DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

Introduction and scope

1. The University of Suffolk is committed to deconstructing myths and misconceptions to provide effective support for victims/survivors.

2. Domestic abuse can affect anyone irrespective of sex, ethnicity, class, religion, sexuality and disability. However, it is widely recognised that domestic abuse is a gendered crime involving a disproportionate number of female victims/survivors and can happen in all types of relationships [1]. Although University of Suffolk recognises that the majority of victims/survivors of abuse are female, this policy includes a gender-neutral definition of domestic abuse to ensure that all victims/survivors are included.

3. The University recognises that students and employees are likely to be affected by domestic abuse; for example as a victim/survivor of domestic abuse, an individual who is currently living with domestic abuse, someone who has been impacted upon by domestic abuse or as an individual who perpetrates domestic abuse. The overarching aim of this policy is to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff and students within the University of Suffolk community.

Scope

4. We are committed to developing a workplace culture in which there is zero tolerance for abuse, and which recognises that the responsibility for domestic abuse lies with the perpetrator. wellbeing, specifically in relation to issues around domestic abuse.

5. The aims are to:

- Raise awareness of the issue of domestic abuse to all members of the university
- Improve recognition and support for those who are victims of domestic abuse
- Support awareness raising and inform cross-institutional training needs
- Engender a culture of openness without fear of discrimination
- Develop a point of contact for staff and students who is trained in the internal and
- external support for victims of domestic abuse
- In some cases, to support appropriate action against those accused of perpetrating domestic abuse

[1] Domestic Abuse Act (2021) https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/1/enacted

9. Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. This definition includes so called honour-based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.[6] Controlling and coercive behaviours became a criminal offence under the Serious Crimes Act (2015).

10. For those attempting to leave of separate from an abusive relationship, a pattern of stalking or harassment may emerge, In the context of domestic abuse, harassment may include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications or contact as well as malicious assertions upon a victim in a manner that would cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

11. Stalking behaviour can include following a person, watching or spying on them or forcing contact with them through any means, including social media. The effect of such behaviour is to curtail a victim's freedom, leaving them feeling that they constantly have to be careful. In many cases, the conduct might appear innocent (if it were to be taken in isolation), but when carried out repeatedly (a course of conduct), it may then cause significant alarm, harassment or distress to the victim. The Protection from Harassment Act (1997) provides protection from harassment and stalking in a wide range of contexts.

12. University of Suffolk also recognises online and digital platforms and social media are increasingly being used to perpetrate domestic abuse, coercion and control. The University of Suffolk takes all forms of domestic abuse seriously including technology-facilitated abuse. The University of Suffolk will draw on the Online Safety Policy[7] to provide further guidance around this matter.

Identification of the problem

13. Whilst it is for the individual themselves to recognise that they are a victim/survivor of domestic abuse, there are signs which may indicate a person may be a victim. An indicative list of signs is in Appendix 1 and further resources can be found on the university intranet or Student Hub..

14. It is essential to understand that any of the signs indicating a person may be a victim could

[6] Home Office (2013) *Circular 003/2013: new government domestic violence and abuse definition*. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-government-domestic-violence-and-abuse-definition/circular-0032013-new-government-domestic-violence-and-abuse-definition

[7] University of Suffolk (2020) Online Behaviour Policy. Available from: https://www.uos.ac.uk/media/uniofsuffolk/website/content-assets/documents/policies-and-procedures/Online-Behaviour-Policy.pdf

arise from a range of circumstances, of which domestic abuse may be one.

DISCLOSURE

Disclosure of Domestic Abuse - Employees

15. Employees subject to domestic abuse may choose to disclose, report or seek support from a union representative, a line manager, or colleague, for example. Line managers, colleagues and union representatives will not counsel victims, but offer information, workplace support, signpost to specialist organisations and undertake a safeguarding referral, where applicable. It is

Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct5 or equivalent policy at partners campuses.

- Do not compel the individual to share or accept information should they not wish
- Call 999 if the individual is in immediate danger

Confidentiality and right to privacy

24. We all have a responsibility for reporting any suspicions or concerns of abuse and for ensuring that concerns are taken seriously. Individuals will refer to the Safeguarding Policy and

If the victim and the perpetrator are located in the same organisation

31. In cases where both the victim and the perpetrator of domestic abuse are located in the organisation, University of Suffolk will take appropriate action such as safety planning. For example, action may need to be taken to ensure that the victim/survivor and perpetrator do not come into contact in the university. Action may also need to be taken to minimise the potential for the perpetrator to find out details about the whereabouts of the victim/survivor. For employees, this may include a change of duties or withdrawing the perpetrators access to certain computer programmes or offices. The potential for disciplinary action against the person who is perpetrating abuse will be considered in light of any active external investigation i.e., Police investigation.

32. The University encourages all employees and students to report if they are aware an individual is subject to or perpetrating abuse. Employees should speak to their line manager about their concerns in confidence and students should speak to an adviser in the Student Life Department or equivalent, about their concerns. In dealing with a disclosure from a colleague or student, it is important that the person with concerns is made aware of the existence of this policy.

PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

33. Domestic abuse will not be condoned under any circumstances. University of Suffolk recognises our role in encouraging and supporting individuals to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds. Employees and students should report if they are aware an individual is a perpetrator of abuse.

34. If an individual approaches University of Suffolk about their abusive behaviour, they will be signposted to specialist services, who will provide information about the services and support available to them. University of Suffolk will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of a domestic abuse related offence on a case-by-case basis with the aim of reducing risk and supporting change. In some circumstances it may be deemed inappropriate for the individual to continue with certain activities or duties, in their current role(s) or attend a current course, due to a caution or conviction.

35. As far as reasonably practicable the University of Suffolk will engage with perpetrators in a constructive way to increase safety and support abusers to recognise that they require help to change their violent and abusive behaviour. These procedures can be applicable in cases where an individual has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or threatened their partner.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against their partner.

- Signpost to other organisations and sources of support.
- Understand that their role is not to be a counsellor or support worker.

Appendix 1: Signs[10]

Signs that someone might be experiencing domestic abuse (some of thes91ri n Tf1]TEET66o(u)19(xr( )-4fl(91r

- Flowers/gifts sent to employee for no apparent reason.
- Isolation from family/friends
- Monitoring of social media profiles or emails, abuse over social media such as Facebook or Twitter, sharing intimate photos or videos without your your your your