

G11: Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy

Statement of Intent

Nottinghamshire County Council condemns domestic violence and recognises it is both a crime and unacceptable. It is committed to the welfare of its employees and seeks to support and assist any employee who is experiencing problems related to domestic violence and abuse.

It also seeks to raise awareness of domestic violence and develop a workplace culture where domestic violence is recognised as unacceptable.

Definition

The term 'domestic violence' usually refers to violence and abuse (physical, sexual, emotional and/or financial) perpetrated within current or former relationships for the purpose of gaining power and control over someone.

Compared with men, women are more likely to experience domestic violence at some point in their lives, more likely to experience repeated victimisation, more likely to be injured and to seek medical help, more likely to experience frightening threats and more likely to be frightened (Home Office Research Study No.192, 1998).

However, the County Council recognises that violence and abuse is experienced within a range of different types of relationships for example men to men, women to men, women to women and children to parents. The advice given in these guidelines is therefore applicable whatever the nature of the relationship.

Nottinghamshire County Council also recognises that domestic violence exists in all social classes, racial, ethnic, religious and cultural groups and that it can be experienced at any age and irrespective of factors such as sexuality, marital status and disability.

However, we are aware that because of various types of discrimination, these are all factors that can affect a person's experience of seeking help and success in protecting themselves and their children from domestic violence.

It may seem that domestic violence is a personal matter and nothing to do with a person's employer. However, for those experiencing it, domestic violence will affect their whole lives, including work and job performance.

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- to demonstrate Nottinghamshire County Council's commitment to and support for employees experiencing domestic violence.
- to raise awareness of domestic violence, what forms it can take and its likely effects on the workforce of the County Council.

- to contribute to the health and wellbeing of employees in order that they can enjoy fulfilling lives both at work and home.
- to increase awareness of managers in recognising that an employee may be experiencing domestic violence and to provide advice about appropriate action to take.
- to offer clear and consistent advice to employees experiencing domestic violence.
- to establish and publicise support for employees experiencing domestic violence.

The following Appendices give further advice and are aimed specifically at employees (Appendix 1) and managers (Appendix 2).

Violence to Employees

The issue of violence to employees as a result of their employment is also of concern to the County Council and the trade unions. A policy statement of intent is detailed in the authority's Safety Manual: Section B11. Further guidance and advice is available from your departmental Safety Adviser.

G11: Appendix 1

Awareness and Support in the Workplace - Information for Employees

"Every three days in England and Wales, a woman is killed by her partner or former partner" - British Crime Survey 2003

1. Statement of Intent

Nottinghamshire County Council condemns domestic violence and recognises it is both a crime and unacceptable. It is committed to the welfare of its employees and seeks to support and assist any employee who is experiencing problems related to domestic violence and abuse.

It also seeks to raise awareness of domestic violence and develop a workplace culture where domestic violence is recognised as unacceptable.

A full copy of the Authority's Employee Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy can be obtained from the HR Team for your department.

2. What is Domestic Violence?

The term 'domestic violence' usually refers to violence and abuse (physical, sexual, emotional and/or financial) perpetrated within current or former relationships for the purpose of gaining power and control over someone. Most domestic violence is experienced by women and children and perpetrated by men.

However, the County Council recognises that violence and abuse can be experienced within a range of different types of relationships for example men to men, women to men, women to women and children to parents. The advice given in these guidelines is therefore applicable whatever the nature of the relationship.

Nottinghamshire County Council also recognises that domestic violence exists in all social classes, racial, ethnic, religious and cultural groups and that it can be experienced at any age and irrespective of factors such as sexuality, marital status and disability.

However, we are aware that because of various types of discrimination, these are all factors that can affect a person's experience of seeking help and success in protecting themselves and their children from domestic violence.

It may seem that domestic violence is a personal matter and nothing to do with a person's employer. However, for those experiencing it, domestic violence will affect their whole lives, including work and job performance.

3. If You Are Abused Who Can You Turn To?

If you are being abused by someone you live with or have had a relationship with, there are things you can do. There are individuals and organisations that can give you practical and emotional support, both inside and outside of the workplace. You can talk to your manager, HR Business Partner, or your trade union representative for advice and guidance.

4. Some Useful Numbers

4.1 HR Teams

Talk to your HR Team for advice. They can provide information about issues such as:

- special leave
- changes to working arrangements
- further advice about contacts to help you
- and, if necessary, liaise with your manager for you.

Further information can be gained by contacting the HR Duty Desk on

4.2 Employee Counsellors/Advice

Counselling is provided by Care First in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council. Employees can self-refer or go through their line manager, HR or Occupational Health.

4.3 Trade Unions

Ask to speak to someone regarding Nottinghamshire County Council's Employee Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy.

Unison

0115 981 0405

Unite

0115 947 6784

GMB

0115 960 7171

5. What Can You Expect from Nottinghamshire County Council?

5.1 Confidentiality and Child Protection Concerns

The County Council recognises that confidentiality is essential for an employee who is experiencing domestic violence. In most circumstances whatever you tell your line manager will remain confidential and will not be revealed to anyone without your permission.

However if you give information which leads your manager to believe that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering harm, they will have a responsibility to inform the ASCH & PP department about this and will seek your agreement to do so.

Your manager may pass their concerns to ASCH & PP without your agreement if they remain concerned about a child's welfare. Your manager will discuss this with their line manager before doing this.

ASCH & PP recognise that living with domestic violence is frightening for adults and children. ASCH & PP will want to support you in protecting your children and will work with you to see if there is any help they can offer before things get worse. Please contact your Duty Social Worker for further advice. (See paragraph 6 - Further Sources of Help and Advice).

5.2 Support

The County Council is concerned about your health, safety and welfare and will therefore respond in an effective, confidential and sympathetic manner to any employee disclosing that they are experiencing domestic violence.

5.3 Time Off

You may need time to attend counselling sessions or court hearings or to make alternative living arrangements. Any employee suffering domestic violence will be entitled to time off in accordance with the special leave provisions. Please speak to the HR Officer for your department for more information about special leave provisions.

Initially requests for time off should be raised with your manager, but if you prefer, they can be made via the HR Officer for your department. Further advice and support can also be sought from your trade union representative.

5.4 Counselling

Employees considering accessing this service should always in the first instance discuss this with their line manager, or with their HR contact if discussion with the manager is not appropriate to the particular circumstances.

5.5 Adapting Working Arrangements

A change in working hours, work location, or other temporary measures for protecting your safety will be available. Full consideration will be given to security arrangements for you, such as screening of telephone calls and not giving information about your work arrangements to callers. In certain circumstances it is possible to register you for redeployment from your existing job.

The County Council recognises domestic violence may have a negative impact on your performance at work. You will not be discriminated against because of domestic violence, however, it is important that you discuss any problems and needs with your manager, HR and/or your trade union representative, in order that you can be fully supported.

5.6 Money

There may be ways in which we can help with financial issues for example changing the method by which you receive your salary or issuing an advance of pay. Any financial requests should be made through the HR Officer for your department and will be considered on an individual basis.

6 Further Sources of Help and Advice

6.1 Contacts

Emergency Services (Fire, Police, Ambulance) If you need to call out the police to a domestic violence crime	999
Nottinghamshire Emergency Duty Team (out of hours)	0300 456 45 46
Women's Aid Integrated Services (WAIS) Support, advice and information for women on domestic violence and related issues.	080 800 0340
Women's Aid Integrated Services (WAIS) 24 Hour Freephone Domestic Violence Helpline Offers support, access to emergency accommodation/refuge and other support services, information and advice on matters such as housing, solicitors, finance etc or just someone to talk to. Subscribes to language line (instant interpretation service)	0808 800 0340
Umuada (primarily for African Caribbean women) (refuge and outreach services)	0115 975 3254
Mansfield and Ashfield Women's Aid (refuge and outreach services)	01623 683 250
Newark Women's Aid (refuge and outreach services)	01636 670 687
Nottinghamshire Women's Aid (Refuge, drop-in and outreach services)	01909 533 610

Midlands Women's Aid (refuge and outreach services)	0115 925 7647
Imani (Quick access housing for African Caribbean and Asian women under 30)	020 8672 1800
Nottingham Rape Crisis Centre (Helpline and counselling)	0115 941 0440
Nottingham Law Centre - For Advice on immigration issues	0115 978 7813
Notts Coalition of Disabled People	0115 924 7176
Lesbian & Gay Switchboard	0300 330 0630
Children and Young People	
Childline national freephone helpline	0800 1111
NSPCC national freephone helpline Confidential service for anyone concerned about children at risk including children themselves.	0808 800 5000
Local ASCH & PP Services	08449 80 80 80

6.2 Websites

There are also a number of websites providing information on a range of domestic violence related issues and services.

The addresses provided below are a useful starting point - all include links to other useful sites. However, please note that if an abuser knows how to read your computer's history or cache file they may be able to see information you have viewed recently on the internet.

The sites detailed below give instructions for clearing your computer's history or emptying your cache file. However, you may not be able to completely hide your tracks.

Many browser types have features that display recently visited sites. The safest way to find information on the internet would be at a local library, friend's house or at work.

website: www.womensaid.org.uk

Women's Aid Federation England - for information about services available, your legal rights, campaigns etc

website: www.brokenrainbow.org.uk

A web site developed for survivors of same sex abuse.

website: www.equation.org.uk

Equation - useful links, information and projects housed by Equation including: Tri - information and resources for working with men on domestic violence (including information about services for men). Educator Project - Work with young people on domestic violence.

7. Crisis Planning

There may be a time when you have to leave your home in a hurry. It is helpful if you have already thought about how you would do it and made a plan to help you feel more in control. The following checklist provides some ideas.

Find somewhere you can quickly and easily use a telephone - at work, a neighbour, a relative?

- carry with you a list of telephone numbers of friends, relatives and emergency numbers.
- try to save some money for bus or taxi fares if needed.
- keep an extra set of keys for your home or car with someone you trust in case you need to leave immediately.
- keep the items you will need and some clothes in a bag packed ready. Keep it somewhere where you can quickly get hold of it.

Checklist:

- National Insurance number
- NHS number
- passport
- driving licence
- cheque book
- credit cards
- building society book
- income support book
- child benefit book
- birth certificates (you and children)
- insurance papers
- marriage certificate
- divorce papers
- address book

- diary
- keys
- medication
- rent book
- details of telephone, gas, electricity, accounts etc.
- car documents
- change of clothes
- toys
- jewellery
- photographs/sentimental items
- mobile phone

More detailed information can be obtained from the 24 hour freephone domestic violence helpline.

tel: 0808 800 0340

G11: Appendix 2

Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy

Awareness and Support in the Workplace - Guidance for Managers

Statement of Intent

Nottinghamshire County Council condemns domestic violence and recognises it is both a crime and unacceptable. It is committed to the welfare of its employees and seeks to support and assist any employee who is experiencing problems related to domestic violence and abuse. It also seeks to raise awareness of domestic violence and develop a workplace culture where domestic violence is recognised as unacceptable.

2. Definition

The term "domestic violence" usually refers to violence and abuse (physical, sexual, emotional and/or financial) perpetrated within current or former relationships for the purpose of gaining power and control over someone. Most domestic violence is experienced by women and children and perpetrated by men. However, the County Council recognises that violence and abuse can be experienced within a range of different types of relationships for example men to men, women to men, women to

women and children to parents. The advice given in these guidelines is therefore applicable whatever the nature of the relationship.

Nottinghamshire County Council also recognises that domestic violence exists in all social classes, racial, ethnic, religious and cultural groups and that it can be experienced at any age and irrespective of factors such as sexuality, marital status and disability. However, we are aware that because of various types of discrimination, these are all factors that can affect a person's experience of seeking help and success in protecting themselves and their children from domestic violence.

It may seem that domestic violence is a personal matter and nothing to do with a person's employer. However, for those experiencing it, domestic violence will affect their whole lives, including work and job performance.

3. Recognising that an Employee May Need Help

It is not always easy to recognise that an employee is experiencing domestic violence and may require some assistance. Certain indicators such as a sudden change in behaviour, depression, inability to concentrate, obvious injuries or regular but unexpected absence from work may be indicative of a variety of problems, of which domestic violence may be one.

4. Warning Signs

- comes to work repeatedly with injuries
- unusual number of calls from home and strong reaction to the calls
- late for work and needing to leave early
- secretive about home life
- frequent absenteeism
- emotional reactions such as tearful, angry, depressed, nervous, confused
- partner exerts unusual amount of control over their life
- partner makes demands over their work schedule
- may be extremely passive or aggressive
- may seem chronically depressed or depressed in cycles
- may isolate themselves at work.

These are just a few characteristics. Different people will react in different ways. A more important sign is when an individual behaves in a way that is unusual for her or him.

5. The Role of the Manager

As a manager you have a responsibility for the health and safety of County Council employees at work, particularly those that you manage. Almost one third of all women will experience domestic violence at some point in their lives and some of these will be your employees. One in ten women are experiencing domestic violence today.

As a manager it is important you respond positively to an employee disclosing a problem with domestic violence. Discussing this issue will have taken a great deal of courage and your response may be a crucial factor in determining whether an employee seeks help.

There are a number of ways you can be helpful:

- try to develop an understanding and supportive climate within the working environment.
- make yourself approachable - give employees the opportunity to talk to you confidentially, both formally, through any regular one to one sessions you have, or informally.
- make relevant literature generally available, such as Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum Information Card and the publicity for the NCC Employee Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy (available from the HR Team).
- display any publicity information prominently.
- look out for warning signs of domestic abuse and ensure information is available, do not however, pressure an employee to disclose information to you.
- remember you are not an expert in this area, an understanding approach and offer of basic information is all that is required.
- be aware that no advice is better than bad advice.
- do not pressure a victim to leave the relationship, the nature of domestic abuse is that the victim will often stay within the relationship or return to it. Respect their decision.

6. Confidentiality and Child Protection Concerns

Confidentiality is essential for an employee who is experiencing domestic violence. It is important that the employee knows that whatever they tell you will remain confidential and will not be revealed to anyone without their permission. In some cases where a violent or abusive partner has discovered their partner has confided in someone, this has resulted in more violence and even death.

The only exception to this may be if it is revealed that children are also being abused. In this case you have a duty to report this. The employee may then find the matter is taken out of their hands and it is therefore essential that you make the employee aware of your obligations in this area at a very early stage, so that they

can decide exactly how much they wish to reveal. In all cases it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the employee is experiencing domestic violence and to ensure that the situation does not become centred solely around her/his child(ren).

7. Allowing Time Off Work

An employee who is experiencing domestic violence will almost certainly need to take time off work to attend counselling sessions, court hearings or to make alternative living arrangements, etc. The conditions of service allow for absence with pay in cases of compassionate leave and urgent domestic business under the special leave provisions. Please remember that a refusal to allow time off may often add to the anxiety of the employee concerned. Managers are expected to respond positively and sympathetically to such requests under these circumstances.

See Special Leave, Section D4 of the Personnel Handbook for details. The HR Officer for your department can give you further advice about allowing time off work.

It is recognised that an employee may not wish to disclose that they are experiencing domestic violence to their manager but will still need to take time off. In these instances the employee should be made aware that they should approach the HR Business Partner for their department for permission.

8. Adapting Working Arrangements

Employers owe a duty of care to their employees. It may be that the most effective way a manager can help an employee is to change their working arrangements, probably temporarily, but possibly on a permanent basis. Perhaps s/he is being harassed by telephone calls from the abuser, in which case a colleague or answering machine could screen calls. At particular times s/he may need to be more flexible about starting/finishing times and lunch breaks to avoid unwelcome visits; a temporary relocation of workplace may be beneficial. Whatever the needs, it is important for managers to consider all options carefully and be as flexible as possible.

It should be recognised that domestic violence will probably have a negative impact on the performance of the employee concerned and it is important that the employee is supported and positive consideration is given to measures to temporarily alleviate work pressures. In certain exceptional circumstances the employee may require redeployment.

It is important to ensure that any action taken complies with the wishes of the employee concerned and that s/he does not feel blamed or punished in any way. To minimise the potential for conflict in the workplace, any changes to working arrangements should be communicated in an appropriate way to colleagues whilst maintaining confidentiality.

You can get further advice about working arrangements from the HR Business Partner for your department.

9. Finance

An employee experiencing domestic violence is entitled to request an advance of pay in an emergency situation and this should be arranged through departmental personnel. Employees might also wish to request a change in the method of paying their salary. This too can be arranged through the HR Team.

10. Dealing with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

In some cases the abuser may actually harass an employee at the workplace. In these circumstances both the victim and her/his colleagues may be at risk. If this person has no legitimate reason to be in the workplace he/she is trespassing and may be escorted from the premises. It is essential that any action taken complies with the wishes of the employee concerned. Do not agree to pass on messages from a perpetrator of domestic violence or disclose the address or whereabouts of an employee who has fled violence.

Inevitably in such a large organisation, there will be employees who are themselves perpetrators of domestic violence. Creating an organisational culture in which domestic violence is unacceptable may help to influence perpetrators behaviour.

Where the perpetration of domestic violence conflicts with the job role, managers should seek guidance from the HR Business Partner for their department. In some cases this could put at risk the continued employment of the perpetrator.

11. Sources of Help and Advice

11.1 Contacts

Emergency Services (Fire, Police, Ambulance) If you need to call out the police to a domestic violence crime	999
Nottinghamshire Emergency Duty Team (out of hours)	0300 456 45 46
Women's Aid Integrated Services 24 Hour Freephone Domestic Violence Helpline Offers support, access to emergency accommodation/refuge and other support services, information and advice on matters such as	0808 800 0340

housing, solicitors, finance etc or just someone to talk to.
Subscribes to language line (instant interpretation service)

Umuada (primarily for African Caribbean women) **0115 975 3254**
(refuge and outreach services)

Mansfield and Ashfield Women's Aid **01623 683 250**
(refuge and outreach services)

Newark Women's Aid **01636 670 687**
(refuge and outreach services)

Nottinghamshire Women's Aid **01909 533 610**
(Refuge, drop-in and outreach services)

Midlands Women's Aid **0115 925 7647**
(refuge and outreach services)

Imani **020 8672 1800**
(Quick access housing for African Caribbean
and Asian women under 30)

Nottingham Rape Crisis Centre **0115 941 0440**
(Helpline and counselling)

Nottingham Law Centre - **0115 978 7813**
For Advice on immigration issues

Notts Coalition of Disabled People **0115 924 7176**

Lesbian & Gay Switchboard **0300 330 0630**

Children and Young People

Childline **0800 1111**
national freephone helpline

NSPCC **0808 800 5000**
national freephone helpline Confidential service for anyone

concerned about
children at risk including children themselves.

Local ASCH & PP Services

08449 80 80 80

11.2 Websites

There are also a number of web sites providing information on a range of domestic violence related issues and services. The addresses provided below are a useful starting point - all include links to other useful sites. However, please note that abusers may be able to see information which has been viewed on the internet. The sites detailed below give instructions for clearing computer histories or emptying cache files. However, many browser types have features that display recently visited sites that cannot be cleared. The safest way to find information on the internet would be at a local library, friend's house or at work. Please ensure that employees are able to access the internet for this purpose if they wish.

website: www.womensaid.org.uk

Women's Aid Federation England - for information about services available, your legal rights.

website: www.brokenrainbow.org.uk

A web site developed for survivors of same sex abuse.

website: www.equation.org.uk

Equation - useful links, information and projects housed by Equation including: Tri - information and resources for working with men on domestic violence (including information about services for men). Educator Project - Work with young people on domestic violence.