



Circular 13/2023

29<sup>th</sup> September 2023

To: National Director of Human Resources, HSE  
CEOs and HR Managers of the NCSAs

### **Introduction of Domestic Violence Paid Leave**

Dear Sir/Madam

I am instructed by the Minister for Health to advise you regarding the introduction of Domestic Violence Paid Leave for all employees in the public health sector.

Public health sector employees are now entitled to leave with pay (including fixed allowances and premia where applicable), referred to as 'domestic violence leave'.

This leave can be availed of by an employee or an employee who is supporting a 'relevant person' who has experienced in the past, or is currently experiencing domestic violence. As defined in the Work life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 (<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2023/act/8/enacted/en/print>), a relevant person includes:

- the spouse or civil partner of the employee;
- the cohabitant of the employee;
- a person with whom the employee is in an intimate relationship;
- a child of the employee who has not attained full age; or
- a person who, in relation to the employee, is a dependent person.

As outlined in the legislation, the purpose of the leave is to enable the employee who is a victim of domestic violence or an employee who is assisting a relevant person to do any of the following:

- seek medical attention;
- obtain services from a victim services organisation;
- obtain psychological or other professional counselling;
- relocate residence temporarily or permanently;
- obtain an order from a court under the Domestic Violence Act 2018;
- seek advice or assistance from a legal practitioner; or
- seek assistance from the Garda Síochána.

Domestic violence leave can be availed of for the reasons above for up to a maximum of 5 days in any period of 12 consecutive months and can be taken as individual days or a block/blocks of days. An absence for part of a day is counted as one day for the purposes of domestic violence leave.

During an absence on domestic violence leave, an employee is deemed for all purposes to be in employment.

When an employee takes domestic violence leave, he or she shall, as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter, by notice in the prescribed form given to his or her employer, confirm that he or she has taken such leave and the notice shall specify the dates on which it was taken.

The Department of Public Expenditure, NDP and Reform have prepared a very comprehensive Domestic Violence and Abuse policy for the Civil Service, where additional information such as supports available to civil servants and other helpful resources are provided which may be of further assistance. A copy of this document is attached for your information.

Noting the operational variances across the public health sector employers, each employer is asked to develop their own Domestic Violence and Abuse policy in this regard, noting the required inclusion of the 5 days Domestic Violence Paid Leave introduced by this circular.

### **General Queries**

Requests for clarification from individual employees should be directed to the employee's own HR Manager where they are employed. Requests for clarification from HR Managers in the NCSAs and from HSE National Employee Relations should be raised directly with National HR Unit@health.gov.ie

### **Circulation**

Please bring this circular to the attention of HR Managers, payroll and staff of your organisation. The HSE is also requested to bring this circular to the attention of Section 38 employers.

Yours sincerely



Michael O'Leary, Principal Officer  
PPSU & IRU, Resources Division

Enc.



An Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí  
Sheachadadh PFN agus Athchóirithe  
Department of Public Expenditure  
NDP Delivery and Reform

# Domestic violence and abuse

Civil Service policy and supports

Circular 16/2023



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<b>Policy title:</b>	Civil Service Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy
<b>Circular:</b>	16/2023
<b>Purpose:</b>	To set out the leave and support arrangements for civil servants whose working life is negatively impacted by domestic violence and abuse
<b>Policy application:</b>	To all civil servants
<b>Relevant law:</b>	Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023
<b>Effective from:</b>	25 September 2023

### 1. Policy statement

The Civil Service is committed to developing strong mechanisms to support employee health, wellbeing and resilience in a safe and secure working environment and to creating a workplace culture that does not tolerate domestic violence and abuse or the attitudes which underpin it.

The Civil Service recognises the increasing prevalence and impact of domestic violence and abuse in wider society and the negative impacts it can have on the morale, performance and working lives of staff who are directly affected, as well as on their colleagues in the workplace. This policy affirms the Civil Service's commitment to supporting staff and colleagues impacted by domestic violence and abuse by creating awareness and providing workplace supports, including statutory domestic violence leave. This will be achieved by promoting a safe and inclusive work environment where those impacted by domestic violence and abuse feel comfortable speaking about the issue and can be directed towards appropriate supports.

**Content warning:** *This document discusses and describes domestic violence and abuse, which may be distressing for some. Contact details for supports and resources can be found in [Appendix 1](#).*

### 2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, domestic violence and abuse can be defined as a pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening and/or violent behaviour occurring in a domestic context, including behaviour that has the object or effect of enabling one person to exert power and control over another. In this policy, people who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence and abuse are referred to as 'victims' or 'survivors'. It is however recognised that people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse may not see themselves as 'victims' or 'survivors' but as strong and resilient individuals who are capable of overcoming what they have experienced. The 'victim' or 'survivor' terminology is not intended to diminish this in any way, but is used throughout this policy as it is commonly used and recognised language.

This policy also makes reference throughout to victims or survivors making a 'disclosure' in a work setting relating to domestic violence and abuse. For the purpose of this policy, a 'disclosure' is where a staff member confides in a planned or unplanned way to a colleague, manager, HR representative, Employee Assistance officer or other person in the workplace about what they are or have experienced.

Domestic violence and abuse may occur between individuals who are or have been intimate partners (whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim), in LGBTI+ relationships or between people who are family members or household members. Domestic violence and abuse victims or survivors can come from all walks of life and may experience other areas of marginalisation and vulnerability, such as age, disability, or sexual orientation, which are often targeted by the perpetrators of abuse.

Statistically, women are more likely to experience domestic violence and abuse. In Ireland, more than one in four women (26%) have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15, many of them in domestic settings<sup>1</sup>. However, domestic violence and abuse can adversely affect men, non-binary persons and people of diverse gender identities and expressions. This policy is therefore inclusive and applicable in all of these cases.

**Types of abuse include\*:**

***Coercive control*** A persistent pattern of controlling, coercive and/or threatening behaviour including all or some forms of domestic abuse (emotional, physical, economic, sexual, including threats) by a current or former partner. It traps someone in a relationship and makes it difficult or dangerous to leave.

***Physical abuse*** Perhaps the most recognisable form of abuse, it does not always leave visible marks or scars but has the potential to worsen over time. Physical harm may follow and in some cases, it can endanger life.

Examples include:

- threatening to cause physical harm or hurt;
- slapping, shoving, scratching, punching, biting, strangling, choking, kicking, burning, spitting or pulling hair;
- throwing things;
- grabbing or restraining;
- denying an individual the right to leave somewhere.

***Sexual coercion/abuse*** When a person is pressurised or coerced to do something sexually that they do not want to do. Where there is a dynamic of control and abuse in an intimate relationship, the likelihood of sexual coercion and/or abuse is high. It is harder for those being coerced and/or abused by their partner to negotiate a free and equal sexual relationship with that partner.

Examples include:

- coercing someone into sexual activity under duress;
- unwanted kissing or touching;
- unwanted rough or violent sexual activity;
- refusing to use contraceptives or restricting the use of contraception;
- rape or assault;
- sexual degradation including the enforced use of pornography;
- Image-based sexual abuse (eg. 'revenge porn', 'sexting').

***Economic abuse*** Where a partner and/or perpetrator restricts, exploits and/or interferes with access to money and other resources, such as food, clothing, transportation and/or a place to live.

Examples include:

- forbidding or preventing someone from being in education or employment or forcing the person to leave education or employment;
- limiting a person's working hours;

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<sup>1</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014). Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

- taking a person's pay;
- oppressively monitoring what someone buys;
- controlling the use of property, eg. a mobile phone or car;
- causing damage to someone's property;
- refusing to contribute to household costs;
- building up debt in a person's name

***Emotional /  
psychological  
abuse***

This includes non-physical behaviours like threats, insults, constant checking-in, excessive messaging, humiliation, intimidation, isolation, stalking, and gas lighting (ie. causing someone to question their own perceptions or memories).

Examples include:

- name-calling or putting someone down;
- shouting;
- demanding to know where someone is or who they are with;
- contacting someone with abusive texts, emails and calls while they are at work;
- threatening to hurt themselves or the person they are abusing;
- threatening to harm children or to deny or restrict access to children;
- constantly controlling or monitoring someone through the use of technology, eg. checking a person's phone log and messages, having control of their email account, installing hidden cameras in their house;
- restricting a person's ability to be alone, eg. following them from room to room or accompanying them to all outside activities.

***Stalking  
cyberstalking***

**&** Stalking can occur in or outside the workplace and can cause fear and distress to victims. Workplace stalking is a repeated behaviour and may include following someone to or from their place of work, waiting outside a workplace entrance, displaying a pattern of repeated, obsessive, unwanted behaviour. Stalking can happen with or without fear of violence. Taken in isolation, some of the behaviours may appear like small acts, but together they make up a consistent pattern of behaviour that is frightening and upsetting to victims.

Stalking can also be in the form of cyberstalking, involving repeated harassment or abuse of a victim through the use of digital technology.

Examples include:

- regularly giving unwanted gifts;
- making unwanted communication;
- damaging property;
- repeatedly following or watching a person, their home or their family;
- threatening and/or repeated, unwanted phone calls, texts or IMs;
- using technology to blackmail or threaten;
- posting offensive or suggestive comments online;
- releasing a person's confidential information online;
- tracking someone's online movements or location with tracking devices;
- posting or distributing real or fake photos of a victim;
- disseminating intimate images without consent or threatening to do so.

\*this list is not exhaustive.

### 3. *Employment protections*

Staff members who avail of statutory domestic violence leave (see [paragraph 5](#)) or support services will not face discrimination and will be supported by their employer.

Managers and HR Departments should be cognisant of the fact that domestic violence and abuse may have a detrimental impact on confidence and work performance. At a practical level, this means that managers, with the guidance of HR Departments where required, will ensure the effects of abuse are taken into consideration when reviewing a staff member's performance goals and/or workload.

### 4. *Confidentiality*

The Civil Service recognises and respects the right to privacy for all staff and the need for confidentiality. It also acknowledges its duty of care in respect of colleague safety in the workplace and at what point to disclose potential safety risks.

It is important at the outset for victims and survivors to know that conversations around domestic violence and abuse will always be held in a private and confidential space. Managers, HR Departments and colleagues should also keep this at the forefront of their minds when engaging in any conversations around domestic violence and abuse.

All information regarding domestic violence and abuse will be kept confidential and shared only with staff members who have a legitimate need to know about it and with the knowledge of the staff member concerned. For example, information may be shared with colleagues so that they can document necessary [safety measures](#) or with administrative staff dealing with statutory leave. Only information necessary to carrying out these roles and tasks will be shared.

The Civil Service may retain confidentially, records which relate to:

- details of agreed safety measures, (if any);
- administrative data such as approval of statutory leave;
- details of abuse occurring in or near the workplace or using workplace equipment.

At the staff member's request, the Civil Service will keep records which demonstrate that a perpetrator is abusing or harassing the staff member in the workplace where the staff member feels that this will support them in any future action they may wish to take.

These records will be stored securely, kept strictly confidential, and retained only for as long as necessary in line with organisational data retention policies. No details of disclosed abuse experienced outside the workplace, unless directly impacting work, should be included. Staff also have the right to have their data erased on certain grounds under Articles 17 and 19 of GDPR. Further information is available [here](#).

Colleagues to whom a disclosure is made are required to uphold confidentiality. Improper disclosure of information is a serious matter and may be subject to disciplinary action.

The Civil Service understands that for victims and survivors, fears around confidentiality being breached may prevent them from disclosing in the workplace. In circumstances where confidentiality cannot be maintained (eg. statutory obligations regarding [safeguarding concerns about children, vulnerable adults](#) or where there is a requirement to act directly to protect the safety of staff members), the staff member will be informed of the reasons why and that the information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only. Care will be taken to ensure that the sharing of information does not put the staff member at greater risk. Where necessary, advice will be sought from specialist support organisations with responsibility for child protection and welfare, protection of vulnerable



adults and the Gardaí where appropriate. Further details on support organisations are available in [Appendix 1](#).

#### 5. *Domestic violence leave*

Civil servants will be entitled to leave with pay, referred to as '*domestic violence leave*'. This leave can be availed of by a staff member or a staff member who is supporting a 'relevant person' who has experienced in the past, or is currently experiencing domestic violence. As defined in the *Work life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023*, a relevant person includes:

- the spouse or civil partner of the employee;
- the cohabitant of the employee;
- a person with whom the employee is in an intimate relationship;
- a child of the employee who has not attained full age; or
- a person who, in relation to the employee, is a dependent person.
- 

As outlined in the legislation, the purpose of the leave is to enable the staff member who is a victim of domestic violence or a staff member who is assisting a relevant person to do any of the following:

- seek medical attention;
- obtain services from a victim services organisation;
- obtain psychological or other professional counselling;
- relocate residence temporarily or permanently;
- obtain an order from a court under the *Domestic Violence Act 2018*;
- seek advice or assistance from a legal practitioner; or
- seek assistance from the Garda Síochána.

Domestic violence leave can be availed of for the reasons above for up to **a maximum of 5 days in any period of 12 consecutive months** and can be taken as individual days or a block/blocks of days. An absence for part of a day is counted as one day for the purposes of domestic violence leave.

During an absence on domestic violence leave, a staff member is deemed for all purposes to be in employment.

Staff members who avail of domestic violence leave should, where possible, notify management of their intention to take the leave as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter.

It is understood that supporting documents showing evidence of attendance at an appointment may be difficult to provide in certain circumstances. Therefore, supporting documentation will not be requested by default. However, managers and/or HR Departments reserve the right to request supporting documentation in certain circumstances where it is reasonable to do so.

#### 6. *How the Civil Service will provide support*

##### 6.1 *Victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse*

This policy is first and foremost for victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse.

You may not recognise or see yourself as a victim or survivor or yet realise that your circumstances could be considered as one of domestic violence or abuse. This policy may be the first step in recognising this and will encourage you to seek guidance and support.

You are encouraged to read and be assured by the processes outlined in this policy, particularly regarding confidentiality, employment protections and workplace supports.

The services of the Civil Service Employee Assistance Programme (CSEAS) and specifically how they can provide guidance, support and direction to specialist services in a domestic violence or abuse situation are outlined in [paragraph 6.2](#). The CSEAS may be a good first step to seeking guidance in order to protect your own safety and in some instances, that of colleagues in the workplace. You will never be forced to share any information that you do not want to, but if and when you do, there is a safe and supportive space in which to do so.

### **“Recognise, Respond, Refer”**

In the Civil Service, the CSEAS, managers, colleagues, named contact persons and HR play a vital role in signposting the way to appropriate supports.

This role is facilitated through the framework of **‘Recognise, Respond and Refer’**. The aim of this approach is to guide managers, HR Departments and/or colleagues on how to recognise and respond to domestic violence and abuse in a workplace context and to refer colleagues to appropriate supports, such as specialist domestic violence and abuse services. This will assist a victim or survivor in accessing information, counselling, legal support or accommodation options. Further details of this approach are outlined in paragraphs 6.4 to 6.7.

#### *6.2 The Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS)*

The CSEAS is a nationwide Employee Assistance service available to all civil servants. The CSEAS provides a non-judgmental, confidential<sup>2</sup> and free service where every individual will be met with empathy and understanding. Employee Assistance Officers have the training and expertise to work collaboratively with staff members, offering emotional, solution-focused and informational support to those who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence and abuse. Employee Assistance officers also provide advice and guidance to managers, HR Departments or colleagues in a position of trust on how to initiate a conversation about domestic violence and abuse and take steps towards providing support to a victim or survivor.

The CSEAS plays a multi-functional role in minimising the impact of domestic violence and abuse in a workplace context by providing:

- immediate and ongoing emotional support to victim and survivors;
- assistance with safety planning, practical information and signposting to local community resources;
- support around making a disclosure to a trusted person in their workplace;
- advice on leave options and other workplace supports;
- consultative support to managers and HR on approaching a potential issue, key considerations, supports and resources;
- psycho-educational and online support via the CSEAS website; and
- emotional and practical support to alleged perpetrators who wish to change their behaviour by signposting them to resources, counselling or therapy.
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Support is available through self-referral by calling 0818 008120 or emailing [cseas@per.gov.ie](mailto:cseas@per.gov.ie) or contacting an [Employee Assistance Officer](#) directly.

If required, appointments can be facilitated outside of these hours by prior arrangement.

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<sup>2</sup> Exceptions to confidentiality are available on the [CSEAS website](#). These include: life-threatening situations to the individual, other parties or the public; where there is a statutory responsibility to report; where required by a court or legal process to do so; where non-disclosure of information could compromise the CSEAS; where the CSEAS becomes aware of a breach in criminal law, disclosure may be necessary.

### 6.3 Role of the Manager

Managers interact with their teams on a regular basis and are often in a prime position to notice changes in performance, attendance and behaviour. These changes may not always be indicators of domestic violence and abuse. However, becoming familiar with this policy and the 'Recognise, Respond, Refer' approach allows managers to become more attuned to the issue and gauge when to start a conversation with a view to providing supports. The role of a manager includes:

- Becoming familiar with this policy document and any supporting guidelines, keeping the policy to hand so it is accessible when required.
- Having an open mind when there are changes in performance and attendance, for example, having particular regard to the signs outlined in paragraph 6.4.
- Starting a conversation in a sensitive and non-judgemental manner at an appropriate place and time. Further details on having a conversation are outlined in the 'Strengthening Understanding and Awareness' information resource.
- Ensure that lines of communication are kept open with staff in a remote or hybrid working environment.
- Be familiar with the supports that are available, such as domestic violence leave, temporary change of work patterns or adjustments of workload and additional workplace security measures.
- Consider and approve applications for domestic violence leave as soon as practicable, having regard to confidentiality.
- Seek advice from the CSEAS if additional information on specialist services or guidance on having a sensitive conversation is required.
- Keep information on domestic violence disclosures, including leave applications, confidential; have a designated and locked place in which to store information.
- Where agreed with the staff member, take note of the safety measures that have been put in place. Make sure this note is accessible in the event of the staff member or their colleague(s) being put at risk in the workplace. Further information on safety measures is available in [paragraph 7](#).

### 6.4 Recognise the signs

Outside of a staff member making a decision to confide in somebody in the workplace, the manager or colleagues who work with a staff member on a daily basis may be in a position to recognise the signs that someone is experiencing domestic violence and abuse, even where no disclosure has been made. Recognising the signs opens up opportunities to start a conversation and signpost someone to resources and supports. Signs to be aware of include, but are not limited to:

#### ***Changes in attendance patterns***

- Unexplained absences, being late for on-line or in-person meetings; an increase in sick leave; spending an unusual amount of time at work for no reason; requesting a change in work hours without explanation.

#### ***Changes in productivity and/or work performance***

- Decrease in quality of work, targets and deadlines missed; mistakes made where this was previously not the case. Work is impacted as someone is distracted by texts, emails, or visits to the workplace by a partner or are distressed when communications are received.

#### ***Changes in behaviour, disposition or mood***

- Becomes anxious, distracted, defensive and/or depressed. Isolates themselves or avoids colleagues at tea break or lunch; stops discussing home-life or relationships.

#### ***Changes in physical appearance***

- Bruises or injuries with implausible explanations; changes in clothing choices to hide injuries; appears

***Changes in a blended working environment***

unusually tired; apparent increase in reliance on substances (eg. alcohol).

- Is consistently on mute or off video; is interrupted frequently; does not participate fully in calls or meetings; the quality of work produced has decreased.

***6.5 Responding where there are concerns***

Where there are concerns, but a manager (or workplace confidant) is unsure about whether a staff member is impacted by domestic violence and abuse, they can:

- Consider asking sensitive questions in a private setting;
- If appropriate, provide the staff member with details of internal and external supports should they wish to discuss the issue in the future.
- 

Working from home can increase the intensity of domestic violence and abuse that a victim or survivor is subjected to, as perpetrators may have more opportunities to abuse. Staff members subjected to domestic violence and abuse may not have any respite from the abuse, be unable to access a safe space, and often experience barriers to seeking help and communicating about the abuse with managers and colleagues. Managers in particular should stay attuned to the wellbeing of staff members when they work remotely, keeping in regular contact with the staff members reporting to them and facilitating in-office work locations where required.

***6.6 Responding to a domestic violence and abuse disclosure***

If a staff member confides in a manager, the manager will respond in a sensitive, compassionate and non-judgemental manner and provide the staff member with assurances of [confidentiality](#). This response applies equally if a staff member confides in someone who is not a manager.

In responding, the staff member should be directed towards information on supports (both internally, such as the CSEAS and [external support networks](#)).

***6.7 Refer to workplace supports and accommodations***

The manager can advise the staff member of potential workplace support options, such as statutory domestic violence leave, temporary change of work patterns or adjustments to workload and additional workplace security measures. The staff member can consider these options in light of their own circumstances. Further information on workplace supports is available in the section '[Safety at Work following a disclosure](#)' and a list of contacts for specialist services is available in [Appendix 1](#).

***6.8 The role of 'trusted colleagues'***

A 'trusted colleague' is not a formal role, but for the purpose of this policy, it is a term that acknowledges that staff members spend a considerable amount of time in the workplace and can develop friendships and positive relationships with their colleagues. As a consequence, a victim of domestic violence or abuse may feel comfortable confiding in someone they trust in the workplace. A trusted colleague may also be in a position to recognise some of the signs of domestic violence and abuse set out in [paragraph 6.4](#).

The manager therefore should be mindful that there may be circumstances where a staff member is not comfortable making a disclosure to them and may share a confidence about domestic violence or abuse with a colleague who they trust. Where a staff member confides in another colleague, that colleague should be supportive, non-judgmental and treat information in confidence. Trusted colleagues may wish to bring this policy to the attention of the staff member. All staff need to be mindful that they should be fully respectful of the need for [confidentiality](#) and should not pass on

information to others – this includes managers, HR, named contact persons, or other colleagues - without the consent of the person themselves (except in very limited cases as outlined in [paragraph 4](#) – ‘confidentiality’).

Where someone confides in you as a trusted colleague, you should signpost your colleague towards appropriate internal and external supports as outlined.

#### *6.9 The role of Human Resources*

The Human Resource Department (HR) plays an important role in ensuring that there is an open and inclusive workplace culture that supports staff who are impacted by domestic violence in the workplace.

HR can not only direct staff members towards appropriate supports where required; they also play a key role in creating organisational awareness and facilitating training. HR also has a role in reminding managers and colleagues to maintain clear boundaries and not assume the role of counsellor or problem solver. HR should clearly signal the correct pathways to access information so that staff members can avail of appropriate supports and guidance when required.

HR will identify a clear point of contact within the HR function (who may be a named contact person) who will provide direction to staff members, colleagues and managers on workplace supports and potential adjustments. This point of contact may also be a person to whom a victim or survivor may wish to make a disclosure.

#### *6.10 The role of a named Contact Person*

In addition to the CSEAS, managers, HR and trusted colleagues, HR Departments may wish to put in place within their organisation, additional access routes for victims towards information and supports. This can be facilitated by naming and publicising ‘contact persons’ within their organisation. The need for an additional named contact person may vary depending on the size and geographical spread of a department or office. Where HR Departments determine that additional contact persons add value to the process, they should ensure that named contact persons are familiar with this policy, the documented pathways to support available to victims and undertake available training. HR should also ensure that any named contact person(s) is aware of the requirement to maintain clear boundaries, that they do not assume the role of counsellor or problem solver, and understand the importance of confidentiality. A named contact person(s) may or may not be someone from within the HR Department and the location and number of contact person(s) can be tailored to the structure and size of an individual department or office.

### *7 Safety at work following a disclosure*

In responding to a disclosure and in considering the risks and impacts of domestic violence and abuse, it is important to understand and plan for the safety needs of a victim or survivor in or around the workplace. It should be agreed with the staff member that a note of planned safety measures should be documented and stored confidentially in the event that it needs to be referred to at any stage. Workplace safety measures can include, but are not limited to:

- Considering temporary changes to work duties, location, hours, and/or working patterns within the department or office;
- Change of contact details (work phone, email);
- Agreeing a future response in the event that a perpetrator attends the staff member’s workplace and/or communicates (calls, emails or texts) with the workplace;

- Improving or reviewing security measures on premises or other work locations and discussing how the employee can take appropriate steps to protect their own safety when traveling to or from work;
- Maintaining confidentiality around the staff member's shifts and work location;
- Consideration of existing barring, safety or protection orders protecting the staff member;
- Ensuring, insofar as possible that any work-provided communication devices are not externally monitored;
- Understanding that any threats that warrant it, such as threats to physically harm or kill, should be reported to An Garda Síochána and relevant management in consultation with the staff member;
- With a the staff member's consent, the manager and/or a HR representative may link in with a specialist domestic violence and abuse service to develop a safety plan that will be treated as confidential and shared on a need-to-know basis only. Only aspects of the safety plan related to work will be shared.

## 8 *Training and awareness*

Departments or offices will facilitate staff attending available training to help them develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to respond sensitively to staff who may have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

Training will aim to familiarise staff with the competencies to employ the already mentioned ***Recognise, Respond and Refer*** framework of support.

There is no expectation, nor is it appropriate, that a staff member, colleague, manager, named contact person or HR representative adopt the role of counsellor or adviser on matters that are more appropriate to professionals or expert support networks.

However, all staff members have a role to play in fostering a workplace that does not tolerate domestic violence and abuse or the attitudes which underpin it. We must also be mindful that, as colleagues and managers, we may be the ones to first suspect or become aware that a staff member has or is experiencing domestic violence and can be prepared by familiarising ourselves with this policy and undertaking available training and awareness sessions.

Training may comprise, but is not limited to the following.

### ***Creating awareness***

- Online seminars, lunch-and-learn presentations, inclusion in mental health and wellbeing events, staff newsletters, inclusion in local inductions.

### ***E-learning modules***

- An eLearning module for staff and managers. This will prepare participants to recognise the nature, indications and damaging consequences of abuse, describe how to respond sensitively to a concern or disclosure, and explain how to signpost and refer someone to supports.

### ***In-person training***

- Training courses for managers, HRs and named contact persons who may require additional guidance on proactively recognising the impacts of domestic violence and abuse and who may be required to manage disclosures.

Further general information and guidance is available in '*Strengthening Understanding & Awareness An information resource for the Civil Service to accompany the Civil Service Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy*'.

#### *9 Support for past domestic violence and abuse experiences*

The Civil Service recognises that staff members may have experienced domestic violence and abuse in the past, and even though it is not ongoing, it may still impact a person emotionally and psychologically. In these circumstances, support will be offered through the CSEAS and/or referral to appropriate specialist organisations. It is acknowledged that survivors do move on and heal from domestic violence and abuse and quite possibly do not need any further support, but if needed, the support of the CSEAS and other specialist services are available.

It is important to note that in the context of this policy, there is never any obligation on a staff member to confide in anyone in the workplace that they are currently or have in the past been subjected to domestic violence. For staff members who do not wish to do so, they are encouraged to utilise the services of the CSEAS or refer to the contact details for expert support services in [Appendix 1](#).

#### *10 Domestic violence and abuse allegations against another staff member*

The Civil Service acknowledges that staff members can also be alleged perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse. The Civil Service will hold alleged perpetrators accountable for incidents of domestic violence and abuse committed in the workplace, during work hours or through work equipment. In such cases, disciplinary procedures may be invoked with potential sanctions up to and including dismissal, in accordance with the Disciplinary Code. All staff members should also be aware of their obligations under the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour.

Staff members who knowingly facilitate abuse, for example, by providing the alleged perpetrator with access to equipment or information on the victim or survivor such as contact details, location or shift patterns, will also be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Depending on the circumstances, where both the victim or survivor and the person accused of wrongdoing are staff members in the same department or office, it may be appropriate and necessary to invoke the Civil Service Dignity at Work policy.

In these circumstances, the Civil Service will consult with the victim or survivor in consideration of their safety and wellbeing while recognising that all individuals have a right to fair process and procedure.

There may be instances where a staff member who is a perpetrator requires signposting to resources, counselling or therapy. This may happen when an alleged perpetrator wishes to change their own behaviour. In these circumstances, the staff member should be advised to contact the CSEAS for guidance. Any direction towards supports does not preclude disciplinary action being taken where this is appropriate or warranted.

## 11 Supports at a glance

### I am looking for support

#### **CSEAS**

Practical information, safety planning, signposting to resources. Provides immediate and ongoing emotional support.

#### **MANAGERS, COLLEAGUES, HR**

Non-judgmental, can direct towards specialist services.

#### **SAFETY PLANNING**

Temporary changes in work location, workload adjustments, security review arranged if required.

#### **EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS**

Statutory leave – 5 days in 12 months  
Employment protections  
Confidentiality

### Specialist Services

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

##### **Information:**

24hr National Free-phone Helpline: 1800 341 900  
Email: [info@womensaid.ie](mailto:info@womensaid.ie)  
Website: [www.womensaid.ie](http://www.womensaid.ie)

#### **Men's Aid**

Domestic Violence services in Ireland  
National Confidential Helpline: 01 554 3811  
[www.mensaid.ie](http://www.mensaid.ie)

#### **SAFE Ireland**

Website: [www.safeireland.ie](http://www.safeireland.ie)

#### **Dublin Rape Crisis Centre**

24-hour helpline: 1800 77 8888  
Website: [www.drcc.ie](http://www.drcc.ie)

### A colleague may need support

#### **RECOGNISE, RESPOND, REFER**

Changes in behavior, attendance, mood. Confidentiality—assurances are key. Sensitive, non-judgmental, private.

#### **DVA POLICY 16/2023 & RESOURCES**

Become familiar with policy and guidelines.

#### **CSEAS**

Seek advice from CSEAS  
Direction to information resources.

### CSEAS

Support is available through self-referral by calling **0818 008120** or

emailing [cseas@per.gov.ie](mailto:cseas@per.gov.ie) or contact an [Employee Assistance Officer](#) directly

### I am a manager/colleague who needs guidance

#### **RECOGNISE, RESPOND, REFER**

Changes in behavior, attendance, mood. Confidentiality—assurances are key. Sensitive, non-judgmental, private

#### **DVA POLICY 16/23 & RESOURCES**

Become familiar with policy and guidelines.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Lines of communication open. Remote/hybrid staff – keep in touch.

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES**

Guidance on disciplinary, dignity at work policies where applicable. Information on training.

#### **CSEAS**

Seek advice from CSEAS. Advice on how to hold a conversation. Information resources.

#### **EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS**

Approve leave asap. Consider goals/work load. Note agreed safety measures.



## 12. Appendix 1 – contacts

### Women’s Aid

24hr National Freephone Helpline:  
1800 341 900  
Email: [info@womensaid.ie](mailto:info@womensaid.ie)  
[www.womensaid.ie](http://www.womensaid.ie)

### LGBT Ireland

National Helpline: 1890 929 539  
Transgender family support line 01 9073707 (open Tuesday/Sundays)

- [On-line chat support service](#)
- [Peer support services](#)
- [www.lgbt.ie](http://www.lgbt.ie)

### Men’s Aid

National Confidential Helpline: 01 554 3811 (Mon – Fri, 9.00am to 5.00pm)  
Email: [hello@mensaid.ie](mailto:hello@mensaid.ie)  
[www.mensaid.ie](http://www.mensaid.ie)

### BeLONg To

LGBTI+ youth support organisation for young people aged between 14–23 years  
Tel: 01 670 6223  
[Support Services](#)  
Email: [info@belongto.org](mailto:info@belongto.org)  
[www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org)

### Men’s Development Network

Male Advice Line Freephone 1800 816 588  
[www.mensnetwork.ie](http://www.mensnetwork.ie)

### MOVE Ireland

#### (Men Overcoming Violence)

Provides Domestic Violence Perpetrators Intervention Programmes for men where they are challenged to take responsibility for their abuse and to change their attitudes and behaviour and develop respectful, non-abusive relationships.  
[www.moveireland.ie](http://www.moveireland.ie)

### TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland)

Gender Identity Family Support Line  
01 9073707  
[www.teni.ie](http://www.teni.ie)

### SAFE Ireland

Programme for creating safety for women and children with a focus on research, public policy and awareness and provision of training.

- [Contacts for National Services](#)
- [Advice for Employers](#)

[www.safeireland.ie](http://www.safeireland.ie)

### Tusla

The State Child and Family Agency  
Operates under the [Child and Family Act 2013](#)

- [Reporting Concerns – Child protection and welfare services](#)
- [Domestic and Gender Based Violence Services](#)
- [Family Resource Centres](#)

[www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

### Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

24-hour helpline: 1800 77 8888  
[Webchat support service](#) (Mon – Fri, 10.00am to 5.00pm (excl. bank holidays))  
[Counselling & therapy services](#)  
[www.drcc.ie](http://www.drcc.ie)

### The Courts Service of Ireland

[www.courts.ie](http://www.courts.ie)

### Citizens Information

[www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)

### Legal Aid Board

[www.legalaidboard.ie](http://www.legalaidboard.ie)

### HSE Sexual Assault Treatment Units

Information on care options if you have been raped or sexually assaulted.  
<https://www2.hse.ie/services/satu/>

### An Garda Síochána

[www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)

13. *Appendix 2 – related policies, legislation and information*

**Policies**

[Civil Service Disciplinary Code 19/2016](#)

[Dignity at Work Policy 2015](#)

[Civil Service Codes and Standards of Behaviour](#)

[Civil Service Leave policies](#)

**Legislation**

[Work life Balance Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023](#)

**Information Resources**

*'Strengthening Understanding & Awareness - An information resource for the Civil Service to accompany the Civil Service Domestic Violence & Abuse Policy'*

[Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2022 to 2026](#) (Department of Justice)

[Still Here](#) (Department of Justice, Public Awareness Campaign – contains information, resources and contacts)

[Women's Aid publications](#) (including reports and research)