



Subject:	Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse in the Workplace
Date:	23rd August 2019
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officer:	Christine Sheridan, Head of Human Resources

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the recently revised Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<u>Key issues</u> The council recognises that domestic abuse is a serious issue which affects all sections of society, and also the lives of many adults and children. It has the potential to affect any employee of the council, whether as victims, survivors or perpetrators of domestic abuse.
3.2	As part of the council's Gender Action Plan, a specific policy for Belfast City Council employees was first developed and implemented in 2012.

3.3	In 2018, the Council was awarded the ONUS (a social enterprise organisation offering best practice advice and specialist training on domestic violence and abuse) Workplace Charter at Platinum level in recognition of the improvements we have made in terms the support structure in place for staff. We will continue to work to maintain this level.
3.4	The attached revised policy and factsheets for both managers and employees have been agreed by both management and trade union sides. The policy has been reviewed based on best practice in other organisations and advice and guidance from organisations including ONUS and Women's Aid. It also reflects recent guidance set out in the government's new Employer Guidelines on dealing with domestic and sexual violence in the workplace.
3.5	Since the implementation of the policy in 2012, the council has set in place a procedure for designating certain staff members to become 'trusted colleagues'. These employees will be available as the first point of contact for employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse. The 'trusted colleagues' receive training relating to the role.
3.6	<p>The revised policy applies to all Council employees (including casual and temporary staff) and its aim is to support and assist employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse as well as provide guidance on managing situations where employees are perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse. The key elements of the policy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A definition of domestic violence and abuse• How to manage and share relevant information in a confidential way• Information and support for employees who are experiencing domestic abuse• Information on the role of the 'trusted colleague'• Information for managers on how to support employees who are victims of domestic abuse.
3.7	When approved by Members, the policy will be communicated through a comprehensive training and communication exercise in conjunction with the trade unions.
3.8	In addition to the work that we continue to do internally for our staff, the council is continuing to work towards Safe City status with our city partners.

	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.9	<p>Financial</p> <p>Any costs associated with the training and communication exercise will be covered by the existing Organisational Development budget.</p> <p>Human Resources</p>
3.10	<p>Departments will be asked to release the relevant staff and trade union representatives for any necessary training.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.11	<p>The policy has been equality screened and there are no adverse equality implications. There are no rural needs implications.</p>
4.0	Document Attached
	Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse 2019