PARADIGM ARTS
VISUAL | MEDIA | PERFORMING

Paradigm Arts Domestic Abuse Policy
(Academic Year 2026 - 2027)

Introduction

This Policy refers to all circumstances where Paradigm Arts is involved in reports of domestic abuse.

This Policy is a point of reference for all staff employed by Paradigm Arts in the delivery of artistic, creative and/or cultural learning activities and refers to any instances where employees who are involved in reports of domestic abuse in a work capacity.

Policy Statement

Domestic Abuse affects a large proportion of the population, directly and/or indirectly. The victim can be young or old, male or female, married, single or cohabiting. Couples can be of the same sex or of opposite.

Domestic abuse is a broad description of abusive relationships that develop within the home or the family setting and where power is exercised to the detriment of at least one party.
The Government's definition of domestic abuse (2013) is:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- *Psychological;*
- *Physical;*
- *Sexual*
- *Financial;*
- *Emotional.*

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."

The Home Office definition of family member is: mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister & grandparents; directly-related, in-laws or step-family.

Evidence indicates that domestic abuse can take place anywhere, it does not only occur in the home environment – on some occasions the victim and perpetrator does not have to live in the same property. Domestic abuse could occur where one resides and the other is a regular visitor. This could be as a result of one being a current partner, ex-partner or a visiting family member. Research also shows that domestic abuse is unlikely to be an isolated event. Domestic abuse may

begin as an isolated offence, but it then gradually becomes more and more frequent over a prolonged period of time – each time, potentially becoming more and more serious in nature. The victim, at the same time becoming more and more frightened, isolated, humiliated and possibly ashamed - in some cases, domestic abuse may be so deeply embedded in a family life or a relationship that the victims, perpetrators and/ or children may fail to recognise or define their experience(s) as domestic abuse – this, will therefore create a barrier for seeking help and advice. Situations inclusive of domestic abuse may involve threatening behaviour, violence or abuse. This could be of a psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional nature. It has also been identified that there may be contributing factors to domestic abuse. For example, mental illness, substance misuse, homelessness, pregnancy, ex partners and family members.

Domestic Abuse & Safeguarding Children

Paradigm Arts recognises the strong links between adult domestic violence and abuse, substance misuse and child abuse, and recognise when a child is in need of help, services or at potential risk of suffering significant harm.

Children may suffer both directly and indirectly in households where there is domestic violence and abuse. From 31st January 2005 section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 was amended to include 'harm caused by the witnessing of abuse or ill treatment of another'.

Hearing or seeing the ill treatment of another constitutes harm. Therefore a referral should be made through the existing Safeguarding Procedures outlined by Paradigm Arts if a child lives in a household where domestic violence is believed to be a factor which may lead to them being in need of support or protection.

Unborn children are at risk as research (Sterne and Poole, 2010) indicates that violence towards women increases both in severity and frequency during pregnancy often involving punches or kicks directed at the women's abdomen. Once born, the impact on the mother - child attachment process may be affected, as well as the child's capacity to develop normal responses to stressful situations. This can result in a fractious baby and place both mother and child at further risk from their abuser. Domestic violence during pregnancy puts a pregnant woman and her unborn child in danger. It increases the risk of miscarriage, infection, premature birth, low birth weight, foetal injury and foetal death.

Scope of the Policy and Procedure.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1992), Paradigm Arts recognises its legal responsibilities in promoting the welfare and safety of all staff. Therefore this policy applies to all Paradigm Arts employees including agency and contract staff.

When developing this policy and when developing future policies Paradigm Arts has been and will be mindful of the impact in relation to disability, race, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion.

This policy recognises that identifying domestic abuse is not a regular part of our professional activity and assessment procedures in the delivery of arts workshops but is keen to support staff through training and education to promote awareness and outline processes to support staff, colleagues and clients.

Support & Confidentiality

Paradigm Arts recognises that domestic abuse is an equalities issue and undertakes not to discriminate against anyone who has been subject to domestic abuse in terms of current employment or career development.

As a responsible employer Paradigm Arts believes it is important to promote the understanding that everyone has the right to a life free from abuse in any form and that domestic abuse is wholly unacceptable and inexcusable.

Paradigm Arts are aware that the challenges that domestic abuse victims face can manifest themselves in problems such as chronic absenteeism or lower productivity.

Confidentiality will be maintained and information restricted only to those who have a need-to-know.

There are some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be assured. These occur when there are concerns about children or vulnerable adults or where an employer needs to act to protect the safety of employees.

If the Victim and Perpetrator are both employed by Paradigm Arts
In cases where both the victim and perpetrator of domestic abuse work for the same employer, Paradigm Arts will take appropriate action including:

- Ensuring schedules, workloads and workplaces don't contribute to increased instances of contact
- Minimising the potential for the perpetrator to use their position or work resources to find out details about the whereabouts of the victim.
- Offer impartial support and where possible ensure both the victim and perpetrator have different line supervisors who are able to provide appropriate information to each party.

That is why when addressing performance and safety issue Paradigm Arts will make reasonable efforts to consider all aspects of the employee's situation and/or safety problems to support them through a challenging time. Information/training will be provided to key supervisors to enable them to provide initial support to anyone who is experiencing or has experienced domestic abuse. This ensures that employees can raise the issue in the knowledge that the matter will be taken seriously

There are some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be assured. These occur when there are concerns about children or vulnerable adults or where an employer needs to act to protect the safety of employees. In these circumstances the employer will discuss with the employee the reason for disclosing any information to a third party and will seek the employee's agreement where possible.

All records concerning domestic abuse will be kept strictly confidential. Improper disclosure of information i.e. breaches of confidentiality by any member of staff will be taken seriously and maybe subject to disciplinary action.

Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

Employees are expected at all times to conduct themselves in a way that will not adversely reflect on the business and its reputation. Domestic abuse perpetrated by employees will not be condoned under any circumstances nor will it be treated as a purely private matter. Perpetrating domestic abuse whilst in the workplace may breach any Code of Conduct. If a colleague is found to be assisting an abuser in perpetrating the abuse by giving them access to facilities such as telephones or email then they will be seen as committing a disciplinary offence.

Paradigm Arts will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of a domestic abuse related offence on a case-by-case basis. The aim is to reduce risk and support change recognising their role in encouraging and supporting employees to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds. If an employee approaches Paradigm Arts about their abusive behaviour, information about services and support available will be provided.

Independent Advice

Paradigm Arts will raise awareness of domestic abuse by publicising external resources for survivors and perpetrators of abuse alongside of this policy document.