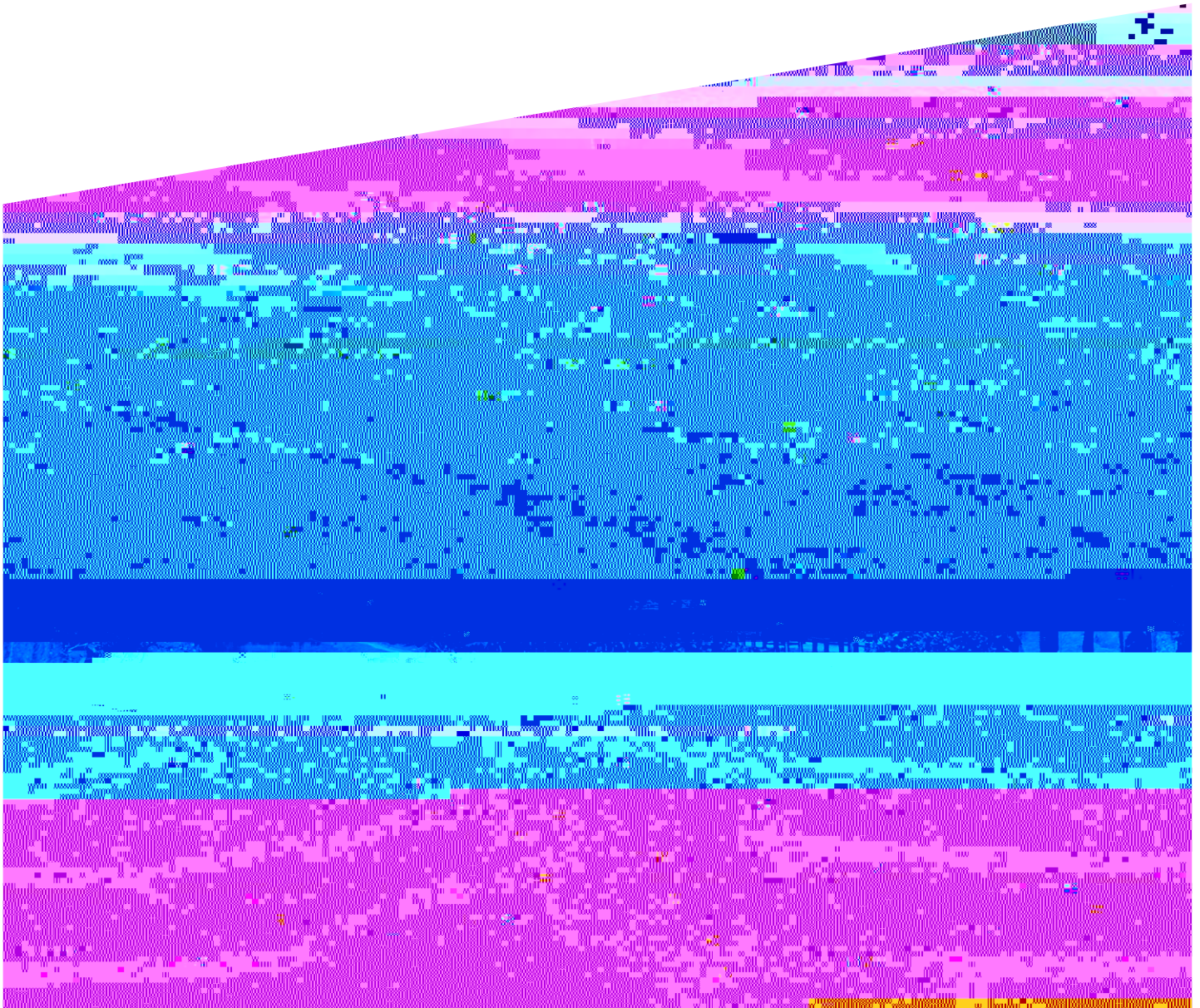


Domestic Abuse, Violence & Sexual Violence Policy



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Issued: April 2024

This document is also available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

Version Control

This document is intended for:

- Council staff only School-based staff only Council & School-based staff

Version	Key Changes	Approved By
Feb 2021	Awarding up to 5 days paid Safe Leave as a supportive measure for staff experiencing Domestic Abuse, Violence and Sexual Violence.	Council
Apr 2024	EAP details updated	OD

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not reflect a fundamental change or affect the spirit or intent of the document.

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1. Policy Statement

Domestic abuse, violence and sexual violence (“domestic abuse/violence”) are serious social and criminal problems that account for almost a quarter of all violent crime and have significant human and financial consequences for individuals, families, communities and society as a whole.

We recognise that some of our employees will be amongst those affected by abuse

- ◁ Reduce absences from work resulting from acts of domestic abuse/violence; and assist in improving any performance issues by offering practical support to employees who are affected.
- ◁ Help everyone (including managers and elected members) through training and understanding to recognise potential victims or perpetrators of acts of domestic abuse/violence and to provide a supportive environment for them.
- ◁ Reinforce the commitment to the principle that any form of violence or abuse is unacceptable behaviour and that everyone has a right to live free from fear and abuse.

4. Definitions and Key Legislation

It is a requirement of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (“VAWDASV”) that all devolved public sector employers have a work place policy for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. This policy fulfils that requirement but is not exclusive to women, also including men and non-binary individuals.

This policy covers: all forms of gender based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence in recognition that both men, women and non-binary individuals are victims of violence; threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation; and also forced marriage.

Domestic violence/abuse can manifest itself through a variety of actions such as:

- ◁ Physical assault or threats of physical assault (e.g. slapping, pushing,

Key Legislation

We acknowledge key legislation relevant to violence at work, including:

- < Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- <

6. Employees experiencing Domestic Abuse/ Violence

Employees who make it known to us that they are experiencing domestic abuse/violence will be treated in a sympathetic and supportive manner. They should not be judged by other employees and will be encouraged to help themselves out of their abusive circumstances, having due regard for their personal safety and that of their children, where applicable.

Employees can seek advice and support from their manager. In addition, we provide a range of supportive and signposting services, which include:

- < [Occupational Health Service](#)
- < [Employee Assistance Programme](#) offering counselling services
- < Trade Union representatives should also be able to provide advice and support
- < Other specialist service providers e.g. the [Live Fear Free](#) helpline

Further details can be found in the [Help and Support](#) section.

Employees who recognise or suspect that a colleague is living in an abusive situation at home should speak in confidence to their manager. Employees should recognise that they are NOT counsellors and should be wary of promising more than they can deliver in terms of support. They should also consider their own wellbeing, as they

In addition, managers should also explore other measures supportively and sympathetically, which may include:

Where a manager suspects that an employee is experiencing domestic abuse/ violence, they can contact the Organisational Development Team for advice before

10. Training & Awareness Raising

Employees are reminded of the importance of not divulging personal details of other employees, such as addresses, telephone numbers or shift patterns. This is paramount when dealing with honour based abuse cases.

If an employee does not wish to discuss the detail of the domestic abuse/violence with their manager, the manager should advise them of other specialist agencies they can speak with as outlined in the help & support section of this policy.

All employees are encouraged to report if they suspect a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating abuse. Employees should speak to their manager about their concerns in confidence. In dealing with a disclosure from a colleague, managers should ensure that the person is made aware of this policy and that there is internal and external support available.

12. Right to Privacy

We respect employees' right to privacy. Whilst we strongly encourage victims of domestic abuse/violence to disclose for the safety of themselves and all those in the workplace, we will not force them to share this information if they do not want to. We do however; require perpetrators of domestic abuse/violence to declare any related prosecutions, convictions or cautions.

13. Equality Statement

We acknowledge that domestic abuse/violence can occur in all areas of society. We recognise that domestic abuse/violence is an equalities issue and that some

< **Employee Assistance Programme**

An Employee Assistance Programme in place with an independent provider called Vivup. With Vivup, you can benefit from confidential access to fully qualified counsellors and support specialists to discuss any emotional, personal, or work-related issues – 24/7, 365 days a year.

Whether r

< **Phoenix Domestic Abuse Services**

Phoenix Domestic Abuse Services is a registered charity established in 2002 to provide a free and confidential information and support service to those affected by domestic abuse within the borough of Blaenau Gwent.

Helpline: 01495 291202

Email: info@phoenixdas.co.uk

Website: <http://www.phoenixdas.co.uk>

< **Live Fear Free**

Live Fear Free is a Welsh Government website, providing information and advice for those suffering with domestic abuse, sexual violence and other forms of violence against women.

< **Family Rights Group**

Provides support, information and advice to parents whose children are involved with, or in need of, social services because of safety or welfare concerns - as well as parents and relatives of children in the care system.

Helpline: 0808 801 0366 (9.30am – 3pm, Mon – Fri)

Website: <https://www.frg.org.uk/>

< **Rape Crisis Centre**

Supports girls and women who have experienced rape, sexual violence or sexual abuse at any time.

Helpline: 0808 802 9999 (12 - 2.30pm and 7pm -9.30pm, 365 days a year)

Website: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/>

< **NSPCC**

Provides information and advice for any adult concerned about the safety of a child.

Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (8am – 10pm, Mon – Fri; 9am – 6pm at weekends)

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

< **Men's Advice Line**

Provides support, information and advice for men experiencing domestic violence or abuse.

Helpline: 0808 8010327 (9am-8pm Mon – Fri)

Email: info@mensadvice.org.uk

< **Request information under Clare's Law: Make a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) application**

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, often called "Clare's Law", gives any member of the public the right to ask the police about a partner's previous history of domestic violence or violent acts. Under Claire's Law, a member of the public can also make enquiries into the partner of a close friend or family member. The form for DVDS application can be accessed via the website below.

Phone: 101 or, if deaf/hard of hearing, use textphone service on 18001 101 to report abuse.

Website: <https://www.south-wales.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/daa/domestic-abuse/alpha2/request-information-under-clares-law/>