

Policy Title	Policy Supporting Employees Who Experience Domestic Abuse
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1. Introduction

Nehemiah is committed to heightening the awareness of domestic abuse, and providing guidance for employees and management to address the occurrence of domestic abuse and its effects on the workplace.

One in four women will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lifetime. This means that it is likely that staff within the workplace have or are likely to experience domestic abuse as well as those who are perpetrators of abuse.

Domestic abuse is the abuse of power and control over one person by another and can take many different forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, verbal and financial abuse.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone, and in all kinds of relationships - heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender. People suffer domestic abuse regardless of their social group, class, age, race, disability, gender, sexual orientation or lifestyle. The abuse can begin at any time – in new relationships or after many years spent together.

In 2008/09 domestic abuse accounted for 68% of female homicides and 15% of male homicides (Walby et al 2010).

There are four main areas of health and safety law relevant to violence at work:

- Health & Safety at work Act 1974
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995
- Health & Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996

An effective workplace policy on domestic abuse can ensure that employers are complying with these laws stated above.

The direct and indirect cost of domestic abuse on staff working for Nehemiah can be wide ranging; such as the quality of service provided to our customers, and:

- Increased sickness absence
- Poor work performance and lost productivity
- Bad time keeping such as lateness

2. Purpose of Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that employees can be made aware of where appropriate assistance can be found where necessary.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all members of staff employed by Nehemiah Housing Ltd. This Policy is also an appendix to Nehemiah's Domestic Abuse Policy which primarily focuses on the tenants of the organisation.

4. Definitions

Domestic abuse is defined as "Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality." (Home Office & ACPO, 2004).

5. Policy Links

Disciplinary Procedures
Health & Safety Policy
Equality & Diversity
Absence Management Policy

6. Policy Details

Nehemiah condemns domestic abuse and is committed to responding sensitively and effectively to staff that require help and support.

Nehemiah intends to make assistance available to employees involved in domestic abuse. This assistance may include:

- confidential means for coming forward for help;
- resource and referral information;
- special considerations in the workplace for employee safety;
- work schedule adjustments or leave necessary to obtain medical, housing, financial, counselling or legal assistance;

In responding to domestic abuse, Nehemiah will maintain appropriate confidentiality and respect for the rights of the employee involved.

6.1 Domestic Abuse and the workplace

Everyone has the right to a life free from abuse in any form. Domestic abuse is wholly unacceptable and inexcusable behaviour, and responsibility for domestic abuse lies with the perpetrator.

Nehemiah strives to create a working environment that promotes the view that abuse against people is unacceptable and that such abuse will not be condoned or made the subject of jokes or graphics.

Any incident of abuse that takes place on Nehemiah premises or in relation to carrying out the organisation's business should be reported to the individual's line manager or Corporate Services.

Employees should also be aware that conduct outside of work could lead to disciplinary action being taken because of its impact on the employment relationship.

The perpetration of domestic abuse by an employee may lead to disciplinary action being taken against that employee, up to and including dismissal, regardless of whether the abuse occurred at work or not. This measure reflects potential risks posed to our customers and also the reputational damage that may potentially be experienced by the organisation.

6.2 Confidentiality & Privacy

Nehemiah respects an employee's right to privacy in the event they do not wish to inform the organisation that they have experienced domestic abuse.

Employees who disclose experiencing abuse can be assured that the information they provide is confidential and will not be shared with other members of staff without their permission.

As far as possible, personal information of employees who are experiencing domestic abuse will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

6.3 Discrimination and Reasonable Support

Nehemiah will not discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to domestic abuse, in terms of his or her existing employment or career development.

Nehemiah is aware that domestic abuse victims may have performance problems such as chronic absenteeism or lower productivity as a result of domestic abuse. When addressing performance and safety issues, all reasonable efforts will be made to consider all aspects of the employee's situation and / or safety problems.

Nehemiah will make reasonable effort to assist an employee experiencing domestic abuse. If an employee needs to be absent from work due to domestic abuse, the length of the absence will be determined by the individual's situation through collaboration with the employee and their manager (supported by Corporate Services) and their Union Representative if applicable.

Nehemiah will reasonably help an employee to address their own domestic abuse. Depending on circumstances, these options may include:

- arranging flexible work hours so the employee can seek protection, go to court, look for new housing, enter counselling, arrange child care, etc.,
- considering job sharing options,
- provide, for a reasonable and proportionately short period of, normally, paid or unpaid leave
- Divert phone calls and email messages and look to change phone extension if an employee is receiving harassing calls.
- Agree with the employee what to tell fellow colleagues and how to respond if their ex/partner telephones or visits the workplace.
- Keep a record of any incident of abuse in the workplace, including persistent telephone calls, emails or visits to the workplace
- Put up a domestic abuse helpline poster on the back of toilet doors.

- Have a list of support services offered in local area that is accessible and refer employees to appropriate organisation that deal with domestic abuse.

6.4 Safety at work

Nehemiah will actively provide support to employees to minimise the risk to their safety while at work, if they make it known to the organisation that they are experiencing domestic abuse.

6.5 Providing support

Nehemiah intends to make support available to employees involved in domestic abuse. Nehemiah will provide support through its managers, Corporate Services and occupational health.

Nehemiah recognises that perpetrators of domestic abuse may wish to seek help and support voluntarily. Reasonable support will be provided by the organisation particularly where the matter is proactively raised outside of any formal processes being taken against them by external agencies

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Managers:

- be available and approachable to employees experiencing domestic abuse;
- keep information confidential, subject to the requirements of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults processes and the Crime and Disorder Act.
- discuss the specific steps that can be taken to help the employee stay safe in the workplace;
- ensure the employee is aware of options available to them, as referenced in this document;
- encourage affected employees to seek advice from external agencies
- encourage affected employees to utilise support mechanisms available internally to the organisation (e.g. Occupational Health).

7.2 The Employee

- take note of this policy, and act in accordance with its contents.
- ensure their behaviour at work reflects the aims and values of Nehemiah and that they follow this policy in maintaining confidentiality and privacy for colleagues experiencing domestic abuse.

8 Training

All staff will receive training on using and accessing this policy and will also be made aware and receive training on the procedures of any best practice.

The level of training individuals receive will be considered in proportion to the role within the organisation.

9 Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or as deemed necessary due to legislative or good practice changes.

10 Reference

This policy has been compiled with reference to the CIPD Guide for Employers March 2013 on Managing and Supporting Employees Experiencing Domestic Abuse and the Home Office & ACPO, 2004

11 Useful links and Information

<p>Black Association of Women Step Out (BAWSO) www.bawso.org.uk Women's Aid is the national domestic abuse charity that helps up to 250,000 women and children every year. They work to end violence against women and children and support over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the country.</p>	<p>Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence www.caadv.org.uk The Corporate Alliance aims to raise awareness and reduce the social and economic impact of domestic violence in the workplace. Working together with employers, their vision is to create a work environment where employees have the opportunity to seek practical support and advice and, ultimately, take positive action to end domestic violence. Membership is open to any employer, trade union or representative body in the UK.</p>
<p>Broken Rainbow www.broken-rainbow.org.uk Broken Rainbow provides support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic abuse.</p>	<p>Man Kind Initiative www.mankind.org.uk The Man Kind Initiative is a national charity that provides help and support for male victims of domestic abuse.</p>
<p>Men's Advice Line www.mensadvice.org.uk The Men's Advice Line offers practical advice, information and support to male victims of domestic abuse as well as concerned friends and families.</p>	<p>Refuge www.refuge.org.uk Refuge is one of the largest single providers of specialist accommodation and services to women and children escaping domestic violence, supporting over 1,000 women and children every day.</p>
<p>Respect www.respect.org.uk Respect is the UK association for professionals working with domestic violence perpetrators and associated support services. The organisation's key aim is to increase the safety of those experiencing domestic violence through promoting effective interventions with perpetrators.</p>	<p>Women's Aid www.womensaid.org.uk Women's Aid is the national domestic abuse charity that helps up to 250,000 women and children every year. They work to end violence against women and children and support over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the country.</p>
<p>24-hour National Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline – 0808 2000 247 This is run by Women's Aid and Refuge</p>	