

East Dunbartonshire Council

Gender and Relationship Based Violence Policy

**Chief Officer & Local Government Employees,
Teachers and those employed on
SNCT Conditions of Service**

Version 1

June 2026

Version Control

Version No.	Effective Date	Approval Date	Summary of changes from previous version
1.0	5 June 2026	4 June 2026	N/A New Policy

Contents

1.0	Policy Statement	4
2.0	Scope	4
3.0	References and Related Documents	4
4.0	Definitions.....	5
5.0	Policy Outline	6
5.1.	Gender Based Violence (GBV) An Overview	6
5.2	Domestic Abuse	7
5.3	Physical Abuse.....	8
5.4	Financial and Economic Abuse	8
5.5	Coercive Control	8
5.6	Psychological and Emotional Abuse	8
5.7	Sexual Abuse.....	9
5.8	Harassment and Stalking	9
5.9	Honour Based Abuse.....	9
5.10	Confidentiality	9
5.11	Seeking support for yourself or others or reporting a work-related incident	10
5.12	Support Available.....	10
5.13	Managing Perpetrators of G&R Based Violence.....	11
6.0	GDPR Statement	11
7.0	Policy Review Statement	12

1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 East Dunbartonshire Council recognises there is no place in society for gender-based violence and it is committed to help tackle all forms of violence. The Council strongly promotes a workplace culture where there is zero tolerance of any form of violence.

East Dunbartonshire Council promotes a working environment that supports and helps those who are experiencing, or have experienced, violence or abuse. Where employees feel it is safe and they have confidentiality to disclose their situation, to help them be able to access vital support and guidance. An employee should not feel pressured into sharing this information if they do not wish to do so.

The Gender and Relationship Based Violence Policy aims to:

- Take all reasonable steps to promote equality and reduce the risk of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and relationship-based violence.
- Provide a framework to assist and support employees to report when incidents have happened or allegations of abuse are raised and investigate allegations relating to the workplace.
- Take an individual approach to each situation and ensure there is always a safe and confidential space for employees to disclose any information and signpost to the most appropriate support.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This Policy applies to Chief Officers and Local Government Employees, Teachers and those employed on SNCT Conditions of Service.

3.0 References and Related Documents

- 3.1 This forms part of the Council's Policies and Procedure base surrounding employment and certain policies, procedures and toolkits may be referenced throughout this document. This policy is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all situations, but to provide example and has been developed to ensure compliance with legislative duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 This Policy should be applied with reference to the Charter of Commitment outlining the Roles & Responsibilities for Employment based Policies, Procedures and initiatives. [Policies & Procedures - East Dunbartonshire Council](#)
- Sexual Harassment Policy
 - Dignity At Work Policy
 - Special Leave Policy
 - Health and Safety at Work Policy
 - Grievance at Work
 - Discipline at Work including Code of Conduct
 - Equally Safe at Work Group

- Trauma Informed Practice

3.3 This policy aims to align with and support the work of - White Ribbon, Equally Safe at Work and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Partnership which supports the national strategy and the VAWG Act 1994.

4.0 Definitions

The following definitions are used in this Policy as for examples of types of abuse and are not intended to be an exhaustive list:

4.1 Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

This refers to harmful acts directed at an individual or a group of individuals based on their gender. Whilst women and girls suffer disproportionately from GBV, men and boys and intersex people can also be targeted. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms.

4.2 Domestic abuse

In Scotland, domestic abuse is legally defined under the Domestic Abuse Scotland Act 2018. It encompasses any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, or financial abuse that occurs within the context of a relationship between partners or ex-partners. The law recognizes that abusive behaviour can include psychological and emotional harm, and it requires evidence of a pattern of abusive conduct over time, which may not necessarily include physical violence.

4.3 Harassment

Is unwanted conduct related to any of the relevant protected characteristics, which has the purpose or effect (*whether intentional or not*) of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

4.4 Sexual Harassment

Is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has violated someone's dignity or created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone. It can be sexual harassment even if the behaviour did not intend to have this effect. Sexual harassment also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted to, or refused to submit to, unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or in relation to gender reassignment or sex.

4.5 Stalking

Stalking is when someone shows a pattern of behaviour that make you feel fear or alarm or had the aim to make you feel fear or alarm. Stalking is unwanted, focussed behaviours carried out by one person, or persons, against another. A wide range of behaviours may be classed as stalking, including sending unwanted messages, harassment, and monitoring on social media, following or spying on someone or verbal abuse.

4.6 Coercive Control

It is a range of actions used to influence or dominate a partner's choices or independence. Coercive control is where someone controls your life through threats, isolation, or constant pressure.

4.7 **Victimisation**

Occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they have made a complaint of discrimination (which may be a complaint of harassment or bullying) or have helped another person to make or bring a complaint. Victimisation can constitute unlawful discrimination and will result in disciplinary action being taken, regardless of the outcome of the original complaint.

5.0 Policy Outline

5.1. Gender Based Violence (GBV) An Overview

5.1.1 Gender-Based Violence covers a range of abuse experienced mostly by women and perpetrated mainly by men. Although primarily experienced by women, all genders can experience abuse. This policy applies to all employees regardless of their assigned gender at birth.

We support the Scottish Governments definition of Gender-Based Violence:

- Physical, sexual, or psychological violence occurring in the family (including children and young people), within the general community or in institutions, including domestic abuse, rape, and incest.
- Sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation in any public or private space, including work.
- Commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution, lap dancing, stripping, pornography, and trafficking.
- Child sexual abuse, including familial sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, and online abuse.
- So called 'honour based' violence, including dowry related violence, female genital mutilation, forced and child marriages, and 'honour' crime.

5.1.2 East Dunbartonshire Council is committed to creating an environment where employees are safe to disclose their experience of abuse, to signpost them to access appropriate support, and increase safety for themselves and others. The right of staff not to disclose is respected and employees should not be pressured into sharing information they do not wish to.

5.1.3 Employees should be aware that GBV can influence the health and self-confidence of the person affected and as a result they may feel unable to confide in others or seek help. GBV can detrimentally impact on an individual's work performance and other aspects of their day-to-day life.

5.1.4 By behaving in a supportive manner to colleagues, an employee may become aware of changes within a colleague and may seek advice from line management or HR who, where appropriate, may signpost them to access support, in how to address the problems that a victim/survivor might experience. It is not always obvious that an employee may be experiencing GBV. See section 5.6 below. However, the following may be indicators:

Physical Signs:

- Having repeated unexplained injuries and explanations that do not fit
- Frequent, sudden, or unexpected medical problems or absence
- Change in appearance
- Fatigue or exhaustion
- Panic attacks
- Sleeping or eating disorders
- Substance misuse
- Depression/suicidal

Changes in behaviour:

- Avoiding lunch breaks or socialising at the end of the working day
- Becoming quiet/avoiding speaking to colleagues
- Loss of confidence and self esteem
- Avoiding colleagues/being visibly uncomfortable around them
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Depressed, anxious, distracted or problems concentrating
- Increased stress or easily overwhelmed
- Withdrawn or detached
- Obsessing about time
- Being fearful/easily startled
- Expressing fear of partner/ of leaving children with partner
- Being secretive about home life

Performance at work:

- Unexplained changes in previous strong record of quality of work
- Suddenly starting to miss deadlines
- Turning down professional development/training opportunities
- Receiving repeated upsetting calls, texts
- Constantly checking mobile phone

5.2 Domestic Abuse

5.2.1 Domestic abuse forms a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour. It is rarely confined to a one-off incident, and it usually escalates in frequency and severity over time, particularly if the victim tries to exercise their independence, leave and/or challenge the perpetrator's control. Women can be at the greatest risk of serious harm when they leave or attempt to leave their abusive partner.

Domestic abuse may impact on all aspects of the working environment:

- The physical workplace (including when the home is the workplace).
- The commute to and from work.
- Attendance at a training or a work-related social event.
- Digital activity at work.
- Anywhere that a worker takes a break or uses facilities, e.g. toilet, touch-down areas.

Domestic abuse could impact an individual's working life in many ways:

- Threatening phone calls and emails.
- When they travel to and from work.

- The abuser might call the victim's colleagues to check up on the victim (e.g. pretending to care).
- The abuser might interfere with the victim's ability to work at home.
- Performance, attendance, career prospects, and job security might be affected.
- Colleagues can also experience threatening or intimidating behaviour from the perpetrator.

There are many forms of Domestic Abuse.

5.3 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is defined as any intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person through bodily contact. It is a deliberate act of force that results in harm, injury, or trauma to the victim's body such as hitting, pushing, grabbing, restraining or using objects to harm you.

5.4 Financial and Economic Abuse

Financial abuse is part of coercive control, it involves a pattern of controlling, threatening and degrading behaviours relating to money and finances. The perpetrator uses money to control their partner's freedom. This can include using credit or debit cards without permission, building up debts in their partner's name, or restricting the partner from accessing their own funds. Economic abuse is a broader term, as it also includes restricting access to essential resources and services, such as food, clothing, mobile phones or transport, and refusing to allow someone to improve their economic status through employment, education, or training.

5.5 Coercive Control

Coercive control is an intentional act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation, and intimidation, which occurs over time, and is used to harm, punish or frighten another individual, to exert power or coercion over them . Some examples of coercive control are:

- Isolating an individual from their friends and family
- Depriving of basic needs, such as food or care
- Monitoring how an individual spends their time
- Tracking and controlling aspects of everyday life, such as where individual can go, who they can see, what they can wear. when they can sleep and what they do online or on their phone
- Stopping you from accessing support services, such as medical services or support groups
- Repeatedly putting an individual down, humiliating, degrading, dehumanising them, or creating rules they must follow

5.6 Psychological and Emotional Abuse

Psychological and emotional abuse can be difficult to describe or identify. It is when a perpetrator uses words and non-physical actions to threaten, manipulate, hurt, scare, or upset someone such as intimidation, constant criticism, belittling or humiliation.

5.7 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse and violence can take place within marriage, relationships or between family members and can often be a part of domestic abuse. If an individual consents to something because they are afraid or have been pressured into it, it is not consent. Some examples of sexual abuse are:

- Rape or sexual assault. This can be any sexual act you did not consent to. It can include forced kissing, touching, penetration, or having sex with someone when they are unable to consent, for example when under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Using force, threats, guilt, manipulation, or intimidation to make an individual perform sexual acts or sabotaging contraception.

5.8 Harassment and Stalking

Harassment and stalking are unwanted, including persistent, often threatening attention for example following someone, constantly phoning, texting, or e-mailing at home or work.

These actions could mean physical or mental harm. They can happen in-person, online, or both. Often the stalker's behaviour focuses on one person.

Every stalking situation is different. Stalkers may have different reasons for what they do. But the tactics they use are often similar. A stalker might:

- Follow someone
- Try to contact someone lots of times, with the aim to create fear or alarm
- Post information about someone online without their consent
- Monitor someone's phone, internet, email, or other communication method
- Wait for a long time in a public or private place so they can follow or interact with another person without consent
- Handle someone's property without consent
- Leave unwanted gifts or notes for someone
- Watch or spy on someone

5.9 Honour Based Abuse

Honour based abuse often occurs within family or community setting and may involve multiple perpetrators. Whereby acts of violence or forms of punishment are committed against an individual for behaviour which is perceived as deviating from what the family or community believes to be the "correct" form of behaviour sometimes referred to as "family honour." These may be verbal or physical forms of behaviour.

5.10 Confidentiality

All advice, information and support provided to an employee will remain confidential. No information should be disclosed without the express consent of the employee.

However, where issues regarding the protection of children or vulnerable adults arises, Social Work services may need to be involved.

All alleged reports of GBV by a Council employee will be managed and investigated in a timely and confidential manner. If the disclosure is believed to be a criminal offence, the senior manager should advise the affected party to report the matter to the police as soon as possible. If it is believed that there is an ongoing risk of serious harm to an individual, the senior manager or HR may contact the police themselves and inform the complainant affected party that they have done so.

5.11 Seeking support for yourself or others or reporting a work-related incident

Within the Workplace

Employees should report all instances of gender and relational violence, harassment, victimisation or discrimination which takes place within the workplace via the Dignity at Work Policy, whether they are the target of the behaviour or they have witnessed it.

Reporting is necessary to address the issue both for the individuals own well-being and that of their colleagues. Employees are encouraged to contact the HR team, their Trade Union or appropriate senior manager if they do not feel they are able to make a report via their line manager.

An individual will be supported to deal with this situation in several ways, from informal discussions with their manager (or HR/TU's) to making a formal report. You do not have to be the recipient or target to make a report. If you see it happening or it is raised to you by the affected party, you have a duty to report it. Tackling all forms of discrimination, harassment, violence, or abuse is everybody's responsibility.

Non Workplace Environment

Employees are encouraged to speak to their Line Manager, HR, Trade Union Representative or a colleague in order to make a disclosure about Gender and Relationship Based Violence that they are experiencing outwith the workplace. The Council will support the employee in an empathetic, non-judgemental and trauma informed manner to enable them to access the available support to help them in their individual situation.

5.12 Support Available

The Council recognises that employees may find making a disclosure difficult to talk about and emotional and require ongoing support and understanding.

The Council can offer a broad range of support, this may include, but is not limited to:

- Special leave with pay for relevant appointments, including with support agencies, solicitors, to rearrange housing or childcare, and for court appointments.
- Temporary or permanent changes to working times and patterns.
- Changes to specific duties, for example to avoid potential contact with an abuser in a customer facing role

- Redeployment or relocation
- Measures to ensure a safe working environment, for example changing a telephone number to avoid harassing phone calls.
- Using other existing policies, including flexible working
- Access to counselling/support services in paid time
- Access to local services
- Taking a Trauma Informed Practice approach when supporting employees

It must be recognised that the employee may need some time to decide what to do and may try many different options during this process. Avoid trying to persuade a course of action that the discloser is uncomfortable with.

Confidential support, practical information, and advice is also available for individual employees with the policy toolkit and from the employee assistance program details of which can be found on the Employee Zone ([Wellbeing - East Dunbartonshire Council](https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/employee-zone/hr-payroll/wellbeing) - www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/employee-zone/hr-payroll/wellbeing).

5.13 Managing Perpetrators of G&R Based Violence

Any report of alleged Gender or Relationship Based Violence by an individual in the scope of this policy will be treated with the upmost seriousness, and the manager will refer to the Dignity at Work and Disciplinary policies (dependant on if the victim is also an employee) and consult with HR, to ensure the individuals involved are supported and that the process is conducted appropriately whether informally or formally.

All reports or disclosures will be managed and investigated in a timely and confidential manner.

If the harassment is believed to be a criminal offence, the senior manager should advise the affected party to report the matter to the police as soon as possible. If it is believed that there is an ongoing risk of serious harm to an individual or others then the senior manager or HR may contact the police themselves and advise they have done so.

Employees will be protected from intimidation, victimisation, or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation. Retaliation against an employee for complaining about or assisting in an investigation of discrimination, harassment, violence, or abuse is a disciplinary offence. Any spurious allegations will be investigated under the appropriate policy.

6.0 GDPR Statement

East Dunbartonshire Council holds, uses, and processes information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and all other relevant national data protection laws. Further information detailing how East Dunbartonshire holds and uses personal information and copies of privacy notices used throughout the Council are available on our website: [Privacy Notices | East Dunbartonshire Council](https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/privacy-notice)

7.0 Policy Review Statement

This policy will be reviewed in two years or in line with:

- Legislative Change
- Other external factors
- Feedback on the effectiveness of the policy
- Requests for review by Trade Unions and/or Management

Other Formats & Translations

This document can be provided in large print, Braille or on audio cassette and can be translated into other community languages. Please contact the Council's Corporate Communications Team at:

East Dunbartonshire Council, 12 Strathkelvin Place, Southbank

Kirkintilloch G66 1TJ Tel: 0300 123 4510

本文件可按要求翻譯成中文，如有此需要，請電 **0300 123 4510**。

اس دستاویز کا درخواست کرنے پر (اردو) زبان میں ترجمہ کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ براہ مہربانی فون نمبر **0300 123 4510** پر رابطہ کریں۔

ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ **0300 123 4510** ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Gabhaidh an sgriobhainn seo cur gu Gàidhlig ma tha sin a dhith oirbh. Cuiribh fòn gu **0300 123 4510**

अनुरोध करने पर यह दस्तावेज हिन्दी में भाषांतरित किया जा सकता है। कृपया **0300 123 4510** पर फोन कीजिए।