

Supporting Employees Suffering Domestic Abuse Policy

The Bristol Methodist District. (Charity Number 1134873)

First Issued	January 2025
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 We have developed this policy as part of our commitment to support our workforce's health and wellbeing at work.
- 1.2 It covers the internal and external support available to individuals experiencing domestic abuse, including appointing a member of staff as a nominated point of contact, special leave provisions and signposting to external sources of advice and help.
- 1.3 The policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend it at any time.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to anyone working for us. This includes employees, workers, contractors, volunteers, interns and apprentices.

3 The aim of this policy

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to:
 - 3.1.1 support individuals experiencing domestic abuse;
 - 3.1.2 enable individuals experiencing domestic abuse to remain productive and at work;
 - 3.1.3 aid managers seeking to help team members experiencing domestic abuse;
 - 3.1.4 assist colleagues of those experiencing domestic abuse; and
 - 3.1.5 reinforce our objectives as a socially responsible organisation by demonstrating that we value, and are prepared to support, staff during difficult periods.

4 What is domestic abuse?

- 4.1 Domestic abuse is abusive behaviour by one person to another, where they are both aged 16 or over and they are personally connected. The abusive behaviour can be a single incident or a course of conduct.
- 4.2 Behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following:
 - 4.2.1 physical or sexual abuse;
 - 4.2.2 violent or threatening behaviour;
 - 4.2.3 controlling or coercive behaviour;
 - 4.2.4 economic abuse; or
 - 4.2.5 psychological, emotional or other abuse.

5 Internal support

- 5.1 To support individuals who experience domestic abuse, we will:
 - 5.1.1 nominate an appointed person in the workplace to act as a confidential first point of contact;
 - 5.1.2 offer access to counselling, and publicise the availability of this support regularly through ongoing health and wellbeing initiatives;
 - 5.1.3 offer access to counselling and other support to individuals perpetrating domestic abuse who seek help from us; and

5.1.4 undertake to raise workplace awareness of domestic abuse issues through a programme of regular information initiatives.

6 External support

6.1 We will signpost external sources of help and support, including information on:

6.1.1 [Respect](#), which provides practical information and advice on domestic abuse for perpetrators, the abused, health and social care professionals, and family and friends;

6.1.2 [the National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#), which provides advice if experiencing domestic abuse;

6.1.3 Business in the Community's [domestic abuse toolkit](#) which helps ensure all employees feel supported and empowered by their workplace to deal with domestic abuse; and

6.1.4 [government advice and guidance](#) for those experiencing, or feel at risk of, domestic abuse.

7 Your line managers' role

7.1 Line managers have a crucial role to play in enabling individuals experiencing domestic abuse to seek help. We provide training for all managers in handling sensitive issues, raising awareness of domestic abuse in teams, and operating the procedures for handling instances of domestic abuse.

7.2 The role of your line manager is to:

7.2.1 identify individuals experiencing difficulties as a result of domestic abuse (for example, using regular performance appraisal, or by fostering an open management culture that enables team members to disclose sensitive issues);

7.2.2 provide support in the first instance, including advice on the options available, but also recognise the limitations of their role (referring to professional counsellors or experts where necessary);

7.2.3 protect confidentiality in all instances (excepting the requirements of child protection);

7.2.4 refer individuals to the appropriate internal or external source of help and support, for example the organisation's confidential point of contact or external agency;

7.2.5 ensure that the safety of all individuals in the team is protected; and

7.2.6 enable the affected individual to remain productive and at work during a difficult period in their domestic life, for example by using the organisation's special leave policies and procedures.

8 Attendance

8.1 We recognise that those experiencing domestic abuse may need to be absent from work at times and will assist them by using our special leave policies.

8.2 Individual absences can be discussed and agreed between the individual and the Line Manager.

9 Security and safety

9.1 We will protect the safety and security of all staff at work, including those affected by domestic abuse and their colleagues.

9.2 individuals need to tell us that they are at risk from domestic abuse to receive this protection and we will seek to enable them to make this disclosure by fostering a supportive and open management culture.

10 Data protection

10.1 When an individual experiences domestic abuse and we are providing support, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

10.2 Data collected from the point at which we become aware of the issue is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of providing the necessary support.

11 Review

- 11.1 This policy may be reviewed at any time at the request of any member of staff, but it will be automatically reviewed two years after initial approval and thereafter on a biennial basis unless organisational changes, legislations, guidance, or non-compliance prompt an earlier review.

12 Definitions

- 12.1 The Bristol Methodist District ("we", "us", "our")
12.2 The Employee ("you", "your")

Document control box

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