Service Policy: PODPOL08 Domestic Violence Policy

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Amendment History:

Vs.	Date	Author	Reasons for Change
1	Mar 2008	[redacted]	New and to support training sessions for employees
2.0	Dec 2013	[redacted]	Conversion on to the new template. Focused the Policy on support for MFRS Employees.
2.1	Apr 2015	[redacted]	New format
2.2	Apr 2016	[redacted]	Annual Review
2.3	Apr 2017	[redacted]	Annual Review
2.4	Apr 2018	[redacted]	Change of EAP provider.
2.5	Apr 2019	[redacted]	Annual Review
2.6	Mar 2020	[redacted]	Annual Review
2.7	Feb 2024	[redacted]	Annual review
2.8	Feb 2026	[redacted]	Change in language

Equalities Impact Assessment:

Initial	Full	Date	Reviewed by	Comments
	X		ED&I TEAM	LOCATED ON PORTAL

Civil Contingencies Impact Assessment:

Date	Reviewed by	Comments

Related Documents:

Doc. Type	Ref No.	Title	Location
Service Instruction		Absence SI	Portal
Service Instruction		Capability	Portal
Fire Standard		Code of Ethics	Portal
Fire Standard		Leading and Developing People	Portal
Fire Standard		Leading the Service	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		URL	
	No	X	Reason	

Legislation:

Title	

Contact:

Department	Email	Telephone ext.
Professional Standards	Professional standards	[redacted]

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.

Domestic Violence is the physical, emotional, sexual or mental abuse of one person by another with whom they have or have had a close or intimate relationship. Domestic violence occurs across society, regardless of age, sex, race, sexuality, wealth and geography.

2. Policy Explanation:

As an employer MF&RS 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 suffering 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, Trade union Representative or Manager 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

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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. The manager will become aware of the situation through changes in their 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
- 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

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- 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:

- Appointments with support agencies such as 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.

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.

As is the case with any employee who is found guilty of a crime, if the Authority views that there is conflict between the conviction for violence, and the job s/he is employed to do, disciplinary action may be taken. 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 should be given to whether the actions of any member of staff who has a criminal conviction for domestic violence brings the Authority into disrepute, and should be regarded as gross misconduct. This may result in dismissal.

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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.**

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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**

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