

# Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy

Reference: HR052

Document Type:	Policy
Status of Document:	Final
Version:	1.0
Date Approved:	11 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
Approved By:	Chief People & Corporate Services Officer
Publication Date:	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
Review Date:	11 <sup>th</sup> August 2026
Policy Owner:	HR Services Manager
Applies to:	All Staff
Document Location:	Corporate Records Centre
Publication:	Internal and External

## **DOCUMENT STATEMENT:**

All Translink Group Corporate Procedural Documentation Policies should be consistent in terms of development, approval, implementation, communication, control and review in line with these guidelines.



Do you need to print this document? If yes, please consider the environment; print double-sided copies and print only those pages you need using the 'Page Range' in Print Properties.

**VERSION CONTROL RECORD**

<b>Policy Owner:</b>		HR Services Manager	
<b>Main Contributors/co- authors:</b>		HR Services Manager, HR Management team, TU Safety Reps, HR Compliance & Governance Officer	
<b>Executive Sponsor:</b>		HR & Corporate Services Officer	
<b>Version Reviewed</b>	<b>Reviewed by / Consultation Sought from</b>	<b>Date of Consultation</b>	<b>Comments</b>

This is a controlled document. Whilst this document may be printed, the electronic version is maintained within the Corporate Records Centre within Sharepoint by the Policy Owner.

### 1. Introduction

Throughout this Policy, the words 'Translink' 'Company' and/or 'the Group' refer to all corporate entities under the ownership of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC). This includes the parent company and each subsidiary either individually or taken together as a group.

Translink believes it is important to have a Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy as anyone can experience domestic violence and abuse. It can take many forms and is often characterised as a personal rather than a workplace issue. However, incidences of domestic violence and abuse can spill over into a workplace and can negatively affect a victim's productivity, absenteeism and employment prospects as well as their workplace colleagues.

Given the effect of domestic violence and abuse on the workplace, it is essential that our employees are knowledgeable about the potential signs of domestic violence and abuse, and the support options available. Due to the changing nature of work, specifically as working from home and hybrid working continues, this applies to all employees regardless of their place of work.

This policy sets out Translink's commitment to recognising the existence of this issue and the steps we will take to support staff experiencing domestic violence and abuse through the provision of a safe and healthy working environment, information and help, where appropriate.

This policy has been developed by Translink in collaboration with its signatory trade unions and aims to assist all Translink employees navigate issues associated with domestic violence and abuse. It provides an overview of why this has become a pressing workplace issue, the legal obligations and the importance of drawing up and putting in place a workplace policy is a 'good first step' in supporting employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

### 2. Scope of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Acknowledge that domestic violence and abuse exists and that it can be a workplace issue
- Raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse and its impact on work
- Encourage open and transparent conversations between line managers and staff
- Provide guidance and support to our employees who are (or are reasonably believed to be) going through a difficult period in their life due to abuse.
- Educate line managers to respond appropriately to disclosures and offer timely support.
- Signpost staff to specialist services and available help

This policy provides information on the specialist help that is available within and outside the organisation.

This policy applies to all employees. As an employer, we can take small steps to support employees, for example, taking action to safeguard individuals at work and facilitating a transfer

to another office location can help staff who are victims of abuse and violence.

Translink recognises that anyone can experience domestic violence and abuse irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, race, religious or political beliefs, age or any other protected characteristic, or their seniority or role within Translink.

Translink wants to spell out a clear message that domestic abuse and violence will not be tolerated within or outside the workplace.

On occasions, throughout this policy we use the term 'victim' to refer to the individual who has been, or is being, subjected to domestic violence or abuse. However, we acknowledge that an individual may not identify as a victim and prefer to be described differently. We use the term 'perpetrator' to describe the individual who has committed, or is committing, domestic violence and abuse.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Group Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. The Chief People & Corporate Services Officer has delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation.

Overall day-to-day responsibility for the management of this policy within Translink rests with the line manager.

#### **All employees are responsible for:**

- Familiarising themselves with the contents of this policy
- Providing appropriate support to colleagues within the provisions of this policy
- Maintaining confidentiality

#### **Line managers are responsible for:**

- Being aware of physical or behavioural changes and/or performance changes that may be the result of domestic abuse and/or violence
- Being available and approachable for employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse
- Listening, reassuring, and supporting employees
- Responding in a sensitive and non-judgmental manner
- Discussing issues confidentially (\*as appropriate)
- Discussing and taking action on specific steps that can be taken to help the employee stay safe in the workplace
- Encouraging the employee to seek the advice of other relevant agencies – see [Appendix 1](#)
- Keeping in touch with employees on a regular basis that may be partly working from home and may not be in the workplace as frequently – these types of employees may not have work as a 'safe place' whilst working remotely.

### Human Resources are responsible for:

- Being aware of the support and information available in this policy
- Providing advice on the policy and signposting to additional information and support
- Working with managers, where necessary, to arrange reasonable support measures
- Advising managers on the sensitive use of performance/ attendance/ disciplinary procedures, where necessary
- Working with managers to investigate if an employee is alleged to perpetrate domestic abuse and/or violence, in the workplace.

### Trade Union Representatives are responsible for:

- Being aware of the support and information available in this policy
- Working with managers, where necessary, to arrange reasonable support measures
- Being available and approachable for employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse
- Discussing issues confidentially (\*as appropriate) with the employee and advising on any support that might be available to the employee
- Encouraging the employee to seek the advice of other relevant agencies

\* See section 6 below on 'Confidentiality'.

## 4. What is domestic violence and abuse?

Domestic violence and abuse is a criminal offence under the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and Department of Justice (DOJ) describe domestic violence and abuse as:

**“Threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.”**

Examples of domestic abuse include but are not limited to:

- Psychological, emotional or economic abuse
- Physical or sexual abuse.
- Controlling or coercive behaviour; and
- Violence or threats of violence.

**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.’

There are different forms of abuse, but it is always about the abuser having control over their victims. Domestic violence and abuse can involve, among other things, exploitation, subordination, manipulation, humiliation, harassment (including online harassment), isolation or intimidation. It is extremely serious and may result in criminal proceedings.

This definition is not limited to any one gender or ethnic group, acknowledging that domestic abuse and violence can affect anyone.

There are different forms of abuse, but it is always about the abuser having control over their victims. A non-exhaustive list of examples of forms of abuse can be found below.

### **Emotional Abuse**

If your partner or relative:

- Belittles you, or puts you down
- Blames you for the abuse or arguments
- Denies or downplays the abuse is happening
- Isolates you from your family or friends
- Stops you going to college or work
- Makes unreasonable demands for your attention
- Accuses you of flirting or having affairs
- Tells you what to wear, who to see, where to go or what to think
- Controls your money, or does not give you enough to buy food or other essentials
- Monitors your communications and social media, shares photos or videos of you without your consent, or uses GPS locators to know where you are

### **Threats and Intimidation**

If your partner or relative:

- Threatens to hurt or kill you
- Destroys things that belong to you
- Stand over you, invade your personal space
- Threaten to kill themselves or the children
- Harasses or follows you including showing up to places they know you will be such as your public workplace, gym, the local supermarket by your house
- Creates fake social media profiles to contact you, especially when you have blocked them on various platforms

### **Physical Abuse**

If your partner or relative:

- Slaps, hits or punches you
- Pushes or shoves you
- Bites or kicks you
- Burns you
- Throws things at you
- Chokes you, applies pressure to your neck/throat

### **Sexual Abuse**

If your partner or relative:

- Touches you in a way you do not to be touched
- Makes unwanted sexual demands
- Hurts you during sex
- Pressures you to have unsafe sex – e.g., not using a condom
- Pressures you to have sex (A partner or relative having sex with you when you do not want to, is rape)

Some behaviors in the list above are associated with stalking, which is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland under the Protection from Stalking Act 2022, and Non-Fatal Strangulation which is an offence in Northern Ireland the Justice (Sexual Offences & Human Trafficking) (NI) Act 2022.

The signs of domestic violence and abuse are not always visible or obvious, and individuals experiencing this may attempt to hide the effects of that violence and abuse. They may also provide an explanation for any signs that are apparent to colleagues or be reluctant to engage in conversation. Some victims may not identify their experiences as those of domestic violence and abuse at all.

## **5. Identifying the signs**

The signs of domestic violence and abuse are not always visible or obvious, and individuals experiencing this may attempt to hide the effects of that violence and abuse. They may also provide an explanation for any signs that are apparent to colleagues or be reluctant to engage in conversation. Some victims may not identify their experiences as those of domestic violence and abuse at all.

We encourage staff to be familiar with some of the signs of domestic violence and abuse, while recognising that these signs may also be indicative of other issues. These signs may include but are not limited to:

- Persistent lateness, absenteeism or presenteeism.
- Uncharacteristic behaviour.
- Spending an increased number of hours at work for no obvious reason.
- Reduced quantity or quality of work.
- Regular interruptions during the working day – repeated calls or emails.
- Changes in an employee's appearance, for example wearing long sleeved clothing to cover up.
- Withdrawal from or lack of participation in work-related meetings and events.
- Repeated injuries, or unexplained bruising or explanations that do not fit the injuries displayed.

We acknowledge that any staff member can experience domestic violence and abuse, irrespective of their seniority or role within the organisation. Whatever the individual's role we

recognise that this can affect their ability to concentrate and perform at work with the potential of capability, absence or conduct issues arising. In these circumstances, we encourage individuals to let their manager know so that adjustments to our usual procedures can be put in place, where appropriate.

We want all our staff members to be able to remain in and be productive at work and are particularly keen to provide support to staff members who may be at risk. We will seek to find ways to help these individuals to remain in work. If a perpetrator contacts our workplace and attempts to undermine a staff member's name, position or reputation, we will speak with the staff member directly and discuss with them how we can protect their position.

### **5.1 Record Keeping**

Any record made under this policy and procedure will be held securely and in accordance with the Translink Data Protection Policy, the Staff Privacy Notice and the Retention and Disposal Policy.

## **6. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality must be maintained by any member of staff who is involved with a case of an employee experiencing domestic violence and/or abuse.

It may not always be possible to keep information provided about domestic violence or abuse confidential, as the information may need to be shared to access the support systems available offering the best assistance for the employee. In this instance, information may be shared with the express permission of the victim. Maintaining confidentiality is not about keeping secrets, it is about limiting discussion and information to those involved in managing and supporting a case.

All information required and/or agreed to be shared will be treated with sensitivity and respect at all times. Information will only be shared with those who need or have been agreed with the employee, to be informed or to seek professional guidance in supporting the employee.

We will keep records of any incidents at work related to domestic violence and abuse (e.g. persistent telephone calls or visits) and note any actions taken. We will also keep a record of any reports of domestic violence and abuse. These records will be handled confidentially in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and will not form part of a victim's personnel record.

There may be occasions where there is a need to share information to safeguard the employee and/or others from a serious risk, and information may be shared more widely internally and externally, even where consent has not been given. Examples of this may include where:

- There is a serious risk to workplace and/or public safety; or
- The risk to the victim of the abuse and violence are considered as so high that there is significant possibility of very serious harm or that their life is in immediate risk; or
- There is a reason to suspect that children, young people or vulnerable adults may be at risk.

### 7. Encouraging Open and Honest Conversations

Translink fosters a supportive work culture in which colleagues are encouraged and feel comfortable having open conversations about domestic violence and abuse without fear of stigma or harassment. We will treat all reports of domestic violence and abuse seriously.

We don't expect our employees and managers to be experts on domestic violence and abuse, but by raising awareness and encouraging open and honest conversations about this matter, Translink aims to provide support to employees impacted by it.

Anyone affected by domestic violence and abuse should feel confident to speak with their line manager, or a member of Human Resources or their trade union representative where appropriate, about the support they need in relation to work.

They are encouraged to:

- Talk to their line manager about their situation and what support could be offered to help them
- Access the support and guidance available from those listed in [Appendix 1](#)
- Agree next steps with their manager, and where appropriate, what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if the abuser telephones or visits their work location; and
- Ensure their emergency contacts and next of kin details are up to date, should we be unable to contact them for any reason

Employees who work from home, may lack a safe space away from the perpetrator of the domestic violence and abuse. In addition, domestic violence and abuse may extend to the workplace itself, as the perpetrator may harass the victim, and/or their colleagues at work (for example, by attending the workplace in person or by telephoning or sending messages to the workplace).

In circumstances, where an individual normally works from a remote location, and we have genuine concerns that they may be experiencing domestic violence and abuse, we will seek to involve the individual in regular contact via telephone or video call. The frequency of such contact may depend on the situation. If contact is lost, we will consider what steps may be appropriate in the circumstances.

### 8. Support and Adjustments

We recognise that there is support we can offer to help victims of domestic abuse at work. While victims' needs will vary, we are committed to offering the following where possible and appropriate in the circumstances:

- Time off work to deal with issues such as moving to a safe house, refuge or new home
- Temporary adjustments to work patterns, hours or duties.
- Safe methods of communication
- An agreed code word or hand signal, so an individual can discreetly alert colleagues that they are experiencing domestic abuse.
- A quiet space to make and receive confidential telephone calls during working hours.

- Access to counselling.
- Removal of the victim's work contact details from our company website and other public platforms.
- Temporary redeployment to another role or work location.
- Access to the office when the individual would otherwise be working from home.
- Changes to office-based seating arrangements to ensure that a victim is sitting in a safe place and not in an isolated area on their own.
- Payment of wages into a different bank account

This list is not exhaustive, and we encourage staff members to let their line managers know what other arrangements or adjustments may be helpful given their circumstances. Decisions about what support can be offered will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the needs of the victim and business requirements.

Translink is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all our staff and will consider any aspects of the working environment that may negatively affect those experiencing domestic violence and abuse. This can include conducting risk assessments, identifying and addressing specific risks to the health and well-being of those experiencing domestic violence and abuse, including those risks where an individual works from a remote location, such as home.

This policy will be promoted to raise awareness and knowledge throughout the organisation.

### **9. Domestic Violence or Abuse where Employees are Working Together**

Where the victim and perpetrator both work for us, we will discuss appropriate steps with the victim and consider whether a temporary change of role or relocation to a different workplace may be appropriate.

There may be occasions when an investigation in the workplace is required and the appropriate policy will be applied.

In circumstances where an employee is found to have either maliciously or deliberately made a false allegation of domestic violence and abuse, we will consider what action, if any, is appropriate.

Where a staff member discloses their violent and abusive behaviour to us, we will engage with that individual to identify sources of external help and support. We encourage all staff members to address their abusive behaviours of any kind and recognise that change may only be possible with the provision of external help.

### **10. Free Travel for Non-Employees Fleeing Domestic Abuse/Violence**

Free travel for non-Translink employees who are suffering from domestic abuse and/or violence is available on bus/rail services, to enable them to go to a refuge or emergency accommodation. This can be arranged through local Women's Aid groups or the NI Housing Executive.

Travel will be by Ulsterbus or NI Railways between stated Translink stations. Tickets can be attained by presenting a completed form from Women's Aid, the NI Housing Executive or the

---

24hr Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline (See [Appendix 1](#) for details).

### **11. Related Policies**

- Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Employee Privacy Notice
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Retention and Disposal Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Employee Charter
- Hybrid Working Policy

## APPENDIX 1 Support Options Available

While we are committed to supporting victims of domestic violence and abuse at work, we are not experts and recognise that not all staff members may feel comfortable speaking with their line manager or a colleague about domestic violence and abuse. The following offer a range of help and support.

Organisation	What they do	Contact Information																				
<b>Police</b>	Emergency Line	Tel: 999 (If you can't speak, press 55 to let police know it is an emergency)																				
<b>Crimestoppers</b>	Confidential reporting line	Tel: 101 (If you can't speak, press 55 to let police know it is an emergency)  Tel: 0800 555 111																				
<b>Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline</b>	24-hour support and information to those affected by Domestic and Sexual Abuse across Northern Ireland.	Freephone: 0808 802 1414 Email: <a href="mailto:help@dsahelpline.org">help@dsahelpline.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.dsahelpline.org">www.dsahelpline.org</a>																				
<b>Women's Aid Federation NI</b>	A voluntary organisation challenging domestic abuse and provides specialist support to women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse in Northern Ireland  Women's Aid provides various specialist services to women and their children including emergency refuge accommodation,  Contact your local Women's Aid directly for assistance.	Tel: 028 90 249 041 Email: <a href="mailto:info@womensaidni.org">info@womensaidni.org</a> Website: <a href="http://womensaidni.org">womensaidni.org</a>  (Local contact numbers and addresses available on their website)																				
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Local Women's Aid Groups</th> <th>Telephone Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne &amp; Newtownabbey</td> <td>028 2563 2136</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Armagh &amp; Down</td> <td>028 3025 0765</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Belfast &amp; Lisburn</td> <td>028 9066 6049</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Causeway &amp; Mid Ulster (Mid-Ulster Office)</td> <td>028 8676 9300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Causeway &amp; Mid Ulster (Causeway Office)</td> <td>028 7035 6573</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fermanagh</td> <td>028 6632 8898</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Foyle</td> <td>028 7141 6800</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North Down &amp; Ards</td> <td>028 9127 3196</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Omagh</td> <td>028 8224 1414</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Local Women's Aid Groups	Telephone Number	Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne & Newtownabbey	028 2563 2136	Armagh & Down	028 3025 0765	Belfast & Lisburn	028 9066 6049	Causeway & Mid Ulster (Mid-Ulster Office)	028 8676 9300	Causeway & Mid Ulster (Causeway Office)	028 7035 6573	Fermanagh	028 6632 8898	Foyle	028 7141 6800	North Down & Ards	028 9127 3196	Omagh	028 8224 1414
Local Women's Aid Groups	Telephone Number																					
Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne & Newtownabbey	028 2563 2136																					
Armagh & Down	028 3025 0765																					
Belfast & Lisburn	028 9066 6049																					
Causeway & Mid Ulster (Mid-Ulster Office)	028 8676 9300																					
Causeway & Mid Ulster (Causeway Office)	028 7035 6573																					
Fermanagh	028 6632 8898																					
Foyle	028 7141 6800																					
North Down & Ards	028 9127 3196																					
Omagh	028 8224 1414																					
<b>Men's Advisory Project (MAP)</b>	Provides confidential support and counselling services for men experiencing domestic abuse.	Tel: 028 90 241 929 (Belfast) Tel: 028 71 160 001 (Foyle) Email: <a href="mailto:info@mapni.co.uk">info@mapni.co.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.mapni.co.uk">www.mapni.co.uk</a>																				
<b>Nexus NI</b>	Work across Northern Ireland to respond to the needs of adults who have experienced sexual abuse, violence or rape by providing counselling and support services and increasing awareness of the issues.	Tel: 028 90 326 803 Email: <a href="mailto:info@nexusni.org">info@nexusni.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.nexusni.org">www.nexusni.org</a>																				

<b>Cara Friend</b>	An organisation dedicated to supporting, empowering, educating, and offering friendship to everyone in the LGBT community in Northern Ireland.	Tel: 028 90 890 202 Email: <a href="mailto:admin@cara-friend.org.uk">admin@cara-friend.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.cara-friend.org.uk">www.cara-friend.org.uk</a>
<b>Respect</b>	A pioneering domestic abuse organisation developing safe, effective work with male perpetrators, male victims and young people who use violence	Website: <a href="http://www.respect.uk.net">www.respect.uk.net</a>
<b>The Rainbow Project</b>	A health organisation that works to improve the physical, mental and emotional health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual people (LGBTQIA+) and their families in Northern Ireland	Tel: 028 9031 9030 (Belfast) Tel: 028 71283030 (Foyle) Website: <a href="http://www.rainbow-project.org">www.rainbow-project.org</a> Email: <a href="mailto:info@rainbow-project.org">info@rainbow-project.org</a>
<b>Victim Support NI</b>	A charity which helps people affected by crime	UK Support line: 0808 168 9111 Tel: 028 90 243 133 (Belfast) Tel: 028 71 370 086 (Foyle) Email: <a href="mailto:info@victimsupportni.org.uk">info@victimsupportni.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.victimsupportni.com">www.victimsupportni.com</a>
<b>Relate</b>	Provides relationship support through counselling for couples, families, young people and individuals, sex therapy, mediation and training courses.	Tel: 028 90 323454 Email: <a href="mailto:office@relateni.org">office@relateni.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.relateni.org">http://www.relateni.org</a>
<b>The CITRAH Foundation</b>	A Christian drop-in centre providing support, counselling and information for individuals seeking help in a crisis. They are also a refuge for women and their families who find they are homeless due to an abusive situation.	Tel: 028 9335 1199 Email: <a href="mailto:info@cithrah.org.uk">info@cithrah.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.cithrah.org.uk">The Cithrah Foundation – Providing support and individuals and families in crisis</a>
<b>Bright Sky</b>	A free app for anyone experiencing domestic abuse, which has a UK-wide directory of specialist domestic abuse support services. It also has content to help you understand if you or someone else is at risk.	Available on android or Apple