



## Polasaí agus Nósanna Imeachta/Policies and Procedures

<b>Code</b>	QA147
<b>Title</b>	Domestic Violence Leave
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Director of Human Resources
<b>Date</b>	20/04/2021; Latest review date: 18/09/2023
<b>Approved By</b>	University Management Team

### **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this leave is to provide for a period of paid time away from work for staff members who have suffered or are suffering from domestic violence or abuse. This leave will enable the staff member to take the time they need to seek assistance in a structured and supported environment.

University of Galway recognises the prevalence of domestic violence in our society and the impact it may have on our staff members. In line with our values and our commitment to the health and safety of our staff, the University opposes all forms of domestic violence and seeks to support victims and survivors of such violence through the provision of leave and other resources.

### **2.0 Description**

Domestic violence leave will be granted to a staff member who has been the victim of an act or acts of domestic violence or abuse. For the purposes of this policy domestic violence will be defined as follows:

“Domestic violence (sometimes referred to as domestic abuse, family violence, or intimate partner violence) involves violent, threatening, or otherwise abusive behaviour by a family member/intimate relation, including but not limited to physical and sexual assault, psychological abuse, coercive control, financial abuse, stalking or dating abuse.”

The perpetrator may be the staff member’s current or former spouse/partner, parent, child, other family member or other person in an intimate relationship with the staff member.

Domestic violence leave will be granted in addition to all other available leaves to provide the staff member with time away from work to recover and to seek necessary supports.

Such supports may include but are not limited to:

- obtaining medical attention and/or counselling
- obtaining legal assistance
- providing for accommodation or protection of self, children and/or other family members
- attending court/legal hearings

### **3.0 Eligibility**

All staff members of the University are eligible for domestic violence leave. There is no minimum service period required in order to qualify for this leave.

### **4.0 Employment Protections**

The University cannot discharge or in any other manner discriminate against a staff member for availing of domestic violence leave, and no negative action will be taken against a staff member for availing of this leave.



## 5.0 Duration of Leave

Paid domestic violence leave will be granted for up to 10 working days per year on a rolling basis. This leave may be taken as a block of leave or broken into separate days of leave as required. Requests for flexibility will be reviewed by the Employee Relations Manager on a case-by-case basis. Thereafter, should further time away from work be required, the staff member may have recourse to one or more of the other University leave schemes as applicable, e.g. Sick Leave, Personal Unpaid Leave, etc.

## 6.0 Application Process and Notice Period

The affected staff member, their line manager, or representative (e.g. health care provider, social worker) should, with the staff member's confirmed consent, contact either Daniel O'Hara ([daniel.ohara@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:daniel.ohara@universityofgalway.ie), 091 49 5281) or Fiona O'Malley ([fiona.omalley@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:fiona.omalley@universityofgalway.ie), 091 49 5420) in Employee Relations, HR Office, as soon as practicable to request a period of domestic violence leave. Advance notification of leave should be provided where possible. The University understands that in certain cases advance notification may not be possible and that the period of leave may have already commenced before notification can be provided.

If for any reason the affected staff member does not wish to inform their line manager, they may come directly to Employee Relations, HR Office, to request this leave.

The affected staff member is not required to provide proof of their abuse or documentary evidence for the leave needed. However, proof may be requested by the employer in certain circumstances.

## 7.0 Line Manager Responsibilities

Line managers are advised to support staff members who disclose to them that they are experiencing domestic violence in a sympathetic, non-judgemental and confidential manner.

When a staff member discloses that they are experiencing domestic violence, the line manager must act promptly. They should discuss domestic violence leave and other supports available (see point 10 below) with the affected staff member, and must alert Employee Relations, HR Office, of the need for this leave as soon as possible via email to either Daniel O'Hara ([daniel.ohara@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:daniel.ohara@universityofgalway.ie)) or Fiona O'Malley ([fiona.omalley@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:fiona.omalley@universityofgalway.ie)).

## 8.0 Training

Training will be provided for line managers and other relevant staff on domestic violence issues including understanding the implications of domestic violence for the staff member in the workplace, and how to recognise, respond and refer.

Employee Relations, HR Office, are not positioned as experts on domestic violence, but will provide the information to support line managers and staff members as required.

## 9.0 Confidentiality

Any disclosure of domestic violence and subsequent request for leave will be treated with the strictest confidence by the University in line with our GDPR Policy.

## 10.0 Additional Supports

Staff members experiencing domestic violence should note the following supports available to them:



- **Flexible working arrangements:** affected staff members may request a change of working hours, work location or other relevant conditions of their employment. Such requests will be accommodated where at all possible.
- **Change of Work Contact Details:** affected staff members may request a change of work phone number and/or work email address as necessary.
- **Employee Assistance Service (EAS):** The EAS is a free and confidential professional counselling and information service which is available to staff members 24/7, 365 days a year. Staff can access the EAS directly as follows:
  - Freephone IRE: 1800 814 243
  - WhatsApp & SMS: Text 'Hi' to 087 145 2056

Further information on the EAS is available on the HR website at this link:

[https://www.universityofgalway.ie/human-resources/employee\\_wellbeing/employeeassistanceservice/](https://www.universityofgalway.ie/human-resources/employee_wellbeing/employeeassistanceservice/)

- **Occupational Health Physician:** An appointment can be arranged with a physician of the University's Occupational Health Provider in order to provide support and accommodations and/or necessary medical advice to the staff member. All referrals are treated with strict confidence. To arrange a referral for reasons related to domestic violence only please email either Daniel O'Hara ([daniel.ohara@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:daniel.ohara@universityofgalway.ie)) or Fiona O'Malley ([fiona.omalley@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:fiona.omalley@universityofgalway.ie)).

## 11.0 HR Office Contacts

- Daniel O'Hara, Employee Relations, [daniel.ohara@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:daniel.ohara@universityofgalway.ie), phone 091 49 5281
- Fiona O'Malley, Employee Relations, [fiona.omalley@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:fiona.omalley@universityofgalway.ie), phone 091 49 5420
- Relevant HR Business Partner

## 12.0 Union Support

A staff member can also contact their Union for support.

## 13.0 External Resources

- HSE: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/domestic-violence-and-abuse.html>
- Garda: <https://www.garda.ie/en/crime/domestic-abuse/>, call **999** if in immediate danger
- COPE Galway: <https://www.copegalway.ie/domestic-abuse-services/>, 24-hour confidential helpline **091 565 985**
- Domestic Violence Response Galway: <https://www.domesticviolenceresponse.com/>, phone **091 866 740**
- Galway Rape Crisis Centre: <https://www.galwayrcc.org/>, helpline **1800 355 355**



- Haven Horizons Clare, <https://havenhorizons.com/>, phone **065 684 1683**
- Safe Ireland: <https://www.safeireland.ie/>, national helpline **1800 341 900**
- Women's Aid: <https://www.womensaid.ie/>, national freephone helpline **1800 341 900**
- Men's Aid Ireland: <https://www.mensaid.ie/>, helpline **01 554 3811**
- Parentline: <https://www.parentline.ie/>, helpline **1890 927 277**
- Bright Sky App: a free app for iPhone and Android devices that connects victims of domestic violence and abuse to advice and support services, <https://www.womensaid.ie/bright-sky/>
- Invisible Chains: Overcoming Coercive Control in Your Intimate Relationship, by Lisa Aronson Fontes: book available in James Hardiman Library

#### 14.0 Responsibilities

Name	Responsibility
Director of Human Resources	Policy Owner
All Staff	In the event of leave being required, the staff member, their line manager, or representative, should contact Employee Relations, HR Office, as soon as practicable
Line Manager	Read and comply with this leave policy; Refer the staff member to Employee Relations, HR Office as required
Human Resources Office	Approval of leave request; Review this policy on a regular basis in light of any changes in legislation