



Service Policy: PODPOL07 Domestic Violence Policy

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April 2014	April 2024	A Cross	Nick Mernock	S&P

Amendment History:

Vs.	Date	Author	Reasons for Change
1	Mar 2008	J Monkhouse	New and to support training sessions for employees
2.0	Dec 2013	PB Flett	Conversion on to the new template. Focused the Policy on support for MFRS Employees.
2.1	Apr 2015	A Cross	New format
2.2	Apr 2016	A Cross	Annual Review
2.3	Apr 2017	A Cross	Annual Review
2.4	Apr 2018	A Cross	Change of EAP provider.
2.5	Apr 2019	A Cross	Annual Review
2.6	Mar 2020	A Cross	Annual Review
3.0	Jan 2023	A Cross	Updated to reflect new legislation & statutory guidance.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

Initial	Full	Date	Reviewed by	Comments
	X	October 2022	Mo Jogi	

Civil Contingencies Impact Assessment:

Date	Reviewed by	Comments

Related Documents:

Doc. Type	Ref No.	Title	Location
Service Instruction		Conduct	Portal
Service Instruction		Capability	Portal

Distribution List:

Name	Position	Department

Sign-Off List:

Name	Position

Target Audience:

All MFRS	Principal Officers	Senior Officers	Operational Crews	Fire Safety	Community Fire Safety	Support Staff
X						

Ownership:

FOI exemption required?	Yes	No	URL	Reason
		X		

Legislation:

Title	Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Contact:

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POLICY

PODPOL08 Domestic Violence Policy

1. Policy Introduction and Background:

This document sets out Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority's policy on domestic violence and supporting its employees who experience this. It reflects the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and associated guidance.

The Serious Violence Duty came into effect on 31st January 2023 and requires specified authorities – including FRSs - to work together and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing, and reducing serious violence in the area. Domestic abuse is classified as violence for the purposes of the Duty and as such the responsibilities under the duty apply to domestic abuse.

Domestic Violence is the physical, emotional, sexual or mental abuse of one person by another with whom they are personally connected with. Domestic violence occurs across society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, socio-economic backgrounds and geography.

Domestic violence can include but is not limited to singularly or in combination:

- Physical abuse, violent or threatening behaviour
- Sexual abuse
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Technology – facilitated abuse
- Abuse relating to faith including “Honour” based abuse, female genital mutilation and forced marriage

2. Policy Explanation:

As an employer MFRA wishes to provide a supportive and compassionate environment so that

issues of domestic violence are understood by our managers and that any of our employees who are experiencing domestic violence are able to seek support and assistance if they choose to raise the matter at work.

Each case will be treated on its particular circumstances and in the light of relevant evidence.

3. Policy Implementation:

Employees, who experience or have experienced domestic violence, will be able to raise the issue with a colleague, manager or trade union representative in the knowledge that the matter will be treated effectively, sympathetically and as confidentially as possible in order to provide support to the employee.

We will: -

- Assist and support employees who approach any member of MFRS for help in addressing problems arising from domestic violence
- Remove fears of stigmatisation for employees who have experienced domestic violence
- Ensure employees seeking assistance are confident that their situation will be handled seriously, compassionately and as confidentially as possible by all those involved

Identifying Domestic Violence in the workplace

Employees who experience domestic violence may not inform their colleagues of their situation, or approach their manager with problems. However, colleagues and Managers can often be the only people outside the home that victims of domestic violence talk to each day and they are therefore uniquely placed to help spot signs of abuse. Work can often be a safe space for an employee suffering domestic violence.

Managers and colleagues may become aware of the situation through changes in the employee and/or associated issues such as sickness absence or a change in personality. Other indicators may include:

- Uncharacteristic lateness
- Inappropriate or excessive clothing
- Repeated or unexplained injuries
- Depression or anxiety

- Becoming withdrawn
- Difficulty in concentrating
- Changes in quality of performance
- Receiving frequent, harassing phone calls from their partner
- Money concerns

As with other welfare issues, identifying that an employee is experiencing difficulties at an early stage will lead to appropriate help being offered, and allow that individual to deal with their situation far more effectively.

Protocols for dealing with domestic violence at work

Managers need to develop a sensitive and non-judgmental approach when dealing with employees who have experienced domestic violence. These measures should include: -

- Understanding the need to find immediate safety and security for the employee and others, for example children
- Being non-judgmental - taking the matter seriously, listening and believing the person
- Ensuring that any discussion with an employee about their circumstances, takes place in privacy
- Respecting confidentiality - the consequences of domestic violence are serious, and managers and colleagues need to respect this and only share information with professionals who can offer relevant support.
- Understanding employees may not wish to approach their line manager, and may prefer to involve a third party such as a colleague or trade union representative
- Finding out what the employee wants - being aware of what support is available, and exploring these options with the employee (a list of support agencies for women and men is listed at the end of this policy).

Supportive Measures

The Service will give consideration, and view sympathetically requests for Discretionary Leave and changes to leave schedules for employees who have disclosed they are experiencing domestic violence.

These requests could include:

- Changing working hours temporarily to provide help or respite to employees
- Support time off for appointments with support agencies such as domestic abuse charities, Women's Aid, Social Workers or Counsellors (Occupational Health can arrange for Counselling

and other support services)

- Time to arrange re-housing
- Meetings with Solicitors or court proceedings involving incidents of domestic violence.
- Making alternative childcare arrangements, including meetings with schools
- Other supportive measures such as a temporary change in hours or working location where requested.
- Using Service premises for meetings with support agencies

On line 24 hour help can be accessed via our employee assistance programme

www.healthassuredeap.com or by telephone on 0800 030 5182

If a member of staff is a perpetrator of domestic violence

Employees should be aware that domestic violence is a serious matter and could lead to a criminal conviction.

If the Authority views that there is conflict between a conviction for violence, an allegation of domestic violence, or an employee being bailed pre-charge or post-charge for domestic violence; and the job s/he is employed to do, disciplinary action may be initiated. An employee may be suspended from work if is necessary and proportionate to do so.

The Authority does not need to wait for formal action by either the Police or Courts to come to completion before determining its outcome. It will make any decision based on the principles of reasonable belief and a balance of probability and in line with its vision and values.

Proven harassment and intimidation of staff by their partner or ex-partner who also works for the Authority will be viewed seriously and may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

Serious consideration will be given to whether the actions of any member of staff who has a criminal conviction for domestic violence or is being investigated for one brings the Authority into disrepute, and whether this should be regarded as gross misconduct under conduct procedures. This may result in dismissal.

Local support agencies

Liverpool Domestic Violence Helpline

PO Box 182
Liverpool
L69 2SW

Helpline 0800 028 3398 (Monday – Thursday 9am –9pm; Fri 9am – 7pm)
(Sunday 3pm –5pm)

St Helens District Women's Aid

Reflection Court
Canal Street
St Helens
Merseyside
WA9 3XP

01744 735411/735477

Refuge/24hr Helpline 01925 220541
MAPP – Merseyside Abusive Partner Project 01744 454290

Knowsley Domestic Violence Support Services

First Step Centre
St Martins Church Hall
Peetwood Avenue
Kirkby
L32 7PR
Tel: 0151 548 3333

Wirral Domestic Violence Helpline

PO Box 14
Birkenhead
Merseyside
CH41 6PX

Tel 0151 643 9766

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINES

If you experience domestic violence, English National Domestic Violence helpline can offer help and practical advice: **0808 2000 247**

If you are a **man** experiencing domestic violence or you want to call on behalf of a male friend or relative, you can contact the Male Advice & Enquiry Line: **0845 064 6800** or **Mankind** on **01823 334 244**.

For forced marriage and “honour” crimes, contact Karma Nirvana (**0800 5999 247**) or The Forced Marriage Unit (**020 7008 0151**).

Broken Rainbow UK provides support to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic violence **0300 999 5428**