

CITIZENS ADVICE REIGATE AND BANSTEAD SUPPORT TO STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS FACING GENDER VIOLENCE OR ABUSE POLICY

1. Introduction and scope

1.1 Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead is committed to supporting staff and volunteers experiencing gender violence or abuse (GVA) by providing a safe and supportive environment and, where appropriate, information and help. In order to receive this protection and support, you may need to disclose that you are facing gender violence or abuse, but can rest assured that any such information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

1.2 Examples of GVA include:

- domestic abuse / violence

And other kinds of gender violence:

- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage
- rape / sexual assault
- stalking
- harassment
- trafficking
- violence or abuse involving so-called shame and dishonour.

In addition to physical violence, this policy covers psychological, emotional and financial abuse.

1.3 This policy applies to anyone volunteering or working at Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead. It applies equally to men and women, regardless of their sexual orientation and whether they live in a heterosexual, lesbian or gay or other relationship.

1.4 The purpose of this policy is to provide you with a range of support if you are at risk of, or experiencing, gender violence or abuse and to enable you to continue performing your role at Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead wherever possible.

2. Internal support

2.1 If you are experiencing gender violence or abuse, you are urged to speak about your situation to your manager, supervisor or another staff member or volunteer.

2.2 Whoever you choose to contact will treat any information in the strictest confidence and will not divulge it to any other person without your express permission, unless they feel that a child may be at risk of physical harm, in which case they should urgently contact the CEO for further advice. In other cases, with your permission, it will be helpful for the CEO to be involved, in order for you to receive maximum protection and support.

2.3 Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead's offices have suitable security arrangements to ensure that members of the public cannot access non-public areas without authorisation. Any personal information held about you (for example your address) is stored securely and never divulged to anyone outside of Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead.

2.4 Managers, supervisors and others should never divulge the home details of their colleagues to people outside of Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead and should always take care when answering enquiries about a person's hours or arrangements at Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead.

2.5 More specific support is available as follows:

Volunteers:

- You are encouraged to talk to your supervisor or the CEO about how often you volunteer, where you are based, whether you need to take a break from volunteering, reduce the demands of your role or any other change that will help you.
- You may wish to discuss with your supervisor a confidential communication plan if you need to be away at short notice and do not wish others in Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead to know why.
- You may wish to arrange to have your volunteer out-of-pocket expenses paid to you in an alternative way if the perpetrator has access to a joint bank account.

Paid staff:

- You may request special paid leave. Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead recognises that staff may need to be absent from work at times and special leave is therefore available for appointments with support agencies or solicitors, to arrange rehousing, change childcare arrangements or for court appearances. Absence in other situations should be discussed with your manager and will be treated as sympathetically as possible.
- Full consideration will be given to requests to change your working pattern or location, either temporarily or permanently.
- If your manager is aware of the situation, you may wish to discuss and agree a temporary reduction in work demands. In any event, your manager will recognise your difficulties and should be sympathetic to distracted behaviour on your part or disrupted attendance or timekeeping.
- You may also wish to discuss with your manager a confidential communication plan if you need to take time off at short notice and do not wish other colleagues to know the reasons for this.
- You can ask for alternative payment methods for your salary if the perpetrator has access to a joint bank account. Further information on this is available from the CEO.

3. External support

External support is also available as follows:

- Surrey Domestic Abuse Helpline 01483 776822 operates 09:00-21:00 7 days a week. <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/family-information-service/support-and-advice-for-parents-and-carers/keeping-your-family-safe/domestic-abuse-information-for-families>
- East Surrey Domestic Abuse Services 01737 771350 operates 9:00-16:00 Mon–Fri. Email; support@esdas.org.uk or SMS 07860 039720. www.esdas.org.uk
- National Domestic Violence Helpline - a national 24-hour helpline providing information and advice to women experiencing domestic violence run jointly by Women's Aid and Refuge. The free number is 0808 200 0247.
- Broken Rainbow - support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic violence. www.brokenrainbow.org.uk/
- Men's Advice Line - The Men's Advice Line is a confidential helpline for all men experiencing domestic violence by a current or ex-partner. This includes

all men - in heterosexual or same-sex relationships. 0808 801 0327.

www.mensadvice.org.uk/

- Women's Aid - a national charity working towards ending violence against women and girls. www.womensaid.org.uk/
- 'Adviceguide' contains information about different types of gender violence and abuse and the options available to survivors.

www.adviceguide.org.uk

1) Domestic violence and abuse

Includes information on all types of domestic abuse: honour-based abuse; stalking and harassment; trafficking; and survivors from domestic violence overseas.

2) Rape and sexual assault

Includes information on: rape and sexual assault; reporting offences to the police; getting specialist help; also includes information on female genital mutilation.

3) Forced marriage

Information on forced marriage and forced marriage protection orders on the 'Getting married' page.

4) Child abuse

Information about safeguarding children and young people, including guidance on confidentiality and reporting child abuse concerns.