

1.45 Domestic Violence and Abuse (Staff and Clients)

Schedule Information	
Policy Category	Category 1 - All staff - Urgent
Directorate Lead	Quality & Continuous Improvement
Committee	ELT
Policy Owner	Director of Operations
Lead Author	Head of Quality
Summary of Policy Changes	Previous versions prior to 2016 are available on request. V1.0 – April 2016 – Policy was first published. V2.0 – September 2019 – Policy has been split into two parts Staff and Clients (change in policy title). Reference to Internal DVA Group. Clearer requirement to disclose convictions existing and new staff. New reference to the Quality Mark (Safer Leeds). V2.1 – May 2021 – 1 year extension of expiry date for review of policy May 2021 under way. Change of organisation branding and policy header changed to fall in with new Website / Intranet branding. There has been no change to policy content. V2.2 – Checked against reference and legislation. Reviewed and change made to update ONS figures. Added non-fatal strangulation to the list of physical violence to reflect changes in law. V2.3 January 2024- Template updated V2.4 January 2026 – Expiry extended for policy review. V2.5 March 26 – Expiry extended to March 2027
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Storage & Version Control	Whilst this policy may be printed and shared, the electronic copy posted on the internal intranet is the controlled document.

Introduction

St Anne's Community Services is committed to preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to domestic violence and abuse in all its forms. St Anne's recognises that our employees and clients may currently be experiencing or have previously experienced domestic violence and we will uphold our duty to support them as a Housing Association and Adult Social Care Provider.

This part (A) of our Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy relates to people supported and/or housed by St Anne's Community Services (Clients).

St Anne's will observe the Government's definition of domestic violence and abuse as stated in Appendix 1.

The purpose of this policy is to set out a framework in which St Anne's will;

- Ensure the safety of clients affected by domestic violence and abuse
- Hold perpetrators to account in a way that reduces risk, deters future offending and promotes behavioural change
- Monitor and report on incidents of domestic violence and abuse
- Create a culture where domestic violence and abuse is not tolerated
- Removing additional barriers to support that our clients may experience

St Anne's recognises that domestic violence is a gendered crime and that women are at disproportionate risk of abuse from men (on average two women are killed by their partner or ex-partner every week in England and Wales, ONS, 2020). However, any client can be affected, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, culture, religion or background. Abuse may occur in same sex relationships, by men from women partners and by family members (including adolescent to parent violence and 'harmful traditional practices' such as Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage). This Policy is therefore applicable whatever the nature of the relationship.

Organisational Commitment

St Anne's is committed to increase the safety of those at risk of harm and will observe the principles of the "4Rs" set out by leading domestic violence organisations;

1. Recognise the problem (look for signs and ask)
2. Respond appropriately
3. Refer on to appropriate help
4. Record the details

Board Responsibilities

St Anne's is committed to having a Board who understand the prevalence of domestic violence and abuse. The Board are responsible for ensuring that St Anne's commitment to this policy is evident across the organisation and that services are

delivered in compliance with the law.

ELT Responsibilities

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is responsible for ensuring that Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy is implemented operationally. St Anne's Executive Lead for Domestic Violence and Abuse is the Director for Quality & Continuous Improvement.

Manager Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all members of staff in their team(s) are of this policy and can implement it in their service(s).

Managers will ensure that relevant, timely and appropriate risk assessments, risk management plans, care plans – and, if appropriate, safety plans - are in place for clients identified as being at risk.

Managers will identify and foster strong working relationships with domestic abuse-related organisations with a strong understanding of local referral processes (including a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, known as MARAC)

Managers will support staff to debrief and signpost them to further sources of support (including our Employee Assistance Provider) if they are affected by their work with a client experiencing violence or abuse.

Employee Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to uphold a zero-tolerance approach to domestic violence and abuse and be able to identify and challenge any behaviour that contravenes this in accordance with St Anne's Safeguarding Policy. All employees should be able to identify domestic violence and/or possible signs of abuse at an early stage (this can be an effective measure in preventing an escalation in severity and frequency).

Supporting Clients Experiencing Domestic Violence and Abuse

St Anne's will create an inclusive and non-judgmental environment in which clients are supported and encouraged to disclose their experiences of domestic violence and abuse. Clients will be treated with dignity and respect to enable them to express their needs as clearly and easily as possible (for example during the processes of assessment and support planning or regular contact).

If a staff member is supporting a client who has, or is experiencing domestic violence or abuse they will work with the individual in a timely manner to;

- Empower them to understand their options and their legal rights
- Signpost them to appropriate specialist support in the local area
- Be aware of the additional barriers to support that the individual may face
- Reassure them that it is not their fault
- Share their concerns with their Manager whilst maintaining confidentiality – 'need to know basis'
- Be alert to the frequent inter-relationship between domestic violence and the abuse and neglect of children
- Ensure that relevant, timely and appropriate risk assessments, risk management plans, care plans – and, if appropriate, safety plans - are in place for identified vulnerable individuals
- Take appropriate legal action where tenancy or licence obligations are breached through domestic violence

Special consideration will be given to clients deemed to be vulnerable adults and to circumstances where the children of service users may be at risk, physically or emotionally, of domestic violence. In responding to such cases, the St Anne's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure should be referred to as well as any other local protocols in place. St Anne's will fulfil all legal and ethical responsibilities towards the children of our clients who may be at risk of domestic violence and abuse in accordance with our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

St Anne's is committed to supporting people from marginalised and underrepresented communities who are likely to experience barriers to support, including those from Religious and Ethnic minority backgrounds as well as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people.

Responding to Clients who are Perpetrators

St Anne's is not a specialist provider of support to perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse. However, it is recognised that staff may support clients who disclose that they are perpetrating abusive behaviour now or have perpetrated in the past.

There may be situations where staff members interact or work with clients and/or their family members who they know to be abusive. In any such cases staff must operate within Health & Safety guidelines and manage risks accordingly. Staff can provide relevant information, signpost or refer those who want to address their abusive behaviour to specialist services.

Internal Domestic Violence and Abuse Group

St Anne's will establish and maintain an internal Working Group, comprising of Service Managers to scrutinise its internal case management of domestic violence and abuse incidents involving clients in Leeds. The Domestic Violence and Abuse Group will be chaired by a named Area Manager and will operate with its own Terms of Reference. St Anne's will strive to replicate the work of this group across the organisation to share best practice.

Leeds Domestic Violence & Abuse Quality Mark

As a commissioned provider that deals with domestic violence and abuse on a regular basis, St Anne's is committed to attaining the Leeds Domestic Violence & Abuse Quality Mark Level Two from Safer Leeds. St Anne's will pursue equivalent quality mark processes if they are offered by local authorities in our relevant geographical areas.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

St Anne's will always encourage clients to make disclosures to seek positive interventions and support whilst recognising that individuals have the right to confidentiality, and permission would be sought for any onward referral.

There are some circumstances where confidentiality cannot be assured. These occur when there are concerns about children or vulnerable adults or where St Anne's as an employer needs to act to protect the safety of employees. Information sharing around domestic violence and abuse will be conducted in accordance with our Information Governance, Data Protection and Safeguarding Policies and procedures.

Recording Information

St Anne's will record disclosure of domestic violence or abuse from clients in accordance with the Incident Management Policy. We will ensure that recorded information relating to incidents of domestic violence and abuse will be;

- Clear and concise (people may need to see and read this at a later date)
- Accurate
- Detailed, dates, times, locations, other people involved
- Kept securely

Training and Development

All employees will receive training to raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse during the mandatory staff induction to St Anne's.

Services working with clients at disproportionate and frequent risk should procure bespoke training for their staff team(s) with support from the Learning and Development team.

Domestic violence and abuse resources including St Anne's policies, information and guidance documents will be digitally available on the staff intranet site for employees to access freely in addition to the Online Portal provided by the EAP provider.

1.45B Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy - Staff

Introduction

St Anne's Community Services is committed to preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to domestic violence and abuse in all its forms.

This part (B) of our Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy relates to our employees (Staff) and is relevant to everybody employed by St Anne's.

We recognise that domestic violence and abuse is a serious issue which can affect any of our employees at any time during their working life. St Anne's is a caring employer and we will uphold our duty to care to support those affected by domestic violence and abuse. St Anne's recognises its legal responsibilities to ensuring the safety of its employees in accordance with the law.

St Anne's does not condone domestic violence or abuse perpetrated by employees under any circumstances and this shall not be considered as a 'private matter'.

St Anne's will observe the Government's definition of domestic violence and abuse as stated in Appendix 1.

The purpose of this policy is to set out a framework in which St Anne's will;

- Create an environment in which staff feel safe to disclose their experience, are believed and supported
- Support staff who are experiencing domestic violence and abuse
- Ensure the safety of employees affected by domestic violence and abuse
- Hold perpetrators to account in a way that reduces risk, deters future offending and promotes behavioural change

St Anne's recognises that domestic violence is a gendered crime and that women are at disproportionate risk of abuse from men (on average two women are killed by their partner or ex-partner every week in England and Wales, ONS, 2018). However, any employee can be affected, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, culture, religion or background. Abuse may occur in same sex relationships, by men from women partners and by family members (including adolescent to parent violence and 'harmful traditional practices' such as Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage). This Policy is therefore applicable whatever the nature of the relationship

Organisational Commitment

St Anne's is committed to increase the safety of those at risk of harm and will observe the principles of the "4Rs" set out by leading domestic violence organisations;

1. Recognise the problem (look for signs and ask)
2. Respond appropriately
3. Refer on to appropriate help
4. Record the details

Board Responsibilities

St Anne's is committed to having a Board who understand the prevalence of domestic violence and abuse. The Board are responsible for ensuring that St Anne's commitment to this policy is evident across the organisation and that services are delivered in compliance with the law.

ELT Responsibilities

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is responsible for ensuring that Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy is implemented across the organisation. St Anne's Executive Lead for Domestic Violence and Abuse is the Director for Quality & Continuous Improvement.

Manager Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all members of staff in their team(s) are aware of this policy and can implement it.

Managers will be approachable and available to support staff who disclose personal experience of domestic violence and abuse with respect and sensitivity.

Managers will ensure that relevant, timely and appropriate risk assessments and, if appropriate, safety plans - are implemented for staff who have disclosed that they are at current risk of domestic violence and abuse.

Employee Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to uphold a zero-tolerance approach to domestic violence and abuse and be able to identify and challenge any behaviour that contravenes this in accordance with St Anne's Safeguarding Policy. All employees should be able to identify domestic violence and/or possible signs of abuse at an early stage (this can be an effective measure in preventing an escalation in severity and frequency).

Supporting Staff Experiencing Domestic Violence and Abuse

St Anne's will make every effort to assist and support a staff member who discloses that they are experiencing domestic violence and abuse. Managers will support the staff member by adopting the following approach;

- Listen carefully in a safe, confidential environment
- Resist making assumptions or reacting with shock
- Reassure them that it is not their fault and that we believe them
- Signpost to our Employee Assistance Programme, Mental Health First Aiders and specialist external organisations for support, ask direct questions about what they want to do and how we can help

St Anne's recognises the serious and enduring affects that domestic violence and abuse can have on a staff member's health and the implications that this may have on their performance and capability. Staff members should not be penalised for being a victim of domestic violence and abuse and any consideration of formal action relating to issues of performance and attendance must take account of this as far as is reasonable.

If an employee needs to be absent from work, the HR Department will support the Manager to explore existing procedures to support the staff member.

Staff members who acquire an injury or disability as a result of abuse will also be supported to stay well at work in accordance with our staff Health and Wellbeing Policy.

Risk Management

Once a known risk to a staff member is identified, all practical measures to keep them safe at work must be explored and implemented by the appropriate Manager with support from the Area Manager and HR Department.

Recommended actions may include (but are not limited to);

- Adjustment to working times
- Temporary relocation in to another work place
- Briefing other colleagues on a 'need to know' basis about how they can help keep the staff member safe whilst at work (for example, never giving out information about their whereabouts to third parties contacting St Anne's)
- Appropriate legal action to protect the work place

In cases the perpetrator is also a member of St Anne's staff, this must be recorded in the associated risk assessment.

Additional recommended actions may include (but are not limited to);

- Minimising the potential for the perpetrator to use workplace systems and resources to find out details about the victim's activities
- Ensure that the perpetrator and victim have different line managers who can provide appropriate information and support

Responding to Perpetrators who are Staff

Staff members who are cautioned or convicted of a criminal offence could be subject to disciplinary procedures as defined within St Anne's Disciplinary and Capability Procedures.

Staff members who perpetrate domestic violence and abuse must declare any associated prosecutions to St Anne's HR department as soon as they occur.

Prospective staff members must declare any related prosecutions and convictions in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

St Anne's will encourage employees to address their violent and abusive behaviour by providing information about the services and support available to them from an appropriate source.

Responding to Perpetrators who are not Staff

St Anne's recognises the risk that perpetrators may pose to our staff and clients and the disruption that perpetrators may seek to cause as part of their abusive behaviour. This may take the form of;

- Making vexatious complaints and accusations against the victim
- Making threats toward the organisation
- Distributing "Revenge Porn" imagery depicting the staff member

Instances of private sexual imagery (including films) being received electronically or via post must be reported immediately to the relevant Manager and to the HR Department who will take necessary action.

Such images must not be forwarded on or shared under any circumstances as this is a criminal offence (Section 33 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015).

Incident Management

St Anne's will record all incidents of domestic violence and abuse that are perpetrated towards staff whilst they are acting in their work capacity. The Manager will record incidents (including malicious communication received by the organisation) in accordance with the Incident Management Policy.

St Anne's will provide Managers and their staff teams with support to debrief after traumatic incidents that occur at work.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Whilst every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of staff experiencing domestic violence and abuse, there are some circumstances where this cannot be assured. These occur when there are concerns about children or vulnerable adults

or where we are required by law to act to protect the safety of others.

Information sharing around domestic violence and abuse will be conducted in accordance with our Information Governance, Data Protection and Safeguarding Policies and procedures.

St Anne's will participate in Police Investigations and Domestic Homicide Reviews as required by the law.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years or earlier in light of new legislation or good practice guidelines

Appendix 1 – Definition of Domestic Violence

This appendix contains excerpts from the Home Office 2013 definition of domestic violence which is available from the Gov.UK website. It defines domestic violence and abuse as;

‘Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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.’

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background. There are different kinds of abuse that can happen in different contexts. The most prevalent type of domestic abuse occurs in relationships. But the definition of domestic abuse also covers abuse between family members, such as adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Young people aged 16-17 years can also be victims to domestic violence in this definition.

Domestic abuse is about the misuse of power and exercise of control by one adult over another adult within the context of an intimate or close family relationship. Domestic violence perpetrated towards people under 16 is generally considered as child abuse.

It is also recognised that pregnant women are at disproportionate risk. Over one third of domestic violence cases begin or escalate during pregnancy according to research conducted by leading domestic violence organisations.

Domestic violence and abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological (including coercive control)
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Other Relevant Terms

Controlling Behaviour

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

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.

Harmful Traditional Practices

This refers to practices including so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. The government definition is clear that people of all ethnic and religious backgrounds can be affected.

Appendix 2 – Example of Behaviours

Physical	Psychological	Sexual	Verbal	Financial	Cyber or Stalking
Cutting	Threat to kill	Unwanted touching	Intimidation	Controlling accounts	Creating fake online profiles
Being pushed downstairs	Isolation	Unwanted kissing	Name calling	Controlling benefits	Installing tracking devices
Spat on	Degradation	Forced to watch porn	Silence	Setting 'rules'	Hacking accounts
Scalding or Burning	Humiliation	Forced to be in porn	Shouted at	Pocket Money	Following
Starved or force fed	Bullying	Forced sex in public	Discounting your opinion	Stealing money	Waiting outside property
Suffocated or non-fatal strangulation	Harassment	Forced sexual acts and rape	Public humiliation	Damage to property	Arriving at work site
Strangled/Choked	Stalking	Sex on demand	Criticising friends	Forcing to beg	Interfering with post
Pulled or dragged by hair	Threat to hurt	Sexual bullying	Criticising family	Forcing to borrow	Breaking and entering
Biting	Threat to hurt others	Withholding clothing	Blaming you for everything	Forcing to steal	Going through bins
Slapping and hitting	Threat to hurt pets	Withholding contraception	Tone of voice	Hiding money	Ordering goods in your name
Kicking	Rules	Intentional HIV transmission	Laughing	Demanding money	Damage to belongings
Punching	Distorting reality	"Revenge" porn images or film	Mocking	Controlling all financial affairs	Invading personal space
Drugged	Threats to punish	Withholding affection	Making demands	No spending on children	"befriending" your friends

Stabbing	Supervising every activity	Prostituted to the public or friends	Body Language	Controlling use of resources	"befriending" your family
Imprisonment	Telling lies	FGM	Belittling	Fraud	Malicious gossip and rumours
Objects thrown	Blackmail	Incest	Making false allegations	Acquiring debt	Vexatious complaints
Murder	Violating privacy	Forced to have abortion	Reporting victim to Police	Illegal activity	Planting spyware
Body blocking	Using children in blackmail	Forced to be pregnant	Undermining	Gambling	Disruptive calls and texts