

SAFER WORKPLACES

**How companies can support survivors
of domestic violence and abuse**

A Toolkit for Action | Dr Jane Pillinger, Senior Fellow, Business Fights Poverty Institute

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For someone experiencing domestic abuse, work may be their only place of safety. All employers should have a domestic abuse policy, setting out the support they provide and how to access it. This gives confidence to those at risk that they will be believed and supported. Not only does it make good business sense for employers to have a workplace domestic abuse response, but they can also change – and save – the lives of their employees.

Susan Bright, CEO of Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA)

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not imply endorsement of the content within by the organisations that have provided input or support for the research of this paper.

Foreword

Business Fights Poverty has been proud to support company engagement in both the agreement and implementation of the new global standard – the International Labour Organisation Convention 190 on Ending Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, which came into force in 2019. We have led a number of collaborations with companies to address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) over the last five years.



Companies can use this toolkit to make workplaces a critical refuge in the fight against domestic violence

—Zahid and Yvette Torres-Rahman,
Co-Founders, Business Fights Poverty

This Toolkit is focussed on one particular form of GBV: domestic violence. It is a contribution to the development of company programmes to provide support for survivors of domestic violence in the world of work. It draws extensively on the expertise of Dr Jane Pillinger¹, learning from her work with companies, trade unions, social partners and global organisations such as the ILO and UN Women. The Toolkit is informed by good practices and experts from the world of work and the domestic violence sector, as well as by interviews with managers, colleagues and survivors of domestic violence over the last decade.

The Toolkit reflects the growing evidence base of ‘what works’ to prevent and address domestic violence in the world of work and points to ways that companies of all sizes, including global companies operating in diverse markets across the world, can address the issue of domestic violence and its effects. The Toolkit offers practical guidance for companies, line managers and colleagues and includes awareness of support for employees carrying out remote/teleworking and emerging forms of hybrid working.

We hope that this Toolkit and the guidance contained within it can contribute to greater awareness of the effects of domestic violence on the lives of survivors and why the workplace can be an important source of support and prevention. Ultimately, companies are one of many stakeholders that can play a role in preventing domestic violence and ensuring that survivors of domestic violence can be safe in their own homes and when they are at work.

Zahid and **Yvette Torres-Rahman**,
Founders, Business Fights Poverty

1. Introduction

This Domestic Violence Toolkit aims to build awareness of and inform learning about the workplace effects of domestic violence. It offers guidance for companies through policies, procedures and support for employees affected by domestic violence.

Across the world, 1 in 3 women have experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner.²

Women and girls are more likely to be assaulted or killed by someone they know, such as an intimate partner, than by a stranger.³

Domestic violence cases have risen by 20% globally since the beginning of the pandemic, with 243 million women and girls between 15 and 49 years of age reported to have been victims of domestic violence.⁴

The global cost of violence against women was \$1.5 trillion in 2016.⁵ That's about 2% of global gross domestic product (GDP).

In the European Union, violence against women costs the EU €228 billion a year (1.8% of EU GDP). The cost to the economy is estimated at over €109 million. Lost output as a result of injuries alone was estimated to be 12% of these costs.⁶

Employee surveys indicate that 1 in 3 of all employees are affected by domestic violence and that it negatively impacts their working lives.

Domestic violence can affect employees' productivity and capacity to continue working and progress in their careers. It can also affect the safety and security of survivors of domestic violence and that of their colleagues in the workplace.

It is for this reason that company and workplace policies are important to prevent and address the risks of domestic violence at work.

The Toolkit has been sponsored by **Business Fights Poverty** to support learning and collaboration. It draws on international evidence and promising practices from companies, company networks and NGOs in addressing the work-related effects of domestic violence,⁷ along with Business Fights Poverty's resources for learning and dialogue amongst global companies/organisations that have begun a journey to address the workplace effects of domestic violence. These initiatives are listed in the References and Further Resources section at the end of the Toolkit.



What does the Toolkit aim to do?

- Raise awareness amongst companies, employers and workers organisations/trade unions, NGOs and any other organisation interested in preventing domestic violence and supporting survivors at work
- Provide information and guidance that can be adapted to meet the needs of large-, medium- and smaller-sized companies
- Point to ways in which each of us can make a difference and how support can be provided for employees experiencing and recovering from domestic violence

The Toolkit affirms the commitment to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for *all* employees affected by domestic

violence. It has been written at a time of increasing interest from companies in how they can support employees affected by domestic violence.

In addition, the adoption in June 2019 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190 and accompanying Recommendation No. 206 recognises that as well as being a human rights and equality issue, there is a strong business case for companies in playing their part in ending domestic violence and mitigating its effects in the workplace.

Protecting the health and safety of employees is part of the employer's 'duty of care' to provide for the occupational safety and health of its employees. Moreover, we all have the right to be free of physical, sexual or psychological violence and abuse at home and at work.

The terminology used in this Toolkit

Domestic violence is used in this Toolkit to be inclusive of the variety of definitions used across the world, such as **intimate partner violence, domestic abuse, relationship violence or family violence**. It is violence and abuse conducted by a current or former partner that causes physical, verbal, sexual, or emotional/psychological harm. This definition recognises that domestic violence frequently involves coercive control and financial/economic abuse. These abuses may extend to the workplace and involve stalking and harassment, including in the different settings where work takes place – for example, when working remotely/teleworking from home, in external meetings with clients and colleagues, on business-related trips or social events, or through email, text and/or telephone.

Domestic violence is a form of gender-based violence. Gender-based violence is defined in ILO C190 as “violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender, or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately”.

The Toolkit uses the terms **victim and survivor** interchangeably to recognise employees who are/have been both victimised and who are/have survived domestic violence.

For further information about terminology, see the Glossary at the end of this Toolkit.

2. What is domestic violence, and how does it affect the workplace?

2.1 What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is one of the most common forms of violence experienced by women globally. It is defined by the World Health Organisation as involving “behaviour by an intimate partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours”.⁸

Domestic violence often involves inter-linked forms of violence and abuse, which can affect a survivor’s safety, well-being and participation in work. Domestic violence can include:

- Physical violence
- Emotional/psychological control and threats
- Coercive control⁹
- Verbal harassment and threats
- Sexual violence
- Financial/economic abuse
- Stalking and being followed, virtually or in person
- Digital domestic violence and sexual abuse, cyber-harassment through social media text messages, calls or emails

Domestic violence is most often perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner. But it can also be perpetrated by a family member such as a sibling, adult child or other family member.

Domestic violence can have devastating physical, economic and psychological consequences, affecting the confidence of a survivor of domestic violence, making it difficult to leave an abusive relationship and to sustain meaningful employment.



2.2 Who is affected by domestic violence?

Domestic violence can affect anyone regardless of occupation, gender, social class, race, religion, culture, age, political opinion, national origin or extraction, social origin, family status, pregnancy and/or maternity status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other relevant classification.

Domestic violence can occur in all types of relationships and between opposite, same-sex or gender-undefined intimate partners of any age – married, cohabiting, dating, living apart or separated.

Data on the prevalence of domestic violence varies across the world. Globally, it is estimated that 1 in 3 women experience physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetimes. Some national surveys show that more than 50% of all women over the age of 15 years of age experience domestic violence in their lifetimes.¹⁰ In the European Union,¹¹ 22% of women report that they have experienced physical and sexual domestic violence, with as many as 43% experiencing psychological domestic violence. In addition, 22% said they had knowledge of someone at work who was experiencing domestic violence.

Overall, it is generally acknowledged that reported rates of domestic violence are a significant underestimation of the true extent of domestic violence. Victim blaming, shame, fear, silence on the issue and the effects of coercive control prevent many survivors from seeking help. Many survivors remain silent, and few look to formal

institutions, such as the police, an employer or social services, for help.

- Although women, men and gender-nonconforming people can all be affected by domestic violence, women are predominately the survivors and men predominately the perpetrators. Evidence from domestic violence prevalence surveys shows that, on average, 70% of victims of domestic violence are women, and 30% are men. Women are more likely to experience longer and more severe forms of physical violence and coercive control than male victims. Women's working lives are not only disproportionately affected by abuse, but they are also murdered at work, most frequently by an intimate partner.¹²
- Young people, especially young women aged 16 to 24 years, are most at risk of domestic violence of any age group,¹³ a risk that is fuelled by rising levels of teen dating abuse, including digital forms of sexual abuse and harassment.
- Disabled women face significant vulnerabilities and discrimination at work; they are twice as likely to experience domestic violence and abuse and are also less likely to seek support.¹⁴



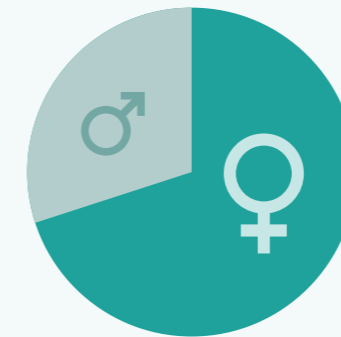
1 in 3 women

are globally estimated to experience physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetimes

x2

Disabled women

are twice as likely to experience domestic violence and abuse



70% of victims of domestic violence are women, on average, and

30% are men

- There are also life course events that may trigger domestic violence – for example, during **pregnancy or when a child is born.**¹⁵ Each year, an estimated 324,000 pregnant women in the USA experience domestic violence, leading to harm and negative impacts on their own maternal health and that of their child.
- Domestic violence often peaks at particular times of the year – for example, during **major sporting events, religious festivals or family gatherings.**
- Furthermore, domestic violence frequently affects the **safety and**

well-being of children.¹⁶ In the UK, Hestia's survey (carried out by Opinium in 2019) found negative impacts of childhood exposure to domestic abuse, including difficulty forming relationships, anxiety and depression, and problems with education and employment. However, research is inconclusive about the intergenerational effects of the so-called "cycle of violence". Overall, Hestia calculated a £1.4bn annual cost to UK taxpayers of children exposed to severe domestic violence who were not provided support to overcome their trauma.

2.3 What are the effects of domestic violence at work?

Domestic violence can impact employees' health, well-being, participation and advancement at work.

Employees experiencing or recovering from domestic violence often report negative effects on their health and well-being, such as tiredness, emotional distress, anxiety, physical injury, loss of confidence and low self-esteem.

The harm, stress and anxiety caused by domestic violence may affect an employee's work performance, attendance at work and/or uptake of training, development and career progression opportunities. They may be distracted at work and unable to perform work tasks safely, leading to accidents or errors. The capacity for a survivor to work to their full potential and progress in their careers may be affected. Absenteeism, lateness, lower productivity, losing valued staff and/or recruiting or training new staff can accrue costs over time, costing companies millions.

Survivors may face safety and security risks in the workplace from a current or former intimate partner. This may also impact the safety of their colleagues. Abuse may occur as a result of stalking when commuting to work, assault in the workplace or car park, and harassment by telephone, email and social media of workers during and after working hours.

Work colleagues may witness their co-workers being affected by domestic violence, often taking on additional work tasks to cover for their colleague. They may have security concerns and fears – for example, if they encounter a perpetrator in the workplace or if they receive abusive and threatening phone calls or text messages.

Doing nothing can affect companies' reputations if an employee is not supported.

Evidence shows that there are significant costs to companies and economies when domestic violence and abuse are not addressed.

We share a few examples from multi-country surveys here. For country-level information about the costs of domestic violence, see the Appendix.

Per a study of nine countries in 2019,¹⁷ an estimated \$1.1 billion to \$2.1 billion of economic output is lost each year as a result of absenteeism related to domestic violence (Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, South Africa, Spain, Turkey and the UK).

Of more than 4,000 employees surveyed in 2021 in nine countries (the UK, Germany, Spain, Italy, South Africa, India, Turkey, Kenya and Ireland), 94% (of the 1 in 3 employees who had experienced domestic violence) said that domestic violence and abuse impacted their work performance and opportunities for career progression. The survey shows the critically important role that the Vodafone domestic violence and abuse policy has had in prevention and early intervention. The policy has been particularly important in raising awareness and in helping to understand how to spot signs of abuse early to help with early intervention.¹⁸

The costs of domestic violence in five countries (Bangladesh, Peru, the UK and Vietnam) is estimated to range between 1.2% and 3.7% of GDP.¹⁹

In a multi-company survey of more than 40,000 employees across six companies in six European countries, countries by the 'OneInThreeWomen'

corporate network²⁰ found that domestic violence had a significant impact in the workplace, not least that women survivors suffered consequences – including coercive control and financial abuse – that threatened their continued employment. 55% of workers who had ever experienced domestic violence said it had affected their work in at least one of the three ways: lateness, absenteeism or presenteeism/productivity.

Domestic violence can seriously **inhibit companies' equality, inclusion and diversity strategies** that support women's progression into senior and leadership roles, and this impacts the gender pay gap. This is because women experiencing domestic violence are more likely than other women to have disrupted work histories, including changing their jobs more frequently, working in casual or part-time jobs, holding lower-paid jobs and not progressing in their careers.²¹

Power and control may mean that someone is prevented from participating in work, progressing in their careers and staying in their jobs (see infographic on pg 15 for figures).



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF THE EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AT WORK

1. COSTS

\$ 1.1–2.1 bn
 ... of economic output is estimated to be **lost each year** as a result of absenteeism related to domestic violence.²²

The **costs of domestic violence** in five countries (Bangladesh, Peru, the UK and Vietnam) is estimated to range between...



1.2-3.7% of GDP²³

2. ABSENTEEISM



55%

... of workers who had ever experienced domestic violence said it had affected their work in at least one of the three ways: **lateness, absenteeism or presenteeism/productivity.**²⁴

3. IMPACTS ON DEI STRATEGIES

Women experiencing domestic violence are **more likely than other women to have disrupted work histories**, including changing their jobs more frequently, working in casual or part-time jobs, holding lower-paid jobs and not progressing in their careers.²⁵



4. IMPACT ON CAREER PROGRESSION

94%

... of those employees surveyed who had experienced domestic violence said that domestic violence and abuse **impacted their work performance and opportunities.**²⁶



1/3

... stated it had also **seriously affected their career progression.**²⁷



83%

... of women survivors in the USA said that their **abusive partners had disrupted their work.**²⁸



5. HYBRID WORKING

56%

... of employees in one survey said that the **abuse increased during the pandemic.**²⁹ According to the ILO and UN, cases of women seeking help doubled during COVID-19.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a significant increase in reports of domestic violence during lockdowns and confinement which led to increased remote/teleworking. Many employees no longer had a physical safe space at work where they could seek support. Security, health and money concerns, isolation at home with abusers and restrictions on movement and access to support services were compounded by women's disproportionate burden of care. Lockdowns also made it much harder for managers to support colleagues affected by domestic violence, although this

continued to be possible by adapting existing policies and guidance for the reality of hybrid working.¹

Companies have to bear the costs of domestic violence, but there are positive outcomes from doing so, as shown in multiple surveys across the world (see Annex). Costs incurred by companies that provide support for colleagues affected by domestic violence, as well as training and awareness-raising in the workplace, are costs that are usually recouped if there is early intervention and support to keep an employee in their job.

In summary, there are business benefits when companies seek to mitigate the effects of domestic violence in the workplace

- Sick leave/lost working hours will be reduced.
- Employees are able to spend time on their work instead of dealing with violence and abuse.
- Productivity improves when perpetrators concentrate on their work rather than on perpetrating violence and abuse.
- Employees will be more productive and happier if they are able to talk to someone they trust.

When action is taken to prevent violence and abuse in the workplace, there are wider spin-off effects across society. There can be a positive impact on the wider community and family relationships if a strong message is sent that violence and abuse are unacceptable.

2.4 Tactics used to control a survivor's access to and participation in work

It is important to understand that domestic violence is about power and control, coercion, threatening behaviour and abuse. These dynamics of power and control are illustrated in the **domestic violence at work power and control wheel**.³⁰



Source: ILO & UN Women (2019)

¹ See examples from a variety of sectors in UN Women (2020).

The following are some of the ways a perpetrator may exert power and control over a survivor, which in turn can have damaging effects on their participation in employment and/or career progression. They include:

- **Isolating** the survivor from support networks, work colleagues, friends and family, with the effect that they are left isolated, feeling inadequate and alone.
- **Preventing** a survivor from leaving the house and getting to work (by hiding the car keys, destroying work equipment or uniforms/clothing, disabling the car, stealing their purse or bus/rail pass, refusing to take the children to school when they have agreed to this).
- **Destroying** their confidence and self-esteem by undermining their decisions, aspirations, independence, work roles and career opportunities, or their role as a parent or family member.
- **Controlling** their money and savings so that they become financially dependent on the perpetrator, running up debts in the survivor's name, making it harder to leave an abusive relationship, and controlling finances to pay for work clothing or to pay for transport to get to and from work. (See 'A spotlight on financial and economic abuse' below.)
- **Threatening** them with further violence and harm to themselves, their children, friends, family members and work colleagues.
- Inflicting **physical injuries** that affect their capacity to attend and continue work.
- **Constant surveillance** – checking on their movements and activities, following them to work, demanding to know who they talk to at work.
- **Domestic stalking**, especially by ex-partners, may threaten or assault the affected employee – and this may also extend to other colleagues in or around the workplace. Stalking can also be perpetrated through email, text and telephone resources inside and outside of the workplace.



It's important for us to recognise that banking is in the fabric of our society, and it's integral to how we operate, so it becomes important in how we respond to societal challenges. As a bank, we know that there's a strong link between a woman's financial independence or inclusion and gender-based violence. From our perspective, one of the things that we have done is to make sure

that we contribute to that national GBV effort ... I think we'd be shocked at how much people, even from a personal perspective, do not realise and recognise gender-based violence and the impact that it has.

—Thokozile Mcopele, Vice-President: Global Corporates and Development Organisations, ABSA Bank, speaking at the Business Fights Poverty Global Goals Summit, 20 September 2023

A spotlight on financial and economic abuse

As mentioned above, financial abuse is a common form of domestic violence, with approximately 90% of cases of domestic violence involving financial abuse. Without an independent income, an employee may not be able to access their salary or other resources, such as to pay for travel to and from work. It may involve mounting up debts in the survivor's name without their knowledge or informed consent.³¹ In addition, control of a survivor's money and finances can impact a survivor's financial independence and capacity to continue to work. As a result, financial advice and assistance may be an important source of support, along with access to specialised legal and support services, including financial services that enable an employee to stay in their job. Some banking institutions have begun to provide support for survivors of domestic violence affected by financial abuse.

For this reason, supporting survivors to seek help against financial abuse is crucial to ensuring an independent income, which is a critical pathway to leaving an abusive relationship. Banking and financial institutions have an important role to play in ensuring that their customers are supported. Examples of guidance from Australia and the UK are given here.

The **Australian Banking Association** issued guidance in 2021 to help banks respond appropriately to domestic violence, family violence and elder abuse by supporting customers / safe communications, recognising the increase in financial abuse during COVID-19, training staff about spotting the signs of financial abuse and how to respond, prevention of financial abuse, and financial support.³² For example, the **Commonwealth Bank of Australia** has issued a policy for bank staff on providing 'Support for Customers',³³ as well as an information guide for customers affected by financial abuse.³⁴

The **UK Finance 2021 Financial Abuse Code**³⁵ (updating the first code issued in 2018) has helped to raise awareness about financial abuse for firms, colleagues, victims, potential victims and their families. It is aimed at ensuring more consistency in the support available for those who need it and training for staff on how to respond and communicate effectively. The aim is to ensure that financial institutions provide survivors of domestic violence with a sympathetic, positive response which helps individuals regain control of their finances. To date, 29 members and 39 brands have committed to implementing this Code.

2.5 Breaking the silence: challenging the myths and stereotypes

In supporting colleagues and preventing the effects of domestic violence coming into the workplace, it is important to **challenge stereotypes and myths about domestic violence.**

Often, domestic violence is described as a personal or family matter as a justification for not doing anything. It is often portrayed as being physical, with the image of the 'black eye'. However, in practice, it frequently involves systematic power and control over a survivor, including coercive control, aimed at undermining the survivor's confidence and self-

esteem and maintaining their dependence. Victim blaming, that somehow it was the survivor's fault that triggered the violence, is also a tactic to keep survivors silent. These stereotypes and myths have the effect of isolating survivors, making it difficult for them to seek help.



A lot of our work has been around creating awareness to break down the wall of silence around gender-based violence. When we first started talking about this, there was a lot of reticence because it's an ugly issue. We have millions of women and their customers across the world and a few good men ... each one of them is a potential change agent.

We rely heavily on experts in this space. It's a complex, nuanced, highly sensitive issue. Our network of NGO partners is incredibly important to help us on where to focus, how to talk about this issue and how to approach it.

—Natalie Deacon, Director Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, Avon International, speaking at the Business Fights Poverty Global Goals Summit, 20 September 2023



Domestic violence is still a taboo subject, and many employees remain silent about the issue for fear of retaliation, losing their jobs, and not being believed or taken seriously. Survivors may be concerned that there will be a risk of further violence from a partner or ex-partner if they know they have spoken to someone at work. In addition, there may be silence because of low awareness of the problem, social norms that perpetuate silence and shame, victim blaming or cultural influences that discourage reporting because domestic violence is considered to be a private matter.

Ultimately, some employees resort to leaving their jobs, denying them the possibility of financial independence.

Leaving an abusive partner does not always lead to the abuse ending. In fact, the first few months after separation can be a dangerous time for survivors, and the abuse can continue for much longer. Sometimes, the workplace is the only place where an abusive ex-partner knows where to find a victim. This is the time when a survivor may need workplace security, including safety plans and other practical workplace supports.



2.6 A role in prevention?

Companies can play a part in preventing domestic violence by supporting survivors, mitigating the workplace effects of domestic violence, and raising awareness about domestic violence. Having a workplace policy can have a preventative effect as it can help survivors and co-workers access safe and supportive spaces to discuss domestic violence. This awareness can have a spin-off effect in families and communities.

Early intervention and support at work are essential to enabling employees to have access to specialised services in the community, to be able to stay at their job, and to live safely in their own homes. Early intervention can also prevent domestic violence from escalating into more serious, and even fatal, consequences.

We can all play our part in raising awareness, debunking myths, challenging victim blaming, breaking the silence on the issue and opening up conversations about domestic violence in the workplace.

What role can companies play in preventing domestic violence and abuse?

In Vodafone's 2021 survey, respondents were asked what companies can do to contribute to the prevention of domestic abuse for employees and in society at large. The top two responses were that companies could do more to 1) raise awareness about domestic abuse at work, in the family and in the community and 2) provide support programmes to help people who have been abused change their behaviour and develop non-abusive relationships.

Many believe that prevention work needs to start with young people. In 2020, UN Women called for action "to teach the next generation and learn from them" – for example, through actions to start conversations early on about gender roles and stereotypes, consent, bodily autonomy and responsibility. Research confirms the importance of prevention in reaching children (as young as four years of age), adolescents and young adults to prevent domestic violence and abuse. Furthermore, children and adolescents in vulnerable situations, particularly those with poor social support networks, are most at risk of being affected by domestic violence.

How can companies give their support for prevention initiatives? A starting point would be raising awareness about prevention through sponsorship, collaboration and support for:

- Programmes that build children and young people's resilience and opportunities for healthy and safe relationships as part of their development into adulthood.
- Initiatives for young people facing multiple disadvantages resulting from poverty, exclusion, intersecting forms of discrimination and troubled family relationships.
- Targeted programmes for vulnerable boys and young men at risk – for example, through their roles as young fathers and supporting healthy parenting roles amongst young parents.
- Working with perpetrators of domestic violence to stop the cycle of abuse and harm.
- Building the prevention of domestic violence into wider occupational safety and health and risk assessments in the workplace so that domestic violence becomes part of the prevention of occupational safety and health risks.

For example, in South Africa, companies have supported campaigns and awareness-raising through community projects such as "Father a Nation", the #NoExcuses campaign and mentoring programmes for disadvantaged young men.



2.7 Domestic violence and the law

Many countries across the world have implemented laws and programmes to protect women and men affected by domestic violence and to hold perpetrators accountable. Many emphasise the prevention of domestic violence. These laws may also provide for court-ordered protection/restraining orders or peace bonds that aim to ensure a survivor's security in their own home, in public places and in the workplace, including commuting to and from work.

However, 30 out of 190 economies surveyed by the World Bank's (2022) survey "Women, Business and the Law" do not currently have legislation addressing domestic violence, and some countries still do not provide domestic violence support services. However, the law in a growing number of countries recognises the role that workplaces and employers can play in addressing the effects of domestic violence at work. For example, laws passed in Australia, Canada, Italy, the

Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, New Zealand, Spain, the Philippines and the USA³⁶ give various levels of entitlement to paid domestic violence leave and other supports for survivors of domestic violence in the workplace. In New Zealand, for example, the 2018 Domestic Violence Victims' Protection Act established the right to ten days of paid leave and flexible work for up to three months, and employers are required to have workplace policies on domestic violence. Some laws

provide for the workplace to be included in a protection order, as is the case in the UK and the USA.

ILO Convention No. 190 on eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work

The importance of preventing and addressing the effects of domestic violence at work is recognised in the global Treaty adopted in June 2019 by the International

Labour Conference. **ILO Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190** puts a responsibility on ratifying governments, along with employers, in consultation with workers' organisations (trade unions), to prevent and address violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment, through workplace policies, risk assessments, information and awareness, amongst other areas.³⁷ The accompanying **ILO Recommendation 206** suggests a number of ways that companies can mitigate domestic violence.

ILO Convention No. 190:

"Noting that domestic violence can affect employment, productivity and health and safety, and that governments, employers' and workers' organisations and labour market institutions can help, as part of other measures, to recognise, respond to and address the impacts of domestic violence." (Preamble)

The Convention calls on governments to "...recognise the effects of domestic violence and, so far as practicable, mitigate its impact in the world of work." (Article 10f)

ILO Recommendation No. 206:

Policies for mitigating risks of domestic violence can include:

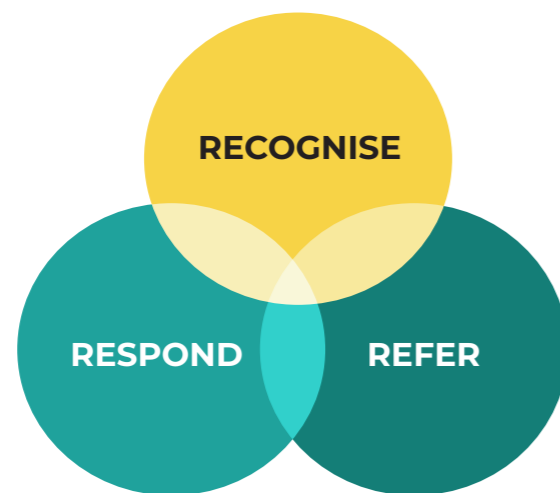
- (a) leave for victims of domestic violence;
- (b) flexible work arrangements and protection for victims of domestic violence;
- (c) temporary protection against dismissal for victims of domestic violence, as appropriate
- (d) the inclusion of domestic violence in workplace risk assessments;
- (e) a referral system to public mitigation measures for domestic violence, where they exist; and
- (f) awareness-raising about the effects of domestic violence.

3. Domestic violence at work: suggestions for companies, managers, colleagues and survivors

3.1 Introduction

This section sets out practical information for companies, line managers, colleagues and survivors in the world of work:

- **What can companies do?** This draws on research and company programmes across the world.
- **What can line managers do?**
- **What can work colleagues do?** As a starting point, it is important to **recognise the problem, respond with appropriate support and refer to confidential support services.**³⁸
- **What can you do if you are experiencing or recovering from domestic violence?**



RECOGNISE – work to recognise the problem at an early stage and help ‘break the silence’ around domestic violence.

RESPOND – the company, line managers and work colleagues can respond with help, support and security for those affected by domestic violence.

REFER – provide information, signpost, and refer survivors to confidential support (such as an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), mental health advisors and occupational health teams in the workplace, trade union representatives, as well as external specialist domestic violence support organisations, legal and counselling services, etc.

3.2 What can companies do?

Seven steps a company can take to end domestic violence

The following seven steps set out what the company can do to lead, train and intervene to end domestic violence – this means having effective policies and procedures, awareness-raising and training, and a workplace culture of trust that is open to people discussing their concerns about domestic violence.

STEP 1: *Create a policy on domestic violence*

STEP 2: *Provide accessible information about the policy and what the company can do*

STEP 3: *Train and raise awareness about domestic violence*

STEP 4: *Create a network of anti-domestic violence ambassadors/advocates*

STEP 5: *Enhance the security of employees affected by domestic violence*

STEP 6: *Partner with domestic violence and victim support organisations, and support wider campaigns*

STEP 7: *Enforce perpetrator accountability and disciplinary actions*

STEP 1: Create a policy on domestic violence

Drawing up a **policy on domestic violence** is an important first step. This is an opportunity to show the company’s commitment to ending domestic violence and outlines the information, training, resources and support that the company provides.

Section 4 of this Toolkit provides a checklist of issues to include in a company policy. It also outlines the main provisions of the AB InBev Global Standard and offers it as an example

to companies to use as a model. AB InBev’s policy reflects best practice, including the provision of work-related supports such as 10 days paid domestic violence leave, training and awareness-raising and how managers can **recognise** the problem, **respond** to it with workplace supports and **refer** to specialist domestic violence or other external organisations.

An important starting point for any company is to gain wide commitment and backing for the development and implementation of the policy:

- Secure senior-level commitment for the policy so that there is leadership in driving the policy across the company.
- Seek advice from domestic violence experts/organisations and draw on good practices from company policies and programmes that address the impact of domestic violence in the world of work (see the list of resources at the end of this Toolkit for further guidance and information).
- Discuss and gain feedback from in-company teams such as the legal team, security team, people/HR team, equality, human rights and diversity teams, as well as trade unions and other company champions.
- In larger companies where there is capacity in a people/HR team, establish a named person or persons in a dedicated unit that can give advice and guidance for managers and colleagues, run training and provide up-to-date information about legal and other domestic violence services in the community.
- Establish a domestic violence committee and response team of all relevant personnel and managers – for example, from the HR, security, legal, EAP, occupational health and other company support services, and trade union representatives.
- Raise awareness about the impact of domestic violence at work across the world through global and national training programmes and resources. These programmes can be delivered through webinars and online learning, face-to-face training, and a combination of different methods.
- Cross-reference the policy with other relevant company policies already adopted – for example, gender equality/gender parity, human rights, diversity and inclusion, anti-harassment, anti-discrimination, work-life balance, training and career development, etc.
- Where relevant, discuss with workers' organisations/trade unions to gain insights through joint discussions and negotiations. Include the issue in negotiations



and relevant collective bargaining agreements at national/sectoral and workplace levels and in Global Framework Agreements and Joint Commitments agreed between multinational companies and global trade union federations at the global level.

Some companies have established a special company **domestic violence fund or allocation of specific resources** as part of their company's commitment to ending domestic violence. These funds can be used to provide financial support for employees who have experienced financial abuse and are in need of emergency financial assistance. In addition, the fund can give financial support to community organisations, women's organisations and specialist domestic violence support services in the community, as has been carried out by companies such as Avon (see Section 3).³⁹ Resources may also be allocated to help to publicise these services nationally or locally. Consider collaborating with other companies in order to raise awareness and pool resources, as has been implemented through the OneInThreeWomen corporate network in France (see Section 3).⁴⁰

Taking a stand to end domestic violence means that companies become visible champions to ensure that employees can live safely in their own homes, travel safely to work and continue working in safety from abuse. This sends a strong message to all actors in the world of work and in wider society that domestic violence is not tolerated inside or outside of the workplace. This means leading from the top and ensuring that everyone knows about the company's policy, that training has been provided for managers and that interventions are tailored to the needs of employees experiencing or recovering from domestic violence.

Large companies with markets in multiple countries can ensure that global policies set standards that are adapted to the countries and markets in which they operate.

This can be very important for those countries where laws or local services provide limited protection for survivors of domestic violence. Awareness-raising through global campaigns, providing support for training and awareness-raising, shared learning and building capacity are all ways that companies can scale up these efforts across the world.



For me, it's the right thing to do as it is truly an issue of gender equality. This is our purpose in action... recognising that domestic violence is a workplace issue and ensuring no one is left behind by supporting survivors. It has been important to share our policy and learnings and spread this beyond Vodafone to make an impact in broader society.

—Claudine McMahon, Global Head of Culture and Inclusion, Vodafone

STEP 2: Provide accessible information about the policy and what the company can do

Accessible information is crucial – it can make all the difference so that all employees know about the policy and are aware of the support and actions the company can take.

Ways to make this information available so that managers and employees know about the policy can include:

- Publicity during a launch event for the policy and at regular points during the implementation of the policy – for example, each year on 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) and during 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.⁴¹
- Regular information in all relevant internal communication channels.
- A leaflet or poster with information on where to go for help and support from the company, line manager, people/HR team, employee assistance programmes (EAPs) or other company supports.
- Workplace events and roundtable meetings in the workplace and in partnership with domestic violence organisations in the community can be held to give wide publicity to the policy.
- Information and guidance for EAPs, if they exist, so that EAP advisors understand the company policy and are aware of ways to give non-judgemental advice and support.
- Up-to-date information resources about specialist domestic violence



The introduction of our Global Recognising and Responding to Domestic Violence Policy reflects our firm belief that as a global employer we have a duty of care to our colleagues, our communities and Society more widely. The zero-tolerance approach to this behaviour is part of our broader work to create a physically and psychologically safer environment for everybody who works for us, regardless of their gender, location, background or beliefs.

Our promise to our people is that where domestic violence or abuse is at risk of happening, we will work to prevent it. When our people tell us they are experiencing it, we will work with them to provide them with the support and practical measures they need to be safe. We know that this is not just good for our business but absolutely the right thing to do.

—Zahira Quattrocchi, Group Head of Culture and Organisational Development, Anglo American

Spotting the signs of domestic violence

- **Work attendance has changed:** an employee arrives to work late more often, has unexplained and increased levels of sick leave, and/or frequently needs to leave work early.
- **Work quality and performance have deteriorated:** an employee has problems meeting deadlines and performance targets, makes mistakes and errors, and/or is reluctant to answer phone calls or attend meetings outside of the workplace.
- **Behaviour changes:** an employee has become quiet, anxious, stressed; they may be distracted or appear depressed; they are more isolated and refuse invitations to socialise outside of work; there is secrecy about home life and relationships.
- **Physical changes:** for example, an employee has bruising or injuries and gives unlikely explanations for them.
- **During remote/teleworking or hybrid working from home:** signs may be harder to spot, but could include not participating in scheduled calls or online meetings, appearing anxious or distressed, interruptions from a partner or damage to work equipment.

organisations, victim support organisations and women's organisations for legal advice, safety information, and safe housing or counselling, if they exist, in print or digital channels.

signs of domestic violence and to develop the skills to enable them to have conversations about the issue in the workplace (see checklist of warning signs in the box below).

STEP 3: Train and raise awareness about domestic violence

The following are examples of different approaches that can be taken in training and awareness-raising programmes, which can be provided face-to-face or through online learning:

- Awareness-raising about domestic violence and how it can be prevented, with the aim to build understanding of the impact of power and control, and of the importance of changing social and cultural norms, including the culture of harmful/toxic masculinity.
- Training to help managers know how to respond to the warning
- Training on steps to take in implementing the policy, including the roles of line managers and all other employees.
- Training for line managers about how to communicate with a survivor, what support can be given to an employee who discloses domestic violence to them, and the immediate and longer-term workplace supports that can be put in place.
- Training for trade union representatives in the workplace about the policy and its implementation, and to ensure that they also publicise the policy in the workplace and provide relevant support for survivors that approach them directly for help.

- Training for all employees about how they can be effective supporters and active bystanders,⁴² with guidance on when and how it is appropriate to intervene. This can enable employees to hold the skills to enable them to feel confident in supporting a colleague.
- Training for domestic violence 'advocates or ambassadors', who are contact persons in each workplace trained to provide confidential support and guidance for employees (see previous page).

STEP 4: Create a network of anti-domestic violence ambassadors/advocates⁴³

'Anti-domestic violence ambassadors/advocates' are specially trained workplace representatives who provide confidential advice and information for survivors. A network of ambassadors/advocates across a company is one way to give information, support survivors and build trust, particularly if it is the

first time they seek help and support.

- Create a network of 'anti-domestic violence ambassadors/advocates' who provide confidential advice, information and support for victims/survivors of domestic violence.
- Ensure this is open to any employee, manager or trade union representative that has a commitment to giving support on this issue. In some company programmes, survivors of domestic abuse have taken these roles, often providing hugely valuable experiences and reassurance for colleagues.
- Ensure that the 'ambassadors/advocates' are networked and supported with regular briefings and training from a key person(s) in the people/HR team.
- Publicise the role of the 'anti-domestic violence ambassadors/advocates' and how they can be contacted for confidential help and advice.



We saw that sometimes sales representatives identify that violence is happening, but we didn't know what to do. So, we started developing WhatsApp training for them ... so that they have the tools to identify GBV and to know how to refer. On what to say to someone experiencing GBV? The question is not, what happened? The question is, what do you need? I'm not proud of saying that a woman is killed every 29 hours. It hurts. And if we want to change it, everyone in the society must take a role. Not alone, we have to do it together.

—Ana Ines Alvarez, Directora Ejecutiva, Fundación Avon para la Mujer, AVON, speaking at Business Fights Poverty Gender Summit, 9 March 2023

STEP 5: Enhance the security of employees affected by domestic violence

As mentioned above, domestic violence may follow an employee into the workplace. A partner or ex-partner may stalk a survivor in the workplace in person or by phone, text or email. At worst, they could be attacked in the workplace. While the workplace may provide a place of safety for an employee experiencing or recovering from domestic violence, it can also be a place of risk if it is the only place that an ex-partner can find them.

Where they are available, workplace security teams and security staff may need to give advice and support on security for employees affected by domestic violence, including any risks to their co-workers.

Here are some steps that can assist with security planning in the workplace:

- Conduct a domestic violence risk assessment to identify risks of domestic violence at the workplace (see suggestions in the box below), ensuring confidentiality and the informed consent of the survivor.
- Where possible, do this in partnership with a domestic violence organisation, which will be able to give practical advice about safety planning, provide legal advice, and help the survivor access specialist counselling or safe housing.
- Inform the police if there is an immediate risk to the survivor or their work colleagues. Security staff can make the notification, but the survivor needs to be involved if she/he wants to file an official police complaint or report.
- If the survivor already has a protection or restraining order, check that the workplace is included with the order and that relevant staff have been informed. Inform relevant personnel of what to do if the order is breached.
- If relevant, inform the survivor of options for getting a protection/restraining order that covers the workplace and travel to and from work, and discuss with them what the benefits of this could be for them. In some jurisdictions, an employer can apply directly for a protection/restraining order for the workplace; if this is the case, it is important that this is discussed with the affected employee.
- Most companies require their employees who have obtained a temporary or permanent protection/restraining order that includes the workplace as part of the protection area to inform their HR team or a designated member of staff of this. The aim will be to trigger procedures that enable line managers and employees to respond to any potential breach of a protection order in the workplace, including notification to relevant personnel and the police when violence, abuse or stalking is perpetrated in and around the workplace.
- It is important to ensure a survivor's confidentiality. If relevant people in the workplace have to be informed, give the minimum amount of personal information and ensure that the survivor knows who has been informed.

- Involve the survivor in drawing up security mitigation measures in the workplace, including a security plan. Hold regular meetings to monitor changes in or escalation of their security risk and adapt it where necessary.

The following examples illustrate situations and possible security risks that could occur in the workplace, along with actions that can be included in a security plan. These plans should always be carried out in consultation with the survivor.

Possible security/safety risk situations	What to consider including in a security/safety plan
 <p><i>An employee works in sales and travels to meetings with clients by car. There is a risk of being stalked, assaulted or harassed.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review alternative work options. • Provide advice about personal safety – e.g. emergency contacts for security or the police on their mobile phone. • Temporarily end meetings outside of the office or always ensure the survivor is accompanied by a colleague or member of the security team.
 <p><i>The car park has areas that are unlit and potentially unsafe. There is a risk of assault when the survivor goes to their car at night or alone.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a safe parking space close to the entrance of the workplace. • Have security personnel accompany the survivor to and from their car. • Improve lighting. • Set up a security camera or alert system, such as a panic or personal alarm.
 <p><i>The employee is threatened and harassed at work by email, text and phone. There is a risk that this will continue and escalate.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divert telephone calls, text messages or emails to a work colleague. • Issue a new safe email address and mobile phone number. • Ask the affected employee to save harassing emails or messages in case evidence is needed. • Check if the abuser has access to passwords for the survivor's work computer, email, social media and other digitally-enabled accounts – be aware that they could also be tracked by a perpetrator. • Disable GPS, geolocation or other tracking devices on a mobile phone, tablet or computer.
 <p><i>Other work colleagues may be at risk.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify relevant colleagues – e.g. reception and security staff, car park attendants – about what they can do/ who to contact if stalking occurs in the workplace. • Find ways to ensure the security of reception or other work colleagues e.g. security guards on reception.

 <p><i>The employee works in an office that is visible to customers/visitors. There is a risk that a partner or ex-partner could assault them.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move the office desk to a less visible place. • Change office location. • Ensure the survivor is never working alone.
 <p><i>There are ongoing risks for the employee and their personal safety.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the employee in making plans for their own security and provide security awareness tips. • Provide an emergency contact number – e.g. security personnel, police or a domestic violence organisation. • Ensure they have relevant contact numbers and can access support or emergency services easily with these numbers preloaded on phone if at risk.
 <p><i>The perpetrator works in the same workplace, which may pose additional security risks.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with the line managers of the survivor and perpetrator. • Ensure security if requested, e.g. changing work schedules or work locations. • Advise on how to access specialist legal and other support. • Refer perpetrators to treatment/counselling programmes, where they exist.
 <p><i>A colleague working from home calls their manager for help.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide emergency contact information for the police or a domestic violence support organisation. • Give information about special confidential safe spaces provided by banks, pharmacies or supermarkets for help. • Assist the survivor in drawing up a safety plan if they need to escape a violent situation or find help. • Request a work-related meeting in the office so that information and support can be provided.

Example Scenario: Security measures in the workplace

Maria works for a large company in sales and regularly travels alone by car to visit clients in stores across the country. A month ago, she left her abusive partner after experiencing many years of violence and psychological control. Thanks to the support she had from her manager and work colleagues, she was able to continue to carry out all of her work tasks. Her ex-partner started stalking her and threatening her with violence. One day, when she was meeting a client, he approached her in the car park, but he left quickly when a member of the public came over to check if she was okay. After that, Maria was frightened

and stressed. It was affecting her sleep and her concentration at work. She knew that she had to do something to stop the stalking. After she approached her line manager, she was given confidential support by the company's security team, which included temporary security measures such as having an emergency number at hand, parking in well-lit, non-isolated areas, and attending meetings during daylight hours only and with another colleague. She was also given the option to reduce the number of meetings with clients temporarily and to apply for a protection order covering the workplace.

STEP 6: Partner with domestic violence and victim support organisations, and support wider campaigns

Setting up partnerships with specialist domestic violence or victim support organisations will help companies to refer employees experiencing or recovering from domestic violence for specialist information, support and legal advice. This also makes it possible for companies to provide resources for joint activities, awareness-raising and support in the wider community.

- Provide funding and other support for domestic violence and women's organisations. Publicise their work across the company. Ensure that contact information is up-to-date and check regularly for any changes in service hours or types of support available.
- Develop joint awareness-raising events and campaigns in the community to highlight the problem of domestic violence and how men can play a role as allies in ending domestic violence.⁴⁴
- Involve specialist domestic violence organisations in the design and delivery of training and guidance for line managers, employees, people/HR team, security staff and 'anti-domestic violence ambassadors/advocates'.
- Collaborate and build alliances with other companies and specialist domestic violence organisations. Share resources and support training about the workplace effects of domestic violence and what works in preventing domestic violence.
- Implement effective collaboration and use brand leverage, advertising and R&D innovation to spread powerful messages to influence attitudes, shift perceptions about domestic violence and engage in transformative approaches to gender equality at work, ending a culture of victim blaming, silence and shame around domestic violence.



Over the past 15 years, we've created a tailored program of support for our employees that includes training sessions on the impact of domestic violence, partnerships with specialist organizations, and a global policy on domestic violence. We strongly believe that networks and collaborative action are essential. By mobilizing other companies, we can have a deeper impact, reaching a broader audience and pushing for change at a local, national and international level.

—Céline Bonnaire, Executive Director of the Kering Foundation, co-founder of the One In Three Women Network

- Collaborate in national and global initiatives – for example, through the UN HeForShe programme.
- Engage in mutual learning through and with national corporate networks, employee and HR professional networks, occupational health professionals and occupational safety professionals

What can you do if you are unsure where to find specialist domestic violence and victim/survivor support services?

- If you are unsure if there are support services available, carry out an online search of local and national women's organisations. Ask and seek advice from health and social care professionals and women's organisations in the community.
- Refer to the NO MORE Directory for country-level information about domestic services, covering most countries across the world.⁴⁵
- Be aware that in some countries, emergency domestic violence support services may be provided by hospitals, community health organisations, social services or other government agencies, and/or by women's associations and local community organisations that support women's empowerment. Where there is no national support helpline or network of safe accommodation/refuges, locally based women's organisations in the community may provide support and help.
- National health care or social services organisations, community/primary care nurses, and social workers, amongst others, may also be able to direct you to appropriate services or named professionals who can give confidential legal advice.
- In some countries, international NGOs and agencies such as UN Women may be involved in supporting projects for survivors of domestic violence.
- Check with other companies and find out if there are any networks of companies that have mapped services locally.
- One option is to go a step further by contracting a professional organisation to provide specialist support and counselling for colleagues affected by domestic violence. For example, a domestic violence helpline could be established for employees, but it could also be made available to people in the local community.⁴⁶ It will be important that whoever is contracted to provide such a service has expertise in working with survivors of domestic violence.
- In countries or localities where there are no domestic violence support organisations to call, try to find a local community or women's organisation that can assist. A local trade union women's committee may also be able to provide help and support.
- Establishing partnerships with and providing financial support for domestic violence organisations in the community may be very relevant where there are no services currently available. There may be other companies, women's organisations, trade unions, international development organisations, NGOs and local authorities who will be interested in working with you on this.

STEP 7: Enforce perpetrator accountability and disciplinary actions

Companies may also have employees who are perpetrators of domestic violence who perpetuate abuse during and outside of work. Taking account of local legislation and existing disciplinary procedures, the following applies in all situations:

- The organisation sends a strong message that domestic violence is not tolerated and that it is never acceptable to exert power and control over an intimate partner. Make sure that the perpetrator is aware of the likely impact of continued violence, including that disciplinary procedures may be applied.
- If perpetrators bring domestic violence into the workplace, apply disciplinary procedures in a consistent way (using existing investigative and disciplinary procedures).
- Some companies have implemented clear disciplinary rules – for example, enforcing dismissal if workplace resources such as mobile phones, computers and tablets are used to perpetrate domestic violence.
- If the perpetrator works in the same workplace as the survivor, implement security or other adjustments in consultation with the survivor.
- Encourage employees who use violence to seek help and take responsibility to find some support to help change behaviour.
- Make referrals to specialist perpetrator counselling/ treatment programmes in the community, if available. These



Learning from different countries is essential in our fight against domestic violence. It's crucial for companies to join the conversation, providing practical tools and support to help everyone, women and men alike, stand up against gender-based violence. This issue is too big for any one group or company to tackle alone. We must encourage and support all who speak out, making it clear that domestic violence affects us all. By working together and sharing experiences and strategies, we can make a real difference in this global challenge.

—Pamela Zaballa, CEO, NO MORE Foundation



Our job here is to provide an affirming, positive view of masculinity and to inspire men to be better.

Why does a beer company have the right to talk about gender violence? Who do you think you are that you're allowed to have this? And my answer is: if not us, then who? It's not a hard thing in the current climate to propose a gender violence policy ... making it practical and walking the talk is the hard bit ... it's only when you really start talking to the hearts of people that that message sticks.

—Arné Rust, Brand Director, Carling Black Label, Hansa and Lion, Anheuser-Busch InBev, speaking at the Business Fights Poverty Gender Summit, 9 March 2023

programmes are successful when there is a willingness to change behaviour. But be aware that not all programmes have been successful in preventing the reoccurrence of domestic violence.

- If there are concerns about a work colleague, or if there have been reports of a colleague's abusive behaviour, communicate clearly with the perpetrator. Make it clear that domestic violence is unacceptable and make the perpetrator aware of the likely impact of continued violence. Managers can also send a strong message to employees who are perpetrators that their behaviour needs to change.
- Provide training and support for managers and colleagues on

how to communicate effectively with perpetrators about the unacceptability of domestic violence and why it is important to create a culture of positive masculinity. Encourage managers and colleagues to reinforce the message that if an employee is concerned about their abusive behaviour, they should seek help to change their behaviour.

- Find out about resources, helplines, organisations and alliances that work with men to change behaviour and raise awareness about men's violence against women.⁴⁷ Make contact with organisations that work with men to change behaviour, raise awareness about men's violence against women, and build this awareness into company training programmes.⁴⁸

3.3 What can line managers do?

Line managers play a vital role in helping survivors of domestic violence get the support they need. This section sets out guidance on how line managers can respond to disclosures of domestic violence or if they have concerns that an employee may be at risk.

It is important to note that each and every employee experiencing or recovering from domestic violence has a different experience and that the effects of it may change over time.

When giving information, advice and workplace support, take into account the different situations that an employee may be in:

- Don't presume that all colleagues will want or need the same kind of support.
- Tailor your advice to your colleagues' current situation, taking into account that their situation may change.
- Listen and help a survivor to identify what they need. Information and

support given to an employee disclosing for the first time, and who is living with the abusive person with no protection order, will be different from that given to an employee who has separated from a partner and has a protection order.

- Advice and action may also depend on whether the survivor and perpetrator are working in the same workplace.

Be flexible and adjust support to the needs of each employee. Review these supports on a regular basis. In cases where an employee's security is affected, it is important to address these issues by referring to a safety or security team in the company.

Three steps line managers can take

The following are three steps that line managers can take to address the workplace effects of domestic violence and to support affected employees.

STEP 1: *Create a work environment where employees have trust and confidence in their line manager*

STEP 2: *Listen, understand and offer support*

STEP 3: *Put in place line manager supports*

STEP 1: *Create a work environment where employees have trust and confidence in their line manager*

- Be aware of the signs of domestic violence and talk to your colleagues if you have concerns, asking them if there is anything in their personal or work life that they would like to discuss and that you can help them with. Give reassurance and let them know that their health and well-being are of utmost importance.
- Build the trust and confidence of all employees you manage so they know that you are always there to help if there are concerns about domestic violence.
- Make it your business as a manager to become familiar with the company policy on domestic violence, find out about the issue and how survivors can be supported in the community, and participate in training when it becomes available.
- Become a champion – speak up about the problem of domestic violence and why it is not tolerated in the home, community and workplace, and what can be done to end it.
- Remember you are not an expert – your role is to focus on workplace supports that can be offered.
- Seek help or advice if you are unsure about what to do – this could be from a company people team/HR specialist, security team, workplace 'anti-domestic violence ambassador/advocate', trade union or specialist domestic violence organisations, if available.

- Be aware that the employer has a 'duty of care' for the safety and health of all employees.
- If an employee is working remotely/teleworking from home – as has been the case for many people across the world during the lockdowns owing to the COVID-19 pandemic – the safety of the home is important.
- Discuss safe ways to have a confidential discussion with your employee. Give advice and discuss with your employees safety measures they can put in place, such as a pre-set emergency telephone number. This safety code can trigger help or a panic alarm connected to a mobile phone.

(See the 'Further Resources' section at the end of this Toolkit for guidance relevant to managers that were introduced in response to remote/teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic).

STEP 2: *Listen, understand and offer support*

How a line manager communicates with an employee can make all the difference as to whether they feel safe to disclose domestic violence. Building trust is of utmost importance. Line managers will find that communicating with a survivor of domestic violence requires listening skills and empathy.

Some employees may find it difficult to talk about their problems because of shame and guilt, and/or they may fear that their abuser will find out. They may have experienced abuse that has left them traumatised and distressed, resulting in a loss of confidence, anxiety, sleep problems, depression,

anger, isolation and withdrawal from socialising with work colleagues.

Line managers should focus on building trust and finding the best solutions to addressing work-related impacts in a supportive, empathetic and non-judgmental way.

- Always respect the employees' decision not to disclose and listen to them and respond in an empathetic and non-judgmental way.
- Listen, be patient and let your colleague tell you about their concerns in their own time.
- Be respectful and avoid giving personal advice or asking personal questions that may be intrusive for your colleague. Your role is to listen and find out how you can help.
- Be supportive and give your colleague information about the

company policy and support available internally, as well as specialist support from a domestic violence organisation, if available.

- Do not pressure them into talking to someone or doing something they are not ready for.
- Inform your colleague that what they tell you is confidential but that precautions may need to be taken if there are safety concerns for other colleagues.
- Disclosure of information about an affected colleague's safety or the risks posed by a perpetrator in the workplace should only take place if a potential security risk has been identified, where security planning is needed and/or to implement protection/restraining orders in the workplace. (See Security Planning in Section 3.2, Step 5, .)



There's often a perception that gender-based violence is something that happens to other people in other places. But it happens in our own communities. We need to continue to speak out and break down that wall of silence. I can't stress enough how important communication and awareness-raising is around this issue ... we need to normalize the conversation ... For us at Avon, it's all about creating opportunities for women to have a voice and a choice, whether that's about where and when they work, whether it's about equality of opportunity to them, but also, it's about creating a platform to keep this movement going and keep this ripple effect.

—Natalie Deacon, Director Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, Avon International, speaking at the Business Fights Poverty Gender Summit, 9 March 2022

Example Scenario: Line manager support

Tom is the line manager of a team of 15 employees in the company. One of his team, Emilia, approached him several times for support as she was often unwell, was missing meetings and turning up to work late. After several conversations with her manager, she opened up about her experience of domestic violence. Having the policy in place was important in helping her realise that there was help out there. Tom reassured her that the company would do what it could to make sure she was secure at work and that there were supports available to her. Emilia was relieved to know she was not alone and started to

make plans to leave her violent partner and recover from the abuse, including applying for a protection order covering the workplace. It took her several months to leave her violent partner and make a new life for herself. She was grateful that her manager had shared information about how to get some legal advice. Being able to talk to her line manager helped her build the courage to leave.

Be aware that some survivors are affected by patterns of coercive control and/or believing that the partner will change, which can make it difficult to leave.

- Be aware that your colleague may need someone to be there for them and for you to show compassion and understanding.
- If there are issues that need to be discussed with the relevant personnel in the people/HR team or security team, let your colleague know this.
- If your colleague is in immediate or potential danger, it is important to propose a 'security plan' with the Security team, in consultation with the survivor (see guidance above for Security teams) and inform the police.
- Stay in touch with team members when they are on maternity leave, as this may be a time when they need support and help. Stay alert to the signs of domestic violence during this time.

STEP 3: Put in place line manager supports

Line manager support can include arranging paid leave, temporary adjustments to work tasks and/or flexible working, some or all of which may be helpful if an employee is facing a particularly difficult time.

A starting point is to give information about the supports that are available in the company policy, even if a survivor does not need them immediately.

- If an employee's work performance is affected, discuss what could help with their work tasks. Their work performance may be affected by stress, anxiety and difficulties in concentrating. Responses could include a time-limited reduction in or reassignment of work tasks, rescheduling of meetings outside of the office, or facilitating a job transfer to another location.

- Provide paid leave to enable an employee to manage, leave and/or recover from an abusive relationship. This could include medical support; counselling; legal advice; attending solicitors, court or police appointments; moving house and settling children into a new home and school and/or workplace relocation (if available).
- Where possible, enable the survivor to take the paid leave flexibly – for example, for half a day or several consecutive days, if needed.
- Provide workplace adjustments as provided for in the company policy, such as changes in work tasks and ways to work flexibly – for instance, staggered start and finish times.
- If a colleague has experienced financial abuse, find out from the people/HR team if financial assistance can be given, such as a salary advance or loan, emergency funding to pay for a hotel room or temporary accommodation.
- With your colleague's consent, discuss safety in the immediate work environment with other team members – for example, by making sure your colleague does not work alone and/or is accompanied by a staff member, or simple changes like moving a desk to so that it is not visible from a door or window, or moving from a front office to a back office location.
- Give advice about security awareness and suggest alternating travel routes, offer a secure parking option and introduce other safety measures relevant to the risk.



Example Scenario: Line manager support

Martina works at the company's reception. She approached her line manager for support after she read the company's domestic violence policy. Her most immediate concern is that she needs some time off to find a new home, find a new school for her children, and settle them into their new home and school. Her line manager asks her how much time she needs, and they agree initially to three days paid domestic violence leave, which can be extended up to 10 days if needed. Martina tells her line manager that thanks to the information in the company policy, she has already contacted a specialist organisation for legal advice and has help in finding new housing. Her line manager says that she does not need any further evidence of her situation to have the paid leave. In addition, her line manager asks her if she could be at risk of violence or stalking in the workplace.

Although Martina doesn't think this is the case, her line manager suggests that the company can introduce security measures near reception in the future and/or if she wishes to be temporarily relocated to the back office. Martina is relieved following her meeting with her line manager and they both agree to meet regularly to review her situation in case there is any further practical support that can be given. After leaving her ex-partner, she became worried again as he started turning up at the workplace – immediately, Martina contacted her line manager. She gave her advice about applying for a protection order that also covers the workplace and her travel to work, and that she would ensure that a security guard was at the entrance to reception at all times, with instructions to refuse him entry.

Knowing the limits of what a manager can do

- Know the limits of what you can and cannot do – remember that your role is to give confidential, non-judgemental advice and support at work, such as paid leave or flexible working time, facilitate security and safety planning, and refer to specialists for legal and counselling and other support. Going beyond this could cause further harm or distress to a colleague.
 - Once you have communicated the workplace supports that are available, discuss with your colleague the supports that could be relevant immediately and/or in the future.
 - Some employees may not be ready to accept the workplace support offered in the policy. Be non-judgemental and remember that it may take months, if not years, before a survivor is ready to take action themselves.
 - Remind your colleague that support is there if it is needed at any time in the future and that your door is open if they need to talk or be supported in getting specialist help.
- Some managers may be affected by the harm and trauma a colleague is facing. This can affect the advice and support that is given. If your own well-being is affected, and/or if you face 'compassion fatigue' or 'vicarious trauma' (see definitions in the Glossary), it is important to seek support. The following are some techniques that managers can use:
- Find someone you trust in the workplace to talk to confidentially about the support you are giving to a colleague.
 - Talk to and get advice from the people/HR team and ask them about existing internal and external individual or group supports.
 - Don't take on the burden of a colleague's trauma or distress; try to stand back and focus on the work-related supports and practical security measures in line with the workplace policy.
 - Ensure you have access to an up-to-date list of domestic violence specialists and trauma counsellors who can give expert advice about counselling or other supports for your colleague.

3.4 What can work colleagues do?

It is often the case that survivors talk to a trusted colleague or friend at work before they speak to their line manager, occupational health or trade union representative. Having support from a trusted colleague can be an important first step in naming the problem and seeking help.

Work colleagues can be important active bystanders in the workplace. It is important to know when and how it is appropriate to intervene if a colleague witnesses domestic violence taking place in the workplace. Training can be a very useful way to ensure that work colleagues understand how to be active bystanders and how to intervene safely, as well as understand the limits of what they can do.

Some people reading this Toolkit will be aware of a work colleague who shows signs of domestic violence. Often, we stay silent as well because of the taboos around domestic violence, but sometimes our silence

is because it is a personal issue, and it is hard to know what to do or say. Many survivors of domestic violence speak of the importance of breaking the silence with someone – a friend, work colleague or a union representative – that they trust.

What can you do to support an employee who is experiencing or recovering from domestic violence?

- If a work colleague discloses domestic violence, do not attempt to solve the problem; be supportive and ask them how you can help.

colleagues or manager difficult. In the end, Bob spoke to one of his colleagues at work, who was really understanding and said it was important to talk to his line manager. Once he did this, Bob's line manager reported it to HR, who conducted an investigation that resulted in disciplinary procedures being instituted against Steve for workplace harassment. His manager knew that he had a 'duty of care' for the safety of his colleagues. Steve was dismissed from the company.

Example Scenario: Line manager support and using company disciplinary procedures

Bob works in the Accounts Department and has been in a relationship with his partner Steve for the last five years, and they have been living together for three years. Steve works for the same company but in a different department. Their relationship ended recently. Steve became abusive after the relationship ended and threatened to 'out' him at work, in addition to sending threatening and harassing text messages and emails. Bob was not 'out' at work, which made talking to his

Example Scenario: Line manager – financial support

Monika works as a manager and enjoys her job; it gives her confidence and financial security. When she left her abusive partner, she discovered that all the money had been taken out of their joint bank account, where her salary is paid each month. Her colleagues and line manager could see that she was distressed and asked her if there was anything they could do to help her. For Monika, the most important thing was to find a safe place to stay for herself and her children, as she knew she couldn't go home. Her line

manager helped her contact a domestic violence organisation, who helped arrange some temporary housing for her that would be available in only two days. In the meantime, her manager had contacted the HR team and they agreed to provide her with some emergency financial support to pay for a safe hotel room until the temporary housing became available. In addition, she was supported to open a new bank account in her own name so that her salary could be paid there.

- When talking to a work colleague about their experience of or recovery from domestic violence, it is important to validate their experience and to talk to them sensitively. Help the survivor to find a strategy to tackle the problem.
- Be empathetic and listen to their concerns – do not try to speak for them or ask intrusive questions.
- Read the company policy and find out what the company can offer. Give your colleague this information. Encourage them to seek help from their manager or someone they trust in the people/HR team, or from a company domestic violence 'ambassador or advocate', if they exist.
- Suggest that they speak to their line manager or people/HR team to discuss their concerns, reassuring them that they will be listened to and believed.
- Encourage your colleague to keep a log of any domestic violence incidents that occur in and around the workplace, including keeping copies of harassing emails or text messages.
- Find out if there are any local domestic violence support organisations (this information should be listed in the policy if it is available), and give your colleague this information.
- If you are concerned that there are possible safety risks for your colleague, stress that in the workplace, everyone's safety is a concern. Urge your colleague to talk to someone confidentially.
- Give reassurance that what they are experiencing is not their fault and that there is help out there for them.



3.5 What can you do if you are experiencing or recovering from domestic violence?

This section is for employees who are experiencing or recovering from domestic violence.

If you are currently experiencing domestic violence, try to get help as this may protect you from further or serious harm. It is important that you seek help if you do not feel safe or you are worried about domestic violence. Remember that domestic violence can involve a range of abusive behaviours, including psychological abuse, coercive control and financial abuse.

- Speak to a trusted colleague at work about your fears. They may be able to give you a 'listening ear' and some emotional or practical support. They may also suggest that you speak to your line manager or someone from the HR team.
- If you prefer not to speak to your line manager or if your line manager is not supportive, speak to another trusted person in the workplace, such as a designated person in the HR team, a workplace 'champion or advocate', EAP,

mental health advisor or a trade union representative about what support is available to you.

- You may be able to access paid leave to give yourself time to seek external support from a domestic violence organisation, attend police or legal appointments, attend court, or move house and settle your children into a new home and school.
- If your safety is at risk, talk to your line manager about

how you can be supported in drawing up a safety plan.

- If you are separated from or are planning to separate from a violent partner, put in place a safety plan and talk it through with a trusted colleague, your line manager, security personnel and/or a domestic violence organisation.
- Help and advice may also be available from your EAP or occupational health team, if they exist.
- Keep a record of how domestic violence affects your work, such as what caused you to be late at work or take time off, the dates and times of harassment or stalking that took place in and around the workplace, and make a note of any witnesses. Save abusive telephone messages, emails and text messages – they may be important evidence.
- If your abuser works for the same company, find out what your line manager can do to help with assessing risks and safety planning.
- If you are in immediate danger, you should seek help, contact the police and get legal advice from a domestic violence organisation. It will be important to agree to some temporary security measures with your line manager and Security team.
- Find out about your rights. If available, you can apply for a court-issued protection order that covers the workplace and your travel to and from work. Make sure that you inform your line manager and people/HR team to ensure that the perpetrator complies with the order.

For additional information, see: 'I need safety and support at work': http://makeitourbusiness.ca/sites/makeitourbusiness.ca/files/I_Need_Safety_and_Support_0.pdf

Download **Bright Sky** or other apps against abuse to help you find local services or emergency help (check online for availability in your country): <https://www.vodafone.com/vodafone-foundation/focus-areas/apps-against-abuse>

Find services available in your country from the **NO MORE Directory**: <https://nomoredirectory.org>



4. Examples of company policies on domestic violence⁴⁹

This section gives examples of the different ways that organisations and companies have addressed the support needs and risks faced by survivors of domestic violence, with examples from Europe, Asia, South America and Africa.

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The examples illustrate some of the critical issues that companies can tackle in their strategies to support survivors of domestic violence. These examples have informed the guidance on creating a company policy on domestic violence (Section 5) and the [model workplace policy on supporting survivors of domestic violence](#) (pg 65).



AB InBEV (USA)

The global beverage company, Anheuser-Busch InBev (AB InBev) is one of many companies that has begun a journey to address the workplace effects of domestic violence. The AB InBev Global Standard on Domestic Violence is currently being adopted in all of its 50+ countries of operation, and the rollout has been supported by training. The AB InBev Global Standard sets out minimum standards for support, security, information and training measures for employees affected by domestic violence in the world of work, including 10 days domestic violence leave, flexible working hours and the possibility to relocate.

In November 2019, the South African Breweries (SAB) launched the AB InBev Global Standard on Domestic Violence at Work as part of the #NoExcuse campaign. The Domestic Violence Policy by SAB and AB InBev gives support and security to staff who are victims of domestic violence. It has helped to raise awareness about how domestic violence can affect women's participation in work and has affirmed the company's commitment to supporting their colleagues.



ABSA Bank (South Africa)

ABSA bank is the largest banking group in Africa, with banking and insurance operations in more than 12 African countries. It is the South African bank for the President's gender-based violence fund. ABSA supports bank employees experiencing and recovering from domestic violence, and is currently drawing up a unified set of guidelines for the bank that can be implemented across its markets. ABSA regularly runs awareness-raising events and initiatives. Each of ABSA's markets run their own awareness-raising campaigns and activities, and regular webinars and meetings are held on ways to support victims of domestic violence.

ABSA has developed the #StoptoStart initiative to stop gender-based violence, as part of its sponsorship of the ABSA Premiership. The #StoptoStart initiative aims to drive positive social change. ABSA has partnered with the NGO *Growing Up Without A Father Foundation* to help boys and young men use the building blocks for positive change in their communities and equip them with a sense of self-worth, honour and the belief that violence is not the solution. Positive role models from Premiership players have supported the initiative through workshops and activities, with more than 800 teenage boys from schools in four provinces.



An Post (Ireland)

An Post and the Communications Workers Union agreed a "Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control Policy" on 26 March 2021.¹ It sets out An Post's commitment and aims to break the silence about domestic abuse and coercive control, provide a safe environment where an employee can receive informed and meaningful support, support the retention safety and wellbeing of staff, and promote a respectful and safe workplace. The policy covers all employees and was drafted in consultation with LGBT Ireland, Men's Aid, women's domestic abuse organisations, Safe Ireland and Women's Aid, and trade union partners. Designated, trained, and trusted contacts across the company provide information and support, along with signposting to external specialist support. The policy sets out An Post's Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control Action Framework with three steps: Reassure, Respond and Refer. Workplace supports include changes in working hours and redeployment, financial assistance in the form of an advance to salary, up to two weeks paid leave, workplace security and measures such as record keeping of violence and harassment by perpetrators. Support is also provided by the Occupational Health and Support Team and the company's confidential Employee Assistance Programme at An Post.

¹ Cited in Pillinger/EU-OSHA (2023)



Anglo American (UK)

The global mining company Anglo American, operating in 13 countries, introduced its 'Recognising and Responding to Domestic Violence Group Policy' in March 2021, with support from a company-wide Domestic Violence Working Group. It was drawn up as part of the 'Stand Up for Everyone' bullying, harassment and victimisation campaign and in support of Anglo American's desire that everyone can 'Live with Dignity'. The policy sets out the company's commitment to providing support for colleagues affected by domestic violence, covering both survivors and witnesses regardless of a person's gender or sexual orientation. Support includes the provision of paid leave, flexible working time, financial assistance, safe accommodation and access to a comprehensive risk assessment and safety plan. An implementation toolkit, leaders guides, information campaigns and training have been critical to raising awareness about domestic violence and giving managers, colleagues and security teams practical guidance on implementing the policy. The training and guidance draws on anonymised case studies, which are informed by the experiences and consent of survivors who have been supported. Leaders guidance on how to respond to the challenges of supporting colleagues during remote/hybrid working highlights ways to spot some of the potential signs of domestic violence, such as changes in behaviour during online meetings and calls, performance issues, physical changes and interruptions or control from a partner. A safety measure, introduced and widely circulated to colleagues, is based on three simple steps an employee can take through a hand gesture, along with guidance for colleagues on how to take the next steps to give support. The policy also addresses ways that the company holds perpetrators accountable through sanctions implemented under the grievance system and through referrals for perpetrator treatment and counselling.

Implementation of the policy has involved the development of a domestic violence risk assessment tool (based on the UK DASH risk assessment checklist), with training on the tool for a network of risk assessors across the company. In addition to the domestic violence training provided for managers and leaders, the company's network of mental health first-aiders has also been trained on how to give non-judgemental support. In South Africa, they launched a new model of an independently run safe space 'hub' for victims of gender-based violence. Victims and bystanders can disclose cases of domestic violence in a safe space and receive confidential support. It is hoped that the 'hub' will be rolled out to other countries. The policy has sent a strong message to colleagues that the company takes domestic violence seriously. There has been a very good take-up of the policy, with the provision of safety planning, counselling for victims and their children, emergency paid leave, flexible working hours, safe housing and legal support provided for more than 60 employees during 2022.

Asia Development Bank (Philippines)

In 2023 the Asia Development Bank (ADB), with offices/resident missions in 30 countries, followed the lead of the World Bank and other UN agencies in drawing up domestic violence guidelines for their staff. The Guidelines, adopted by the ADB President in August 2023, resulted from extensive consultations with ADB stakeholders and the ADB Working Group on Domestic Violence, led by the Office for Professional Ethics and Conduct (OPEC). The Guidelines provide a framework for a streamlined approach to support survivors which are aligned to existing ADB policies, while ensuring a better overview of resources and staff roles to ensure a coordinated whole-organisation response. The aim is that everyone and every part of ADB plays its role in supporting survivors and ensuring their safety, while also making it clear that domestic violence, in certain circumstances, can be viewed as a form of workplace misconduct under the ADB Code of Conduct. The Guidelines are grounded in the principles of the ADB duty of care for the safety, health and well-being of its staff; a survivor-centred and gender-responsive approach; confidentiality, privacy and consent of survivors; where there are safety concerns for staff, to balance confidentiality with safety; a 'safety first' and 'do no harm' approach; respect and dignity for and about the choices made by survivors; and the non-retaliation and non-discrimination against a survivor or colleague supporting a survivor.

The Guidelines are supported by an implementation Toolkit, and the first training was carried out in November 2023 for managers, employee support networks, mental health champions and key services. During the pandemic, ADB was concerned about the increase in cases that were being referred to their Ombuds Office and security teams, when cases of domestic violence increased dramatically. ADB responded by issuing guidance on how survivors can plan for their safety in "Hidden Pandemic: Domestic violence", with tips on getting help and staying safe.

Avon (UK)

Avon has played a unique role in raising awareness about domestic violence and in using its global sales network of self-employed representatives to provide support and awareness about domestic violence for women. Avon aims to help improve support pathways, working with a network of front-line domestic violence service providers in over 30 countries to whom Avon donates each year. In addition, Avon's Gender-Based Violence (GBV) protocol, launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, aims to give an extra layer of support to employees. Trained Ambassadors have been established to provide support in local communities and places of work and to ensure they can access support in their country, including unlimited paid leave if needed.

Avon has helped to break the silence surrounding domestic violence, for example, through its ongoing 'Speak Out' campaign, run with Avon's global charity partner NO MORE, an example of which is a powerful video which shines a light on the controlling and abusive behaviour designed to destroy self-esteem and a woman's power.¹ The words in the video are based on real experiences of survivors of domestic violence and signposts survivors to where they can seek help. Avon's 2023 research of 7173 Women in the UK, Italy, Philippines, Turkey, Poland, Romania and South Africa aimed to gain a better understanding of how women feel their partners have control over their appearance, makeup, clothing and self-expression and how makeup can be used as a form of control, in contrast to the positive and empowering aspects of make-up for women. The research found that 1 in 5 women said their partner had controlled whether or not they wore makeup and that 15% of women used makeup to hide an injury inflicted by a partner.

Since 2004 Avon has contributed more than US\$91 million globally to support awareness, education and the development and implementation of prevention and direct service programmes by collaborating with NGOs around the world to help end violence against women and girls. During the pandemic, Avon brought together other companies in the Natura &Co family of brands (Natura, The Body Shop, and Aesop) to give support to domestic violence survivors. #IsolatedNotAlone was a global campaign aimed at giving resources to fund front-line services and signpost survivors to support services across the world, carried out in partnership with national and international organisations that deliver frontline services to domestic violence survivors to help at-risk women.

¹ <https://www.avonworldwide.com/supporting-women/violence-against-women-and-girls>



BNP Paribas (France)

The French bank **BNP Paribas** has been a pioneer in the financial sector in raising awareness and implementing concrete actions to end domestic violence. For over 15 years, the social workers in the BNP Paribas Social Action Unit have provided personal support for employees across France, and the bank provides internal and external information, awareness campaigns and workshops, and has made links with domestic violence organisations for specialist guidance and support. Branches in Belgium, Italy or Portugal are also committed to supporting employees suffering from domestic violence. The 5th Agreement on Diversity and Inclusion with banking union SNB / CFE-CGC (2020–2024) refers to awareness-raising campaigns on domestic violence. BNP Paribas aims to launch a Group intranet page dedicated to domestic violence, which will be open for employees worldwide with information about support and resources available for employees. As a member of OneInThreeWomen,⁵⁰ PNB Paribas has participated in the sharing of best practices and the co-creation of awareness materials and tools.

Cited in Pillinger/EU-OSHA (2023)



Danske Bank, (Northern Ireland)

The Danske Bank “Domestic Abuse: Support for our colleagues’ policy” was the first policy in the banking sector in Ireland and has inspired many other banks to follow suit. It was agreed with the Irish Financial Services Union in 2021, who have been pioneers in this work. The policy covers guidance about the duty of care of the employer to both prevent abuse and provide support for survivors carrying out remote working during the pandemic. It is based on the Recognise, Respond and Refer model (first adopted by Vodafone in its Global Policy on domestic violence and abuse) and addresses support for victims and measures to hold perpetrators who are employees accountable for domestic abuse. Danske Bank has zero tolerance for violence and ensures that “any colleague who is the victim of domestic abuse has the right to raise the issue with us in the knowledge that they will receive appropriate support and assistance.” The policy applies to all employees regardless of their contractual status or place of work. Specific guidance is given to providing support during remote working and to assist managers and other supporters of survivors to recognise the signs of domestic abuse, respond by providing workplace support, and refer to relevant specialist domestic violence and legal services.

One of the strong features of the policy is that it sets out Danske Bank’s commitment to raising awareness of domestic abuse in the community through the work of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Women’s Aid, the Men’s Advisory Project and the NGO Onus, Safe Place initiative. Disclosures of abuse may also be made to a trade union representative, who will offer information, workplace support, and signposts to other subject matter experts. The policy is reviewed as best practice, legislative requirement or regulation dictates in consultation with the trade union.



Deutsche Telekom AG, (Germany)

Deutsche Telekom AG, Germany developed a threat management process to ensure the safety of workers who may face threats to their safety and security at work. The process aims to prevent serious violence and threatening behaviour by identifying, assessing and defusing the problem. The prevention of serious violence and threats against employees became a high-level priority in 2014, and a dedicated Physical & Personnel Security Department in Telekom Security was established. Trained personnel handle each case individually with tailored support and prevention. Support for survivors of domestic violence can include changes in work tasks or work location and paid leave, and practical support and counselling from the occupational health service. Critical success factors contributing to the policy’s success include senior-level commitment, teamwork, coordination, an internal interdisciplinary network across all departments, an external network of security and support services and experts, and regular dialogue with unions.

In addition, the company provides practical guidance, “Dealing with precarious situations in field service”, for field staff who work with customers in their private residences. The guidance gives information about how they should react to, behave and deal with situations that may be getting out of control, including how to respond to situations where domestic violence and child abuse or neglect is occurring, and relevant information is given about mandatory reporting to the police or social services. Specific support is provided for employees through designed processes and contact points.

Cited in Pillinger/EPSU et al. (2023)



EDF (France)

The EDF agreement on Gender Equality and Professional Equality between Women and Men, 2021–2025, gives detailed information about support for victims of domestic violence, building on their previous agreement and providing support and guidance. A partnership has been formed for expertise, advice and training with the association FIT (une femme un toit). An appendix sets out the company’s support and job retention scheme for victims of domestic violence, with provisions that include flexible working time; support to take paid time off to attend to legal or administrative issues; financial support through salary advances and exceptional aid – for example, to cover childcare costs; support in accessing identity or other administrative papers and opening a bank account; help with emergency housing and more permanent solutions with Action Lodgment; and support with temporary or longer-term job relocation. Other practical safety support includes providing a vehicle to enable the victim to get to work, changes to computer or telephone equipment, or changes to email address in an emergency, improving security around the worksite.

Cited in Pillinger/LO (2024, forthcoming)



Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse EIDA (UK)

The UK-based Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA) is a free-to-join network of over 1500 small and large organisations established in 2017 to raise awareness, share learning and inspire employers to take action on domestic abuse.¹ EIDA's Membership Charter supports employers in taking action on domestic abuse and asks its members to commit to raising awareness, creating a safe and supportive environment, supporting employees, and sharing best practices. EIDA's website provides a wide range of resources, including a Handbook for employers (currently being updated), a guide on survivor-centred language, case studies, a guide to the law, and a directory of domestic abuse support services. Regular events are held on topics ranging from employers' roles in recognising and responding to domestic abuse to holding perpetrators accountable. EIDA's Foundation Programme gives an introduction to how employers can support colleagues impacted by domestic abuse. The programme is based on learnings from EIDA's members and works to bring about constructive change and ensure that employers are aware of their duty of care to employees under the statutory guidance accompanying the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

In summary, EIDA's four strands of activity aim to:

- Raise awareness of domestic abuse among employers through a regular newsletter, "Tuesday Trio", "lunch & learn" sessions, a website, bi-monthly online "Insight Hours", and regular updates via social media.
- Provide employers with the tools to tackle domestic abuse, including a template for a workplace policy, guidance, case studies, and connections to experts in the field who can provide specialist training or other services.
- Support employers to share best practices with each other through roundtable discussions, events and resources.
- Collaborate with government, policy-makers, domestic abuse services and academics to provide up-to-date guidance and champion change.
-

EIDA's work is informed by the lived experience of domestic abuse, and survivors form a powerful network of Ambassadors. There is also good collaboration with specialist organisations in the domestic abuse sector (Surviving Economic Abuse, Women's Aid, Galop, Respect, Mankind, Hestia, SafeLives, and several smaller organisations such as Sikh Women's Aid). EIDA is funded by its small group of **Beacon members** and, through this, has been successful in leveraging the work of larger employers that are taking effective action on domestic abuse. The government's Home Office recognises EIDA's work and encourages employers to join EIDA and make use of its practical guidance. EIDA's work has been inspirational in leading to culture change in business and much greater recognition of how domestic abuse impacts the workplace.

¹ <https://www.eida.org.uk>



EIR (Ireland)

The EIR Domestic Violence Policy was agreed in 2021 between the Director of Human Resources at Eircom Limited and the Communication Workers Union and is part of the company's duty of care to its employees to provide work in a safe environment. It recognises the severe impact that domestic violence can have on employees and their families and makes a strong commitment to addressing the consequences of domestic violence in the workplace – for example, when it affects performance, attendance and safety if an employee is upset or harassed at work by the perpetrator either turning up at their workplace or because of abusive phone calls, text messages or emails. The policy provides support to victims of domestic violence, including up to two weeks paid leave per annum to attend legal and other appointments, changes to working hours and work location, amongst other measures, and puts in place measures to ensure that there is a safe environment that enables those affected by domestic violence to feel comfortable speaking about the issue. The policy also addresses the safety of co-workers, as well as situations where the perpetrator is employed in the same workplace. Managers give non-judgemental and confidential support by putting the employee in touch with the appropriate support services. For perpetrators of domestic violence who are employees and used company equipment to abuse, intimidate or harass the victim, the matter may be investigated under the company's disciplinary procedures. The development and monitoring of the policy is carried out in consultation with unions.

¹ Cited in Pillinger/ILO (2024, forthcoming)



Endesa (Spain)

The collective agreement for the energy company Endesa Group¹ in 2020 provides for a range of supports on domestic violence: revised and flexible working hours, social care, legal advice and assistance, protection orders and counselling and psychological support, medical care and financial support of 50% of rental expenses (up to €450 per month for up to six months) and 50% of expenses related to personal safety, change of school of children in her care to pay for school fees, books and uniforms. Special leave of absence for a period of between 3 months and 3 years (Spain 2020). Evidence has to be provided such as a court issued protection order or other document giving evidence of domestic violence. Protection measures set out in the policy apply to the victim and dependent or disabled children or adults living with them. (Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado 2020).

¹ Cited in Pillinger/EU-OSHA (2023)



Kering (France)

Kering, the French-based multinational company specialising in luxury goods, has since 2008 been a pioneering business leader in combating gender-based violence.⁵¹ In 2021, Kering launched a global policy on domestic violence to ensure the health, well-being and safety of its employees worldwide. Confidential support is provided for any employee who is a survivor of domestic violence – for example, in the form of paid leave or other financial assistance, adjustments to work arrangements, such as flexible working time or changing work location, and referrals to specialist organisations. Kering has not only inspired other companies to take action; it has also played an important role in raising awareness internationally about domestic violence and why companies have a key role to play.

The Kering Foundation works with and supports local partners in France, Italy, Korea, Mexico, the UK, and the USA. Its three-pillar strategy is focussed on resourcing its partner organisations to ensure quality services for women and children, engaging Kering's ecosystem to create safe and supportive workplaces through trainings and policies, as well as influencing and mobilising new audiences to take action. After 15 years of action, in 2023, it extended its commitment to also address violence against children – in particular, child sexual abuse. As a private sector leader of the Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence at the UN Women Generation Equality Forum, the Kering Foundation made five commitments, including with OneInThreeWomen, the first European network of companies engaged to combat violence against women, which the Foundation co-founded in 2018, to convince 50 private sector organisations to adopt and implement internal policies and procedures to support employees who are survivors of domestic violence. By 2024, 56 companies had become members of the network and had signed the OneInThreeWomen Commitment Charter (see below).



NO MORE Foundation (UK)

NO MORE⁵² is an international NGO established in 2013 in the USA with the mission to end domestic and sexual violence by increasing awareness, inspiring action and fuelling culture change. It has more than 1,400 allied organisations in 40 US states and local and international chapters. Along with local programmes, grassroots activism and large-scale media campaigns, NO MORE works with the private sector to prevent domestic and sexual violence through awareness campaigns, special events, active bystander interventions, volunteering and training on preventing sexual violence. An important part of NO MORE's work is the creation of collaborative partnerships with organisations.

Organisations that have partnered with NO MORE include the National Football League (NFL) and Viacom in the US, and in 2021 Uber and NO MORE partnered to run a campaign, "Stand Up, Don't Stand By", promoting safety and ways to intervene safely to prevent sexual assault. Also, with the Commonwealth nations, NO MORE has run campaigns and developed the "Commonwealth says NO MORE" website with information, training materials and resources for the Commonwealth's 54 members. Some campaigns have targeted specific events, such as 16 Days of Activism in 2022, when NO MORE's partnership with Avon led to the launch of #IAmASupporter campaign. In 2022, NO MORE began a partnership with Match Group, which holds 16 dating apps, including Tinder and Hinge, resulting in Healthy Dating Guides being promoted through their apps and the media globally. NO MORE has also partnered with the World Bank Group's Domestic Abuse Prevention Program to raise greater awareness about domestic abuse and the confidential resources available from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and Inter-American Bank for staff and families in difficulty. An example of a NO MORE resource is "Creating Change Together: Corporate Toolkit to Help Stop Domestic & Sexual Violence", which encourages businesses to become part of the solution. A hugely valuable resource is the NO MORE Directory, which provides up-to-date contact information for organisations that provide domestic and sexual assault services in most countries across the world.



OneInThree Women (France)

In 2018, the French network of companies, **OneInThreeWomen**, was co-founded by the Kering Foundation and the Face Fondation,⁵³ with the aim to inspire companies to take action to support employees who are surviving domestic violence and to play a wider role in ending violence against women. Currently, 54 companies are part of the network and have signed Charters of Engagement that set out their commitments to providing support for survivors of domestic violence. They include, amongst others, L'Oréal, Korian, BNP Paribas, Carrefour, the OuiCare Solidarity Fund, SNCF, Publicis, Pwc, L'Epnak, Orange, Superga Beauty, Air France and l'Agence Française de Développement. Working together and sharing best practices, the network has developed awareness materials, face-to-face and online training, and the development of company policies to provide confidential support, including paid leave, for survivors.

The OneInThreeWomen 2019 multi-company European survey⁵⁴ of more than 40,000 employees in six companies and six countries found that more than half of survivors reported issues at work (lateness, absenteeism and/or presenteeism) due to domestic violence. Awareness-raising materials have been jointly developed and include the OneInThreeWomen Podcast series⁵⁵ and a best practices guide.⁵⁶ During the pandemic, the OneInThreeWomen network collaborated to provide funding for domestic violence organisations, including a national information campaign to raise awareness about support services available for survivors of domestic violence.



Unilever

In November 2020, Unilever published a Global Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy,⁵⁷ which provides for 10 days paid safe leave to attend relevant appointments, flexible working, a further five days paid level and changes in working time for a worker escaping abuse, and possibilities for job relocation. The policy sets out the internal support that Unilever will provide, including legal and financial support, counselling and safety planning. Safety planning is carried out with the survivor and all relevant personnel, such as HR, OH&S, Facilities and Security. Measures can include – but are not limited to – parking space review (if applicable), escort assistance, improved building security and surveillance, change in work location (where possible), never working alone, reduction/ reallocation in tasks and providing new contact details for email and phone. A guide and global learning programme were drawn up to address domestic violence. New measures to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in tackling inequality and unfairness were implemented in response to an escalation in requests for support from Unilever employees.

The global policy sets a standard for all countries where Unilever operates, which is adapted to local settings. This has ranged from awareness-raising campaigns in partnership with local anti-domestic violence organisations in South Asia and South Africa to self-defence for women in India.⁵⁸ The Unilever South Africa policy has introduced 'haven leave' to enable employees to take up to 10 days a year to seek assistance and access legal, residential, medical and psychological support. It has partnered with the NGO POWA (People Opposing Women Abuse) to raise awareness about domestic violence. In 2021, Unilever South Africa launched an external campaign, #Unmute, aimed at breaking the silence on domestic violence.

Unilever UK's policy on supporting survivors of domestic abuse is based on the principles set out in the global policy and was updated in 2023 in response to insights gained from employees who had suffered domestic abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic. Support for survivors of domestic abuse forms part of Unilever UK's safeguarding policy. Trained Safeguarding Officers, who mainly come from HR and Unilever's union representatives, play a role in spotting signs of domestic abuse and providing a contact point for employees to receive confidential information. A domestic abuse support service, run by a domestic violence advisor, provides confidential information and helps survivors navigate services with signposting to domestic violence and other support services. This service is also available to support perpetrators who are employees to take responsibility for their actions and change their behaviour.



Vodafone (UK)

The telecommunications company Vodafone has been a leading example globally and was the first company to launch a Global Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse on 8 March 2019, setting a model for many other companies across the world. Along with support for survivors, there is a strong commitment to training, awareness raising and guidance for managers in implementing the policy. A Toolkit drawn up to support implementation was updated in 2021 to include remote working, drawing on guidance, including podcasts, that had been issued to managers in response to the pandemic and the greater use of hybrid working.

The global policy sets out a framework for support based on the Recognise, Respond and Refer model covering:

- a. Recognition that domestic violence and abuse, including coercive control and financial/economic abuse, is a world of work issue and that Vodafone's employees have the right to support and protection in employment.
- b. Confidentiality, non-discrimination and non-retaliation against employees.
- c. Provision of 10 days paid domestic violence leave, on top of existing leave entitlements, which could be extended in exceptional circumstances.
- d. Provision of other forms of support measures, including counselling, referrals to EAP services, reduction or changes in work tasks or flexible working time, and assistance in the event of financial/economic abuse.
- e. Safety measures in the workplace, change in work locations or work tasks, and protection against cyber harassment and stalking at work.
- f. Training for HR and line managers, and processes to enable line managers to have support from HR.
- g. Information for and regular communications with employees aimed at building trust and awareness of the policy.
- h. Holding perpetrators accountable, including immediate dismissal if workplace resources such as mobile phones, tablets and computers are used to perpetrate abuse inside and outside of working hours; support to perpetrators to change behaviour; and referrals to perpetrator treatment and counselling programmes.
- i. Partnering with domestic violence organisations for referrals for legal advice, specialist support and safe housing, and building capacity and training.

Vodafone has made substantial efforts to ensure that all managers and employees are aware of the policy by using all available global and national communications and information networks, regular information and publicity, emails to employees, integration into management and induction training, and through training and webinars. In June 2020, the first PRIDE webinar was held by Vodafone to address domestic violence experienced by and support that can be given to LGBTI+ employees.

More recently, Vodafone has introduced a training programme, "Allies Against Abuse", to ensure that all employees can play their part in preventing domestic violence. In addition, training on safety planning, using a trauma-informed perspective, has been implemented for security, health and safety and cyber security staff.

A review¹ of the implementation of the policy in Vodafone's 27 markets found that the policy had been implemented in 98% of Vodafone's markets and that training had been provided or was planned for managers to implement the policy in 80% of markets. In the markets that had developed support, 68% of respondents stated that the most frequent form of support was referral to employee assistance programmes, followed by paid leave, provided in 64% of markets. Critical success factors that assisted the implementation of the policy include senior-level commitment, training and awareness raising so that survivors are aware of the policy and also ensure that line managers are equipped to recognise the problem, respond effectively and refer to specialist support, including through successful partnerships with domestic violence organisations. As well as the actual provisions of the policy, its symbolic value was found to be important in naming the problem of domestic violence, which helped to build trust and awareness amongst employees.

Each market has developed the policy in line with local laws and services, sometimes going beyond what is in the global policy. For example, Vodafone Italy extended the leave to 15 days in 2020 in their collective agreement that addressed domestic violence as part of smart working and well-being at work. Domestic violence is included as a special case where measures may be implemented to enable employees to work reduced hours and have additional leave. Paid leave can be taken for medical and psychological advice and counselling security support in reporting to the police and assistance in contacting domestic violence organisations, and help is given to change the victim's company telephone number and email address. Vodafone Turkey has implemented the policy with training for all managers and, in addition to leave for survivors, has included two days' leave for a colleague who gives support in accompanying a survivor to police or court appointments or in helping with childcare. Vodafone UK has been a leading member of the UK Employers Initiative Against Domestic Abuse (EIDA), which has been an opportunity for Vodafone to share learning and resources on domestic abuse with other UK companies. Vodafone Ireland partnered with Women's Aid to run mandatory training sessions for all of its 127 line managers and members of the senior leadership team, the feedback from which was very positive. Vodafone Ghana has ensured that dissemination of information about the policy and training is made available to all managers and employees, and awareness of domestic violence and the policy is included in induction training.

¹ Vodafone/Pillinger (2021)



Vodafone Foundation, Apps Against Abuse (UK)

Vodafone Foundation has launched a portfolio of ground-breaking 'Apps Against Abuse' in multiple countries and languages that connect with survivors and their supporters, raise awareness and give advice, and give survivors support in finding services through the geo-location of services in each market. Vodafone Foundation's earliest commitment to ending domestic violence started after Vodafone Foundation in Spain developed the TECSOS handset for women at the highest risk of domestic violence, later extended to the UK and five other markets.⁵⁹ Further, the innovative Bright Sky app, developed by Hestia, Thames Valley Partnership and Vodafone Foundation, was launched in the UK in 2018. The app is available in five languages (English, Urdu, Punjabi, Polish and Welsh) and has been downloaded 111,362 times in the UK since its launch.⁶⁰ It is now available in ten other countries (Albania, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Portugal, Romania, South Africa, the UK, and the USA).

As well, Vodafone Foundation's 'It's Not Nothing' campaign aims to help people recognise coercive control and directs people to the Bright Sky app and website as a source of help and support.

5. Drawing up a company policy on domestic violence and abuse

Below is a checklist of what to include in a company policy on domestic violence and abuse. This is followed by a company policy template based on examples from companies taking action to address domestic violence.

This guidance can also be adapted to small businesses, where steps are taken to address the effects of domestic abuse in the workplace.

This can include providing confidential support, safety measures such as diverting telephone calls or emails to

a colleague, giving advice about safety in travelling to and from work and a safe car-parking space, allowing a colleague to temporarily work different shifts or flexible hours, and providing help in contacting local or national domestic violence support services.

CHECKLIST: what to include in a company policy on domestic violence and abuse

<p>1. Introduction, objectives, definitions and who is covered by the policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective and commitment: for example, to create inclusive and safe workplaces where domestic violence in the world of work is not tolerated, and where the company commits to mitigating the impact of domestic violence in the workplace. • Definitions: give a comprehensive definition of domestic violence and why it is applicable in the workplace, covering physical, sexual, psychological and verbal violence and abuse, and including coercive control, financial abuse, and cyber-harassment and abuse. • Make the policy country relevant: if the policy is a global policy that is to be adapted to markets and companies at the national levels, it will be relevant to refer to national definitions and relevant laws (even if they fall short of what is contained in the policy). • Coverage: define who is covered by the policy (all employees regardless of the contractual status), trainees, interns, job applicants, and in all situations where people work (inside and outside of the formal workplace, remote/hybrid working).
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<p>2. Legal compliance, implementation, training and monitoring of the policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal compliance: ensure that the policy is in compliance with local, national and international laws, bearing in mind that the policy may introduce a higher-level support, such as paid leave, than is provided under the law. • Implementation: set out a plan for dissemination and implementation of the policy, including raising awareness about what it covers and how help can be given. • Training: implement a training programme for line managers and employees to raise awareness about domestic violence and what the company policy covers. • Monitoring: monitor the implementation of the policy and periodically update the policy, if needed.
<p>3. Giving support to victims / survivors of domestic violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of companies, line managers, security teams and work colleagues: set out the specific roles for companies, line managers, security teams and work colleagues, and give advice to survivors about what they can do to get support/stay safe. • Create safe spaces so that it is safe to disclose domestic violence and gain support at work. • Confidentiality and non-retaliation: be sure to include these principles as they are important in building trust and encouraging survivors to speak up and seek support and advice. • Provide for support and advice for survivors of domestic violence from a variety of sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Line managers and supervisors □ EAPs, social assistance services, occupational health or other company supports services for employees □ Designated confidential contact point, such as an 'Anti-domestic violence ambassador' or 'advocate' or 'domestic violence contact person' to provide confidential advice and information □ A named person in HR who can provide support to managers • Provide specific workplace support available for employees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Paid domestic violence leave (minimum of 10 days per year, with a provision that it can be extended in exceptional circumstances). □ Flexible working time for a defined period of time. □ Financial assistance/support in cases of emergency and/or financial abuse. □ Changes in work location or work tasks/responsibilities. □ Risk assessment and safety planning with the survivor, if a safety risk is identified in the workplace. A safety plan is drawn up with the survivor and reviewed regularly.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align the policy with existing policies on equality, diversity and inclusion, paid/unpaid leave, flexible working hours, security and occupational health and safety. • For existing workplace support and safety measures that may already be provided for a survivor, adapt them to remote/hybrid working. For example, introduce a safety code or hand signal as a way to trigger emergency help. Ensure that work equipment, such as a phone or computer, are provided to a survivor, and that there is emergency financial assistance if a survivor is forced to leave home in an emergency.
4. Perpetrator accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that there are consistent approaches to perpetrator accountability and that there is clarity about how disciplinary procedures are applied, including the possibility of dismissal. • Give perpetrators information about perpetrator treatment and counselling programmes, and provide unpaid leave to facilitate their uptake of the programmes.
5. Referrals to and partnerships with domestic violence organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an up-to-date list of relevant organisations to facilitate referrals to domestic violence specialists for legal advice, safety plans, counselling, safe housing, etc. • Partner with domestic violence organisations for their expertise in planning the policy and in providing training. • Provide financial support for and participation in awareness-raising campaigns with domestic violence organisations – and, where possible, collaborate with other companies.



In the Asia-Pacific context, where domestic violence is rampant, it was crucial for the Asian Development Bank to develop guidelines and a toolkit on domestic violence to support our colleagues and community. This initiative ensures that our staff know we stand with them as allies and that ample resources are available to support them.

—Christel Amadou, Director, Office of Professional Ethics and Conduct, Asia Development Bank

Template for a company policy on domestic violence

1. Introduction and objective

[company name] has a core objective to create an inclusive and safe working environment for all our employees. Domestic violence is a serious issue that can affect employees at their workplaces.

This policy aims to contribute to a work environment where survivors feel safe, can seek help, disclose confidentially and seek support if they are currently experiencing or recovering from domestic violence.

Our commitment at **[company name]** is to provide safety and support for survivors of domestic violence and to mitigate the impact it has on our employees.

2. Persons covered by this policy

The policy applies to any colleague who is experiencing or recovering from domestic violence, whether domestic violence takes place inside or outside of the workplace. It covers all employees, trainees, interns and job applicants regardless of their contractual status.

The policy is also applicable to employees who are perpetrators of domestic violence regardless of whether the domestic violence takes place inside or outside of the workplace and irrespective of whether workplace resources such as email, internet, and mobile phones are used.

This policy applies to all **[company name]** operations and to all **[company name]** full-time, part-time, and temporary employees directly employed by **[company name]**, including directors, officers and other senior management.

3. Definitions

a. Domestic Violence

Domestic violence (also referred to as 'domestic abuse', 'intimate partner violence' or 'family violence') is severe or pervasive coercive behaviour, including acts or threatened acts, that a perpetrator uses to gain power or control over a current or former spouse, intimate partner or family member.

Domestic violence can include, but is not limited to, physical, psychological, sexual, financial and economic forms of violence and abuse. It can also involve stalking, which may occur in and around the workplace.

Domestic violence and abuse can affect any colleague regardless of their race, religion, culture, gender, age, political opinion, national origin or extraction, social origin, pregnancy and maternity status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other classification.

It is not necessary for an incident to constitute a criminal offense or for there to be a court- or policy-issued protection order to be considered domestic violence under this policy.

b. Survivor or victim

An individual who is experiencing or recovering from domestic violence.

c. Perpetrator

An individual who commits or threatens to commit an act of domestic violence/abuse.

d. World of work

[company name] workplace goes beyond the physical workplace to include all places where **[company name]** business is conducted, **[company name]** worksites and accommodation, work-related travel, transport provided by the company, business trips and meetings outside of the workplace, and work-related social events and client entertainment events.

e. Protection or restraining order

In certain jurisdictions, protection orders (or restraining orders or peace bonds) are often issued by a court to protect the survivor from domestic violence, covering stalking and the workplace, if relevant. In some countries, employers can apply directly for an order if a colleague is threatened with domestic violence in the workplace. In addition, in some countries, the police can issue a temporary protection order. However, it is important to note that not all countries have legislation providing protection or restraining orders. An employer may also be able to apply for a protection order to cover the workplace.

4. Legal compliance

[company name] complies with all applicable local, national and international laws relating to the effects of domestic violence at work. Even in those situations where there is no national law or regulation on domestic violence at work, this **[company name]** domestic violence at work policy gives support and rights to all affected employees.

5. Implementation of the policy and training

The HR Team is responsible for ensuring all line managers and employees know the policy and the support provided therein.

The HR Team will promote awareness of domestic violence by providing information and training to enable employees to discuss the issue with their co-workers and to equip line managers with the communication skills and knowledge required to respond appropriately.

[company name] will appoint a designated person in HR who will provide guidance for line managers and for survivors who may not wish to disclose to their manager.

[company name] will provide training for a network of domestic violence advocates/champions who can provide confidential information and support for survivors.

[company name] will provide training and tools for domestic violence risk assessors so they have the expertise to draw up safety plans with survivors. Risk assessors can be HR personnel, trade union representatives and/or security team personnel.

6. Assessment, monitoring and updates

[company name] will carry out periodic monitoring and review of the policy, its implementation and effectiveness, including employee feedback about the policy, and in consultation with trade unions, where relevant. Periodic review of the policy may result in it being revised and updated.

7. Support for employees: addressing domestic violence when it impacts the workplace

This section outlines what support we provide to employees under the policy.

a. Confidentiality

[company name] recognises and respects a colleague's right to privacy and the need for confidentiality and autonomy. Consistent with all legal requirements, **[company name]** shall take reasonable steps to maintain the confidentiality of a colleague's disclosure regarding violence unless doing so would result in physical harm to any person and jeopardise safety within the workplace.

When information must be disclosed to protect the safety of individuals within the workplace, **[company name]** shall take reasonable steps to limit the breadth and content of such disclosure to the information reasonably necessary to protect the safety of the disclosing colleague and others and to comply with the law. **[company name]** shall endeavour to provide advance notice to the colleague who disclosed information if the disclosure must be shared with other parties to maintain safety in the workplace or elsewhere.

b. Non-retaliation

[company name] will not discharge or in any manner discriminate or retaliate against a colleague because of the colleague's status as a survivor of domestic violence if the survivor provides notice to the organisation of the status or the organisation has actual knowledge of the status.

[company name] will not retaliate against a survivor of domestic violence for requesting leave, regardless of whether the request was granted.

c. How to seek support and advice if you are a survivor of domestic violence

There are different routes that you can take to seek support if you are experiencing domestic violence.

The usual first step is that employees speak directly with their line manager or a member of the HR / People team. In some workplaces, there will be a confidential 'workplace domestic violence ambassador' or 'contact person'. If an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is in place, confidential support and counselling can be sought by contacting the EAP directly.

Whichever route you take, you can confidently explore what support is available.

Employees experiencing or recovering from domestic violence may find it challenging to carry out their job tasks, and their performance at work may be affected. Your line manager or other nominated person will provide you with appropriate support and assistance, potentially including information, referrals to counselling, paid leave and other workplace adjustments.

d. Paid domestic violence leave

Employees are eligible for up to ten days of paid domestic violence leave per calendar year, which can be extended if necessary. Employees must seek approval through their line manager or designated person in the HR team to obtain leave. This can be taken for medical support, counselling, legal and any other related activities, such as moving home and supporting children when fleeing domestic violence and settling children into a new home and school.

This leave is in addition to existing leave entitlements.

If an employee does not use their domestic violence leave within 12 months, they cannot carry it over to the following year. If the colleague stops working for the company, **[company name]** is not required to pay them for any domestic violence leave they have not taken.

Evidence of domestic violence is not necessary.

e. Flexible working time

Employees can request flexible working hours if they need assistance, counselling or other support that conflicts with work schedules. The company will attempt to accommodate where feasible.

f. Financial assistance

You are entitled to emergency financial assistance where needed and approved, such as help opening a new bank account, paying a salary, or assistance finding and paying for emergency accommodation.

g. Safety planning, changes in work location or work tasks

If you believe you could be in danger at work, you are encouraged to discuss it with your line manager, domestic violence contact person, the nominated person in the HR / Security Team or trade union representative to ensure your security when you are carrying out work activities, including when you are working outside of the formal workplace, carrying out work-related tasks off-site, attending meetings or working from home.

If you are experiencing or recovering from the threat or act of domestic violence that affects your work, you can discuss plans with your Security Team and line manager or a representative from the HR Team.

The Company may take measures which could include, but are not limited to:

- Job transfer to another location, if feasible
- Temporary reassignment of work roles and responsibilities
- Changing work schedules or shifts worked
- Suggesting and advising on changing or alternating travel routes and other daily routines
- General security awareness to better protect self and/or reactive awareness
- Changing work telephone number or email address, including diverting calls or emails to a named manager or colleague
- Offering secure car parking options
- Conducting checks and patrols of the work area of survivors and colleagues
- Issuing a photo of the perpetrator for reception, car parking and security staff
- Other safety measures relevant to your situation

Employees can also receive support if they work from home as part of a remote/hybrid working agreement with their manager. Managers will adapt existing workplace support and safety measures that may already be provided for survivors to remote/hybrid working. Safety measures, such as introducing a safety code or hand signal or requesting a meeting in the workplace, can be triggers for emergency help. Emergency financial assistance and work equipment, such as a phone or computer, are provided to a survivor who has to flee domestic violence in an emergency.

Employees who have obtained a temporary or permanent protection order that includes the workplace as part of the protection area must inform their HR / People or Legal teams of this. This will trigger procedures to enable line managers and employees to respond to any potential breach of a protection order in the workplace, including notification to relevant personnel and the police when violence, abuse or stalking is perpetrated in and around the workplace.

h. Perpetrator accountability

All employees of **[company name]** are expected to uphold the values of personal integrity and respect for others.

As violent behaviour is a safety and security concern to everyone around the perpetrator, employees who are perpetrators of domestic violence during and outside of work can face disciplinary actions, including termination of employment.

The company will provide information about perpetrator treatment and counselling programmes.

i. Referrals to and partnerships with domestic violence organisations

The company or your trade union may be able to provide you with information about and help with referrals to community resources, specialist legal support, emergency accommodation and specialist domestic violence support services.

The company will partner with a domestic violence organisation for expert advice when drawing up the policy and providing training and may wish to provide financial support for the service in the community.

The company will provide regular financial assistance to one or more domestic violence organisations.

Glossary

Coercive control	A systematic pattern of behaviour designed to undermine a survivor and create fear. It often involves threats, humiliation, intimidation and depriving an individual of support and independence. It is a psychological or emotional form of abuse that is used to control and limit the freedom of an intimate partner and create fear.
Compassion fatigue	This describes how a manager or other supporter in the workplace providing empathetic and regular support to a colleague may find it difficult to feel empathy for a colleague. They may feel emotionally or physically exhausted or fatigued, making it difficult to give ongoing support. There are techniques and support that can be given to help manage compassion fatigue.
Cyber-harassment	Control and threats in the form of harassment and stalking carried out virtually through email, text messages, telephone messages, etc.
Financial / economic abuse	Control of finances to prevent women from having financial independence, ranging from having money to pay for transportation to get to work or to purchase suitable clothing for work, to theft from a bank or savings account and running up debts in the survivor's name. Without financial independence and/or access to resources, it can be very difficult for a survivor to leave a violent or abusive relationship.
Perpetrator / people who use violence	Someone who commits an act of violence, abuse or harassment. We sometimes refer to 'people who use violence' as this is less stigmatising; it can open the door for someone to seek help to change their behaviour and ensure that perpetrators take responsibility for stopping their violence
Physical violence	Physical violence can result in injury resulting from hitting, punching, kicking, burning, stabbing or shooting leading to injury and, in the worst cases, death (sometimes referred to as femicide or domestic homicide).
Protection/restraining order or peace bond	A protection/restraining order, or peace bond, is a court-issued order to protect the survivor from domestic violence, and can include the workplace, travel to and from work and domestic stalking. In some countries, employers can apply directly to the court for a protection or restraining order. Protection/restraining orders require that the perpetrator does not engage in violent actions or contact with the survivor. This can include no contact in person or contact by telephone, mail, email, text, etc. at work, in public spaces or at home. Failure to comply will usually result in prosecution.
Psychological/emotional violence	A form of abuse that is designed to undermine a survivor, affecting their confidence and self-esteem. It may involve a range of behaviours, such as control over social interactions and autonomy or undermining of the role of a survivor as a parent.

Risk assessment	A method used to identify actual or potential hazards and risk factors that cause or have the potential to cause harm. Domestic violence risk assessments play an important role in prevention of domestic violence occurring in the workplace. Risk assessments are an important part of risk management in occupational safety and health.
Security or safety plan	A plan put in place in consultation with relevant staff, including security staff, to protect against security and safety risks. Usually, this follows a risk assessment.
Sexual violence	Unwanted sexual attention and sexual abuse, including rape.
Stalking	Unwanted and/or repeated surveillance of a person. Workplace stalking often results in the perpetrator following a survivor to and from their place of work or hanging around the workplace entrance. Digital or cyber-harassment is a form of stalking.
Survivor	The Guidelines refer to staff members who are survivors, as well as situations where support can be given to an ADB-registered dependent. The term survivor recognises that someone who has experienced or is recovering from domestic violence has agency and can survive and move on with their lives.
Vicarious trauma	The effect of being exposed to other people's traumatic experiences, where someone's experience of domestic violence may be experienced second hand. Giving support to someone may bring up a manager or supporter's previous history of domestic violence or other trauma that is unresolved. Individual and group support, supervision and changing workplace culture are ways to address vicarious trauma.
Workplace / world of work	The workplace / world of work includes all places where work is conducted – in the office, work from home and in remote locations, work-related travel to and attendance at conferences and meetings outside of the workplace, and work-related social events and client entertainment events. The definition of the “world of work”, as embodied in the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190, recognises the main different places outside of the office where work is carried out.
Workplace bystander	A bystander is an employee who has been trained to prevent and change culture around violence and abuse. Training can help to empower work colleagues to intervene to prevent violence and harassment from occurring. Building skills to be ‘active’ bystanders helps employees to recognise violence and harassment and to know when it is appropriate to intervene.
Workplace supports	Paid leave, flexible work and relocation to encompass HR supports provided to survivors, in addition to medical, counselling and security-related support provided to survivors of domestic violence.
World of work / Company workplace	The world of work / company workplace goes beyond the physical workplace to include all places where business is conducted – worksites and accommodation, work-related travel, transport provided by the company, business trips and meetings outside of the workplace, work-related social events and client entertainment events.

Appendix: Costs of domestic violence for employers

Domestic violence also has significant and direct costs for employers, amounting to billions of dollars in most countries. The following estimates from across the world show that domestic violence has a high impact in terms of lost economic output and productivity, sickness absence and lost jobs. Additional significant costs of

domestic violence (not included here) have been calculated for health care, police, justice, court, support and shelter, and other services connected with domestic violence.

The economic costs associated with not tackling violence and harassment against women in the world of work are staggering:

Australia: Violence against women cost the economy AUS\$13.6 billion per year in 2015.⁶¹ Between 2020 and 2021, employers lost AUS\$ 456 million as a result of domestic violence.⁶² The estimated cost of domestic violence to the retail industry alone was more than \$62 billion (€44 billion) between 2014–15.⁶³

Bolivia: Lost productivity from domestic violence costs companies an estimated US\$2 billion a year, amounting to 6.5% of GDP.⁶⁴

Canada: Domestic violence costs the economy \$7.4 million, and lost productivity alone from domestic violence costs the country \$53 million a year.⁶⁵ Victims of domestic violence lose one month of productivity per year.⁶⁶

China: 13.3% of women had experienced domestic violence in the past 12 months, and nearly half of them experienced the effects of domestic violence at work.⁶⁷

Egypt: Days lost from work because of domestic violence amounted to €1.6 million of the Egyptian economy.⁶⁸

European Union: The estimated annual cost to the European Union of gender-based violence against women in 2011 was about

€228 billion (1.8% of EU GDP).⁶⁹ The cost to the economy is estimated at over €109 million. Lost output as a result of injuries alone is estimated to be 12% of these costs.⁷⁰

Fiji: 10 work days per year is lost because of domestic and sexual violence, including four days to presenteeism, two to absenteeism and four to assisting others experiencing domestic and sexual violence.⁷¹

Ghana: 28% of all employees surveyed had a loss in productivity due to being less productive and due to absenteeism, which is equivalent to nine days per employee, based on an eight-hour working day. 10% of male employees reported being absent from work because they perpetrated domestic violence; lost productivity when at work amounted to six days a year.⁷²

India: 75% of the 15,500 workers surveyed said that their work had been affected by domestic violence.⁷³

Mongolia: 37% of women who had experienced domestic violence stated in an employee survey that it affected their ability to work; over half of these workers stated that it affected their work; 76% said that it made them late for work.⁷⁴

Appendix: Costs of domestic violence for employers cont.

New Zealand: Family violence is estimated to cost \$368 million per year due to lost productivity, stress and staff turnover.⁷⁵

Pakistan: One in seven of the women surveyed lost days from work (equivalent to 17 working days for each employee affected by domestic violence).⁷⁶

Paraguay: Domestic violence costs businesses US\$734 million, amounting to 2.4% of GDP.⁷⁷

Peru: 70 million working days are lost due to violence against women. Companies lose more than US\$6.7 billion a year as a result of absenteeism, staff turnover and lost productivity resulting from domestic violence at work – equivalent to 3.7% of GDP.⁷⁸

Philippines: 75% of survey respondents who experienced domestic violence said it affected their work performance because they were unwell, distracted or injured; 34% said that their abuser was employed in the same workplace; 74% reported knowing someone at work who had experienced domestic violence and that it affected them.⁷⁹

Solomon Islands: Lost productivity resulting from being distracted or tired amounted to 7 days for each employee per year, and 4.2 days were lost from being absent from work.⁸⁰

South Africa: 74% of abused women were harassed by their partner while at work, and over half of them were late for work at least 5 times per month.⁸¹

Uganda: An estimated 9% of women who had experienced domestic violence in the past 12 months took 11.8 days each off work per annum due to the violence.⁸²

UK: Domestic violence costs the UK economy £1.9 billion (€2.2 billion) in lost economic output resulting from time taken off work owing to injuries.⁸³ Time taken off work and reduced productivity cost the economy £14 billion in 2019.⁸⁴

USA: Domestic violence costs employers between \$3-5 billion every year – employers lose another \$100 million each year in lost wages, paid sick leave, and absenteeism linked to domestic violence. An estimated 8 million days per year are taken off work because of domestic violence, resulting in a cost to the economy of \$2.5 billion in lost productivity. 83% of women victims of domestic violence said that their abusive partners had disrupted their work, e.g. by preventing them from seeking a job, causing them to lose a job or to lose out on career and promotional opportunities.⁸⁵

Vietnam: Women victims of domestic violence took an average 5.5 days off work per year, with loss of earnings and productivity losses equalling 1.78% of the total payroll.⁸⁶

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Endnotes

- 1 Dr Jane Pillinger has worked for over twenty years as a global expert on gender-based violence in the world of work and has supported many companies and organisations worldwide in the development of policies and programmes to support survivors of domestic violence in the workplace. She has been an expert to the ILO, UN Women, the European Commission and the Asia Development Bank, amongst others. She has an academic background in social policy and is currently a Visiting Senior Fellow at the Department of Social Policy and Criminology, Open University (UK), and a former Specialist Advisor to the UK House of Commons Select Committee on Employment.
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- 7 See, for example, company examples cited in ILO & UN Women, 2019; UN Women, 2020; Vodafone's Global Policy, 2021; Pillinger/EU-OSHA, 2023; Pillinger, 2023; Pillinger/ILO, 2024; Pillinger, Runge & King, 2022; and from company networks such as Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse (UK), OneInThreeWomen network (France) and the Center for Research on Ending Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC), University of London, Ontario, Canada. Further learning has been gained from inspiring research, practice and collaboration with key global experts, amongst which are Barb MacQuarrie (CREVAWC, Canada), Ludo McFerran (Australia), Robin Runge (USA), Chidi King (ILO) and Céline Bonnaire (Kering Foundation).
- 8 World Health Organisation (2013).
- 9 Coercive control is a pattern of behaviour involving threats, humiliation and control, often isolating a survivor from support networks, family and friends. It is designed to undermine the independence and agency of a survivor, ensuring their dependence on an abuser.
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- 30 Reproduced from ILO & UN Women Handbook Addressing Violence Against Women in the World of Work (2019) by Jane Pillinger. The wheel was drawn up by Barb McQuarrie and adapted with permission from the power and control wheel drawn up by the Duluth Domestic Violence Intervention Project.
- 31 Evidence from studies on financial abuse: TUC & Women's Aid (2015); ILO (2021); Coop Bank (UK) & Refuge (2020); Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) and University of New South Wales Gendered Violence Research Network (2020).
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- 33 <https://www.commbank.com.au/support/dv-assistance.html>
- 34 Recognise and Recover guide (for customers): https://www.commbank.com.au/support/recognise-and-recover/download-guide.html?ei-CTA_DownloadGuide
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- 37 For further information, see ILO Briefing Note (2020).
- 38 The 'Recognise, Respond and Refer' model is adopted in Vodafone Foundation's Domestic Violence Toolkit and in the rollout of Vodafone's global policy on Domestic Violence at Work. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this model was adapted for remote working to enable managers and team leaders to provide support to their colleagues working from home. See: <https://www.vodafone.com/sites/default/files/2021-11/vodafone-domestic-violence-abuse-toolkit-2021.pdf>
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- 40 <https://www.keringfoundation.org/en/programs/one-in-three-women>
- 41 UN Women: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/unite/16-days-of-activism>
- 42 For further information on bystander training programmes, see ILO / UN Women (2019).
- 43 The Canadian Unifor Women's Advocate Program is a union-management workplace programme designed to prevent and address gender-based violence, including domestic violence in the workplace. Trained workplace representatives (Women's Advocates) support survivors to access information, leave from work, psychological support and safe housing. The programme has played a transformational role in raising awareness of domestic violence and sexual harassment and in bringing confidential support for survivors to the heart of the union (for further information, see ILO/UN Women (2019) and Pillinger (2022).
- 44 See examples of company programmes in Business Fights Poverty's resource 'How Business Can Engage Men as Allies for Gender Equality': <https://businessfightspovetry.org/articles/gender-equality-is-everyones-business-how-can-companies-engage-men-as-allies-across-the-value-chain/>
- 45 <https://nomoredirectory.org>
- 46 An example is the partnership established between Vodacom South Africa and the Department of Social Development to set up the national GBV Command Centre to assist anyone affected by gender-based violence and harassment. Vodacom South Africa also pledged R10 million to the private sector-led, multi-sectoral Gender-based Violence and Femicide (GBVF). Response Fund to support the implementation of the National Strategic Plan and GBVF
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- 48 Examples of organisations include the Global Boy Initiative: <https://www.boyhoodinitiative.org> (supported by Equimundo and Kering Foundation); the CESVI Foundation in South Africa: <https://www.one.org/international/blog/men-fighting-gender-based-violence-south-africa/>; and specific campaigns are also targeted at men, such as the #NoExcuses campaign in South Africa, for example: <http://noexcusesa20221014.abinbev.acsitefactory.com/campaing/noexcuse-bride-armour>
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