

DURHAM CONSTABULARY



Altogether Better Policing

Domestic Abuse Affecting Police Officers and Staff Policy

Application	Police Officers and Staff
Policy Owner	Human Resources
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Durham Constabulary Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme	



1.0 DOMESTIC ABUSE AND THE WORKPLACE POLICY

2.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 2.1 To provide internal assistance for staff who are victims of domestic abuse and to provide advice and guidance to any manager who may be concerned that their staff are affected by domestic abuse.

3.0 THE LEGAL BASIS AND LEGITIMATE AIMS

- 3.1 The Legal Basis for this policy comes from the following Acts:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Equality Act 2010
- Domestic Violence, Crime & Victims Bill 2003

- 3.2 Throughout the operation of this policy Durham Constabulary will seek to take the least intrusive action which fits within the working policy criteria and will act fairly and proportionally to achieve the proposed purpose

- 3.3 Durham Constabulary will operate within the policing principles as defined by the College of Policing Code of Ethics and in support of this our policies will seek to promote Accountability, Fairness, Honesty, Integrity, Leadership, Objectivity, Openness, Respect and Selflessness.

- 3.4 The Force recognises the contribution of its entire staff and is committed to creating a fully inclusive working environment. This will be achieved by making reasonable adjustments where appropriate, valuing the differences that a diverse workforce can bring and challenging unlawful and unfair discrimination, bullying, harassment, victimisation and other unfair treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

4.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 4.1 Durham Constabulary recognises that it has a role in encouraging and supporting individuals to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds. It is acknowledged that there will be victims of domestic abuse employed by Durham Constabulary and it is the Force's policy to ensure that every individual who is experiencing or has experienced domestic abuse will have their issues taken seriously and that such will be dealt with empathetically and sensitively.
- 4.2 It is recognised that domestic abuse can affect the wellbeing of staff, have a direct impact upon family members and also affect colleagues in the workplace. In this respect Durham Constabulary is committed to ensuring that all staff are provided with a supportive and safe working environment.
- 4.3 Support and assistance will be offered to individuals who are the victims of domestic abuse. This policy also provides the steps which will be taken where the perpetrator of domestic abuse is employed by Durham Constabulary.

5.0 WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE

- 5.1 The Government has agreed the below definition for domestic abuse:

'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**

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim'

6.0 POTENTIAL WARNINGS SIGNS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

6.1 Whilst there may be no obvious signs a person may be suffering domestic abuse the following non-exhaustive list of examples could signal that an individual may be experiencing such:

- The individual may confide in their colleagues or managers
- An individual may inform their line manager that they are concerned that another staff member is experiencing domestic abuse
- There may be obvious effects of physical abuse although it is important not to make assumptions
- There may be diminished performance or poor concentration
- Arriving late to the workplace
- Significant change in behaviour
- It may reveal itself as the background to poor attendance or presenteeism where individuals prefer to be in the workplace rather than at home

However, it is important to recognise that any of the above may arise from a range of different circumstances and may not be an indicator of domestic abuse.

6.2 Colleagues may also be affected by domestic abuse by:-

- Being required to perform the duties of the victim.
- Concerns regarding their own safety.
- Contact by the perpetrator regarding the victim's whereabouts

7.0 SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR STAFF

7.1 Domestic abuse is a sensitive issue and all Staff are encouraged to seek support from an appropriate person listed below if they are the victim of domestic violence:-

- Line Manager
- Head of Command / Department
- Health Management Unit team
- Head of HR
- HR Managers
- Workplace friend / colleague / trade union representative (who may then seek relevant support from the above)
- Dedicated domestic abuse champions. (see appendix C for list of champions)
- D/Chief Inspector, Safeguarding Unit (see appendix C)
- Strategic Co-Ordinator for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (see appendix C)
- D/Sgt in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (see appendix C)

7.2 If an individual approaches one of the above they should:-

- Meet with the individual in private and sympathetically explore the issue – see suggested questions at appendix A
- If appropriate, inform the individual of what they observed and express their concern.
- Be non-judgemental – the individual may seek to take time to decide how they wish to act against the abuse
- If the individual acknowledges the abuse, provide information regarding the support available to them both internally and externally (see appendix B)
- Be aware that there may be wider additional issues faced by the individual.
- If there is a direct threat to safety or specialist management advice is required, the Safeguarding Team should be contacted (see appendix C)
- Contact the D/Sgt in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to advise of the disclosure for appropriate confidential recording purposes and to ensure that a safety/risk assessment is conducted.

7.3 If necessary one or more of the below may be offered to staff experiencing domestic abuse:-

The suggested areas below outline support that may be offered to individuals experiencing domestic abuse if appropriate:-

- Special paid leave for relevant appointments, including with support agencies, solicitors, to rearrange housing or childcare and for court appointments. No record of the specific reason for the special leave absences will be recorded.
- Temporary or permanent changes to working times, patterns and duties to avoid potential contact with the perpetrator
- Changing an extension number to avoid harassing phone calls.
- Access to counselling and other support services
- An advance of pay

8.0 PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE WHO WORK FOR DURHAM CONSTABULARY

- 8.1 Domestic abuse perpetrated by a member of Durham Constabulary staff will not be condoned or tolerated under any circumstances nor will it be treated as a purely private matter.
- 8.2 Any disclosure from a member of staff that they are the perpetrator of domestic abuse will result in appropriate advice being sought from Professional Standards and Legal Services Department. Such a disclosure may lead to staff being subject to Misconduct – Disciplinary Policy for Police Staff and the Misconduct Regulations for Police Officers.

8.3 If you think you may abusive and want to stop, who can help:-

If you work for Durham Constabulary and think you may be a domestic abuse perpetrator, the force strongly recommends that you seek help to stop this behaviour. Durham Constabulary do not condone domestic abuse under any circumstance. Choose to stop, call Respect on 0808 802 4040 or find out more at: <http://www.respectphoneline.org.uk/>

The Respect Phone Line offer a confidential and anonymous helpline for anyone concerned about their violence and/or abuse towards a partner or ex-partner. They offer advice, information and support to domestic violence perpetrators, as well as to their (ex) partners and frontline workers. Their key focus is to increase the safety of those experiencing domestic violence through promoting effective interventions with perpetrators

9.0 DISCLOSURE

- 9.1 Durham Constabulary recognises and respects an individual's right to privacy and the need for confidentiality.
- 9.2 Every effort will be made to ensure that the victim's disclosure regarding domestic abuse will remain confidential unless there is a risk of serious harm to the victim, colleagues, children or vulnerable adults. If the disclosure must be appropriately shared in order to prevent serious harm, the individual will be informed of this and provided with the reason.

10.0 **APPEALS PROCEDURE**

If an individual wishes to appeal against any decision made in connection with this policy, they should write to or email, the Deputy Chief Constable at the below address within 14 days of receiving a decision. The appeal will be considered and consultation will take place with appropriate individuals to establish all facts before a decision with regard to the appeal is made. A response to the appeal will be provided in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. Should this period not be achievable the individual will be notified in writing when a decision will be communicated.

The Deputy Chief Constable
c/o Human Resources
Police Headquarters
Aykley Heads
Durham
DH1 5TT
Email human.resources@durham.pnn.police.uk

Appendix A

Asking difficult questions – all questions should be asked with great sensitivity

Indirect questions

- Are there any issues you would like to discuss with me?
- I have noticed recently that you are not yourself, is anything the matter?
- Is everything all right at work?
- Are there any problems or reason that may be contributing to your frequent sickness absence/under-performance at work?
- Is everything all right at home?
- Are you being looked after properly?
- Is your partner taking care of you?
- Are you getting on alright with your partner at the moment?

Direct questions:

The manager should ask direct questions to prompt the employee to discuss any possible experiences of domestic abuse, if they are displaying signs of physical assault or injury.

The following are some examples of direct questions, which it might be useful to ask the individual, once it has been established that there maybe or is a problem related to domestic abuse:

- Do you feel frightened of your partner or someone else at home?
- Are you currently in a relationship where you are experiencing abuse?
- Does your partner lose their temper with you? If so what happens to you as a result?
- Has your partner threatened to hurt you or your children?
- Does your partner get jealous of you seeing friends, talking to other people, going out? If so what happens?

Useful Contact Numbers

County Durham residents: Harbour Support Services – call 03000 20 25 25

<http://www.myharbour.org.uk>

Darlington residents: Sanctuary Supported Living – call 01325 283226

www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk

The Meadows, Sexual Assault Referral Centre

<http://www.themeadowsdurham.org.uk>

The Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre (Darlington and County Durham)
– 01325 369933

Refuge www.refuge.org.uk

Women's Aid www.womensaid.org.uk

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

National LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline www.brokenrainbow.org.uk

UNISON Welfare, There for You 020 7121 5620 or email

thereforyou@unison.co.uk or speak to your branch welfare officer

Confidential Care Line – CiC 0800 085 1376, assist@cic-eap.co.uk

Durham Constabulary Domestic Abuse Champions

Please see list of Champions on the Force intranet

Specialist Management Advice is available from the below

- D/Chief Inspector, Safeguarding Unit, 752247
- Strategic Co-Ordinator for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, 752124
- D/Sgt, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub , 732803
- Domestic Abuse Project Support Officer, 752125