

As an organisation we are committed to challenging employees who perpetrate domestic abuse. We also recognise that abusive behaviour is the responsibility of the perpetrator.

It is important to remember that it may not be possible to assess whether someone is a perpetrator based solely on their outward behaviour. Many perpetrators conceal their abuse by behaving pleasantly to most people.

There are however some potential indicators that an employee may be using abusive behaviours. These can include:

- ⇒ Negative comments made by the abuser about a partner (and women/men in general).
- ⇒ Jealousy or possessiveness.
- ⇒ Expressing anger and blaming their partner for issues.
- ⇒ Constant text messaging or telephoning a partner.
- ⇒ Repeated injuries (scratches, bite marks, bruised knuckles, injuries to wrists and forearms, which could be the consequence of their partner defending themselves).

There may be any number of reasons for this behaviour, but managers who suspect that domestic abuse may be an issue should discuss this with HR so that appropriate action can be taken.

A manager might also find out that an employee is a perpetrator of domestic abuse through:

**Self-disclosure** - This may be prompted by a crisis, such as a particularly serious assault, arrest or ultimatum from the abused partner.

**Indirect disclosure** - This could be a direct allegation shared with the employer by the person experiencing abuse, an allegation by a family member, friend or colleague, notification by the police or through a DBS check.

### **What to do following a disclosure:**

As an employer we have a duty of care to all employees, and alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse will be dealt with in a fair way.

Following a disclosure, an urgent assessment of the risk posed by the individual will need to be made and a preliminary investigation undertaken, in order to decide how best to proceed.

When assessing risk, the following should be taken into account:

- The job the employee does and the impact of their actions on their duties and responsibilities
- Any safeguarding implications
- The employee's work location
- The impact on the victim or his/her dependants; and
- Whether the employee has voluntarily sought help to deal with the issue.

In the first instance, the manager should always seek advice and guidance from HR.

Depending on the nature of the disclosure, it may be that the police need to be informed, in which case care must be taken not to prejudice any potential police investigation that may need to take place. In addition, if there are serious concerns regarding the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult, a referral will need to be made to [Family Connect](#) for advice on how to proceed. (Note: if the employee lives outside of the borough, Family Connect can advise on the appropriate service to contact).

#### Following the preliminary investigation:

In some cases, it may be appropriate to offer specialist help and support to the employee to address their behaviour. Organisations such as 'Respect' provide confidential and honest advice to help perpetrators to address their behaviour. An employee may need to be redeployed into an alternative role on a temporary or permanent basis whilst this support is taking place. Engaging with the abuser in a constructive way does not mean you are excusing the abuse, but it is necessary to increase safety and perhaps even save lives.

When discussing potential support, it is important to be clear that abuse is always unacceptable and abusive behaviour is a choice. It is equally important to be respectful and recognise that it is possible for perpetrators to change if they recognise they have a problem and are willing to take steps to change their behaviour.

Alternatively, it may be necessary to undertake a formal investigation in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Policy. This may be the case even though the misconduct has taken place outside of the work place. Employees should be aware that this could result in their dismissal if it is decided that their actions constitute gross misconduct and that trust and confidence has been destroyed or the Council's reputation has been damaged. For example, if an employee receives a criminal conviction, the effect of this charge or conviction on the employment relationship will need to be taken into account.

Managers should keep a confidential record of any disclosure that is made, investigatory notes and any action/ decisions that they have taken. Good records may subsequently help in any legal proceedings or disciplinary hearing involving the perpetrator.