



**Domestic Abuse
in the Workplace**

Policy:	Domestic Abuse in the Workplace
Version number:	3.0
Date effective from:	September 2024
Policy Owner:	Head of Human Resources
Policy Author(s):	Senior Human Resources Business Partner
Accountable Executive:	Executive Director of Customer, People and Engagement
Approved by:	Executive Team
Equality Assessment:	Yes
Next review of policy due:	September 2027
Policy Grade:	2
Scope:	This policy applies to all colleagues in Gentoo
Purpose:	To determine Gentoo's approach to domestic abuse and set out the support available to individuals.
Roles and Responsibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources - policy owner; ensure this policy is up to date, incorporates best practice and is legally compliant; provide advice and support; oversight of consistency of application. • Colleague – understand and adhere to policy; ensure actions are completed in a timely manner; ensure their own behaviour and conduct is appropriate; awareness of escalation of issues; ensure their own health, safety and wellbeing. • Manager – responsible for the implementation of the policy; decision making; carrying out the required actions in a timely manner; reporting, maintaining compliance and following the policy; escalation of issues; ensure health, safety and wellbeing of colleagues; awareness and understanding of issues; ability to deal with issues.
For the full version history of this policy, see the back page	
If you require this policy in a different format, please speak to the HR Team.	

Contents		
1.	Domestic abuse	4
2.	What is domestic abuse?	4
3.	Recognising domestic abuse	5
4.	Support	6
5.	Time off work	6
6.	Your safety at work	7
7.	Perpetrators	7

Policy Statement

This policy is issued as guidance on the Group's policy and practice around domestic violence. Our aim is to make Gentoo a great place to work and to support colleagues to the best of our ability, who may be experiencing or know someone who is experiencing domestic abuse.

Every colleague at Gentoo is different and we want to embrace that and to empower colleagues to be able to deliver in the best possible way for our customers. We are committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce. This policy is applicable to all colleagues regardless of their gender, gender reassignment, marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, nation of origin, sexual orientation, religion, or age.

It does not form part of a colleague's contract of employment or otherwise have any contractual effect on Gentoo's Terms and Conditions.

If you're unsure about any parts of this document, please reach out to your manager or the HR Team who will be able to support you if you are taking leave.

Regulation and Legislation

This policy is written in line with the following regulations and legislation;

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Rights Act 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 2018

- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Police and Justice Act 2006
- Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014

Domestic abuse

We will do everything we can to support you if you are experiencing or are close to anyone impacted by domestic abuse. We believe that everyone has the right to live free from abuse in any form.

If you are reading this because you have been affected by domestic abuse, we want you to know that we are here to listen and will support you any way we can and enable you to feel safe at work. We have a team of Domestic Abuse Champions and Victim Support Officers who are available to provide support to those who are experiencing or supporting someone who is impacted by domestic abuse.

We're committed to supporting all our colleagues in any way possible. The purpose of this policy is to help you understand what domestic abuse is and give you information about what help is available both inside and outside of Gentoo whether you need it for yourself or to help someone else.

Just so you know, this will be kept confidential and will not be shared unless you say it's okay – expect if there is a serious concern for yours or others' safety. Please refer to the [FAQs](#) for further information on confidentiality.

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse describes abusive behaviour that takes place between two people that are over 16, who are personally connected to one another. This may be through marriage, civil partnership, through relationships (i.e. share a child together) or through relatives (including adult parents or children). Domestic abuse is not gender specific and can happen to anyone regardless of gender, race, religions or sexual orientations.

As defined in the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#), abuse can be a single incident but is often a pattern of behaviours that can take many forms including:

- Physical or Sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic or financial abuse
- Online abuse
- Psychological and emotional abuse
- Stalking
- Honour based violence (such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage).

Just so you are aware, if children see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse, they are also defined as victims. Domestic abuse is a criminal offence and can lead to criminal convictions.

Legal definitions can be found in the [FAQs](#).

Recognising domestic abuse

Does your partner, ex-partner, family member or someone else do any of the below? If so, you may be experiencing domestic abuse – it isn't always physical violence:

- Cuts you off from family and friends and intentionally isolates you
- Bullies, threatens, or controls you
- Takes control of your finances
- Monitors or limits your use of technology
- Physically and/or sexually abuses you
- Controls your medication

If you think this applies to you, you may be experiencing domestic violence, and you should seek support.

We as colleagues need to look out for one another, so if a colleague is presenting with any of the below, they may be experiencing domestic abuse and may need our support. Signs may be:

- Frequent absence from work, lateness or needing to leave work early
- Reduced quality and/or quantity of work or missed deadlines
- An increase in the number of hours spent at work for no reason
- Changes in the way a colleague communicates – many personal calls or texts or a strong reaction to personal calls
- Physical signs and symptoms such as unexplained or frequent bruises or other injuries
- A change in behaviour – for example becoming more withdrawn than usual
- Excessive clothing on a hot day
- Change in the amount of makeup worn
- Changes in social behaviour – for example not turning up to social activities
- An obsession with leaving work on time

If you are a concerned manager or colleague reading this policy, remember it is not your responsibility to fix the issue or take on the role of counsellor. What you can do to help is to be alert to the signs, provide support by listening and signpost to the appropriate help. Signposting materials can be [found here](#). You can also refer to [FAQs](#) for guidance on what questions you can ask.

We recognise that dealing with disclosures of domestic abuse can be challenging and therefore have the following support in places for colleagues:

- Employee Assistance Programme (Spectrum Life)
- Westfield Health
- Clinical supervision on a case-by-case basis
- Mental Health Champions/Positive Engagement Officers (signposting only)
- Victim Support Officers/Support Manager
- Training resources and materials

Support

We understand that recognising domestic abuse can be difficult and speaking about it can be even more challenging. If you wish to confide in your manager, a Domestic Abuse Champion (DAC), a Victim Support Officer (VSO) or someone else you trust, please be reassured that it will be kept confidential, unless you are happy for it to be shared, and they will support you as much as possible.

If you do not feel like you can speak with your manager or a DAC, remember we have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) who can provide support. Contact details can be found [here](#). If you do not feel ready to disclose anything to anyone at work, we would strongly encourage you to contact one of the specialist support agencies or download the Bright Sky App (if it is safe for you to do so), as a first step of accessing local support if you are unsure where to turn.

If you are reading this policy and are unsure whether you are experiencing or someone else is experiencing domestic abuse, you can learn more about the signs by visiting [one of the websites available](#).

If you need immediate help, you can ask for 'ANI' at any participating pharmacy and they are ready to provide a private space, a phone and ask if you need support from the police or other domestic abuse support services. Your local participating pharmacy can be found [here](#).

Time off work

We know that if you are experiencing domestic abuse, you may need time away from work to manage legal or accommodation issues and deal with family demands. We also know that every situation will be unique. We will support you with reasonable paid time off to attend meetings/appointments/ take calls etc. But please do not worry, if you require additional time off, we will always be open to discussions around your individual circumstances and needs.

Please refer to the Leave and Time Off Policy for further information about paid leave and the Ways of Working for changes to working hours and patterns.

Your safety at work

At Gentoo, we have a duty to protect your health, safety and wellbeing whilst at work. If you disclose that you are experiencing domestic abuse, we will provide reasonable support to you to try and minimise any risk to your safety whilst at work. We are committed to protecting your safety and making changes where reasonable to minimise any risk. Some examples of practical changes that could be made to make you safe include:

- Changes to specific duties
- Measures to ensure a safe working environment
- Redeployment or relocation
- Review of security information held.

For more information on changes, please refer to the [FAQS](#).

If you are managing someone who has disclosed domestic abuse to you, you should not directly involve yourself in the situation. You can help by providing support for your colleagues in the workplace and make any adjustments to support their safety as well as helping the colleague to find the right professional help. Support can be found [here](#).

Perpetrators

Gentoo does not tolerate or condone domestic abuse in any form. Should a colleague have allegations made against them (both in and outside of work), if a colleague discloses perpetrating domestic abuse or we receive information which suggests they are, appropriate action will be taken in line with the Colleague Relation Policy. Specialist advice and guidance can be obtained from colleagues within Gentoo including referrals to specialist behaviour change programmes and support if required. More information can be found in [FAQs](#).

Just so it is clear, any allegations or admissions of domestic abuse may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Gentoo has a duty to contact the police if the perpetrator discloses domestic abuse as it is a criminal offence, but we will always consider the safety and wishes of the victim/survivor when doing so. Support is also available for colleagues who are perpetrators and genuinely want to change. Further information can be found in the [FAQs](#).

In cases where both the victim and the perpetrator of domestic abuse work for Gentoo, appropriate action will be taken. Examples of appropriate action can be found in the [FAQs](#).

There is also an associated [Domestic Abuse Toolkit](#) which may be helpful.

Version Control

Version	Reason	Issuer	Date
V1.0	Approved	A Bell	2018
V2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved by the Chief Executive Officer and/or whole Executive Team - July 2020 Approval route amended to the Executive Director (Corporate Services) 'General' deleted reference to 'orange book and red and green book 'Contribution and Goals' deleted detail of vision and values General Formatting 	N Young	July 2020
V3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General formatting and tone of voice review. Amended overall responsibility to Head of Human Resources. Reviewed and amended policy wording. Additional policy wording included for employees covered under The Equality Act. 	S England	September 2024