

Domestic Abuse Champions

A network of Domestic Abuse Champions will be situated throughout the Council. They will be expected to have an in-depth understanding of domestic abuse, built from additional training, and a strong knowledge of the services and pathways that are available to provide support to those experiencing domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse Champions will make themselves available to employees who need advice about domestic abuse, whether it relates to the employee personally, or if it relates to supporting a resident or tenant.

If you share your personal experience as a victim of domestic abuse with a Designated Safeguarding Officer or Champion, you can expect:

- For the Officer/Champion you speak with to consider your personal safety before engaging in any discussion of your situation, by asking whether it is a safe and appropriate time to talk. If it is not, the Champion will make arrangements to ensure your safety is prioritised.
This could be by arranging to meet with you in a mutually agreed location, or continuing the discussion via an alternative contact method.
The Champion will use their judgement to determine whether it is appropriate to delay the conversation without taking further action, and they will speak with you within 24 hours at most.
- For any preferences to speak to an Champion with particular characteristics (such as sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race et al) to be met, as far as it is reasonably practicable, and there is an available Champion who meets those preferences, to do so.
- For an impartial interpreter to be made available and/or for other accommodations to be made if English is not your first language, or if there are other literacy or support needs that are likely to impact your ability to communicate effectively.
- To be listened to and treated in a non-judgemental and compassionate manner
- For the Champion to provide a relevant and supportive response that prioritises your wishes and your safety

Domestic Abuse Champions will:

- Take an active role in raising awareness of domestic abuse and the support available from specialist domestic abuse services within their service area and working circles
- Be available to listen to employees who wish to discuss their personal experiences with an 'empathetic ear'
- Take a 'victim-centred' approach to domestic abuse disclosures and/or questions and provide relevant and appropriate information in response

- Be able to provide information about the support measures that are available to Dacorum Borough Council employees and support the Employee with approaching a Line Manager to complete a Workplace Support Plan (any measures would need to be signed off by a Line Manager or Safeguarding Officer)
- Be involved in domestic abuse related projects and initiatives within the Council

Domestic Abuse Champions will not:

- Replace the support offered by specialist domestic abuse services
- Give specific domestic abuse advice to employees or residents or make decisions on their behalf
- Make decisions about, or changes to Employees' working circumstances

If an employee would benefit from accommodations to their schedule or duties, or if they are experiencing performance, absence, or sickness issues related to the abuse, this would need to be considered by the Employee's Line Manager/Alternative Line Manager, or Designated Safeguarding Officer.

In these circumstances, the Champion may encourage an employee to share their circumstances, (at a level of detail that they are comfortable with), with a line manager or Designated Safeguarding Officer.

A full list of Domestic Abuse Champions is included below.

You can contact them by emailing them directly, or through the group email address.

DAHA describe Domestic Abuse Champions:

Each team that provides direct advice, support and contact with tenants/residents should have access to a designated Domestic Abuse Champion either directly within their team or through a closely associated team. The DA Champion should have enhanced training, understanding and awareness of domestic abuse and links to partner agencies to provide support. This does not need to be a separate role, but an additional responsibility/title taken on by an existing staff member who has the confidence, desire and access to learning and development to fulfil this role. It is imperative to recognise that DA Champions are not considered domestic abuse specialists, and do not replace the vital support offered through co-located domestic abuse advocates or the role of specialist domestic abuse services within the local area, which all survivors should be offered the opportunity to access.

The role, responsibilities and contact for DA Champions should be provided to all relevant partner agencies, including local specialist DA and by and for services. The

DA Champion is the team's main point of contact with partner agencies regarding DA related issues or tenants/residents experiencing domestic abuse, including multi-agency forums such as MARAC, MATAC, MAPPA, Child and Adult Safeguarding Conferences.

DA Champions can lead on regular reflective practice sessions with the purpose of learning from cases that are working/have worked well and others where there have been gaps in practice (cases to be identified by line managers in regular case audits).

Staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse should also have access to support from a Domestic Abuse Champion who will be equipped to specifically respond to the needs of these staff and to staff who may have a concern that a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating abusive behaviours and want advice on how to respond.

The standards to achieve this according to the framework are:

- *The DA Champion should have a role description that outlines their responsibilities and the training they will access to fulfil their role.*
- *DA Champions can be provided for each team that is tenant/resident facing, or these teams should have links to a DA Champion who will provide that support. For example, the Contractors' Team may not have a DA Champion, but the Housing Officers' Team that they refer to when concerns are raised will have a DA Champion in place. However, bear in mind that having DA Champions within the teams of operatives and contractors who are not office-based helps widen the network and support available.*
- *DA Champions are provided with regular group support and supervision-e.g. regular DA Champions meetings that could include regular group clinical supervision and chances to discuss DA cases, policies, and practices. This should be led by the organisational DA Lead.*
- *DA Champions are provided with individual case management supervision and support while supporting tenants/residents experiencing domestic abuse within their roles.*
- *DA Champions are offered individual clinical supervision when requested outside of management supervision and group DA Champion supervision.*
- *The role of the DA Champions and contact for them is provided to all relevant staff within each team and organisation. For example, included on staff signatures*

and emails, updated through staff newsletters/updates, included in induction information, reiterated through staff supervision and support.

- *The role, responsibilities and contact for DA Champions is provided to all relevant partner agencies, including local specialist domestic abuse and by and for services.*
- *The DA Champion is the main point of contact with partner agencies regarding domestic abuse related issues or tenants/residents experiencing domestic abuse, including multi-agency forums such as MARAC, MATAC, MAPPA, Child, and Adult Safeguarding Conferences.*
- *DA Champions and/or managers lead on regular reflective practice sessions to learn from cases that are working/have worked well and others where there have been gaps in practice (cases to be identified by line managers in regular case reviews).*

Designated Safeguarding Officers

We will also make a Designated Safeguarding Officer available in every service area within the Council, who will be of at least Team Leader seniority, so that we can ensure we meet our safeguarding responsibilities.

If any Employee or person appears to be at immediate risk, Domestic Abuse Champions have a duty to refer directly to specialist services and/or Police, and to escalate any safeguarding concerns.

Further information about Designated Safeguarding Officers and Designated Safeguarding Champions can be found within the Children and Adults at Risk policy.