



# RCSI

---

## Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy

### Purpose

In the pursuit of our mission to 'educate, nurture and discover for the benefit of human health', RCSI is committed to equitable treatment of all. Our policies enable us to support this goal to ensure that RCSI is a safe and welcoming place of study and work.

The purpose of this policy is to state RCSI's commitment to support victims of domestic violence and abuse, to outline that RCSI recognises and will deal sensitively with any employee who may be experiencing domestic violence and abuse and to provide clear guidance on the supports, internally and externally, that are available.

### Scope

This policy applies to all RCSI staff.

### Policy statement

RCSI is committed to aligning all its efforts to meet the needs of the victim, as set out in legislation including Section 42 of The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014<sup>1</sup>. By doing so we support the wellbeing of our employees and the promotion of a secure environment whereby they feel safe and are free from any form of violence or abuse. Equally, RCSI seeks to create a supportive workplace environment in which colleagues feel comfortable discussing domestic violence and abuse and seeking assistance.

While there is no legal requirement to grant leave in relation to domestic violence and abuse, RCSI is committed to supporting its staff at times where they are experiencing such sensitive personal challenge and crisis.

RCSI is committed to providing a range of appropriate reasonable accommodations and supports including adjustments to working arrangements

---

<sup>1</sup> Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, places a positive duty on public sector bodies to have regard for the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, and protect Human rights, in their daily work.

and dedicated leave of up to 10 days a year to support staff members experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

## What is domestic violence and abuse?

Domestic violence (DV), often referred to as domestic abuse or intimate partner violence (IPV), is a human rights abuse and a form of gender-based violence with its roots in gender inequality.<sup>2</sup>

This abuse can occur between opposite or same-sex intimate partners of any age, who may or may not be married or living together. It can also occur between family members, or between carers and those they live with or care for in the home. The use of coercive control is a key feature of this process.

Domestic violence and abuse and its impact on the individual can continue after a relationship has ended. This conduct can affect all people of all cultures, religions, ages, genders, sexual orientations, educational backgrounds and income levels.

## What constitutes abuse?

For the purposes of this policy, abuse or violent crime includes any alleged or actual violence which causes significant disruption to the survivor. This can include the need to take time away from work for reasons which may include attending appointments with: medical practitioners, legal advisers, Gardaí, counselling services, Courts attendance or to organise specific arrangements for the purposes of supporting their family (e.g., alternative accommodation, schooling, childcare, etc.).

A list of non-exhaustive examples is listed below.

<b>Physical Violence</b>	Involves, but is not limited to, hitting, kicking, burning, pulling hair, stabbing, and shooting, leading to injury and in the worst cases, death.
<b>Verbal Abuse</b>	Refers to the use of language to ridicule, disrespect, manipulate, degrade, and demean; compelling you to engage in humiliating acts, whether in private or public.
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	Infliction of sexual contact upon you by forcible compulsion, including but not limited to unwanted sexual attention and rape.
<b>Coercive Control</b>	A systematic pattern of behaviour with the purpose of undermining you and creating fear through threats, humiliation and intimidation, and depriving you of support and independence. It is a psychological or emotional form of abuse that is used to control and limit the freedom of an

<sup>2</sup> Definition - Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual & Gender-Based Violence 2022-2026

	<p>intimate partner.</p> <p>Some common examples of coercive behaviour are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolating you from friends and family</li> <li>• Depriving you of basic needs, such as food</li> <li>• Monitoring your time</li> <li>• Monitoring you via online communication tools or spyware</li> <li>• Taking control over aspects of your everyday life, such as where you can go, who you can see, what you can wear and when you can sleep</li> <li>• Depriving you of access to support services, such as medical services</li> <li>• Repeatedly putting you down, such as saying you're worthless</li> <li>• Humiliating, degrading or dehumanising you</li> <li>• Making threats or intimidating you</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial or Economic Abuse</b></p>	<p>Refers to a situation where an abuser has control over your monetary assets and other economic resources. It may result in withholding and denying you access to education, employment, and misusing common resources. This includes, but is not limited to, restricting economic freedoms such as preventing you from having the money to pay for transport to get to work, or to buy suitable clothing for work, refusing to fulfil mortgage obligations meaning you go into arrears through no fault of your own leading to a bad credit score. This makes it particularly difficult to leave a violent or abusive relationship.</p>
<p><b>Emotional or Psychological Abuse and Threats</b></p>	<p>It can affect confidence and self-esteem and may also include control over social interactions and autonomy.</p> <p>Emotional abuse is a highly effective means of establishing a power imbalance within a relationship. It is often unseen or intangible to those outside the relationship. Emotional abuse is as harmful as physical violence. It often involves threats of and actual physical or sexual abuse.</p> <p>It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being put down</li> <li>• being constantly criticised</li> <li>• being constantly controlled and monitored by the use of technology: including your phone use being checked and recorded; your mobile phone logs being checked and having all text messages read; abusers using spyware to read your emails and secretly installing cameras in the house.</li> <li>• threats by the abuser to kill you or family member, the children, members of your family, or themselves, including details of how and when they will do it.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• property being destroyed including your cars, furniture, clothes, and home.</li> <li>• being referred to using derogatory language including name calling.</li> <li>• being trapped as the abuser takes your car keys, empties the petrol from your cars, and steals or smashes phones so you cannot seek assistance.</li> <li>• never being left on your own; being followed room to room; being accompanied to all outside activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Stalking</b>	Workplace stalking often results in the perpetrator following you to and from their place of work or hanging around the workplace entrance. Stalking can also occur at any point in your day-to-day life, such as stalking near your home or whilst you are engaged in daily chores.
<b>Cyber harassment/Tech Abuse</b>	Many of the forms of control, threats and stalking are carried out virtually through email, text messages, telephone messages, social media, etc.
<b>Elder Abuse</b>	Elder abuse is the abuse of someone aged 65 or over. The abuse can be physical, financial, psychological or sexual.

Further examples can be found by accessing further sources of supports, as detailed later in this policy, including, [Women's Aid](#), [Men's Aid](#) and [Safe Ireland](#).

## Confidentiality

RCSI recognises the sensitivity and personal nature of this issue and commits to respecting an employee's right to confidentiality and to privacy.

All information regarding domestic abuse will be treated as confidential and shall be strictly managed on a need-to-know basis. Employees who disclose that they are experiencing domestic abuse can be assured that the information they provide is confidential and will not ordinarily be shared with other members of staff without their permission.

There are however exceptional circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be assured such as when there are safeguarding concerns about children, vulnerable adults or when RCSI is required to act directly to protect the safety of employees. In such circumstances, the applicable employee will be advised in advance where possible.

Improper disclosure of information i.e. breaches of confidentiality by any member of staff will be taken seriously and may be subject to disciplinary action.

## Making a disclosure

RCSI is committed to creating a supportive workplace environment in which colleagues feel comfortable discussing domestic violence and abuse and seeking assistance for domestic abuse concerns.

RCSI recognises that making any disclosure in relation to domestic violence and abuse is very difficult. Where comfortable to do so, employees experiencing domestic abuse may choose and are welcome to disclose their experience internally to their Head of Department, line manager, a colleague or a HR Partner or externally to a dedicated domestic violence and abuse confidential contact as listed in the "Sources of Support" section below.

## What to do if you suspect a colleague is being subjected to domestic violence and abuse?

Line managers and/or colleagues can also play an active role in providing support and information, and may be the first ones to suspect or hear about a colleague's experiences of domestic violence and abuse. In situations where this is suspected, it is important to address the concern with tremendous sensitivity and caution. Knowing what your limits are and how you can respond is important.

- Recognise
  - Refer to the non-exhaustive list of examples above to help inform your thoughts. It's important to be open-minded and not make assumptions.

- Check in with the individual and, if comfortable to do so, sensitively share your observations and personal concern. Focus on clear examples and work related impact.
- Respect your colleague's boundaries. If an individual is unwilling to discuss, don't force a conversation.
- You are not expected to be an expert so it's important not to offer professional advice or promise a specific outcome.
- Be prepared by knowing the policy and understanding how to refer to internal supports, if needed.
- Respond
  - Review the RCSI Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy.
  - If your concern is verified, ask what you can do to help, let your colleague know that you are there to listen and guide them towards supports and resources that are available – as set out in this policy.
  - Allow them to be in control - ask how you can help and allow them to make their own decisions.
  - Avoid expressing judgment or shock; don't criticize their decisions; don't try to "fix" the situation. Listen and respond in a non-judgemental way.
  - Help them source relevant information but avoid insisting on them doing anything or speaking to anyone they don't want to.
  - If you feel there is an immediate serious risk of harm to the employee, a child, vulnerable adult or other RCSI staff member it is important to act immediately by contacting the internal supports (i.e. HR Partners and/or Campus Security) as listed below.
  - If you are their line manager, you can agree and implement supportive, flexible working arrangements, for example, workload, expectations, and working time.
- Refer
  - In some situations if you believe the individual is in imminent danger and/or you have concern for workplace safety, involve HR, Campus Security and/or the Gardaí. Otherwise, your concerns should remain confidential.
  - You can signpost the 'Sources of Support', outlined below. Line managers and/or colleagues can also avail of these.

## Working Arrangements

In some cases adjustments to working arrangements may help a survivor deal with challenges at home, even though they may not be ready to leave an abusive relationship. RCSI is committed to working with any survivor and adapting responses and supports to the different situations that they are in, taking account of the fact that their situation may change.

## Domestic Violence and Abuse Leave

Domestic Violence and Abuse Leave will be available as one of a number of supports for employees who are suffering from domestic abuse up to a maximum of 10 days per year. In the first instance you can speak confidentially to your Head of Department/School, line manager or HR Partner (as listed in the “Sources of Support” section below).

Each person will be supported on a case-by-case basis. We will adopt a partnership approach, through conversation, working with you to explore what support options are most suitable for you. In some cases, this may be to signpost counselling supports or reorganise workload.

Domestic Violence and Abuse Leave is paid leave from work provided to employees who require time off for matters associated with their experience of domestic abuse.

Domestic Violence and Abuse Leave may be used for one of the following reasons:

- a) To seek medical attention for you or your dependent(s) in respect of a physical or psychological injury resulting from domestic violence and abuse.
- b) To obtain services from an organisation providing support services for survivors of domestic violence and abuse.
- c) To obtain counselling for yourself or for a dependent as a consequence of domestic violence and abuse.
- d) To relocate your place of residence, either temporarily or permanently, as a consequence of domestic violence and abuse.
- e) To seek or receive legal or law enforcement assistance, including preparing for or participating in any civil or criminal proceedings related to, or resulting from domestic violence and abuse.
- f) Such other purposes as may be required with regard to all the circumstances.

It may transpire that your circumstances do not fall within the purpose of Domestic Violence and Abuse Leave. If this is the case, you will be advised of the grounds for the decision not to grant Domestic Violence and Abuse Leave. In those circumstances, any leave taken may alternatively be classified as sick leave or unpaid leave or annual leave or force majeure or compassionate leave, depending on the circumstances.

Related Policies:

[Sick Leave](#)

[Force Majeure](#)

[Dignity at Work](#)

[Compassionate Leave](#)

This list is not exhaustive. The above policies aim to preserve a harmonious workplace and promote our positive culture where staff can flourish and balance their jobs with

their personal lives.

## How to apply for leave

In instances where Domestic Violence and Abuse Leave is needed, this will be managed by Human Resources applying an additional 10 days leave to your annual leave entitlement.

This leave may be taken as whole days or half days, as needed and can be taken either on separate dates or on a number of consecutive dates, as needed.

## Seeking supports

RCSI is committed to providing a safe environment for its staff, and to responding appropriately to any incidents. There are a number of RCSI supports available to you should you feel you are being subjected to or are in danger of being subject to any form of domestic violence and abuse. These supports are outlined in the below table in addition to some external supports that you can avail of.

### Sources of Support

#### Any of the HR Partners

- Maire Ryan (01) 402 2505 or [maireryanhr@rcsi.com](mailto:maireryanhr@rcsi.com)
- Mark O'Dea (01) 402 2754 or [markodea@rcsi.com](mailto:markodea@rcsi.com)
- Rachel Hipwell (01) 402 2522 or [rachelhipwell@rcsi.com](mailto:rachelhipwell@rcsi.com)
- Cathy Buffini (01) 402 5138 or [cathybuffini@rcsi.com](mailto:cathybuffini@rcsi.com)

#### Campus Security

St. Stephens Green Campus: 191 or (01) 402 2219

Beaux Lane House: 2760 or (01) 402 2760 (7am-7pm)/2219 (7pm-7am)

Reservoir House, Sandyford: 8679 or 01 402 8679

Smurfit Building, Beaumont: 3700 or 01 809 3700 (8am–8pm, Mon-Fri)/ 2110 (8pm-8am)

**[Employee Assistance Programme](#)** - provided by Spectrum.Life. They offer an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) that gives employees the support that they need to help them manage their health and wellbeing issues effectively. Through the EAP, staff have access to a 24/7 free confidential counselling service. Contact the Spectrum.Life Employee Assistance Programme service, by:

Freephone ROI: 1800 903 542

WhatsApp: Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010



**RCSI Gym** to support your physical health, mental health and overall wellbeing. Contact the gym team at [gym@rcsi.ie](mailto:gym@rcsi.ie) for support.

### **Contact your General Practitioner (GP)**

#### **Emergency Services**

If you, or others, feel at risk or consider the situation to be an emergency, you can call the Gardaí on 999. If you need urgent medical help you should call for an ambulance (also on 999).

[Safe Ireland](#) is the national social change agency working to eradicate domestic abuse and coercive control in Ireland.

[Women's Aid](#) can help you if you are experiencing domestic violence. They give [advice on how you can help yourself and others](#). You can also contact them 24 hours-a-day on 1800 341 900.

[Men's Aid Ireland](#) is a service for men who are experiencing domestic violence. You can call them on 01 5543811 or email [hello@mensaid.ie](mailto:hello@mensaid.ie). Their helpline is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm.

[Aoibhneas](#) is a women and children's refuge. You can contact them 24 hours-a-day on 01 8670701 or email [helpline@aoibhneas.ie](mailto:helpline@aoibhneas.ie)

[Immigrant Council of Ireland](#) give advice on migrant women's rights and domestic violence.

[Dublin Rape Crisis Centre \(DRCC\)](#) operate a free National 24-hr Helpline which provides confidential listening and support for women and men who have been raped, sexually assaulted, sexually harassed or sexually abused at any time in their lives. The Free National 24-hr Helpline is 1800 77 8888

[Sexual Assault Treatment Units \(SATU\)](#) provide services for individuals, of all genders, who have experienced sexual crimes by addressing their immediate medical, psychological and emotional needs. This service can also perform a forensic examination to gather physical evidence of the assault/rape that can be used in a legal process if a person decides to report this crime to the Gardaí (Police).

A Rape Crisis Support Worker will be in attendance to offer you information and emotional support. Please click [here](#) to for the details of the nearest SATU to you.

### **Getting Further Help**

The Human Resources Department is available to support any member of staff in understanding or implementing the content of this policy and procedure.

## **Policy Review**

The Human Resources Department will ensure that this policy will be monitored and kept under review.