

**Report to:** Joint Staff Advisory Committee

**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023

**Title:** Staff Domestic Abuse Policy

**Report of:** Senior Specialist Advisor: Domestic Abuse

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of report:** To inform the Joint Staff Advisory Committee regarding the development of Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils' Staff Domestic Abuse Policy.

**Officer recommendation(s):** 1) That the report be noted; and  
2) That the Head of HR be recommended to approve and implement the Staff Domestic Abuse Policy, as set out in Appendix 1.

**Reasons for recommendations:** To ensure that the Councils have a Domestic Abuse Policy for Staff. This will safeguard our employees and ensure that as an organisation we are fully committed to support those who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse. It supports the Councils' ability to achieve the DAHA accreditation.

**Contact Officer(s):** Name: Ray Brickley  
Post title: Senior Specialist Advisor: Domestic Abuse  
Email address: [ray.brickley@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:ray.brickley@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 01323 415393

---

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils believe that no person should live in fear of violence or abuse. We commit to treating all reports of domestic abuse seriously. We will create a safe workplace and send out a strong message that domestic abuse is unacceptable.

We must however acknowledge that it is statistically likely that we will have members of staff who may have experienced or may be experiencing domestic abuse. This policy sets out our approach to supporting our employees who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse and how they can safely disclose this to a member of staff. The policy also covers the approach we will take if there are concerns that an employee may be the perpetrator of domestic abuse.

Eastbourne Borough Council and Lewes District Council are working towards achieving the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation. This

accreditation will allow for the improvement of our services and offer the best possible outcomes for those suffering with domestic abuse.

DAHA's mission is to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards including the creation of domestic abuse policies for our customers and staff. DAHA embeds the best practice and is the first domestic abuse accreditation for housing providers. To demonstrate our commitment, we have employed a Senior Specialist advisor to lead on our project and implement the necessary improvements to achieve the accreditation.

We understand that there are many barriers to reporting domestic abuse but hope our improvements will encourage employees to seek support with the assurance we will treat any disclosures confidentially and with empathy.

- 1.2 This is a new policy and does not significantly impact upon existing staff related policies. The policy works in conjunction with current guidance and policies namely the Councils Annual Leave/Time Off Guidance and the Staff Safeguarding Policy.

## **2 Information**

- 2.1 This policy will be implemented by publication on the Council intranet known as 'The Hub' following approval, with communication to all staff both on The Hub and also via The Watercooler (The Councils' in house social media hub). Guidance will be issued to managers.
- 2.2 Unison has been consulted on the new policy and we are awaiting feedback from them. They were sent copies of the policy on **21/02/2023** and **24/04/2023**.

## **3 Resource Implications**

- 3.1 The implementation of this revised policy should have no financial impact.

## **4 Conclusion**

- 4.1 The members of Joint Staff Advisory Committee are asked to note this report.

## **5 Financial appraisal**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

## **6 Legal implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

## **7 Equality Analysis**

- 7.1 The policy sets out a range of measures and processes which will ultimately improve and enhance the Councils' response to and ability to support staff who are experiencing domestic abuse.

The policy is likely to impact female staff more than male staff given that DA is predominantly a gender-based crime (more so in incidences of (so-called Honour Based Violence, FGM and adult child-maternal abuse). The policy acknowledges the intersectionality of DA and recognises that an individual's identity may impact their own experience of abuse. Staff will be trained to understand how different groups may be impacted in different ways. – Seanne Sweeney – Community Services Lead.

## **8 Appendices**

8.1 Appendix 1 - Eastbourne Borough Council and Lewes District Council Staff Domestic Abuse Policy

8.2 Appendix 2 - Types of Domestic Abuse for Policies

## **9 Background papers**

9.1 None.