will investigate the facts and decide whether the disciplinary procedure will be invoked. Depending on the circumstances, a disciplinary hearing may result including sanctions up to and including dismissal.

8.3 If both the perpetrator and the victim of domestic abuse are employees of the Library, the Library, dependant on the circumstances will give priority support to the alleged victim.

9. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 Staff must take reasonable steps to protect the safety of themselves and their colleagues by:

- co-operating with the policy
- informing their manager of any concerns that they have relating to violence at work

- acting responsibly to avoid putting themselves or others in danger or at risk including withdrawing from serious and potentially threatening or actual violent situations until appropriate assistance and support is available.
- following any advice, procedures, systems or training that has been developed for their safety and introduced in order to reduce or eliminate risk'
- reporting any incidences of violence, including verbal abuse, that have occurred as part of their work to their line manager or in exceptional instances (e.g. when the line manager is not available), to any alternative sources of support and advice (see sections 6.2 and 6.3)
- utilising the expertise and professional services of external organisations where appropriate (as listed in Appendix 1)

10. EXTERNAL SUPPORT

10.1 There are many external sources of help and support for employees and managers, which can be found on the internet, some of which are listed in the brief appendix at the end of this document. The main ones are:

- Police - dial 999 in an emergency, or contact your local police station via the number in your telephone directory.
- Your GP or Health Visitor.
- Refuge www.refuge.org.uk national charity for women / children experiencing domestic violence.
- Respect <http://respect.uk.net/> (practical information and advice on domestic abuse for perpetrators, abused, care professionals, and family and friends);
- The Samaritans - 0345 909090 - 24-hour confidential support for anyone in crisis.

11. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

11.1 Domestic abuse may be perpetrated by a partner, ex partner, carer or a family member/s in a current or previous relationship and may be experienced by anyone. It occurs regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, religious, cultural or political beliefs, ethnicity, disability, class or location.

11.2 Any information or personal details with regard to domestic abuse such as race, gender, age and disabled status will be kept confidential by Human Resources and will be used for no other purpose than to enable the Library to fulfil its obligations for monitoring equal opportunities and for monitoring where possible the effectiveness of the policy in terms of managing abuse.

12. RESPONSIBILITY

12.1 All members of staff referred to within the scope of this policy are required to adhere to its terms and conditions.

12.2 All line managers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is applied within their own area. Any queries on the application or interpretation of this policy can be discussed with Human Resources prior to any action being taken but confidentiality must be maintained where required.

12.3 Human Resources are responsible for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this Policy. Proposed changes to the policy will follow the process as described in section A: Introduction: paragraph 1.1 of this Staff Handbook.

Appendix 1 – External Support

- Police - dial 999 in an emergency, or contact your local police station via the number in your telephone directory.
- London - Metropolitan Police Contact Centre (Non emergencies) 0300 123 1212
- For West Yorkshire Police the non-emergency contact number is 0845 6060606
- For North Yorkshire Police (non emergencies) 0845 60 60 247 or the Independent Domestic Abuse Services 01904 646 630 which covers part of North Yorkshire.
- Your GP or Health Visitor.

Organisations that offer support include:

- Refuge www.refuge.org.uk national charity for women / children experiencing domestic violence. Services include a 24 hour national helpline 0990 995 443, emergency accommodation, a safe house and emotional and practical support for women and children. Also information to victims on how to recognise domestic abuse; keeping safe; planning to leave and help for children, men, a friend or family member.
- Respect respect.uk.net (practical information and advice on domestic abuse for perpetrators, the abused, health and social care professionals, and family and friends);
- The Samaritans - 116 123 - 24-hour confidential emotional support for anyone in crisis.
- Crown Prosecution Service Public Enquiry Point – 0207 796 8500. General and practical information on the CPS (with CPS domestic violence co-ordinators in each local area).
- Domestic Violence Intervention Programme - email: info@dvip.org. Diverse services including programmes and support services for women
- <http://www.victimsupport.org.uk>- 0808 1689 111. Offers information and support to victims of crime, whether or not they have reported the crime to the police.
- www.womensaid.org.uk - women's aid is a key national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children. Helpline 0808 2000 247 email: info@womensaid.org.uk. support, help and information about practical and legal options available - can refer to a local Women's Aid refuge / advice service, or other sources of help
- <http://www.brokenrainbow.org.uk/help/helpline> Raising awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people's domestic violence with a reporting and referral service. Helpline 0300 999 5428.
- Men's Aid – 0871 223 9986. Can give information, support and advice to men experiencing domestic violence.
- The Corporate Alliance <http://www.caadv.org.uk/> - background information for managers and professionals on the workplace implications of domestic violence.

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- clear all temporary internet files (also known as a cache) from your computer, and
- clear all the links in your history.