

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LANCASHIRE



OPCC – Employees Domestic Violence Policy

Statement of Intent

It is important to recognise domestic violence is a widespread problem that cannot be ignored.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) will take all reports of domestic violence involving employees seriously and will endeavour to act in ways which increase the safety and welfare of employees who are victims or perpetrators of abuse.

This will include supporting staff through the HR policies and procedures which may be able to assist them and, if appropriate, sign posting them to specialist domestic abuse services.

The OPCC recognises while it is mainly women who experience domestic violence, this policy applies equally to men who need advice or support.

Definition

According to the Government, domestic violence is "any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

Aims of the policy

The aims of the domestic violence policy are:

- To support the Commissioner's priorities to raise awareness of domestic abuse and champion the rights of victims.
- To demonstrate the commitment of both the Commissioner and the wider OPCC to challenging the crime of domestic violence.
- Raise awareness of the extent and nature of domestic violence and its effects in the workplace.
- Assist and support employees who are both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and want help in addressing problems arising from domestic violence.
- Equip managers and employees with the knowledge to recognise, address and help prevent domestic violence/abuse.
- Provide guidance to managers and make employees who are perpetrators aware of possible actions which may be taken.
- Provide guidance to managers of issues to consider before commencing other procedures, e.g disciplinary, capability, management of attendance, grievance.
- Assist the OPCC to meet its legal obligations (see below).

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LANCASHIRE



- Achieve positive outcomes on all the potential impact of domestic abuse on the workplace, as outlined below.

Implementing a domestic violence policy is important in order for the OPCC to demonstrate its commitment to safeguarding staff, taking the wider issue of domestic abuse seriously, and recognising its potential to make a positive difference to the lives of staff members by doing so.

Legal obligations

The OPCC recognises it has a legal responsibility to promote the safety and welfare of all staff in line with the Gender Equality Duty and under both the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1992).

Confidentiality

Staff should report instances of domestic abuse to their line manager, if they wish to do so.

The OPCC respects an employee's right to confidentiality and recognises employees experiencing domestic violence normally have the right to complete confidentiality. However, in circumstances where child protection or the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse are a concern, child protection and adult protection services may need to be involved. Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in these situations.

Right to privacy

The OPCC respects an employee's right to privacy, and recognises they are under no obligation to inform the organisation they have been a victim of domestic violence. However, where adjustments in working arrangements are requested as a result of the abuse, it would aid the organisation to be aware of the circumstances.

Anti-discrimination

The OPCC will not discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to domestic violence, in terms of his or her existing employment or career development.

Impact of domestic violence on the OPCC

The OPCC recognises that, where staff members are affected by domestic violence, there may be the following impacts:

Impact of domestic violence on employees:

- Direct impact on an employee's ability to work due to physical abuse, including physical injuries and homicide.

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LANCASHIRE



- Absenteeism due to physical and psychological injuries.
- Time off required to seek professional help.
- Poor time keeping due to the abuser attempting to prevent the victim from going to work.
- Harassment/abuse at work by the perpetrator.
- Requirement to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities.

Impact of domestic violence on colleagues:

- Providing cover whilst victims are absent.
- Cover for victims' low output.
- Feeling resentful of victims needing time off or receiving extra attention.
- Trying to protect the victim from unwanted phone calls or visits.
- Feel helpless and unsure about how to intervene.
- Being distracted from their own work.
- Fear for their own safety e.g. be followed by the abuser and subjected to questioning about how to contact the victim.

Impact of domestic violence on the OPCC:

- Negative impact on productivity, performance and morale.
- Costs associated with staff turnover.
- Requirement to meet health and safety responsibilities.
- Ethical and moral responsibility to ensure the welfare of all staff.
- Safeguarding of the organisation's reputation

The role of managers in delivering the policy

- Provide a sensitive and non-judgemental approach.
- Ensure that confidentiality is respected as far as possible.
- Understand that the employee may not wish to approach their line manager and may prefer to involve a third party such as a colleague or human resources manager.
- Recognise the employee may need some time to decide what to do and may try many different options during this process.
- Discuss measures to prioritise safety in the workplace.
- Be aware of what support is available and explore these options with the employee. This may address leave and time off work, financial issues and health effects.

This policy will be reviewed annually.