



# **Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure**

**October 2025**

<b>People Area</b>	<b>Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure</b>
<b>Authored by (Responsible Officer):</b>	<b>Head of HR</b>
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## **Policy**

Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB) acknowledges that domestic abuse is a significant problem which has a devastating impact on victims, their families, friends and colleagues, whether that is an individual living with domestic abuse, someone who perpetrates domestic abuse, a survivor, or those who have been impacted by domestic abuse in other ways. The service has a responsibility to provide all its employees with a safe working environment where every employee effected has the knowledge that they can raise any issues relating to domestic abuse and any disclosure will be dealt with in a supportive, confidential and sensitive manner. CFB does not condone domestic abuse and violence under any circumstances, and all employees must adhere to the services Code of Conduct and Values and Behaviours Framework.

### **1. Scope**

- 1.1 This policy applies to all CFB employees, temporary/agency workers, volunteers, and contractors, working for or on behalf of the service.

### **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The policy aims to raise awareness of domestic abuse including what is recognised as domestic abuse, the likely effects on individuals, their families, friends, colleagues and the service, how to recognise if an individual is experiencing domestic abuse and the actions and responses that may be taken in relation to this or any disclosure/s.
- 2.2 The policy provides a framework to encourage those who may be affected to raise their concerns and seek help and support.
- 2.3 This procedure provides guidance to line managers when supporting those who may be suffering or are affected by domestic violence and ensures that both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse are aware of the support that is available from the service and the support that can be accessed through external third parties.
- 2.4 The information within the policy is to raise awareness of domestic abuse which will assist and support employees of the service to feel able to support others, report any concerns raised to them or feel comfortable to raise any issues they may be experiencing themselves to ensure that situations are

handled appropriately, confidentially and with compassion through appropriate reporting lines.

### **3. The Definition of Domestic Abuse**

3.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines Domestic Abuse as any physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic, psychological, emotional, or other form of abuse that an individual inflicts on another person if both the victim and the perpetrator are aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other. This definition includes 'honour' based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Behaviour is "abusive" if it involves any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse.
- Violent or threatening behaviour.
- Psychological and emotional.
- Controlling or coercive behaviour.
- Economic & financial abuse.
- Denial of rights, or other form of abuse.

**This is not an exhaustive list.**

3.2 A personal connection between two people under the The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 is where someone is or has been:

- Married to the other person.
- A Civil Partner of the other person.
- Agreed to marry the other person (regardless of whether the relationship is still ongoing).
- Entered into a civil partnership agreement with the other person (regardless of whether the relationship is still ongoing).
- In an intimate relationship with the other person
- A parental relationship with the other person in relation to the same child.
- A relative.

3.3 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 refers to domestic abuse occurring if both the victim and the perpetrator are both aged 16 and over, however there are individuals who may experience domestic abuse from their children, siblings, or individuals they are connected to who are under the age of 16 years.

3.4 Domestic abuse can occur in all communities regardless of gender, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity.

- 3.5 Domestic Abuse can take the form of physical and/or emotional abuse which may leave physical and emotional scars and issues such as feelings of isolation and loneliness. This may happen as a pattern of abusive behaviour that occurs over a short or long period of time or may be a singular incident.
- 3.6 When an individual is a victim of domestic abuse, it may not only affect them but it may have a significant effect on those around them or those living in the same household such as children, members of the family, friends and colleagues.

#### **4. Examples of Domestic Abuse**

##### **4.1 Physical Abuse**

- 4.1.1 Physical abuse includes but is not limited to punching, slapping, hitting, biting, pinching, kicking, cutting, hair pulling, pushing, shoving, burning, strangling, withholding medication, attempting to murder or murder itself.
- 4.1.2 Rape and sexual physical abuse occurs when the victim's refusal of consent being ignored and forcing a person against their will to engage in sexual activity or acts. This includes situations such as where someone is forced to take part in unwanted, unsafe, or degrading sexual activity. The legal definition of rape is as stated in The Sexual Offences Act (2003).

##### **4.2 Psychological and Emotional Abuse**

- 4.2.1 Psychological and emotional abuse can be either verbal or non-verbal. It is often a more subtle form of abuse which can include but is not limited to name calling, yelling, blaming, isolation from friends and family, intimidation, threats of violence, telling someone they are useless and/or preventing someone from sleeping. This may be privately or in front of others, potentially causing a lack of confidence and independence, making them feel reliant on the abuser.

##### **4.3 Controlling or Coercive Control**

- 4.3.1 Controlling behaviour can include a wide range of acts intended to make a person dependent by isolating them from those who may support them such as restricting or preventing them from talking to or seeing family and/or friends, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
- 4.3.2 Coercive control is an act or a pattern of acts and behaviour including assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or any other form of abuse that is used intended to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

##### **4.4 Economic & Financial Abuse**

- 4.4.1 Economic abuse limits the victim's ability to seek and gain help and support. This may include the abuser taking control of finances to deny or withhold money or bank/credit cards, make someone unreasonably account for the money they spend, exploits their assets or stealing their money, withhold basic necessities such as food or clothes, deliberately run up debt/s or prevent someone from working.

#### **4.5 Other Forms of Abuse**

- 4.5.1 Forced Marriage where one or both spouses do not consent to be married.
- 4.5.2 Stalking, a pattern of unwanted persistent attention that can make someone feel harassed, pestered, scared and anxious. Stalking can include unwanted communications, the use of threats and following or spying on someone.
- 4.5.3 Gaslighting, undermining or manipulating someone, making them feel they are the problem or cause them to doubt their own sanity and decisions.
- 4.5.4 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), procedures involving the removal or part removal of a female's external genitalia or injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

### **5. Domestic Abuse in the Workplace**

- 5.1 Individuals who suffer from domestic violence may also be targeted whilst at work. This may include, unwanted telephone calls and text messages, and the abuser targeting behaviour on the individual's way in or out of work. It is likely that the victim of the abuse may choose not to disclose information about what they are experiencing to anyone at work, and it is more likely that the individuals line manager and/or colleagues may become aware of the situation through associated issues such as uncharacteristic issues relating to:
- Attendance and timekeeping.
  - Performance levels.
  - Welfare issues such as, repeated or unexplained injuries, depression, anxiety, stress, difficulty concentrating.
  - Inappropriate or excessive clothing being worn.
- 5.2 As with any welfare issues, identifying that a member of staff is experiencing difficulties at an early stage will lead to the appropriate help and support being offered, and allow that member of staff to deal with their situation far more effectively.
- 5.3 In cases where both the victim and the perpetrator of domestic abuse both work for the service every effort should be taken to ensure that the victim and perpetrator do not come into contact in the workplace. Action may also need

to be taken to minimise the potential for the perpetrator to use their position or work resources to find out details about the whereabouts of the victim. This may include a change of duties for one or both employees or withdrawing the perpetrators access to certain computer systems or CFB sites/offices should this happen disciplinary action may be taken.

- 5.4 Both the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator should be encouraged to seek professional help and support. This may be reporting matters to the appropriate authorities or seeking advice and/or counselling from professional providers.
- 5.5 Domestic abuse can affect colleagues of the victim, and the effects may include:
- Being subject to questioning from the victim's abuser such as their location.
  - Being following in to or home from work, fearing for their own safety.
  - Covering for colleagues' absenteeism.
  - Having awareness of the abuse but not knowing how to help and support.

## **6. Recognising Domestic Abuse**

- 6.1 Individuals themselves need to recognise if they are a victim of domestic abuse, however it should be noted that there may be incidents which occur in the workplace or specifically affect the work of a member of staff. There are many indications that an individual may be possibly suffering from domestic abuse, they include but are not limited to:
- Out of character changes to behaviour and conduct, being tearful, aggressive, anxious, low mood or distracted.
  - Visible effects of physical abuse and/or patterns of injuries.
  - Reduced and poor performance levels with no explanation.
  - Fearful of leaving children at home.
  - Isolation from colleagues, family, and friends.
  - Poor attendance or high presenteeism without an explanation.
  - Secretive about their home life.
- 6.2 If an individual does display one or several of the above indicators, assumptions should however not be automatically made that they are a victim of domestic abuse. A general discussion should take place between the employee and their line manager, and the matter raised sensitively. Consideration must be given as to how and when the conversation takes place to ensure the employee is alone.

- 6.3 It is crucial that line managers feel able to start a conversation with an employee, as often an employee suffering from domestic abuse will not usually raise the issue until the situation becomes dangerous. There is no 'one size fits all' approach when a victim of domestic abuse is identified but line managers should have the skills to respond and signpost an employee and their colleagues to the support available to them.

## **7. Addressing the Effects of Domestic Abuse**

- 7.1 There are several steps that line manager can take to address the effects of domestic abuse and provide support to those who are affected. In many cases, it is about being aware of how to support and being able to signpost to the organisations that provide specialist support:

- **Recognise the problem**

Look for sudden or unexpected changes like the examples in sections 5 and 6.

- **Respond**

Trust an employee if they disclose experiencing domestic abuse, do not ask for proof. Reassure the employee that the service understands how domestic abuse may affect their work performance and that support that can be offered.

- **Provide Support**

Look to change the phone extension if a member of staff receives harassing calls and agree with the employee what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if the perpetrator telephones or visits the workplace. Ensure the member of staff does not work alone or in an isolated area and check that they have arrangements for getting safely to and from work. Keep a record of any incidents of abuse in the workplace, including persistent telephone calls, emails, or visits to the workplace.

- **Refer to the appropriate help**

Provide contact details of the support services offered in the local area that are easily accessible and refer staff to appropriate organisations that deal with domestic abuse.

- **Record**

It is important to record details of what is said as accurately as possible as should the abuse become subject to criminal proceedings, this may be required as an exhibit and required to be handed to the police.

## **8. Employee Support**

8.1 Employees experiencing domestic abuse may choose to disclose, report to or seek support from a variety of sources. This could include:

- Their line manager.
- A work colleague.
- Human Resources.
- Trade Union Representative.

It is not their role to counsel victims, but they can offer information, workplace support, and signpost to other organisations.

8.2 The service will respond sympathetically, supportively, and effectively to any member of staff who discloses that they are suffering from domestic abuse. Line managers should consult with the employee and consider what actions that they can make to offer practical support and advice, this could include:

- Temporary adjustments to working patterns (e.g. flexible working).
- Signpost to third party organisations for support.
- Referral to Occupational Health/counselling services.
- Raising general awareness of the issue and in particular, amongst other managers.
- Time to attend appointments, such as GP, counselling, solicitors, school.

This is not an exhaustive list.

8.3 If an employee is experiencing domestic abuse and finds certain aspects of their role or work distressing, concerns should be discussed with the line manager and Head of Department to explore ways to address the concern/s and minimise the impact.

8.4 The service will provide on-going support for employees that disclose domestic abuse by encouraging them to seek advice and support from professional advisory groups, including the police.

8.5 If an employee does not feel comfortable disclosing information relating to domestic abuse, employees are encouraged to speak to a trusted colleague or a member of the services Human Resources team.

## **9. Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse**

9.1 The Code of Conduct, The Values and Behaviours framework and other service policies set out the standards of behaviour and conduct expected of all employees. They identify principles governing behaviour by which employees are expected to abide. Employees are always expected to present

high standards of personal integrity, honest, respect and conduct that will not reflect adversely on the organisation and its reputation both at work and also outside of work. Domestic abuse perpetrated by employees will not be condoned under any circumstances.

- 9.2 The service has a Safeguarding Staff and Managing Safeguarding Related allegations Policy which provides a framework for the Brigade to effectively manage concerns or safeguarding related allegations.
- 9.3 The service will treat any allegation, disclosure, or conviction of a domestic abuse related offence or any allegation that an individual assisted an abuser in carrying out and/or perpetrating domestic abuse seriously and as a potential breach of the Code of Conduct, The Values and Behaviours framework and other service policies.
- 9.4 Employees should be aware that domestic violence is a serious matter and could lead to a criminal conviction. As is the case with any member of staff who is found guilty of a crime. If the Service views that there is conflict between the conviction for violence, and the job the employee is employed to do, disciplinary action may be taken. Matters that arise will be investigated under the Service's disciplinary procedure as potential gross misconduct which may, if proven, render the employee liable to dismissal without notice.
- 9.5 If an employee approaches the service about their abusive behaviour, the CFB will provide information about the services and support available to them and will encourage the perpetrator to seek support and help from an appropriate source. The service will treat any allegation, disclosure, or conviction of a domestic abuse related offence on a case-by-case basis with the aim of reducing risk and supporting change.
- 9.6 The service will ensure that allegations will be dealt with fairly and in a way that provides support for the person who is the subject of the allegation or disclosure. All employees involved will receive support and guidance and all investigations carried out in accordance with the services Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- 9.7 The services Disciplinary Policy and Procedure may also be applicable and disciplinary action taken in cases where a member of staff has knowingly assisted an abuser in perpetrating abuse.
- 9.8 Malicious allegations, where evidenced, against a colleague may result in disciplinary action.
- 9.9 The accused member of staff will be treated fairly and honestly, with help given to the employee to understand the concerns expressed and what processes are involved. The staff member will be kept informed of the

progress and outcome of any investigation/s and advised of the implications of any disciplinary process.

## **10. Guidance and Support for Line Managers**

10.1 It is important for line managers to respond with a sensitive nonjudgemental to an employee disclosing a problem with domestic violence. Discussing this issue will have taken a great deal of courage and the response given may be a crucial factor in determining whether an employee seeks help. There are several ways a line manager can support including:

- Try to develop an understanding and supportive climate within the working environment.
- Make yourself approachable. Give employees the opportunity to talk to you confidentially, both formally, through any regular one to one sessions, or informally.
- Display any publicity information prominently.
- Look out for warning signs of domestic violence and ensure information is available, do not however, pressure an employee to disclose information to you.
- Remember you are not an expert in this area, an understanding approach and offer of basic information is all that is required. Be aware that no advice is better than bad advice.
- Do not pressure a victim to leave the relationship, the nature of domestic violence is that the victim will often stay within the relationship or return to it. Respect their decision.
- Direct the individual to professional help as suggested at Appendix 1.

10.2 Line managers should also ensure that they:

- Ensure the immediate safety and security of self and others.
- Take the matter seriously, listening and believing the person.
- Ensure that any discussion with the employee about their circumstances, takes place in privacy.
- Confidentiality is respected.
- Consider involving a third party such as a colleague or trade union representative if the employee agrees to this.
- Found out what the employee wants in terms of support. What would they like to happen now.
- Being aware of what support is available and exploring these options with the member of staff.

10.3 If you suspect that a member of staff is experiencing domestic abuse, line managers should facilitate a conversation to discuss this and identify /

implement appropriate support. Shying away from the subject can perpetuate fear of stigma and increase feelings of anxiety. Often employees will not feel confident in speaking up, so making the first move to begin a conversation can be key to ensuring that employees feel able to disclose information to help establish a relationship with the employee to help identify and implement support when needed. Avoid victim blaming. It is important that you are able to provide a non-judgmental and supportive environment. Respecting boundaries and privacy are essential. To help with this you should ask the employee indirect questions, below are some examples of questions that could be used:

- How are you?
- I have noticed recently that you are not yourself. Is there anything wrong?
- Are there any issues you would like to discuss with me?
- Are there any problems or reasons that may be contributing to your frequent sickness absence / under-performance at work?
- How's things at home?
- Is there any support you think may help you now?

10.4 Even if you disagree with the decisions being made regarding a member of staff's relationship, it is important to understand that a victim of domestic abuse may make a number of attempts to leave their partner before they are finally able to do so. The line manager's role is not to deal with the abuse itself but to make it clear that members of staff will be supported and outline what help is available and direct employees to other professional sources of support.

## **11. Dealing with Domestic Abuse in the Community**

11.1 Employees may witness, receive allegations of abuse or have concerns about domestic violence as they undertake community fire safety activities or operational duties. Under section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, Cleveland Fire Brigade, as a public body, has a statutory duty to contribute to the reduction of crime and violence and the improvement of the quality of life of people of Cleveland.

11.2 If an employee witness's domestic violence or suspects someone is in immediate danger or harm they should telephone the Police on 999. If a member of staff is approached by a member of the community with a disclosure of domestic violence or if an employee suspects that a member of the community is a victim of abuse they should refer their concerns to the designated Safeguarding Officer in line with Brigade safeguarding procedures.

## **12. Effects on the Service**

12.1 Domestic violence within a community can have effects on the service such as:

- **Accidental fires**

- Children who may feel isolated by what is going on around them may have a heightened interest in playing with matches, lighters etc.
- Adult supervision may lessen during periods of abuse.
- Victims of abuse use alcohol and/or substances as a coping mechanism meaning they are not alert during misuse.

- **Deliberate fires**

- There may be a direct threat of arson from perpetrator to the victim.
- Young people may seek attention by setting fires in their own homes or secondary fires such as rubbish.
- Young people stealing cars to set fire to.

## **13. Confidentiality**

13.1 Staff who disclose that they are a victim of domestic abuse can be assured that the information they provide is confidential and will not be shared with other colleagues or services without their permission. There are, however, some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, for example when there are safeguarding concerns regarding children, or where the service is required to protect the safety of their staff due to threat of harm or risk of serious injury. In these circumstances, the member of staff will be informed of the reasons why confidentiality cannot be maintained. As far as possible, information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

13.2 Confidentiality is essential for an employee who is experiencing domestic violence. It is important that employees know that whatever they tell you will remain confidential and will not be revealed to anyone without their permission. In some cases where a violent or abusive partner has discovered their partner has confided in someone, this has resulted in more violence and even death

13.3 Line managers should remind employees that information they may know regarding a domestic abuse case is confidential and any unauthorised breaches of this or improper disclosure of information could result in disciplinary action being taken. The consequences of breaching confidentiality

could also have very serious consequences for the person experiencing domestic abuse.

#### **14. Policy review**

- 14.1 This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed every three years or periodically where changes to legislation may occur.

## **15. Appendices**

### **15.1 Appendix 1: Internal and External Support Links**

The service offers support and guidance for anyone affected by, or accused of, domestic violence. If you require access to confidential support please contact the Human Resources team via telephone on 01429 874020 or by email [hr@clevelandfire.gov.uk](mailto:hr@clevelandfire.gov.uk). The team are able to refer CFB employees to our external Occupational Health provider for further support, or to an external counselling and emotional support provider.

Alternatively, please contact our external Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which can be accessed online at <https://www.pam-assist.co.uk>

Support and guidance can also be obtained from your trade union and at the following external services:

**National Domestic Abuse Helpline** (Freephone, 24 hour) – 0808 2000 247

[Home | Refuge National Domestic Abuse Helpline \(nationaldahelpline.org.uk\)](https://nationaldahelpline.org.uk)

**Victim Support** – (Freephone, 24 hour) – Support line 0808 1689 111

0800 138 2020 Durham

0303 040 1099 Cleveland

[Domestic abuse - Victim Support](#)

#### **Women's Aid**

Women's Aid is the national charity working to end domestic abuse against women and children. Email, live online chat.

[I need help - information and support on domestic abuse \(womensaid.org.uk\)](https://womensaid.org.uk)

**Rape Crisis Helpline** – 0808 802 9999

A network of independent Rape Crisis centres that provide specialist support and services for victims and survivors of sexual violence.

[Rape Crisis England & Wales](#)

**Rights of Women** - 020 7251 6575

Provides advice to women on family, criminal, and immigration law issues.

[Contact us | Rights of Women](#)

**Changing Lives Middlesbrough Domestic Abuse Refuge** - 01642 861788  
[middlesbroughrefuge@changing-lives.org.uk](mailto:middlesbroughrefuge@changing-lives.org.uk)

Middlesbrough Domestic Abuse Refuge is supported accommodation for women and women with children who are fleeing domestic abuse.

[Middlesbrough Domestic Abuse Refuge | Changing Lives \(changing-lives.org.uk\)](http://changing-lives.org.uk)

**Arch Teesside** – 01642 822331

Providing free sexual violence support for women, men, and children across Teesside.

[Getting Help - ARCH Teesside](#)

**Harbour** – 03000 202 525 [info@myharbour.org.uk](mailto:info@myharbour.org.uk)

Operating the following services: Woman's Refuges, Adult Outreach Service, Children's Outreach Service, Perpetrator Programme, Counselling Service.

[Harbour Support Services | Domestic Abuse Helpline \(stocktonadvice.org.uk\)](http://stocktonadvice.org.uk)

**ManKind** – 01823 334244

For male victims of domestic abuse.

[ManKind Initiative - Supporting Male Victims of Domestic Abuse](#)

**Broken Rainbow**

<http://www.broken-rainbow.org.uk/>

Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic abuse.

**BAWSO**

<http://www.bawso.org.uk/>

A specialist agency who can provide culturally sensitive and appropriate information service to black and other minority ethnic groups.

**Respect**

<http://www.respect.uk.net/>

The UK association for professionals working with the perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Further information on support services can also be accessed on the Victim Services Directory Victim and witness services - [Domestic abuse: how to get help - GOV.UK](#)

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## 15.2 Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

### EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – INITIAL SCREENING

EQIAs enable us to consider all the information about a service, policy, practice or activity from an equalities perspective and then put an action plan in place to achieve the best outcome for our employees and service users. EQIAs analyse how the work that we undertake can impact different groups. This will help us to make better decisions and evidence how we have reached these decisions.

Analysis Rating: please tick one box (the analysis rating is identified after the analysis has been completed – See EQIA procedure)	RED		AMBER		GREEN	✓
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### SECTION 1 – INITIAL SCREENING

Directorate:	Strategic Planning & Resources
Department/Section:	Human Resources
Title of EQIA – Name of Service or Policy Conducted on:	Domestic Abuse Policy & Procedure
Date Of Assessment:	16 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
Assessment carried out by:	Louise Bate, HR Manager

Is this Policy/Service/Project: Existing ☐ New/Proposed ☒ Changing ☐ Other ☐

Applicable to: Our staff ☒ Our Communities ☐ Other ☐

## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

What are the aims of the service / policy?	<p>Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB) acknowledges that domestic abuse is a significant problem which has a devastating impact on victims, their families, friends and colleagues, whether that is an individual living with domestic abuse, someone who perpetrates domestic abuse, a survivor or those who have been impacted by domestic abuse in other ways. The service has a responsibility to provide all its employees with a safe working environment where every employee effected has the knowledge that they can raise any issues relating to domestic abuse and any disclosure will be dealt with in a supportive, confidential and sensitive manner. CFB does not condone domestic abuse and violence under any circumstances, and all employees must adhere to the services Code of Conduct and Values and Behaviours Framework.</p> <p>The policy aims to raise awareness of domestic violence, to provide clear procedures for disclosure and support, and to outline the responsibilities of manager and colleagues in responding appropriately.</p>
Who is responsible for the service / policy? Who is responsible for the assessment?	Human Resources are responsible for completing this assessment and ensuring the periodical review of the policy and making amendments in line with employment laws and legislation.
Who implements the policy? Are external contractors involved?	It is the responsibility of managers to ensure consistent application of the policy and for all Brigade employees to have basic knowledge and understanding of identifying if someone is being subject to domestic violence and the steps to take if you suspect or an individual has disclosed an issue.
Are there any related policies or processes that will need to be changed associated to this one?	<p>Dignity at Work, Grievance and Disciplinary Policies and Procedures that should reference this policy and interlink.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> The <b>Domestic Abuse Act 2021</b></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Equality Act 2010</li></ul>

	<input type="checkbox"/> National guidance from Women's Aid, SafeLives and Respect
To what extent does the service / policy have an impact on people? Who is affected by it and how?	This policy may impact on all Brigade employees. Those who may experience domestic violence, those may be accused and those that may be witness to it. The policy may not just impact CFB employees, this may impact members of the community who may disclose that they or someone else are a victim of domestic abuse.
What analysis has been done to identify if the service / policy is meeting the needs of all of these groups of people?	<p>Feedback and consideration of best practices through other regional fire services and other organisations. Guidance from ACAS and the NFCC. The assessment has been informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Domestic Abuse Act 2021</b></li> <li>• Equality Act 2010</li> <li>• National guidance from Women's Aid, SafeLives and Respect</li> <li>• Existing safeguarding, HR, disciplinary and wellbeing policies</li> <li>• National data indicating domestic abuse can affect people regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status</li> </ul>

## ESTABLISHING RELEVANCE

In this section you should review the data and evidence above and consider the actual and potential impact of the policy, service, activity or practice on employees, residents, groups and other service users. Findings should be noted in the table below. You should also consider whether the decision will, or is likely to, influence CFB's ability to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act and other relevant legislation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups of people
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Using the information available, identity the impact of this service / policy in relation to people across the Protected Characteristics:

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	Negative Impact	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Explain your answer
<b>Age</b>		X		This policy is applied equally to all Brigade employees regardless of age. Policy reflects that abuse can occur beyond spousal relationships and acknowledges impacts involving children and extended family.
<b>Disability</b>		X		This policy is applied equally to all Brigade employees regardless of disability. Disabled employees may be more vulnerable to coercive control or reliant on abusers for care. Policy recognises economic and controlling abuse. Adjustments and Occupational Health referrals can be made. Support offered without requiring proof.
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>		X		This policy is applied equally to all Brigade employees regardless of gender reassignment. Trans employees may face additional barriers to disclosure or fear of discrimination. Policy explicitly states abuse occurs regardless of gender identity; links include LGBT-specific support (e.g. Broken Rainbow). Confidential, non-judgemental handling is emphasised.
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>		X		This policy is applied equally to all Brigade employees regardless of Pregnancy and Maternity. There is an increased risk of domestic abuse during pregnancy and after birth. Managers encouraged to respond early, offer flexibility, and enable access to support services and medical appointments.

<b>Race</b>		X		This policy is applied equally to all Brigade employees regardless of race. Cultural barriers, language barriers, or fear of statutory services may reduce reporting. Policy recognises honour-based abuse, forced marriage and FGM. Specialist culturally sensitive support (e.g. BAWSO) is included. Line managers encouraged to seek appropriate specialist advice.
<b>Religion and Belief</b>		X		This policy is applied equally to all Brigade employees regardless of religion and belief. Religious or community pressures may discourage disclosure or leaving abusive relationships. Sensitive, non-judgemental approach required. Referrals can be tailored to appropriate faith-aware or specialist agencies if desired.
<b>Biological Sex</b>		X		This policy is applied equally to all Brigade employees regardless of biological sex. Women are statistically more likely to experience domestic abuse, whereas men who experience it may feel more stigma in disclosing abuse. The policy is explicitly gender-inclusive and recognises all victims. External support links include specialist services for women and men (e.g. Women's Aid, ManKind).
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		X		This policy is applied equally to all Brigade employees regardless of sexual orientation. Policy explicitly states abuse occurs regardless of sexual orientation. Specialist LGBT support is referenced.
<b>Marriage and civil Partnerships</b>		X		This policy is applied equally to all Brigade employees regardless of marriage and civil partnerships. Policy is clear domestic abuse is unacceptable and may constitute misconduct regardless of marital status.

<b>Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? Yes or No If not why?</b>	<i>If you have identified a negative potential impact for group, then you must complete a full Equality Impact Assessment. If you have identified a neutral or positive impact on any groups then no further action is required.</i>  N/A
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