

**REPORT FROM: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**TO: SPECIAL BUDGET POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 13<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY, 2020**

**Report Author: Audrey Drinkwater/Sarah Astin-Wood**

**Tel. No: 661339 / 661782**

**E-mail: [Audrey.drinkwater@pendle.gov.uk](mailto:Audrey.drinkwater@pendle.gov.uk)/[sarah.astin-wood@pendle.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.astin-wood@pendle.gov.uk)**

## **PENDLE DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY AND WHITE RIBBON ACTION PLAN**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update Committee on our work to raise awareness of domestic abuse and request that this is further shared amongst Council staff.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) To offer comments on, and approve, the Domestic Abuse Policy for Council employees.
- (2) To encourage staff to become White Ribbon Ambassadors and Champions.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

To raise awareness of, and encourage commitment to tackling domestic abuse both within, and outside of, the workplace.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **White Ribbon**

Founded in 2005, **White Ribbon UK** is part of the global movement to end male violence against women.

**White Ribbon** works with men and boys to challenge those male cultures that lead to harassment, abuse and violence. Volunteer ambassadors engage with other men and boys to call out such behaviour among their peers and promote a culture of equality and respect.

#### **Accreditation**

Pendle Council, along with all councils in Lancashire and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), was awarded White Ribbon status in October 2017 and Lancashire was the first White Ribbon County in the UK.

At a meeting of the Council in October 2017, in support of this commitment Council:

- (1) requested the Executive and Community Safety Partnership keep progress on the action plan under regular review;
- (2) would encourage male Councillors and staff to lead by example by signing up to become Ambassadors, and
- (3) would work with partner local organisations such as the business sector, sports clubs and licensed premises on how they can inform men about violence against women and girls and encourage them to challenge it.

Progress on our White Ribbon Action Plan has included:

- Awareness raising through community events, the Directors' blog, Messages of the Day, social media, press releases and featured articles in the Leader-Times to encourage people to become Ambassadors/Champions and sign the White Ribbon pledge.
- Posters and beer mats given to Pendle Beer Festival and licensed premises across Pendle
- Attendance at the Pendle Vision Board to raise awareness of and highlight the benefit to Pendle businesses of becoming accredited organisations
- Support for Pendle Domestic Violence Initiative events held in the Town Hall;
- Promotion of White Ribbon messages via the TV screens at the Leisure Box (Northlight)
- Promotion of White Ribbon on the side of one of our new refuse vehicles
- Development of '10 ways you can take action against gender based violence' poster (see Appendix 1)
- With support from the Council's Green Spaces Manager, we have undertaken work with local sports clubs who have signed up to become White Ribbon organisations. These include:
  - Pendle Charity Football League
  - Trawden Athletics Club
  - Colne Rugby Club
  - Colne Football Club

Through these clubs, it is estimated that about 500+ people have signed the White Ribbon pledge.

The Council's White Ribbon accreditation in 2017 was for two years.

We are now in the process of seeking re-accreditation with White Ribbon, via the OPCC as a Lancashire-wide approach.

One of the actions in the White Ribbon Action Plan is to increase the numbers of White Ribbon Ambassadors (male) and Champions (female) within the Council. This involves some e-learning to increase awareness and knowledge of the subject. Service Managers have been asked to encourage staff to undertake the e-learning to become Ambassadors or Champions.

Another action in the White Ribbon Action Plan is to develop a Domestic Abuse policy for Council employees.

## Domestic Abuse – Employee Policy

Domestic abuse is an issue which affects all sections of society and it is important therefore that the Council has a clear and effective response to help minimise the impact of domestic abuse on employees. It is also important that the Council provides practical guidance to managers and staff to help offer support to those who are affected at work from experiencing abuse.

The draft Domestic Abuse - Employee Policy has been drafted and is presented here for comment and approval (see Appendix 3). It sets out the Council's approach to supporting employees who experience or are affected by domestic abuse, ensuring they can raise the issue at work and that this is taken seriously and responded to sensitively.

This is the first policy for employees regarding domestic abuse. Currently, Appendix 1 of the Family Support and Safeguarding Policy outlines how to report domestic abuse should it be identified in a family or customer.

Through the domestic abuse policy being effectively applied, we will work to reduce the risks related to domestic abuse and create a safer workplace.

There are key links to other Council policies, which are outlined in the document. These are:

- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding Policies
- Harassment & Bullying Procedure
- Policy & Procedure on Incidents
- Disciplinary Procedure

## IMPLICATIONS

**Policy:** help deliver on the Council's corporate objectives, i.e. helping to create and sustain resilient communities

**Financial:** the cost of White Ribbon accreditation is £530; £180 per annum over three years. We have asked the OPCC to contribute to this again.

**Risk Management:** the Council has a responsibility for the welfare of employees and providing guidance for managers and staff to address the issues of domestic abuse and its effects in the workplace.

**Health and Safety:** under the Health & Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations (1992) the Council recognises its legal responsibilities in promoting the welfare and safety of staff, including agency and contractor staff.

**Sustainability:** There are no implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

**Community Safety:** This work supports the delivery of the Community Safety Partnership Strategy priorities and the Pendle Domestic Abuse Action Plan

**Equality and Diversity:** It is recognised that, whilst victims of domestic abuse can be male or female, they are largely female and so this is a gendered issue.

**APPENDICES:**

- Appendix 1: 10 ways you can take action against gender based violence (poster)
- Appendix 2: White Ribbon Plan on a Page
- Appendix 3: Domestic Abuse – Employee Policy

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Report to Council 26<sup>th</sup> October 2017

<https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/>