

**Meeting: Cabinet**

**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

**Wards Affected: All wards**

**Report Title: Domestic Abuse Charter for Employees**

**Is the decision a key decision? No**

**When does the decision need to be implemented? 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

**Executive Lead Contact Details:** Christine Carter, Cabinet Member for Corporate and Community Services, (01803) 207087, [Christine.Carter@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:Christine.Carter@torbay.gov.uk)

**Supporting Officer Contact Details:** Anne-Marie Bond, Director of Corporate Services, (01803) 207160, [Anne-marie.bond@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:Anne-marie.bond@torbay.gov.uk)

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## **1. Proposal and Introduction**

- 1.1 The GMB Trade Union has developed a Charter for employers with recommended actions to support employees who may be experiencing Domestic Abuse. GMB has recommended that Torbay Council adopt the Charter and sign-up to the pledges within it.
- 1.2 The Charter supports the work that Torbay Council is doing in regard to the wellbeing of its workforce and raising awareness of Domestic Abuse. This also supports the Council's wider corporate priorities in working with and supporting our communities.

## **2. Reason for Proposal and associated financial commitments**

- 2.1 Torbay Council is an employer who cares about the impact of Domestic Abuse on its' employees. The introduction of the Charter will provide a strategic approach in supporting this commitment and an overarching framework of actions in which to demonstrate this.
  - 2.2 The Charter sets out some practical actions to support employees who are experiencing Domestic Abuse. These actions will be delivered by the Staff Wellbeing Group as part of their action plan.
  - 2.3 There are no direct financial implications in regard to the proposals contained within this report.
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### **3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision**

- (i) that the Domestic Abuse Charter and pledge set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved.
- (ii) that all Councillors take an active role in supporting and promoting Domestic Abuse awareness across the Council's workforce.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: GMB Domestic Abuse Charter.

Appendix 2: Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy

### **Background Documents**

None

## Section 1: Background Information

1.	<p><b>What is the proposal / issue?</b></p> <p>The GMB Trade Union has developed a Charter for employers with recommended actions to support employees who may be experiencing Domestic Abuse. GMB has recommended that Torbay Council adopt the Charter and sign-up to the pledges within it.</p> <p>The Charter supports the work that Torbay Council is doing in regard to the wellbeing of its workforce and raising awareness of Domestic Abuse. This also supports the council's wider corporate priorities in working with and supporting our communities.</p>
2.	<p><b>What is the current situation?</b></p> <p>Torbay Council already has a policy on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Appendix 2). The Charter and the pledges within it support the guidance within the policy, further awareness about Domestic Abuse for staff has already been identified by the Staff Wellbeing Group within its action plan. The approval of Charter will provide a more strategic approach to the delivery of this commitment.</p>
3.	<p><b>What options have been considered?</b></p> <p>There is the option not to approve the GMB Charter however in not doing so, the Council will be remiss in its commitment to fully supporting staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.</p>
4.	<p><b>What is the relationship with the priorities within the Partnership Memorandum and the Council's Principles?</b></p> <p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thriving People and Communities</li><li>• A Thriving Economy</li></ul> <p>Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce demand through prevention and innovation</li><li>• Integrated and joined up approach</li></ul>
5.	<p><b>How does this proposal/issue contribute towards the Council's responsibilities as corporate parents?</b></p> <p>The Council wants to ensure that staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse are fully supported within the workplace if they raise a concern and/or need help. It is recognised that many of these staff may be parents or carers</p>

	<p>therefore it is important that any children affected by the situation are also receiving the right care and support.</p>
6.	<p><b>How does this proposal/issue tackle poverty, deprivation and vulnerability?</b></p> <p>Domestic Abuse can affect mental health and vice versa, therefore, through the adoption of the Charter, the Council's Staff Wellbeing Group can further build on the mental health support for staff that is already in place. Many of the Council's staff live within Torbay and so it is hoped that through effective awareness raising with staff and ensuring that the right support and advice is in place will have a wider community impact.</p>
7.	<p><b>How does the proposal/issue impact on people with learning disabilities?</b></p> <p>If approved, the Charter and pledges within it will be made accessible to all staff and will be applied equally. Where staff identify an individual need, this will be discussed with them and any adjustments required will be put into place.</p>
8.	<p><b>Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with? How will the Council engage with the community? How can the Council empower the community?</b></p> <p>Torbay Council employees and those within the Council's Maintained Schools. The Charter is intended to support the Council's workforce therefore wider community engagement will not be needed at this stage.</p>

## Section 2: Implications and Impact Assessment

9.	<p><b>What are the financial and legal implications?</b></p> <p>There are no direct financial or legal implications associated with this proposal.</p>
10.	<p><b>What are the risks?</b></p> <p>There are no risks associated in approving this proposal.</p> <p>Risks if not approving this proposal are likely to be lack of awareness of domestic abuse across the workforce and reputation to the Council where other employers are adopting the same/similar Charters.</p>
11.	<p><b>Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012</b></p> <p>No goods or services are identified at this present time.</p>
12.	<p><b>What evidence / data / research have you gathered in relation to this proposal?</b></p> <p>The GMB Trade Union has recommended that the Council approve the Domestic Abuse Charter. This is based on the work they have carried out in supporting staff in different workplaces and the detrimental impact that domestic abuse can have on individuals and their families.</p> <p>The Equality and Human Rights Commission recommends that having a domestic abuse policy in place and the right information and support can enable those experiencing domestic abuse to safely access services and information that can ultimately save their lives. The Charter further supports the Council's policy and its commitment to supporting staff experiencing Domestic Abuse:-</p> <p><a href="https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/domestic-abuse-workplace-policies-and-managing-and-supporting-employees">https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/domestic-abuse-workplace-policies-and-managing-and-supporting-employees</a></p>
13.	<p><b>What are key findings from the consultation you have carried out?</b></p> <p>That by not providing the right support and advice to staff who are experiencing Domestic Abuse can have a detrimental impact upon individuals and their families. Raising awareness and taking action to support staff can help to save lives.</p>
14.	<p><b>Amendments to Proposal / Mitigating Actions</b></p>

	<p>No mitigating actions have been identified at this stage however the Staff Wellbeing Group will review progress against the Charter as part of their action plan.</p>
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## Equality Impacts

15.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups			
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
	Older or younger people			No differential impact.
	People with caring Responsibilities			No differential impact.
	People with a disability		Staff with a learning disability or other disability unable to access the policy. Ensuring that the policy and Charter are easily accessible and that staff with individual needs know where and how to access the right help and advice via signposting.	
	Women or men			No differential impact.
	People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>		Staff unable to access the policy due to translation or language difficulties. Ensuring that the policy and Charter are easily accessible and that staff with individual needs know where how to access the right help and advice via signposting.	
	Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No differential impact.
	People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No differential impact.

	People who are transgendered			No differential impact.
	People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No differential impact.
	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No differential impact.
	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	Staff who have families will be more aware of the support and advice available to them if they are experiencing DA.		
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	Staff who are experiencing a mental health issue as a result of domestic abuse or vice versa are assured of the support within the workplace and signposting to the right services.		
<b>16.</b>	<b>Cumulative Impacts – Council wide</b> (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	Community Safety due to the wider impact of awareness raising with the workforce. Public Health in relation to support for staff with mental health issues.		
<b>17.</b>	<b>Cumulative Impacts – Other public services</b> (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	Community mental health and domestic abuse support services.		