V.2 August 2026

Human Resources

Guidance for Supporting Colleagues who are experiencing Domestic Abuse

Manager Guidance

1. Purpose

The University is committed to supporting colleagues by:

- Ensuring our campus and University buildings offer a safe environment for all colleagues, in accordance with our legal and regulatory duties.
- Putting in place measures to support colleagues at risk.
- Signposting colleagues to relevant and appropriate information and specialist support.

The University will support colleagues who make it known that they are experiencing domestic abuse, and work to minimise the risk to their safety in the workplace.

Note: As no two cases of domestic abuse are the same, the University recognises that this guidance cannot cover every situation. This guidance will be updated as required to reflect changes in the law. If you have any queries, feedback or suggestions, please contact your Human Resources Adviser within the Employee Relations Team: EmployeeRelationsTeam@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

2. What is Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Domestic abuse occurs between two people aged 16 or over who are "personally connected". This connection includes:

- being or having been married or in a civil partnership
- having agreed to marry or enter a civil partnership (whether the agreement has been terminated)
- being or having been in an intimate personal relationship
- having or having had a parental relationship with the same child; or being a relative

Abusive behaviour encompasses any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse (behaviour with substantial adverse effect on ability to obtain, use, or maintain money or property or goods or services)
- psychological, emotional, or other abuse

It can consist of a single incident or a course of conduct.

Many forms of domestic abuse are criminal offences.

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It is important to remember that domestic abuse is much wider than physical violence. Visit the Gov.UK website for more information on this and what the law says.

It is important to remember that a person's Protected Characteristics may impact the way in which they experience domestic abuse. For example, racism, homophobia or disability discrimination can create barriers and stigma for those experiencing abuse and make it more difficult to seek and receive appropriate support.

3. In an Emergency

If an individual is being harmed, or in immediate danger of being harmed, you should call 999. If the emergency is taking place on campus, you should also contact Security on 4444 or 0113 812 3165.

4. For Managers supporting colleagues affected by domestic abuse

If a colleague or somebody in your team tells you that they are experiencing domestic abuse, or you suspect something is wrong, it is important that you take the time to speak with them privately as soon as you can.
It may be difficult for the colleague to speak about what they're experiencing. For this reason, it is important that you use the following principles as a guide when meeting with them;

1. Give the colleague time and space to talk in their own words.
2. Listen carefully.
3. Give them encouragement and reassurance that you understand that this might be difficult to talk about, and that this is confidential.
4. Be nonjudgemental.
5. Ask the colleague what, if anything, they would like to do at this time, or if there's anything they'd like you to do that would help (see section 6).
6. Let the colleague know about support services available to them through the Employee Assistance Programme, our HR Policies and this document.
7. Keep factual notes of your conversation confidential.
8. Ask the colleague's permission before seeking advice from Human Resources or speaking to others in the workplace about it.
9. Assess whether a risk assessment should be undertaken and agree regular check in meetings (see section 7).

The University can offer a range of measures to reduce the impact of domestic abuse. These could include (but are not limited to):

- A change of working hours (temporary or permanent).
- A change to physical tasks or duties.

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- A change of worksite location (considering our campuses, buildings, mode of work, e.g hybrid).
- Sympathetic consideration of flexible working arrangements to facilitate attendance at appointments (e.g. solicitor, childcare, social services, Police).
- Car parking provision (e.g., a temporary car parking permit).
- Referral to specialist services (e.g., counselling, legal advice) or external organisations. A list of specialist organisations is available on our Support Report Respect platform.

As a Manager supporting a colleague experiencing domestic violence, your own wellbeing may be impacted too. You might feel worried, frustrated if the colleague returns to the perpetrator, or reminded of your own experiences of abuse. For this reason, you might like to access support from your own Manager or consider wellbeing resources or our coaching and mentoring offer.

5. Perpetrators of domestic abuse who work at the University

The University will not tolerate domestic abuse by its employees, nor use of university equipment to carry out such abuse and this will be made clear to the perpetrator. The University will take seriously any allegations towards an employee of domestic abuse and investigations may lead to disciplinary action being taken in line with the University's disciplinary policy and procedures.

When speaking with an alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse, a manager should, if considered necessary, take measures to ensure their own safety such as taking another member of staff to accompany them to any meetings.

The University will seek to offer support to perpetrators of domestic abuse if it is evident that they are seeking help to address their behaviour.

In cases where both the victim and the perpetrator of domestic abuse are employed by the University, appropriate action will be taken. In addition to considering disciplinary action against the employee who is perpetrating the abuse, because of breach of the University's disciplinary rules, action may need to be taken to ensure that the victim and perpetrator do not come into contact in the workplace. However, it is recognised that in certain circumstances, those experiencing and perpetrating domestic abuse in a relationship may choose to seek solutions jointly, and in such situations appropriate solutions can be explored.

6. Guidance, Policies and support information

The impact of domestic abuse can be significant, varied and long-lasting (both when the abuse is happening and after, for many months or years).

There are a range of policies and documents which might be relevant or helpful for colleagues experiencing domestic violence to refer to with their Manager, published on the HR A-Z Webpage

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These include:

- Sickness absence policy
- Special Leave policy and examples
- Flexible working policy and principles
- Redeployment
- Performance management procedures
- Personal Relationships at Work policy
- Guidance on supporting mental health for staff (includes a flowchart on steps for managers responding to mental health concerns)
- Safeguarding

In the event of a colleague perpetrating domestic violence, the following policies are particularly relevant:

- Addressing and Preventing Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Disciplinary rules
- Digital Services Acceptable Code of Practice

Managers should make sure that they are familiar with these policies when supporting colleagues experiencing domestic abuse and to ask for help from Human Resources as needed. It is a good idea to share the policies with the colleague so they can refer to them too.

7.Risk Assessments

Colleagues experiencing domestic abuse may wish to have a personalised risk-assessment in place to reduce the risk of the perpetrator impacting them in the workplace (for example, if the perpetrator arrives on-site or contacts the University).

Managers are responsible for ensuring that a person-specific risk assessment is conducted locally in their School or Service area, in accordance with our Health and Safety procedures (colleagues should refer to the Health and Safety webpages).

Managers should seek support from their School or Service's Human Resources Adviser if they need help to complete the risk assessment.

8. Confidentiality

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Any disclosures, advice or support given should be treated as confidential as far as possible, unless it is necessary to share information in the interests of supporting and/or protecting the colleague (for example, if you as a Manager need to seek guidance from Human Resources).

Records concerning domestic abuse must be managed in accordance with the University's data protection procedures.