

Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

As a provider of Domestic Violence and Abuse services Rochdale Connections Trust recognise that Domestic Abuse is a serious issue and that incidents of Domestic Abuse are common and critically affect many people's lives. RCT acknowledges that Domestic Abuse can affect an individual's work performance and that as both an employer and an organization that utilises volunteers that we have a responsibility for health, safety and welfare at work.

Rochdale Connections Trust is wholly committed to tackling Domestic Abuse as its effects become apparent in the workplace. The effects of Domestic Abuse can influence the health and self-confidence of staff who may in turn feel unable to confide in others or seek help. Many of those that experience Domestic Abuse have difficulty attending work regularly and demonstrate longer term symptoms such as depression, anxiety, or stress that consequently affect work performance. Rochdale Connections Trust recognise that it is important to be aware of Domestic Abuse as a possible cause when staff are depressed, distracted, lacking in self-confidence or visibly injured. Rochdale Connections Trust therefore strives to create a working environment that promotes the view that everyone has the right to a life free from abuse in any form and that violence against people is unacceptable.

DEFINITION

Domestic Violence and Abuse is about the misuse of power and exercise of control by one adult over another adult within the context of an intimate or close family relationship.

For the purposes of this policy, Domestic Abuse is defined as "Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, regardless of gender or sexuality, who are or have been, intimate partners or in a close family relationship such as parents or adult children". This policy is therefore applicable whatever the nature of the intimate relationship.

It is recognised the majority of those affected are women, although a significant proportion affects men and this policy applies to men and women equally.

SCOPE

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1992), Rochdale Connections Trust recognises its legal responsibilities in promoting the welfare and safety of all staff. Therefore, this policy applies to all Rochdale Connections Trust employees and individuals who volunteer for the Charity.

SUPPORT and CONFIDENTIALITY

Rochdale Connections Trust recognises that Domestic Abuse is an equalities issue and undertakes not to discriminate against anyone who has been subject to Domestic Abuse in terms of current employment or career development.

As a responsible employer Rochdale Connections Trust believes it is important to promote the understanding that everyone has the right to a life free from abuse in any form and that Domestic Abuse is wholly unacceptable and inexcusable.

Rochdale Connections Trust are aware that the challenges that Domestic Abuse victims face can manifest themselves in problems such as chronic absenteeism or lower productivity. That is why when addressing performance and safety issue Rochdale Connections Trust will make reasonable efforts to consider all aspects of the employee's situation and/or safety problems to support them through a challenging time. Information and training will be provided to their Line Managers to enable them to provide initial support to anyone who is experiencing or has experienced Domestic Abuse. This ensures that employees and any volunteers can raise the issue in the knowledge that the matter will be taken seriously.

There are some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be assured. These occur when there are concerns about children or vulnerable adults or where an employer needs to act to protect the safety of employees. In these circumstances the employer will discuss with the employee the reason for disclosing any information to a third party and will seek the employee's agreement where possible.

All records concerning Domestic Abuse will be kept strictly confidential. Improper disclosure of information i.e. breaches of confidentiality by any member of staff will be taken seriously and maybe subject to disciplinary action.

PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Employees and those volunteering for the Charity are expected at all times to conduct themselves in a way that will not adversely reflect on the organisation and its reputation. Domestic Abuse perpetrated by employees or volunteers will not be condoned under any circumstances; nor will it be treated as a purely private matter. Perpetrating Domestic Abuse whilst in the workplace may breach any Code of Conduct. If a colleague is found to be assisting an abuser in perpetrating the abuse by giving them access to facilities such as telephones or email then they will be seen as committing a disciplinary offence.

Rochdale Connections Trust will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of a Domestic Abuse related offence on a case-by-case basis. The aim is to reduce risk and support change recognising their role in encouraging and supporting employees and volunteers to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds. If an employee or volunteer approaches Rochdale Connections Trust about their abusive behaviour, information about services and support available will be provided.

Confidentiality will be maintained and information restricted only to those who have a need-to-know. There are some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be assured. These occur when there

are concerns about children or vulnerable adults or where an employer needs to act to protect the safety of employees.

IF THE VICTIM AND PERPETRATOR WORK/VOLUNTEER FOR THE SAME EMPLOYER

In cases where both the victim and perpetrator of Domestic Abuse work or volunteer for Rochdale Connections Trust we will take appropriate action including: -

- Consider utilising different locations; working/volunteering hours etc.
- Minimising the potential for the perpetrator to use their position or work resources to find out details about the whereabouts of the victim.
- Offer impartial support and where possible ensure both the victim and perpetrator have different Line Managers who are able to provide appropriate information to each party.

RAISING AWARENESS

Rochdale Connections Trust will endeavour to raise awareness of Domestic Violence and Abuse by publicising external resources for survivors and perpetrators of abuse alongside of this policy document.

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY

Rochdale Connections Trust expects all employees and volunteers to ensure that the policy and its procedures are strictly observed at all times.

REVIEW SCHEDULE:

The Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy is formally reviewed on an annual basis.

Date of last review: 23/08/2023

Reviewed by: Kathy Thomas

Job Role: CEO (Senior Management Team Representative)

Date of next Review: 23/08/2024