

# Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy and Procedures

## 1. Policy Statement

Oxford City Council is committed to tackling all forms of violence and abuse; including Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA). All cases of domestic abuse experienced by employees will be treated seriously.

Oxford City Council recognises that its employees will be amongst those affected by DVA, either as survivors/victims of DVA, friends, family or colleagues of victim/survivors, or perpetrators of DVA.

Oxford City Council is committed to ensuring a safe workplace and to safeguarding the health and well-being of employees. As such, Oxford City Council are committed to taking all reasonable steps to combat the reality and impact of domestic abuse on those being abused and to challenge the behaviour of perpetrators.

Oxford City Council will work to ensure that any employee who experiences DVA can raise the issue at work, without fear of stigmatisation or victimisation and will receive appropriate support and assistance to protect themselves and their children

This policy outlines the role of Oxford City Council in supporting employees who have experienced or are experiencing DVA and where there are concerns that an employee may be the perpetrator of DVA.

## 2. Who is covered by this policy?

- 2.1 This policy covers all employees of the council.
- 2.2 This procedure has been drafted in consultation with the Council's Domestic and Sexual Abuse Coordinator, and applies to all employees regardless of status or length of service

## 3. Duty of Care

- 3.1 Under the Human Rights Act 1998 all public bodies have an obligation to protect the human rights of individuals and to ensure their human rights are not violated. DVA denies the individual the most fundamental of human rights. Implementing a workplace policy assists authorities to meet their human rights duties in relation to incidents of domestic abuse. Failing to tackle this could lead to an infringement of the Human Rights Act.

- 3.2 The Equality Act 2010 includes a public sector duty and those subject to the general equality must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity for protected groups; and foster good relations.
- 3.3 Health and safety laws ensure workers have the right to work in a safe environment where risks to health and wellbeing are considered and dealt with effectively. The main areas of health and safety law relevant to violence at work:

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

#### 4. Definition

- 4.1 The Home Office defines Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) as:  
‘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

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.

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.” (A list of different abuses can be found in Appendix 1)

- 4.2 DVA occurs in all groups and sections of society and may be experienced differently, due to, and compounded by gender and gender identity, race, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, culture, class or mental health.

4.3 For the purposes of this document the term 'survivor' will be used for those affected by DVA and the term 'perpetrator' for the person who has instigated DVA.

4.4 Throughout this document survivors and perpetrators can be female or male, however women are disproportionately survivors of DVA. Male survivors may need a different type of support from specialist services. (A list of specialist services can be found in Appendix 2)

## 5. DVA in the workplace

5.1 DVA can impact greatly on an individual's working life affecting their emotional, mental and physical health which interferes with productivity and performance. There are many ways perpetrators can abuse their partner in the workplace including but not limited to constant phone calls, unannounced visits, following to and from work, abusive emails, making false accusations to line managers. However for some survivors the workplace is a safe haven.

5.2 DVA can also have an impact on a survivor's mental health. In addition some survivors misuse drugs and/or alcohol as a coping strategy if they are living with DVA. These factors are also likely to impact on an individual's ability to function normally at work; lateness, absenteeism, poor performance, poor concentration and exhaustion.

5.3 DVA also affects people close to the survivor and this can include work colleagues. Some effects may include:

- Being followed to or from work
- Being subjected to questioning about the survivor's contact details or location
- Covering for other workers during absence from work
- Trying to deal with the abuse and fear for their own safety
- Being unaware of the abuse or not knowing how to help

## 6. Evidence for taking action in the workplace

6.1 Each year in the UK at least 3 million women experience violence

6.2 DVA costs UK business over £1.9 billion each year in lost economic outputs

6.3 In the UK in any one year, more than 20% of employed women take time off work because of DVA and 2% lose their job as a direct result of the abuse

6.4 75% of those experienced DVA are targeted at work

6.5 Statistically 25% of female employees and 16% of males in Oxford City Council will have experienced DVA and 10% of the females are currently experiencing

it.<sup>1</sup>

6.6 53% of victims of DVA are absent from work at least three days per month<sup>2</sup>

6.7 56% of abused women arrive late for work at least 5 times per month<sup>3</sup>

## 7. Additional needs

7.1 Members of staff may have different needs and experience and these should be taken into account, for example:

- Older women are less likely to report their experiences of domestic abuse
- Disabled women are more likely to experience domestic abuse and sexual violence than non-disabled women
- Ethnic minority women face additional barriers to accessing support
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual women and men can be vulnerable to abusers who undermine their sexuality and threaten to 'out' them to colleagues, employers and family members
- Transgender women and men may have fewer services available to them
- Men experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence may find it more difficult to disclose abuse and may find more barriers to accessing support<sup>4</sup>

## 8. Guidelines for Managers

8.1 Whilst the majority of violent and abusive incidents take place in the home they can occur in the workplace as well as the impact spilling into the work environment. Employers have an important part to play in referring survivors and perpetrators to specialist organisations, assisting them to access support and putting measures in place to increase their safety. Managers are able to:

- Recognise the problem – look for signs and ask
- Respond appropriately
- Refer on to appropriate help
- Record the details

### 8.2 Recognising domestic abuse

Survivors of domestic abuse may not confide in anyone in their place of work

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<sup>1</sup> 1-5 statistics from [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

<sup>2</sup> Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence; [www.safelives.org.uk](http://www.safelives.org.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> The Proposed Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Duty, p7; Equality and Human Rights Commission

for a wide variety of reason. It is more likely the Manager will become aware of the situation through associated issues. The signs that an employee may be experiencing violence and abuse at home can include:

### **Work Productivity signs**

- Persistently late without explanation or with unusual explanation, or needing to leave work early on a very regular basis
- High absenteeism without explanation or with unusual explanation
- Changes in the quality of work performance for unexplained reasons
- Increased time being spent at work for no apparent reason i.e. arriving early and leaving late
- Upset at work due to receipt of upsetting emails, texts, phone calls

### **Psychological signs**

- May cry frequently or be anxious at work
- Uncharacteristic depression, anxiety, distraction, problems with concentrating
- Changes in behaviour; may become quiet and withdrawn and avoid interacting with others
- Fear of partner or references to anger
- Expresses fear at leaving children home alone with their partner

### **Physical signs**

- Repeated injuries such as bruises; the explanation for injuries that seem implausible
- Frequent and/or sudden/unexpected medical problems/sickness absence
- Fatigue
- Change in the way an employee dresses i.e. excessive clothing in summer; unkempt or dishevelled appearance
- Change in the pattern or amount of make-up worn

### **Other signs**

- Receives constant phone calls or texts from their partner or ex/partner
- Partner regularly meets the staff member outside work
- Employee appears anxious about going home
- Employee is anxious about leaving work on time

## **8.3 Managing performance and/or attendance**

Managers should be aware of the possibility of DVA when implementing either the Performance Improvement Policy and Procedure or Attendance Management Policy. If the manager suspects DVA could be the cause of poor performance or absence they should create a safe environment in which the employee is free to disclose the abuse if they wish to do so. The focus should be on supporting the employee rather than penalising. (See Appendix 3 for further information on creating a safe environment)

#### **8.4 Asking the question**

Survivors of abuse may find it difficult to disclose in the absence of direct questioning because they are not sure what to say and how to start the conversation, fear of being judged or not being believed. They may also not recognise they are being abused. It is possible they are fearful about what will happen if they do disclose. There may also be cultural barriers to speaking out. Asking about DVA can generate anxiety in managers as they can be concerned about causing offence, are not sure what to do if they do disclose or may get it wrong.

If a manager suspects the employee may be suffering violence and abuse at home they should have a conversation with them in a private and safe setting. The manager can ask non-threatening questions to gently encourage the employee to open up, for example 'I have noticed recently that you are not yourself, is anything the matter?' (For a more comprehensive list of possible questions please see Appendix 3)

#### **8.5 Responsibility of the Manager**

If the employee is in immediate danger the manager should call the police on 999.

The manager's role is to provide practical work related support for the employee and signpost them to specialist services (see Appendix 2 for a list of services) which can provide appropriate risk assessment, safety planning and support. If the employee does not wish to engage with a support service the manager could suggest they speak to one of the Domestic Abuse Champions within the City Council (a list of Champions can be found in Appendix 7). The manager is not responsible for stopping the abuse or assisting the employee to leave the relationship; the most dangerous time for a survivor is just before and up to 18 months following a separation.

#### **8.6 Responding to a disclosure**

It is important the manager provides a supportive environment to talk. They must be non-judgemental and validate the experience of the employee with statements such as 'you do not deserve to be treated that way' (see Appendix 3 for further guidance). When a survivor discloses they are experiencing DVA it is vital that they are believed without passing judgement on the perpetrator and the employee's response. Boundaries and privacy should be respected.

#### **8.7 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality should be maintained at all times and information can only be shared with the permission of the employee. Confidentiality can be broken only if the employee, a child or vulnerable adult is at significant risk of harm. If a child or vulnerable adult is at risk the manager should follow the procedures outlined in the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adult Policy. If the

employee is at significant risk the police should be contacted.

## **8.8 Work place safety**

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) employers have a duty to ensure, as far as possible, the health, safety and welfare of employees at work. The management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1992) requires employers to assess the risk of violence to employees and make necessary arrangements for their health and safety. Once the manager is aware of domestic abuse they must discuss with the employee what measures could be put in place to keep them safe at work (see Appendix 5 for possible safety measures).

## **8.9 Time off**

If the victim needs to attend appointments for example with support services, GP, police, solicitor or housing, the manager may use their discretionary powers to allow reasonable time off. Unpaid leave should be considered if paid leave options have been exhausted.

## **8.10 Recording information**

It is essential to record concerns or disclosures of DVA. The manager should inform the victim they will be doing this but they do not need their permission to do so. All records should be kept confidential (for further guidance see Appendix 6)

## **8.11 Employees who perpetrate DVA:**

A manager may be concerned an employee is a perpetrator of DVA if:

1. If an employee directly discloses perpetrating DVA
2. An employee raises concerns about a colleague's possible abusive behaviour
3. An employee discloses being a victim of DVA and the perpetrator is also an employee

If an employee suspects a colleague is perpetrating DVA they should inform their manager in confidence. The safety of the victim and any dependents is the priority. The Whistle Blowing Policy provides protection for an employee who raises a concern in good faith.

## **8.12 Response**

If an employee is perpetrating DVA the priority for the manager is to increase safety and promote help seeking. The manager should speak to the employee in a positive, respectful manner without excusing the abuse (see Appendix 4). They may also signpost the employee to specialist support (see Appendix 2 for support services). If the manager is concerned a child or vulnerable adult is at significant risk of harm they should discuss with their safeguarding lead or the

Domestic & Sexual Abuse Coordinator and follow the Council's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy.

### **8.13 Taking disciplinary action**

DVA is a serious matter and could lead to disciplinary action in work and/or a criminal conviction. Employees may be subject to investigation under the Disciplinary Policy in the following circumstances:

- If they have committed a criminal offence, or serious evidence of assault/harassment
- If they are involved in DVA related incidents that occur in the workplace or during work time, including making threatening telephone calls or misuse of computer network
- If an employee's activities outside work have an impact on their ability to perform the role for which they are employed, or are likely to bring the Council into disrepute. This is particularly relevant for those who work with the public, with children or vulnerable adults
- If a colleague is found to be assisting an abuser in perpetrating the abuse, for example, by giving them access to facilities such as telephones or email then they will be seen as having committed a disciplinary offence
- If an employee discloses confidential information about another employee or service user
- If it becomes evident that an employee has made a malicious allegation that another employee is perpetrating abuse, perhaps in relation to a custody battle, then this will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and action will be taken

### **8.14 When both the victim and perpetrator are employees of the Council**

The main priority is the safety of the victim and ensuring that any actions do not increase the risk to them. Any decisions should be agreed with the victim before being actioned. Disciplinary action may be considered against the employee who is perpetrating abuse. Action may also be taken to minimise the potential for the perpetrator to use their position or Oxford City Council's resources to further abuse or to locate the victim. Where suspension or termination of employment is being considered the manager should speak to local support services to ensure safety plans are put in place with the victim.

Mediation or couple counselling is never a recommended course of action where DVA is present.

### **8.15 Recording information**

Any disclosure of abuse or allegation of abusive behaviour should be recorded in full and kept in a secure folder (see Appendix 6 for guidance on recording information). In the event of criminal proceedings the records may be used by the police.

## 8.16 Training

Training on awareness of domestic abuse and stalking can be provided by the Domestic & Sexual Abuse Coordinator. Domestic Abuse Champions training is available free of charge and can be accessed through [www.reducingtherisk.org.uk](http://www.reducingtherisk.org.uk)

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1	List of different abuses
Appendix 2	Support Services
Appendix 3	Asking about DVA
Appendix 4	Dealing with suspected perpetrators of DVA
Appendix 5	Safety in the workplace
Appendix 6	Recording Information
Appendix 7	Domestic Abuse Champions

## Appendix 1

### List of different abuses<sup>5</sup>

There are 3 categories of risk;

1. Standard – there are no indicators of serious harm
2. Medium – there are identifiable indicators of serious harm. The offender has the potential to cause serious harm but is unlikely to do so unless there is a change in circumstances
3. High – there are identifiable indicators of serious harm. The potential event could happen at any time and the impact would be serious

Risk of Serious Harm (Home Office 2002 and OASys 2006):

‘A risk which is life threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible.’

<b>Physical abuse</b>			
No	Standard	Moderate	High
Never, or not currently	Slapping, pushing; no injuries.	Slapping, pushing; lasting pain or mild, light bruising or shallow cuts.	Noticeable bruising, lacerations, pain, severe contusions, burns, broken bones; threats and attempts to kill partner, children, relatives or pets; Strangulation or holding under water; loss of consciousness; use of (or threats to use) weapons; head injury, internal injury, permanent injury, miscarriage.
<b>Sexual abuse</b>			
No	Standard	Moderate	High
Never, or not currently	Use of sexual insults.	Uses pressure to obtain sex; unwanted touching; nonviolent acts that make victim feel uncomfortable about sex, their gender identity or sexual orientation.	Uses threats or force to obtain sex, rape, serious sexual assault; deliberately inflicts pain during sex, combines sex and violence including weapons; sexually abuses children and forces partner to watch; enforced prostitution; intentional transmission of STIs/HIV/AIDS.
<b>Harassment or stalking</b>			
No	Standard	Moderate	High
Never or not currently	Occasional phone calls, texts and emails.	Frequent phone calls, texts, emails.	Constant/obsessive phone calls, texts or emails; uninvited visits to home, workplace etc or loitering; destroys or vandalises property; pursues victim after separation, stalking; threats of suicide/homicide to victim and other family members; threats of sexual violence; involvement of others in the stalking behaviour.

### Jealous or controlling behaviour/emotional abuse

<sup>5</sup> CAADA-DASH MARAC Risk Indicator Checklist for the identification of high risk domestic abuse, stalking and ‘honour’ based violence

No	Standard	Moderate	High
Never or not currently	Made to account for victim's time; some isolation from family/friends or support network; put down in public.	Increased control over victim's time; significant isolation from family and friends; intercepting mail or phone calls; controls access to money; irrational accusations of infidelity; constant criticism of role as partner/wife/mother.	Controls most or all of victim's daily activities; prevention from taking medication or accessing care needs (especially relevant for survivors with disabilities); extreme dominance, e.g. believes absolutely entitled to partner, partner's services, obedience, loyalty - no matter what; extreme jealousy, e.g. "If I can't have you, no one can" - with belief that the abuser will act on this; locks person up or severely restricts their movements; threatens to take the children; suicide/homicide/familiacide threats; involvement of wider family members; crimes in the name of 'honour'; threats to expose sexual activity to family members, religious or local community via photos, online (e.g. Facebook) or in public places.

## Appendix 2

### Support Services for Victims

Local	Website	Telephone
Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service	<a href="http://www.reducingtherisk.org.uk">www.reducingtherisk.org.uk</a>	0800 731 0055
Oxfordshire Sexual Abuse & Rape Crisis Centre (OSARCC)	<a href="http://www.osarcc.org.uk">www.osarcc.org.uk</a>	0800 783 6294
SAFE! (for young people)	<a href="http://www.safeproject.org.uk">www.safeproject.org.uk</a>	0800 133 7938
<b>National</b>		
National 24hr Helpline	<a href="http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk">www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk</a>	0808 200 0247
Men's Advice Line	<a href="http://www.mensadvice.org.uk">www.mensadvice.org.uk</a>	0808 801 0327
Galop (LGBT)	<a href="http://www.galop.org.uk">www.galop.org.uk</a>	0300 999 5428
Karma Nirvana (HBV)	<a href="http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk">www.karmanirvana.org.uk</a>	0800 599 9247
Stalking Helpline	<a href="http://www.stalkinghelpline.org">www.stalkinghelpline.org</a>	0808 802 0300

### Support Services for Perpetrators

National	Website	Telephone
Respect Helpline	<a href="http://www.respectphoneline.org.uk">www.respectphoneline.org.uk</a>	0808 802 4040

## Appendix 3

### Asking about Domestic Violence and Abuse<sup>6</sup>

Victims living with DVA say they are glad when someone asks them about their relationship, so be brave: ask the question, open the dialogue.

#### Top 10 things to remember:

1. Victim's safety: always be guided by the need to keep the victim and their children safe. This includes making sure you have privacy for the conversation, and know where you can refer for immediate help. Always put the victim's and children's safety first. Leaving an abusive relationship is the most dangerous time for a victim; if they are considering leaving encourage them to talk to the local domestic abuse service for support and safety planning.
2. Difficult to talk: the victim might not want to talk right now, or even acknowledge what is happening to them. They might be ashamed or embarrassed. Give them space and time to talk – if you have not got time now arrange a convenient time where you can.
3. Do not push: this conversation is the start of a process – victims take time to feel comfortable and open up. Do not push them to reveal what they are not comfortable with.
4. Culture/religion: this is never an excuse for domestic abuse. Do not let cultural concerns stand in the way of supporting a victim of abuse.
5. Interpreting: never use children or family members as interpreters. Try Language Line, or a professional interpreter, but make sure the victim is happy with the interpreter.
6. Children: make sure you know your child protection/safeguarding procedures, and make them clear to the victim – do not promise to keep a secret if you will have to disclose under child protection.
7. Rapport: domestic violence and abuse is hard for victims to talk about. Take time to put the victim at ease and build up a rapport – this applies to everyone in your setting; people are more likely to disclose if they feel they can trust you.
8. On-going support: whether the victim discloses or not, be prepared to ask them again in future if they are all right. Make sure they know they can always talk to you.
9. Referring on: give the victim the contact details of the local domestic abuse helpline. Check it is safe to have this. The local helpline will give them access to a range of services for example face to face outreach worker and help with safety

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<sup>6</sup> Adapted from Bristol City Council – Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy and Guidelines 2012

planning and options available to them.

10. Immediate risk of serious harm: if the victim says they are worried for their own or their children's immediate safety, refer on to the police. Do not ever try to resolve the abuse yourself.

### **What can I say to start the conversation?**

- I am concerned about how you are; would you like to come and have a chat?
- How are things with your partner?
- How are things at home?
- Does your partner treat you well?
- Has your partner ever hit you?
- Are you ever afraid at home?
- Is someone hurting you?
- Have you ever been forced to do anything you didn't want to do?
- I see you have a bruise on your face/body, has someone hit you?

### **Essential things you can say:**

- It is not your fault and you don't deserve it. No one deserves to be hurt, scared or controlled by their partner or anyone else.
- You are not alone – it has happened to lots of other people and lots of them go on to make new safer lives for themselves and their children. There are people who can help and want to help.
- You, your neighbours, family or friends can always call the police in an emergency. You can call 999 – it is their job to protect us and to prevent crime and that includes domestic violence and abuse.
- If you want to leave your partner now, even just for a break to get some rest and some time to think, I can help you make contact with someone who can support you to safely do that.
- Whatever you decide to do, you can always come back to see me again; I care what happens to you.
- Is there someone else you would prefer to talk to? I don't mind if you don't feel able to talk to me.

## **What not to do?**

- Pressurise the victim into a specific course of action
- Promise confidentiality. Do explain the limits of confidentiality and safeguarding duties
- Attempt to discuss the issue with the perpetrator
- Send anything home informing individuals of a disclosure of DVA
- Attempt to provide mediation between partners
- Recommend couple counselling, mediation or anger management as suitable solutions
- Be judgemental of the individual's choices and actions
- Stop supporting the individual once you have referred to another agency
- Encourage them to leave their partner unless they have specialist support to do so safely

## Appendix 4

### Dealing with suspected perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse<sup>7</sup>

Managers and colleagues are not expected to attempt to identify perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse. However, if you have concerns about an employee's behaviour, the following guidance may be of use.

*Although they do not always imply that an individual is a perpetrator, the following signs may be indicative that an employee is perpetrating DVA:*

- Uncharacteristic lateness or absence with no explanation
- Repeated injuries/scratches/bite marks/bruised knuckles/injuries to wrists or forearms
- Constant text messaging or telephoning a partner
- Jealousy or possessiveness
- Negative comments about the employee's partner or women in general

*If an individual discloses abuse behaviour, these are useful questions to ask:*

- What worries you most about your behaviour?
- Your behaviour towards your partner does sound worrying, would you like to talk to a specialist who can help you?
- It sounds like your behaviour can be frightening; does your partner ever say that they are frightened of you?
- How are your children affected?
- If you are made aware of concerns that an employee may be perpetrating domestic violence and abuse by another employee, it is important that you do not take any actions that may lead to repercussions for that individual.

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<sup>7</sup> Adapted from Bristol City Council – Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy and Guidelines 2012

## Appendix 5

### Safety in the workplace

The following steps should be considered when assessing the safety of an employee. The list is not exhaustive and the victim should be consulted on what they believe would keep them safe in the workplace:

- Identifying an emergency contact person in case the manager is unable to contact the employee
- Identify a code word or words known to the manager or support colleague which indicates help is needed
- Screen, track and record telephone calls where necessary
- Change email address and telephone number if applicable
- Provide a meeting room away from public areas for the victim to meet with domestic abuse support workers or domestic abuse champion
- Instruct and train staff on how not to reveal information to others such as location and movements of the victim
- Have an emergency plan in place
- The manager can keep the originals or copies of important documents such as birth certificate and driving licence in a secure place for the victim
- Ascertain if the victim has a protection order and if the conditions include 'not to enter, remain or access any premises the protected person occupies or works in' and 'not to contact'.
- Provide evidence of abusive communications to the police and to the abuser's employee if emanating from their workplace (CAUTION – only if the victim and abuser have separated)
- With permission of the victim provide reception and security staff a photo of the abuser
- Look into alternative working hours or work location

## Appendix 6

### Recording Information

This offers general guidance to recording a disclosure of domestic violence and abuse.

1. You should record all disclosures of DVA, for your own safety and the victim's, and should tell the victim that you will do this, including explaining who will have access to the record. You do not need the victim's consent.
2. Record the date, time and setting in which the abuse happened.
3. Record non-judgementally, using the words that the victim used (e.g. "John hit me with a hammer" not "client has experienced physical violence.") Use words like "stated" and "said", not "alleged" or "claimed."
4. Record your observations: how the victim appears, physical, emotional and behavioural signs that they are experiencing DVA.
5. Make it clear if you are recording interpretation or conclusions that you have drawn, which are not what the victim has stated (e.g. "I think that Jane is being denied access to food because she has lost a lot of weight recently and cannot give a reason for it.")
6. If the victim minimises or tries to excuse the abuse, make it clear in any record that this is minimising or excusing, and that this is not a reason for abuse to happen.
7. Always keep notes confidential and under no circumstances allow abusers to see these. This may include having a separate file for the victim e.g. if they live together and have a shared housing record.
8. Never write anything about disclosure on something that the victim will take home. If you work to rules that give clients rights to copies of their own records, make sure disclosure notes are in the "exempt" part of the notes, which will not be copied.
9. If there are previous notes for the victim, review these to see if there have been previous disclosures or evidence of abuse, and if so, what happened as a result.
10. Discuss all disclosures with supervising manager e.g. line manager or safeguarding lead, according to local protocols for information sharing.
11. Sign and date any record

Adapted from guidance by South Ayrshire Council and Mid-Cheshire NHS Trust

## Appendix 7

### Domestic Abuse Champions

There are a number of domestic abuse champions within the Council. They have received additional training on domestic abuse, risk assessment and management. The Champions will be able to provide support and advice if you have had a disclosure and are unsure what to do next. If the victim is willing, following disclosure, they can be assessed for the risk posed to them. The Champions able to do this are highlighted in red. The Designated MARAC Officers (DMO) will make the referral to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) for high risk victims. The Champions are:

Name	Post
Liz Jones	Domestic & Sexual Abuse Lead and ASBIT Manager
Jan Robinson (DMO)	Sanctuary Scheme Coordinator
Nick Prior	Community Response Officer
Sara Malyon	Principal Lead Officer
Dee Gabbidon	Housing Officer
Mel Armstrong	Housing Officer
Louise Gallagher	Housing Officer
Kate Warrington (DMO)	Housing Officer
Jackie Mogridge	Tenancy Relations Officer
Alison Cassidy	ASBIT Officer
Jubeen Ashraf	Housing Officer
Linda Campbell	Customer Services Officer
Karima Ward	Housing Officer
Eunice Mubi	Housing Officer
Beata Patok	Customer Services Officer
Leanne Cooper	Customer Services Officer