

Domestic Violence Leave

Status

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1. About

This policy supports employees affected by domestic violence and aligns with the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023. The Law Society is aware that this is a deeply sensitive issue. The Law Society will deal with this in a compassionate and thoughtful way.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Law Society of Ireland.

Employees directly experiencing domestic violence or supporting a 'relevant person' are eligible, whether the experiences are ongoing or in the past.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this leave is to:

- Provide paid leave for employees affected by domestic violence.
- Foster a supportive workplace culture.
- Ensure a safe work environment for all.

4. Definitions

For this policy and in line with the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023, domestic violence and abuse is defined as:

Violence, or threat of violence, including sexual violence and acts of coercive control committed against an employee or a relevant person.

The domestic violence may have been committed by:

- the spouse or civil partner of the employee or relevant person,
- the cohabitant of the employee or relevant person,
- an individual who is or has been in an intimate relationship with the employee or relevant person, or
- a child of the employee or relevant person who is of full age and is not, in relation to the employee or relevant person, a dependent person.

A 'relevant person' in relation to an employee is:

- The spouse or civil partner of the employee,
- The cohabitant of the employee,
- A person with whom the employee is in an intimate relationship,
- A child of the employee who has not attained full age/age of majority, or
- A person who, in relation to the employee, is a dependent person.

The purpose of the leave is to enable the employee who is subject to domestic violence to:

- seek medical attention.
- obtain services from a victim service organisation.
- obtain psychological or other professional counselling.
- relocate temporarily or permanently.

- obtain an order under the Domestic Violence Act 2018.
- seek advice or assistance from a legal practitioner.
- seek assistance from the Garda Síochána.
- *or other such actions as appropriate.*

5. Eligibility for paid leave

Employees can avail of at least 5 days of paid domestic violence leave in any consecutive 12 months, subject to an extension. The Law Society is committed to supporting employees and, where possible, will ensure that additional supports are put in place.

There is no minimum service required to qualify for domestic violence leave.

Employees who work part-time, are eligible for domestic violence leave on a pro-rata basis.

The leave does not need to be taken all at once. It can be taken as single or multiple days. An absence for part of a day is counted as one day.

Domestic violence leave is paid at a rate that is equivalent to the normal daily rate of pay.

6. How to Access Domestic Violence Leave

To access support:

- Employees can inform their line manager or an HR representative within the Law Society that they have taken domestic violence leave as soon as reasonably possible and confirm the dates in which the leave was taken.
- For contact regarding this leave, the email for HR is: [Human Resources Department](#).
- Employees are not obligated to disclose details of their situation.

7. Confidentiality

Employees disclosing their experience of domestic violence should be discussed privately and confidentially. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis, only with the employee's consent. Records generated in the context of the operation of this Policy will be stored securely and retained only as necessary.

8. Conduct while at work

Employees are accountable for their conduct while at work. Disciplinary procedures may apply if domestic violence is committed while at work. Employees who are found to facilitate domestic violence while at work will be subject to the disciplinary procedure. Special arrangements will be made if both parties involved in domestic abuse are employees of the Law Society of Ireland.

9. Return to work

On the expiration of a day or days of domestic violence leave, the employee is entitled to return to work under the same terms and conditions of employment held immediately before the domestic violence leave.

Appendix: Specialist services & supports

The Law Society would like to outline in this section external support structures for employees who are experiencing domestic violence.

Law Society EAP (It's Good to Talk)

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a 24/7 free and confidential support service designed to help staff deal with any personal or work-related problems they might be facing.

The EAP provides short-term, solution focused counselling and referral services to employees and their families.

- See further information on the [Laya EAP Portal](#)
- [It's Good to Talk](#)

The Laya 24/7 Free Phone number is 1800 911 909 or you can email hello@layaeap.ie.

Women's Aid:

Women's Aid operates the 24hr National Freephone Helpline for victims-survivors of domestic violence. Support can also be accessed through the Instant Messaging Support Service, available on the relevant websites.

Phone Number: 1800 341 900

Websites:

- www.womensaid.ie
- www.toointoyou.ie

Men's Development Network:

Men's Development Network operates the Male Advice Line, the national Freephone Helpline offering confidential advice and support to male victims-survivors of domestic abuse.

Tel. No: 1800 816 588

Website:

- www.mensnetwork.ie

Local services:

There are specialist domestic abuse services located in towns right across Ireland. Details of your local service can be accessed through these websites.

Websites:

- www.safeireland.ie
- www.stillhere.ie
- www.womensaid.ie/get-help/support-services/find-support-locally/

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre:

National Sexual Violence 24hr Helpline: 1800 77 8888

Website:

- www.drcc.ie

Review

This Policy will be reviewed when appropriate in respect of updated legislation or good practice. For information on potential reviews please contact the [Human Resources Department](#)