



## Domestic Abuse Policy

<b>Original Policy:</b> February 2015	<b>CMT Date:</b> 16/02/2015	<b>JCC Cons Date:</b> 02/03/2015	<b>Exec:</b>
<b>Full Council:</b>	<b>Next Review:</b>	<b>Uploaded:</b>	

## **Domestic Abuse Policy**

### **1. Policy**

1.1. Waverley Borough Council recognises the damaging nature of domestic abuse and the serious impact it can have in the workplace in terms of the morale, health, wellbeing and self confidence of an employee. It can affect performance at work and can result in:

- Employee absenteeism and turnover
- Reduced work performance
- Stress and anxiety
- Concerns over the safety of employees

1.2. Through appropriate support and management action, Waverley aims to maintain a high performing staff team to deliver high quality services to the community.

1.3. Waverley is committed to supporting staff affected by domestic abuse through:

- Encouraging employees experiencing domestic abuse to confidentially raise the issue at work, without fear of stigma or victimisation
- Publicising within the Council offices and on Backstage, those organisations which can offer appropriate support and assistance
- Responding sensitively and effectively to those needing help and support
- Ensuring all line managers are aware of domestic abuse and its implications in the workplace

1.4. The procedure, gives guidance on how to recognise and support employees who are victims of domestic abuse.

### **2. Background**

2.1. Domestic abuse occurs regardless of gender. Whilst one in four women will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lifetime and research shows that women are more likely to suffer more serious injury and ongoing assaults than men, it should be acknowledged that men can experience domestic abuse from their female partner and that domestic abuse also occurs in same-sex relationships.

2.2. It is therefore likely that all workplaces, including Waverley, will have staff that have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse as well as those who are perpetrators of abuse. Research also shows that whilst for some, the workplace can be a place of safety, 75% of those experiencing domestic abuse are targeted by the abuser whilst at work.

### **3. What is Domestic Abuse?**

The UK Government's definition of domestic abuse is:

- 3.1. "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, and emotional.
    - 3.1.1. 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.
    - 3.1.2. 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."
  - 3.2. Domestic abuse can go beyond actual physical violence. It can also involve emotional abuse, destructive criticism, pressure tactics, disrespect, breaking trust, isolation from friends, family or other potential sources of support, control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone, and stalking.
  - 3.3. It can also include abuse inflicted on, witnessed by or threatened against children. It should be remembered that any children within the household or linked to relationships will be adversely affected by seeing or hearing such abuse and may be injured as part of the abuse or as a result of intervening during episodes of abuse.
  - 3.4. Domestic abuse occurs in all social classes, cultures, and age groups whatever the sexual orientation, mental or physical ability. Once it has started it often becomes more frequent and more violent.
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