

Gender-Based Violence (often referred to as Violence Against Women) covers a range of abuse experienced mostly by women and perpetrated mainly by men. **Although primarily experienced by women, all genders can experience abuse. This policy applies to all employees regardless of gender.**

We have adopted the Scottish Government definition of Gender-Based Violence which is:

- *physical, sexual or psychological violence occurring in the family (including children and young people), within the general community or in institutions, including domestic abuse, rape, and incest;*
- *sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation in any public or private space, including work;*
- *commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution, lap dancing, stripping, pornography and trafficking;*
- *child sexual abuse, including familial sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation and online abuse;*
- *so called 'honour based' violence, including dowry related violence, female genital mutilation, forced and child marriages, and 'honour' crime.*

We're committed to creating an environment where employees feel safe to tell us about their experience of Gender-Based Violence. This will help us to provide support and increase safety for the employee and their colleagues. However, we do understand employees might not wish to share this information and should not feel pressured into sharing this.

By having a clear Policy and providing supporting guidance we aim to:

- Reassure employees affected by Gender-Based Violence that they will be listened to and supported
- Provide information about the types of support available to employees affected by Gender-Based Violence
- Raise awareness of Gender-Based Violence as a serious health and social issue highlighting its hidden nature and the impact on those affected by it
- Recognise that these impacts can also have implications on the workplace including an effect on health and wellbeing, which may also affect attendance, performance and productivity and can also impact on colleagues
- Emphasise that the Council will not tolerate behaviour in and out of the workplace that conflicts with an employee's role in the Council

Although Gender-Based Violence can be experienced by any gender, it does have a disproportionate impact on women and girls and is an indicator of gender inequality.

Providing support through this policy and guidance will help us to meet our legislative obligations to promote gender equality under the Equality Act 2010.

Our Approach

We will offer practical support. This will look different depending on the situation, but examples of support are:

- appropriate support and action from your manager to facilitate your personal safety at work
- appropriate time off work to attend related appointments
- consideration for a transfer to another work location or more flexible working
- an advance of pay where finances are challenging due to Gender-Based Violence
- access to counselling support through your manager if accessing through self-referral is difficult
- investigation by management if gender-based violence takes place in connection to work, with appropriate action
- understanding if this has impacted your ability to attend work regularly
- confidentiality with discussion of who else needs to be involved - like HR - to progress appropriate support.

Employees who have a concern about the safety and/or wellbeing of colleagues in the workplace are encouraged to bring this to the attention of a manager.

Further Guidance

Gender-Based Violence Guidance pages on HR Online

Bullying and Harassment Guidance pages on HR Online

CC01 Code of Conduct for Council Employees

WB01 Supporting Mental Wellbeing at Work Policy

OHS-P-01 Fife Council Health & Safety Policy

Produced by Fife Council Human Resources Service

*Date: March 2021 Issue Number: 1.0
Agreed at JNCF on 23rd March 2021*