

Freedom of Information Request: Our Reference CTHB_213_19

You asked:

I am researching what support Trusts and Health Boards across the UK provide to employees who are experiencing domestic abuse. I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information about your Trust/Health Board:

- 1. Do you have a domestic abuse policy or something equivalent that applies to employees experiencing domestic abuse? If so, please provide a copy of the applicable policy.**

Please see attached (attachment 1) the Domestic Abuse, Violence Against Women and Sexual Violence Policy.

- 2. Do you have other policy/policies which provide for support for employees experiencing domestic abuse (for example, as part of a leave policy)? If so, please provide a copy/copies of the relevant policy/policies.**

The organisation also has a Safeguarding and Public Protection Policy (attachment 2).

Our Occupational Health Service offer advice, guidance and signposting to relevant agencies to assist the staff member who discloses incidents of domestic abuse and/or violence.

- 3. Please inform us when each of the policies caught by the above questions ('the relevant policies') were first created and, if applicable, subsequently reviewed and updated?**

The start date for each Policy, along with the review date are indicated on the front page of each individual policy.

All Workforce Policies are reviewed by an internal Workforce Policy Review Group. Each policy contains a review date however where the review date has lapsed, the policy remains extant until it is reviewed and/or updated.

Some Workforce Policies are produced on an All Wales basis. All Wales Policies are sent out to Health Boards following ratification by the NHS Welsh Partnership Forum. Once received, Workforce (HR) Teams are informed that new or updated All Wales Workforce Policies are available, with a request to share this information with their business areas. All Wales Policies are then uploaded to the internal Intranet site.

- 4. Do you have a dedicated point of contact staff member who is trained to provide information and support to employees experiencing domestic abuse? When was that role created and first made active?**

There is no dedicated point of contact in the Health Board, however the Policies offer guidance and advice for Managers, should a member of staff disclose incidents of domestic abuse or violence to them.

Staff can also disclose this information to a member of the Workforce Team, or they can they can contact the Occupational Health Department directly.

5. How are HR staff and managers made aware of the existence of the relevant policies?

Staff from the Workforce (HR) Teams, Staff Side colleagues and UHB staff representatives are members of the Workforce Policy Review Group and are involved in the updating/revision of policies.

New or updated Policies, once ratified are placed on the internal Intranet site. The Workforce Policy Review Group inform the Workforce (HR) Teams that new or updated policies are available, who in turn share this information with their business areas.

6. How are general staff made aware of the existence of the relevant policies?

See 5 above.



GIG
CYMRU
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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf
University Health Board

**DOMESTIC ABUSE, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND SEXUAL
VIOLENCE**

INITIATED BY: Director of Workforce and Organisational
Development

APPROVED BY: Corporate Risk Committee Chairman

DATE APPROVED: April 2014

VERSION: One

OPERATIONAL DATE: April 2014

DATE FOR REVIEW: April 2017

DISTRIBUTION: All Staff via Intranet & Core Brief Message

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATUS: OPEN

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1 PURPOSE

The aim of this policy is to support victims of domestic abuse and to ensure their safety whilst they are at work. It explains the processes and procedures to adopt in the event of a disclosure or suspicion of domestic abuse by a member of staff, as either a victim or perpetrator.

2 POLICY STATEMENT

The Health Board is concerned for the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees and recognises that there may be occasions when domestic abuse situations impact on the workplace. It will take any report of domestic abuse seriously. It may be necessary to support an individual in terms of working arrangements, leave or support from within the organisation or in conjunction with external agencies. This policy will provide guidance regarding how this can be achieved.

3 PRINCIPLES

Domestic violence is defined by the Welsh Government as 'any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and/or emotional. This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage and it is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group'.

The Board will endeavour to provide a safe and effective work environment that removes the perception of fear of stigma for employees who have experienced domestic abuse and prevents inappropriate judgements or comments being made by colleagues.

The Board will work in partnership with the police force and other agencies as appropriate.

Support will also be available within the organisation from Occupational Health, and Organisational Development (W&OD) and managers and colleagues within the individual's area of work.

Where the perpetrator is an employee of the Health Board, appropriate policies may be used as necessary. This may include the involvement of regulating professional bodies

It is recognised that anyone could suffer from domestic abuse and furthermore that people from minority groups are more vulnerable and may have different experiences and needs.

Domestic abuse and abuse is regarded as unacceptable and potentially criminal behaviour and will therefore not be tolerated by the Health Board.

These responsibilities are underpinned by Health and Safety legislation, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 and the Board will ensure compliance with its duties.

4 SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Cwm Taf Health Board.

5 LEGISLATIVE AND NHS REQUIREMENTS

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences regulations 1995
- The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Data protection

6 PROCEDURE

Incidents of domestic abuse are common and have a serious impact on those who experience it. Studies have consistently demonstrated the prevalence of domestic abuse, with an estimated 1 in 10 women experiencing domestic abuse each year and 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men experiencing domestic abuse in their lifetime. Domestic abuse often begins or exacerbates in pregnancy, with over a third of domestic violence starting or getting worse when a woman is pregnant. Despite this, its effects and costs within the workplace remain largely hidden and unidentified by most organisations. Research has shown that a significant proportion of employees who experience domestic abuse have taken time off work. Many others also report symptoms that have had a long-term effect on their work performance such as depression, anxiety or stress.

Domestic abuse therefore, is not just an issue for external agencies that provide services directly to the public. The Health Board recognises that

within its workforce there are potentially a significant number of employees who have or who are currently experiencing abuse in their personal lives and those who are perpetrators of abuse.

It is therefore important that the Health Board develops a clear and effective response to help minimise the impact of domestic abuse. The following procedure has been developed to help managers to deal with these issues in an appropriate and empathetic manner.

6.1 Dealing with Disclosure of Domestic Abuse

Victims are often reluctant to disclose their situation for many reasons including fear and cultural issues and hope that the abuse will stop. A manager therefore may only become aware that an employee is experiencing domestic abuse problems through employment related issues such as:

- Management of frequent sickness absences
- Management of under performance in their role for no apparent work related reason
- Obvious physical injuries
- Disclosure of abuse

Timely, appropriate support and assistance may be offered if an employee who is experiencing domestic abuse is identified at an early stage. Managers should therefore offer employees the opportunity to discuss personal issues which may be affecting their health and performance during each stage of the Sickness Absence and Capability Policies. The manager should inform the employee that, with the exception of the following conditions, any information they disclose as part of these meetings, will be treated in confidence:

- If the individual is a victim of crime and the level of severity warrants criminal justice intervention and/or immediate medical intervention, e.g. A&E;
- If safeguarding issues are identified, i.e. risk to children and young people, vulnerable adults, etc;
- If the perpetrator is a member of staff.

When dealing with situations of this nature, managers should develop a sensitive, empathetic and non-judgemental approach as it will already be difficult for victims to confide in them. The manager should therefore:

- Take the employee seriously, taking time to listen to and be prepared to believe them.
- With the exception of the safeguarding and protection of life conditions mentioned above, ensure that any discussion about the

employee's situation is confidential and private (see Employee Confidentiality section in section 6.3).

- Be mindful that the employee may not wish to discuss the matter in detail with them, but prefer to involve a colleague, Human Resources Advisor or staff side representative.
- Ensure that the employee is made aware of the difficulties, which may arise if the manager is not aware of the relevant facts and circumstances, such as managing their sickness absence or under performance in accordance with the Health Board's policies etc.
- Be aware that there may be additional issues faced by the employee because of their age, gender, sexuality, ethnic background, religion / beliefs, disability, etc.
- Be non-judgemental as the employee may need some time to decide what to do and may try many different options during the process. Research has shown that it can take a long time to break free of a violent relationship with violence often increasing when a relationship ends. The manager should not assume that because the employee returns or stays in a violent relationship that the abuse is not severe or does not take place.
- Advise the employee of the support available and explore the possible options. A list of agencies is attached as **Appendix A**. With the exception of the safeguarding and protection of life conditions mentioned above, if an employee does not want the manager to contact an agency on their behalf, the manager must respect their wishes.
- When advised of a case of domestic abuse, the manager should seek help and advice from a Human Resources Advisor if they are not comfortable in taking the matter forward or advising the employee.
- A manager's guide to asking appropriate questions of an employee they suspect may be experiencing domestic abuse is set out in **Appendix B** of this document.

6.2 Dealing with Domestic Abuse Situations in the Workplace

All disclosures of domestic abuse must be taken seriously and an appropriate assessment using the Risk identification Checklist (RIC) should be undertaken. This may be completed by the line manager or signposted to the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) at the Local Safety Unit. The checklist will assist in identifying levels of risk and it is important that the victim is aware of the organisation's duty to act to protect life. A high risk score may necessitate a referral to Childrens services and/or referral to the MARAC process where there are serious safeguarding concerns

A MARAC is a multi-agency meeting to share information to increase the safety, health and well-being of victims and their children. Managers will

be expected to have an awareness and understanding of this process to inform the member of staff before completion of the RIC. It is always best practice to obtain consent prior to referral to other agencies, however where children are involved, even if consent is refused, the information will still be shared. In situations where there is a reluctance to consent, advice should be taken from the safeguarding team.

The following additional measures may assist in managing the risks in the workplace:

- Alerting security staff and / or the main reception staff that the alleged perpetrator is not allowed access to the building, unless they have a legitimate reason for doing so, such as a patient, service user, etc.
- If possible, provide security / reception staff with a photograph and other relevant details, such as car registration number, etc, which will assist them to recognise the violent partner / ex-partner.
- Where appropriate, improve security measures, such as changing keypad numbers or ensuring that access to the building / department is not open to access from unauthorised staff or persons.
- Remind reception / switchboard staff and all other staff that they must not divulge information about employees, especially personal details such as addresses, telephone numbers or shift patterns etc.
- Where practical, consider offering a temporary or permanent change of workplace, working times / patterns, to help the employee to reduce the risk on their way to and from work. This could include a change to the office layout to ensure that the employee is not visible from reception points or from windows etc.
- Where practical, offer changes in specific duties, such as not expecting the employee to answer telephones or sit on the reception. Consider and discuss temporary secondment or permanent redeployment to another post, if an alternative, vacant, fully funded post is available.
- Agreeing with the employee what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if the violent partner / ex-partner telephones or visits the workplace.
- Seek to ensure that the systems for recording the whereabouts of the employee during the working day are adequate and if their work requires them to work outside of the office / ward, consider how risks can be minimised, for example by changing their duties or allowing another colleague to accompany them on certain journeys if practical.
- Keeping a record of any incidents of abuse in the workplace, including persistent telephone calls, emails or visits to the employee by their partner / ex-partner. These records may be used if the employee decides to press charges or apply for an injunction

against the alleged perpetrator of abuse. In extreme circumstances it may be necessary to call the police.

- These records may also be used by the Health Board if they decide to apply for an injunction, if the action of the alleged perpetrator impinges on the health and safety of a member of staff or service provision.
- Please note that when considering the above measures, the manager may have to take into account whether the measures are operationally viable. In all instances however, the health and safety of the employee and other members of staff and service users should be a primary consideration when managing the situation

6.3 Employee Confidentiality

Once an employee has confided in their manager or a member of the Workforce Management (Human Resources) Department that they are experiencing domestic abuse, they should be reassured that this information will be kept confidential, unless there are any safeguarding concerns.

An exception to confidentiality will arise if the employee indicates that their children have also experienced or witnessed abuse which is likely to cause significant harm. In these circumstances, the manager must inform the employee that they are obliged to seek further advice from the Health Board's Safeguarding Team or from Children's Services and that they may share this information with the appropriate agency.

The Health Board has a duty to maintain a secure environment for all of their employees. When a manager becomes aware that one of their members of staff is a victim of domestic abuse, it may be easier to maintain a secure working environment if all staff within the department are aware of the problem and potential risks. It is essential that the manager agrees with the individual concerned, how much and what information, if any, their colleagues will be told.

Managers should remind their staff that this information is confidential and any unauthorised breaches of this information could result in disciplinary action being taken. This is important, as the consequences of breaching confidentiality could have serious effects for the individual experiencing domestic abuse.

6.4 Support for Victims

It is important that domestic abuse victims are aware of and have access to specialist trained Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA's) who are based at the local Safety Units. There are two Safety units in the Cwm Taf area, one in Pontypridd (OASIS) and the other in Merthyr Tydfil

(TEULU); contact details are in the attached Appendix A. The IDVA's are able to assist with practical and emotional support including managing the risks and formulating a safety plan if necessary.

Managers should consider requests for flexible working to access support services which may include appointments with solicitors, police, schools, housing, benefits agencies, counselling services etc.

Employees will be entitled to special leave to attend civil or criminal court hearings as a witness, if they have been called under a subpoena or a witness summons. Entitlement to special leave may also be granted to attend court to seek an injunction against their violent partner/ex-partner. Further guidance can be found in the Health Board's Special Leave Policy.

6.5 Other Supportive Measures

An individual who has decided to leave or has recently left a violent partner may face considerable financial hardship. If they raise these matters with their manager, they should be signposted to the Consumer Credit Counselling Service. Details of these organisations are contained in **Appendix A**.

If an employee discloses to their manager that their partner has access to their finances or is exerting economic pressure upon them, they should be advised to approach their link Human Resources Advisor to enable them to arrange with Shared Services (Payroll) for an alternative method of salary payment.

It may also be appropriate to refer the employee to the Health Board's Occupational Health Counselling Services for professional support and arrange a follow up meeting, if the employee would find this helpful.

6.6 Dealing with Employees Who Are Perpetrators of Abuse

Incidents of domestic abuse that are perpetrated by members of staff will be investigated in accordance with the Health Board's internal policies and also through the professional strategy process if there are safeguarding concerns. Employees who are also members of a professional regulating body may be in breach of their code of conduct and be subject to further investigation. This could ultimately lead to suspension or dismissal if proven.

Where any employee is under investigation and it is not deemed necessary to suspend them, the decision to allow them to continue working with vulnerable adults or children will be managed through the professional strategy process.

The perpetrator may also be discussed as part of the MARAC process which will alert the Health Board to any potential risks to others whilst in their current role.

Situations may arise whereby both perpetrator and victim are employed by the Health Board and it is essential that they do not work in the same areas or come into contact during the course of their duties. As above, this may necessitate temporary or permanent redeployment.

7 TRAINING IMPLICATIONS

Managers are expected to familiarise themselves with the provisions of this Policy. The existence of this policy and its provisions will be brought to the attention of employees through existing internal communication systems, training and other relevant methods. Training will include guidance on the completion of the CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) Risk Identification Checklist.

Human Resources Officers will give full support to both managers and staff in the implementation of this policy.

8 REVIEW, MONITORING AND AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed after one year in the first instance and thereafter as appropriate, taking account of its practical application if possible. It will be updated to reflect developing legislation and good practice.

9 MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers must take overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented and monitored effectively and appropriately for employees for whom they are managerially accountable.

10 RETENTION OR ARCHIVING

In cases involving legal processes it is often necessary to demonstrate the policy in place at the time of the incident. The Workforce & Organisational Development Director must therefore ensure that copies of this Policy are archived and stored in line with the Health Board's Records Management Policy and are made available for reference purposes should the situation arise

11 NON CONFORMANCE

Any deliberate misuse or abuse of this policy will be regarded very seriously and could lead to disciplinary action or dismissal.

12 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

13 REFERENCES

- Domestic Abuse: a Resource Manual for Health Care Professionals in Wales
- CAADA co-ordinated action against domestic abuse
- MARAC implementation guide (2007)

Appendix A

SUPPORT AND ADVICE AGENCIES

Cwm Taf Health Board Safeguarding Team - 01443 744800

Provides specialist clinical support and advice for Safeguarding Children, Vulnerable Adults and Domestic Abuse. The Safeguarding Team is currently based in Ynysmeurig House, Navigation Park, Abercynon

Safer Merthyr Tydfil – 01685 353 999

Charitable organisation that includes the following domestic abuse services:

- **Domestic Abuse Resource Team (DART) - 01685 388 444 / (Freephone) 0800 3897552.** Supports male and female victims of domestic abuse
- **Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs):**
 - Community IDVA
 - Court IDVA - **01685388444**
- **Children's Support Programmes – 01685 353999.**
 - Cre8: Supports young people aged 11-25 who are at risk of, have been affected by or who have experienced domestic abuse.
 - Comets & Rockets: Supports children aged 4-11 who have been affected by domestic abuse within the family, and includes a parent / carer programme.
- **'Believe in Change' Programme - 01685 379044**
A voluntary programme (including group and 1-1 work) for any male or female perpetrator of domestic abuse who would like to change their behaviour within close / intimate relationships

Teulu Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) – 01685 387 172

Local support centre including a range of co-located services such as Llamau Merthyr Women's Services (refuge), Freedom Programme, DART, IDVAs, Recovery Toolkit, Believe in Change Programme, Children's Support Services, BAWSO Floating Support Service, and Victim Support. Appointments and drop-in available, open Monday-Friday 9-5pm.

The Oasis Centre: Pontypridd Safety Unit – 01443 494190

IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Adviser) Service. A non-gender specific service, providing independent support and advice for high risk victims of Domestic Abuse.

The Dyn Project – 08088 010 321

The Dyn Wales Helpline provides free confidential support and advice to men who experience domestic abuse in Wales.

New Pathways (Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Service) - 01685 379310

Projects cover Merthyr Tydfil and wider Cwm Taf area and include: Merthyr Tydfil Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), Merthyr Tydfil Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs), Counselling (Adult, Children, for Deaf and hard of hearing, telephone counselling), Prison/Ex-Offender Project, Children & Young People's Therapists

POLICE – For Immediate help in an emergency call the police on 999

At other times the local police force, Domestic Abuse Helpline, can offer advice and information about what the police can do to help. Calls can be made anonymously. You will find the telephone number of your local police station in your local telephone directory or via directory enquiries.

Refuge – 0808 2000 247

Refuge's network of safe houses provides emergency accommodation for women and children when they are most in need.

All Wales Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Helpline – 0808 8010 800 (24 hour helpline) www.allwaleshelpline.org.uk/

If you are experiencing domestic abuse or sexual violence, have experienced domestic abuse or sexual violence, or are worried about a friend or relative who is experiencing domestic abuse or sexual violence - then call the All Wales Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Helpline for free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Social Services Department

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Rhondda: | 01443 431513 |
| Cynon: | 01685 888800 |
| Pontypridd: | 01443 486731 |
| Merthyr: | 01685 724506 |
| Out of hours: | 01443 849944 |

In an emergency, callers should ask for the telephone number of the local Social Services Emergency Duty Team.

If a child is suspected to be at risk through domestic abuse, Social Services should be contacted immediately.

Occupational Health Department - 01443 443231

Cwm Taf Health Board's Occupational Health Service provides strictly confidential services and delivers specialist advice that supports the promotion of a healthy, safe working life for all its employees. The Occupational Health Team comprises of Occupational Health Physicians, qualified Occupational Health Nurses and other professional and support

staff, including trained counsellors. This service is free to all Health Board employees.

Employees can self refer themselves for an Occupational Health consultation or confidential counselling services.

National Health Services – See Local Telephone Directory

You will find information about local hospitals and GP Surgeries in your local telephone directory or via directory enquiries or by contacting NHS Direct Wales.

NHS Direct Wales – 0845 4647

A 24-hour confidential helpline providing advice and information on what to do if you are feeling ill, have health concerns about you or your family, information on local health services and self-help and support organisations.

FINANCIAL

Credit Unions

For free, confidential and sympathetic financial advice and assistance. Such referrals can be made regardless of whether the employee is an existing member of the Credit Union.

- **Dragonsavers Credit Union Ltd – 01443 777043**
For people who reside in or are employed in the Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taff
- **Merthyr Tydfil Borough Credit Union Ltd – 01685 377888**
People residing or employed in the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough

StepChange Debt Charity – 0800 033 4321

A free independent counselling service to help you solve your debt problems, avoid bankruptcy and learn how to manage your money.

HEALTH

Alcoholics Anonymous National Helpline – 0845 769 7555

If you need help with a drinking problem either phone our national help line or contact them by email: help@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Alcohol Concern Cymru – 02920 226 746

Alcohol Concern is a national agency for people experiencing alcohol misuse. It is working to ensure more people in Wales understand more about alcohol and what is sensible drinking.

Miscarriage Association – 01924 200799

A national helpline, which offers help and support to women who have suffered a miscarriage.

HOUSING**Local Council – see local telephone directory**

For advice you should contact the local Council Housing Department. You will be able to get the contact details for your local council offices in your local telephone directory or via Directory Enquiries.

LEGAL**Citizens Advice Bureau – See local telephone directory**

The Citizens Advice Bureau Service offers free, confidential, impartial and independent advice on a range of issues including debt, benefits, housing and legal matters. Advisers can help clients to fill out forms, write letters, negotiate with creditors and represent them at court.

The telephone number of the local Citizen Advice Bureau for any area can be found in the local telephone directory or via Directory Enquiries.

Solicitors

See local telephone directory for firms which specialise in family law.

Trade Union or Professional Staff Organisation

Trade Union or Professional Staff organisations may be able to provide free legal advice on non work related matters. Local representatives can provide further information.

SUPPORT SERVICES**Black Association of Women Step Out (BAWSO) – 0800 7318 147 (24 hour helpline)**

A specialist agency that can provide culturally sensitive and appropriate information and services to support people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds who are affected by domestic abuse and other forms of abuse, including Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage, Human Trafficking & Prostitution.

Broken Rainbow – 0300 999 5428

A National LGBT domestic violence helpline providing confidential support to all members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) communities, their family and friends, and agencies supporting them.

Childline (Wales) – 0800 1111

Freephone helpline for children and young people.

Freecall Message Home – 0500 700 740

This is a confidential, non-traceable service for individuals who have left home but want to pass on a message to family and friends without communicating directly. Women escaping domestic abuse can use this service without having to give details of where they are. This is a free service

Gwalia Care & Support - 01443 494192

A non-gender specific, drop in facility providing support and advice in relation to Domestic abuse, based at the Oasis Centre, Monday-Thursday 9am-5pm, Friday 9am-4.30pm

Mankind Initiative UK National Helpline – 01823 334 244

Provides confidential support and help for men who are experiencing domestic abuse.

Merthyr Women's Services – 01443 480067/693737 (24 hour helpline)

Provides a gender specific range of housing related support projects for women aged 16 and over.

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Cymru Wales – 0808 800 5000 (24 hour helpline)

This is a free, confidential service for anyone concerned about children at risk, including children themselves. The service offers counselling, information and advice.

The Samaritans – 08457 909090

This is a free, confidential 24 hour service offering emotional support for anyone in crisis.

Victim Support – 0845 612 1900

An independent charity, which helps people cope with the effects of crime. They provide free and confidential support and information.

All of the above details were correct at the time of writing, but please be aware that they may change over time.

Appendix B

A MANAGER'S GUIDE TO ASKING EMPLOYEES QUESTIONS ABOUT SUSPECTED DOMESTIC ABUSE

As this is a difficult subject to approach with an employee, it must be handled in a sensitive, empathetic and non-judgemental manner and with extreme care. It is important to put the employee at ease and help them to feel comfortable about disclosing information on their experiences through the use of suitable questions.

Such questions could be asked during a routine return to work interview, following a bout of sickness absence, during an informal or formal sickness absence interview or in informal/formal managing under-performance meetings etc.

If further advice or guidance is required before dealing with such an issue, a member of the Human Resource Department should be contacted.

Indirect Questions

If a manager suspects that an employee is experiencing domestic abuse, they should ask the employee indirect questions to help establish a relationship with the employee and develop empathy. For example:

- 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?

(Source: Domestic Abuse: A Resource Manual for Health Care Professionals in Wales)

By asking indirect questions it may prompt the employee to disclose information if they are otherwise hesitant.

If the employee replies that there are no problems at home, but the manager continues to have suspicions that there may be a problem, they should seek advice from their Human Resources Advisor or continue to ask questions periodically and sensitively as the opportunity arises.

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 questions must be asked with great sensitivity and care.***

This may be approached as follows:

"I am sorry to ask you this and I don't wish to cause you any offence, but I notice that you have a number of bruises/cuts/burns etc. ***I know that in the UK 1 in 4 women, or 1 in 7 men*** experience domestic abuse in the home, can you tell me how you got your injuries"?

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

- Have you ever been slapped/kicked/punched etc, by your partner?
- Do you feel frightened of your partner or someone else at home?
- Are you currently in a relationship where you are experiencing abuse or 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?
- Does your partner blame alcohol or drugs for their behaviour towards you?

(Source: Domestic Abuse: A Resource Manual for Health Care Professionals in Wales)