

Hull Teaching Primary Care Trust

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE HR Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

Hull Teaching Primary Care Trust recognises that domestic violence and abuse is a serious crime and a violation of an individual's human rights;

- the right to life (Article 2)
 - the right to live free from fear, threats and abuse (Article 3)
 - and the right to liberty and security (Article 5)
- European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1998)*

The PCT is committed to the welfare of its employees and recognises that domestic violence/abuse is unacceptable and inexcusable behaviour and the responsibility for domestic violence lies with the perpetrator. The PCT strives to create a working environment that promotes the view that violence against people is unacceptable.

The PCT employs many staff who may themselves be experiencing domestic violence/abuse. It is essential that managers recognise that this can affect the health, morale, confidence and self-esteem of employees that can, in turn impact on their work performance.

A guidance for managers has been developed and should be read in conjunction with this policy.

2. SCOPE

This policy and procedure applies to all PCT employees irrespective of age, race, colour, religion, disability, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or marital status, domestic circumstances, social and employment status, HIV status, gender reassignment, political affiliation or trade union membership. All employees will be treated in a fair and equitable manner and reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate (e.g. interpreter or signing provision, access arrangements, induction loop, etc.)

3. DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

For the purpose of this policy the PCT defines domestic violence as;

'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.'
(Home Office, Department Of Health, 2006)

The pattern of abuse can involve a wide range and combination of behaviours. It can take such forms as being kept short of money, being prevented from working, studying or sleeping as well as physical abuse. Essentially, it is about the misuse of power to assert and maintain control over another person.

Domestic violence is not limited to any particular group or class, but occurs across the whole social spectrum. In the main, a diverse range of individuals experience such violence – different ages, with or without disabilities, with or without children and individuals of different ethnic origin.

Studies have consistently demonstrated the prevalence of domestic violence and abuse, with an estimated 1 in 10 women experiencing domestic violence and abuse each year. 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men will experience domestic violence at some point in their life time. Despite this, its effects and costs within the workplace remain largely hidden and unidentified by employers. As a large employer the PCT may have many employees who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence and abuse which may have long term effects on their work performance. There may also be within the workforce a number of convicted perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse. It may not be appropriate for these individuals to provide services to vulnerable individuals and children.

4. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are:

- To assist and positively support employees who approach the PCT as their employer for help in addressing problems arising from domestic violence and abuse.
- To ensure that employees seeking assistance are confident that their situation will be handled seriously, effectively, sympathetically and confidentially by managers involved.
- To remove fears of stigmatisation for employees who have experienced domestic violence and abuse.
- To ensure all employees who are experiencing domestic violence are aware of the policy and its implications, including employees who are perpetrating domestic violence.
- To assist and support managers in dealing with cases in a sensitive, fair and consistent manner.

5. SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FIRST CONTACT OFFICERS

The PCT will provide support for and promotion of the Hull Teaching Primary Care Trust Domestic Violence First Contact Officer Scheme. This scheme involves Domestic Violence First Contact Officers, who are volunteer employees, providing a first contact advice and guidance service to any Hull Teaching Primary Care Trust employee who is a survivor of domestic violence and abuse.

The Hull Teaching Primary Care Trust will provide domestic violence and abuse awareness raising training for Domestic Violence First Contact Officers, Managers, Human Resources Officers, Occupational Health Officers and Trade Union Representatives. (Co-ordinated by the Hull Primary Care Trust Specialist Domestic Violence Practitioner).

6. SUPPORT FOR PERPETRATORS

The PCT recognises that perpetrators of domestic violence may wish to seek help voluntarily.

7. RAISING AWARENESS

The PCT will raise awareness of domestic violence through the following measures:

- Publishing, maintaining and posting locations of high visibility, a list of external resources for those who experience domestic violence and perpetrators of domestic violence.
- Publicising and distributing information on the PCT's policy.

8. ROLE OF A LOCAL SECURITY MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST (LSMS)

The LSMS is available to assist PCT staff with any specialist security advice and/or assessing any areas of risk. For further details please refer to the PCT's Security Policy.

9. TRAINING

The PCT will develop a programme of training for all managers to raise awareness of domestic violence and understanding of this policy and guidance.

Managers will be trained to:

- Identify if an employee is experiencing difficulty.
- Provide initial support.
- Offer referrals to Occupational Health and the appropriate domestic violence resources.
- Discuss ways to help the person stay safe in the workplace.
- Understand they are not counsellors. Counselling should be left to trained professionals and no one should attempt to act in place of a domestic violence expert or counsellor.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

The PCT respects an employee's right to confidentiality and recognises that employees experiencing domestic violence normally have the right to confidentiality. However, in circumstances of child protection or the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse, the child protection and adult protection services may need to be involved. Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in these situations.

11. MONITORING AND REVIEWING ARRANGEMENTS

The Domestic Violence First Contact Officer Scheme monitoring and reviewing group will be responsible for regularly reviewing and amending this policy and associated procedures.

13. FURTHER INFORMATION

If you require any further guidance on any matters relating to domestic violence and abuse please contact the Domestic Violence Specialist Practitioner or the Hull Domestic Abuse Partnership.

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Approved by: Date:

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