



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **PERSONNEL BOARD** will be held in
David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40
1BN on **WEDNESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 7.00 PM**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage', written in a cursive style.

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive

Published on 12 September 2023

Note: Non-Committee Members and members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting or participate in the meeting virtually, in line with the Council's Constitution. If you wish to participate either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams please contact Democratic Services. The meeting can also be watched live using the following link:

<https://youtube.com/live/3UCfTFghMA8?feature=share>

Our Vision
<i>A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business</i>
Enriching Lives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion excellent education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background. • Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to enable healthy choices for everyone. • Engage and empower our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity for the Borough which people feel part of. • Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.
Providing Safe and Strong Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people. • Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to reduce the need for long term care. • Nurture our communities: enabling them to thrive and families to flourish. • Ensure our Borough and communities remain safe for all.
Enjoying a Clean and Green Borough
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play as full a role as possible to achieve a carbon neutral Borough, sustainable for the future. • Protect our Borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas for people to enjoy. • Reduce our waste, promote re-use, increase recycling and improve biodiversity. • Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.
Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future. • Ensure the right infrastructure is in place, early, to support and enable our Borough to grow. • Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment. • Help with your housing needs and support people, where it is needed most, to live independently in their own homes.
Keeping the Borough Moving
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways. • Tackle traffic congestion and minimise delays and disruptions. • Enable safe and sustainable travel around the Borough with good transport infrastructure. • Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners in offering affordable, accessible public transport with good transport links.
Changing the Way We Work for You
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be relentlessly customer focussed. • Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around our customers. • Communicate better with customers, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough. • Drive innovative, digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.
Be the Best We Can Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an organisation that values and invests in all our colleagues and is seen as an employer of choice. • Embed a culture that supports ambition, promotes empowerment and develops new ways of working. • Use our governance and scrutiny structures to support a learning and continuous improvement approach to the way we do business. • Be a commercial council that is innovative, whilst being inclusive, in its approach with a clear focus on being financially resilient. • Maximise opportunities to secure funding and investment for the Borough. • Establish a renewed vision for the Borough with clear aspirations.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PERSONNEL BOARD

Councillors

Rachel Bishop-Firth (Chair)	Prue Bray (Vice-Chair)	Stephen Conway
Pauline Helliar-Symons	Pauline Jorgensen	Stuart Munro
Lindsay Ferris		

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
32.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence	
33.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 August 2023.	5 - 8
34.		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest	
35.		PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice. The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this committee. Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Committee or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions	
36.		MEMBER QUESTION TIME To answer any member questions	
37.	None Specific	DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY REFRESH To consider the Domestic Abuse Policy refresh.	9 - 42
38.	None Specific	WORKFORCE EQUALITIES MONITORING REPORT To consider the Workforce Equalities Monitoring Report.	43 - 58
39.		EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that	

they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) as appropriate.

40. None Specific

CHANGES TO OPERATING MODEL OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

**To
Follow**

To consider a report regarding changes to operating model of Chief Executive's Office.

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading.

CONTACT OFFICER

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PERSONNEL BOARD
HELD ON 14 AUGUST 2023 FROM 7.00 PM TO 7.50 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Rachel Bishop-Firth (Chair), Stephen Conway, Pauline Jorgensen, Stuart Munro and Lindsay Ferris

Officers Present

Madeleine Shopland, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Matt Pope, Executive Director Children, Adults and Health
Sally Watkins, Chief Operating Officer
Sally Halliwell, Lead HR Business Partner

22. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Prue Bray and Pauline Helliard Symons.

23. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 21 June 2023 and the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 13 July 2023, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

With regards to the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2023, the Chair commented that People's Strategy should read People Strategy. In addition, she referred to issues in recruitment being taken back to the specific department for consideration. She commented that whilst the departments should have ownership of any issues, there should still be a dialogue with the Personnel Board about spending on agency staff.

24. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

25. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

26. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

27. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023

The Board considered the Pay Policy 2023.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- It was noted that the lead officer for the report was Sally Halliwell and not Sally Watkins.
- The Pay Policy was a statutory requirement.
- The Chair commented that the Council had an annual expenditure of around £530million and provided a broad range of services to its residents. Central government grants were failing to keep pace with inflation, and needs were rising. It was essential that the Council attracted the right staff with the right skills, who could provide key services for its residents. Pauline Jorgensen asked how much of the £530million was directly controlled by officers. She sought clarification from officers.

RESOLVED: That the Pay Policy 2023 be recommended to Full Council for approval.

28. DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN SERVICES PERMANENT RECRUITMENT PROPOSAL

The Board considered a report regarding a proposal for the recruitment of a permanent Director of Children's Services.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Members were advised that an interim Director of Children's Services had been in place since December 2021, and permission was being sought to recruit to the role on a permanent basis. The report detailed the proposed recruitment process.
- Pauline Jorgensen noted that the report stated that the cost would be £198,000, and commented that this was not the case, and that this was the gross figure. She expressed concern regarding the costs identified for advertising, particularly in the Municipal Journal. She questioned whether the Council was moving more towards LinkedIn recruitment. Matt Pope confirmed that it would be at least cost neutral to the Council as the role already existed. A lot of work was being undertaken by HR to help reduce agency costs. However, due to the significant nature of the role it was considered necessary to also advertise via the Municipal Journal. Sally Watkins added that the Council bringing in its own recruiter had a big impact. However, balance was important and there was a need to advertise where the best possible candidates would be reached.
- Stephen Conway stated that it was imperative that a permanent Director was recruited. The role oversaw a vital part of the Council's services, which represented 23% of the Council's revenue spend. Stability and strong management were imperative.
- Lindsay Ferris emphasised the importance of getting a good number of candidates.
- It was suggested that the background section of the report be amended to highlight that the post would be cost neutral to the Council with the exception to the recruitment costs, which was an inevitable cost, as the current incumbent was an interim member of staff. Rachel Bishop-Firth agreed that the recruitment process would have cost far less than in previous years.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the proposed recruitment process for the appointment of a permanent Director of Children's Services be approved.
- 2) The report be amended as detailed above.

29. AGENCY & TEMPORARY WORKER REPORT Q4 2022/23

The Board considered the Agency & Temporary Worker Report Q4 2022/23.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- By Quarter 4 the spend had reduced quarter on quarter. The work into making services more accountable by using the framework, was having an impact.
- Whilst there was a slight increase in agency costs in Children's Services, there were several hard to fill roles in this area.

- The report contained a breakdown of the different services. Typically, in areas that were hard to fill, interims or consultants were used.
- The annual increase year on year for agency spend was approximately £755,000. However, benchmarking with the other Berkshire local authorities had shown the Council to have one of the lowest spends on agency workers, in Berkshire. Skill shortages and pressures on recruitment continued to be widespread issues.
- Sally Halliwell outlined the approach going forwards including greater use of the framework, more robust management and more detailed, regular reports to the Directors and Assistant Directors.
- Stephen Conway emphasised that the use of temporary workers and agency staff could in some cases be positive, when they were used to staff particular short-term projects for which funding had been provided. Rachel Bishop-Firth agreed that a judicious use of agency staff could mean the right staff in the right posts at the right time.
- Pauline Jorgensen questioned whether those paid through small companies were included in the scope of the report. Sally Watkins indicated that they were considered temporary workers and would be included in the scope. She went on to outline the types of workers that would not be included in the scope.
- Pauline Jorgensen noted that the Board had been previously provided with the number of long-term agency and temporary workers, and requested that this information be provided again in future. Members agreed that officers should not be able to be identified in a public report.
- Lindsay Ferris stated that trends should be monitored to ensure that there were not issues with recruitment in areas where there traditionally had not been. Sally Watkins added that looking at trend data with regards to what was happening with a service was part of the ongoing work around the BI dashboard. In addition, with the enhanced HR partnering model, conversations were being had at directorate leadership teams.
- Pauline Jorgensen commented that it would be helpful to receive information on the head count equivalent of agency workers and temporary workers, how this compared with the Council as a whole, and trends over time.
- Rachel Bishop-Firth praised the positive impact that the Agency Contracts Manager was starting to have. Members were assured that there was no conflict of interest with this post.

RESOLVED: That the Agency & Temporary Worker Report Q4 2022/23 be noted.

30. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) as appropriate.

31. PERMANENT APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The Board considered a report regarding the permanent appointment of the Director Public Health.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the recommendations contained within the report be agreed.
- 2) The report be amended as discussed.

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TITLE	Domestic Abuse Policy Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Personnel Board – 20 th September 2023
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Sally Halliwell – Head of HR and OD

RECOMMENDATION

That Personnel Board approves the revision to the Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy for line managers and staff and so that the Council can progress its accreditation with the DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance).

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Domestic Abuse Policy will set out what Wokingham Borough Council employees can expect from the Council when they are experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse. This will allow the Council to demonstrate that there should be confidence in reporting abuse and mitigate the adverse effects of domestic abuse in the workplace.

The policy revision and the separate guidance documents are required to meet accreditation from Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance which the Council is aiming to achieve in October 2023 as we have a requirement to provide clear guidance for staff affected by this.

This is a policy refresh to ensure we are delivering against the requirements for accreditation achievement and involved HR, Public Health and Community Safety.

BACKGROUND

Domestic abuse is estimated to affect 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men during their lifetime, with 1 in 10 adults affected in the last 12 months. Based on the statistical likelihood of 5.5% of people experiencing domestic abuse in the past year, this would equate to 74 WBC employees being victims of domestic abuse in the past year. During their lifetime, 293 employees of WBC are statistically likely to be victims of domestic abuse.

Employers have a duty to safeguard the wellbeing of staff and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 makes clear that employers should consider the impact of domestic abuse on their employees as part of their duty of care.

The policy and guidance sets out the support available to colleagues experiencing domestic abuse, how line managers and colleagues can spot the signs and offer support and provides information on additional support available from other organisations.

COSTINGS

Domestic Abuse costs businesses an estimated £14 billion each year through decreased productivity, time off work, lost wages and sick pay.

This proposal will provide a clear framework for WBC's response to domestic abuse and non-financial costs will involve staff time in delivery and attendance at awareness raising sessions, completion of short e-learning module for all staff and workshop sessions for line managers.

Financial costs will be the production and dissemination of policy and guidance documents as well as posters to display in the workplace however these costs will be part of the Council's corporate budget that is built to deliver on its core responsibilities to its workforce.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

	How much will it Cost	Is there sufficient funding	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	NA	NA
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	NA	NA
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	NA	NA

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

Cross-Council Implications

None

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A

List of Background Papers

Domestic Abuse Policy and Support Guidance

Contact: Sally Halliwell – Head of HR and OD

Service: HR and OD, Chief Executive's Office

Telephone No

Email sally.halliwell@wokingham.gov.uk



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Policy



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Policy – V1

Wokingham Borough Council recognises and acknowledges that our employees may be affected by domestic abuse, and should this situation occur the Council are committed to fully supporting employees through this difficult time.

Everyone has the right to a life free from abuse in any form. Domestic abuse is wholly unacceptable and inexcusable behaviour, and our working environment must reflect this.

This policy sets out our approach to supporting employees who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse. It also sets out the approach we will take if there are concerns that an employee may be the perpetrator of domestic abuse. We commit to:

- Ensuring that employees experiencing Domestic Abuse feel supported in making a disclosure at work.
- Ensuring line managers understand their responsibilities and take reasonable measures to facilitate needs in the workplace.
- Provide all employees with access to information about domestic abuse, in a format that is easily and discretely accessible within the workplace.
- Provide adequate access to support within the workplace for all employees, whether they be a victim-survivor or where there is concern about the impact of their behaviour on others.

We understand that there are many barriers to reporting domestic abuse, but encourage employees affected to raise the issue in the knowledge that we will treat the matter empathetically and confidentially. You can report domestic abuse or seek support from your line manager; a colleague; a member of the Human Resources Team; a Mental Health First Aider or, a union representative.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Policy



Contents

Scope of this Policy – who this applies to.....	2
Further Guidance	2
Introduction.....	3
Purpose of this Policy.....	3
Raising awareness of this policy	3
Reviewing this Policy.....	4
Equalities considerations.....	4
We have completed an equality impact assessment for this policy.....	4
Identifying domestic abuse	5
Support for employees experiencing domestic abuse.....	6
Other Local and National Helplines	7
Privacy and Confidentiality for employees.....	7
Perpetrators (people who use abusive behaviour).....	8
Version Control	8

Scope of this Policy – who this applies to

This policy applies to direct employees of Wokingham Borough Council.

This does not apply to the following:

- Agency workers. If you are an agency worker, you should contact your agency direct to discuss the appropriate procedure.
- Schools based colleagues for whom separate policies and procedures apply.
- Contractors, consultants, or any self-employed individuals working for the Council, who should speak to their main point of contact in the council if they have any concerns.

Further Guidance

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Domestic Abuse Guidance document which includes further advice and guidance to support colleagues who are the victims of domestic abuse, how to manage allegations that someone is a perpetrator of domestic abuse and contact information of other organisations who can provide support and guidance.

Should you require any further advice, please contact a member of the Human Resources team.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Policy



Introduction

Domestic abuse has a devastating impact on individuals and their families. Being a great place to work includes supporting employees who may be experiencing domestic abuse currently as well as those whose previous experiences continue to impact on their physical or mental wellbeing.

Each year over 2 million people in the UK experience some form of domestic abuse, with an estimated one in four women and one in six men affected during their lifetime. Research has shown that for those who share a protected characteristic or have complex needs, accessing help can be even more challenging and we want to send a clear message that we understand that domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of gender, sexuality, disability, economic means, ethnicity, religion or culture and will work with you to ensure support is accessible and meets your individual needs.

There are different kinds of abuse, but it is about one person having power and control over the other person.

The workplace can be a lifeline for people experiencing domestic abuse. A steady income is often key to a victim-survivor's economic independence and their opportunities to escape from an abusive relationship.

Engaging and interesting work can also provide physical and mental health benefits. Providing opportunities for employees who are affected by abuse to remain in work can support their well-being over the long term, as well as ensuring Wokingham Borough Council retains its talent and gets the best out of our employees.

It can take a huge amount of courage for someone to seek help. We want to make sure that if an employee shares their experience of abuse to someone in Wokingham Borough Council be it their manager, a trusted colleague or someone in HR, we get the response right, first time.

All employers have a duty of care. Health and safety laws ensure workers have the right to work in a safe environment where risks to health and well-being are considered and dealt with efficiently. This policy will help to ensure that Wokingham Borough Council is complying with these laws.

Purpose of this Policy

This policy is designed for all colleagues, so you know where to turn and what to do. This document is intended to help line managers and colleagues recognise and support victim-survivors of domestic abuse and; know what actions to take when an employee is suspected, or known to have, perpetrated domestic abuse.

Separate Domestic Abuse policies are in place for customers and residents experiencing domestic abuse.

Raising awareness of this policy

All employees, including line managers, will be made aware of this policy through:

- new starter inductions
- awareness sessions for Mental Health First Aiders
- awareness-raising events throughout the year
- promotion via the staff intranet
- communications from equality champions.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Policy



In raising awareness of the policy, all communications will remind employees of the methods for reporting domestic abuse, the support available and the importance of not divulging personal details of other members of staff in the course of ordinary business.

Training

We will widely publicise information to raise awareness about domestic abuse and how to get help when needed.

We will carry out a rolling programme of employee and manager training to ensure that they know how to support colleagues experiencing domestic abuse. Information and briefings will make sure that line managers and relevant employees are able to:

- Identify if an employee may be experiencing difficulties because of domestic abuse
- Respond to disclosures and suspicions of domestic abuse in a sensitive and non-judgemental manner
- Provide initial support, tailored to the employees individual needs
- Be clear about available workforce support
- Discuss how Wokingham Borough Council can contribute to safety planning, making reasonable adjustments as needed

We'll inform employees of the importance of confidentiality in the workplace. This might include not divulging personal details of other employees, their work hours or location or contact details.

Reviewing this Policy

Wokingham Borough Council will review this document every 3 years so we can gauge how it is working for us as an employer and for our managers and employees. We recognise that it may be difficult to monitor uptake because of the need to maintain confidentiality. Updates may also be made ad-hoc following feedback from policy users.

Equalities considerations

We have completed an equality impact assessment for this policy.

We'll provide a variety of ways that employees can talk about domestic abuse to people they feel comfortable with – this could include discussions with line managers, HR, Mental Health First Aid Champions which could take place face to face or remotely, in a confidential meeting space or place you feel safe.

We recognised that victim-survivors' experiences of domestic abuse may in part be defined by their background, for example economic status, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, religion, ethnic group, immigration status. We'll recognise this intersectionality and understand that individuals may face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. We'll consider each individual's needs when tailoring our approach.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Policy



Identifying domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can have severe impacts on the lives of those affected and we will provide a sympathetic, supportive and non-judgemental support and help to any employee we know is experiencing, or trying to move forwards with their lives following, domestic abuse.

Employees can report domestic abuse or seek support from your line manager, a colleague, a member of the HR team, a Mental Health First Aider or a union representative.

Concerns about a colleague who may be experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse can be discussed with line managers or Human Resources in confidence.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 created a statutory legal definition of domestic abuse, the full wording of which can be accessed at [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk). The Act defines domestic abuse as being any single incident, course of conduct or pattern of abusive behaviour between individuals aged 16 or over who are “personally connected” to each other because of being, or having been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. Children who see, hear, or experience the effects of the abuse and are related to either of the parties are also considered victims of domestic abuse.

This definition includes honour-based abuse and forced marriage.

Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following: physical or sexual abuse; violent or threatening behaviour; controlling or coercive behaviour; economic abuse; or psychological, emotional, or other abuse. This includes incidences where the abusive party directs their behaviour at another person (for example a child). Economic abuse means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on someone’s ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services.

- **Psychological abuse** includes intimidation, threats to harm, threats to kidnap children, blackmail, destruction of pets, property, mind games and stalking
- **Physical abuse** includes inflicting or attempting to injure, grabbing, pinching, biting, kicking, stabbing, weapons, withholding medications, food, funds
- **Sexual abuse** includes marital rape, acquaintance rape, forced sex after physical beating, fondling, and forced prostitution
- **Economic abuse** includes maintaining control of earned income, withholding money and running up debt in the victim’s name, stopping someone from working.
- **Emotional abuse** includes undermining or attempting to undermine the victims’ sense of worth, constant criticism, name calling, insults, put downs, silent treatment, repeatedly making and breaking promises, harming or making threats.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Policy



- **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.
- **'Honour' based abuse** is where an individual is punished for breaking the so called 'honour' code of a family or community.
- **Forced marriage** is where one or both individuals is coerced or forced to enter into a marriage which they don't want to.

(Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunts, cousins and grandparents, whether directly or indirectly related, in-laws or stepfamily.)

Support for employees experiencing domestic abuse

If you are the victim-survivor of domestic abuse, it can be difficult to talk to anyone about your situation. You may be afraid or worried about the consequences this might have on you, your family, your home, your job or your income.

We want to know that there is help and support available and that we will work with you to address any concerns you have about disclosing information about your situation.

We'll respond empathetically and confidentially if you disclose you're experiencing domestic abuse. You don't need to provide evidence for us to support you.

The person offering support won't provide counselling, but will offer information, workplace support and signpost you to specialist organisations depending on your individual needs.

We have staff who are trained to deal with reports of domestic abuse. You can contact the Domestic Abuse Coordinator for WBC, Karen Evans (karen.evans@wokingham.gov.uk), or Domestic Abuse Housing Specialist, Tanya Pellew (tanya.pellew@wokingham.gov.uk). You can also seek advice from our free and confidential [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#). We also have Mental Health First Aid Champions are equipped to help you if you would prefer to choose someone to speak to from the list of MHFA Champions, you can find the details on our employee intranet.

Your safety is our priority and we will work with you to identify work specific safety concerns you may have to try and identify ways which these risks could be reduced. Line managers will consider incidents such as abuse in the workplace, abusive telephone calls, intimidation or harassment by the alleged perpetrator, and will address this in any safety planning. This could include addressing any risks there may be to other colleagues.

Safety planning could involve a broad range of support, which may include, but is not limited to:



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Policy



- temporary or permanent changes to your working times and patterns
- changes to specific duties, for example, to avoid contact with an abuser
- agreeing with you what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if the perpetrator makes contact
- contacting you regularly if you are working from home
- measures to ensure a safe working environment, for example, changing your work location
- Using other existing policies, including leave from work or flexible working
- Allowing access to occupational health, counselling, support services, legal meetings in paid time.

Our guidance document outlines additional practical support a line manager can offer you, contact details of our [Employee Assistance Programme](#) and contact details for several external organisations who can offer support.

Wokingham Domestic Abuse Support Service is delivered by Cranstoun and all employees of Wokingham Borough Council can access their support, regardless of whether or not you live in Wokingham Borough. For those employees who live outside the borough, it may be that more local support would best meet your needs and you can either speak to Cranstoun, contact your local service (by searching 'domestic abuse' and the area you live in) or national helplines.

Support for victim-survivors includes a helpline, safety planning with an Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor (IDVA) or outreach worker, individual and group based support, practical and emotional support. Support for perpetrators includes behavioural change programmes. Cranstoun will not notify the council of any contact you have with them and your information will be confidential (unless there are safety concerns as detailed below).

Cranstoun Domestic Abuse Support Contact details:

Telephone: 0118 402 1921; email dass@cranstoun.org.uk or www.cranstoun.org.

Other Local and National Helplines

The contact details for numerous other organisations are listed in Appendix E of the Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance document.

Privacy and Confidentiality for employees

It is up to you to decide how much information you are comfortable sharing. You will not be pressured into talking about things you do not wish to discuss. Whoever you speak to, their main concern will be your safety. They will ask information to help keep you safe and how you can access the support you need.

Wokingham Borough Council will not disclose information without your express permission except in some circumstances. Such circumstances may be if we believe you are at risk of serious harm, or we believe that there is a risk of harm to any children or vulnerable adults.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Policy



Perpetrators (people who use abusive behaviour)

We don't condone domestic abuse perpetrated by employees under any circumstances. We'll treat any allegations, disclosure or conviction of a domestic abuse related offence on a case-by-case basis, aiming to reduce risk and support behaviour change. Our response may include initial conversations with line managers or HR to gain an understanding of the situation and issues, to decide next steps.

We encourage and support employees to address abusive behaviour of all kinds and will work with the employee to be able to access behavioural change appointments and programmes, such as [Men & Masculinities](#) or 1:1 support for female and LGBT+ perpetrators delivered by [Cranstoun Wokingham Domestic Abuse Service](#). You may also be given information about [Occupational Health](#) and the [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (EAP).

We view the use of abusive behaviour by an employee, wherever this occurs as a breach of the [Code of Conduct](#) for disciplinary purposes.

We'll inform employees about how to report any concerns confidentially and sensitively, such as through our [Whistleblowing \(Confidential Reporting\) Policy](#)

Further guidance for line managers if a team member tells you they have been arrested or convicted of a domestic abuse related offence can be found in the Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance document.

Version Control

Version	Date	Description
1		New Policy – previous Guidance document converted to Policy.
Document Approvals		
Author:	Gail Tulett, HR Business Partner	
Director, Chief Executive Officer:		
Personnel Board:		
Review Date		
3 years from republish date		



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance – V2

Wokingham Borough Council recognises and acknowledges that sadly an employee may be affected by domestic abuse, and should this situation occur the Council are committed to fully supporting the employee through this difficult time.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Employee Domestic Abuse Support Policy available on the HR Hub.

Contents

Purpose of this Guidance	2
Advice for managers - supporting someone experiencing domestic abuse.....	2
What should you do as the colleague of a victim-survivor of domestic abuse?	4
Advice for managers - supporting colleagues of victim-survivors of domestic abuse.....	4
Colleagues may witness violence or other abuse in the workplace. They should be offered appropriate counselling and other relevant support to overcome any practical and emotional issues that arise consequently. Support can be provided by the Employee Assistance Programme.	5
Advise for those concerned about the impact of their behaviour on others.....	5
Recognising the signs	5
You may find it helpful to think if you have ever felt or said any of the following:.....	5
Annex A - Signs of domestic abuse for the victim-survivor	11
Annex B - Signs of domestic abuse for managers and colleagues	13
Annex C – Guidance to managers on practical measures to support victim-survivors of domestic abuse	14
Annex D – ‘Honour’ based abuse and forced marriage	17
Annex E - LGBT+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and intersex) specific issues	18
Annex F - Useful Contacts – Help and Advice.....	20
Version Control	23



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



Purpose of this Guidance

This guidance is designed for all colleagues, so you know where to turn and what to do. This document is intended to help line managers and colleagues to respond to suspicions or disclosures that someone may be affected by domestic abuse as a victim-survivor and how to deal with colleagues who are perpetrators of domestic abuse.

This document should be read in conjunction with our Domestic Abuse Policy which includes further advice and guidance.

Advice for managers - supporting someone experiencing domestic abuse

Research has indicated that in any one year, more than one in five of employed women take time off work and at least 2% lose their jobs as a direct result of domestic abuse. Studies show that over half of domestic abuse victim-survivors call in sick at least three days a month and turn up late more than five times a month.

75% of those experiencing domestic abuse are targeted at work, and it is often possible for perpetrators to use workplace resources such as phones, emails and other means to threaten, harass or abuse their current, former partner or a family member.

Managers can play an important role when a team member is experiencing domestic abuse. As a manager you can support your team member; you can consider practical measures that will allow them to stay in work and to stay safe; and you can signpost them towards specialist sources of help. However, it is not your role to advise your team member what to do about their relationship or to act as a counsellor.

You can find more information about what you can do further on in the guidance. You may also wish to discuss the options available to you with HR. If you wish to discuss the application of this guidance, please contact HRenquiries@wokingham.gov.uk

Your safety and that of your colleagues is paramount. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, you should contact the police by dialling 999.

Recognising the signs of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can cause employees to be distracted at work, arrive late, leave early or miss work. Some common signs which might indicate that an employee is affected by domestic abuse can be found in Annex B. Please note this list is not exhaustive. These are examples of things you should be mindful of when considering whether domestic abuse may be affecting the member of staff. You should avoid making any assumptions about a person's situation based on the existence, or absence, of any of these signs and should be mindful that there may be other causes for the behaviour.

Talking to your team member

If you suspect someone is experiencing domestic abuse, you should try to have a conversation with them. Shying away



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



from the subject can perpetuate a fear of stigma and increase feelings of anxiety. Often, people who are affected will not feel that they can speak up and disclose the situation themselves, so sensitively taking the first step to start the conversation can be key.

You should begin by making sure you are in a comfortable and safe space where you are not going to be interrupted. Asking indirect questions can help establish a relationship and develop empathy. Some examples of question you might ask are:

- How are you doing at the moment? Are there any issues you would like to discuss with me?
- I have noticed recently that you aren't entirely yourself. Is anything the matter?
- Are there any problems or reasons that may be contributing to your frequent sickness absences/dip in your performance at work?
- What support do you think might help? What would you like to happen next?

If you need to, you can try something slightly more direct such as "Is everything ok at home?" But remember, they may not be ready to tell you what is happening so do not push the issue. Take their lead and let them know you are ready to have a confidential chat when they are ready to do so.

You can also suggest that if they don't want to talk to you, there are other options such as the Employee Assistance Programme helpline. Contact details for this and other relevant external organisations can be found in **Annex E**.

Do not make assumptions or be judgmental. Studies show it can take several years to break free of an abusive relationship and you should not assume, because they stay or return, the abuse is not severe or that they don't want it to stop.

As a manager, you should never encourage your team member to leave their abuser. Studies show when a victim-survivors of domestic abuse is attempting to leave a violent relationship, this is a time when the potential for an attack resulting in severe injury or death is at its highest. Instead, you should encourage them to reach out for the professional help they need to make sure they have the right support in place. Details of relevant external organisations can be found in **Annex E**.

You should also be aware that there may be additional issues and barriers facing a team member seeking help. For example, many LGBT+ people are fearful of coming out. This can be used as a method of control, by threatening to "out" them to family, faith communities, colleagues or employers. More information about specific issues facing LGBT+ and people with disabilities that experience domestic abuse can be found in **Annex D**. This annex also provides more information on 'honour' based abuse and forced marriage.

Key actions for managers

If someone chooses to disclose domestic abuse to you, there is a range of practical measures you can put in place to support your team member at work. Some are quick and easy. Others may take a bit longer. These can be found in **Annex C**.

Remember, it is essential you do what you can to put your colleague in control of the situation. Let them know the practical measures that can be taken and let them tell you what they think will help them the most.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



What should you do as the colleague of a victim-survivor of domestic abuse?

You almost certainly know someone who has been, is currently or will be affected by domestic abuse. Managers and colleagues are in a good position to spot the warning signs. Things to look out for can be found in **Annex B**.

If a colleague or friend tells you that they are affected by domestic abuse, you should not force them to disclose this to someone else. Offer a listening ear but recognise that you cannot adopt the role of counsellor, nor compel them to accept help.

You can encourage them to talk to their manager and you can tell them about relevant external organisations. A list of contact details can be found in **Annex E**. You can also reassure them that contacting the Employee Assistance Programme is confidential.

You may wish to contact the Employee Assistance Programme which can support you too. There is also a free mobile app called Bright Sky you can download. This provides nationwide domestic abuse information for victim-survivors and those who may be worried about someone they know.

It is important you keep any information your colleague shares with you confidential. The perpetrator may know someone in the office or within your circle of friends. Your colleague can be at serious risk if anything they say gets back to the perpetrator. However, if you believe they or someone in their family, such as a child, is in immediate danger, you should contact the police by dialling 999. If a child or vulnerable adult is at risk, you will also need to make the appropriate referrals in order to help keep them safe.

Advice for managers - supporting colleagues of victim-survivors of domestic abuse

As well as supporting your team member experiencing domestic abuse, you should also consider your other team members. They may be the first people to pick up signs of abuse or to be told what is going on at their colleagues' home. They may not be sure where to get support for themselves or their colleague. You should encourage them to read this guidance.

You should remind them that any information disclosed to them by the victim-survivor must be kept confidential. However, if they feel their colleague or a member of their family, such as a child, is in danger, they should contact the police.

You may find colleagues of victim-survivors need practical support and advice if, for example, they are subject to questioning by the perpetrator about the victim-survivors contact details or location. You should advise them and all team members not to give out any information over the phone or by email about another colleague, whether or not they are the victim-survivor of domestic abuse.

Colleagues may fear for their own safety. They may wish to contact the Employee Assistance Programme or seek advice from a relevant external organisation. These organisations may be able to suggest measures that can be put in place to keep them safe. Details of relevant external organisations can be found in **Annex E**. If they feel they are in immediate danger, they should always contact the police by dialling 999.

As a manager, you may wish to conduct a risk assessment with your team member and enable them to change their



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



start and finish times, change their working pattern or suggest they change their route to and from the office or work from home.

Colleagues may witness violence or other abuse in the workplace. They should be offered appropriate counselling and other relevant support to overcome any practical and emotional issues that arise consequently. Support can be provided by the [Employee Assistance Programme](#).

Advise for those concerned about the impact of their behaviour on others

Recognising the signs

You may find it helpful to think if you have ever felt or said any of the following:

- When I get angry, I just can't control myself.
- Well, you've got to stand up for yourself, haven't you, otherwise they walk all over you.
- Sometimes when we argue, I shout and my partner is afraid of me.
- I don't know, a few drinks and things just get a bit out of hand.
- I don't know what they mean. I've never hit them. I just pushed them and they fell over. It's all very well for you to talk about me being abusive - you don't know what I have to put up with.

You may also want to think if:

- you check up on your partner or ex-partner frequently (listening to their phone conversations, checking their car mileage, emails, texts)
- you put your partner or ex-partner down (calling them names, criticising them, humiliating them)
- you try to control your partner or ex-partner (telling them who they can or can't see, where they can and can't go, what they can or can't wear)
- your partner or ex-partner is afraid of what you will say or do
- you are being physically violent, emotionally abusing your partner, intimidating your partner or sexually abusing your partner.

Your responsibilities as an employee

You are responsible for ensuring your conduct and behaviour meets the expected standards set out in the Wokingham Borough Council Conduct Policy.

Domestic abuse will not be condoned under any circumstances. This behaviour will be taken very seriously and can lead to disciplinary action which may lead to dismissal.

The Conduct Policy requires you to inform line manager if you are arrested and refused bail, or if you are convicted of a criminal offence. This includes any charges made against you for domestic abuse. Failure to let your line manager know may lead to disciplinary action and dismissal.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



You should notify your manager if you are arrested, charged and released or if you are released under investigation for domestic abuse or any other crime.

The Council recognises that if you are released under investigation, this does not mean you are guilty of an offence. There will be no presumption of guilt. You should read the managers' section of the guidance to understand what action may be taken in relation to your work.

If you do not wish to tell your manager, you can contact HR via HRenquiries@wokingham.gov.uk and advise them. They will let you know what the next steps are in regard to work.

Getting help

Many perpetrators of domestic abuse constantly put the blame on their partner or ex-partner – “I'll stop shouting at you or hitting you if you do this” – “if you do that” – “if you stop winding me up” – “if you do what I say” etc. The only person who is responsible for your actions is yourself. Try to get help now rather than putting it off or denying that you need help.

Perpetrators of domestic abuse have to want to get help for themselves. This means being prepared to work hard and to face up to what you are doing and the damage this causes to your partner or former partner and any children who may be involved in the relationship.

To be able to take responsibility for your actions and to stop blaming others takes strength and courage. If you are a perpetrator of domestic abuse, you can choose what kind of person you want to be. There are agencies which provide workshops to help you to stop this cycle of abuse. Contact details can be found in **Annex E**.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



Advice for managers - managing a perpetrator of domestic abuse

If a team member tells you they have been arrested or convicted of a domestic abuse related offence

If a team member tells you they have been arrested or convicted of domestic abuse, you need to consider what action needs to be taken. You should make it clear to your team member that domestic abuse is a serious matter and is not acceptable. Your team member should understand this type of behaviour may lead to disciplinary action and dismissal from Wokingham Borough Council.

You should advise them you will need to consult with HR to discuss what action needs to be taken.

Released under investigation

If your team member tells you they have been released under investigation, you should treat this information in strictest confidence. Released under investigation doesn't mean your team member is guilty of an offence. It is worth remembering that false accusations can be made.

You should tell your team member that, wherever possible, you will not share the information without their consent. However, you should advise them there may be situations when you have to break confidentiality, for example, if you feel there is risk of harm to any children involved.

You should not be judgmental or make any comments about the allegations or your perceived innocence or guilt of your team member. You should not ask about the investigation or offer any advice. Instead, you should listen to your team member and let them know you will need to consult with HR to determine what happens next in relation to their work. This will include any relevant safeguarding procedures that may need to be put in place to mitigate reputational or operational risk to the council, as well as any risk to residents or colleagues.

You should also reassure your team member that the council recognises being accused of domestic abuse can be very stressful and may affect performance at work. You should advise your team member that you will discuss with HR any steps that can be taken to support them to ensure their safety and well-being is monitored.

Your team member may also wish to speak to the Employee Assistance Programme or contact a relevant external organisation such as Respect for advice and support. Contact details can be found in **Annex E**.

Other ways of becoming aware a team member may be being abusive or controlling

There are other ways you can become aware of a team member's abusive behaviour. For example, an allegation may be shared with you by the person experiencing abuse or by a family member, friend or work colleague. Or, you may have concerns because of the team member's behaviour at work. Below is a list of signs you may wish to consider, although it is important to remember that it may not be possible to assess whether someone is a perpetrator based solely on his or her outward behaviour. Many perpetrators conceal their abuse by behaving pleasantly to most people. You should also not make any assumptions about a person's behaviour on the existence or absence of any of these signs:



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



- negative comments made by your team member about a partner (and women/men in general)
- jealousy or possessiveness
- expressing anger and blaming their partner for issues
- constant text messaging or telephoning a partner
- repeated injuries (scratches, bite marks, bruised knuckles, injuries to wrists and forearms, which can be the consequence of their partner defending themselves).

However you become aware of the situation, you should always seek help and support from HR before taking any action.

Next steps

You should familiarise yourself with this guidance as it will help you when considering the next steps. For example, below is a list of things to consider when discussing the case with HR. You will be best placed to provide them with the information they will need to ensure the appropriate action is taken.

Things to consider when discussing a team member's case with HR

When discussing the case with HR you should consider the following:

- do you need to take immediate action to minimise the potential for your team member using their position or work resources to continue their abusive behaviour? For example, if they have access to a computer programme that can help them find their victim-survivor, you should consider withdrawing their access.
- is your team member able to carry out certain duties? For example, it would be inappropriate for a perpetrator of domestic abuse to provide advice or services to vulnerable men, women and children and/or the public. If so, you should consider a change in job role.
- is your team member working in the same location as their partner or former partner? If so, do you need to move either the perpetrator or the victim-survivor to a new location? If you are considering moving the victim-survivor, you should not do this without their consent.
- is your team member released under investigation? If so, are there any issues to be considered at work? For example, is it appropriate to offer suitable support for your team member? If so, what would that support be?

Considering disciplinary action

You should also discuss with HR if disciplinary action is appropriate. Where a team member has committed a criminal offence outside work, they cannot be fairly dismissed without following a disciplinary procedure, even if your team member has been remanded in custody or has been convicted of the offence.

For disciplinary action for out-of-work conduct to be fair, your team member's offence must have some bearing on their employment. You will need to consider what effect the charge or conviction has on their suitability to do the job and their relationship with the council, work colleagues and customers.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



If, for example, your team member is abusive to their partner or a former partner who is employed by the council or they are being abusive during working time, this provides a connection between the offence and their employment. Another example is if your team member is using workplace resources such as the telephone or emails to threaten, harass or abuse their current or former partner and/or involve other colleague.

Disciplinary action does not have to wait until your team member has been convicted of the offence. Where there is a connection between the offence and the employment, the disciplinary procedure must be followed, and a thorough investigation completed before any decision is taken. However, legal advice should be sought before any action is taken.

Wokingham Borough Council understands this can be a difficult situation. You should discuss any concerns you have with HR who will advise and support you through the process. You may also wish to speak to the Employee Assistance Programme who can offer you confidential advice and support.

Considering suspension

If you are considering suspending your team member from work pending disciplinary action, you must seek HR advice first. It is unlawful to suspend an employee without pay unless it is provided for in the contract of employment. To do so would place the council at risk of claims for unlawful deductions from wages and possibly constructive dismissal.

Holding a discussion with your team member

If, after discussing the case with HR, you have further discussions with your team member, you should always consider your own safety and make sure it will not be compromised. For example, you may wish to take another work colleague with you or meet in a public place.

When talking to your team member, do not make any assumptions or judgements. Talking to your team member in a constructive and respectful way will not mean you are excusing their behaviour.

When holding a discussion with your team member, you should:

- be clear that abuse is always unacceptable and is never justifiable
- be clear that abusive behaviour is a choice
- be aware that domestic abuse is about a range of controlling behaviours and not just physical abuse
- be aware that, on some level, your team member may be unhappy about their behaviour.

You should let your team member know if any immediate action is to be taken and what that will be. You should also advise them of any disciplinary action being considered and who will conduct any investigation that may need to take place.

If, during your discussion, your team member expresses a desire to change their behaviour, you should encourage them to seek the professional help they need. For example, you can signpost them to a relevant external organisation such as Respect, which runs a helpline, email and web chat service for perpetrators of domestic abuse looking for help to stop their behaviour, or ideally our local perpetrator intervention. Contact details can be found in **Annex E**.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



Keeping a confidential record of your discussions

If you have any discussions with you team member, any information disclosed should be treated in confidence wherever possible. However, if you suspect immediate danger to another person, you should contact the police by dialling 999. You should keep a confidential record of any discussion you have with your team member and any subsequent action or decisions that are taken. Good records may subsequently help in any legal proceedings or disciplinary hearing involving your team member.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



Annex A - Signs of domestic abuse for the victim-survivor

If you answer yes to any of the following questions, you might be in an abusive relationship.

Emotional abuse

Does your partner or ex-partner ever:

- monitor how you spend your time
- control your daily life, for example where you can go, who you can see, what you can wear
- isolate you from your family and friends
- make unreasonable demands for your attention
- accuse you of flirting or having affairs
- impose “rules” which humiliate, degrade or dehumanise you
- belittle you, or put you down
- blame you for the abuse or arguments
- deny that abuse is happening, or play it down
- stop you going to college or work
- prevent you from accessing transport
- control your money, or not give you enough to buy food or other essential things?

Threats and intimidation

Does your partner or ex-partner ever:

- threaten to hurt or kill you
- threaten to hurt or harm a family pet
- destroy things that belong to you
- stand over you, invade your personal space
- threaten to kill themselves or the children
- read your emails, texts or letters
- harass or follow you?

Physical abuse

The person abusing you may hurt you in several ways.

Does your partner or ex-partner ever:

- slap, hit or punch you
- push or shove you
- bite or kick you
- burn you
- choke you or hold you down



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



- throw things?

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse can happen to anyone, whether they're male or female.

Does your partner or ex-partner ever:

- touch you in a way you don't want to be touched
- make unwanted sexual demands
- hurt you during sex
- pressure you to have unsafe sex – for example, not using a condom
- pressure you to have sex?

If your partner has sex with you when you don't want to, this is rape.

Have you ever felt afraid of your partner?

Have you ever changed your behaviour because you're afraid of what your partner might do?



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



Annex B - Signs of domestic abuse for managers and colleagues

- Sudden changes in behaviour or changes in the quality of work performance for unexplained reasons, despite a previously strong record of performance.
- Repeated or unexplained absences or unexplained hospital visits.
- A change in work patterns, for example frequently late, asking for leave at the last minute, needing to leave early, being very concerned about timekeeping or wanting to stay late even though there is no business need.
- Having low self-esteem, being extremely apologetic and meek.
- A change in a person's attitude, for example becoming introverted, anxious, frightened, tearful or aggressive.
- Being secretive about their home life.
- Making excuses like tripping or being accident-prone or clumsy to explain an injury. Often the seriousness of the injury does not match up with the explanation.
- Single or repeated injuries with unlikely explanations or the same explanation used repeatedly for different occasions. Bruises or injuries that look like they came from choking, punching or being thrown down. Black eyes, red or purple marks at the neck, and sprained wrists are common injuries in violent relationships.
- Referring to the partner's temper but not disclosing the extent of the abuse.
- Drinking alcohol, taking drugs or smoking – all in excess.
- Having symptoms of depression, such as sadness or hopelessness, or loss of interest in daily activities.
- Talking about taking their own life, attempting suicide, or showing other warning signs of suicide.
- Conduct out of character with previous employment history.
- Having few close friends and being isolated from relatives and co-workers and kept from making friends.
- Having to ask permission to meet, talk with, or do things with other people.
- Having little money available. They may not have credit cards or the use of a car.
- Wearing clothes inappropriate to the weather conditions such as heavy winter clothes in summer or changes in the amount or type of make-up worn
- Change in the use of the phone/email: for example, a large number of personal calls/texts, avoiding calls or a strong reaction to calls/text/emails.

Of course, these can all be signs of other sensitive issues. Do not make any assumptions about a person's situation based on the existence, or absence, of any of these signs.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



Annex C – Guidance to managers on practical measures to support victim-survivors of domestic abuse

Contact arrangements

- Sharing work contact details as well as an emergency contact outside work. Arrange with your team member when and who to contact if they do not come into work (examples could include a family member, the police or a trusted friend or neighbour).
- Agree how you will maintain communication during any absences, for example if your team member calls in sick. Assure them you will not disclose their whereabouts to anyone without their agreement. If they do not call you to explain an unexpected absence and you cannot reach them via your agreed method of contact, consider whether they may be in immediate danger. If you think they may be, contact the police on 999 and provide as much information as you can.
- Agree who in the team you can share the contact details with, in case they are needed in your absence, for example when you are on leave.

Working arrangements

- Discuss possible flexible working arrangements. It may help if they change their start and finish times, change their working pattern, or work from home.
- Discuss their objectives and workload making reasonable adjustments where necessary. The stress of experiencing domestic abuse can impact significantly on performance so be mindful of this when agreeing what can be delivered and when. Agree to keep the situation under review and assure them they can change priorities and deadlines when needed.
- If their attendance is a cause for concern, you should approach this sympathetically. You can consider making workplace adjustments to support them to remain in work. These can include adjusting the absence trigger point to ensure they do not inappropriately face disciplinary action over sick absences. If you are not sure how to manage attendance and you are aware domestic abuse is one of the contributing factors, it is likely you may need the speak to HR.
- Any adjustments should be made with the consent of your team member.
- Allow them to access professional services, including counselling, during working hours, to avoid their partner becoming suspicious or aware of what they are doing.
- Consider special leave to attend appointments such as a GP, hospital or other agencies. They may need time off to attend court, visit a solicitor or the police. They may have children and need time off to visit the school or make alternative childcare arrangements.

If your team member is working in the same location as their partner or former partner, you should consider seeking advice from HR or more information on what action can be taken to move either the perpetrator or the victim-survivor to a new location. However, if you are considering moving the victim-survivor, you should not do this without their consent.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



Safe Communication

- If they are receiving harassing emails or calls from the perpetrator, consider changing their work email address and their phone number and, in the meantime, diverting phone calls and emails.
- Agree what to tell their colleagues and how they should respond should the perpetrator telephone.
- Verify the source before communicating – never share ‘missing person’ reports from non-verified accounts on social media or elsewhere i.e. not from a police source.

Identity issues

- If they are attempting to leave an abusive relationship, you should seek advice from HR and/or the Employee Assistance Programme.
- Where necessary, you can seek additional support and advice from other agencies (such as domestic abuse organisations, Witness Protection and the Police).
- They may wish to conceal their identity by using an assumed name at work. If they do, their personal records, payroll records and intranet details may need to be altered. You should contact HRenquiries@wokingham.gov.uk to arrange for this to happen.
- You should consider whether any photographs or descriptions that can identify your team member need to be excluded from publications and websites.
- Your team member may wish to reduce or eliminate information that may be accessed through the Internet including social media sites.

Security arrangements

- Ensure they do not work alone or in an isolated area.
- Where practical, offer changes in specific duties, such as not expecting your team member to answer the telephone or sit on reception.
- Move your team member out of public view, ensuring that they are not visible from reception points or ground floor windows.
- Remind employees never to give out personal information about their colleagues such as contact details/patterns of work, even if that request comes from a family member.
- Agree what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if the perpetrator or other named parties (family or friends) telephones or visits the workplace and asks for them.
- Agree with them to give reception/security staff (where applicable) specific instructions as to how to identify the perpetrator, for example a photo or car registration, should they try to come into the building, or should they tell reception that your team member is expecting them.
- If there is a protection order that prohibits the perpetrator from coming to the workplace, agree with them that you can share these details with reception/security staff as they may be required to call the police where appropriate.
- Remind reception/security staff of their general responsibilities to protect the identity of individuals and never to give out any personal information about their colleagues.
- You may find it helpful to carry out a personal Health and Safety Risk Assessment and to keep a record of any incidents of abuse in the workplace, including persistent phone calls, emails or visits to the workplace.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



- In some cases where your team member's personal safety is at serious risk, it may be necessary to consult the Police about the best way to implement safety measures including safe escape routes.

Travel

- Make sure they have safe arrangements for getting to and from home. If they have concerns, talk to them about how they might change their route, for example by taking a different bus or train time.

Personal information

- You should review the security of all personnel information held. For example, a temporary or new address and bank details should always be held securely and only available to relevant employees.
- If the perpetrator works for the council or partner body, you should make sure they do not have any access to your team member's personal information.
- You should make sure you keep contact with your team member during any absence, while keeping their whereabouts confidential.
- Explain that you will keep a confidential record of your conversations and any incidents that are disclosed to you or that you witness, in case they ever want to use it.

Transfers

- If your team member feels they need to move location, you can consider a transfer or redeployment to another post and/or location. You can seek the advice from HR via HRenquiries@wokingham.gov.uk to discuss the options available to accommodate the move.

Financial support

- If your team member is experiencing financial hardship as a result of domestic abuse, discuss with them the option of contacting our Employee Assistance Programme or their Trade Union, if they are a member, as they may be able to offer additional financial support.
- Discuss if they wish to change their bank details to redirect their salary. However, be mindful this can alert the perpetrator of their intention to leave. They must therefore decide when to take this action.
- Refuge has produced a financial guide called 'My Money, My Life' that they may find helpful.

Remember when discussing the options available to your team member, it is important that they agree to any action being taken so they are in control of the situation at work.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



Annex D – ‘Honour’ based abuse and forced marriage

‘Honour’ based abuse

‘Honour’-based abuse is a form of domestic abuse that is perpetrated in the name of so called ‘honour’. It can exist in any culture or community where males are in a position to establish and enforce control over women’s conduct. However, men can also be victim-survivors. This is sometimes because the relationship they are in is deemed inappropriate, for example if they are gay, have a disability or have assisted a victim of abuse.

It is important not to underestimate or be dismissive of the extent of control over behaviours in some communities. For example, wearing what is considered inappropriate clothing can be seen as bringing shame upon the family or community and can therefore result in retribution.

Escaping ‘honour’-based abuse can be even more difficult than escaping other abusive relationships, as it often involves leaving behind friends, family and community. Families can sometimes go to extreme lengths to trace a family-member considered to have brought shame upon them. For example, they may make false reports to the police that the family member has stolen something from the family.

Issues of confidentiality are always important in domestic abuse situations, but extra care is needed where a team member is the victim-survivor of honour-based abuse. In tight-knit communities, a victim-survivor of ‘honour’-based abuse may be suspicious of any member of that community, which can make accessing support extremely difficult.

If you, or a colleague, experience this kind of abuse, you may wish to contact an organisation such as Karma Nirvana. This is a national charity supporting victim-survivors of honour-based violence across the country. Their contact details can be found in **Annex E**.

Forced Marriage

Forced marriage is a criminal offence. A forced marriage is one in which one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities or mental incapacity, cannot) consent to the marriage and violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is involved. Coercion may include emotional force, physical force or the threat of physical force, and financial pressure. In an arranged marriage, both parties have consented to the union but can still refuse to marry if they choose to.

Refusal to participate in, or resistance to, a forced marriage can result in honour-based violence as described above. A team member, particularly a young woman or man, who is expressing concern about a family holiday abroad may be worried about the potential for a forced marriage, and any concerns expressed should not be dismissed, nor should disclosures or suspicions that someone is under pressure or coercion to enter into a marriage they don’t want to.

If you, or someone you know, is at risk of, or has been forced into a marriage, the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) can provide advice and support, and signpost on a range of issues including safety. Their contact details can be found in



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



Annex E - LGBT+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and intersex) specific issues

It is important to remember that domestic abuse can occur in same sex relationships as well as in heterosexual relationships. Research into the experiences of domestic abuse of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people has highlighted the following specific issues.

- There is a general lack of discussion about domestic abuse in same sex relationships, and the unspoken assumption that domestic abuse occurs only in heterosexual relationships can make it difficult for those affected to recognise that they are experiencing domestic abuse.
- Many LGBTQ people are fearful of coming out. This can be used as a method of control, by threatening to “out” people to family, faith communities, colleagues, employers etc.
- The power dynamic within a same sex relationship can be affected by the length of time someone has been “out”. Someone in their first same sex relationship can be vulnerable to an abusive partner suggesting that their behaviour is the norm in same sex relationships. This can make it extremely difficult for someone to recognise, acknowledge and speak about domestic abuse.
- Victim-survivors of domestic abuse in same sex relationships often feel responsible for the emotional welfare of the abusive partner and protective of them. This can make it very difficult for them to recognise the abuse, and makes them very reluctant to disclose that their partner is abusive.
- Victim-survivors in same sex relationships are less likely to turn to the police for help than those in heterosexual relationships. Research refers to a gap of trust between victim-survivors and mainstream agencies.

If a team member discloses to you that they are experiencing abuse in a same sex relationship, they may be taking a very difficult step and will be placing a high degree of trust in you. It is important to set aside any preconceived ideas you may have and avoid making any assumptions (for example, assumptions as to who is the most powerful or the strongest in the relationship).

If you, or a team member, experience domestic abuse in a same sex relationship, you may wish to contact, or signpost your team member to an organisation such as Galop. This is a national charity, which provides support for LGBT people experiencing domestic abuse. The contact details can be found in **Annex E**.

Specific issues for victim-survivors of domestic abuse who have a disability

There are some specific issues for victim-survivors of domestic abuse who are disabled, and it is important to be aware of, and be sensitive to these issues. An Office for National Statistics report published in 2020 found that:

- 14.7% of women with a long-term illness or disability had experienced domestic abuse, compared to 6.0% of non-disabled women
- 7.5% of men with a long-term illness or disability had experienced domestic abuse, compared to 3.2% of non-disabled men

People who have a disability face many barriers in society, which can be exploited by a controlling and abusive partner. For example, where a person’s partner is also their carer, they have additional opportunities to exercise power and



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



control. They can threaten to withdraw care or remove mobility aids to take away the person's independence.

This can make it extremely difficult for a victim-survivor of domestic abuse who has a disability to contemplate reporting the abuse or leaving the situation for fear of losing an element of necessary care.

A common feature of domestic abuse is the erosion of the victim-survivors' self-esteem and confidence, making them feel that they deserve no better. An abusive partner telling a person with a disability that nobody else would ever love them or be interested in them, and they should be grateful that the partner stays with them, can make it very difficult for a victim-survivor to acknowledge the abuse even to themselves, let alone disclose it to anyone else.

People with a disability, particularly those with mental health issues, often fear that they will not be taken seriously or believed if they report abuse and can be very susceptible to an abusive partner repeatedly telling them that no-one will believe them.

A person who has a disability which requires adaptations carried out at their home will find it very difficult to leave that property, as any other property may not meet their needs. The process of accessing and completing adaptations can be lengthy, and costly.

People with a disability often have difficulty accessing support services. Many refuges are not accessible to someone with a disability and many people who have a disability have smaller support networks than those without a disability.

If a team member who has a disability discloses that they are being subjected to domestic abuse, it is important to treat them with the same respect and dignity as you would any other team member. They may need additional support to negotiate a care package if they are contemplating separating from an abusive partner who is also a carer. You may wish to encourage them to contact a local disabled people's support agency or advocacy organisation, as well as, in relevant circumstances, a benefits advisor.



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



Annex F - Useful Contacts – Help and Advice

If you are concerned for your own or someone else’s immediate safety, call the police on 999.

24-hour helplines:

Wokingham Domestic Abuse Service: 0118 402 1921 (for male and female victim-survivors – emergency out of hours service available if you need to access a refuge)

National Domestic Violence Helpline for female victim-survivors – 24 hours a day [0808 2000 247](tel:08082000247)

Employee Assistance Programme – Vita health Group– freephone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year 0800 111 6387, or for management support 0800 111 6385. For online information see [Vita Health Group](https://www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk) with EAP log in code: WOKwell. See <https://wokingham.sharepoint.com/Services/Pages/Counselling.aspx> for further details.

There are many other organisations that can offer advice and practical guidance on domestic abuse. Some are listed below, and you can find a full list of Wokingham based services on the [domestic abuse pages of our website](#):

Name	Contact details	Information/support available
Ashiana Sheffield	Tel: 0114 255 5740 ashianasheffield.org	Ashiana has a dedicated team who assist black, asian, minority ethnic and refugee women across the country whose lives have been affected by violence and abuse.
Black Association of Women Step Out (BAWSO)	Tel: 0800 731 8147 www.bawso.org.uk	BAWSO provides advice and support for black and minority ethnic people in Wales providing culturally sensitive and appropriate information on a range of issues such as domestic abuse, forced marriages and female genital mutilation.
Bright Sky	Download free from App store	It is the first app of its kind in the UK, providing nationwide domestic abuse support for victim-survivors and those who may know of someone in an abusive relationship.
Domestic Abuse Service, Wokingham (delivered by Cranstoun)	Helpline 0118 402 1921 available Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm and 24 hours to access refuge accommodation.	Support for victim-survivors, children and those who want to change their behaviour. Support includes helpline; safety planning outreach and advocacy; group based programmes; support for children and young people; interventions for those



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



		<p>who wish to make changes to their behaviour.</p> <p>The helpline is also available for practitioners to access advice to enable them to support a client, work colleague, friend or family member</p> <p>The service also provides perpetrator interventions, including a long-term behaviour change programme</p>
Eastern European Service	<p>Call: 0772 524 5777 or email: EasternEuropeanIDVA@refuge.org.uk</p>	Support to domestic violence victim-survivors from the Eastern European Community. Women-only service.
Forced Marriage Unit (FMU)	<p>Tel: 020 700 8151</p> <p>email: fmu@fco.gov.uk</p> <p>email for outreach work: fmuoutreach@fco.gov.uk</p> <p>Facebook: Forced Marriage page</p> <p>Twitter: @FMUnit</p>	The FMU provides a public helpline giving advice and support to victim-survivors of forced marriage. The support provided ranges from safety advice, through to helping a forced marriage victim-survivors prevent their unwanted spouse moving to the UK
Hourglass	<p>Free text: 0786 005 2906</p> <p>24/7 helpline: 0808 808 8141</p>	Hourglass support older people in Wokingham who are experiencing domestic abuse. They also have a 24/7 helpline and link with our local service to support those in the Wokingham area.
Kaleidoscopic	<p>Kaleidoscopic UK website</p> <p>Email: kaleidoscopicuk@gmail.com</p>	Supports adults and children who have been exposed to domestic abuse through peer-based support.
Karma Nirvana	<p>Tel: 0800 599 9247</p> <p>(Monday to Friday 09:00 to 17:00)</p>	Karma Nirvana is a national charity supporting victim-survivors across the country of honor-based abuse and forced marriage.
Men's Advice Line	<p>Tel: 0808 801 0327</p> <p>(Monday to Friday 09:00 to 15:00)</p>	Men's Advice Line is a confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic abuse from a partner or ex-partner (or from other family members).



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



National LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline	<p>Tel: 0800 999 5428</p> <p>(Monday and Thursday 10:00 to 20:00</p> <p>Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10:00 – 17:00</p> <p>(13:00 - 17:00 Tuesday is trans specific service))</p> <p>Email: help@galop.org.uk</p>	<p>The National LGBT Domestic Abuse helpline is run by Galop, the leading LGBT anti-violence and abuse charity.</p>
National Stalking Helpline	<p>Tel: 0808 802 0300</p> <p>About stalking Suzy Lamplugh Trust</p>	<p>The helpline provides help and offers support to victim-survivors of stalking, offering free safety tips and delivering community projects.</p>
Refuge	<p>Tel: 0808 200 0247</p> <p>24- hour free phone telephone number</p> <p>www.refuge.org.uk</p>	<p>Refuge is one of the largest single providers of specialist accommodation and services to women and children escaping domestic abuse.</p>
Respect	<p>Tel: 0808 802 4040</p> <p>(Monday to Friday 09:00 – 17:00)</p> <p>www.respect.uk.net</p>	<p>Helpline for those worried about their own, or someone else’s abusive or controlling behaviour.</p>
Southall Black Sisters	<p>Helpline: 020 8571 0800 (open Monday to Wednesday, and Friday, 9.30am to 4.30pm, General enquiries: 020 8571 9595</p>	<p>Support for domestic violence victim-survivors from black and minority ethnic groups and advice on immigration issues. (This is a women-only service)</p>
The Samaritans	<p>Tel: 116 123</p>	<p>The Samaritans is a nationwide charity that provides 24-hour confidential and emotional support for anyone in a crisis.</p>



Employee Domestic Abuse Support Guidance



Support U	0118 321 9111	Specialist Thames Valley wide service to support members of the LGBT+ community who are experiencing domestic abuse.
Victim Support	Tel: 0845 303 0900 (Monday to Friday 09:00 to 21:00, Weekends 09:00 to 19:00)	Victim Support is the national charity for people affected by crime. It is an independent organization offering a free and confidential service irrespective if the crime has been reported.
Women's Aid (female victim-survivors of domestic abuse)	www.womensaid.org.uk	Support for women affected by domestic abuse. There are many resources on their website, including a survivors handbook.
Women and Girls Network	Freephone advice telephone: 0808 801 0660 or email: advice@wgn.org.uk . Open Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm, and Wednesday 6pm to 8pm	Providing advice and specialist support for victims of rape or sexual assault and operating a free domestic abuse advice line. Women-only service.

Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Author
1	23/08/21	Publish and launch date	Gail Tulett, Senior HR Specialist
1.1	13/10/21	Added version control table.	Gail Tulett, Senior HR Specialist
1.2	08/07/22	Updated link error	Gail Tulett, HR Business Partner
2	TBC	Amended to create new Policy and Guidance documents. Updated support contact information.	Gail Tulett, HR Business Partner

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TITLE **Workforce Equalities Monitoring Report**

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Personnel Board – 20th September 2023

WARD Non-Specific

LEAD OFFICER Sally Halliwell – Head of HR and OD

RECOMMENDATION

That Personnel Board approves the workforce equalities monitoring report so that this can be published as required.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

In accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 we need to ensure that we publish sufficient data to show how we meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Workforce Equalities Monitoring report shows our commitment to delivering fairness and removing barriers that limit what people can do and can be. This is an annual report that falls in line with the Equality Framework which is the national measure of equality performance for local authorities which is managed by the Local Government Association.

It allows us to measure our performance against the highest possible standards. Our various internal equality groups will be responsible for providing evidence of progress and in particular we will work with the Ethnical Diverse and Neurodiverse staff network groups. This will be delivered by an annual review against the requirements including action plans to address any gaps/areas for development. Please report attached for further detail

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

	How much will it Cost	Is there sufficient funding	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	NA	NA
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	NA	NA
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	NA	NA

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

Cross-Council Implications

None

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

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List of Background Papers
Pay Policy Statement 2023

Contact: Sally Halliwell – Head of HR and OD	Service: HR and OD, Chief Executive’s Officer
Telephone No	Email sally.halliwell@wokingham.gov.uk

Wokingham Borough Council

Workforce Diversity Report – July 2023

The Equality Act 2010 requires Public Bodies to publish sufficient data to show how they are meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty – which includes workforce profile and other information.

The broad purpose of the equality duty legislation is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of public authorities. Therefore, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
-

The legislation states advancing equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Having due regard to the aims of the general equality duty requires the Council to have an adequate evidence base for its decision-making. Collecting and using equality information should enable it to develop a sound evidence base and to understand the impact of its proposals and decisions on people with protected characteristics.

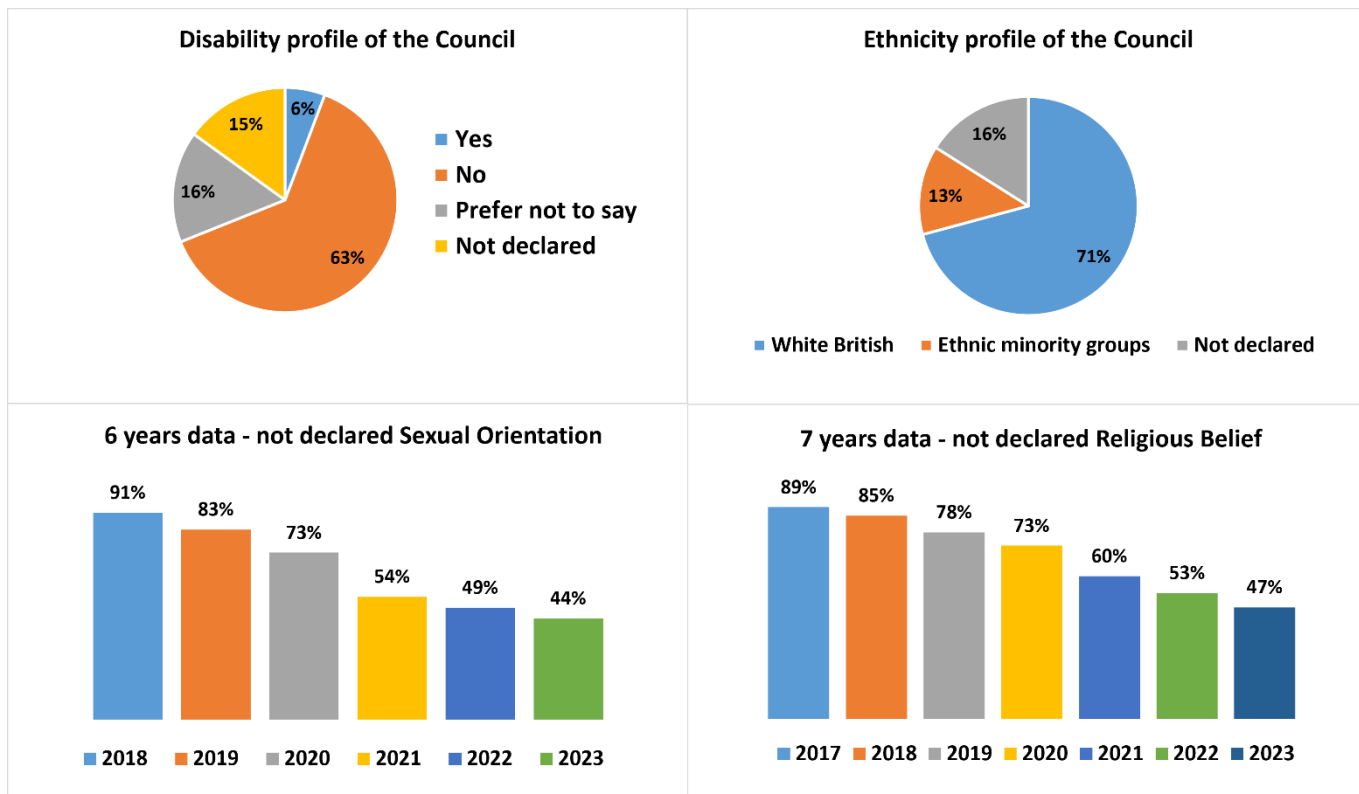
The quality of diversity data of Council staff has gradually been improving since 2017 as highlighted in the below graphs.

This information is requested as part of the recruitment process and added to the ERP system (BWO) during the new starter onboarding process. Individuals can choose not to declare information about their ethnicity or other protected characteristics.

Current employees are able to view and update their diversity information via self-service access to BWO and they are reminded to review/add any missing information annually as part of the appraisal process.

Table 1 – Current snapshot of equality data declared

The below graphics give an overall snapshot of the equality data percentages currently declared.



Analysis by protected characteristic

High level summary:

- Analysis has taken place of the workforce make-up based on various protected groups, using data from a fixed date (31 March 2023), e.g. percentage of the workforce by ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and so on; with a view to understanding if the Council's workforce truly reflects the community it serves.
- Other analysis looks at equality data based on the year up to 31 March 2023 e.g. recruitment and leavers data; with a view to understanding if there are any inherent biases towards or against any protected characteristics, suggested by the data.
- As shown by the tables above significant improvements have been made in the percentages of employees declaring their equality data over the last 5+ years.

A full analysis is provided below.

Ethnicity

Table 2 – Ethnicity breakdown of the Council vs Wokingham Borough

The below table shows the ethnicity profile of the Council, Wokingham Borough along with Council leavers and new starters.

	White British	Ethnic minority groups	Prefer not to say	Not declared
Ethnicity profile of Wokingham borough	80%	20%	N/A	0%
Ethnicity profile of the Council	71%	13%	0%	16%
Ethnicity profile of new starters	65%	34.50%	0%	0.5%
Ethnicity profile of leavers	75%	8%	0%	17%

In 2023, we can see that 0% of Council colleagues have actively selected not to disclose their ethnicity, with ethnicity unknown for 16% of employees.

In the 2021 census, 80% of WBC (Wokingham Borough Council) residents reported an ethnicity within the high-level “White British” category. Based on the 2023 workforce data the number of employees self-declaring as other than white British would need to increase by 7% to be truly representative of the population.

Table 3 – Ethnicity breakdown by salary grouping

The below table shows the ethnicity profile of the Council by salary grouping.

	Non-Ethnic Minority Group	Ethnic Minority Group	Prefer not to say	Not declared
<£20,000	0%	0%	0%	0%

£20,000 - £29,999	25%	5%	0%	5%
£30,000 - £39,999	20%	4%	0%	4%
£40,000 - £49,999	15%	3%	0%	3%
£50,000 +	11%	1%	0%	4%
Overall Total	71%	13%	0%	16%

71% of employees declared they did not belong to an ethnic minority group. 16% of employees have not declared their ethnicity, there has been a sustained improvement in this figure indicating action taken to encourage disclosure has been successful. Desktop exercise will be undertaken

Gender

Table 4 – Gender breakdown of the Council vs Wokingham Borough

The below table shows the gender profile of the Council, Wokingham Borough along with Council leavers and new starters.

	Male	Female
Gender profile of Wokingham borough	49%	51%
Gender profile of the Council	26%	74%
Gender profile of new starters	30%	70%
Gender profile of leavers	24%	76%

The borough has an equal split of men and women, whilst the Council's workforce is predominantly female at 74%. This is broadly consistent with the gender profile across local government. There is a slight increase in the percentage of female employees in the last year, rising from 73% last year to 74%.

The above data highlights that a higher proportion of men are joining as new starters than are leaving the organisation.

Table 5 – Gender breakdown by salary grouping

The below table shows the gender profile of the Council by salary grouping.

	F	M
<£20,000	0%	0%
£20,000 - £29,999	28%	6%
£30,000 - £39,999	21%	7%
£40,000 - £49,999	15%	6%
£50,000 +	10%	7%
Grand Total	74%	26%

There remains a variation in gender split based on salary. For instance, there is the highest percentage of females in the lowest salary group and one of the smallest percentages of males – this can be explained by the fact that lower paid roles more traditionally occupied by males are outsourced to external organisations.

Disability

Table 6 – Disability breakdown of the Council vs Wokingham Borough

The below table shows the disability profile of the Council, Wokingham Borough along with Council leavers and new starters.

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say	Not declared
Disability profile of Wokingham borough	13%	87%	N/A	N/A
Disability profile of the Council	6%	63%	16%	15%
Disability profile of new starters	4%	64%	0%	32%
Disability profile of leavers	5%	46%	0%	49%

In the 2021 census, 13% of WBC residents reported a disability. Current data shows 6% of employees have declared a disability whilst 16% of employees have actively opted to select the 'prefer not to say' option. This has increased from 1% in the previous report, it is worth noting that the last report highlighted that 30% of employees had not declared the information at all.

Along with improving the Councils data the Disability Confident Scheme will be explored with a view to introduce it so that the Council can ensure that it encourages potential candidates with a disability to apply for roles. Given the small number of employees that have declared a disability this characteristic is not represented by salary banding

Sexual orientation

Table 7 – sexual orientation breakdown of the Council

The below table shows the sexual orientation profile of the Council.

Bisexual	1%
Gay	0%
Heterosexual	49%
Prefer not to say	5%
Not declared	44%
Other	1%

1% of employees have declared themselves to be gay or bisexual, compared to national estimates of around 6%. 44% of employees have not declared this information, however it is worth highlighting that this figure has shown a steady reduction since 2018 when it was 91% of employees.

As above due to the small numbers of declarations this characteristic is not broken down by salary range.

Religion and belief

Table 8 – religious/belief breakdown of the Council

The below table shows the religious/belief profile of the Council.

Christian	23%
No Religion	19%
Other Religion	7%
Prefer not to say	4%
Not declared	47%

47% of employees have not declared this information, however it is worth highlighting that this figure has shown a steady reduction since 2017 when it was 89% of employees.

As above due to the small numbers of declarations this characteristic is not broken down by salary range.

Age

Table 9 – Age profile of the Council vs Wokingham Borough

The below table shows the age profile of the Council compared to the borough.

Age range	2023	Population
16-19	0.1%	4.5%
20-24	4.5%	4.6%
25-34	17.4%	11.3%
35-49	38.1%	22.3%
50-64	36.7%	19.3%
65+	3.2%	17.1%

The workforce profile remains older in comparison to the community (based on the 2021 census). Though it should of course be remembered that by definition a working population will not include anyone under 16 and fewer at the higher and lower age ranges, which means there will be proportionally more in the age groups in between.

Recruitment

An audit of recruitment activity from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 has been undertaken. A summary is shown below.

Table 10 – Gender/Ethnicity/Disability profile of applicants to the Council

The below tables shows the gender profile, ethnicity profile and disability profile of people applying for jobs at the Council through the various stages of recruitment.

	Applicants		Shortlisted		Appointed	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Sex						
Female	1876	72%	993	72%	342	72%
Male	702	27%	359	27%	125	26%
Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Prefer Not to Say	20	1%	14	1%	8	2%
Not Declared	6	0%	5	0%	2	0%
Total	2604		1371		477	

	Applicants		Shortlisted		Appointed	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Ethnicity						
White British	1270	49%	801	58%	329	70%
Ethnic Minority Groups	1253	48%	518	38%	130	27%
Prefer Not to Say	75	3%	47	4%	12	3%
Not Declared	6	0%	5	0%	2	0%
Total	2604		1371		473	

	Applicants		Shortlisted		Appointed	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Disability						
Yes	133	5%	87	6%	25	5%
No	2414	93%	1256	92%	441	93%
Prefer Not to Say	51	2%	23	2%	5	2%
Not Declared	6	0%	5	0%	2	0%
Total	2604		1371		473	

This data will be produced on an annual basis in order to compare and highlight trends. Some initiatives to further improve the workforce profile for individuals with protected characteristics will be actioned the coming year these are capture in the action plan but include review of advertising methods, pilot of anonymised application forms, the exploration of the disability confident scheme.

2023/2024 Action Plan			
Subject	Action	Target	Owner
Data Collection	<p>Undertake a project to work towards improving the declaration of equality data.</p> <p>Improve employee confidence in disclosing their personal information.</p> <p>Introduce some new easy ways of collecting the data.</p> <p>Undertake benchmarking with other Local Authorities</p>	<p>85% equality data disclosed</p> <p>(Currently 69% disability, 84% ethnicity, 56% sexual orientation and 53% religious belief)</p> <p>See what we can learn from the benchmarking adopt new initiatives in consultation with CLT & Staff Networks</p>	HR & OD working with EDI team
Recruitment	<p>Review of job boards and advertising mediums used to attract candidates to ensure that they reach all minority groups</p>	<p>Extensive selection of advertising mediums available to the Council backed up with collated data on what candidates are attracted from which job board</p>	Recruitment Lead
Recruitment	<p>Review of the information provided to the Council by applicants and what information is shared with hiring managers.</p>	<p>Explore the possibility of anonymised application forms (pilot this is one area)</p>	Recruitment Lead

Recruitment	Explore the Disability Confident scheme	Introduce the scheme and train recruiting managers	Recruitment Lead
Training	Introduction of mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion training to be rolled out to all staff	90% completion	EDI Lead Learning & Development Team

Note: There will also be engagement with the staff networks and SLF's on all the above actions.

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