Policy statement
The Office of the Police and Crime Commission (OPCC) is committed to heightening awareness of domestic abuse and fulfilling its duty of care to all employees. This policy defines the way in which the OPCC will support employees who are the victims of abuse.

Scope
All employees of the OPCC

Policy aims
The aims of this policy are to:
- support employees who are experiencing domestic abuse
- signpost employees to specialist domestic violence and abuse services
- provide a framework for managers to respond to domestic abuse concerns

Check which policy to use
Absence from work due to sickness should be addressed through the Managing Sickness Absence Policy.

Unsatisfactory performance due to a lack of skill, knowledge, experience or aptitude should be addressed using the Managing Unacceptable Performance Policy.
**Key definition**

The Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership, who lead on the development of the County’s domestic abuse strategy, define domestic abuse as:

“All 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. This includes issues of concern to black and minority ethnic communities such as honour based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. Domestic abuse frequently co-exists with child abuse.”

The OPCC recognises that domestic abuse may include a range of behaviours such as hitting, biting, burning, verbal threats, physical threats, being watched, being constantly blamed, having wages or pensions taken away, rape and indecent phone calls.

**What the law says**

The areas of legislation and guidance for the sharing of information in domestic abuse situations include Common Law Duty of Confidence, Human Rights Act, Caldicott Guidelines, Crime and Disorder Act and the Data Protection Act.

**Employee reporting domestic abuse**

Employees are encouraged to raise issues of domestic abuse with their line manager in the first instance.

Employees should consider what the OPCC and / or their trade union may be able to do to help and which of the support measures available they may wish to explore.

**Manager receiving a report of domestic abuse**

If an employee discloses they are the victim of domestic abuse or where a manager suspects the employee might be:

- the manager should meet to discuss this sensitively and confidentially with the employee. Managers must be familiar with this policy in order to ensure the correct support and advice is offered

- each time a disclosure of domestic abuse is made, the manager should complete:
  - an incident checklist
  - a safety plan checklist
  - a referral for a domestic abuse DASH risk assessment

The manager must consider the employee’s safety during all contact and any subsequent referrals.
**Support measures**

The OPCC is committed to ensuring support in the following areas, subject to operational requirements:

- to provide compassionate leave to employees who are victims of domestic abuse
- to provide the opportunity to work flexibly, if necessary, to enable the employee to visit relevant agencies including solicitors, attending counselling, or to make alternative living arrangements
- to consider a change of work arrangements, a change of workplace or extended leave
- to offer confidential counselling through the Counselling Service
- to consider any relevant risk assessments, health and safety and security arrangements that may need to be in place
- to consider allowing a period of paid or unpaid leave
- to look sympathetically at requests for reasonable time off to attend appointments during work time with various support agencies or to attend hearings

**Record keeping**

Managers must keep accurate documentation and records of domestic abuse concerns as these may have an important role in providing evidence.

**Confidentiality**

Employee consent should normally be obtained before information is sought or passed on by the manager to related departments. The dangers associated with breaches of confidentiality in domestic and sexual violence cases can be extreme.

There are some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be assured such as concerns about children or vulnerable adults or where the manager needs to act to protect the safety of employees and their families.

Where there is significant concern for the employee’s safety or concern that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, information must be passed on without the employee’s consent. Where this is believed to be the case for a child the local authority has specific statutory obligations and a referral must be made to Children’s Services.

**Safeguarding**

The need to share information in relation to the protection of children or vulnerable adults overrides data protection and confidentiality obligations.

**Perpetrators of domestic abuse**

Employees who are perpetrators of domestic abuse may be managed using the Managing Misconduct Policy.
Related documents
To help with the application of this policy it may be useful to read the following:
- Managing Requests for Flexible Working Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Annual Leave and Time Off Policy
- Resolving Workplace Issues Policy
- Managing Misconduct Policy

Other relevant policies and procedures
- Data protection policy

Support
Employees:
Queries should be directed to your line manager.

A confidential Employee Support service is available on freephone 0800 030 5182 (or 0161 836 9498 if calling from a mobile) at any time. Further information is available at http://www3.hants.gov.uk/employee-support

Managers:
Further information is available in the Managers’ How to guide – Supporting Employees Experiencing Domestic Abuse.

Advice on remaining queries can be directed to HR Operations

Other support services
Trade Unions can offer information and workplace support as well as signposting to support organisations.

24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline:
0808 2000 247
Provides advice and information, including help finding local services.

Hampshire Constabulary (your local Public Protection unit)
Tel: 101

Outreach/Floating Support Services
Domestic abuse outreach/floating support provides independent and impartial advice, guidance and support on a range of topics such as housing, schooling and benefits. This can be through one to one meetings in safe, neutral surroundings away from clients’ homes, by telephone contact or through group support. The service is free and confidential and available to both men and women. There are several locally run outreach/floating support services in Hampshire – to find your most local service, see the local service directory/map at: http://www.hdaf.org.uk

Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership:
http://www.hampshiredomesticabuse.org.uk (for the public)
http://www.hdaf.org.uk (for managers)
Women’s Aid website:
www.womensaid.org.uk

Men’s Advice Line Enquiries:
www.mensadviceline.org.uk
Provides information and publicity for male victims of domestic abuse.

Respect:
http://www.respect.uk.net
Help and advice for perpetrators of domestic abuse.

The ADAPT programme: 023 8021 3520
http://www.hamptontrust.org.uk/what_we_do/da_services/adapt_men.html
Email: info@hamptontrust.org.uk
For male perpetrators of domestic abuse in Hampshire who want to change their behaviour.

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Employees of non Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner bodies are excluded from this policy and should refer to their own employer’s policies and procedures.