

Committee: Establishment Committee	Date: 4 February 2016
Subject: Domestic Abuse and Stalking Policy	Public
Report of: Director of Human Resources	For Decision
Report Author: Colette Hawkins	

Summary

The City of London Corporation has developed this policy as part of its suite of policies to support employees' health and wellbeing at work. It covers both the internal and external support available to employees experiencing domestic abuse and stalking. The policy is intended to support the City Corporation's outward focussed work with other agencies to support victims of domestic abuse and stalking.

Recommendation

Members are asked to approve the Domestic Abuse and Stalking Policy attached as Appendix 1.

Main Report

Background

1. In relation to Domestic Abuse it is estimated that in England and Wales one in four women in England and Wales, and one in six men, will suffer domestic abuse at some time in their life (Crime Survey for England and Wales, 2013/14). This may have an impact in the workplace in terms of employee wellbeing and absence, particularly if the victim and perpetrator are both employees.
2. In relation to Stalking the Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2013) found that one in six women, and one in twelve men, will experience stalking in their life. 50% of victims have curtailed or stopped work due to stalking; 75% of domestic violence stalkers will turn up in the workplace of their victim; and 79% of domestic violence stalkers will use work resources to target their victims (ONS, 2013).
3. Domestic abuse and stalking is likely to have a significant effect on someone's physical and mental wellbeing. It can also potentially affect attendance and presenteeism, staff turnover and mental wellbeing at work. Workplace teams may also be affected as they may be caught up in a colleague's distress or in supporting them to move on.
4. The City of London Corporation has a legal responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees, although there is no legal obligation that an

employer has to take action if it becomes aware that an employee is suffering domestic violence.

Current Position

5. The City Corporation's Code of Conduct; Communications and Information Systems Use; Disciplinary Procedure; Grievance Procedure; and Social Media Policy for employees' set out the conduct required from all staff at work. These policies allow managers to manage misconduct and behavioural issues.
6. Currently there is no specific policy in place to provide support and guidance to victims, or managers in relation to domestic abuse, harassment and stalking.
7. To support the values Lead Empower Trust, the strategy in relation to HR policy review and development is to streamline and simplify over complex and prescriptive policies. However it is recognised that as an employer we need to support the City Corporation's role in public health initiatives and partnership working. We have therefore developed a policy to clarify our stance on these issues as an employer. Managers' guidance has also been developed in order that managers can identify and support employees who may be victims of domestic abuse or stalking.
8. The City Corporation has a duty of care to all of its employees and should take all steps which are reasonably possible to ensure their health, safety and wellbeing. This is not only for those who are the victim in these situations but also other staff in the workplace.
9. Although no formal monitoring is undertaken, over the last couple of years the City Corporation has had four cases of employees who were the victim of domestic abuse or stalking. Whilst all appropriate actions were taken to support the individuals, the cases did highlight that a clear policy and associated guidance for managers would have been helpful.
10. Staff who are affected by domestic abuse or stalking and seek help will be given reasonable support by the City Corporation, however it should be noted that many people experiencing domestic abuse or stalking may not wish to make it known.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

11. The development of the City Corporation's policy will demonstrate its commitment to our staff by recognising and supporting victims of domestic abuse through the provision of a safe working environment, information and help where appropriate.
12. The introduction of this policy aligns with the Safer City Partnership strategic plan 2014-17 and their work to raise the profile of domestic abuse, harassment and stalking across all organisations within London.
13. Colleagues from Town Clerks, Comptrollers and City Solicitors, Community and Children's Services, Community Safety team, representatives from the six Staff

Networks and the Trade Unions have been consulted on the development of this policy. Chief Officers and managers within the business were also consulted on its development through HR Business Partners.

Conclusion

14. The City Corporation has a duty of care to support all of its employees, this policy provides advice and guidance on both external and internal support available to any employee who is affected by domestic violence, harassment and / or stalking.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Domestic Abuse and Stalking Policy

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