

July 2021

Domestic Abuse Policy

Overview

It is Dunelm's policy that every colleague who is experiencing or has experienced domestic abuse can ask for and receive support. This policy also covers the approach we will take where there are concerns that a colleague may be the perpetrator of domestic abuse.

We are committed to developing a workplace culture that recognises that some colleagues may be experiencing domestic abuse and that Dunelm will be a place of safety and one that recognises that perpetrators of domestic abuse are responsible for their behaviour and for addressing it. We will create a safe workplace and send out a strong message that domestic abuse is unacceptable.

Dunelm recognises that domestic abuse is an equalities issue and we will not discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to domestic abuse both in terms of current employment or future development.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Support all colleagues experiencing domestic abuse and promote their health, safety and well-being at work;
- Support Line Managers to recognise the signs and help colleagues who are experiencing domestic abuse; and
- Assist colleagues who are experiencing domestic abuse.
- Support perpetrators who voluntarily wish to seek advice and support to address their behaviour.

Definition of domestic abuse

Domestic violence and abuse is the use of physical and/or emotional abuse or violence, including undermining of self-confidence, sexual violence or the threat of violence, by any person, who is or has been in a close relationship with the victims/survivors, including abuse of parents or adult children.

The government definition is:

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 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, escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation, intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten someone. This definition includes stalking and so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage including honour-based violence. All forms of domestic abuse come from the abuser's desire for power and control over other family members or intimate partners.

Identification of the problem at work

While it is for the individual themselves to recognise they are a victim/survivor of domestic abuse, there are signs which may indicate an colleague may be a victim/survivor. These may include the following:

- The member of colleagues may confide in their colleagues/manager
- Colleagues may inform their manager that a colleague is suffering from domestic abuse
- There may be obvious effects of physical abuse (it is important not to make assumptions)
- It may come to light because of enquiries into a drop-in performance or a significant change in behaviour
- It may reveal itself as the background to poor attendance or presenteeism - where victims/survivors prefer to be at work rather than at home.

It is essential to understand that any of the above may arise from a range of circumstances of which domestic abuse may be one. Line managers should address the issue positively and sympathetically ensuring that the colleague is aware that support and assistance can be provided.

Confidentiality and right to privacy

Colleagues who disclose experiencing abuse can be assured that the information they provide is confidential and will only be shared on a need to know basis with members of the People Team or where there is an immediate safety concern.

Dunelm respects colleagues' right to privacy. Whilst Dunelm strongly encourages victims/survivors of domestic abuse to disclose domestic abuse for the safety of themselves and all those in the workplace, it does not force them to share this information if they do not want to.

There are, however, some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be assured. These occur when there are concerns about children or vulnerable adults or where Dunelm needs to act to protect the safety of colleagues.

In circumstances where Dunelm has to breach confidentiality, it will discuss with the colleague why it is doing so, and it will seek the colleague's agreement where possible.

As far as possible, information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

All records concerning domestic abuse will be kept strictly confidential and there will be no adverse impact on the employment records of victims/survivors of domestic abuse.

Improper disclosure of information i.e. breaches of confidentiality by any member of colleagues will be taken seriously and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Disclosure of abuse

Colleagues experiencing domestic abuse may choose to disclose, report to or seek support from their line manager, colleague or People Team. Line managers will not counsel victims/survivors, but offer information, workplace support, and signpost other organisations.

The People Team will provide a confidential specialist support contact through retailTRUST for colleagues. The People Team will also provide guidance for line managers who are approached by colleagues who are being abused.

Role of colleagues

Dunelm encourages all colleagues to report if they suspect a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating abuse. Colleagues should speak to their line manager or the People Team about their concerns in confidence. In dealing with a disclosure from a colleague Dunelm will ensure that the person with concerns is made aware of the existence of this policy.

Support for individuals experiencing domestic abuse

Dunelm recognises that developing a life free from abuse is a process not an event and will provide ongoing support for colleagues who disclose abuse.

Where domestic abuse has been reported, line managers will work with colleagues and discuss reasonable temporary adjustments to attendance policies.

We may offer colleagues experiencing domestic abuse a broad range of support. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Special paid leave for relevant appointments, including with support agencies, solicitors, to rearrange housing or childcare, and for court appointments
- Up to 5 days paid special leave may be provided to someone escaping an abusive situation, subject to agreement with the People Team
- Temporary or permanent changes to working times and patterns
- Measures to ensure a safe working environment, for example changing a telephone number to avoid harassing phone calls
- Flexible working
- Access to counselling/support services in work time
- Access to courses developed to support female survivors of domestic abuse, for example The Freedom Programme (www.freedomprogramme.co.uk) or assertiveness training.



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- Relocation to another place of work either on a temporary or permanent basis where possible.

Line managers will respect the right of colleagues to make their own decision on the course of action at every stage and avoid being judgemental. It is recognised that the colleague may need some time to decide what to do and may try many different options during this process.

Other existing provisions including support available from retailTRUST will also be signposted to colleagues as a means of help.

Safety planning

Dunelm will prioritise the safety of colleagues if they make it known that they are experiencing domestic abuse. Line managers may have to consider incidents such as violent partners or ex-partners visiting the workplace, abusive phone calls, intimidation or harassment of a colleague by the alleged perpetrator, and these will need to be addressed in any safety planning.

When a colleague discloses domestic abuse, they will be encouraged to contact a specialist support agency (or suitably trained specialist) and advise appropriate referrals where necessary, such as the retailTRUST or Domestic Abuse Alliance <https://domestic-abuse.co.uk/>.

Dunelm will work with the colleague and relevant agencies (with the colleague's consent) to identify what actions can be taken to increase their personal safety as well as address any risks there may be to colleagues, considering the duty of care for all colleagues.

Perpetrators of domestic abuse

Dunelm will not tolerate domestic abuse perpetrators at any level of seniority nor will it be condoned. Dunelm recognises that it has an obligation to encourage and support their colleagues to address abusive behaviour. If a colleague approaches Dunelm about their abusive behaviour, Dunelm will provide information about the services and support available to them and will encourage the perpetrator to seek support and help from an appropriate source.

Dunelm will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of a domestic abuse related offence on a case-by-case basis with the aim of reducing risk and supporting change.

There are four potential strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- disciplinary action
- providing specialist, safety-focused counselling
- identifying risk.

An individual cautioned or convicted of a criminal offence may be subject to the organisation's disciplinary policy and procedure, Dunelm also reserves the right to consider the use of this policy should an colleague's activities outside of work (whether or not it leads to a criminal conviction) have an impact on their ability to perform the role for which they are employed and/or be considered to bring the organisation into disrepute.

In some circumstances it may be deemed inappropriate for the individual to continue in his/her current role(s).

Dunelm is committed to ensuring that:

- Allegations will be dealt with fairly and in a way that provides guidance and support for the person
- Confidentiality will be maintained, and information restricted only to those who have a need-to-know

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, they will have committed a serious disciplinary offence.

If it becomes evident that a colleague has made a malicious allegation that another colleague is perpetrating abuse, then this will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and action may be taken.

Further guidance

Please refer to the associated guidance document **"Domestic Abuse Managers Guide"** for further details on how to manage situations relating to domestic abuse.

However, if you are concerned for your own or someone else's immediate safety, ring the police on 999.

Refuge www.refuge.org.uk offers a range of services which provide women and children access to professional support whatever their situation.

If you or a friend needs help call 0808 2000 247 the freephone 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline (run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge) or email: helpline@womensaid.org.uk

Bright Sky app is a free to download mobile app, providing support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know. The app is also designed to be used by anyone looking for information about issues around domestic abuse such as online safety, stalking and harassment and sexual consent. More info here: <https://www.hestia.org/brightsky>

National LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline for LGBT people experiencing domestic abuse. Call 0800 999 5428 Monday to Wednesday 10am to 5pm, Thursday 10am to 8pm, Friday 1pm to 5pm and Sunday 12pm to 4pm. Tuesday 1pm to 5pm is a trans specific service. Email: help@galop.org.uk Online chat: 3pm to 7pm Saturday, 3pm to 7pm Sunday www.galop.org.uk

Men's Advice Line for men experiencing domestic violence. Call 0808 801 0327 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm or email: info@mensadvice.org.uk

If you are worried about your behaviour towards your partner, or if you have been abusive or violent, you can get information from the Respect Phonenumber. Call 0808 802 4040 (free from landlines and most mobile phones). Monday - Friday 9am-5pm You can leave a message when the lines are closed or busy and they will get back to you within two working days. Email: info@respectphonenumber.org.uk www.respectphonenumber.org.uk