



Cloch Housing Association

Domestic Abuse (Staff)

Policy Name	Domestic Abuse (Staff)
Policy Category	Staffing
Policy Number	105
Approved by	Finance & Corporate Services Sub
Responsibility of	Head of Corporate Services
Date Adopted	3/3/2020
Last Review	N/A
This Review	30/05/2023
Next Review	May 2026
Equalities Impact Assessment Required	To be done once training has been completed.
Link to other policies	Domestic Abuse (Customers)
Consultation	No

1. Introduction

Cloch recognises that staff may be affected by Domestic Abuse and this Policy sets out our approach to assisting staff who have been affected and our approach to dealing with perpetrators of Domestic Abuse. In 2020, Cloch signed up to the Make A Stand Campaign and the commitment was made then to produce a staff policy.

This policy links to Business Plan Outcomes:

- Strategic Priority 20: Support our People.
- Strategic Priority 27: Promote a Culture of Safety.

1.1 Definition

Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) see domestic abuse as (as at May 2023):

"Any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct, and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, cohabiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse may be committed in the home or elsewhere including online".

1.2 Make A Stand – the four pledges

In 2020, Cloch joined the Make A Stand Campaign run jointly by Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance, Chartered Institute of Housing and Women's Aid. In joining the campaign, Cloch has made four pledges:

Pledge One: Put in place and embed a policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse.

Pledge Two: Make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available on your website and in other appropriate places so that they are easily accessible for residents and staff.

Pledge Three: Put in place a HR policy, or amend an existing policy, to support members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.

Pledge Four: Appoint a champion at a senior level in your organisation to own the activity you are doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

Pledges Three and Four apply to this policy. The Domestic Abuse Policy for customers is a separate policy.

1.3 **Context**

Cloch is committed to providing a safe, comfortable environment where staff can grow and thrive. Cloch also has policies in place that address staff conduct including our Health & Safety policies, Dignity at Work Policy, and the Staff Code of Conduct.

2. Supporting Victims of Domestic Abuse

2.1 Firstly, Cloch accepts that not all Domestic Abuse victims will share their information at work. However, in the event that they do share, and in order to support victims of domestic abuse Cloch will:

- Create an environment where staff feel safe to open up about such a difficult subject. Those reporting the abuse should never feel they have to prove the abuse, be forced to accept help or think that Cloch staff would contact the abuser.
- Provide training to all staff to help them identify and support victims of domestic abuse including looking for the signs of abuse such as a decline in productivity, frequently late or absent and changes in behaviour.
- Support our Domestic Abuse Champions to ensure their knowledge is up to date. And they can tackle issues in a non-judgemental, supportive, sensitive and discrete manner
- Create good practices around support such as (but not exclusively):
 - Counselling service.
 - Consideration to compassionate leave to deal with issues.
 - Provide signposting information to signpost to support agencies.
 - Risk assessments to ensure the person's safety should an abusive partner visits the office.
 - Keeping documents on behalf of the victim such as passports which help the victim if they have to remove themselves from their home.

Cloch also has a Dignity at Work Policy which looks at Bullying and Harassment and an Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Cloch recognises that abuse can be across all genders.

2.2 Cloch is required to assign a Champion to support the pledges and Make a Stand campaign. Currently, the Champion is the Head of Housing Services.

2.3 Privacy

Any report of domestic abuse will be treated in the strictest confidence by the person to whom it has been reported and any sharing of the information will be by consent of the victim and only to those who need to know.

- Only in very exceptional circumstances will the knowledge be shared without consent, and this is only if the victim or a colleague are at risk of serious injury or death, or/
- It is believed that there is a substantial risk of harm to any children who are witnessing the violence or abuse.

All violence, threatening behaviour, or breaches of security in the workplace will be recorded and retained for evidence purposes, if required. The record will be clear and accurate and include dates, times, locations, and any witnesses. Breaches of orders, for example, non-molestation orders will also be noted.

Cloch as a Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice for Employees.

3. A Staff Member Who Is a Perpetrator of Abuse

Domestic abuse is a very serious matter that can lead to a criminal conviction. Misconduct inside and outside the workplace can lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, in line with our normal policy and procedures on misconduct.

If the perpetrator chooses to manage their abusive behaviour, Cloch will signpost them to relevant support agencies and groups and will take this in to account when dealing with the behaviour. While the matter is being dealt with, the CEO may choose to suspend the person with pay while an investigation takes place.

Cloch's Terms and Conditions, Section A13 sets our procedures with dealing with Disciplinary Action.

4. False Allegations by Employees

False allegations about domestic abuse are very rare, however, if an employee is found to have made a false allegation, it may be regarded as misconduct and our Disciplinary process will therefore apply.

5. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Board however, changes to the legislation or the Make A Stand pledges that are substantive can mean the policy being reviewed earlier.