



**An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige**
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Policy template

Workplace supports
for employees
affected by domestic
violence and abuse





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Department of Children, Equality,
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Women's  Aid

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1. About this policy

This policy covers the internal and external support available to employees who have been or are being subjected to domestic violence and abuse, or where the employee is supporting a relevant person. The policy incorporates relevant provisions of the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023, which introduces domestic violence leave.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Provide for a period of paid time away from work for an employee who has experienced, is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing domestic violence and abuse.
- Promote a workplace culture that facilitates disclosures of domestic abuse.
- Support employees through a range of policy provisions, including paid leave.
- Support employees subjected to domestic violence and abuse in maintaining employment.
- Promote a safe work environment for all staff.



2. Introduction

Domestic violence and abuse is a highly prevalent issue in Ireland. [\[The employer\]](#) is committed to offering support to affected employees.

For this policy and in line with the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, domestic violence and abuse is defined as: violence, or threat of violence, including sexual violence and acts of coercive control committed against an employee or a relevant person by another person. For the purposes of eligibility for domestic violence leave (see: [Domestic violence leave](#)) the 'other person' must:

- a. Be the spouse or civil partner of the employee or relevant person,
- b. Be the cohabitant of the employee or relevant person,
- c. Be or have been in an intimate relationship with the employee or relevant person, or
- d. Be a child of the employee or relevant person who is of full age and is not, in relation to the employee or relevant person, a dependent person.

A 'relevant person' in relation to an employee is:

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

Domestic abuse has significant impacts on people affected by it, which can also impact their work. Employees' attendance, performance, and productivity at work may be impacted. In some cases, abuse can occur during work time or through work communications channels. The workplace can also be a place of safety and support. The importance of maintaining employment and independent income as a basis for recovery cannot be underestimated.

Domestic violence and abuse can occur within any relationship, although women are affected disproportionately. This policy is applicable in all cases regardless of sex, gender or sexuality.



3. Eligibility

This policy applies to all employees of [\[the employer\]](#). There is no minimum service required to qualify for statutory domestic violence leave. Such leave may be availed of by an employee directly experiencing domestic violence and abuse, or where an employee is supporting a 'relevant person' (see: [Introduction](#)). The domestic violence to which the supports relate includes experiences that are ongoing, as well as past experiences.

4. How to access the provisions of this policy

[Employer to insert detail on the process an affected employee must follow to avail of the policy provisions]

An employee who may benefit from employer support under this policy is encouraged to raise the issue with an appropriate person. The following person(s) ('designated person(s)') have a primary role in the company in responding to disclosures of domestic violence and abuse. They have received appropriate training on responding to disclosures, the provisions of the policy, and their limits in providing support (see: [Awareness raising and training](#)).

- *[Employer to adapt according to size and structure of the organisation. Depending on the size of the organisation this could be: Direct line manager, HR representative, business owner/manager, other internal designated point(s) of contact or channels].*

5. Disclosures

The person responding to a disclosure will:

- Listen and respond in a non-judgmental and compassionate manner.
- Support the employee in making their own decisions.
- Provide practical support as appropriate (see: [Supports available](#)).

In line with good management practice, it is a manager's responsibility to be mindful of the well-being of their team members, and issues impacting on well-being. Where a manager has concerns regarding well-being, the manager may, if appropriate:

- Consider asking open questions in a private setting to allow the employee to disclose their experience if they wish to do so.
- Seek support from or refer the employee to a designated person, where there is one in the company, while being mindful of confidentiality (see: [Confidentiality](#)).
- Where a disclosure is made, provide or support access to available support as appropriate (see: [Supports available](#)).

5.1 Working from home

Working from home can have a negative impact on employees subjected to domestic abuse. It is important that managers stay attuned to the well-being of employees when they work remotely. This, and other relevant factors, should be borne in mind where employees wish not to work remotely (where normally encouraged by the employer). Where possible, opportunities to work in a separate physical location will be encouraged and requests facilitated.

5.2 Disclosing to a colleague

If an employee discloses to a colleague, the colleague will treat the disclosure in a supportive, non-judgmental, and confidential manner and bring this policy to the attention of the disclosing employee. It is not appropriate for the employee receiving the disclosure to pass on any information to others, including to managers or another designated person, where there is one in the company, without the consent of the disclosing person except in very limited cases (see: [Confidentiality](#)).

5.3 No requirement to disclose

For the sake of clarity, there is never any obligation on an employee to disclose that they are currently or have in the past been subjected to domestic violence.



6. Confidentiality

Domestic violence and abuse should always be discussed in a private and confidential space. All information regarding domestic violence will be kept confidential and shared on a need-to-know basis only and ideally with the consent of the employee concerned. For example, information may be shared with colleagues who need to implement a workplace safety plan or with administrative staff dealing with domestic violence/special leave. Only information necessary to carrying out those roles/tasks will be shared.

[The employer] may retain in the employee's personnel file:

- Details of agreed workplace safety plan (see: [Workplace safety](#))
- Administrative data such as approval of domestic violence/special leave (see: [Domestic violence leave](#) and [Special leave](#))
- Details of abuse occurring in/near the workplace or using workplace equipment (see: [Maintaining records](#))

The above records will be stored securely, kept strictly confidential, and retained only for as long as necessary.

Colleagues to whom a disclosure is made (initial or as part of risk management) are required to keep confidentiality. Improper disclosure of information may be subject to disciplinary action.

There are limited occasions where confidentiality cannot be maintained. These are:

- Where there is a requirement under law.
- When ordered by a court.
- Where it is necessary to share the information to protect the safety of employees and/or the public.

In these circumstances, the employee will be informed of the reasons why confidentiality cannot be maintained, the information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, and care will be taken to ensure that the sharing of information does not put the employee at greater risk. In any of these instances where confidentiality cannot be maintained, the employee will be encouraged to contact a specialist domestic abuse service for support.

7. Supports available¹

7.1 Domestic violence leave

In line with the provisions of the Act, employees are entitled to paid time off ('domestic violence leave') for up to five days in any 12 consecutive months.

The purpose of the leave is to enable an employee who is subjected to domestic violence, or an employee supporting a 'relevant person' to do any of the following:

- a. Seek medical attention;
- b. Obtain services from a victim services organisation;
- c. Obtain psychological or other professional counselling;
- d. Relocate temporarily or permanently;
- e. Obtain an order under the Domestic Violence Act 2018;
- f. Seek advice or assistance from a legal practitioner;
- g. Seek assistance from the Garda Síochána;
- h. Seek or obtain any other relevant services.

While advance notice of the leave is preferable, in certain circumstances, this may not be possible. However, an employee should notify their manager of their intention to take or remain on domestic violence or other leave for this purpose as soon as reasonably practicable.

7.2 Special leave

Where an employee requires leave in addition to the statutory domestic violence leave, additional special leave may be facilitated, with or without pay, for the same purposes to which domestic violence leave applies.

7.3 Workplace safety

The impacts and risks of domestic violence and abuse necessitate a safety conscious response at all times. Following a disclosure, a manager or other designated person, where there is one in the company, will consult with the employee on their safety needs in and around the workplace. Depending on individual circumstances, safety measures that may be proposed include:

- Temporary (subject to review) changes to work duties, location, contact details, hours, and/or working patterns.
- Risk assessment of the workplace for the affected employee, other employees and/or clients as appropriate.
- Improved security measures on premises or other work locations, in traveling to/from work, and on work related equipment.
- Offering information on specialist support services to the affected employee (see: [Appendix: Specialist services and workplace contacts](#)).

This workplace safety plan will be treated as confidential and shared on a need-to-know basis only (see: [Confidentiality](#)).

Where there is a serious threat to someone's life or health, the employer will take action to address this risk (see: [Confidentiality](#)).

7.4 Referrals

A list of domestic abuse specialist organisations is available in [Appendix: Specialist services and workplace contacts](#). This information will be provided to employees disclosing domestic abuse. Where appropriate, the employee will be supported to access a safe physical space and/or method of communication from which to contact these services.

¹ Note to drafter: Domestic violence leave is a statutory entitlement and must be included in a domestic violence and abuse workplace policy. All other supports in this section are not statutory requirements; their inclusion, although recommended, is at the discretion of the employer.

7.5 Financial assistance

Relevant financial support for employees will be considered, such as:

- Salary advance
- Speedy change of arrangements and/or method for payment of salary (e.g. banking details)

7.6 Employment protections

Domestic violence and abuse can impact work attendance, performance, and productivity. In cases where an employee discloses domestic abuse, the employee will be supported with temporary protection from dismissal or other adverse actions if they have difficulties performing tasks at work. Subsequent reviews of the employee's performance targets or workload will be completed in consideration of the impacts of abuse.

7.7 Maintaining records

Records of any form of abuse, including stalking or harassment of the employee in the workplace, may be supportive to the employee should they decide to seek redress through the justice system. As such, the employee will be supported to retain any such records at their request.

Any records maintained by the employer will be stored securely and kept strictly confidential (see: [Confidentiality](#)).



8. Conduct in the workplace

Employees will be held accountable for their conduct in the workplace, in work time, or through work equipment. Where domestic violence and abuse is committed in the workplace, disciplinary procedures may be invoked with potential sanctions up to and including dismissal, according to disciplinary policy.

Employees who knowingly facilitate domestic violence, for example by providing access to equipment or information in respect of another employee, such as contacts/location/shift pattern, will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Domestic abuse may be reported to have occurred, or be occurring, where both parties are employees of the same organisation, or employees of different entities but sharing a work location. In such cases, particular arrangements need to be put in place. Safety and well-being are paramount, while recognising that all individuals have a right to fair process and procedure.

9. Awareness raising and training

Training and awareness events, including how to recognise, respond to and refer domestic abuse cases to specialist organisations if required, will be run. Domestic abuse resources and supportive material will be made available, as appropriate.

The number, gender, and distribution of persons who have accessed training will be regularly monitored to ensure any expertise lost through staff turnover is replaced.

10. Policy review

This policy will be kept under review to include any changes in legislation and good practice.

11. Relevant policies and documentation

This policy is aligned with our policies on [\[employer to refer to relevant policies such as Dignity at Work, Health & Safety Statement, Code of Conduct, etc.\]](#).

Other relevant policies include: [\[Employer to include existing relevant policies\]](#).



Appendix: Specialist services and workplace contacts

Specialist Domestic Violence and Abuse Services

Women's Aid

Women's Aid operates the 24hr National Freephone Helpline for victims-survivors of domestic violence. Support can also be accessed through the Instant Messaging Support Service, available on the relevant websites.

1800 341 900

www.womensaid.ie

www.toointoyou.ie

Men's Development Network

Men's Development Network operates the Male Advice Line, the national Freephone Helpline offering confidential advice and support to male victims-survivors of domestic abuse

1800 816 588

www.mensnetwork.ie/mal

Local services

There are specialist domestic abuse services located in towns right across Ireland. Details of your local service can be accessed through these websites.

www.safeireland.ie

www.alwayshere.ie

www.womensaid.ie/get-help/support-services/find-support-locally/

Other services

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

National Sexual Violence 24hr Helpline:

1800 77 8888

www.drcc.ie

LGBT Ireland

National LGBT Helpline:

1800 929 539

www.lgbt.ie

Local rape crisis centres

www.rapecrisishelp.ie

An Garda Síochána

112 or 999

Workplace Contacts

[\[Employer to add contacts\]](#)

[\[Employer to add contacts\]](#)

[\[Employer to add contacts\]](#)

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