

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Staffing Committee – 25 September 2019

Report Title

GMB Work to Stop Domestic Abuse Charter

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Shokat Lal, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

Ian Henderson, Senior Employee Relations Officer
01709 822467 or ian.henderson@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Not applicable

Report Summary

This report provides detail of GMB's Work to Stop Domestic Abuse Charter. The Charter sets out measures that GMB would like employers to put in place to support employees that are experiencing Domestic Abuse; enabling them to access support services and information confidentially.

Recommendations

1. That Staffing Committee recommend to Council that the authority be a signatory to GMB's Work to Stop Domestic Abuse Charter
2. Staffing Committee are asked to note how the Council currently meets the aims of the Charter, how it supports the Council Plan priorities, safeguarding principles and the work of the Rotherham Safer Partnership.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

GMB Work to Stop Domestic Abuse Charter

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Not applicable

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

GMB Work to Stop Domestic Abuse Charter

1. Background

- 1.1. According to the [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) (CSEW) for the year ending March 2018, approximately 2 million adults aged between 16 and 59 experienced domestic abuse in the last year (1.3 million women, 695,000 men).
- 1.2. Nationally the police recorded 599,549 domestic abuse-related crimes in the year ending March 2018. This was an increase of 23% from the previous year, according to the survey, this apparently alarming rise was, in part, the result of police forces improving their identification and recording of domestic abuse incidents as crimes. Also, there has been an increased willingness by victims to come forward. The figures show that for every 100 reported incidents of domestic abuse, there are 38 arrests, with convictions running at 76% of prosecutions – their highest level since 2010.
- 1.3. Domestic Abuse can be experienced by anyone regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background - this is true for both the abuser and the abused.
- 1.4. Different kinds of abuse 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. Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to: - Psychological, Physical, Sexual, Verbal, Financial and Emotional abuse.
- 1.5. One in 4 women and 1 in 6 men in the UK have endured abuse in their lifetime. Two women each week and one man each month are killed in England and Wales by a current or former partner.
- 1.6. In Rotherham, there were 3,201 domestic abuse crimes recorded in 2018, which is an increase of 67% on the previous year. This increase impacts on services across organisations and can only be tackled by a multi-agency response. Working alongside partners, the Council plays a key role in delivering the Safer Rotherham Partnership's response to domestic abuse in the borough.
- 1.7. The GMB Union wants to work with employers to put in place access to support services and for them to take all reasonable measures to protect employees suffering abuse being disadvantaged in the workplace.
- 1.8. To qualify for the GMB Work to Stop Domestic Abuse Charter mark, employers must agree to five standards, which are:

1. Support employees who are experiencing Domestic Abuse to access support services and information confidentially.

The Council's Employee Domestic Violence Policy provides advice, guidance and support available for employees. This includes supportive steps managers can take; ways to ensure employees are safe; the 24 hour employee assistance programme (EAP); national help lines and local services available including the Adult Services Domestic Abuse Service and Children's Social Care Services (MASH).

2. Ensure that those experiencing Domestic Abuse will not be disadvantaged within the terms and conditions of their employment and will take all reasonable measures to facilitate any needs in the workplace.

The Employee Domestic Violence Policy ensures a consistent, effective, sympathetic, confidential and supportive approach is taken when dealing with domestic abuse issues and includes guidance for managers on a range of potential measures that can put in place to help ensure employees are not disadvantaged and kept safe.

Managers must undertake a risk assessment where full consideration of the range of possible risks should be given and solutions sought which may include:

- Improving security measures
- Offering special leave
- Reminding employees not to divulge information about employees
- Offering temporary or permanent changes in workplace, worktimes and patterns, helping to make the employee less at risk at work and on their journeys to and from work
- Offering changes in specific duties
- Agreeing what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if the abuser rings or calls at the workplace
- Recording any incidents of violence in the workplace, including persistent phone calls, e-mails or visits, to an employee by the abuser

3. Commit to working/participating with other organisations to facilitate best support for those experiencing Domestic Abuse.

The Council condemns domestic abuse and recognises that it is a very serious offence. It is committed to working towards providing the best and most appropriate support and services for people

experiencing or affected by domestic violence. The Council leads partnership arrangements through the Safer Rotherham Partnership, with a domestic abuse strategy in place since 2017.

Managers identifying that an employee is experiencing difficulties should use the Employee Domestic Violence Policy to identify appropriate support to enable them to deal with their situation more effectively. Further advice, guidance and support are available from specialist Officers, across Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Public Health and local and national partner organisations.

4. Provide all employees with access to toolkits, information and Council policies on domestic abuse, in a format that is easily and discretely accessible within the workplace.

Support available to employees is readily available on the HR A to Z webpage of the Council's intranet including a link to the Employee Domestic Abuse Policy. This information includes links to the employee assistance programme, services provided by the Council in the Domestic Abuse Service (Adults) and Children's Social Care (MASH), plus local and national services where employees can access support and further information.

5. Ensure that we have employees trained across our organisation, to provide adequate access to support within the workplace for all employees. Staff trained should be representative of our workplace and will include line managers and Trade Union representatives.

Employees are trained to spot the signs of abuse, support available and how to escalate concerns via a safeguarding learning module which is mandatory to complete.

Managers, who have a duty to maintain a secure environment for employees, have access to advice and guidance on supporting employees from officers in Human Resources, Health & Safety, Adult's and Children's Services.

- 1.9. It should be noted that the Council's current practices are in line with the key principles of the Charter, which are supported by Health and Safety legislation designed to ensure that workers have the right to work in a safe environment where risks to health and wellbeing are considered and dealt with effectively.
- 1.10. The Council also provides advice and guidance through specialist employees in the Independent Domestic Advisory Service situated in Adult Services and

employees have access to support from the employee assistance programme provided as part of the Occupational Health contract.

- 1.11. Three quarters of the Council's workforce lives in Rotherham and the Council works with partner organisations through the Rotherham Safer Partnership to protect children, young people and families from all forms of abuse, violence and neglect.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 There are no issues for the Council in adopting the Charter

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 Not to adopt the Charter.
- 3.2 The Council already operates to the standards of the Charter and adoption would support the Council's Safeguarding principles, links to the work of the Safer Rotherham Partnership and aligns to priority areas in the Council Plan.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the relevant Cabinet member who supports the adoption of the Charter.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 There is no set timescale for implementation. The Council already operates in the spirit of the Charter so there would be no change to existing policy or implications for agreeing to adopt..

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)

- 6.1 There are no financial implications.
- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications associated with this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications from this report. The Charter would help facilitate RMBCs duty to provide a safe working environment for its employees

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 The Charter supports the standards of Health and Safety operated by the Council to protect employees and supports the Council's Safeguarding principles.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The Charter supports the work undertaken to protect vulnerable children and adults.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 In making any decision the Council is required to have due regard to its equalities duties and in particular with respect to the Equality Act 2010, section 149, part 11 of the public sector duty:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and eliminate any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act,
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who are a protected characteristics and persons who do not share it and to
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 10.2 The recommendation before the Council will not have any adverse impact on anyone with one or more protected characteristics, namely age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

11. Implications for Partners

- 11.1 Adopting the Charter would support the work of the Safer Rotherham Partnership in tackling Domestic Abuse.

12. Risks and Mitigation

- 12.1 There is no risk associated in adopting the Charter.

13. Accountable Officer(s)

Shokat Lal Assistant Chief Executive
Lee Mann Assistant Director Human Resources

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	05/09/19
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Named officer	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Stuart Fletcher	29/07/19
Assistant Director of Human Resources (if appropriate)	Lee Mann	29/07/19
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)		Click here to enter a date.

Report Author: Ian Henderson Senior Employee Relations Officer
lan Henderson, Senior Employee Relations Officer

01709 822467 or ian.henderson@rotherham.gov.uk

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).