



## DOMESTIC ABUSE (SUPPORT FOR STAFF) POLICY

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Reviewer:  
Grampian Area  
Partnership Forum

Approver:  
Grampian Area  
Partnership Forum.

Signature

Signature

Signature

Identifier:  
NHS/POL/29/HR

Review date:  
This policy will be  
reviewed annually by  
the Grampian Area  
Partnership Forum.

Implementation date:  
August, 2005

**UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED**

**VERSION 1**

**NHS GRAMPIAN  
DOMESTIC ABUSE (SUPPORT FOR STAFF) POLICY**

**This policy is also available in large print and on computer disk. Other formats can be supplied on request.**

**Please call the Corporate Communication Team on 01224 554400 for a copy.**

# **NHS GRAMPIAN DOMESTIC ABUSE (SUPPORT FOR STAFF) POLICY**

## **1 SCOPE**

NHS Grampian recognises that domestic abuse is a serious issue within society which affects many people - the majority of whom are women - and will take all practical steps to support employees who are victims of domestic abuse.

It also recognises that individuals can be exposed to domestic abuse without being abused themselves e.g. the child of a parent who abuses the other parent and that this can have traumatic effects.

The support provided under this policy, therefore, applies equally to all employees who may be experiencing domestic abuse, whether they are male or female, or are affected by domestic abuse perpetrated against someone close to them rather than against them personally.

## **2 DEFINITION**

Domestic abuse can be carried out by a partner or ex-partner (married, co-habiting or single sex relationship), by a family member, or by another person living in the same household.

Domestic abuse can be a single incident or a series of incidents and can include:

- physical abuse - assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour
- sexual abuse - acts which degrade and humiliate and are perpetrated against the victim's will (this includes rape) and
- mental/emotional abuse – for example, threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money, or other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family and friends

## **3 POLICY STATEMENT**

3.1 NHS Grampian employs a large number of staff and recognises that, statistically, a number of employees may be experiencing domestic abuse in their personal relationships and, through this policy, seeks to provide effective, confidential and sympathetic support to these employees.

- 3.2 There are also a number of policies in place which can be used to provide support to employees experiencing domestic abuse e.g. Special and Carer Leave for Domestic Personal and Family Reasons, Redeployment etc.
- 3.3 NHS Grampian realises that employees who are experiencing domestic abuse may not wish to divulge this fact, even in strict confidence, to any other employee of the organisation. A list of various external organisations which can offer support and guidance is, therefore, given in Appendix 2.
- 3.4 In the event that the direct effects of domestic abuse extend into the workplace e.g. by unwelcome visits from an abusive partner, NHS Grampian has a duty of care to protect both the abused person and their colleagues. For that reason, NHS Grampian may, depending on the individual circumstances, arrange for police involvement in such situations.
- 3.5 NHS Grampian will ensure that this Domestic Abuse Policy is widely publicised and made freely available to all employees.
- 3.6 Some facts on the reality of domestic abuse are shown in Appendix 1.

#### **4 SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE**

- 4.1 Any employee who is experiencing domestic abuse and feels that NHS Grampian can offer the support they need, should speak to their director, clinical/line manager, supervisor, HR Team, Staff Side representative, the Chaplaincy Service or the Occupational Health Service (OHS). As outlined in Section 5, this matter will be dealt with on a strictly confidential basis and only those with a “need to know” will be made aware of the situation.
- 4.2 Any employee who feels that domestic abuse is having an impact on their self-esteem can arrange to attend one to one counselling sessions through OHS. As this would be on the basis of a self referral, the employee will not be asked to tell OHS why they wish to attend such sessions and the Counsellor is bound by professional ethics which will ensure total confidentiality.
- 4.3 Individuals who are experiencing domestic abuse often require to take time off work in order to visit solicitors, banks, schools, support agencies etc and this can be accommodated through NHS Grampian’s Policy on Special and Carer Leave for Domestic, Personal and Family Reasons. Such arrangements should be made, in confidence, through the employee’s clinical/line manager. Alternatively, this can be progressed through the HR Team, Staff Side representative, Chaplaincy Service, OHS, who may then discuss the matter with the line manager.

4.4 NHS Grampian recognises that individuals who are experiencing domestic abuse may also require to arrange to meet with third parties e.g. support agencies, police etc., for short periods during normal working hours and can accommodate requests from staff to hold such meetings on NHS Grampian's premises. Again, such arrangements should be made, in confidence, through the employee's clinical/line manager. Alternatively, this can be progressed through the HR Team, Staff Side representative, Chaplaincy Service, OHS, who may then discuss the matter with the clinical/line manager.

Details of external agencies who can provide advice and/or support to victims of domestic abuse are listed at Appendix 2.

## **5 CONFIDENTIALITY**

NHS Grampian recognises that, where an employee is experiencing domestic abuse, confidentiality must be strictly observed by all parties concerned and that any breach of confidentiality could have severe repercussions on the person experiencing domestic abuse. For that reason, NHS Grampian will treat any breach of confidentiality committed by an employee under the provisions of the appropriate employee conduct procedure, in which case the range of penalties open to the organisation will include dismissal.

The only exceptions to this would be where third parties e.g. children or vulnerable adults, were at risk and in such instances the decision to inform an external body would be taken by the clinical/line manager.

The need for confidentiality generally includes ensuring that an employee's address, telephone number and work location is not identified.

To protect the confidentiality of employees, NHS Grampian will ensure that any disclosures which are required under its data protection registration, or its responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act, do not have the potential to compromise employees who may be experiencing domestic abuse. NHS Grampian will also ensure that, in cases where an employee is known to suffer from domestic abuse, only those other employees who "need to know" about the employee's situation are informed.

## **6 MANAGERS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

6.1 All managers have a responsibility for the welfare and the health and safety of employees at work.

- 6.2 All managers must be aware that domestic abuse can influence the health and self-confidence of people who may be reticent to confide in others, or seek help. They should, therefore, be alerted to the signs of **possible** domestic abuse e.g. where an employee is depressed, distracted and/or lacking in self-confidence, which may be reflected in work performance, while being aware that domestic abuse may not always be the reason behind such conditions. Any sign of physical injury, particularly if these are repeated, should also be noted.
- 6.3 All managers should recognise the importance of employee welfare and appreciate that, by supporting an employee who may be the victim of domestic abuse, they will potentially contribute to an improvement in service delivery and a reinforcement of good management/employee relations.
- 6.4 All managers should ensure that employees are aware of the issues surrounding domestic abuse by bringing this policy to their attention.

### THE REALITY OF DOMESTIC ABUSE – SOME FACTS

The following figures provide an indication of the problem of domestic abuse in Scotland:

- It is estimated that anything between a quarter and a third of all women in Scotland will experience abuse at some point in their lives.  
**Source:** Scottish Executive 2003. Responding to Domestic Abuse: Guidelines for Health Care Workers in NHS Scotland.
- Of the women victims of homicide in Scotland, a half are killed by their partners.  
**Source:** HM Inspectorate of Constabularies for Scotland, 1997. Also cited in Providing Quality Services for People who are Abused or who are the Victims of Violence - a Multi-agency Strategy for Aberdeenshire, 2002.
- Statistics show that in 2000 there were 712 incidents of domestic abuse per 100,000 population in Scotland. (In 2001 the figure was 1,066 per 100,000 population for Aberdeen City and 575 per 100,000 population for Aberdeenshire).  
**Source:** Scottish Executive 2002 and the Statistical Bulletin SE 2001.
- The Scottish needs assessment programme estimated the extent of the problem in Scotland to be 260,000 women over the age of 15 years experiencing some form of domestic violence.  
**Source:** Burke M, Taylor R 2004. Evaluation of a Domestic Abuse Project in Aberdeen West LHCC. The Robert Gordon University (unpublished).
- There are specific times when violence may increase such as when a person experiencing abuse tries to end the relationship, during separation or divorce, during pregnancy and following the birth of a child.  
**Source:** Scottish Executive 2003. Responding to Domestic Abuse: Guidelines for Health Care Workers in NHS Scotland.

The figures shown above reflect those cases which are reported and do not include those where the victim "suffers in silence". It must also be realised that while figures on domestic abuse tend to concentrate on abuse against women, there are an increasing number of cases where men are the victims of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is not confined to any particular sector of society, or to groups of individuals who can be easily identified. People from all social backgrounds, occupations, educational levels and ethnic origins can commit, or be the victim of, acts of domestic abuse.

Alcohol is often a contributory factor in cases of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse can have a profound effect on children living in an environment where domestic abuse is taking place, even although the child may not be subjected to personal abuse.

## NHS GRAMPIAN DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

### DETAILS OF EXTERNAL AGENCIES WHICH CAN PROVIDE ADVICE AND/OR SUPPORT TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE.

<b>ABERDEEN WOMEN'S AID</b>	<p>The Green, Aberdeen AB116PE Telephone: 01224 59157766 (Monday-Friday 9.30am-4.30pm)</p> <p>Emergency telephone number: 07702 294064 (out of hours)</p> <p>Provides refuge accommodation (limited disabled access), information advice and support.</p>
<b>DOMESTIC ABUSE OUTREACH WORKERS (ABERDEENSHIRE)</b>	<p>Telephone numbers: North Aberdeenshire - 01779 484221 South Aberdeenshire - 01358 725756</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Outreach Workers are trained Social Workers who provide support to victims of domestic abuse.</p>
<b>DOMESTIC ABUSE PROJECT (ABERDEEN)</b>	<p>Telephone: 0845 345 6766 (Monday – Friday 9.30am- 3.30pm)</p> <p>This is a telephone advice line which provides support and information as required. Where necessary arrangements can be made to meet with the caller.</p> <p><b>Professionals only</b> can contact Dorothy on 01224 522714</p>
<b>GRAMPIAN WOMEN'S AID</b>	<p>Crown Terrace, Aberdeen AB11 6HE. Telephone: 01224 5933816 Hours: Monday – Friday 10am-4pm</p> <p>Provides refuge accommodation, both in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire (disabled access available in 3 of the 4 refuges), advice, support and information.</p>

**HEMAT GRYFFE WOMAN'S  
AID DROP-IN CENTRE**

Flat 0/1,  
24 Willowbank Street,  
Charing Cross,  
Glasgow, G3 6LZ.  
Telephone: 0141 353 0859  
Fax: 0141 564 1277  
e-mail: [womensaid@gryffe.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:womensaid@gryffe.fsnet.co.uk)  
web site: [www.hematgryffe.co.uk](http://www.hematgryffe.co.uk)

Provides temporary refuge accommodation to minority ethnic women fleeing domestic abuse, follow up support and drop in centre.

**MORAY WOMEN'S AID**

21-27 Murray Street,  
New Elgin IV30 6DT.  
Telephone: 01343 548549

**Office hours:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday,  
Friday- 9.30am-4.30pm

**Helpline:** Monday- Friday 9.00am-10.00pm and  
on call Sat/Sun 4.00pm-10.00pm and on call  
Wednesday -9.30am-1.30pm

Provides refuge accommodation (disabled access), information, support and advice (new refuge scheduled for October, 2005.)

**POLICE - DOMESTIC ABUSE  
LIAISON OFFICERS**

Telephone: 0845 600 5700

Call the above number and ask to be put through to the Domestic Abuse Liaison Officer (DALO) for your area. Grampian is split into four areas- Aberdeen City, Moray, Aberdeenshire North and Aberdeenshire South.

In an emergency call **999**

**SCOTTISH DOMESTIC  
ABUSE HELPLINE**

Telephone: 0800 027 1234 (24hrs)

The helpline workers will provide support over the phone as well as information. They are also aware of Domestic Abuse services across Scotland and can inform callers where they can obtain assistance in their own area

**SHAKTI WOMEN'S AID  
(SCOTLAND)**

Telephone: 0131 4752399  
Monday-Friday 10am-5pm

Website: [www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk/shakti](http://www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk/shakti)

Provides refuge accommodation, advice and support for women and young girls from black and minority ethnic groups who are affected by domestic abuse and forced marriage (abuser may be from the woman's extended family). Disabled access.

**SCOTTISH WOMAN'S AID**

Website: [www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk](http://www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk)

Provides advice and information on local services, the law, safety and what to expect from a refuge.

There are other services which, while not specialising in Domestic Abuse, may also be able to provide support and information.

It may also be the case that office hours, premises and telephone numbers for the agencies listed above may change. A comprehensive and current list of agencies can be accessed at [www.grampiancaredata.gov.uk](http://www.grampiancaredata.gov.uk)