

**Newcastle City Council**

# **Domestic Violence Policy for Staff**

**October 2013**



October 2013

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# **Newcastle City Council Domestic Violence Policy**

## **1.0 Policy Statement**

It is Newcastle City Council's policy that every employee who is experiencing or has experienced domestic violence has the right to raise the issue with their employer in the knowledge that we will treat the matter effectively, sympathetically and confidentially. This policy also covers the approach we will take where there are concerns that an employee may have used violence and abusive behaviour towards an intimate partner. We are committed to developing a workplace culture which recognised that some employees will be experiencing domestic violence and that the workplace should be a place of safety and one which recognises that perpetrators of domestic violence are responsible for their behaviour and for addressing this.

Through this effective domestic violence and abuse policy and working to reduce the risks related to domestic violence, we aim to create a safer workplace and send out a strong message that domestic violence is unacceptable.

Newcastle City Council recognises that domestic violence is an equalities issue and undertakes to not discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to domestic violence and abuse both in terms of current employment or future development.

This policy is part of Newcastle City Council's commitment to family friendly working, and seeks to benefit the welfare of individual members of staff; retain valued employees; improve morale and performance; and enhance the reputation of Newcastle City Council as an employer of choice.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1992), Newcastle City Council recognises its legal responsibilities in promoting the welfare and safety of all staff. Therefore this policy applies to staff across all sites as well as agency and contract staff.

## **2.0 Introduction**

Domestic Violence is a serious social and criminal problem that accounts for almost a quarter of all violent crime and has significant human and financial consequences for individuals, families, communities and society as a whole.

Incidents of domestic violence are common and have a serious impact on those who experience them. Studies have consistently demonstrated the prevalence of domestic violence, with an estimated 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men experiencing domestic violence each year.

Whilst the majority of victims of domestic violence and abuse are female with a male perpetrator, we recognise that victims can also be male with a female perpetrator, and that domestic violence can and does occur in same sex relationships. However, women are more likely to experience a complex pattern of overlapping and repeated abuse within a context of power and control, and women are considerably more likely to experience repeated and much more severe forms of violence than men.

According to British Crime Survey men's experience of domestic violence differs from women's; for example, 9 % of male victims experience frightening threats compared to 48% of female victims. Similarly, 28% of males disclose emotional or financial abuse compared to 41% of females" (Walby & Allen 2004).

Despite the extent of domestic violence, its effects and the costs within the workplace it remains largely hidden and unidentified by most employers.

### **3.0 Domestic Homicide Reviews**

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) were established on a statutory basis under section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004), which came into force in April 2011. A DHR is a review of the circumstances of the death of a person due to violence, abuse or neglect due to domestic violence. DHRs aim to identify lessons learnt and how policies and procedures can be changed to improve support and services to victims and their children.

A domestic violence incident which results in the death of the victim is often not a first attack and is likely to have been preceded by psychological and emotional abuse. Many people and agencies may have known of previous incidents, including employers and colleagues of both the victim and the perpetrator.

Employers and colleagues can be invited by the Homicide Review Panel to participate in the review of the circumstances leading up to the death. As a consequence of working in the same place and/or alongside a domestic homicide victim or perpetrator employers or colleagues may possess valuable knowledge useful to the homicide review. Research shows that 12 per cent of those who experience intimate partner violence tell someone at work (Roe, 2009)

The Home Office actively encourage employer involvement in the DHR process and hope that employers will see their engagement as an important part of their duty of care to their employees.

#### **4.0 The impact of domestic violence on the work place**

We acknowledge that within the Newcastle City Council workforce, there are those who have experienced violence in their personal or professional lives and those who may be perpetrators of violence. We know domestic violence is having a negative impact on the morale, productivity and performance of our staff and by adopting this policy, Newcastle City Council aims to address this.

##### **The Impact of domestic violence on employees can include**

- Direct impact on an employee's ability to work due to physical abuse
- Absenteeism due to long term injuries such as chronic pain, vision or hearing loss and the psychological impacts of domestic violence such as anxiety, depression, post traumatic stress disorder and or use of alcohol or drugs as a coping mechanism
- Taking time off as a result of having to seek help from solicitors, doctors or support agencies
- Lateness as a result of the abuser trying to prevent an employee from going to work
- Harassment in the workplace: perpetrators of domestic violence may target a victim at work. This can include numerous telephone calls, emails, and the abuser turning up at workplace or leaving unwelcome notes on the victim's car.

##### **The Impact of domestic violence on work colleagues**

Domestic violence also affects people close to the victim and this can include work colleagues. Other staff member's may:

- Have to fill in for absent or non-productive workers
- Try to "protect" the victim from unwanted phone calls or visits
- Feel helpless and unsure about how to intervene
- Feel distracted from their own work
- Experience a negative impact on their own mental health, especially if they are being abused themselves or have previous experience of domestic violence.

##### **The Impact of domestic violence on the employer**

- Negative impact on productivity, performance and morale
- Staff turnover, as employees may have to leave work or move away to escape abuse
- Organisational reputation loss

## **5.0 Definition**

Domestic violence is not confined to incidents of physical abuse and violence. The Central Government definition states that domestic violence constitutes:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

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. This definition, which is not a legal definition, also includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.”

## 6.0 Aim of this Policy

- Reduce recurrence and prevent incidents of domestic violence,
- Improve the safety and welfare of both adults and children who are affected,
- Assess and manage risk and communicate this effectively with other professionals
- Provide a consistent and achievable policy framework within which Newcastle City Council can work when supporting those experiencing or affected by domestic violence,
- Provide a response and service that respects the diversity of our workforce
- Promote respectful relationships
- Promote the principle that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- Promote wider social change





## **7.0 The victim: Recognising the problem and responding to it**

It is most likely that a manager will become aware that an employee is experiencing domestic violence through associated issues such as absence monitoring or poor performance. It is less likely that the employee will approach their manager with their problems in the first instance, or that they will disclose to people at work about the violence they are experiencing. As with other welfare issues, identifying that an employee is experiencing difficulties at an early stage will lead to appropriate help being offered. This, in turn, could mean that the member of staff is able to deal with their situation far more effectively.

It is not the role of managers to advise anyone in this situation what to do about their relationship or to act as a counsellor but rather to deal with practical issues that will allow them to stay in work, stay safe, not be penalised at work because of their domestic situation and to signpost them towards specialist sources of help.

Managers need to develop a sensitive, pro-active and non-judgmental approach when dealing with employees who have experienced domestic violence, which can include:

- Taking the employee seriously and taking time to listen to them
- Ensuring that any discussion about the employee's situation takes place in private and that you respect their confidentiality as far as possible (see below for further guidance).
- Understanding that the member of staff may not wish to approach their line manager and may prefer to involve a third party such as a colleague, trade union representative or Domestic Violence Officer (see Section 6 below for details of this role and contact information) who can advise the employee and/or their line manager on what measures can be taken.
- If an employee does not wish to speak to their line manager, they should be advised of the difficulties which may arise if the manager is not aware of the relevant facts and circumstances. For instance, if there is a potential health and safety issue or if other action is being taken on performance or absence monitoring.
- Being aware that there may be additional issues faced by the employee because of their age, gender, sexuality, ethnic background, disability etc.
- Being non-judgmental; the employee may need some time to decide what to do and may try many different options during this process. Research has shown that it can take a long time to break free of a violent relationship.
- Do not assume that because an individual returns to, or stays in a violent relationship that they want or deserve violence, or that the violence is not severe or does not take place. Statistics have shown that the risk of more serious assaults, permanent injury and murder taking place increases significantly when a victim decides to leave home or immediately after. It is important therefore, not to underestimate the danger or assume that the fear of violence is exaggerated.

## 8.0 Ensuring Safety

The responsibilities of employers, employees and others for the health and safety of persons at work are defined by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The City Council has developed guidance for managers to deal with incidents where an employee is verbally abused or threatened or physically assaulted in the course of their duties. This is detailed in the Newcastle City Council Health and Safety at Work Policy, which can be found on the intranet. Failure to comply with the Policy may result in disciplinary action.

This policy details the responsibilities of managers and employees; however, managers may have to consider additional factors if these incidents involve domestic violence. These incidents may involve violent partners or ex-partners visiting the workplace, abusive phonecalls, or intimidation or harassment of an employee by the alleged perpetrator.

These issues could be addressed by the following measures:

- Improve security measures, such as changing key pad numbers or ensuring that access to buildings is open to authorised staff only.
- Remind reception or switchboard staff not to divulge information about employees, especially personal details such as addresses, telephone numbers or shift patterns.
- Offer temporary or permanent changes in workplace, work times and patterns, helping to make the employee less at risk at work and on their journeys to and from work. This could include changes to the office layout to ensure that the employee is not visible from reception points or from ground floor windows.
- Offer changes in specific duties, such as answering phones or working in reception area, or in exceptional circumstances, transfer to another job of the same grade, if an alternative is not easily found.
- Agree what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if the abuser rings or calls at the workplace. Provide colleagues or porters with a photograph of the abuser and other relevant details such as car registration numbers which may help them to maintain security in the workplace
- Change email address to make it more difficult for the perpetrator to harasses the victim.
- Make sure that the systems for recording staff whereabouts during the day are adequate and if the work requires visits outside the office, considering how risks can be minimised (e.g. change duties or allow another colleague to accompany them on certain journeys). See the Corporate Health & Safety Codes of Practice, under Health and Safety Inspections Checklists for Managers
- Record any incidents of violence in the workplace, including persistent phone calls, e-mails or visits to an employee by their partner/ex-partner. You should also take down details of any witnesses to these incidents. These records could be used if the employee wants to press charges or apply for an injunction against the alleged perpetrator. The employer could also apply for an injunction if the action of an alleged perpetrator impinges on the health and safety of staff.

- It is important to also consider the safety of work colleagues and service users if the alleged perpetrator has access to the victim at work, whereby work colleagues and/or service users potentially becoming involved as a result of an assault on the victim.

**NB** Managers may have to take into account whether the above measures are operationally appropriate. However, ensuring that employees are safe should be of primary consideration throughout this process.



## **9.0 The Perpetrator: what to do if you suspect a Newcastle City Council employee is a perpetrator of domestic violence**

Newcastle City Council will treat any disclosure or conviction of a domestic violence related offence on a case-by-case basis with the aim of reducing risk and supporting change. Employees should be aware that domestic violence is a serious matter which can lead to criminal convictions.

There are four potential strands in the consideration of a disclosure:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- disciplinary action
- facilitating access to specialist, safety-focused support and behaviour change services
- identifying risk.

Section 6 of the Code of Conduct for Employees states that “What you do in your own time is your business so long as you do not:

- put your private interests before your duty to the Council;
- put yourself in a position where your duty and private interests conflict or could appear to conflict; or
- do anything which could harm the Council’s reputation.

Conduct outside of work, whether or not it leads to a criminal conviction, can lead to disciplinary action against an employee because of its employment implications and because it undermines the confidence the Council, as an employer, has in the employee and can potentially impact on the Council’s reputation. There should be an investigation of the facts as far as possible, a view taken and consideration whether the conduct is sufficiently serious to warrant instituting disciplinary procedures.

Managers should refer to the Code of Practice on the Conducting of Disciplinary Investigations (available on the [HR website on the intranet](#)) prior to instituting any disciplinary procedures.

Conduct outside work may make certain job duties inappropriate and justify consideration for dismissal. For example, if a perpetrator of domestic violence is employed to provide services to vulnerable women and children and is identified as posing an identified risk to their partner or ex-partner due to domestic violence, this may make it untenable for them to retain their post.

Proven harassment and intimidation of Newcastle City Council employees by their partner or ex-partner who also works for the Council will be viewed seriously and may lead to disciplinary action being taken. This includes improper use of email to receive or transmit material that is designed to, or is likely to cause inconvenience or distress, or to create, receive or transmit any defamatory material (see E-mail Acceptable Use Guidelines on the intranet for more details).

If any of the circumstances detailed above are brought to a manager's attention, advice should be sought from the Human Resources site on the intranet in the first instance <http://intranet2.newcastle.gov.uk/hr-home/human-resources-intranet-homepage>.

However, the majority of domestic violence incidents do not come to the attention of the police or other professionals and for the domestic violence policy to be effective it needs to be proactive, not just reactive. If a manager has concerns about an employee's behaviour with a partner or ex-partner, then they should be prepared to raise this.

The aim of the policy is reduce risk and Newcastle City Council has agencies that work with employees who are seeking help to address their behaviour. There may be a number of reasons why a manager would be concerned about an employee's behaviour towards a partner: they could be going through an acrimonious separation, be very angry and blaming or depressed or seeming jealous or obsessive about their partner.

Managers need to develop a sensitive, pro-active and safety focussed approach when dealing with employees who may be a risk to a partner. Newcastle City Council provides training that supports this policy which covers how to establish and conduct a discussion with employee where there are concerns about their behaviour towards a partner.

The key principles are:

- Take the employee seriously and take time to listen to them
- Ensure that any discussion about the employee's situation takes place in private and that you respect their confidentiality as far as possible (see below for further guidance).
- Be respectful but do not collude with negative descriptions of their partner
- Be positive, it is possible for perpetrators of domestic violence to change, if they recognise they have problem and seek help.

There is further guidance on holding discussion with employees about domestic violence on the [CAADA website](#), or you contact the Safe Newcastle Unit (ext 27833). Advice should always be sought from a Domestic Violence Officer or specialist domestic violence service prior to any such discussions. They can advise on any potential risks to the victim.

Given the prevalence of domestic violence many workplaces will have employees who are at times a risk to their partner. Encouraging employees to recognise the signs of this and to ensure they know that Newcastle City Council will be supportive of employees who are taking action to access help.

## **10.0 Confidentiality**

Once an employee has confided in their manager that they are experiencing domestic violence, the manager should reassure them that they will keep this information confidential as far as possible. One of the exceptions to this is where child protection issues could arise; for instance, if an employee gives information which suggests that their child or another child is at risk of abuse (whether physical, emotional, sexual or through neglect). Consideration also needs to be given if a vulnerable adult could be at risk of abuse (whether physical, emotional, sexual or through neglect).

The manager needs to be satisfied that appropriate steps are being taken to protect any dependant children and if they are not satisfied that they must make a referral to Children's Services and inform the employee of their concerns and action. Information and advice on child protection issues can be obtained from Children's Services or the Newcastle Safeguarding Children's Board (NSCB) (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

If there is concern for a vulnerable adult's safety, the manager should inform the employee that they are seeking further advice from an appropriate agency such as Adult Services or the Safeguarding Adults Unit and that they may have to pass this information onto these bodies. Information and advice on safeguarding adult issues can be obtained from Adult Services or from Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Unit (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

Managers have a duty to maintain a secure environment for all staff and this could be made easier if colleagues are aware of potential risks. However, it is essential that the manager agrees with the employee concerned what information to tell colleagues. Managers should remind staff that this information is confidential and any unauthorised breaches of this could result in disciplinary action being taken.

The consequences of breaching confidentiality could also have very serious effects for the person experiencing domestic violence. Statistics have shown that the risk of more serious assaults, permanent injury and murder taking place increases significantly when a woman decides to leave home or immediately after. It is important therefore, not to underestimate the danger or assume that the fear of violence is exaggerated.

## **11.0 Information sharing and record keeping**

If a manager receives a disclosure of domestic violence from an employee who is a victim or perpetrator of domestic violence, it is important that the manager keeps a confidential note of any discussions or action taken, as this information may need to be shared at a future date.

Information may need to be shared for safeguarding reasons or shared with criminal justice agencies to prevent a future crime or incident taking place. Information may also be requested if there is a civil or criminal case involving the victim or perpetrator, or if a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) takes place.

Should a domestic homicide occur where an employee is involved as either victim or perpetrator, the DHR Panel may request involvement from employers, managers or colleagues. In such a case, the Panel will need as much information as possible, no matter how minor, so that they can fully understand why the tragedy occurred.

Examples of the type of information which might be requested by a DHR Panel are as follows:

- Information about the victim and/or the perpetrator.
- What they had told you or other members of the team about their experience/behaviour, unexplained absences and/or injuries.
- Other people you can recommend who should be invited to take part in the review.
- 

Any information provided to a DHR will be confidential and is not given under oath. Advice should always be sought prior to sharing information.

## 12.0 Special Leave and other supportive measures

The Conditions of Service (Section 9: Other Paid Leave) has provision to grant up to two weeks special leave with pay for a variety of purposes, including for an unforeseen personal or domestic crisis. See the [Special Leave section on the HR website](#) for details. Managers should look sympathetically at requests for reasonable time-off with pay for employees who have disclosed that they are experiencing domestic violence.

Managers may receive requests for time-off from employees who are experiencing domestic violence, to arrange appointments during the normal working day. These requests should be treated sympathetically. Employees who have perpetrated domestic violence and are demonstrably engaged in addressing their behaviour will also have requests to attend appointments considered. These appointments could include, but are not limited to:

- Appointments with support agencies, e.g. Newcastle Women's Aid, Panah, Victim Support, Independent Domestic Violence Advocates, Children's Social Care, Adult Services or counsellors, MESMAC, Perpetrator Programmes
- Arranging rehousing,
- Meetings with criminal justice agencies, e.g. the Police, solicitors, Probation
- Making alternative childcare arrangements, including meetings with schools.
- Flexible hours to attending counselling or treatment.

Managers should also explore other measures supportively, such as temporary negotiated hours. "Temporary negotiated hours" means that by agreement between the manager and employee, the employee's working hours can be temporarily varied for a specifically agreed period of time to allow them some flexibility while they are dealing with a short term crisis. This would generally apply to staff working outside of the flexi system and does not extend to allowing an employee to work shorter hours for full time pay, other than as allowed for under the emergency leave provisions.

Under the Special Leave Policy, an employee summoned as a witness in a criminal court case will be granted leave. The employee must claim an allowance from the court for loss of earnings and the Council will make up any difference between that and normal pay. Unpaid leave may also be given to an employee to attend a court or tribunal in other circumstances. See the Special Leave Policy for further details.

Managers should record absences or application for special leave in accordance with normal Newcastle City Council procedures.

Individuals leaving a violent partner may face considerable financial hardship or have concerns about finding suitable accommodation for themselves and their family. Advice should be sought about what appropriate measures can be taken to help employees in these circumstances; for example referring employees to Newcastle's MoneyWise Credit Union or the Citizen's Advice Bureau for confidential financial advice and assistance. See Appendix 1 for contact details.



If the employee has disclosed that their partner has access to their finances or is exerting economic pressure upon them, the Payroll section should be approached to change the method of salary payment.

If appropriate and with the employee's consent, referring the employee to Occupational Health who will be able to advise on supports available to employees such as counselling.

### **13.0 Raising Awareness**

Newcastle City Council is committed to ending violence against women, children and men. It is essential therefore that the working environment promotes the prevention, early identification, help seeking and effective pathways to safety for those at risk from domestic violence and for perpetrators. To support this process, it is Newcastle City Council's view that such violence is unacceptable and that will not be condoned, nor should it be made the subject of jokes or graphics.

The Council will aim to raise awareness through the following measures:

- Preparation and distribution of information publicising the issue and the Council's policy,
- Training for departmental management teams and other appropriate managers and supervisors,
- Briefings for other appropriate staff, in particular front line staff and customer services centre staff,
- Briefings for Elected Members
- Inclusion of issues relating to domestic violence in relevant in-house training sessions and as part of corporate induction,
- Specialised training or briefing sessions for designated Domestic Violence Officers to ensure they understand their role,
- Publicising the role of the Domestic Violence Officers to the Council's workforce
- Ensuring that information on sources of help for those experiencing domestic violence and those who are perpetrators is easy to access through Newcastle City Council staff and premises.

## 14.0 Occupational Health, Newcastle City Council

Members of staff experiencing domestic violence often come to the notice of management due to their sickness absence records.

The Occupational Health Unit (OHU) provides a range of services with the aim of promoting and maintaining good health in the workplace. All managers must read the guidance on OHU support in managing sickness absence. This explains the referral process, the OHU role and, importantly, the responsibilities of managers in effectively using OHU services in relation to sickness absence. This can be accessed on the intranet at: <http://webccs002.newcastle.gov.uk/healthsafe.nsf/a/ohuhome>

The OHU can make assessments:

- Following an employee's absence, their fitness to return to work on the basis of normal hours and duties,
- Following an employee's absence, whether a phased return could enable an earlier return to work,
- Whether the employee is likely to be suffering from a disability within the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA),
- Whether frequent short-term absences may be due to any underlying medical condition,
- Whether referral for physiotherapy or counselling is appropriate,
- Other specific requests,
- Whether a further OHU appointment is needed.

Managers need to be clear when they complete the OHS4 referral form what types of assessments they require. Please refer to the 'Support in Managing Sickness Absence' part of the website for further information on the above services.

Newcastle City Council has a package of measures aimed at preventing work-related stress, helping employees to avoid becoming stressed and supporting employees who are suffering from stress (Tackling Stress Together – guide for staff and managers) or need support to return to work after long term or short term sickness absences including:

- Sickness absence policy/stress awareness,
- Early referral to Occupational Health by managers of employees who appear to be suffering from stress, or who are absent due to stress,
- Face to face counselling available through manager referral to the Occupational Health Unit.

## **15.0 Domestic Violence Officers**

Domestic Violence Officers (DVO) are based internally and drawn from the workforce, to provide a confidential signposting service to employees experiencing domestic violence, their managers and colleagues. They are an important resource for managers and staff who have questions or need guidance and help with domestic violence issues.

The main features of the DVO's role are to:

- Be available and approachable as a first point of contact for employees experiencing domestic violence;
- Listen to, reassure and support individuals,
- Keep any information confidential (within the boundaries as outlined in Section 8 above e.g. child protection, protection of vulnerable adults,)
- Respond in a sensitive, non-judgmental manner,
- Ensure that the employee is aware of the support options available to them and remains in control of the situation,
- Encourage the employee to seek the advice of other relevant agencies,
- Provide advice and answer questions from managers supporting staff experiencing domestic violence.

Domestic Violence Officers cannot provide:

- HR advice,
- Advice on disciplinary proceedings,
- Advocacy or casework support for staff experiencing domestic violence.

Contact details for the Domestic Violence Officers can be obtained from the intranet or:

- Safe Newcastle Unit,
- Human Resources,
- UNISON,
- Occupational Health.

## 16.0 Monitoring and Review of the Policy

The Domestic and Sexual Violence Coordinator with support from the Corporate Community Safety Officer Working Group and appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Panels will monitor this policy to evaluate its effectiveness and update and amend the Policy and Guidance as appropriate.



## **Appendix 1**

### **Local Support**

#### **Adult Social Care**

**Telephone 0191 278 8377**

This service is responsible for the completion of initial assessments, coordinating safeguarding adult alerts and safeguarding adult protection plans.

#### **Safeguarding Adults Unit**

**0191 278 8156**

This Unit is responsible for safeguarding alerts on vulnerable adults that involve paid members of staff and advice should be sought from the Unit.

#### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

**Telephone: 0845 7697555**

Offer free support for alcohol problems.

#### **Broken Rainbow**

**Telephone: 08452 60 44 60**

Mondays & Thursdays 2pm - 8pm; Wednesdays 10am - 1pm

This is a national organisation which provides support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people experiencing domestic violence.

[www.broken-rainbow.org.uk](http://www.broken-rainbow.org.uk)

#### **Children's Social Care**

**Telephone: 0191 277 2500**

This service is responsible for the completion of Initial Assessments, Child In Need Core Assessments, Child in Need Plan monitoring and reviewing, Child protection enquiries, Initial Child Protection Conference Reports.

#### **Cruse Bereavement Care**

**Telephone: 0844 4779400; 0191 276 5533**

Monday to Friday 9.30am to 5pm

Cruse Bereavement Care exists to promote the well-being of bereaved people and to enable anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss. The organisation provides free support and offers information, advice, education and training services for adults, young people and children. They also offer specialist advice for schools.

Children and Young People can contact the freephone helpline on **0808 808 1677**

Monday - Friday, 9:30 am - 5:00 pm

#### **Housing**

**Your Homes Newcastle** manages local authority housing on behalf of Newcastle City Council.

To find out your local housing office contact Your Homes Newcastle  
**Telephone: 0191 278 8600**

### **Housing Offices**

Your Homes Newcastle operates community housing offices which provide residents and prospective residents with a local point of contact. A variety of services are available at the offices, including;

- register for Your choice homes
- report a repair
- make a complaint or compliment
- report anti-social behaviour
- access to complementary services, such as Advice and Support

### **Local Safeguarding Children's Board**

**Telephone: 0191 211 6470**

This is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how organisations will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. It is proactive in driving forward the duty of all partner agencies in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

### **Men's Advice Line**

**Telephone (Freephone) 0808 801 0327** (Monday –Friday 10am-5pm)

Men's Advice Line: confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic violence from a partner or ex-partner (or from other family members). We help by: giving you time to tell your story; offering emotional support; providing practical advice; signposting you to other services for specialist help.

### **MESMAC North East**

**Telephone: 0191 233 1333**

This is a gay/bisexual men's health project which offers advice and information on many different health issues anti violence.

[www.mesmacnortheast.com](http://www.mesmacnortheast.com)

### **Moneywise Credit Union**

**Telephone: 0191 276 7957 / 0191 211 6983 / 211 6972**

Head Office, Moneywise and Newcastle Credit Union Ltd, 2 Chirton Wynd, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PW. There are 19 other service points across Newcastle.

### **Newcastle Lesbian Line**

**Telephone: 0191 261 2277** (Thursday evenings 7pm – 9pm)

This phone line gives and receives information about services and facilities both locally and nationally refer on, with regard to the individual needs of the user / signpost. They provide counselling and support.

[www.newcastlelesbianline.co.uk](http://www.newcastlelesbianline.co.uk)

**Newcastle Women's Aid****Telephone: Freephone 0800 923 2622, or 0191 265 1248 (24 hours)**

Provides 24 hours safe, emergency accommodation to women and children fleeing domestic violence. The outreach service offers telephone support, advice and advocacy to women experiencing abuse and control and to their manager/employer if required.

**North East Council on Addictions (NECA)****Telephone: 0191 222 1262 (Core Services)****Telephone: 0191 233 1026 (Bespoke Services)**

Monday to Friday 09.00 -18.30

Offer free support for drug/alcohol addictions and gambling problems.

**Panah****Telephone: 0191 284 6998**

Panah is a specialist project which offers safe refuge accommodation and an outreach service to Black Minority Ethnic (BME) women and their children.

**Police, Newcastle Protecting Vulnerable People's Team****Telephone: 03456 043 043 x 62431**

Northumbria Police have dedicated Domestic Violence Units staffed by Police Officers who are specially trained to support victims of domestic abuse and investigate domestic violence offences. They can also give advice about legal options and safety issues.

**REACH****Telephone: 0191 212 1551**[www.reachcentre.org.uk](http://www.reachcentre.org.uk)

REACH is a free, confidential counselling, advice and support service which helps women and men aged 16 or over who have been raped or sexually assaulted. The centres are staffed by women who are experienced in dealing with the effects of rape and sexual assault. They will be happy to help you whether or not you wish to report the assault to the police. If you do decide to report it to the police, they can help you do that and act as a contact for you.

**RESPECT****Phoneline - freephone 0808 802 4040 or 0808 801 0327**

Respect provides services for:

- male and female perpetrators of domestic violence
- young people who use violence and abuse at home and in relationships
- men who are victims of domestic violence

**Sanctuary Scheme****Telephone: 0191 281 3791**

This scheme is available for all tenants and homeowners who are experiencing domestic violence and as a result are considering leaving their home. The scheme helps people to remain living in their home and feel safer by adding a range of security



measures to their property to meet their individual needs. Ongoing support will also be offered to ensure victims' safety. A risk assessment and security survey will be carried out by a police officer before any work is agreed by you and/or your landlord. This scheme can be accessed by contacting Victim Support

**Social Services Emergency out of hours duty team:**  
**Telephone: 0191 232 8520**

**Emergency Duty Team for Housing**  
**Telephone: 0191 232 8520**

**The Samaritans of Tyneside**  
**Telephone: 0191 232 7272 (24 Hours) or 08457 90 90 90 (24 Hours)**  
Drop in available 9.00am – 9.00pm Monday – Friday (no appointment required)  
15 Portland Terrace  
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1QQ

Samaritans provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support 24 hours a day for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide.

#### **Trades Unions and Professional Associations**

Many organisations offer their members access to free initial support on work and non-work matters.

**UNISON**  
**Telephone: 0191 211 6980**

**GMB**  
**Telephone: 0191 233 3930**

**Tyneside Rape Crisis Centre**  
**Telephone: 0191-232-9858 (Helpline, also available evenings)**  
**0191 222 0272 (Admin)**  
[www.tynesidercc.org.uk](http://www.tynesidercc.org.uk)

Tyneside Rape Crisis based in Newcastle offers a women-only counselling service for women survivors of adult rape, sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse.

**Victim Support**  
**Telephone: 0191 281 3791**

Offering free, confidential advice to all victims of domestic violence.

Trained workers are based in the Northumbria Police Public Protection Unit and work alongside the police. You do not have to report to the police to access the service. Any advice/support will be totally confidential. Victim Support is open to anyone experiencing domestic violence. This includes male victims and members of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) community.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Policy Context**

This policy is aligned with and informed by the following policies, plans and strategies:

#### **Newcastle City Council, Council Plan**

Newcastle City Council values inform the approach we take to decision making, the way we work with our partners and the way we develop and provide services that are used by the people of Newcastle. In all that it does Newcastle City Council will be:

- Fair – tackling inequality and promoting rights, responsibilities and respect.
- Cooperative – strongest when we work together in the interest of us all.
- Liberating – unlocking the power of people to realise the potential in their communities and in themselves.
- Accountable – putting the people we serve at the heart of what we do.
- Forward thinking – acting today to build a better tomorrow.
- Confident – proud to stand up for Newcastle and the North East.
- Leading – bringing people together to make a difference.

Newcastle City Council has the following priorities

The council has four very clear priorities for how we will focus our efforts and resources to make a positive difference to the city. These are:

- A working city – creating good quality jobs and helping local people develop the skills to do them.
- Decent neighbourhoods – working with local communities to look after each other and the environment.
- Tackling inequalities – tackling discrimination and inequalities which prevent people from fulfilling their true potential.
- A fit for purpose council – a council which leads by enabling others to achieve.

#### **The Corporate Equalities Plan**

This Plan aims to remove discrimination in employment on the grounds of race, gender and disability.

#### **The Corporate Equalities Policy**

This Policy commits to achieving equality of opportunity by removing all direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of gender

#### **Safe Newcastle Plan 2012 - 15**

This Plan has reducing domestic violence as one of its key priorities with a focus on prevention, protection of victims and their children, and provision of services to victims, perpetrators and their children.

#### **The Gender Equality Scheme**

This Scheme has the following objectives:

- Raise awareness of the scope and nature of domestic violence,

- Reduce the fear of crime, especially among female residents,
- Ensure men and women have equal access to services, using monitoring data where appropriate,
- Promote and deliver employment policies and practices which meet the needs of all staff,
- Provide support for parents and carers.

**The Dignity at Work Policy**

This Policy has the aim of ensuring that employees of Newcastle City Council are free from bullying, harassment and intimidation in the workplaces.



## Appendix 3

### **Forced Marriage, 'So Called Honour Based Violence' and Female Genital Mutilation**

**Forced Marriage:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office states that: in a forced marriage, "one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage, or consent is extracted under duress. Duress includes both physical and emotional pressure".

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19 states that: "State parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child".

In a forced marriage at least one party does not consent to the marriage and some element of duress is involved. Forced marriage is primarily an issue of violence against women. Most cases involve young women and girls aged between 13 and 30 years, although, there is evidence to suggest that as many as 15 per cent of victims are male.

A clear distinction must be made between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. The tradition of arranged marriages has operated successfully within many communities and many countries for a very long time. In arranged marriages the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice whether to accept the arrangement remains with the individuals.

Currently, some two hundred cases of forced marriage are reported to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office each year. Many others go unreported. With greater awareness this figure is likely to increase. The majority of cases of forced marriage encountered in the UK involve South Asian families. However, despite appearances, this is not solely an Asian issue. A reason for this disparity is that the UK has a large Asian population. There are also cases involving families from East Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Africa and within Roma communities. The issue of forced marriage should not be used to stigmatise any community. Some forced marriages take place in the UK with no overseas element while others involve a partner coming from overseas or a British citizen being sent abroad.

For guidance on dealing with forced marriage issues, please contact the Domestic Violence Team in the Safe Newcastle Unit 0191 277 7847 (ext 27847).

**'So Called Honour Based Violence':** Forced marriage cases can develop to the extent where women and men need protection from their family and extended relatives. It is common for individuals being forced to marry to experience being forced to travel abroad, being kidnapped, being physically and mentally abused and in extreme cases being subjected to a so called "honour killing" for bringing shame onto the family by refusing to consent to the marriage.

Honour related violence occurs when perpetrators believe a relative has shamed the family and they believe that the only way to redeem the family's honour is to punish or kill the relative. There are strong links between such abuse, domestic violence and forced marriage.

For guidance on dealing with honour based violence, please contact the Domestic Violence Team in the Safe Newcastle Unit 0191 277 7847 (ext 27847).

**Female Genital Mutilation:** Female genital mutilation (FGM), often referred to as 'female circumcision', comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural, religious or other non-therapeutic reasons.

FGM has been a social custom in Northern Africa for millennia. Many people link FGM with the religion of Islam, but it is actually a social custom that is practiced by Animists, Christians, and Muslims in countries where FGM is common. Many of the communities that practice FGM are Muslim with religion often cited as a reason, despite the fact that neither the Qu'ran nor any other holy text advocates for FGM. There are many Muslim countries in which the mutilation is essentially unknown, including Algeria, Iran, Kuwait, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

FGM is occasionally performed in North America and Europe on girls of families who have emigrated from countries where FGM is practiced. It is estimated that as many as 6,500 girls are at risk of FGM within the UK every year.

FGM is a fundamental violation of the rights of girls. It is discriminatory and violates the rights to equal opportunities, health, freedom from violence, injury, abuse, torture and cruel or inhuman and degrading treatment, protection from harmful traditional practices, and to make decisions concerning reproduction. These rights are protected in international law.

FGM is not an act of hate. It is carried out on children because their parents believe it is in their best interest. In the patriarchal communities where FGM takes place, marriage is necessary for a woman's honour and survival. An uncircumcised woman will stand very little chance of marriage and will not be accepted by her community. In these communities FGM is carried out to safeguard the chastity of a woman before marriage. FGM is used as a means of controlling and de-sexualising women and repressing sexual desire, to reduce the chance of sexual promiscuity in marriage on the part of the woman. FGM is also carried out for reasons of aesthetics and hygiene and as a means of purification and ensuring that a woman is clean.

For guidance on dealing with FGM issues, please contact the Domestic Violence Team in the Safe Newcastle Unit 0191 277 7847 (ext 27847).

If this information is needed in another format or language, please contact:  
Joan Flood, Community Safety Officer, Domestic Violence  
0191 277 7881 or 27881  
Email: [joan.flood@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:joan.flood@newcastle.gov.uk)  
**[www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk)**