

7.07 Domestic Violence and Abuse

This policy provides advice on how Departments and Agencies should deal with domestic violence situations that might arise.

- The Provides details of the first point of contact for employees who need to discuss issues around domestic violence – Section 7 Help and Support for Individuals Experiencing Domestic Violence
- Identifies Signs of Domestic Violence – Section 5 Identifying Domestic Violence
- Sets out the role of the Line Manager and Welfare Officer – Section 6 The Role of Line Managers and the Welfare Service
- List of Contact details for Support Services available to staff – Section 8 Support Services

The following terms within this policy are defined in the glossary:

Domestic violence and abuse, coretime

You may also be interested in the following policies:

7.02 Staff Welfare

This policy is version 4.

For a printable version please click the icon. Please make sure that your printed version is current with the one on this portal.

This homepage is only a guide to the policy, not the policy itself. In the event of any discrepancy between the content of this homepage and the associated policy, the wording of the policy shall apply.

7.07 Domestic Violence and Abuse

CONTENTS

1 Introduction	3
2 What is Domestic Violence and Abuse?	3
3 The Impact of Domestic Violence on the Workplace	3
4 The NICS Position.....	4
5 Identifying Domestic Violence.....	4
6 The Role of Line Managers and the Welfare Service	5
7 Help and Support for Individuals Experiencing Domestic Violence	5
8 Support Services	5

7.07 Domestic Violence and Abuse

1 Introduction

1.1 Domestic violence and abuse is a serious problem. It has a devastating impact on victims and their families. It is likely that every Department and Agency has employees who have been affected by, or are at risk from domestic violence, or who are perpetrators of domestic violence.

1.2 This section provides advice on how Departments and Agencies should deal with domestic violence situations that might arise.

2 What is Domestic Violence and Abuse?

2.1 Domestic violence and abuse is essentially a pattern of behaviour, which is characterised by the exercise of control and misuse of power by one person over another within an intimate relationship or a family. It is usually frequent and persistent. It knows no boundaries as regards age, gender, race, ethnic or religious group, sexual orientation, wealth, disability or geography, but in the majority of reported cases women are the victims. It has wide adverse effects on children.

2.2 Domestic violence and abuse means: “threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation”.

3 The Impact of Domestic Violence on the Workplace

3.1 Home and work issues cannot always be separated and domestic violence can impact greatly on the working life of someone who is being abused. Domestic violence can result in deterioration in performance, increased absenteeism or poor timekeeping, threatening job prospects and poor timekeeping and job security.

3.2 People experiencing domestic violence are especially vulnerable once they attempt to leave abusive partners and may become vulnerable going to or coming from work, or while they are at work as the abuser knows where they can be located. This can give rise to health and safety issues and an increased risk of workplace violence.

3.3 By having policies in place to assist you if you should experience domestic violence, it is possible to create a safe and supportive environment where your workplace can become a place of safety. A policy that supports employees experiencing domestic violence is also of benefit to the employer, helping them to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the workforce and increase productivity.

4 The NICS Position

4.1 The NICS:

- a. is committed to the principle that domestic violence and abuse is unacceptable behaviour and that everyone has a right to live free from fear and abuse;
- b. will provide details of the first point of contact should you need to discuss issues around domestic violence;
- c. is committed to creating a supportive environment and to providing confidential mechanisms if you do experience domestic violence to enable you to seek help and information;
- d. is committed to offering ongoing support should you experience domestic violence;
- e. is also committed to raising awareness on domestic violence issues; including provision of resources, posters and information on domestic violence available in the workplace;
- f. will review the effectiveness of the guidance and regularly update information on help available and how to contact support services.

5 Identifying Domestic Violence

5.1 Individuals experiencing domestic violence can suffer a broad range of physical and emotional consequences. Possible signs of domestic violence might include:

- a. poor attendance record;
- b. uncharacteristic depression, anxiety, distraction or problems with concentration;
- c. unexplained poor quality of work performance;
- d. the receipt of repeated upsetting calls/faxes/emails, or you being a victim of vandalism or threats;
- e. obsession with time;
- f. needing regular time off for appointments;
- g. repeated injuries, or unexplained bruising or explanations that do not fit the injuries displayed; or
- h. increased hours being worked for no apparent reason.

6 The Role of Line Managers and the Welfare Service

6.1 Individual line managers can, in consultation with Welfare Service, play a key role in supporting you should you be subjected to or have been victims of domestic violence. Managers should make a managerial, rather than a personal commitment, to help you resolve any issue when they are asked for assistance. This reduces the potential for confusion arising about the line manager's role and can reduce the potential for complications or blurring of responsibilities for both manager and yourself. Both of you can seek advice on such matters from the appropriate Personnel Officer or Welfare Officer.

6.2 Any discussion about your situation will take place in private and any questions will be asked with care and sensitivity, reinforcing that, subject to the provisions of the law, confidentiality will be respected. However, you should not be pressured into disclosing any personal information that you do not feel comfortable disclosing. If domestic violence is disclosed, line managers need to recognise that you may need specialist help and should refer you to the Employee Assistance Programme and/or Welfare Service for further advice.

7 Help and Support for Individuals Experiencing Domestic Violence

7.1 Any individual experiencing domestic violence should be made aware that there is help available. If you are in this position and do not feel comfortable talking to a line manager, then you should be referred to the Department's Welfare Officer or Personnel Branch, who can provide information on organisations which can offer advice and support. If appropriate, line managers may introduce limited workplace measures to assist you, for example in the interim giving some leeway regarding coretime.

7.2 Although managers will try to provide as much support as possible if you are experiencing domestic violence, you may also need to be reminded of what is expected with regard to performance and attendance when you are at work. Managers should keep records of discussions, as appropriate.

7.3 Trade Union Side will offer help and support if you are experiencing domestic violence.

8 Support Services

8.1 **Anyone who feels in immediate danger should dial 999.**

8.2 Police Service of Northern Ireland

Domestic Violence Officers 028 9065 0222
(Ask to speak to the local Domestic Violence Officer)

8.3 Women's Aid

Women's Aid is the lead voluntary organisation challenging domestic violence in Northern Ireland. Its main aim is to create a safe and supportive society for women, children and young people affected by domestic violence.

8.4 Freephone Helpline

24 hour Domestic Violence Helpline 0800 9171414

8.5 Local Women's Aid Helplines

Ballymena	028 2563 2136
Belfast	028 9066 6049
Coleraine	028 7032 1263
Cookstown and Dungannon	028 8676 9300
Craigavon	028 3834 3256
Fermanagh	028 6632 8898
Foyle	028 7128 0060
Newry	028 3025 0765
North Down and Ards	028 9127 3196
Omagh	028 8224 1414

8.6 Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender Helplines

Cara Friend - Gay Helpline	028 9032 2023
- Lesbian Helpline	028 9023 8668
Rainbow Project	028 9031 9030
Belfast Butterfly Club	078 8543 0408

8.7 Other Useful Numbers

Men's Advisory Project (MAP)	028 9024 1929
------------------------------	---------------

This organisation provides a service to male victims of domestic violence and abuse and also offers counselling to men on anger management.

Men to Men	028 9023 7779
Rape Crisis Centre	028 9024 9696
Nexus	028 9032 6803
Victim Support	028 9024 4039
Disability Action	028 9029 7880
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities	028 9023 8645
Citizen's Advice Bureau	028 9023 1120
Law Society (Legal and Local Solicitor Advice)	028 9023 0696
Opportunity Now	029 2043 6912
Relate	028 9032 3454
Samaritans	08457 90 90 90
Parents' Advice Centre (Helpline Freephone)	0808 8010722
Parents' Advice Centre (HQ Office Line)	02890 310891
Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission	028 9024 6441

8.8 Trade Unions

NIPSA

Harkin House
54 Wellington Park
BELFAST
BT9 6DP

Telephone: 028 9066 1831
Fax: 028 9066 5847

UCATT

Rooms 108/110
Midland Building
Whitla Street
BELFAST
BT15 1JP

Telephone: 028 9075 1866
Fax: 028 9075 1867

AMICUS

26 – 34 Antrim Road
BELFAST
BT15 2AA

Telephone: 028 9074 7871
Fax: 028 9074 8052

GMB

3 – 4 Donegall Quay
BELFAST
BT1 3EA

Telephone: 028 9031 2111
Fax: 028 9031 2333

ATGWU

Transport House
102 High Street
BELFAST
BT1 2DL

Telephone: 028 9023 2381
Fax: 028 9024 0133