

Toolkit on domestic violence and abuse at work: Recognise, respond and refer

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International toolkit on domestic violence

**This toolkit was produced for Vodafone Foundation
by Dr Jane Pillinger, Independent Gender Expert**

International toolkit on domestic violence

Foreword by Andrew Dunnett, Vodafone Foundation Director

Vodafone Foundation exists to invest in the communities in which Vodafone operates, bringing technology, funding and skills to address specific issues where Vodafone's technology can make a tangible and lasting difference.

Over the past ten years, Vodafone Foundation has connected over 700,000 people affected by domestic abuse to help and advice. One example, the TecSOS device (developed in partnership with the Red Cross, TecSOS Foundation and Thames Valley Partnership) provides high-risk survivors of domestic violence with enhanced access to the Police at the press of a button. Used by over 100,000 people to date, TecSOS has been credited with enabling lifesaving interventions by the Police, as well as significantly enhancing the user's sense of safety and security. Whilst Vodafone Foundation continues to develop technology to support those affected, their family and friends, we believe there is more that can be done to support, particularly through the workplace.

With an estimated one in three women and one in six men experiencing abuse in their lifetime, this issue affects people throughout society. In 2017, Vodafone Foundation worked with the Employer's Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA), Durham University Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse and Ipsos MORI to produce the report; "Domestic Violence and Abuse: Working together to transform responses in the workplace", a rallying cry for employers to address domestic abuse in the workplace. This toolkit builds on the findings of that report and its recommendations.

This toolkit was produced for the Vodafone Foundation by Dr Jane Pillinger, but builds on much that the Foundation has learnt from our partners over the last ten years. The intention is that through the toolkit, employers and managers around the world will feel more confident in beginning to address this issue and support those affected by abuse within their teams and organisations.

“[My employer] wrapped its arms around me when I needed it *most*”

A quote from an employee who experienced domestic violence and benefitted from a paid leave policy implemented by the employer.

The victim, Emma (not real name) was emotionally and physically abused by her partner. The time off and support she received from her employer enabled her to plan and rebuild her life.

International toolkit on domestic violence

Vodafone Foundation's work in preventing domestic violence and abuse

Vodafone Foundation commissioned research, carried out by Opinium in 2019, revealing that **more than 1 in 3 (37%) working people surveyed across multiple industries and at varying levels of seniority have experienced domestic abuse**. The survey of 4,715 men and women in employment across nine countries (UK, Germany, Ireland, Turkey, South Africa, Kenya, India, Italy and Spain) found that 1,725 had experienced abuse of some form, which accounts 37% of respondents.

Impact of domestic abuse on work-life and career experience:

- 1 in 2 (50%) say that the abuse they experienced during their working life resulted in low self-esteem/confidence - this is 45% for men and 53% for women
- 38% said they were less productive at work
- 1 in 5 (22%) say they sometimes stopped going into work/would take days off
- 1 in 10 (13%) quit their job
- Two-thirds (67%) say that domestic abuse affected their career
- 1 in 2 (56%) victims say that the domestic abuse they experienced affected their co-workers

Seeking support at work:

- 1 in 2 (51%) of those who did not tell anyone at work about the abuse they were experiencing felt too ashamed to mention it at work – the biggest barrier to telling people at work about their abuse was feeling ashamed, and feeling it was inappropriate to mention (42%)
- Of those who experienced abuse during their working life, more than two-thirds (68%) felt safer at work compared to home and more than two-thirds (67%) said they could be themselves at work, but not at home
- 1 in 3 (33%) workers said that an app that people can download to access help and support would help reduce the impact of domestic violence on the work lives of workers

International toolkit on domestic violence

Aims of the **Domestic Violence and Abuse Toolkit**:

- Provide information and resources about domestic violence and abuse and how it impacts on the workplace;
- Show practical examples of how managers and employees can make a difference to preventing and responding effectively to prevent domestic violence and abuse as it impacts on the workplace.

1. Introduction

Companies have an important role to play in helping to prevent domestic violence and abuse where it impacts on the workplace – and when a victim’s work, productivity and safety are affected.

A growing number of companies across the world are aware of their duty of care to support victims of domestic violence and abuse, leading them to develop and implement proactive responses in the workplace. Companies also recognise that there are important links between home and work that may impact on performance and safety – one of which is the impact of domestic violence and abuse.

Domestic violence and abuse is a violation of an individual’s human rights. It can severely impede the health, wellbeing and safety of affected employees, impacting on their capacity to work and to progress in their careers.

The Toolkit is designed to support women and men who are impacted by domestic violence and abuse around the world. It gives information and practical examples to help support employees and managers in this work – it is based on evidence of promising practices across the world. **It is based on the premise that we all have a role to play in ending domestic violence and abuse.** Case studies, based on real life scenarios, also aim to promote discussion about developing the best responses to cases of domestic violence and abuse. There is no quick fix and managers should be prepared to spot early warning signs for domestic violence and abuse and respond to each case appropriately.

2. Definitions of domestic violence and abuse

Domestic violence and abuse (sometimes defined as intimate partner violence, family/carer violence or domestic violence) is an incident or pattern of physical, verbal, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse. It can involve financial/economic abuse and control, and/or stalking and harassment that is perpetrated by one intimate partner over another. Domestic violence and abuse frequently involves control, coercion, threatening behaviour and abuse. It frequently takes place over time, often starting with small acts of abuse.

- **Physical violence:** involving hitting, kicking, burning, pulling hair, stabbing and shooting, leading to injury and in the worst cases death.
- **Sexual abuse:** unwanted sexual attention, including rape.
- **Coercive control:** a systematic pattern of behaviour with the purpose of undermining a victim and creating fear through threats, humiliation and intimidation and depriving an individual of support and independence.¹ It is a psychological or emotional form of abuse that is used to control and limit the freedom of an intimate partner.
- **Financial/economic abuse:** control of finances, often used to prevent a victim from having the money to pay for transport to get to work, or to buy suitable clothing for work. Without financial independence, it can be very difficult to leave a violent or abusive relationship.
- **Emotional/psychological control and threats:** can affect confidence and self-esteem and may also include control over social interactions and autonomy.
- **Stalking:** workplace stalking often results in the perpetrator following a victim to and from their place of work, or hanging around the workplace entrance.
- **Cyber harassment:** many of the forms of control, threats and stalking are carried out virtually through email, text messages, telephone messages etc.

Domestic violence and abuse occurs 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.

¹ Evan Stark (1979) first coined the term coercive control, defining it as '...a pattern of behaviour which seeks to take away the victim's liberty or freedom, to strip away their sense of self.'

International toolkit on domestic violence

Domestic violence and abuse can continue after a relationship has ended. Although women and men can both be victims of domestic violence and abuse, women are predominately the victims and men predominately the perpetrators. An estimated 30% of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence at some point in their lives.² Very few look to formal institutions for help and less than 10 per cent of women seek help from the police.³

Some myths and facts about domestic violence and abuse

Myth: Someone would not be abusive for no reason – ‘my cousin was probably only abusive because their partner did something to make them angry’.

Fact: There are no excuses for any form of domestic abuse. Perpetrators often try to exert control through intimidation and physical abuse, but that is no reflection on the person experiencing it and it is never their fault. Only the person being abusive can control the abuse.

Myth: Continuous fighting at times is normal in a relationship. They will probably sort it out eventually.

Fact: Continuous fighting is not normal and can be a sign of an abusive relationship.

Myth: It is very unlikely that older people in long-term committed relationships experience domestic abuse – especially if one of them is acting as a carer for the other.

Fact: Anyone can experience domestic abuse regardless of his or her age. Older people can sometimes face even more barriers when it comes to seeking support than younger people. Their abuser may be their carer, too, making it difficult for them to access information and support.

Myth: It does not really happen to people with high incomes.

Fact: Domestic abuse affects people from all levels of income and backgrounds.

Myth: My brother only shouts at his girlfriend because he has a drug and alcohol problem. He cannot control it.

Fact: Many people use alcohol or drugs and are not abusive, and neither are any an excuse for any form of abuse.

Myth: My friend is manipulating her partner and puts him down emotionally, but that does not mean she is being abusive: it is just the way she is.

Fact: Being emotionally abusive and manipulative is never OK and can cause serious harm. If you are worried about someone you know, reach out to them and offer your support.

Myth: If they were really suffering from abuse in the relationship, they would just leave.

Fact: Leaving an abusive relationship is not an easy step. Many people stay because they believe their partner has the potential to change.

Source: Hestia & Vodafone Foundation Bright Sky app.

² UN Women (2018) Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2018/sdg-report-gender-equality-in-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-2018-en.pdf?la=en&vs=4332>

³ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014) Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. P. 104.

International toolkit on domestic violence

Laws on domestic violence and abuse

Laws play an important role in providing protection from domestic violence and abuse. According to the World Bank, at least 144 countries have passed laws on domestic violence.⁴ Even where laws have not been passed, there are a range of international treaties and norms relating to domestic violence and abuse that are applicable to all countries.⁵

In some countries the law addresses domestic violence and abuse at work, including duties on companies to support employees who are victims of domestic violence. For example, the New Zealand Domestic Violence Victims' Protection Act 2018 established the right for workers to take 10 days domestic violence leave and the Spanish Organic Law 1/2004 of 28 December 2004 on protection against domestic violence provides for domestic violence leave and other work-related support.

You can find out more detailed information about what laws and policies exist in your country by accessing UN Women's Global Database on Violence against Women and interactive map.⁶

While laws are important in setting out rights and in sending powerful messages to change attitudes and culture, they alone are insufficient in addressing the impact of domestic violence and abuse in the workplace. Studies show that domestic violence and abuse is most likely to occur in countries where social norms result in acceptance of domestic violence as normal.⁷ **Changing these social norms can start in the workplace. When companies and workplaces send the message that domestic violence and abuse is unacceptable this can have a spin-off effect, sending a strong message to the wider community.**

⁴ World Bank Group (2018). Women, Business and the Law 2018, database. See report of database : Iqbal, S. (2018) Women, Business, and the Law 2018. Washington, D.C, World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/926401524803880673/Women-Business-and-the-Law-2018> In the report further information can be found on different laws, including domestic violence, in the 'Economy tables' for each country. Of the 36 economies with no domestic violence laws or aggravated penalties for violence at home, 19 are in Sub-Saharan Africa and 10 are in the Middle East and North Africa.

⁵ For a brief overview of international norms and relevant regional instruments see: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/global-norms-and-standards>

⁶ UN Women Global database on violence against women contains information of measures introduced by governments to address violence against women, in the areas of laws and policies, prevention, services and statistical data: <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en>

⁷ UN Women (2018) p. 193.

3. Why is domestic violence and abuse a workplace issue?

Between 30 and 40 per cent of victims of domestic violence and abuse will be in employment at some point in their lives. This means that most workplaces will be affected in some way or another.

This is higher in some countries, for example, research carried out in Turkey in 2008 found that 40% of working women had been exposed to domestic violence and abuse from their partners at some point of their lives and 13% had experienced domestic violence in the previous 12 months.⁸ Women earning higher wages than their husbands were also more exposed to domestic violence and abuse.⁹

The majority of employees affected by domestic violence and abuse say that domestic violence and abuse has affected their work performance or their safety at work.

- **Domestic violence and abuse affects work performance and ultimately impacts on the capacity of a victim to be able to stay in work.** Surveys show that around half of victims of domestic violence and abuse report that their job performance was negatively affected, and three out of four had a hard time concentrating while at work.¹⁰ In a survey by the US Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 64 per cent of victims of domestic violence said that their ability to work had been affected.¹¹
- **Domestic violence and abuse may also affect the safety of victims and co-workers in the workplace.** This may arise if an abuser stalks a victim, threatens or abuses a victim in their workplace in person, or through workplace resources such as computers, mobile phones and telephones.

⁸ Cited by Arat, M. et al. (2014) Domestic violence against white-collar working women in Turkey : A call for business action. Sabanci University. http://research.sabanciuniv.edu/25972/1/BADV_Report.pdf

⁹ Arat, M. et al. (2014) *ibid*.

¹⁰ For further information about the surveys see: <http://dvatworknet.org/research/national-surveys>

¹¹ Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence (CAECV) (2005) National Benchmark Telephone Survey on Domestic Violence in the Workplace. <http://www.ncdsv.org/images/CAEPVSurvey.WorkPlace.pdf>

International toolkit on domestic violence

Understanding domestic violence as a form of power and control

Domestic violence and abuse is a form of power and control. As the Power and Control wheel below shows, domestic violence and abuse impacts on the workplace and on victims' capacity to work in different ways. Forms of power and control include **isolating the victim, emotional abuse, economic abuse, masculine privilege, using children**, through to **threats, minimising, denying and blaming and intimidation**.



For more information see the report [Can Work Be Safe When Home Isn't?](#)

This version of the Power and Control wheel, is adapted with permission from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota, and Futures Without Violence www.futureswithoutviolence.org.

International toolkit on domestic violence

The business case

When domestic violence follows victims into the workplace it impacts on productivity, morale, wellbeing and workplace relationships. It puts limits on an employees' full and active participation in work. Domestic violence and abuse particularly affects the retention of women workers. In practice, many women experiencing domestic violence and abuse end up by leaving their jobs. Career chances may be jeopardised, particularly if a victim leaves her work without a reference.

Research in Australia found that 25–50% of Australian women subjected to domestic violence reported having lost a job, at least in part due to the violence. Preventing this from happening and supporting victims of domestic violence can be important in helping them survive the impact of domestic violence and stay in work. Quite simply, it can save the life of victim.

Research commissioned by Vodafone Foundation (conducted by Ipsos MORI) confirmed that HR leads in organisations who have had disclosures or who believe employees are affected by domestic abuse felt that domestic abuse had impacted upon their organisation in ways such as productivity decline, absenteeism and quality of work suffering.¹²

In addition, the workplace may be the only safe place for a victim of domestic violence and abuse – but it can be a place of risk if a violent/abusive partner or ex-partner knows the victim's place of work. Remember that everyone's experience is unique. The International Labour Organisation says *'...work can be a preventive and protective factor in the lives of victims, as often the workplace offers a break from the violent situation and can be a place where the violence is identified.'*¹³

As well as being the right thing to do, there is also a strong business case for preventing domestic violence in the workplace and in giving victims the support that they may need.

- Sick leave and lost working hours will be reduced.
- Companies have improved reputations, enabling them to attract and retain workers.
- Victims are able to spend time on their work instead of dealing with anxiety and fear, or struggling to deal with the consequences of violence and abuse.

¹² The report 'Domestic Violence and Abuse: Working together to transform responses in the workplace' is available at: https://www.vodafone.com/content/dam/vodafone-images/foundation/55376_Vodafone_domestic_violence_report_AW5_V2.pdf

¹³ ILO (2018) Ending violence and harassment in the world of work. Report V (2). Geneva, ILO. p.5

International toolkit on domestic violence

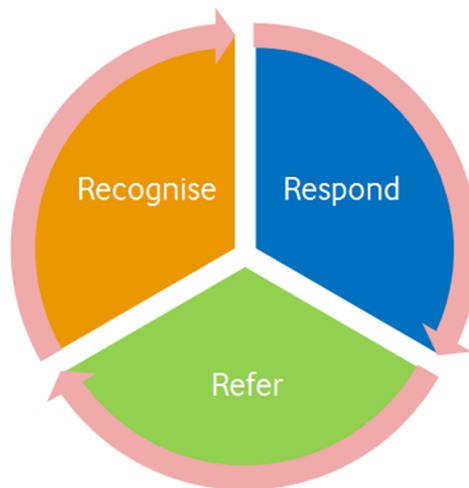
- Employees will be more productive and happier if they are able to talk to someone they trust and find a solution to their safety at work.
- There is a positive impact on the wider community and family relationships if violence and abuse is identified and prevented.

4. Taking a proactive approach: recognise, respond and refer

Vodafone Foundation's research¹⁴ also revealed that businesses are committed to preventing domestic violence and abuse as it impacts in the workplace. It also noted that there needs to be better awareness about how companies can be proactive in making a difference. Although the survey found that 86 per cent of companies interviewed believed they had a duty of care towards victims of domestic violence and abuse, only 5 per cent had introduced a specific policy or guideline on the issue.

The section of the **Vodafone Foundation Domestic Violence and Abuse Toolkit** is organised around the following key themes:

By recognising the problem – particularly at an early stage – managers and employees can help 'break the silence' about domestic violence and abuse in the workplace, and encourage employees to disclose and discuss the problem. This means that everyone in the organization knows and understands that domestic violence and abuse is a workplace issue.



Companies ensure that policies and procedures provide a supportive workplace that can respond appropriately and empathetically when an employee discloses domestic violence and abuse.

Managers signpost employees to internal confidential services and information about support from specialist domestic violence support organisations, counselling services and other tools such as Vodafone Foundation Bright Sky app (where available) in order to report concern.

The **RECOGNISE, RESPOND and REFER** model has been used extensively across the world as a framework for a comprehensive approach to support victims of domestic violence and abuse at work.

¹⁴ The report is available at: https://www.vodafone.com/content/dam/vodafone-images/foundation/55376_Vodafone_domestic_violence_report_AW5_V2.pdf

International toolkit on domestic violence

1. RECOGNISE

This section looks at how to become more aware of the early signs of domestic violence and abuse and take the early warning signs seriously. Remember to always consult an expert/domestic violence specialist if you are not sure if what you are seeing poses a risk. Do not make assumptions! Even if you find out that it is not domestic violence and abuse that is leading to changes in work attendance or performance, there may be other personal issues that an employee is facing that you can help with (such as a recent bereavement, relationship break-up or mental health difficulty).

Recognising the signs of domestic violence and abuse

Changes in attendance at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arriving at work late. • Wanting to change working hours for no particular reason, needing to leave work early. • Frequent unexplained absence from work. • Increase in sick leave. • Spending an unusual number of hours at work for no particular reason.
Changes in work performance and productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of work has deteriorated – performance targets and deadlines are missed, and mistakes are made. • Work quality is affected by frequent text messages, emails, phone calls and/or visits to work by the employee’s partner. • There is an avoidance of phone calls and there are signs of distress or anxiety when a text or phone message is received.
Changes in behaviour or demeanour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in behaviour – becoming quiet, anxious, frightened, aggressive, distracted or depressed. • Becoming isolated from colleagues – not joining colleagues for coffee or lunch breaks, not joining in work social events. • Secrecy about home life and relationships. • Fear about leaving children at home and not leaving work on time.
Physical changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible bruising or injuries with unlikely explanations. • Changes in the pattern or amount of make-up used. • Changes in clothing, such as wearing long sleeves to hide injuries. • Changes in appearance, for example, in the use and pattern of make-up • Tiredness and irritability. • Substance use/misuse.
Other factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner or ex-partner stalking an employee in or around the workplace or on social media. • Partner or ex-partner exerting unusual amount of control or demands over work schedule. • Isolation from family and friends.

Case study 1

Dita regularly arrives at work late and in a distressed state. Her manager noticed that she has difficulties concentrating on her work, often makes mistakes and is regularly distracted. The most recent time she was late she told her manager she had lost her car keys and had to get the bus to work, the time before she was late because her husband couldn't take the children to school.

Her manager knew that something is wrong, she used to be an outgoing member of the team but now she is often withdrawn, stressed and tired. Her colleagues were also concerned about her and recently Dita told her closest colleague at work about her problems, who said she should talk to her manager. After a week she plucked up the courage to do this. Her manager talked to her in a sensitive and non-judgemental way and told her that he is always there if she wants to talk about any problems at home. Dita told her manager that her husband regularly controls her, including her money – he often hides her car keys and her purse – making it difficult for her to get to work. And sometimes when he is supposed to take the children to school he doesn't, which means that she arrives late at work.

Dita eventually left her husband and was supported by her manager to make temporary adjustments in her work. She also took a week's paid leave so that she could move house and settle her children into school. Her manager also helped her to contact a domestic violence organisation and they gave her some further advice and support. Dita said that the support from her manager and her colleagues enabled her to build the confidence to leave her husband and stay in her job.

International toolkit on domestic violence

RECOGNISE that domestic violence and abuse takes many forms and affects different people in different ways.

Stigma, as well as social and cultural norms, often prevent victims from speaking about their experiences and seeking help. Some groups of women and men may experience additional difficulties or vulnerabilities and may be reluctant to disclose domestic violence and abuse. Some may face multiple forms of discrimination that makes it difficult for them to seek help from a manager.

- LGBT+ employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse may be reluctant to speak out or seek help from a manager, particularly if they are not 'out' at work. They may fear that a perpetrator will threaten to 'out' them at work or to family members.
- Women may experience increased levels of domestic violence and abuse when they are pregnant or after giving birth, and subsequently when they have childcare responsibilities.
- Disabled people experience higher levels of domestic violence and abuse than non-disabled people and they may be less likely to speak out about their experiences if their work situation is insecure.
- Minority ethnic women and men may face added barriers to seeking help and disclosing domestic violence and abuse and seeking support because of discrimination and racism.
- Older women and men are less likely than younger women and men to report their experiences of domestic violence and abuse and seek help.
- Men experiencing domestic violence and abuse often find it difficult to talk about their experiences and to know where to access support services.
- Perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse are often reluctant to acknowledge what they are doing and to ask for help.

International toolkit on domestic violence

RECOGNISE what you can and cannot do

An important element of an effective response is knowing what a manager or an employee can and cannot do. Knowing what your limits are and how you can respond is important.

- ✓ **Remember you are not an expert and you should not try to 'solve the problem'.**

- ✓ Focus on work related impacts and let the employee know what you can and cannot do (making sure that you are also familiar with the domestic violence and abuse policy and what can be offered to an employee).

- ✓ If you are not sure, do not make promises of what the company can provide, rather check what is possible with Human Resources.

- ✓ Ask what you can do to help, let them know that you are there to help and that you can offer information and resources (internal and external).

- ✓ Be prepared to implement both safety and prevention measures, working closely with key personnel and relevant departments, including Human Resources and security, and domestic violence experts.

- ✓ Always respect the individual's decision to not disclose and listen and respond in a non-judgemental way.

International toolkit on domestic violence

RECOGNISE: the need for confidentiality, while balancing this with safety in the workplace

It is important to recognise the need for confidentiality. However, employers are also responsible for - and have a duty of care - for their employees' safety in the workplace. Balancing these two is important – this means **understanding when it is relevant to respect confidentiality and at what point to disclose potential safety risks.**

Confidentiality should never be a reason for not doing anything or not getting involved in supporting a victim. There are not hard and fast rules on this, but understanding the need to balance the two is an important starting point. Ensuring safety in the workplace inevitably involves informing key managers, security personnel and co-workers of potential risks, which may or may not require disclosure of personal information. However, a rule of thumb is that disclosure of information about a victim or the risks posed by a perpetrator in the workplace should only take place in the following circumstances:

- Where there are potentially dangerous or emergency situations;
- Where safety planning is necessary;
- To implement protection or restraining orders in the workplace.

In some countries there is a legal duty of disclosure in cases where there are potential risks to others. It is important to check whether the laws in your country include this legal duty to disclose and what the responsibilities of an employer or manager are.

RECOGNISE: information, raising awareness and training

An important part of recognising and preventing domestic violence and abuse and the impact on the workplace is to ensure that everyone in the workplace is aware of the problem and knows what the company can and cannot do. Through information, awareness raising and training, everyone can learn about domestic violence and abuse and know what role they can play.

International toolkit on domestic violence

3. RESPOND: effective workplace responses

Workplace policy and procedures

Workplace policies and procedures help to identify support that can be provided for victims. They can help managers and colleagues to respond appropriately and empathetically when an employee discloses domestic violence and abuse.

The starting point is to ensure that all managers and employees know that there is a domestic violence at work policy. It is important that everyone knows and understands the role they can play.

The different elements of a workplace policy



- It contributes to a workplace culture where domestic violence and abuse is understood and where support is given to victims.
- It ensures that employees know that domestic violence and abuse is unacceptable and is treated as misconduct in the workplace.
- It sends a strong message to employees that the company is serious about the issue and that appropriate support and help will be provided. This is important in giving reassurance to victims of domestic violence and abuse and for them to feel safe to disclose the abuse.
- The workplace may be the only a safe place for a victim to disclose domestic violence and abuse and where employees feel safe to talk about their experiences.

International toolkit on domestic violence

RESPOND: Where there may be an immediate threat to the victim of her/his colleagues in the workplace

In some cases it may be necessary to act immediately if there is a risk to the victim or her/his colleagues in the workplace. If in doubt, do not hesitate to call the police and/or seek advice from a domestic violence organisation.¹⁵ The first thing to check when carrying out a safety plan is whether the victim has a protection or restraining order and if it covers the workplace. Check what the order covers and that the company complies with the provisions contained in the order. A victim may require some support or signposting for specialist information about how to apply for an order.

Protection or restraining orders and the workplace

A protection or restraining order is issued by a court to protect the victim from domestic violence, covering stalking and the workplace, if relevant. In some countries, employers can apply directly for an order if employees are threatened with domestic violence and abuse in the workplace. Orders specify that the perpetrator/alleged perpetrator does not engage in actions or contact with the victim, and may also include contact by telephone, mail, text etc. A non-violent contact order can be issued, requiring the alleged perpetrator to cease violent contact, but to allow the victim to have contact with them. Failure to comply will result in prosecution.

Drawing up a safety plan

- ✓ With the victim, involve all relevant personnel who can assist with safety planning, e.g. reception staff, work colleagues, security staff and others such as car park attendants.
- ✓ Assist the victim to be aware of their own safety (e.g. having telephone numbers of support services, who to contact if there is potential danger, relevant phone numbers easily accessible).
- ✓ Provide a new/safe parking space close to the entrance, an escort to and from parking if necessary, improve lighting and security measures such as security camera or panic button.
- ✓ Change office location, ensure the victim is never working alone, and/or move desk away from the entrance and windows where she/he can be easily seen from the outside.
- ✓ Review and temporarily rearrange work tasks to reduce risk of violence e.g. if a victim is on the front desk or in a public space such as a shop.
- ✓ If the victim is being stalked or harassed on email, mobile phone and/or social media, provide a new email address, mobile number and divert phone calls.
- ✓ Inform the police if there are concerns about a victim being abused in the workplace, including if a protection order is being broken.

¹⁵ A template for an individualised safety plan can be downloaded from 'Make it our Business', Western University, Ontario, Canada: <http://makeitourbusiness.ca/content/individualized-safety-plan-template>.

International toolkit on domestic violence

Case study 2

At the end of the working day, Sasha goes to the staff car park to discover that her car has been vandalised and there is a note saying 'I will get you wherever you are'. She doesn't know who has done this but suspects that it is her ex-boyfriend who has been stalking her and sending text messages. She is scared and doesn't know what to do or who to turn to. The security guard at the car park knows her ex-boyfriend well and was unaware that they had separated or that he was threatening her. He had let her ex-boyfriend into the car park as he had done many times over the previous year. She knows she must do something and isn't sure if she trusts the security guard so makes a plan to talk to her manager the next day.

The next day she spoke to her manager who helped her put in place a plan for a new parking space and to be accompanied to and from her car, so that she can be safe arriving and leaving work. Her manager spoke to the security guard and told the security guard not to let Sasha's boyfriend in the car park and if he did try, the guard should immediately call Sasha's manager and the police.

Case study 3

Melisa started dating Gabriel six months ago. They both work for the same company but in different offices. Recently Melisa ended the relationship but it wasn't easy. After a couple of weeks she started receiving offensive and threatening text and phone messages on her mobile phone. They became more and more regular, day and night, and they were interfering with her work. She was constantly worried and at times very scared. She told her friends at work and they advised her to change her phone number, and that she should not delete the messages as she may need them as evidence. Her manager noticed that she was distracted and seemed anxious when she received text messages. Melisa and Gabriel both have mobile phones provided by the company. Melisa spoke to her manager and she was given a new telephone number and her work calls were redirected to her manager. Her manager told her to keep relevant evidence of calls and text messages and not to delete them. Disciplinary action was taken against Gabriel and he was sacked for perpetrating violence at work, misusing workplace resources.

RESPOND: Talking to an employee who is experiencing domestic violence and abuse

It is important that managers and employees are aware of how to talk to an employee where there are concerns about domestic violence and abuse, including any work related performance problems.

Be aware that managers should not see themselves as an expert and the solutions suggested should be focused on addressing work-related problems in a supportive and non-judgmental way.

Domestic violence and abuse is traumatic and distressing – it can cause loss of confidence, anxiety, sleep problems, depression, anger, isolation and withdrawal from socialising with work colleagues. Many victims feel shame and guilt. As with other sensitive work-home related issues – such as responding to mental health or substance misuse issues that impact on the workplace - how a manager communicates with an

International toolkit on domestic violence

employee can make all the difference as to whether an employee feels safe to disclose domestic violence and abuse.

Although a manager is not expected to be an expert, there are certain things that are important to know in order to respond appropriately. Listen, encourage and work with those reporting abuse to ensure they document any incidents of abuse in the workplace, including by telephone or text messages. The following are tips regularly used by managers and can apply to any employee, including a co-worker, to ensure effective, open, empathetic, sensitive and non-judgemental communications:

- ✓ Do not judge - listen, be patient and let them tell you what has happened in their own time.
- ✓ Avoid giving personal advice, help your employee or co-worker find the help they need.
- ✓ Avoid asking questions about what happened if they are not ready to talk about it.
- ✓ Let them know that what they tell you is confidential, but that precautions may need to be taken if there are safety concerns for other employees.
- ✓ Remember that the victim may just need someone to be there for them.
- ✓ Allow them to be in control - ask how you can help and allow them to make their own decisions.
- ✓ Help them find information but avoid insisting on them doing anything or speaking to anyone they don't want to.
- ✓ Be respectful and understand that the employee may be uncomfortable with being touched.
- ✓ Be supportive. Acknowledge what they are going through and let them know options and support available to them, now and in the future.

Case study 4

Joel works as an office administrator in an office with six other women. Recently Joel's colleagues were getting concerned that Joel wasn't looking after herself. Her clothing was frequently dirty and she had developed a bad body odour. Her colleagues didn't know how to talk to Joel about it so they went to their manager, Karen. Karen had also been concerned and didn't really know how to approach the issue either, as it was embarrassing. She spoke to Joel and very kindly asked her if everything was ok and if there were any problems in her private life that she could help her to deal with. At that moment Joel broke down and said she had been experiencing a lot of controlling behaviour by her husband, including that he wouldn't allow her to take a shower or wear clean clothes. She believed he was doing this to stop her from going to work. Karen remembered the training she had done earlier in the year about domestic violence and realised this was an example of coercive control. She gave her support and helped Joel draw up a safety plan for when she was in work and she referred her to a domestic violence organisation for specialist help.

International toolkit on domestic violence

Ten years later Joel said that the support from her colleagues and manager was crucial in helping her to build a new life for herself – she was still working for the company and was now in a senior position. Over the years she had given advice and helped and advised several women who had experienced domestic violence.

RESPONDING: Arranging workplace adjustments, paid leave and flexible working

Arranging paid leave and temporary adjustments to working time/flexible working can make all the difference to enable a victim of domestic violence to access relevant support services and to make adjustments in their own life and those of their children.

One of the impacts of domestic violence and abuse at work is that victims can be preoccupied, face stress, anxiety and lose concentration at work, affecting their work performance and confidence. During a difficult time in dealing with domestic violence and abuse and/or when a victim is in the process of leaving a violent and abusive partner, it may be necessary to put in place some temporary adjustments to the employee's work tasks.

In some cases adjustments to working time can help a victim deal with a particularly difficult time at home, even though she may not be ready to leave an abusive relationship. Look at the provision of leave and flexible work within your company policy. Examples of different reasons for granting leave include: attending court or appointments with solicitors; to move to a new/safe housing; to settle children into a new home and school; to attend specialist counselling or domestic violence support services. In some instances, managers can use their discretion to extend paid leave in exceptional circumstances taking into account the needs of the victim. Provision should be made for leave to be taken flexibly, for example, for a couple of hours or a day if needed.

Case study 5

Susan had lived with her partner Joe for four years, experiencing aggression. Demeaning comments and shouting started soon after they started living together. Joe controlled what she did more and more. It was worse after night fall as Joe was often drunk and his abusive comments and shouting got worse. By the time Susan got to work in the morning she was often exhausted from stress, worry and lack of sleep. Her line manager saw that she was tired and knew that something was wrong. He had seen some company information about what to do if an employee is experiencing domestic violence, but wasn't sure if this was the problem. One morning he told Susan that she looked tired lately and asked if she was ok and if was there anything he could do. Susan said there wasn't anything he could do and she left it at that. He told her that if she needed to talk to someone she could contact the employee assistance programme if she needed to

International toolkit on domestic violence

talk to someone confidentially. A couple of weeks later Susan asked her line manager if she could have some flexible work hours with a later morning start, explaining that, at the moment that was all she could cope with doing and needed to get some additional sleep. She was also given some information of how to contact a domestic violence organisation if she needed further help. After a few years of receiving support, Susan left her abusive partner. She said her manager and being able to talk confidentially to someone from the employee assistance programme had really helped her to keep her job.

Case study 6

Saleen experienced years of physical and emotional abuse by her husband. She had recently separated from her husband and left the family home, temporarily staying with friends while she sorted out her living arrangements. However, the abuse has continued and her husband kept following her, turning up at her temporary home and when she was at work. Keeping her job was the most important thing for her because she has friends and support at work – and importantly - an income. She spoke to her manager about whether she could have some time off work to get legal advice and a protection order, which could mean attending court. She also shared with her manager how the abuse had worn her down and that she was getting panic attacks and flash-backs about the abuse she had suffered from her husband, which affected her work. Saleen's manager wasn't sure how best to respond and spoke to Human Resources and then to a specialist domestic violence organisation. This enabled her manager to give advice about who to contact to get a protection order that covered the workplace, and the option to take paid leave to attend solicitors' and court appointments. Human Resources arranged counselling for Saleen with a specialist victim support organisation, which Saleen said really helped her to build her confidence and to reduce the panic attacks.

International toolkit on domestic violence

RESPOND: assisting an employee where there has been financial abuse

Financial abuse is a common form of domestic abuse and is often one of the first signs of domestic violence and abuse. It involves control of a victim's finances and may stop an individual from working. Put simply, if there is no bus fare for work or money to buy suitable clothing for work, the individual will be prevented from participating in work. Some cases of financial abuse result in a victim not having access to their salary, for example, if her salary is paid into a joint bank account. Some companies give help to employees who are victims of financial abuse in providing support and advice. Please see your local company policy for details or discuss options with Human Resources.

Case study 7

Jan is in a same-sex marriage and had put in place plans to leave her abusive partner, including opening a new bank account and finding a new place to live. She had opened up about the abuse to two trusted colleagues at work and they had been very supportive, and she had arranged with her manager to get some paid flexible leave, which is part of the company policy. Her ex-partner had agreed to transfer 50% of the joint account into her new account so she could pay the deposit for her new house. Just before she was due to move she discovered that all the money from the joint bank account had been taken by her ex-partner – what was worse she discovered a debt on the account. The next day she arrived in work in a distressed state and her colleagues advised her to talk to her manager about how the company might help her out temporarily. Taking this advice she spoke to her manager, who said she wasn't sure what to do, but that she would talk to Human Resources. Later that day Human Resources came back to her manager to say that they could arrange a one-month advance on her salary and also some additional financial support to pay for the rental deposit. Jan was able to keep the place she had planned to rent and moved the following week. Her manager also said she should go and talk to her bank about how to deal with the debt her ex-partner had run up.

Case study 8

Anaya works as a manager and enjoys her job, it gives her some freedom and autonomy in her life. However, her husband, who has always been controlling, started insulting her and her family and telling her that she should stop work as her role should be at home to look after him. Recently he had become threatening towards her and the children, which really scared Anaya. Anaya decided that she had to leave him and ensure that her children were safe. She knew if she carried on working that she would be able to provide for her children. However, Anaya's problems got worse when she discovered that her husband had taken all the money out of their bank account, which is where her salary was paid every month. She confronted her husband about this and asked him for some money to pay for her weekly train travel pass to get to work. He refused and she phoned in sick to work. Later that week, Anaya's manager phoned her to check if she was ok. She told her manager what had happened and that she was scared, trapped at home and couldn't get to work. She didn't know what she should do and if she could open a bank account without her husband's permission. Anaya's manager helped her to contact a bank that she knew had introduced a policy on domestic violence and abuse for customers. With her manager's support she opened a bank account in her own name. She got temporary safe accommodation with a domestic violence organisation who later helped her to find permanent accommodation. This was the first step in building a new life for herself and her children.

International toolkit on domestic violence

RESPOND: What can co-workers do?

Employees 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 fact surveys show that victims of domestic violence usually disclose to a trusted work colleague before they talk to a manager.

The following are some tips on how to encourage co-workers to safely take a role in preventing domestic violence and abuse as it impacts on the workplace:

- ✓ Circulate easy to understand information to all employees, including this toolkit.
- ✓ Ensure that all employees have access to relevant information – or know where to access information – about domestic violence and abuse support services, including support they can expect to get from Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) or managers, and external support from domestic violence organisations.
- ✓ Provide up-to-date information on the company's intranet and/or in internal information bulletins circulated to staff. Nominate a member of the HR team to keep this information up-to-date.
- ✓ Provide clear and accessible information about the company's domestic violence and abuse policy and the ways that employees can be supported through paid leave, readjustment of work tasks, safety planning and other provisions in the policy, as well as relevant information about domestic violence and abuse laws.
- ✓ Encourage and raise awareness amongst all employees about they how to talk openly about domestic violence and abuse (refer to the tips above on communicating with a victim of domestic violence and abuse). Start opening up conversations about the issue in the workplace.

International toolkit on domestic violence

RESPOND: Perpetrator accountability

Where perpetrators are employees, it is important that they are held accountable in a consistent way (using existing investigative and disciplinary procedures, for example, as set out in relevant policies on violence and harassment at work). In serious cases of violence and abuse in the workplace contact the police.

It is important that perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse are held to account for their actions and are given support in ending violent and abusive behaviour. Perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse can also be employees who may bring the problem of domestic violence and abuse into the workplace. The victim and the perpetrator may also work in the same workplace.

If violence is persistent and serious, or if the perpetrator engages in violence, stalking or other criminal activity, there should be no hesitation in calling the police. There may need to be close monitoring of perpetrators by the police in order to ensure the safety of victims in the workplace. As a result it is important that prevention measures in the workplace are part of coordinated responses to preventing domestic violence spilling-over to work.

Referral to specialist counselling and/or perpetrator programmes can play a role in changing attitudes and behaviours that lead to domestic violence and abuse, with the potential to reducing re-incidence. However, these programmes are more likely to be successful if they are part of wider inter-agency programmes at different levels: societal, institutional, community and individual. It is wise to be cautious as perpetrator programmes - while showing success when there is a willingness to change behaviour - do not always prevent violent and abusive behaviour reoccurring.

Remember that even if an employee perpetrates domestic violence and abuse outside of the workplace or work hours, if they use workplace resources such as mobile phones or computers to stalk or harass a victim, this should be viewed as misconduct at work and covered by disciplinary procedures including dismissal. In cases where the perpetrator and victim are both employees, if the violent and abusive conduct takes place outside of work and impacts on an employee's performance then this should be a concern for the employee's manager.

International toolkit on domestic violence

Tips in communicating with a perpetrator/alleged perpetrator

If there are concerns about an employee or if there have been reports of an employee's behaviour it is important to communicate effectively. Here are some tips on communicating with an employee who is suspected for, or is a perpetrator of, domestic violence and abuse in the workplace:

- ✓ Be clear that domestic violence is unacceptable and that domestic violence and abuse is part of a range of controlling behaviours and not just physical violence.
- ✓ Inform the person that violence and abuse taking place in the workplace – including the use of company resources inside and outside of work – will result in disciplinary action and dismissal.
- ✓ Let the person know that it may be necessary to speak to the police or other agencies, particularly in cases where a protection order has been breached.
- ✓ Be aware the perpetrator may be unhappy about their behaviour and may wish to change.
- ✓ Inform the perpetrator that domestic violence causes significant harm for victims, and that children are always negatively affected whether or not they witness it directly.

If the perpetrator and the victim work in the same workplace it may be necessary to implement some additional measures. Efforts should be made in consultation with the victim to ensure that both employees work in different work locations, sites or shifts.

Case study 10

John is a well-liked colleague and is friendly with everyone at work. No one knew that he had become jealous about another employee Chris, after they had had a brief relationship. Chris told him that he no longer wanted to see him and rejected his offers to go on dates. John had also begun to threaten him saying 'if you don't go out with me I'll tell everyone at work that you are gay'. He didn't know what to do as he was not 'out' at work, so talking to his colleagues or manager was difficult. At a staff social occasion, Chris and some of his colleagues noticed John getting aggressive. When Chris tried to leave his colleagues saw that John barred his exit and kicked him, and when his colleagues came to help he hit one colleague across the face. The next day at work Chris kept his distance from his colleagues as he was embarrassed. But they were concerned and talked to Chris, as they were worried for him but also for their own safety. They told him that he should talk to their manager. Chris's manager approached John's manager in the workplace and told her of his concerns about John's abusive behaviour towards Chris. Chris's manager also knew that it was important to deal with the issue quickly and fulfil the 'duty of care' to ensure all employees are safe at work. Disciplinary action was taken against John - after which he agreed to attend a specialist perpetrator programme to help him deal with his aggression and jealousy. He said that he had benefitted from the specialist programme and that it had helped him to acknowledge that he had a problem that needed to be dealt with. He found a job in another company.

International toolkit on domestic violence


3. REFER

One of the most important things that a manager can do is to signpost where an employee can receive confidential and specialist services.

Internally managers should also be aware of who might be available to speak confidentially:

- A named person in Human Resources
- The company's Employee Assistance Programme
- Domestic violence and abuse service providers
- Victim support service(s)
- Counselling services
- Police, including dedicated domestic violence services if they exist
- Legal aid and assistance services

One very useful resource in countries where it is available is to refer people to the 'Bright Sky' app developed by Hestia & Vodafone Foundation.



Bright Sky

Bright Sky is an app developed by Hestia & Vodafone Foundation. It is a free to download mobile app, providing support and information for anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or for those concerned about someone they know. It provides a UK-wide directory of specialist domestic abuse support services which can be found directly from the app. In a secure 'My Journal' tool incidents of abuse can be logged in text, audio, video or photo form, without any of the content being saved on the device itself. Questions are also asked to enable a user to assess the safety of a relationship, plus a section on dispelling myths around domestic and sexual abuse. Information is also given about domestic abuse, the different kinds of support available, tips to improve your online safety, and how to help someone you know who is experiencing domestic abuse.

5. Further information and resources

'**Make it our Business**' resources for companies by the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women & Children, Western University, Ontario, Canada. <http://makeitourbusiness.ca>

International toolkit on domestic violence

EHRC/Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (UK) Managing and supporting employees experiencing domestic abuse. https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/managing-and-supporting-employees-experiencing-domestic-abuse_2013_tcm18-10528.pdf

Male Champions for Change (Australia) 'Playing our part: Workplace Responses to Domestic and Family Violence. <http://malechampionsofchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Playing-Our-Part-Male-Champions-of-Change-Letter.pdf>

OurWatch Australia: Workplace Equality and Respect (WER) Standards and suite of tools and resources. <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/Workplace-Equality-and-Respect-Hub/Home>.

Refuge & Respect (UK) Domestic violence resource manual for employers' 2nd edition. http://www.safeineastsussex.org.uk/content/files/file/Respect_Refuge_DV_Manual_A4_76pp.pdf

UK Business in the Community Domestic Abuse Toolkit: <https://wellbeing.bitc.org.uk/all-resources/toolkits/domestic-abuse-toolkit>

UN Women (Australia) Taking the first step: Workplace responses to domestic and family violence, December 2017. https://unwomen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Taking_the_First_Step_UNWNCA_Report.pdf

UN Women / ILO Handbook to address violence and harassment against women in the world of work (2019)

UNISON (UK) Domestic violence and abuse: A trade union issue. A UNISON guide, December 2015. Available at: <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/02/24192.pdf>

Workplaces Respond to Domestic and Sexual Violence, National Resource Centre (US): Model Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence and Stalking. Available at: <https://www.workplacesrespond.org/resource-library/modelpolicy/>

International toolkit on domestic violence

Vodafone Foundation invests in the communities in which Vodafone operates and is at the centre of a network of global and local social investment programmes. Vodafone Foundation's Connecting for Good programme combines Vodafone's charitable giving and technology to make a difference in the world. Vodafone Foundation is a UK registered charity 1089625. For more than ten years, Vodafone Foundation has been investing funds through their TecSOS project to use connectivity to help support those affected by domestic abuse in the UK and across Europe. TecSOS provides enhanced access to the emergency services and has been used by more than 100,000 people to date. The TecSOS portfolio products also includes the Bright Sky app, developed in partnership with domestic violence charity Hestia, currently available in the UK. In March 2019, Vodafone Foundation announced its commitment to roll out apps like Bright Sky across all of the countries where it operates to help support people affected by domestic violence and abuse and connect them to help. As part of their broader work in this area, Vodafone Foundation has supported research into the impact of domestic abuse on the working population and the development of this toolkit which builds on the UK toolkit produced by Business In The Community.

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