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Reclaim the Night

A Guide to Tackling Domestic Violence in the Workplace



Regional Development
Agency

a TUC publication

Trade union reps are trusted peers within the workplace and therefore have a crucial role to play in raising public consciousness of domestic violence; talking to others about the facts will break a taboo that can help support thousands of women and children whose lives are devastated by this inexcusable crime. As the former Equalities Minister, Barbara Roche MP points out: *“We know that the workplace can be a place of safety for women, and that they will often confide in their colleagues about their experiences. It is also a place where others notice what is going on and help women access the support they so desperately need. Domestic violence won’t go away. We need a whole range of strategies to tackle it.”*

Why is Domestic Violence an Issue in the Workplace?

Domestic violence is a prevalent crime. Many workplaces employ someone who has experienced it directly or indirectly. The workplace is not cut off from the wider world, but is in fact an integral part of society and everyday life. Therefore what happens in the workplace is indicative of problems off the shop floor, outside office walls or factory gates. When people are living with domestic violence, it affects the whole of their lives, including their work. Domestic violence can have an impact on employees’ performance, productivity, health and safety and their attendance at work. Too often domestic violence is seen as a problem that is somebody else’s responsibility to deal with: Government, public agencies; social services, healthcare practitioners, the Police, families or even victims themselves. However the complexity, scale and inter-related issues of domestic violence requires a collective response, one which acknowledges first, that the problem is multi-faceted and second, recognises although public policy can make a highly effective contribution towards tackling this appalling societal ill, its dimensions are both social and economic, thus cannot be resolved by agents of the State alone. All actors are required to play their part, colleagues and employers included.

What is Domestic Violence?

Women’s Aid defines domestic violence as “physical, sexual, psychological or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and that forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour that may take a variety of forms, not all of which are in themselves inherently violent.

Signs of Domestic Violence

Although every situation is unique, there are common factors that link the experience of abusive relationships:

Destructive Criticism and Verbal Abuse: shouting, mocking, accusing, name calling and verbal threats.

Pressure tactics: sulking, threatening to withhold money, disconnect the telephone, take the car away, commit suicide, take the children away, report the victim to welfare agencies unless they comply with the abuser's demands, lying to friends or family, telling someone they have no choice in any decisions made for them.

Disrespect: persistently putting someone down in front of other people, not listening or responding when talking, interrupting telephone calls, taking money without asking and refusing to help with childcare or housework.

Breaking Trust: lying, withholding information, being jealous, having other relationships, breaking promises and shared agreements

Isolation: monitoring or blocking telephone calls, telling someone where they can or can't go, preventing access to friends or relatives.

Harassment: following someone, checking up on them, opening mail, repeatedly checking to see who has telephoned, public embarrassment.

Threats: Making angry gestures, using physical size to intimidate. Shouting, destroying possessions, breaking things, punching walls, wielding a knife or a gun and threatening to kill or harm a person or their children

Sexual Violence: using force, threats or intimidation to make someone perform sexual acts, having sex with a person when they don't want to have sex, any degrading treatment based on sexual orientation.

Physical Violence: punching, slapping, hitting, biting, pinching, kicking, pulling hair out, pushing, shoving, burning, strangling.

Denial: saying abuse doesn't happen, alleging the victim caused the abusive behaviour, being publicly gentle and patient, crying and begging for forgiveness, saying it will never happen again.

How Common is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is widespread. Research shows it can affect 1 in 4 women in their lifetime, regardless of age, social class, race, disability or lifestyle. Most commonly domestic violence is experienced by women and perpetrated by men, although can also take place in lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender relationships and involve other family members, including children.

Domestic Violence: A Life or Death Issue

Homicide: On average 2 women a week are killed by a male partner or former partner and make up a third of all female homicide victims. **One call, every minute, of every day, to the Police concerns domestic violence.** This amounts to 1,300 calls each day, or over 57,000 each year. (Stanko 2000)

Repeat victimisation is common. 44% of domestic violence victims are involved in more than one incident.

Women are most commonly sexually assaulted by men they know. In 2001 researchers conducting the British Crime Survey found that when women were asked about the last incident of rape experienced since the age of 16, they found that 45% were raped by current husbands or partners, 9% by former partners, and a further 29% of perpetrators were otherwise known to the victim. (Walby & Allen 2004)

Fear of Being Killed: In a study of 200 women's experiences of domestic violence it was found that 60% of the women had left because they feared that they or their children would be killed (Humphreys & Thiara, 2002).

Is it a crime?

Domestic violence may comprise a number of different behaviors and consequences, so there is **no single criminal offence** of "domestic violence". However, many forms of domestic violence are crimes – for example, harassment, assault, criminal damage, attempted murder, rape and false imprisonment. Being assaulted, sexually abused, threatened or harassed by a partner or family member is just as much a crime as violence from a stranger, and often more dangerous.

Who are the abusers?

Since abusers typically display different kinds of behaviours in public than they do in their private relationships, most people are not usually aware domestic violence is happening within their community. Sometimes, it is difficult to believe that a person that behaves respectably in public is capable of abusing their family. This can sometimes make it even more difficult for women who are trying to reach out for support, as they may feel they will not be believed when they try to speak out about the violence.

Who is responsible for the violence?

The perpetrator – always. Abusers do not have to choose violence. They can choose, instead, to behave non-violently and foster a relationship built on trust, honesty, fairness and respect. It is important that any intervention to address domestic violence prioritises the safety of survivors and holds the perpetrators accountable.

What is the cause of domestic violence?

Misuse of power and control is the principal cause of domestic violence. Perpetrators of domestic violence choose to behave abusively to get what they want and gain control. Their behaviour often originates from a sense they are entitled to what they want. This view is tacitly affirmed by discriminatory attitudes born of historic gender inequalities which encourage male dominance and see women as subordinate.

Whilst responsibility for the actual violence belongs to the perpetrator, handed down beliefs in society, moulded by outdated traditions, influence and perpetuate abusive attitudes towards women. This in turn creates a social milieu which makes it difficult for victims to seek help. These include:

- Blaming the victim for the violence
- Putting the 'family' before the safety of women and children
- Tolerating the use of violence
- Men's privilege precedes women and children's needs
- Treating domestic violence as a private matter

Similarly, racist, homophobic and other discriminatory attitudes are also reflected in the nature of violence against lesbians, gay men, disabled people and individuals from BME communities.

Perpetrators of domestic violence frequently avoid taking responsibility for their behaviour by attempting to justify it or blaming their violence on someone or something else, denying it took place at all or minimising their behaviour.

Issues for Policy Makers

Vulnerability to domestic violence is linked to a lack of economic resources. Victims may lack the financial wherewithal to set up a new independent household. An absence or scarcity of well paid employment also reinforces the perpetrator's ability to obtain and consolidate power. Domestic violence both causes and produces poverty, disrupting employment and preserves male dominance reinforcing women's inequality in the labour market. Individuals susceptible to domestic violence tend overwhelmingly to be female, young and poor. Policy researchers have consistently highlighted poverty as a significant factor heightening women's risk of suffering domestic violence.

Earlier this year the Northern TUC published a discussion paper to provoke public debate and focus policy makers' attention on the rise of the working poor; the large numbers of low paid workers swapping unemployment for poor wages, terms and conditions of employment. Women experience higher rates of poverty than men. Although there are now almost equal numbers of men and women in work, the increased quantity of women's employment has not been matched by an improvement in its quality.

Gender roles and the economic status of women relative to men are heavily influenced by the way the economy operates, changes in Government policy and cuts in public spending. Women feel the effects of these changes more acutely as a greater proportion tend to be in insecure employment, on the fringes of the labour market and more dependent on benefits. This analysis is supported by the findings of the Women and Work Commission, which identified that access to workplace learning and skills development, the way in which an employer runs an organisation, staff recruitment strategies, reward systems and career structures all have an impact on the gender pay gap, thus women's ability to support themselves and their children lead an independent lifestyle away from an abuser.

Men by and large do the bulk of the breadwinning, whereas women continue to bear primary responsibility for unpaid work in the home. Women are generally employed in occupations perceived to be jobs designed to supplement a family's income, or for pin money and therefore fail to attract a living wage, serving to reinforce occupational segregation and the gender pay gap.

Unable to compete with men on an equal basis in the labour market due to caring responsibilities and the opportunity costs posed by institutional, attitudinal and cultural barriers to workplace participation, women continue to be disadvantaged. Consequently women face higher risks of falling into poverty and becoming trapped in a violent household.

Women are disadvantaged on every single measure of economic welfare from employment, pay, income, pensions and assets. Without comparable economic status to men, women are placed at a higher risk of poverty, fostering dependence on the state and reliance on their partners.

In regions such as the North East where skills levels and wages remain low, poverty compels workers to put in longer hours. Not only does this carry huge costs, the negative impact of long working hours is wrought in personal, social and family relationships. Where people live and work also has an important bearing on whether they are likely to be

placed at increased risk of poverty. Overall the North East has the highest proportion of low paid workers. Given the link between poverty and domestic violence, it is perhaps unsurprising to learn that over 34,000 women in Newcastle will experience poverty at some point in their lives; moreover that Teesside has one of the worst rates of domestic violence in the North of England. Domestic violence is literally on our doorstep.

Accessible, Affordable Childcare

Childcare provision is woefully inadequate to enable working women combine earning and caring. The Women's Budget Group testify that child care for mothers who want to work is generally non-existent and unaffordable, even with tax credits. There is an urgent need to develop a recognised system of childcare provision to support people leaving abusive relationships support their family.

Health Inequalities and Domestic Violence

The North East region is marred by significant health disparities. Intimate violence aggravates women's experience of health inequalities and represents a major barrier to women receiving effective and adequate healthcare. Health agencies have been quick in their response to this trend. The recently launched Regional Public Health Strategy contains specific actions to improve the support services available to victims of domestic violence. The TUC is represented on the Task Group configured to monitor implementation of the strategy and will strive to ensure this work has an explicit workplace focus so that women can access the help they so desperately need.

Improving Policy Outcomes through Partnership

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has argued that fragmented policy and governance arrangements in relation to social inclusion and economic development constitute key barriers to the delivery of more effective interventions to resolve contemporary social and economic challenges. Poor links between the regional economic agenda and weak social inclusion programmes at local level are held responsible for producing mixed outcomes. Addressing issues of domestic violence requires economic development agencies and social services to work in partnership on a shared socio-economic agenda. The Northern TUC will continue pressing public sector agencies to cater more adequately for the needs of domestic violence victims in their institutional, policy and service provider frameworks.

These factors all combine to make it harder for women contemplating leaving or actually fleeing a violent relationship.

The Realities of Domestic Violence

Do women choose violent men?

Women do not seek out relationships with violent men. Frequently, men who will become violent do not reveal this aspect of their behaviour until the relationship has become well-established.

Are women who experience domestic violence helpless?

Women living with and leaving violent men say they want the violence to stop and are often actively engaged in trying to protect themselves and their children from it. They may also try a number of ways to cope with or get the violence to stop, including changing their own behaviour, for example by avoiding situations or appeasing the abuser by complying with his demands.

What are the effects of domestic violence on women?

Woman may be affected in a number of ways and experience any or all of the following:

- Isolation from family or friends
- Loss of income or work
- Homelessness
- Emotional/psychological effects such as anxiety, depression or low self esteem
- Poor health
- Physical injury or ongoing impairment
- If they are pregnant, they may miscarry or the baby may be stillborn
- Time off work or study and suffer a long-term detrimental impact on financial security and career
- Death

Effects of Domestic Violence on Women

Employment

Time off work can lead to lost earnings, while reduced performance can lead to reduced promotion opportunities and even job loss where women are obliged to move to flee violence. This has the effect of exacerbating gender inequality by contributing to the low income associated with domestic violence.

More than a fifth of women (21%) who were employed and who have suffered domestic violence have taken time off as a result of the incident. For around half of the women time taken off employment was limited to a day or two, yet for nearly a quarter this lasted more than a week. Alarming 2% of women and men lost their jobs because of the incident.

Evidently the employer may also incur losses as a consequence of paying wages during time taken off work, reduced workplace performance and the costs of recruiting a new worker if someone leaves. The state and wider community also sustain costs via public taxation funding sick pay as well as the damage to the productivity of the economy as a whole.

III Health

Violence against women has serious consequences for their physical and mental health. Abused women are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, psychosomatic systems, eating problems and sexual dysfunction and violence can also affect reproductive health. (World Health Organisation 2000).

Injuries

In the worst incidents of domestic violence women often sustain injuries: 46% suffer minor physical injuries, 20% moderate injuries and 6% severe injuries, while 31% experience mental or emotional problems.

Homelessness

Research on homelessness for Shelter found that domestic violence is "the single most quoted reason for becoming homeless". The study showed that 40% of all homeless women stated domestic violence as a contributor to their homelessness.

Why doesn't she leave?

Even though the risk of staying may be exceptionally high, simply leaving the relationship does not guarantee that the violence will stop. In fact, the period during which a woman is planning or making her

exit, is often the most dangerous time for her and her children. Many women are frightened of the abuser and with good reason; it is not uncommon for perpetrators to threaten harm or even kill their partners or children if they leave.

However there may be other reasons influencing a woman's decision to stay:

- Many women do not necessarily want to leave the relationship; they just want the violence to stop. They may still care for their partner and stay in the vain hope they will change.
- She may feel ashamed or believe the violence is her fault.
- "Better the devil you know scenario" – scared of the future, women worry about where they will go, what they will do for money, what will happen to the children and whether they will have to stay in hiding forever.
- Worn down by their abuser, many women may be too exhausted or lack confidence to take decisions
- She may be isolated from family or friends, or be prevented from leaving home, unable to access help.
- She may believe it is better to stay for the sake of the children – wanting her children to have a father or wish to avoid the stigma attached to single parenthood.

Resources and support women need to leave safely include: money, housing, help with moving, transport, ongoing protection from the police, legal support to protect her and the children, a guaranteed income and emotional support. **If a woman is not sure the resources will be available to her, this may prevent her from leaving.**

Women may also seek support from family, friends or colleagues and the quality of the support they receive is likely to significantly influence their decision-making. Sometimes women will make several attempts to leave before they can actually leave permanently and safely. It is vitally important women are supported while continuing to live with their abusive partner. **If a women senses she will be denied support while she stays, she is unlikely to seek help from the same person or organisation again.**

Access to culturally specific or specialised support may also be an important consideration for women from BME communities, lesbians, disabled women, asylum seekers and women with insecure

immigration status. These women often face additional barriers to seeking help such as language.

Shattering the Myths

“It Only Happens to a Certain Type of Woman”

One in four women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetimes – regardless of their level of education, employment or financial situation. The Freephone 24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline receives calls from all types of women, from business executives wanting advice, to full-time mums needing an escape route.

“She can leave at any time”

Planning or making an exit from an abusive relationship is often the most dangerous time. Many women are terrified of making that final step. Also, a woman may feel ashamed about what has happened, or feel that it’s her fault or she may be worried about the future – what she will do for money or a home, how will the children cope at a new school. She may even be physically prevented from leaving her home. **Sadly, many women do not feel they have the support from family, friends and employers that give them the courage to leave.**

“It’s just the odd domestic row – all couples have them”

Children are the forgotten victims of domestic violence. **In 9 out of 10 cases of domestic violence children are in the same or next room and in this country at least 750,000 children are living with domestic violence.** Witnessing a parent attacking another has terrible and lasting long-term effects on life chances.

“It has nothing to do with me”

Hopefully you will never experience domestic abuse directly or indirectly, but a friend, colleague or family member you know could be suffering right now. Don’t be complicit. Inaction allows the issue to be swept under the carpet.

What is the cost of domestic violence?

The estimated cost of domestic violence to society in monetary terms is **£23 billion per annum**. This figure includes an estimated **£3.1 billion as the cost to the state and £1.3 billion as the cost to employers and human suffering cost of £17 billion** (Walby 2004). This is based on the following:

The cost to the criminal justice system is a billion per annum. This represents one quarter of the criminal justice budget for violent crime

including the cost of homicide to adult women annually of £112 million.

The cost of physical healthcare treatment resulting from domestic violence (including hospital, GP, ambulance, prescriptions) is £1,220,247,000, i.e. 3% of the total NHS budget.

The cost of treating mental illness and distress due to domestic violence is £176,000,000

The cost to social services is £0.25 billion

Housing costs are estimated at £0.16 billion

Domestic violence costs civil legal services £0.3 billion.

The statistics are thought to be an under estimate because they do not take into account the cost of social services work with vulnerable adults, the cost to education services, human costs to children (including moving schools and the impact this has on educational attainment hence their future employment prospects) and excludes support within the voluntary sector.

The TUC has produced a guide to enable trade union reps and employers handle the impact of domestic violence in the workplace.

In a key publication, **Domestic Violence: a Guide for the Workplace**, the TUC notes trade unions have a long history of campaigning to overcome inequality and implement practices that benefit working people's lives. By working with employers to introduce workplace policies on domestic violence, trade unions can change attitudes and help people who experience violence get the support they need.

Why is Domestic Violence a Business Issue?

Developing good policies and practice on domestic violence makes good business sense because it can enhance employee wellbeing, productivity and reduce abuse-related costs.

Identification of domestic violence at an early stage can lead to appropriate help being offered, which eliminates factors that adversely affect productivity and result in:

- Employee absenteeism and turnover
- Lost productivity
- Stress

- Workplace violence that threatens the safety of all employees
- Impact on other staff
- Financial costs

More Effective Staff

Good employers want to recruit and retain good staff. A workplace policy on domestic violence can be introduced as part of wider policies relating to family friendly matters and equal opportunities. An employer seeking to recruit and retain skilled, trained and experienced staff may, as a result of such policies attract a wider pool of applicants when posts are advertised. This constitutes a sound investment, contributing to increased morale, loyalty, motivation and job satisfaction. This in turn can have a positive impact on productivity. Employers know that replacing staff can be a costly and time consuming process.

Staff will also feel fully supported and confident approaching their employer for help. This can improve the work environment for all employees by reducing stress and absenteeism thereby increasing employee commitment to the organisation.

Maintaining a Positive Reputation

Workplace policies that acknowledge the complexities and difficulties of people's lives outside work can help to send a strong message that the employer and trade union is committed to supporting employees.

Prevention of Disciplinary Action

Domestic violence can result in poor attendance, lateness, poor performance, health and safety risks and reduced productivity. A clear policy on domestic violence which enables employees to confide in their trade union rep at an early stage can prevent disciplinary action.

Financial Savings

Prevention of poor productivity and improvement in performance saves money.

Advice for Employers

Be alert to the possibility of domestic violence

Managers may become aware that an employee is experiencing domestic violence because they occupy a job role that requires them to monitor and investigate sickness, attendance and work performance. It is important that managers have the skills to safely and effectively address workplace domestic violence issues. In particular, managers and Human Resources need to be clear about their respective roles and responsibilities for identifying, reporting and dealing with a suspected victim, or perpetrator of abuse.

Women's Aid rightly points out that **“it would be wrong and may be dangerous to raise awareness of domestic violence and raise expectations that help is available then not be able to respond properly.”** This could create a worse situation for employees, managers and the organisation as a whole. Working in tandem with trade union reps, employers can ensure the policy is fit for purpose, effectively implemented and rigorously enforced to help mitigate this risk.

An Integrated Approach

Advice on developing workplace domestic violence policies advocates linking this type of initiative to other workplace policies, for example supervision and performance monitoring, confidentiality, flexible working hours, redeployment, health and safety, risk assessments, discrimination, harassment, disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Training

The policy needs to be effectively implemented and monitored for the impact on employees, behaviour of the organisation and its development.

Working with Trade Union Reps

Most employees do not want their employer or trade union rep to know about their private lives. Similarly employers may be reluctant to interfere, believing their intervention may be regarded as an infringement of staff privacy. But letting someone know about domestic violence can be helpful both to the employee and the employer. The employee may be relieved to confide in someone at

work, particularly if by doing so, they could explain absences or deterioration in performance.

Domestic violence itself is not a statutory offence and employers are under no legal obligation to take any action if they are made aware that a member of their workforce is experiencing abuse. However there is a duty of care to ensure safety in the workplace. The health and safety responsibilities of employers, trade union reps and other people in the workplace are laid out clearly in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Some workplaces also have a policy on dealing with violence in the workplace. Both of these areas warrant consideration when addressing the impact of domestic violence in the workplace.

It could be that the safety and welfare of both the person experiencing domestic violence and their colleagues are at risk directly or indirectly in the workplace. This may be an opportunity to revisit any workplace policy to include a section on domestic violence.

A well-publicised policy in the workplace that allows employees to explain their circumstances would also be beneficial to employers, assisting in personnel, performance management and helping to safeguard the health and welfare of the workforce.

What a Workplace Policy Should Cover

The TUC Guide on managing domestic violence in the workplace sets out for employers and reps the steps required to establish a policy on domestic violence in the workplace. It suggests that it may be practical for one or two people to be identified as the first point of contact for staff members who need to discuss personal issues. A domestic violence policy should give details of who these people are, where they can be found and what their role is in these circumstances. These people should not act as counsellors, but listen to staff members, provide information and ensure lines of communication between employer and employee are kept open. In some workplaces this could be the role of a shop steward as well as a person from human resources with the experience to deal with personal problems in the workplace.

Any person who is identified as a point of contact would need to undergo training that specifically addresses domestic violence as a workplace issue. This could be incorporated into wider training on the impact of personal problems in the workplace. Whoever takes on this role would need to fully appreciate the importance of discretion, confidentiality and respecting the wishes of an individual. If training is not an option, staff identified as a point of contact should be provided with detailed information and management support on dealing with domestic violence.

If resources allow, some workplaces may benefit from training and awareness raising for all staff (including management) on domestic violence. This will help to ensure the policy is effective, particularly if there is resistance to it among some people in the workplace. This might offer scope for joint training of management and trade union reps.

Confidentiality

It can be very difficult for a person experiencing domestic violence to divulge this information to an employer, colleague or trade union rep. For many people, admitting the reality of the situation, even to themselves can be very difficult. A workplace policy on domestic violence should stress that a person will be treated in confidence and with discretion. However while confidentiality will be respected, there may be times when it has to be broken, for example if a child is involved and the relevant services have to be informed. The policy should highlight the importance of keeping certain details confidential, such as contact details which should not be shared outside the workplace. Abusive partners are known to try and track partners down when they have left a relationship. Revealing information could put a person at risk.

Special Arrangements

Some workplaces allow for special leave to enable employees time off to visit their solicitor, the police, their GP, the hospital and other agencies. Some people who are experiencing violence may need time off to visit schools or make alternative childcare arrangements. A workplace policy on domestic violence could detail what provisions there are for such leave and how an employee should seek it. It would be helpful if the policy explicitly stated that requests for leave in these circumstances, while not guaranteed, would be treated sympathetically.

Finance can be a key determinant in a person's decision to leave a violent partner. Many people are afraid they will be homeless and penniless. In some cases, violent partners try to take financial control of the relationship and deny people access to their own bank accounts or other funds. In certain circumstances it may be helpful for an employee if they were offered an advance on pay or could negotiate alternative payment methods. A workplace policy on domestic violence could set out a process for organising this.

Where it can be accommodated into the running of a business or an organisation, employers may find it helpful to work with the employee and the trade union rep to review certain aspects of the employee's

job or workplace layout. For example it might be helpful to alter where the employee works so that they are not in public view, or staffing reception.

Other steps could include developing or improving security measures such as changing keys and code numbers for accessing the workplace; ensuring that personal details are not disclosed over the phone, by email or strangers coming into the workplace; reviewing or perhaps altering the working hours or shift patterns of an employee. It may be appropriate to offer employees the opportunity to work in a different location, although this should be organised in full consultation with the employee and may be an area where trade union reps can represent the member of staff concerned.

Perpetrators employed in the same workplace

It is not the responsibility of an employer or a trade union rep to take action against an employee who is suspected of being violent towards a partner or ex partner. However, there may be cases where a person who is perpetrating the violence is working for the same employer as the partner they are abusing. In these instances safety in the workplace is paramount, both the safety of the abused and all employees. In these circumstances it may be necessary for an employer to enforce the workplace policy on harassment or bullying. Trade union reps can ensure this happens.

Language in the Workplace

A workplace policy on domestic violence may mention how important it is for employers, trade union reps and employees to consider sensitively how they talk about issues of violence against women. Workplace jokes or banter could deter a person from confronting a situation of domestic violence or seeking help. This may also serve as a warning to perpetrators of domestic violence that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Signposts for Help

A safe and supportive working environment can be crucial to helping a person experiencing domestic violence escape that situation. Most people spend up to 8 hours a day in the workplace and it can be an ideal space for sufferers to access help and information.

Notice boards can be used to display national and local information including local helpline numbers, police numbers, solicitors, as well as counsellors and organisations like the Samaritans. Many of these organisations provide posters, leaflets and stickers advertising their

services and people's rights. Local councils and telephone directories are also a good source of help. Remember the quality of advice given can help a person escape their plight for good.

- Provide written information in public and private areas, including changing rooms and toilets
- Prominently display posters informing employees of support available
- Put support information on pay slips
- Provide information as part of the staff induction process
- Distribute leaflets on domestic violence to all employees
- Publish articles about domestic violence in staff newsletters
- Consider publicising the signs of domestic violence to raise awareness

To order a full copy of *Domestic Violence: a Guide for the Workplace*, please visit the TUC Website at www.tuc.org.uk
Although trade unionists cannot stop the abuse from happening, they can support people to seek help because in unity lies strength.



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