

Changing Professional Practice

Why it's important:

- Domestic violence costs the UK around £1.9 billion a year through lost economic output (due to injuries sustained)
- Organisations are impacted through: Employee turnover; sick days; decreased productivity; impact on team morale & working environment
- Employers have a moral and ethical duty to support the health, safety & welfare of their employees

The Stats:

- 75% of domestic violence victims are targeted at work – ranging from harassing telephone calls to physical assaults
- 78% of male perpetrators of domestic violence use workplace resources to threaten and check up on their partners
- 44% of convicted male perpetrators sent to a domestic violence programme have told someone about the abuse they have perpetrated

The role of employers/organisations:

- Employers play a key role in tackling IPV – working with employees who are victims and those who are perpetrators
- The workplace can offer some respite to victims, the chance to feel independent, and the opportunity to draw on support networks, and to talk with colleagues & managers about the abuse
- However, for many, the abuse continues while they are at work through harassment, interruptions and even the perpetrator showing up at their workplace.
- Covid has had a huge impact on rates and severity of IPV. Home-working presents new issues and challenges for supporting victims, and for tackling IPV.

Summary of Resources/Pilot Projects

Domestic violence resource manual for employers (Refuge and Respect 2010)

Guidance for employers on how to develop and implement a domestic violence policy in order to protect and support staff. Covers: Impact of DV on employee, colleagues & employer; organisational reputation; moral & ethical responsibility; how to support victims; disclosure; referrals; documenting IPV; responding to perpetrators; taking disciplinary action; staff training; awareness-raising activities. Advice is structured around the 4 'Rs' –

Recognise, Refer, Respond, Record. Includes case studies & best practice examples.

https://www.safeineastsussex.org.uk/content/files/file/Respect_Refuge_DV_Manual_A4_76pp.pdf

Workplace support for victims of domestic abuse (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Jan 2021)

Guidance for employers, based on a call for evidence, which considers ways in which Government will work with employers to tackle IPV, including the new challenges that have risen as a result of the pandemic. Includes advice on devising and implementing workplace policies. Promotes the use of company frameworks; signposting; domestic abuse champions and senior management/leadership playing a key role in changing workplace culture and breaking down barriers.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workplace-support-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse/workplace-support-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse-review-report-accessible-webpage>

Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce - Training Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions

One day training course delivered by New Era (local DA service). Staff from all levels are trained to spot potential signs of IPV, and are equipped to support victims. After training, businesses are equipped with a DA policy template and are urged to take commitments to support victims. https://www.staffskillshub.co.uk/course_details/?id=1665

The Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA)

Network of over 470 public and private employers. Enables employers to take action on IPV by raising awareness of issues, and provides perpetrators with access to interventional services. In collaboration with Business in The Community and Public Health England, EIDA created 'Domestic Abuse: a toolkit for employers' to educate employers on domestic abuse, provide guidance and offer best employer practice. <https://www.eida.org.uk/>

Employer Domestic Abuse Covenant (EDAC)

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Sharan Project Launched the Employer Domestic Abuse Covenant (EDAC) in December 2020 on a 6-month pilot basis, in London and Essex, until national rollout. The EDAC is a pledge by businesses to support women affected by abuse to enter or re-enter the workplace. Employers are invited to sign the covenant and identify opportunities within their businesses for women seeking sustainable employment opportunities. <https://edacuk.org/>

Vodafone – Safe Leave Policy – special leave specifically for victims of domestic abuse to attend appointments and seek help.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workplace-support-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse/workplace-support-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse-review-report-accessible-webpage>

Luminary Bakery are a small employer that offer paid work to women who have experienced 'multiple disadvantage' including domestic abuse and violence. As a Social Enterprise, Luminary is comprised of a business and charity team. Luminary has established workplace safeguarding protocols, with all staff required to attend annual safeguarding training to recognise and respond to 'red flag' risks. This is in addition to frontline charity staff that are offered monthly external counselling sessions to reflect on what they face in the workplace. <https://luminarybakery.com/>

Hestia Everyone's Business Advice Line is available to any UK business or organisation wanting free guidance and information regarding domestic abuse and how to support employees and colleagues enduring domestic abuse in the workplace.

<https://www.hestia.org/everyones-business-advice-line>

Perpetrators & Victims within the Police

Failure to address police perpetrated domestic abuse – Centre for Women's Justice (March 2020)

40% of police officer families experience IPV as opposed to 10% of the general population (The National Centre for Women and Policing in the US). Personality of an authoritarian, a need to be in control, narrow-mindedness and suspicion.

Highlights the need for special arrangements in cases of police perpetrated IPV. Following issues identified: Improper manipulation of police processes; accused officers' personal links with others in the force; incorrect approach to misconduct investigations & decisions; abused women arrested etc. Smaller conviction rate compared with UK average. Set in context of 'locker-room culture' – of 'institutionalised sexism' which 'trivialises violence against women'. Proposed changes include:

Breakout Rooms - Resources

Use of external investigating force; external disciplinary procedures & IOPC oversight; restricting roles of officers facing allegations to prevent working with victims of IPV and sexual abuse. Need for pledges from leadership to take action.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/913084/Police_perpetrated_domestic_abuse.pdf