

Domestic Abuse Policy

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Description:	The purpose of this document is to explain the responsibilities of the CCG to its employees and the support that will be offered to an employee of Lewisham CCG
Audience:	Governing Body members, committee members and all staff working for, or on behalf of, the CCG

Consultation:	
Name	Title and /or Organisation
Senior Management Team	Lewisham CCG

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1 Introduction and Purpose

Domestic abuse is a crime which can affect both women and men. It covers offences ranging from common assault to rape and murder and it has a massive impact on the victims, their family and the wider community.

Domestic abuse is a pattern of behaviour characterised by the misuse of power and control which commonly includes physical, psychological, financial, emotional and sexual abuse. Within Lewisham CCG there may be those who have experienced, or are experiencing domestic abuse and those who may be perpetrators of violence or abuse.

Lewisham CCG is committed to promoting a zero tolerance approach to domestic violence and abuse. It will ensure that the working environment promotes the view that all forms of domestic abuse is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

The CCG recognises that domestic abuse can affect an individual's work performance and that as an employer we have responsibility for health, safety and welfare of staff at work and seek to provide support to those affected.

Employees who experience abuse should be supported regardless of gender and the type of abuse. The workplace can be a lifeline for survivors of domestic abuse as it offers an opportunity to seek help. Supporting employees to remain at work can support their wellbeing over the longer term.

2 Scope and definitions

2.1 This policy applies to those members of staff that are directly employed by NHS Lewisham CCG.

This policy:

- enables the support of employees experiencing problems at work arising from domestic violence and abuse
- ensures confidentiality and sympathetic handling of situations at work arising from domestic violence and abuse
- removes fears of stigmatisation at work for employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse
- provides guidance for managers on how to support victims of domestic violence and abuse
- provides guidance for managers on how to deal with perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse
- raises awareness and understanding amongst all members of staff in the workplace of the effects of domestic violence and abuse.

2.2 Since March 2013, the cross-government definition of domestic abuse has been:

“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

2.3 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.

2.4 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.”

This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group. Harmful practices such as controlling or coercive behaviour forced marriages, honour based violence and female genital mutilation (FGM) are also considered to be forms of domestic abuse. Appendix 1 provides an explanation of these practices.

3. Process and requirements

3.1 Employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse:

Employees are not obliged to inform anyone at work about their domestic situation but the safeguarding leads within the CCG can offer support and advice in relation to domestic abuse, child protection and safeguarding adults and children.

It is understood that victims of domestic violence and abuse may feel unable to talk to anyone about their situation. They may be afraid or worried about the consequences that this may have for them, their family, home, job or income. Signs that an employee might be experiencing domestic abuse include:

- Unexplained injuries
- Decrease in productivity
- Frequent lateness or absence
- Changes in behaviour

Examples of these signs can be seen at Appendix 2

These behaviours could reflect a range of issues and at the same time, potentially lead to disciplinary action. It is therefore important to establish what is behind them.

3.2 Managerial Support

Managers should avoid victim blaming and it is important that they provide a non-judgemental and supportive environment to an employee who is experiencing domestic violence and abuse. If an employee alleges abuse they should be believed.

Managers should provide a private space to enable the employee to talk and should assure them of their confidentiality unless there are child protection issues which must be reported, or, in order to safeguard the employee, a disclosure may be made to adult or children's social care (see CCG safeguarding procedure). The manager should ask the employee what they want to do, if anything, and respect their decision and protect confidentiality in all instances except where to do so would leave children of the relationship at risk of harm or place a vulnerable adult at risk of significant harm/danger. In this instance advice should be sought from the CCG safeguarding leads.

The employee should be asked if they want to report the abuse to the police and if they need to see their GP for medical attention. This is again up to the employee. If the employee is injured they should be encouraged to seek medical attention to have the injury/injuries assessed, treated and documented. Injuries are an indicator of high risk. In some circumstances a decision may be made to report an incident to the police where a crime has been committed.

If the manager or anyone else supporting the employee considers that any children in the family or vulnerable adult may also be at risk of abuse, they must request a consultation with the Safeguarding Designates.

The manager should provide information, not advice, about domestic violence and abuse support services or helplines and also advice of workplace support such as occupational health services and the employee assistance programme. Details of support services and helplines can be found in Appendix 3. Managers must recognise the limitations of their role as they are not professional counsellors or experts

The manager should also discuss the risk to the employee whilst at work and the safety and security of colleagues. To address these issues the manager should work with them to create a personal safety at work plan. Examples of issues to be considered are outlined in Appendix 4.

The employee should be offered the same standard of support on all occasions no matter how many times the same member of staff comes forward. Because of the nature of persistent domestic violence and abuse victims often find it very difficult to leave abusive relationships.

It is important to remember that pressurising employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse to leave the abuser is not helpful. In most cases the employee will want to remain in their home and be safe. In many cases violence escalates after an attempt to leave and

therefore managers and colleagues aware of an individual's circumstances should be extra vigilant particularly with regard to absence from work. Leaving the situation either temporarily or permanently is a step that should be planned carefully with support from a specialist.

The employee should be offered the opportunity to complete the CAADA DASH

Risk

Assessment and safety planning to ensure that the level of risk can be ascertained:

this

Can be via the Police.

The employee should be offered emergency domestic leave in accordance with the CCG's Annual Leave/Special Leave Policy to enable them to take time off work in order to visit solicitors, banks, schools, support agencies etc.

3.3 Arrangements where others may be put at risk

Managers have a duty of care for all employees. Where there is an immediate risk to colleagues of the employee experiencing domestic violence and abuse, the manager must agree with the employee what will be disclosed. Details disclosed must be kept to an absolute minimum and the recipients must be informed they must treat the information confidentially and that there are risks to the employee if disclosed.

3.4 Perpetrators of domestic abuse

Managers should provide support in a non-judgemental way, to an employee who discloses they are the perpetrator of domestic violence or abuse and are seeking help.

Harassment and intimidation by a CCG employee whether of a partner or ex-partner who is employed by the CCG or not, will be considered misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

Conduct outside of work (whether or not it leads to a criminal conviction) may also lead to disciplinary action being taken because of the impact it may have on the employees suitability to undertake their role and/or because it undermines public confidence in the CCG.

Before taking action, advice should be sought from the Human Resources Business Partner.

3.5 Confidentiality

Any discussions that take place about domestic abuse and violence and any actions agreed should be documented clearly and accurately by the manager and where possible include dates, times and locations. This information may be required as evidence in any potential legal action within the criminal or civil justice system or in any internal review. The information must be stored securely and the employee should be made aware why the information is being recorded and that as far as practicably possible the information will remain confidential.

Any records must be stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

Any breaches of confidentiality will be dealt with via the CCG's Disciplinary Procedure.

Appendix 1

Definitions

Forced marriage: is a form of domestic violence. Where one or both of the parties is under 18 years, it is a form of child violence and must be referred to Children's Social Care. Where the marriage involves a vulnerable adult, it is also deemed as adult violence and must be managed under local safeguarding adult procedures.

Female genital mutilation (FGM): The WHO defined FGM as procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural, religious or other non-therapeutic reasons. Anyone knowing or suspecting that a girl is to be, or has been subjected to FGM should make a referral to Children's Social Care.

Honour based violence: The terms "honour crime" or "honour based violence" or "izzat" embraces a variety of crimes of violence including, assault, imprisonment and murder where the person is being punished by their family or community. They are being punished for actually or allegedly, undermining what the family or community believes to be the correct code of behaviour, the person shows they have not been properly controlled to conform by their family and this is to the "shame" or "dishonour" of the family.

Signs of domestic abuse:

Some of these signs may reflect a range of sensitive issues so managers should approach with caution any discussion with the employee.

Work productivity signs:

- Change in the persons working patterns: for example, frequent absence, lateness or needing to leave work early
- Reduced quality and quantity of work: missing deadlines, a drop in usual performance standards
- Change in use of the phone/email: for example, a large number of personal calls/texts, avoiding calls or a strong reaction to calls/texts/emails
- Spending an increased amount of hours at work for no reason

Changes in behaviour or demeanour

- Conduct out of character with previous employment history
- Changes in behaviour: for example, becoming very quiet, anxious, frightened, tearful, aggressive, distracted, depressed
- Isolating themselves from colleagues
- Obsession with timekeeping
- Secretive regarding home life
- Worried about leaving children at home (with abuser)

Physical signs

- Visible bruising or single or repeated injury with unlikely explanations
- Change in the pattern or amount of make-up used
- Change in the manner of dress: for example, clothes that do not suit the climate which may be used to hide injuries
- Substance use/misuse
- Fatigue/sleep disorders

Other signs

- Partner or ex-partner stalking employee in or around the workplace
- Partner or ex-partner exerting unusual amount of control or demands over work schedule
- Flowers/gifts sent to employee for no apparent reason
- Isolation from family/friends

Support services and helplines

Athena Provides support and refuge to women and children experiencing domestic abuse in Lewisham and is run by Refuge.

Athena Service 0800 112 4052
Email: lewishamvawg@refuge.org.uk

Man Kind Initiative - www.mankind.org.uk

Confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence

Helpline - Weekdays 10am to 4pm
Tel: 01823 334244

Refuge www.refuge.org.uk

Provides support to women, children and men for a range of services including refuges, independent advocacy, community outreach and culturally specific services

24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline
Tel: 0808 2000 247

Rights of Women – rights.of.women.org.uk

Advise women who have been affected by domestic and sexual violence on:

- injunctions such as non-molestation orders and occupation orders
- divorce and finances on relationship breakdown
- parental responsibility and arrangements for children
- lesbian parenting

Monday 11am-1pm, Tuesday 2-4pm, Wednesday 2-4pm, Thursday 2-4pm
Tel: 020 7608 1137

The line is closed on bank holidays

London LGBT Domestic Abuse partnership – www.lgbtdap.org.uk

The DAP is made up of 4 LGBT agencies, Stonewall Housing, Galop, London Lesbian and

Gay Switchboard and London Friend who each provide different services for LGBT Victims/survivors of domestic abuse

Tel: 0207 704 2040 or fill out a referral form on the website

True Honour – www.truehonour.org.uk

Aim to engage with Police and Agencies to gauge a better understanding of victims, to meet

the needs of South Asian Communities by providing training and raising awareness on hidden abuse and by supporting them in a safe and an empowering way Tel

07480 621711 Or e-mail sarbathwal@truehonour.org.uk
contact@truehonour.org.uk

Personal safety at work plan

All employees must be aware that under no circumstances should the personal details of an individual be divulged unless consent is given by the individual concerned. This is applicable to all employees.

In order to ensure personal safety at work consideration should be given to the following, and in discussion with a domestic abuse specialist:

- Improving security, changing keypad numbers or reminding employees of any restricted access arrangement which may apply
- Changing duty arrangements such as reception or answering the telephone
- Changing the layout of the office environment so that the victim cannot be seen from an entrance or window
- Agreeing with the victim what to tell colleagues and how they should respond when dealing with any contact from the abuser
- Providing colleagues with a photograph and or other relevant details of the abuser, e.g. car make and registration
- Ensuring robust lone working arrangements are in place
- Providing a car parking space near to the exit point of the building or arranging for the individual to be accompanied to their vehicle
- If possible a method of contacting the employee outside of work should be agreed, contacting them at home may not be appropriate.
- The CCG has a duty of care to protect both the individual and other employees. Therefore any manager/staff member may decide to call the police if they feel that staff safety may be compromised.

Domestic abuse discussion checklist

Name of employee	Reported to:	Date
Task	Action/Notes	Date complete
<p>Ensure that any discussion about the employee's situation takes place in privacy and that their confidentiality is respected as far as possible (unless there are overriding concerns such as child protection concerns)</p>		
<p>What does the employee want to do?</p> <p>What measures do they feel could help them at work?</p> <p>Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary flexibility on start/finish times • Change of work location • Screening of external calls/emails from abuser • Stress risk assessment • Share brief information with any colleagues as additional form of support • Prevent lone working <p>Manager to create log of contact/incidents they are aware of.</p>		
<p>Discuss whether to report the abuse to the police.</p> <p>Highlight the benefits of doing this.</p> <p>Remember; do not pressure them if they do not want to report it.</p>		

<p>Does the employee need to see Occupational Health, a GP or other professional for medical attention?</p>		
<p>What methods of support have been discussed and explored regarding the work place?</p> <p>Has work performance or attendance been affected?</p>		
<p>Give the employee information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Care First ▪ Local Refuge ▪ Help lines 		
<p>Has a referral been made to an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA), Housing or the Police for risk assessment and / or further support?</p> <p>Which agency will be involved?</p> <p>Has the employee consented to this?</p> <p>NB: Normally consent should be obtained from the employee unless, in your professional judgment, there is a risk of serious harm or murder.</p>		
<p>Has a safety plan (see section 2 of this document) been discussed and drawn up</p> <p>1. Regarding the workplace?</p> <p>2. Regarding the home?</p>		
<p>Have you given the employee information about local advice/support agencies and how to contact them?</p> <p>Has the employee been given a copy of</p>		

<p>'organisations providing external support – Appendix 1 of the policy?</p> <p>It may be useful to offer help in contacting agencies if the employee would feel more comfortable that way.</p>		
<p>If the person completing the checklist is not the employee's line manager, consideration should be given to informing the line manager. Describe to the employee the possible difficulties that could arise from the line manager not knowing, e.g. performance or absence monitoring.</p>		
<p>When will the employee's situation next be reviewed?</p>		

Appendix 6

Employer's Safety Plan Checklist

Please discuss and complete all of the following fields to help an employee consider their options and plan for their safety.

Ask some of the following questions:

	Action
In what way can I (and others) help you?	
What do you feel would help you keep safe?	
Do you have any concerns about your children's safety? Or vulnerable adult?	
What have you tried in the past to protect yourself and your children? Or vulnerable adult?	
Did any of these strategies help?	

Safety considerations at work:

Advise employee to keep emergency numbers at hand where possible.	
Keep emergency contact person and details in case you can't contact the employee.	
Have you identified the organisation's contact and given their details to the employee?	
Offer, if possible, changes to the employee's workplace location and work hours, especially if they do front line work or can be seen in the building.	
Consider changing or increasing workplace security:	

Change keypad numbers/ door access codes	
Remind front line staff not to give out personal information, including contact details and working hours.	
Ensure the HR / personnel information is secure.	
Review parking arrangements i.e. does someone need to escort the employee to their car?	
If the employee is experiencing any form of domestic abuse, stalking or harassment, discuss the possibility of getting a restraining order for the workplace/surrounding environment	
If the employee consents, advise colleagues (on a need to know basis) what they should do to help.	
Are there any other measures that could help?	
Discuss with employee.	

Appendix 7

Domestic Abuse Personal Safety Plan Handout

1	Keep emergency numbers easily accessible – consider the use of a mobile phone that connects directly to the police.
2	Know who your contact person is in your organisation if you need help or advice.
3	Give your organisation the name and number of an emergency contact person for you.
4	Tell someone if you are receiving any sort of threat or harassment at work
5	Think about how you travel to and from work – try to make sure that you are not travelling alone or in the dark.
6	If there is anything you think your employer can do to help increase your safety, ask as soon as possible.

General safety advice:

1	Arrange where you might go if you have to leave urgently.
2	Find places where you can quickly and safely use the phone.
3	Always carry a list of numbers with you in case of an emergency.
4	Try to save money so that you have bus or taxi fares in an emergency.
5	Get an extra set of keys for the house / car.
6	Keep the keys, money and anything else you may need in a safe place, should you have to leave quickly.
7	Talk to your children. Let them know it's not their fault. Children do not have to see abuse to be affected by it. They hear it, sense it and can be sad and frightened by it.
8	Talk to friends, relatives, your doctor, nurse or others about how you feel.

If you decide to leave home, consider taking:

Birth certificates	Marriage certificate	School records
Medical records	Driving Licence	Car documents
Money	Credit cards	Cheque books
Benefit books	Rent books	Passports
Work permits	Visa	Medications
Several days clothing	Personal possessions with sentimental value	Children's favourite toys