

## North Kent Mind

### Domestic Violence Policy

#### 1. Statement of Commitment

North Kent Mind is committed to heightening awareness of domestic abuse and providing guidance for employees and management to address the occurrence of domestic abuse and its effects on the workplace.

North Kent Mind intends to make assistance available to employees affected by domestic abuse. This assistance may include: confidential means for coming forward for help; resource and referral information; special considerations at the workplace for employee safety; work schedule adjustments or leave necessary to obtain medical, counselling or legal assistance; and workplace relocation (if available). In responding to domestic abuse, North Kent Mind will maintain appropriate confidentiality and respect for the rights of the employee involved.

#### 2. Definition

##### 2.1 Overall Definition

For the purposes of this policy, domestic abuse is defined as:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

##### 2.2 Scope of Definition

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

**Controlling behaviour is:** a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

**Coercive behaviour is:** an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

### **3. Policy**

#### **3.1. Domestic abuse and the workplace**

It is important to promote the understanding that everyone has the right to a life free from abuse in any form. Domestic abuse is wholly unacceptable and inexcusable behaviour, and responsibility for domestic abuse lies with the perpetrator. North Kent Mind strives to create a working environment that promotes the view that abuse against people is unacceptable and that such abuse will not be condoned or made the subject of jokes which make light of it.

#### **3.2 Confidentiality**

North Kent Mind respects an employee's right to confidentiality. We recognises that employees experiencing domestic abuse normally have the right to complete confidentiality. However, in circumstances of child protection or the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse, the child protection and adult protection services may need to be involved. Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in these situations.

#### **3.3. Right to privacy**

North Kent Mind respects an employee's right to privacy in the event they do not wish to inform the company that they have experienced domestic abuse.

#### **3.4. Anti-discrimination**

North Kent Mind will not discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to domestic abuse, in terms of his or her existing employment or career development.

North Kent Mind is aware that domestic abuse victims may have performance problems such as chronic absenteeism or lower productivity as a result of domestic abuse. When addressing performance and safety issues, we will make reasonable efforts to consider all aspects of the employee's situation and / or safety issues.

#### **3.5. Absence options for employees experiencing domestic abuse**

North Kent Mind will make every effort to assist an employee experiencing domestic abuse. If an employee needs to be absent from work due to domestic abuse, the length of the absence will be determined by the individual's situation through collaboration with the employee and CEO.

Employees and managers are encouraged to first explore paid leave options that can be arranged to help the employee cope with the situation without having to take a formal unpaid leave of absence. Depending on circumstances, these options may include:

- arranging flexible work hours so the employee can seek protection, go to court, look for new housing, enter counseling, arrange child care, etc.
- considering use of sick time, job sharing, compensatory time, paid leave, informal unpaid leave, etc., particularly if requests are for relatively short periods.

### **3.5 Safety at work**

North Kent Mind undertakes to ensure the safety of its employees. We will actively provide support to employees to minimise the risk to their safety while at work, if they make it known to the trust that they are experiencing domestic abuse.

### **3.7. Providing support for employees**

North Kent Mind intends to make support available to employees involved in domestic abuse. The organisation will provide support through our managers and counselling.

This person's role is to:

- be available and approachable to employees experiencing domestic abuse
- listen, reassure and support individuals
- keep information confidential (subject to the requirements of child and adult protection)
- respond in a sensitive and non-judgemental manner
- discuss the specific steps that can be taken to help this person stay safe in the workplace
- ensure the employee is aware of the options available to them
- encourage the employee to seek the advice of other relevant agencies.