



DOMESTIC ABUSE Policy

HR.30 – November 2022

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Related Documents

- **Violence & Aggression at Work Policy C.38**
- **Dignity At Work Policy HR.13**
- **Code of Conduct HR.13**
- **Lone Working HR.15**

Translation Statement

If you have any difficulties reading this information or need further help understanding our processes please contact us. We can make this document available in a variety of formats. All you need to do is let us know what you need and we will try to assist.

Compliance

This policy has been drafted to ensure that it complies with current legislation and industry good practice.

Equality & Diversity

Fyne Homes is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and which promote equality of opportunity. As an employer we are also committed to equality and diversity within our workforce. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our Values, are embedded in our day-to-day working practices.

Openness & Confidentiality

Fyne Homes believes that its members, tenants and other interested parties should have access to information on how it conducts itself. This means that unless information requested is considered commercially sensitive or personally confidential it will be made available on request.

Data Protection

Fyne Homes recognises the importance of data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation, in protecting the rights of individuals in relation to personal information that we may handle and use about them, whether on computer or in paper format. We will ensure that our practices in the handling and use of personal information during the processes and procedures outlined in this policy comply fully with data protection legislation. More information is available from our Data Protection Officer.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Domestic abuse against any of our members of staff will be taken extremely seriously. Fyne Homes understands the risks and consequences of domestic abuse and will take all reasonable action to support any member of staff who is the subject of domestic abuse.
- 1.2. We will work hard to foster a supportive workplace culture where employees feel able to talk openly about their experiences if they wish to.

2. Aim

- 2.1. The aim of this policy is to set out Fyne Homes' stance on domestic abuse and explain the support Fyne Homes can offer to employees experiencing domestic abuse

3. Links to vision and strategic priorities

- 3.1. Fyne Homes is committed to respecting its staff and approaching its business activities with openness and integrity as stated in its Vision and Values.
- 3.2. The Human Resources Strategy and People Plan 2020-25 commits to providing a working environment which is stimulating, supportive and ensures employee safety and wellbeing.

4. Legal framework

- 4.1. We acknowledge our duty of care towards our employees and understand that this includes a legal responsibility to provide a safe and effective work environment; we appreciate that tackling domestic abuse is an integral part of this.

5. Managing and Reporting

- 5.1. Any issues raised in relation to this policy will be treated with utmost confidentiality.
- 5.2. Issues raised under this policy will be tracked and monitored by Human Resources and reported anonymously to the Staffing Committee on a quarterly basis.

6. Definition

- 6.1. Domestic abuse involves controlling, coercive threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those who are, or have been, in an intimate relationship or

close family relationship. Domestic abuse can involve a single incident or a pattern of incidents. It can take many forms, including:

- psychological abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- verbal abuse
- economic abuse.

6.2 Anyone can suffer from domestic abuse regardless of sex, race, sexuality or religion. It is a criminal offence and can lead to a criminal conviction. Nonetheless, research worldwide shows that women experience domestic abuse disproportionately to men and as such it is a form of gender based abuse.

7. Signs that someone may be experiencing domestic abuse

7.1. Signs which may indicate that someone is experiencing domestic abuse may be:

- frequent absence from work, lateness or needing to leave work early
- reduced quality and quantity of work or missing deadlines
- spending an increased number of hours at work for no reason
- changes in the way an employee communicates - a large number of personal calls or texts or a strong reaction to personal calls
- physical signs and symptoms such as unexplained or frequent bruises or other injuries
- excessive clothing on a hot day
- changes in the amount of make-up worn
- changes in social behaviour, for example, not turning up to work social activities
- obsession with leaving work on time.

8. Perpetrators of domestic abuse

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

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

8.3. Fyne Homes will seek to offer support to perpetrators of domestic abuse for example, time off for professional help, if it is evident that they are seeking help to address their behaviour. However, responsibility lies with the individual to address the problem and not the organisation.

8.4. If both the individual experiencing domestic abuse and the perpetrator work for Fyne Homes, measures will be taken to reduce the impact, such as:

- reassigning duties/roles and
- restricting the perpetrator's access to information about the person they targeting.

8.5 Managers will keep confidential records of any disclosure or action taken in relation to an alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse.

9. Action to be taken if employee confides in a manager in the organisation

9.1. The manager will offer reassurance to the employee of the Association's stance towards domestic abuse and outline the support that is to be offered. The manager will not ask the employee for evidence of abuse. If so indicated by the employee, the manager will arrange for another manager of the same sex as the employee to be their confidante and offer support.

9.2. Confidentiality is of utmost importance for managers dealing with an employee who informs them that s/he is experiencing domestic abuse. However, there may be circumstances where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, for instance, where there are concerns about the safety of children.

9.3. The manager should not directly involve themselves in the situation, by, for example, confronting someone accused of being abusive. Instead, the role of the manager in this situation is:

- to provide support to the employee in the workplace
- to help the employee find professional specialist help and support.

9.4 In terms of practical assistance, the manager will:

- arrange access to a safe, private place for the employee to seek professional help and / or participate in counselling
- arrange for the employee's telephone extension number to be changed if the employee is receiving harassing telephone calls
- agree with the employee how they should respond if the perpetrator attends the workplace

- ensure that the employee does not work alone or in an isolated area
- check that the employee has arrangements for safe travel between home and the workplace
- keep a record of incidents which occur in the workplace, e.g. harassing telephone calls or visits
- consider a temporary change to the employee's working patterns.

9.5 Managers should:

- be non-judgmental and supportive and
- respect the employee's privacy.

9.6 It may be helpful in this situation if the employee is encouraged to speak to Fyne Homes' Employee Assistance service or Occupational Health Service and this should be facilitated by allowing time off for work for a visit to take place to any professional support organisation.

9.7 At the manager's discretion paid time off of up to 10 days will be granted to assist an employee experiencing domestic abuse to leave their current situation and arrange and move to alternative accommodation.

9.8 In all cases employees experiencing domestic abuse will be treated sympathetically and supported by Fyne Homes.

10. Action to be taken if the manager suspects that an employee is being subjected to domestic abuse

10.1. Suspicions that an employee is experiencing domestic abuse must be treated in a careful, balanced and sensitive manner where no evidence or disclosure has been made.

10.2. The line manager should sensitively facilitate a conversation to discuss the issue on a general level. If the employee discloses that s/he is experiencing domestic abuse, the manager should follow those guidelines set out above.

11. Professional help, Specialist Support and Information

11.1. The line manager should encourage the employee to seek professional help, specialist support but should not make contact with them personally. This *may* include encouragement to report instances of violence to the police, or seek help from specialist organisations such as:

- Argyll and Bute Women’s Aid, www.argyllwomensaid.org.uk 01369 706636
- Scotland’s Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline 0800 027 1234 www.sdafmh.org.uk
- Homeless standby service 0345 056 5457
- Samaritans 116123
- Bright Sky app: www.hestia.org.brightsky
- ManKind: www.mankind.org.uk/help-for-victims

12. Reviewing process

12.1. This policy will be reviewed in line with the respective current Fyne Homes’ policies, and/or where a change in legislation arises.

12.2. If there is a procedural delay in the policy revision then the relative legislation in force at the time will prevail.

Version number	Revision Date	Part of doc revised	Reason for revision	Approved by
01	Sept 2022	ALL	New policy	Man Comm
02	Nov 2022	All	Scheduled review – no significant adjustments	ManComm