

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM
REPORT TO CABINET
14 DECEMBER 2017
REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Leader of the Council – Councillor Bob Cook

DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

Summary

On 18th May 2017 Cabinet endorsed the Multi Agency Domestic Abuse Strategy 2017-2022 for the borough. The new strategy strengthens the focus on working together as local partners', agencies and communities to prevent individuals from becoming victims or perpetrators of Domestic Abuse.

Domestic abuse is a significant problem which has a devastating impact on victims and their families. National data suggests that domestic abuse is not rare and that in a workplace with 2,000 employees approximately 120 people will have experienced domestic abuse within the last 12 months. It is therefore important that the Council has effective support in place for our employees who may be victims, or perpetrators, of domestic abuse.

As a large Employers, with over 70% of our employees living within the borough, it is important that the Council supports its employees who may be victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse.

The Council has had a Domestic Abuse Policy in place since 2009, however following the introduction of the Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy earlier this year, it was considered timely to update and re-launch the policy. The principles of the existing policy are generally felt to work well and therefore the policy is largely unchanged. However changes have been made to include reference to the new Strategy, updates to the contact details for the Domestic Abuse Champions (Champions) and other support available, and linkage to the Council's culture statement.

This report outlines the content of the revised Domestic Abuse Policy for Employees and provides a copy of the revised policy at Appendix 1.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- Approve the revised Domestic Abuse Policy as set out in Appendix 1.

Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

As the political leaders of the organisation it is felt appropriate that Cabinet are informed of the Council's revised Domestic Abuse Policy which contributes towards the Council Plan 2017-20.

Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in accordance with paragraph 18** of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code)

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code)

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This report outlines the content of the revised Domestic Abuse Policy for Employees and provides a copy of the revised policy at Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- Approve the revised Domestic Abuse Policy as set out in Appendix 1.

BACKGROUND

1. The Council has a number of policies and procedures to support employees at work and has had a Domestic Abuse Policy in place since 2009. Following the introduction of the Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy this year, it was felt an appropriate opportunity to update our employee policy and support both for victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.
2. The revised policy:
 - Explains what Domestic Abuse is
 - Describes the impact that Domestic Abuse can have on colleagues

- Explains what Employees and Managers can do where they have concerns regarding a colleague
 - Details the support available to victims of domestic abuse
 - Lists the Domestic Abuse Champions who can provide support
 - Details the support available to, but also the potential implications for perpetrators of Domestic Abuse
3. Additional employees have volunteered to act as Domestic Abuse Champions and we have a good range of employees across the Council.
 4. The Champions will be supported by the new post of Domestic Abuse Coordinator (within the Community Safety team in Children's Services). The new post holder is expected to commence employment in December 2017 following pre-employment clearances. This post will provide our Champions with a point of contact for training, advice and support, enable information to be shared and circulated amongst our champions and assist where appropriate. The Champions will be used to help launch the new policy, and a meeting will be held with all Champions following the appointment of the new Domestic Abuse Coordinator.
 5. It is intended to launch the updated policy in December 2017 prior to the Christmas period with communication within KYIT and promotion through our Domestic Abuse Champions and Better Health At Work Advocates. HR will also liaise with the Domestic Abuse Coordinator, to arrange bi-annual meetings with the Champions, hopefully to commence in January 2018.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6. There are no financial implications arising from this report. The policy can be supported and delivered within existing budgets.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

8. The Domestic Abuse Policy is categorised as low risk.

COUNCIL PLAN THEMES

9. Ensuring children, young people and families in need of help and protection get the help and support they need is a key theme of the Council's Plan. The Council's Domestic Abuse Policy supports this aim internally with our own Employees.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10. N/A

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

11. Children Services, Public Health, and Community Safety have been consulted in the update of the policy and the Trade Unions have also been consulted

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Domestic Abuse Policy



Culture Statement

The Council's HR policies and procedures underpin the organisational culture and behaviours we expect from all our employees to ensure that:

We are an organisation where we all make a positive contribution at work for the whole Council.

Where we never lose sight of the fact that we are here to serve the people of the Borough.

This is the place where

- We are valued, trusted and supported
- We are heard
- We take responsibility for our own development
- We work hard
- We are not afraid to try something new
- We belong

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DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

We acknowledge that domestic abuse is a significant problem which has a devastating impact on victims and their families.

A Domestic Abuse Strategy has been developed by the Council which aims to improve physical, psychological and social outcomes for the residents of Stockton-on-Tees. By promoting preventative measures, alongside early intervention, support and protection, it aims to reduce the effects of harmful behaviour now and for the generations to come. <https://www.stockton.gov.uk/community-safety/domestic-abuse-strategy/>

We want our employees to belong and feel safe and supported at work. We are committed to taking all reasonable steps possible to support our employees who are victims of domestic abuse. We also recognise that we need to challenge the behaviour of perpetrators as well as encourage them to seek support to change their behaviour.

This policy details the support that victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse can expect to receive from us and provides guidance to line managers when supporting those who are affected by domestic abuse.

2. WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE?

The Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy defines domestic abuse as:

'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or 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. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

For further information, please see the Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy <https://www.stockton.gov.uk/community-safety/domestic-abuse-strategy/>

3. IMPACT AT WORK

In most cases, domestic abuse will occur away from the working environment. It should be noted however that there may be incidents which do occur in the workplace especially if the victim has left the family home and work provides a known way to contact or confront them. It can also affect the work of an employee.

Signs of Domestic Abuse

Possible signs of domestic abuse could include:

- Changes in behaviour including uncharacteristic depression, anxiety, distraction or problems with concentration or decision making;
- Changes in the quality of work for no apparent reason;
- Arriving late or leaving early, or the opposite of working longer hours
- Poor attendance or high presenteeism without an explanation;
- Needing regular time off for appointments;
- Inappropriate or excessive clothing such as wearing long sleeves on a hot day
- Bruises, chronic headaches, abdominal pains, muscle aches, Vague, non-specific medical complaints
- Signs of fear, intense startle reactions, tension around receiving phone calls or visits at work

Colleagues

Domestic abuse can also affect people close to the victim including work colleagues. Some effects may include:

- Concern for co-worker
- Concern for own personal safety, being followed to or from work, or fear violence will come to the workplace;
- Being subject to questioning about the victim's contact details or locations;
- Being aware of the abuse or not knowing how to help.

4. WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF YOU SUSPECT A COLLEAGUE IS A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

We need you to report any concerns you may have to a manager, Human Resources or a Domestic Abuse Champion (see **Appendix 1**) if you suspect a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse. Your concerns will be kept, as far as is possible, confidential.

In an emergency situation, particularly where there is a risk of injury, which requires immediate response, the first point of access should always be the Police Force via 999.

Alternatively, you can contact the Police on 101 (no immediate danger) to report your concerns or a confidential reporting line is available through **Crimestoppers (0800 555 111)**. Crimestoppers is a national charity which works in partnership with the police and the media to help to solve crime. It provides the public with a number to call anonymously with information. [Find out more on crimestoppers](#)

If you believe that a child or young person is not being safeguarded as a result of domestic abuse you must make your concerns known immediately to the Children's Hub (01429) 284284.

5. SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

If you are experiencing domestic abuse you should seek support from trained advisers who can assess risk and offer confidential advice and guidance on safety. Help and Support is also available for you at work. Your line manager can offer direct support, or if you prefer, you can contact Human

Resources or speak to one of the Council's Domestic Abuse Champions. See **Appendix 1** for a list of all internal and external key contacts.

It is essential that you feel able to disclose personal information and you are encouraged to discuss any concerns you have with your Line Manager particularly if the abuse is affecting your work, or you think you might be harmed as a result of the abuse. Whether or not you tell someone at work is entirely your decision, however by telling someone at work, you can expect to receive the appropriate support from us.

If you choose to tell your line manager, Human Resources, or a Domestic Abuse Champion you can expect them to:

- Be non-judgemental, supportive, sensitive and discrete.
- Prioritise your safety over your work efficiency.
- Respect your experience and allocate time to talk.
- Observe confidentiality except in extreme circumstances.

Confidentiality

If you disclose that you are a victim of domestic abuse, you can be assured that the information you provide is confidential and will not be shared with other colleagues without your permission.

There are however, some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be assured. This may occur when there are concerns regarding your safety, or the safety of children and vulnerable adults, or where the Council is required to protect the safety of other employees. In these circumstances, you will be informed as to the reasons why confidentiality cannot be maintained. As far as possible, information will only be shared on a need to know basis.

Support from Line Managers

If you confide in your line manager that you are experiencing domestic abuse, they will ensure your health and safety at work. They will be able to consider making workplace adjustments to support you, which could include:

- Reasonable time off (paid and/or unpaid) for relevant appointments, including with support agencies, solicitors, to arrange housing or childcare and for court appointments;
- Annual leave, flexi-time, lieu time, as required
- Special leave provision (e.g. compassionate leave or unpaid leave) where the officer or member of staffs annual leave entitlement has been exhausted;
- Temporary or permanent changes to working times and patterns
- Changes to specific duties, for example to avoid potential contact with the perpetrator in a customer facing role;
- Temporary Redeployment or relocation:
- Safe Working Environment
 - ICT - blocking emails / screening telephone calls;
 - alerting reception / security if the perpetrator is known to come to the workplace; and
 - ensuring arrangements are in place for safely travelling to and from work;
 - Improvement to security measures such as a change in key pad numbers
 - Contact arrangements if out of the office on visits
- Communication
 - Agreeing emergency and safe contact arrangements

- Advising colleagues on a need-to-know basis and agree a response if the perpetrator contacts the workplace
- Reminding employees not to divulge information about employees – i.e. working patterns or locations
- Providing a photograph of the perpetrator to line management, security staff and reception.
- Reviewing the security of personal information held, such as temporary or new address and bank details.
- Change of bank details for salary payments

Your right to make your own decisions about the course of action at every stage will be respected. It is recognised you may need some time to decide what to do and may try different options during this process.

Further guidance for Line Managers is available from Human Resources.

6. SUPPORT FOR PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Council is also committed to supporting its employees who acknowledge their abusive behaviour and want to change.

If you are a perpetrator of Domestic Abuse you are encouraged to seek support from your Line Manager, HR, Domestic Abuse Champions or other external support services.

The Council will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of a domestic abuse related offence on a case-by-case basis with the aim of reducing risk and supporting change.

However, employees should be aware that domestic abuse is a serious matter which can lead to cautions or criminal convictions. Conduct inside or outside of work (whether or not it leads to a criminal conviction) may also lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, as such conduct may undermine the confidence and trust the Council has in them.

7. FURTHER GUIDANCE

For further advice, please see **Appendix 1** for Internal and External agencies that can offer help and support.

For further guidance in relation to children's safeguarding please contact the Children's Hub (01429 284284).

Appendix 1 – Internal and external contacts and support agencies

There are many internal and external local support agencies that can offer further advice and practical guidance on domestic and sexual abuse, these include:

Internal Contacts:

Human Resources – (01642) 528278

Email: HRGeneralEnquiries@stockton.gov.uk

Occupational Health – (01642) 526780

Email: OccupationalHealthNurse@stockton.gov.uk

Domestic Abuse Coordinator – TBC

Tel: (01642) 52XXXX

Email: XXXXXX

Domestic Abuse Champions:

Name	Directorate	Telephone	Email
Jenny Collier	Adult Services	01642 528442	jenny.collier@stockton.gov.uk
Laura Poppleton	Adult Services	01642 527054	Laura.Poppleton@stockton.gov.uk
Katie Slack	Adult Services	01642 528802	Katie.Slack@stockton.gov.uk
Keith Morrison	Children's Services	01642 527515	Keith.Morrison@stockton.gov.uk
Dale Metcalfe	Community Services	01642 527827	Dale.metcalfe@stockton.gov.uk
Karen Morris	Culture, Leisure & Events	01642 526518	karen.morris@stockton.gov.uk
Leanne Taylor	Economic Growth & Development	01642 524322	Leanne.Taylor@stockton.gov.uk
Jacqui Gowland	Finance & Business Services	01642 524765	Jacqui.Gowland@stockton.gov.uk
Michelle King	HR, Legal & Communications	01642 526780	Michelle.King@stockton.gov.uk
Jane Webb	HR, Legal & Communications	01642 524670	Jane.webb@stockton.gov.uk

Insight Healthcare

Insight Healthcare provide a service on behalf of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council - offering Employees unlimited access to a 24 hour support and advice line, every day of the year and up to 6 face-to-face or telephone counselling sessions. You will be able to talk to them in confidence about any issue that is causing you concern or distress.

Call Insight - 0800 027 7844 / 0300 555 0120

Go Online and visit Insight's employee portal –

www.insightwellbeingatwork.org/employee-portal

Username: insighthealthcare@stockton.gov.uk

Password: insight-healthcare

Housing Options Services:

Homelessness Prevention – (01642) 528324

Welfare Rights – (01642) 526141

Safeguarding Children's Hub – (01429) 284284

External Contacts A-Z

Arch North East – (01642) 822331 <http://www.archnortheast.org/>

Arch North East are a specialist provider of free, confidential sexual violence services across Teesside, offering support to men and women aged 14 years and over who have suffered rape or sexual abuse at any time in their lives.

Eva Womens Aid – (01642) 490677 www.eva.org.uk

EVA supports women (and their families) who are, or have been, victims of domestic/sexual abuse and violence.

Foundation – 0300 4562214 <http://foundationdomesticabuse.org/>

Foundation work throughout Redcar and Cleveland offering support and advice relating to Domestic and Sexual violence, which can be physical, emotional, sexual, financial or psychological.

Halo Project – (01642) 683045 <http://www.haloproject.org.uk/>

Halo Charity provides support to anyone suffering honour based violence and anyone at risk of forced marriage.

Harbour Support Services – (03000) 202525 <http://www.myharbour.org.uk/>

Harbour Support Services (formerly North Tees Women's Aid) offer a range of different services to assist those affected by domestic abuse. Services include refuge for those fleeing Domestic Abuse, outreach services and groups for those experiencing abuse, support for children and young people affected by Domestic Abuse, support programmes for those perpetrating abuse and support for Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions.

Hart Gables – (01429) 236790 <http://www.hartgables.org.uk/>

Hart Gables aims to provide support and inclusion to lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender individuals of all ages and the wider community in the Teesside area. Hart Gables ethos is to create positive social change and equality for all people, whilst creating a safe, confidential space for service users to come along to, free from discrimination and prejudice.

Men's Advice – 0808 8010327

Men's Advice is a confidential helpline for male victims of domestic violence (in heterosexual or same-sex relationships).

My Sisters Place – (01642) 241864 <http://www.mysistersplace.org.uk>

My Sister's Place' is a specialist domestic violence service based in central Middlesbrough. The service provides support services to women over 16 years of age who are or have suffered domestic abuse.

National Centre for Domestic Violence – 0844 8044 999

The National Centre for Domestic Violence give legal advice and offers protection to victims by obtaining emergency injunctions regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation or financial situation. Our aim is to provide instant and effective protection against domestic violence and give advice to anyone who seeks it.

Respect – 0808 802 4040

Respect is a confidential helpline for domestic violence perpetrators (male or female) wishing to address their violence and abuse.

Stockton and District Advice and Information(SDAIS) – (03442 451295) www.stockton-cab.co.uk
SDAIS is the local Citizens Advice Bureau for Stockton Borough. They offer free, confidential, independent and impartial advice for a wide range of problems,

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) – (01642) 516888 <http://www.sarcteesside.co.uk/>
The SARC for Teesside is located at North Ormesby Health Village, Middlesbrough but covers the whole of Teesside. The SARC provides 24 hour crisis intervention and support 365 days a year with dedicated specially trained staff who are able to explain and discuss your options with you. **You do not need to report to the Police to access SARC Services.**

Tees Valley Women’s Centre – (01642) 296166
Tees Valley women’s Centre is a “women only” space in the Tees Valley Area, providing a holistic approach to all women’s issues. Any woman attending the centre can be assured of a no labelling, non judgemental approach with support from start to finish.