



Gender Based Violence Guidance

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1. Introduction

This guidance accompanies the Gender Based Violence policy and gives fuller details on the application of the policy.

2. Definition of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

As detailed in the policy GBV can include domestic abuse, sexual harassment, stalking, sexual assault and rape and so-called 'honour based' violence with an explanation of each detailed below (this is not an exhaustive list): -

-Domestic abuse is a pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and/or violent behaviour, including sexual violence by a partner or ex-partner.

-Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which is intended to, or has the effect of, violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment e.g. unwelcome physical contact, sexual comments, inappropriate and sexist jokes, and displaying sexually graphic pictures.

-Stalking is a persistent and unwanted attention that aims to curtail freedom. It is defined as two or more incidents of behaviour directed towards a victim-survivor which causes physical or psychological harm, or fear for the safety of the victim-survivor e.g. following a person, watching or spying on them or forcing contact with them through any means, including social media.

-Sexual assault can be defined as any behaviour of a sexual nature which is unwanted and that takes place without consent or any reasonable belief of consent. Sexual assault covers sexual contact and behaviour that is unwanted, ranging from touching and sexual activity involving physical contact to penetration. Rape is when any person with a penis penetrates another person (whether intentionally or recklessly) against their will, either vaginally, anally or orally.

-So-called 'honour based' violence is a form of violence and abuse that is committed to protect family and community honour. It is the belief that family and community honour is rooted in women's behaviour, appearance and sexuality and is to be guarded by men. It includes restricting women from doing certain things that are perceived as going against culture, family, community and religion, and can involve physically and sexually harming a woman, forcing marriage and isolating them from friends and family. It can also involve controlling finances, preventing women from learning the language of their new country, restricting movement and using their immigration status to threaten to send them away.

The policy and guidance apply to all employees of the Council. Whilst it is acknowledged that GBV is experienced mostly by women (with research showing that to be the case) any person of any gender identity or sexual orientation can experience this.

It should be noted that there is a link between GBV and women's inequality in the labour market. This is because GBV is a cause and consequence of gender inequality. Labour market and economic inequality reduces women's financial independence, restricts choices in employment and creates a conducive context for GBV (see appendix 8 for further details).

3. Why GBV is a Workplace Issue

As well as being societal issue GBV is also a significant employment issue, with it occurring both out with and within the workplace. Its effects can often mean that employees can develop a poor record of attendance, poor timekeeping, can be less productive with lower standards of work and poorer performance and a disciplinary record. This can have a bearing on their morale, job prospects, and career progression as well as the efficiency of the organisation including causing higher labour turnover.

GBV can also impact on the wider workforce. For instance, if an employee experiencing abuse is absent or has poorer work standards at a time when workplaces are already stretched, colleagues can become resentful of the additional work demands of covering for a colleague, especially if they are unaware of the reason for this.

Colleagues can also feel distracted from their work if they are trying to protect the victim from unwanted calls or contacts. They may also witness a form of GBV and feel helpless and unsure about how to intervene to support a colleague. In addition, there may be a negative impact on their mental health, especially if they have had previous experience themselves of GBV.

The job of a person experiencing GBV is often crucial to them. The workplace can be a haven from the abuse and vital for the victim's mental health and wellbeing. If a person is to leave an abusive situation then a regular income and economic security can be vital. The loss of employment can have a devastating effect on a person experiencing GBV.

For these reasons it makes most sense to ensure the best possible workplace arrangements are in place to provide appropriate support to people experiencing GBV and to minimise the impact on the workplace.

4. Process for disclosure of GBV by an employee to a manager

An employee who is a victim-survivor of GBV can inform their line manager or another appropriate manager of their experience (assuming they are comfortable and able to do this). Where this occurs the line manager, or another appropriate manager, should arrange to meet with the employee as soon as practicable.

Under the Council's Guiding Principles line managers have a duty to support staff and to put arrangements in place that facilitate employee resilience and wellbeing. As such, when a disclosure or allegation of GBV is brought to the attention of a manager it should be acted on promptly. Managers should believe an employee if they disclose that they are experiencing GBV and not ask for proof. Managers must be aware of the parameters of their role and make clear to an employee what they can and cannot provide, with the manager's role not being to try to resolve the employee's GBV issue.

Note: Where an employee is not comfortable disclosing GBV to their manager (or another manager), they can raise this in the first instance with:

- a People and Organisation Adviser, who will be able to have an initial discussion with the employee on a confidential basis in relation to available support. This can be requested by contacting the HR Service Centre on 01224-523939 and asking for the Employee Relations team or by e-mailing the Employee Relations team at employeerelations@aberdeencity.gov.uk

or
- one of the Council's designated mental health first aiders (who should be able to offer support, and who can also contact the Employee Relations team on the employee's behalf, as above, if the employee's wishes that)

or
- their trade union representative, where they are a union member, (who should be able to offer support, and who can also contact the Employee Relations team on the employee's behalf, as above, if the employee's wishes that)

Where a disclosure is made to a manager, the approach taken by the manager at the meeting with the employee should be as follows: -

- a. Suggest that you go somewhere quiet and comfortable, away from the office/desk if possible. Acknowledge the courage of the employee and how difficult it must be to talk about a GBV issue.
- b. Confirm the confidentiality of the disclosure. As a guide for managers, information should only be disclosed to another person if it is necessary in providing help and support, and with the prior agreement of the employee who has disclosed it. An exception to this is if the manager believes there may be a risk of harm to others, including harm to children.
- c. Treat employees with respect and dignity. Be non-judgemental, supportive and sympathetic. Reassure them that the abuse is not their fault, that no-one deserves to be abused and acknowledge that it is not always easy to know what to do.
- d. Be aware of some of the barriers to disclosure for employees, e.g. not recognising/wanting to recognise their experience as abusive, fear of bringing shame or dishonour to their family, fear that they might lose their children, belief that the abuse is their fault, concerns about confidentiality.
- e. Take account of any additional cultural or equality related needs of the employee. For instance, employees of a particular race, religion or sexual orientation may have specific needs, as may transgender employees or those with a disability. Advice on this is available from People and Organisational Development, as required.
- f. Carry out a work-place risk assessment to minimise any potential risk to the victim-survivor, with appropriate input from the employee (see appendix 2 for more details).
- g. From the risk assessment to consider what steps might be necessary to ensure the employee remains safe in the workplace (safety planning), in case the perpetrator tries to harass or harm them at work (see list of suggested measures at appendix 4). To also go over what general work-related support can be provided by the Council (also shown in appendix 4).
- h. Encourage the employee to seek advice and support from relevant external agencies, signposting them as appropriate (see list at appendix 5 of relevant organisations).
- i. It is important to remember that the impact of GBV can be long term. Managers should be aware that court processes can take some time to complete, and that abuse may continue long after a relationship with a

perpetrator has ended, hence safety and general support measures may be needed for some time, and different support may be needed at various times.

- j. Avoid language that indicates blame or fault. Also, well-meaning comments intended to be supportive and sympathetic can sometimes have the opposite effect resulting in the victim-survivor feeling not believed, judged, isolated and reluctant to share further information e.g. avoid minimising the employee's experience by saying things like 'it's not that bad' or 'it could be worse'. Care is therefore needed in the language used at the meeting.
- k. Follow up in writing (handing the letter to the employee) setting out any safety-related and other support measures agreed (see template letter at appendix 6). The letter is copied to the HR Service Centre for the employee's personal file, with no other copies to be held.

Managers should complete a record of each disclosure of GBV for statistical purposes using the form at appendix 7. The employee's name and specific details of the disclosure are not entered on the form – only the Cluster, Function and date. The information will be used to monitor the usage of the policy and guidance. The forms require to be kept confidential. Once completed the manager will pass the form to the Employee Relations Team in People and Organisational Development (e-mail employeerelations@aberdeencity.gov.uk) for appropriate collation/storing of this data.

5. Other ways GBV can come to light

It may be the case that an employee experiencing GBV does not wish to tell anyone at work of their situation or approach their manager with their problem(s) in the first instance or at all.

It could be that a manager becomes aware of the situation through the identification of possible signs of GBV (see list at appendix 1). It would then be for the relevant manager to initiate a conversation on a general level with the employee who may be experiencing GBV. The aim of starting the conversation is to be supportive rather than to encourage disclosure. Respecting the employee's boundaries and privacy is essential. If a disclosure is made, then the above-mentioned process can then be followed, assuming the employee wishes that, to identify and implement appropriate support. Questions that can be asked to start a conversation could include: -

-I've noticed that you're not yourself lately, is everything okay?

-Is everything alright at home?

-Is everything alright at work?

-Is there anything happening at work that's concerning you?

-What support do you think could be provided that might help you?

Alternatively, it could be that a manager becomes aware of the situation through the employee being subject to one of the Council's procedures e.g. performance management or attendance. If this were so, the above process for disclosure of GBV can be applied alongside/in addition to any other Council procedure. A manager can take advice from People and Organisational Development as required about a case where GBV has been a contributing factor to a performance, attendance or other issue. It may be that putting in place relevant support measures is enough to remedy any performance or attendance issue etc. Consideration can also be given to an occupational health referral where appropriate before continuing.

Where an employee who is experiencing GBV makes a colleague aware of their situation, the colleague, with the employee's consent, should make the employee's line manager (or another appropriate manager) aware so that the process above can then be followed (as long as the employee wishes to make a disclosure).

6. GBV occurring in the workplace

Where an employee is experiencing or has experienced GBV within the workplace, perpetrated by another employee, and this is brought to the attention of management, there should be a discussion between the manager and the victim employee in the first instance. The manager will ask the employee to provide a brief overview of what occurred so that they can obtain an initial understanding of the issue.

The employee will be asked to confirm to the manager that they wish it to be formally investigated and if this is the case, they will be asked to submit a complaint in writing. Consideration can be given to applying the informal part of the relevant procedure where appropriate e.g. bullying and harassment.

On receipt of the written complaint this will then be progressed through the appropriate Council procedure depending on the nature of the allegation(s) (e.g. discipline or bullying and harassment).

As part of any investigation, witnesses will be identified (where relevant) and asked to provide a statement to be used as evidence in the case.

Relevant parts of the above process for disclosure of GBV can be followed to enable the implementation of any safety or support measures in the workplace and to signpost the employee to relevant external agencies for support and advice.

An employee who witnesses an instance(s) of GBV in the workplace without it having come to management's attention, should report that to their line manager, for the manager of the victim to address the matter.

Cases being investigated will be progressed as quickly as practicable in accordance with the timescales in the appropriate Council procedure and depending on the complexity of the case.

Regardless of whether an employee has been experiencing GBV out with or within the workplace, it is important to ensure that they are not subject to any negative repercussions from raising or reporting the matter to their manager, or it coming to light in another way. This can be done through putting in place appropriate support mechanisms and ensuring that the employee is not treated differently to other employees at work.

7. Employees who do not wish to take up support

Although the Council will seek to provide a supportive environment in which an employee can raise issues relating to GBV, depending on their situation, some employees affected may refuse support or only take up partial support. Dealing with GBV is a process that can take time and there are various reasons why employees may find it difficult to seek support for example they may have pressure from family to remain silent/stay in a relationship; financial pressures may restrict their options especially if children are involved; and/or they may feel it is safer to continue in their present circumstance. It should be noted that contrary to popular belief evidence shows that individuals are likely to experience the most significant episode of violence at the point of ending an abusive relationship or once the relationship has ended.

It is the employee's choice on whether to accept support and managers should respect their decision, reassure them the Council's primary concern is for their safety and remind them that support is available if they need it in future.

Even if a manager disagrees with the decision being made by the employee regarding their situation, it is important to understand that a victim of GBV may make several attempts to change their personal circumstances before they are finally able to do so.

The role of a manager is not to deal with the issue/abuse itself but to make it clear that employees will be supported and to outline what help is available.

8. Special leave

The ability to take time off work can be crucial for victim-survivors of GBV, who may be in the process of leaving an abusive relationship or have just left one or are still in the relationship and continuing to experience GBV.

As detailed in the Gender Based Violence policy, the Council can provide employees experiencing GBV with up to 3 days paid special leave per annum. The purpose of the leave would be for time off requirements an employee may have in relation to practical arrangements directly linked to their experience of GBV.

Examples can include:

- Attending an appointment with a support organisation to seek advice in relation to domestic abuse etc.
- Meeting with a solicitor in relation to separating from an abusive partner.
- Arranging for alternative/new accommodation where it has been necessary to move home due to GBV.
- Arranging for a change of school for their children following a home move due to GBV.
- Participating in a police investigation into the GBV as the complainer/witness.

It should be noted that the above is not an exhaustive list.

The normal process for applying and authorising special leave is as follows: -

The employee puts their request to their line manager either verbally or in writing indicating the reason for the request and the time off required. The line manager will, where necessary, discuss the request with the employee and then decide on whether to grant it. If it is to be granted the line manager will go into the Special Leave screen on the Core HR system and approve the request selecting 'Special Leave – Other' from the picklist on the system. If it is declined or only partially granted, the manager will inform the employee of the reason for that.

Note - Where an employee has not felt comfortable disclosing GBV to their manager (or another manager) and requesting special leave, they can put their special leave request(s) to People and Organisational Development by contacting the HR Service Centre on 01224-523939 and asking for the Employee Relations team or by e-mailing the Employee Relations team at employeerelations@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Alternatively, a special leave request can be raised through one of the mental health first aiders, or through the employee's trade union representative (if a member of a

union), who can then contact the Employee Relations team on the employee's behalf (assuming the employee gives their consent).

9. Employees who may be perpetrators of GBV

It is acknowledged that some Council employees may be perpetrators of GBV. The committing of GBV is viewed by the organisation as a serious matter which can have a significant bearing on a person's employment.

The following sections give guidance to managers to enable them to respond effectively in relation to perpetrators, when GBV comes to light.

Information about GBV may arise either through a perpetrating employee directly disclosing this (voluntarily or when asked by managers/colleagues) or through an allegation raised by another party (either within or out with the organisation).

Allegations may relate to GBV perpetrated outside or within the workplace.

9.1 Allegations of GBV outside of the workplace

Employees may be perpetrating various forms of GBV outside of the workplace. For example, domestic abuse, sexual violence, involvement in honour-based violence, or stalking.

Given that such conduct could constitute a criminal offence, many of these examples would likely involve criminal proceedings. However, whether criminal charges are involved or there is a conviction, this behaviour may, in some cases, lead to a disciplinary investigation against an employee because of its employment implications. Each case will be considered individually on its facts and advice should be sought from People and Organisational Development in such cases.

Perpetrating these forms of abuse could breach the Employee Code of Conduct and/or professional codes of conduct and potentially bring the Council into disrepute, especially if an allegation of GBV was not acted upon. If an employee who perpetrates GBV is a member of a regulated profession e.g. social worker, teacher etc they may be in breach of the professional standards required of them by their professional regulator. This could in turn lead to the revocation of their professional registration which could affect their ability to continue in their role with the Council. The Council may therefore make a referral to the appropriate professional body, where appropriate.

9.2 Allegations of GBV within the workplace

Employees who are perpetrating abuse might use workplace resources such as telephone or e-mail to threaten, harass or abuse current/ex-partners or others. Their behaviour might also include, for example, stalking, physical assault, sexual violence or sexual harassment.

This conduct could be dangerous for those being abused and could bring the organisation into disrepute. In such circumstances, an investigation should be considered through the appropriate Council procedure. Action may also need to be taken to minimise the potential for employees to use their position or work resources to perpetrate GBV. This may include a change of duties or withdrawing certain IT access.

9.3 What managers can do about incidents of GBV

When an incident of potential GBV is brought to the attention of a manager this should be carefully considered and acted on where appropriate. Managers should respond in the same way that they would address any other serious complaint against an employee by following the relevant Council procedure.

Where the source of the allegation is anonymous, or where the allegation relates to abuse out with the workplace which has no impact on the employee's job, it may be that the Council, as an employer, will not be able to act. However, advice from People and Organisational Development should be sought, as the circumstances of each individual case will require to be considered in order to determine whether a matter can and should be investigated as an employment issue.

The Council will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of a GBV related offence on a case-by-case basis, with the aim of addressing the matter, reducing risk and supporting change.

In some instances, it may be necessary to instigate disciplinary proceedings against an employee who has perpetrated GBV. Each case requires to be assessed to determine whether an investigation should be carried out. An allegation of GBV will not automatically result in a formal investigation.

9.4 Assessment process following disclosures or allegations

The information that managers gather through direct disclosures from employees or from allegations, will form the basis for any decision about how best to respond to the issue and identify what action may be required.

The manager should assess the potential impact of the alleged abuse on the employee's role at work to determine whether an investigation should be carried out.

When undertaking an assessment, the manager should take account of the following factors:

- The nature of the conduct and its potential bearing on the employee's job role.
- The extent to which the employee's job involves contact with vulnerable individuals or groups, and assessment of any potential risk that this might pose to them or other employees.
- Whether or not the actual/alleged actions of the employee could breach the Employee Code of Conduct or one of the professional codes e.g. SSSC and GTCS.
- Whether or not the alleged actions of the employee could bring the Council into disrepute and/or conflict with its Guiding Principles.

The manager should then weigh up the above factors to determine whether there are enough grounds to investigate.

If grounds are established, then an investigation should be carried out using the relevant Council procedure.

Whilst an investigation process is ongoing, employees alleged to be perpetrators will receive relevant support from their line manager.

9.5 Allegations of GBV where criminal proceedings are pending

Acts of GBV can constitute a criminal offence which can lead to caution, arrest, prosecution and criminal conviction. It is important therefore for managers to take account of the potential impact of any such action on a person's employment.

Where an employee has been charged or convicted of a GBV related criminal offence, disciplinary action will not be taken automatically. Each case requires to be considered individually based on whether the employee's conduct warrants action dependent on its employment implications.

The Council may initiate an internal investigation where appropriate and then decide whether there are grounds to move forward to disciplinary proceedings. Advice should be taken from People and Organisational Development.

9.6 Good practice in working with perpetrators

When responding to a direct disclosure from an employee or where it has been established that an employee has perpetrated GBV, it is important for a manager to adopt good practice. Engaging with perpetrators of GBV in a positive, respectful way does not mean excusing the abuse. This is an area that requires sensitivity and an

awareness of how this might affect the safety and wellbeing of those experiencing the abuse. The manager's response could affect the extent to which the perpetrator accepts responsibility for their behaviour and, therefore, the need to change.

Good practice principles to observe include the following:

- Being aware that some perpetrators, even when they have sought help voluntarily, are unlikely to disclose the seriousness or extent of their abuse and may minimise it or blame it on other factors e.g. alcohol or stress.

- Being clear that abuse is always unacceptable and that it may constitute criminal behaviour.

- Being clear that abusive behaviour is a choice.

- Being respectful but not colluding.

- Being aware that on some level, the perpetrator may be unhappy about their behaviour.

- Being positive; it's possible for perpetrators to change if they recognise they have a problem and take steps to reform their behaviour.

- Assisting the perpetrator to be aware of the likely costs of their continued abuse.

When a perpetrator has been identified then this must be treated confidentially. The safety of the person experiencing the abuse must be paramount and taken into consideration. Some perpetrators will want to seek assistance in changing their behaviour and should be supported in doing so e.g. using unpaid time off to allow them to attend appropriate counselling sessions or to comply with a court order to attend an abuser programme.

9.7 Providing information to perpetrators to enable change

A manager can provide details of an organisation called 'Respect' to alleged or actual perpetrators of GBV. It supports and develops effective interventions with perpetrators of abuse.

This service is open to people who are worried that their own behaviour towards a partner etc is abusive. It helps them to consider the effects of their behaviour and take the first steps to changing it. The Respect Phoneline is 0808 802 4040 and the website can be visited at: www.respectphoneline.org.uk.

9.8 Colluding with perpetrators of GBV

Where an employee is found to be assisting a perpetrator of GBV to use work resources to harass and abuse others, this will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offence and action will be taken under the disciplinary procedure.

9.9 Malicious allegations

Where there is clear evidence that an employee has made a malicious allegation that another employee is perpetrating GBV, then this again will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and action taken under the disciplinary procedure.

9.10 Victimization

Employees should not suffer victimisation as a result of making allegations (or supporting others to do so) that another employee is perpetrating GBV. Where there is clear evidence that an employee has been victimised, then this will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and action will be taken under the disciplinary procedure.

10. Confidentiality

All disclosures by a victim-survivor of GBV will be treated confidentially. The only exception to this is a situation where there is reason to believe that there may be a risk of harm to others, including harm to children. In that circumstance local child/adult protection procedures should be followed. Disclosures or allegations in relation to a perpetrator of GBV will also be treated confidentially with the same exception above applying.

11. Grievance process

If an employee is dissatisfied about the way they have been treated under the GBV policy and guidance, then they can raise a complaint under the Council's grievance procedure. Employees are encouraged to provide feedback on the policy and associated guidance to their manager.

Appendix 1

Identifying GBV

Individuals experiencing GBV can suffer a broad range of physical, emotional and other issues. Signs that an employee may be experiencing GBV can include:

- poor timekeeping without explanation
- high absenteeism rate without explanation
- uncharacteristic anxiety, depression or problems with concentration
- uncharacteristic deterioration in the quality of work performance
- the receipt of repeated upsetting calls/texts
- obsession with time
- needing regular time off for appointments
- inappropriate or excessive clothing;
- repeated injuries, or unexplained bruising or explanations that do not match the injuries displayed
- increased hours being worked for no apparent reason
- exhibiting fearful behaviour such as startled reactions
- secretive about home life
- appearing isolated from friends and family
- crying at work
- never able to attend social events
- fatigue
- substance use
- eating disorders

It is important to be aware that any of the above may arise from a range of circumstances, of which GBV may be one. This is not an exhaustive list. It should be noted that some victims may display no signs of violence or abuse.

Other ways in which GBV can exhibit itself at work can include:

- Employees receiving unplanned/unannounced visitors at work.
- They can be stalked whilst travelling to and from work or at work.
- Colleagues may be followed to or from work or subjected to questioning about how to contact the victim or where s/he can be found.
- Perpetrators could also use workplace resources such as phones, email etc to threaten, abuse their current or former partner.
- An employee may misuse their position by assisting a perpetrator to locate their partner.

Appendix 2

Risk assessment and safety planning

A risk assessment allows a manager to identify the level of risk a victim-survivor of GBV may be experiencing in the workplace. This can reduce the chance of continued abuse or violence occurring and enables the manager to ensure that the risk to the employee (and their colleagues) at work is minimised. The risk assessment should be done with the employee's involvement. The manager should explain to the employee the purpose of undertaking a risk assessment.

Ascertaining risk involves taking account of the details provided by the employee. The level of risk is likely to vary depending on whether the GBV is past or current and on what the behaviour of the perpetrator has been to date.

The risk assessment and safety plan should be documented using the form at appendix 3, with the manager indicating high, medium or low against each risk identified. The following questions can be asked of the employee to identify relevant risks: -

- Is there any immediate danger from the perpetrator?
- Have there been any threats of harm?
- Has there been any violence, (or has the behaviour been coercive)?
- How does the employee feel about the situation, are things getting any worse?
- Is there a risk to the employee's colleagues or others in the workplace?
- What is the level of security in the workplace e.g. card activated barriers, reception/security staff present?

From the risk assessment appropriate measures are identified that can be put in place to ensure the employee experiencing GBV (and their colleagues) are safe in the workplace (see list of examples of possible measures at appendix 4). The measures should help to reduce the identified risks.

The risk assessment and safety plan should be monitored and reviewed as appropriate to ensure that it is still relevant and up-to date.

Appendix 3

Risk Assessment and Safety Planning form - Gender Based Violence - Confidential

Employee's Name	_____	Manager's Name	_____
Job Title	_____	Job Title	_____
Cluster	_____	Cluster	_____
Function	_____	Function	_____

What are the potential risks?	Level of Risk? - High, Medium, or Low	Measures already in place to reduce risk	Further measures required to be put in place to reduce risk	To be applied by whom and when?

Employee's Signature	_____	Manager's Signature	_____
Date	_____	Date	_____

Notes:

Any risks to the employee's team or wider workforce should also be listed on the form.

The assessment of risk and safety plan should be monitored, reviewed and updated if necessary

Once completed, this form should be forwarded to the HR Service Centre to be held confidentially in the employee's personal file (it can be accessed by the manager when it is required). No other copies should be held. E-mails with the form attached should be deleted.

Appendix 4

Possible measures that a manager can take to ensure an employee experiencing GBV remains safe in the workplace.

For some employees the workplace is a haven and the only place that offers routes to safety. Managers should support the employee in a sympathetic, non-judgemental way and take reasonable measures to mitigate and reduce the potential risk to employees and colleagues. For example:

- a. Divert phone calls or change phone extension number if employee is receiving harassing calls.
- b. Agree with the employee what, if anything, to tell colleagues and how they should respond if the perpetrator of GBV telephones or visits the workplace.
- c. Ensure the employee does not work alone or in an isolated area and check that the employee has arrangements for getting safely to and from home.
- d. Keep a record of any incidents of abuse in the workplace, including persistent telephone calls, emails or visits to the workplace.
- e. Allow the employee to use an assumed name at work where practical, and depending on the terms of any professional registration (e.g. teacher, lawyer etc.)
- f. If the perpetrator has an employee's work email, consider arranging a block on e-mails from that person to help shield the employee from their abuser.
- g. Notify reception and security staff if the perpetrator is known to come to the workplace.
- h. Update content of personal information, such as temporary or new addresses, bank or health care details, as provided by the employee.
- i. Ask individuals to supply you with an up to date emergency contact number for a trusted friend or family member.

- j. Implement any changes to the employee's next of kin information, as provided by the employee.
- k. Where practical, consider offering a temporary or permanent change of workplace, working times/patterns.
- l. Where practical, offer changes in specific duties, such as not expecting the employee to answer telephones or sit on reception.
- m. Where practical, move the employee out of public view, ensuring that they are not visible from reception points or ground floor windows.
- n. Agree a safe, confidential method of communication when the employee needs to be absent from work and consider safety implications that may arise when working alone or from home.

It is vital that employees have the chance to consider all the available options and decide for themselves how they wish to handle matters. Managers should maintain regular contact with an employee if they have disclosed GBV, to evaluate whether measures put in place are working or if any alternatives are required. Managers are expected to be available and approachable; to listen and reassure; to respond in a sensible and non-judgemental manner and to discuss how they can support the employee concerned.

Possible measures that a manager can take to provide general support to an employee experiencing GBV

- a. Make the employee aware that they can make use of the employee counselling service or the chaplaincy service.
- b. Assist employees to make best use of the flexi time scheme to help accommodate any needs they may have associated with their experience of GBV.
- c. Allow an employee to change work patterns and allow flexible or more flexible working, where this is practicable.
- d. To regularly review the employee's workload to ensure that they are coping with their duties.

- e. Agree reasonable time off for individuals to facilitate any practical arrangements e.g. attending court; attending mediation; meeting or calling a solicitor; viewing properties; meeting teachers at school; medical appointments; talking to their bank or getting advice from organisations such as Women's Aid. See section on special leave.

- f. To make the employee aware of the mental health first aider service should they experience any immediate mental health difficulties whilst at work.

Appendix 5

List of relevant external agencies an employee can contact to seek support, information or advice

Organisation	Address	Contact details	Service
Aberdeen City Council Domestic Abuse Team	74-76 Spring Gardens, Aberdeen AB11 5BW	01224 538085	Providing support for women experiencing domestic abuse.
Aberdeen Cyrenians Domestic Abuse Support & Accommodation Project (DASAP)	62 Summer Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1SD	01224 625732	Supporting women, men and families who are experiencing domestic abuse to gain safe accommodation.
Aberdeen Cyrenians Violence Against Women Project (VAW)	62 Summer Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1SD	01224 625732	Supporting women who have experienced or are currently experiencing any form of abuse, violence &/or exploitation.
Barnardos	20 Carden Place, Aberdeen, AB10 1UQ	01224 624090	Supporting disadvantaged children, young people, families and communities to help ensure that every child has the best possible start in life.

Children 1 st	36 Carden Place, Aberdeen, AB10 1UP	01224 251150	Helping families to put children first, with practical advice and support in difficult times.
Choices Aberdeen	14-20 John Street, Aberdeen, AB25 1BT	01224 624900	Promoting & supporting positive relationships in young people and vulnerable adults.
Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service Aberdeen	Aberdeen Business Centre, Willowbank Road, Aberdeen, AB11 6YG	01224 332397	Providing an independent advocacy service for people experiencing domestic abuse.
Grampian Women's Aid	25 Greenfern Road, Aberdeen, AB16 6TS	01224 593381	Providing support, information & accommodation for women & their children experiencing domestic abuse in Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire.
Police Scotland Partnership Coordination Unit		101	Providing specialist assistance in relation to Domestic Abuse victim safety.
Rape Crisis Grampian	112 Crown Street,	01224 590932 e-mail info@rapecrisisgrampian.co.uk	Offering support and information

	Aberdeen, AB11 6HJ	www.rapecrisisgrampian.co.uk	to anyone who has been raped or sexually abused.
Scottish 24-Hour Domestic Abuse Helpline		0800 027 1234	Providing information & support on all issues surrounding domestic abuse.
Forced Marriage Unit		020 7008 0151 From overseas +44 (0)20 7008 0151 Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm Out of hours 020 7008 1500 (ask for the Global Response Centre)	Contact the forced marriage Unit (FMU) if you're trying to stop a forced marriage or you need help leaving a marriage you've been forced into.
Broken Rainbow National LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline		0300 999 LGBT (5428) All 300 calls are the same price to ring as 01/02 landlines & included as part of any inclusive call minutes. Opening hours for the helpline are Mon 2pm – 8pm Wed 10am – 1pm Thur 2pm – 8pm	
Scottish Women's Aid		www.womensaid.scot Scottish Women's Aid local group directory: www.womensaid.scot/find-nearest-wagroup	Scotland's lead domestic abuse organisation working towards preventing domestic abuse and supporting victim-survivors.
Domestic Abuse and Forced		24hr service: 0800 027 1234 www.sdafmh.org.uk	Support for anyone

Marriage Helpline			experiencing domestic abuse or forced marriage, as well as their family members, friends, colleagues and professionals who support them.
Rape Crisis Scotland		Helpline from 6pm-midnight: 08088 01 0302 www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk Rape Crisis Scotland local service finder: www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/find-a-service-near-you/	Scotland's national rape crisis organisation providing helpline and email support for anyone affected by sexual violence.
Scottish Women's Rights Centre		Freephone: 08088 010 789 www.scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk	Free legal information and advice for women experiencing gender based violence.
Shakti Women's Aid		0131 475 2399 www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk	Support and information for Black and minority ethnic women, children and young people experiencing or who have experienced domestic abuse.

Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre		Helpline from Mon-Fri 10am-4pm: 0808 801 0301 www.mwrc.org.uk	Culturally sensitive signposting and support service for Muslim and ethnic minority women.
Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid		Helpline (24hrs): 0141 353 0859 www.hematgryffe.org.uk	Support to Asian, Black and minority ethnic women, children and young people.
LGBT Helpline Scotland		Helpline: 0300 123 2523	Information and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.
National LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline		Helpline: 0800 999 5428	Helpline for LGBT people, their family, friends and agencies supporting them.
Men's Advice Line – Domestic Abuse		Adviceline: 0808 801 0327	Advice and support for men experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

Appendix 6

Template letter responding to a disclosure of GBV from an employee

Dear ??

I refer to our meeting on ?? following your disclosure to me that you have been experiencing Gender-Based Violence (GBV). I am sorry to hear that you have been facing such difficult challenges at present and am glad that you have felt able to approach me to explore and identify what workplace support the Council can provide you with.

At the meeting we undertook a risk assessment to identify any risks that you may be exposed to in the workplace in relation to the GBV. From the risk assessment certain measures were identified to help ensure your safety in the workplace which will now be put in place as a safety plan, as follows: -

Enter the safety measures (see appendix 4)

In addition, we also discussed what general workplace support can be provided to you in relation to the GBV you are experiencing. Support measures identified were as follows, which again will now be put in place: -

Enter the support measures (see appendix 4)

I also encouraged you to consider seeking advice and support from relevant external organisations and signposted you to the bodies below: -

Enter the relevant external organisations (see appendix 5)

The Council is committed to creating a working environment that enables employees affected by Gender-Based Violence to feel safe and confident in seeking support and advice. As discussed, I will keep the details of our conversation confidential, in accordance with the content of the policy.

Please let me know if there is anything else the Council can do to support you. I would propose that we have a follow up meeting in ? weeks' time to review the risk assessment and the measures put in place to check that they are still appropriate and will let you know the meeting details in advance. If any concerns arise in the interim, please contact me and we can meet to discuss as required.

Yours sincerely

Name

Job Title

Notes to the manager: -

The letter must be handed to the employee – not sent or e-mailed.

A copy of the letter is to be given to the HR Service Centre for the employee's personal file - that must be the only copy held in the Council.

Pl note that the contents of this letter can be adapted as appropriate.

Appendix 7 – Gender Based Violence (GBV) – Record of Disclosure for Statistical and Monitoring Purposes

1. Which form(s) of GBV was/were disclosed? (tick appropriate box(es))

- Domestic Abuse
- Sexual Harassment
- Stalking
- Sexual Assault/Rape
- So Called 'Honour-Based' Violence
- Other (please state):

2. What action was taken as a result of the disclosure? (tick appropriate box(es))

- Risk assessment
- Safety measures
- General workplace support measures
- Signposting to support services
- Special leave
- Other (please state):

Function:

Cluster:

Date:

Once completed this form requires to be forwarded to the Employee Relations Team in People and Organisational Development by e-mailing it to employeerelations@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Appendix 8

The link between GBV and women's inequality in the labour market

Preventing GBV is intrinsically linked to addressing women's inequality in all areas of society. This is because GBV is a cause and consequence of gender inequality. Similarly, women's labour market inequality is also caused, and sustained, by wider gender inequality. Women's labour market and economic inequality reduces their financial independence, restricts their choices in employment and creates a conducive context for GBV. Financial dependence and poverty can make it harder for women experiencing violence or abuse to move on and maintain employment. Addressing women's labour market inequality is therefore a necessary step in ending GBV.

The gender pay gap is the key indicator of women's labour market inequality, and the persistently divergent experiences men and women have in the workplace, and in education, training, care and domestic labour. While there are commonalities experienced by all women at work, disabled women, BME women, Muslim women, lesbian and bi-sexual women, trans women, refugee women, young women and older women experience different, multiple barriers to participation in the labour market, and to progression within their occupation.

Socioeconomic background also has an influence on women's labour market outcomes, with working class women less likely to be represented in higher paid jobs, and more likely to be in lower paid, stereotypically female work. This can result in financial inequality or instability which diminish women's resilience and options in the face of violence.

Gender norms and stereotyping about women's capabilities and interests results in a stark segregation in the types of work that men and women do. In local government, this means women are more likely to work in homecare, admin, primary teaching, and early years and childcare, while men tend to work in IT, refuse collection and trades. A lack of quality part-time and flexible jobs, coupled with women's disproportionate responsibility for caring, finds women underrepresented in management and senior roles.

To address GBV it is essential to address gender inequality in the workplace. By advancing women's labour market equality GBV can be reduced and prevented.

The Council is a part of the 'Equally Safe at Work' employer accreditation programme, which is concerned with gender equality and violence against women. The programme involves putting in place appropriate measures to tackle gender inequality at work and gender-based violence.