

Bolsover District Council

Meeting of Council
on 4th March 2026

Approval of a Domestic Abuse Policy

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Resources

Classification	This report is Public
Contact Officer	Peter Wilmot, HR Business Partner

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

1. To approve the implementation of a Domestic Abuse Policy to ensure that Bolsover District Council provides a safe, inclusive and responsive working environment for all employees. The policy formalises the Council's approach to recognising, responding to, and supporting those affected by domestic abuse—whether as victims or perpetrators.
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REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 Domestic abuse is a pervasive societal issue with significant implications for affected individuals' mental and physical health, personal safety, and employment. Bolsover District Council recognises that some of its employees may be impacted by domestic abuse and that the workplace can play a crucial role in offering safety, stability and support.
- 1.2 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced a statutory definition of domestic abuse and a legal framework to better protect victims. Employers have a duty of care to safeguard their workforce. This policy affirms Bolsover District Council's commitment to upholding this responsibility.
- 1.3 Prior to this point, the policy has been the subject of formal consultation at the Council's Union Employee Consultation Committee and informally with the Council's Specialist Domestic Abuse Officer, Service Managers, Senior Leadership Team and the Council's recognised Trade Union Representatives.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

- 2.1 The Domestic Abuse Policy includes the following key components:
 - Adoption of the statutory definition of domestic abuse under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

- Recognition that domestic abuse can affect anyone—regardless of gender, sexuality, age or background—but that women and children are disproportionately affected.
- Clear guidelines for confidentiality and safe disclosure.
- Support mechanisms including time off for legal, housing or health appointments, access to counselling, and flexible working arrangements.
- Practical guidance for managers on identifying signs of abuse and supporting affected staff.
- A framework for dealing with employees who are identified as perpetrators of abuse, including the potential use of disciplinary procedures.
- Signposting to internal and external sources of support, including local helplines and domestic abuse services.

3. **Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 **Legal Compliance** – Aligns the Council’s HR practices with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and safeguarding best practices.
- 3.2 **Staff Wellbeing** – Promotes a supportive and trauma-informed workplace culture, improving morale, retention, and wellbeing.
- 3.3 **Organisational Reputation** – Demonstrates the Council’s commitment to social responsibility, equality, and community safety.

4. **Conclusion**

The implementation of this policy will reinforce Bolsover District Council’s standing as a responsible and compassionate employer. It ensures appropriate procedures and protections are in place to address a complex and sensitive issue affecting staff and the wider community.

5. **Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 Not adopting a formal policy would leave a significant gap in the Council’s ability to appropriately support staff, respond to safeguarding concerns, and mitigate risks to wellbeing and performance. A lack of clear guidance could also expose the organisation to reputational and legal risks.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Council approves the Domestic Abuse Policy.
2. That the HR Team takes steps to raise awareness of the policy among staff and management and provides training on how to identify and respond to domestic abuse in the workplace.

Approved by Councillor Clive Moesby, Portfolio Holder for Resources

IMPLICATIONS:

<u>Finance and Risk</u> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Details: On behalf of the Section 151 Officer
<u>Legal (including Data Protection)</u> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Details: Ensures compliance with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council
<u>Staffing</u> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Details: The policy will ensure any instances of domestic abuse are managed consistently and employees will receive the appropriate support. On behalf of the Head of Paid Service
<u>Equality and Diversity, and Consultation</u> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Details: The policy adds to the Council's many policies aimed at ensuring our staff are fully supported. The policy has been subject to informal and formal consultation.
<u>Environment</u> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment. Details:

DECISION INFORMATION:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies:</i>	
Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Revenue (a) Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or (b) Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.	(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input type="checkbox"/>

