



**DOMESTIC ABUSE, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND  
SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY**

This Policy applies to all staff affected by abuse, violence or sexual violence regardless of their sex or any other personal characteristic.



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**Disclaimer**

**When using this document please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date either by checking on the UHB database for any new versions. If the review date has passed please contact the author.**

**OUT OF DATE POLICY DOCUMENTS MUST NOT BE RELIED ON**

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| 1                     | 29/01/2013                     | 15/03/2013            | Updated into UHB format<br>Information on EWS and case management added   |
| 2                     | 29/10/2013                     |                       | Replaces Domestic Abuse Policy –<br>scope widened to incorporate<br>forthcoming Violence Against Women ,<br>Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse<br>Duty |
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (the UHB) is committed to being a good employer and caring for its staff. This includes supporting staff (both male and female) through new or difficult periods in their lives. Domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence has a devastating impact on individuals and their families and the UHB is committed to raising awareness of these issues and providing guidance, support and safety for employees and their manager's. The UHB aspires to provide a duty of care beyond that required by legislation, and to provide ongoing support to all staff affected by domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence. This Policy therefore applies equally to all staff, whether they are male or female, who are affected by these issues.

Domestic abuse can impact negatively on an employee's health and wellbeing, staff morale and an organisation's image and reputation. In addition, in England and Wales domestic abuse costs £1.9 billion<sup>1</sup> a year in lost economic output. This is due to decreased productivity, administrative difficulties from unplanned time off, lost wages and sick pay. It can cause employees to be distracted at work, arrive late, leave early, or miss work, and it can increase employee turnover.

## 2 POLICY STATEMENT

Studies have consistently demonstrated the prevalence of domestic abuse, with an estimated 1 in 10 women experiencing domestic abuse each year and 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men experiencing domestic abuse in their lifetime<sup>2</sup> Every year across the UK at least three million women experience violence and many more are living with the legacies of past abuse<sup>3</sup>. Increasing research however demonstrates that partner abuse is as common and as severe among same sex couples as among heterosexual couples<sup>4</sup>. By having a Domestic Abuse, Violence Against Women and Sexual Violence Policy, the UHB is able to support employees who may be experiencing domestic abuse and other forms of violence.

The enduring social problems of violence against women, of which domestic abuse and sexual violence are key elements, undermine our workplaces and communities and should have no place within them. It is fundamentally important to promote the understanding that everyone has the right to a life free from abuse in any form.

Domestic abuse is wholly unacceptable and inexcusable behaviour regardless of gender or sexual orientation, and the responsibility for domestic abuse lies with the perpetrator. The UHB strives to create a working environment that promotes the view that abuse against people is unacceptable and that such abuse will not be condoned. Under the

disciplinary procedure, acts of harassment or bullying or violent, threatening or abusive behaviour of fellow employees, or members of the public visiting the organisation, is considered to be gross misconduct and can lead to dismissal from the UHB or employing organisation (where employment contract is held by a 1/3 party). Employees should also be aware that conduct outside of work could lead to disciplinary action being taken because of its impact on the employment relationship and the Professional Abuse Policy being implemented.

This policy is designed to provide support to employees in a consistent way and address its impact on the workplace. In responding to domestic abuse, the UHB will maintain appropriate confidentiality and respect for the rights of the employee involved wherever possible.

### **3. SCOPE**

This Policy applies to all staff employed by the UHB. For the purposes of this Policy, individuals who are engaged by the Nurse Bank are treated as employees.

The principles set out in this Policy also apply to other individuals and groups, including agency workers, contractors, honorary contracts holders, volunteers and trainees.

The umbrella term of violence against women is used due to the disproportionate affect on women. Nevertheless, it is recognised that men can also experience domestic abuse and sexual violence, from their female partner. There is also recognition that same sex domestic abuse and sexual violence can occur. Whilst this Policy refers primarily to violence against women, it also applies to men, but it is acknowledged that their experiences are likely to be different to women's and they may require different support.

### **4. AIMS**

This policy aims to provide assistance and guidance to employees and managers in identifying and dealing with incidences where domestic abuse and/or its effects become apparent in the workplace and to provide reassurance to victims of domestic abuse that the issue will be dealt with sympathetically, seriously and confidentially with no fear of stigmatisation.

### **5. OBJECTIVES**

- To provide reassurance to victims of domestic abuse that the issue will be dealt with sympathetically, seriously and confidentially with no fear of stigmatisation
- To enable staff to remain in a safe supportive working environment
- To reduce levels of sickness and absence, and improve performance,

self-confidence and morale

- To provide resource and referral information
- To retain skilled and experienced staff

## 6. DEFINITIONS

Domestic Abuse is the actual or threatened physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial abuse of a person by a partner, family member or someone with whom there is, or has been, a close relationship. This abuse also relates to the perpetrator allowing or causing a child to witness, or be at risk of witnessing domestic abuse. Domestic abuse essentially involves the misuse of power and exercise of control by one person over another with whom there is, or has been, a close relationship.

The term violence against women includes domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence and many other forms of violence that predominantly affect women. They are grouped together by the term violence against women to highlight that they are a cause and a consequence of women's inequality. Domestic Abuse is the most prevalent form of violence against women, and this Policy focuses on supporting employees who have or are experiencing domestic abuse. However, it is important to recognise that whilst employees are more likely to be affected by domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence and harassment are often interlinked with domestic abuse.

Sexual violence and abuse can be defined as any behaviour perceived to be of a sexual nature which is unwanted and takes place without consent or understanding. Sexual assault covers any other sort of sexual contact and behaviour that is unwanted, ranging from touching to any other sexual activity.

Other examples of where this policy may apply include stalking, crimes in the name of 'honour', human trafficking and sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Further guidance on understanding these issues can be obtained via the [All Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Helpline](#) telephone number **0808 8010800** or other specialist agencies listed in **Appendix 1**

## 7. A DUTY OF CARE

- 7.1 Under the Human Rights Act all public bodies have an obligation to protect the human rights of individuals and to ensure that their human rights are not being violated. Domestic Abuse, violence against women and sexual violence denies the most fundamental of human rights. Implementing an effective Policy can help the UHB to meet its human rights duties in relation to incidents of domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence, and violent or sexual related abuse among same sex couples

**7.2** The Equality Act 2010 includes a public sector duty which means that the UHB must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity for protected groups; and foster good relations. The nine protected characteristics set out in the Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

**7.3** There are four main areas of health and safety law relevant to violence at work:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995
- The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996

An effective policy on domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence helps ensure that the UHB is complying with these laws.

**7.4** The Welsh Government's 10,000 Safer Lives project includes the need for a domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence workplace policy, as one of the eleven minimum standards for public services in Wales.

Furthermore, the forthcoming ending domestic Abuse, violence against women and sexual violence (Wales) legislation proposes a duty on all devolved public sector employers to have a workplace policy for domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence.

## **8. Responsibilities**

**8.1** Managers should look for sudden changes in behaviour and / or changes in the quality of work performance for unexplained reasons. They should also look for changes in the way an employee dresses, for example excessive clothing on hot days or changes in the amount of make up worn as these can be clues that there are problems. Other possible indicators are listed in **Appendix 2**

Managers should encourage the disclosure and discussion of abuse and identify appropriate support. They should endeavour to support those experiencing domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence in a sympathetic, non-judgemental and confident manner. They can also assist in recording details of incidents in the workplace. Further information on asking difficult questions can be found in **Appendix 2**.

**8.2** If they feel able, employees can take basic steps to assist friends and colleagues. By behaving in a supportive manner, an employee can assist an affected colleague in gaining confidence to tackle and report the problems that they might experience. It is important that options of support are discussed (see **Appendix 3**), and that employees are encouraged to disclose, either to the line manager, Human Resources staff, a staff representative or a Domestic Abuse Liaison Contact (DALC).

**8.3** The Domestic Abuse Liaison Contact (DALC) Scheme provides employees who are experiencing domestic abuse an opportunity to speak to a trained and independent person in confidence. Staff should initially contact the Safeguarding Team on **029 20932625** who will arrange for a DALC to contact them.

The role of the Domestic Abuse Liaison Contact is intended to be taken up by individuals with an interest in and commitment to achieving equality in the UHB, and promoting the understanding that everyone has the right to a life free from abuse in any form. Potentially anyone at any level in the UHB could fulfil the role which will have a number of separate duties and responsibilities associated with it, such as:

- to listen to the individual in an understanding, sensitive, non-judgemental manner and to establish empathy and trust;
- encourage the individual to discuss how they are feeling and discuss the forms of abuse they are experiencing;
- acknowledge that they are in a frightening and difficult situation, and reassure them that the abuse is not their fault and they are not responsible for the perpetrator's behaviour;
- establish whether the employee has suffered any physical harm or injuries for which they may need medical attention or treatment and advise them to seek appropriate medical advice.
- To provide advice and support if needed to managers/HR/Staff representatives who may be affected by dealing with these cases.
- To liaise with the safeguarding team where it is believed that children and vulnerable adults may be at risk.

**8.4** Individuals affected by domestic abuse, violence against women or sexual violence may also wish to seek support from the UHB Employee Wellbeing Service (EWS). The EWS aims to promote work practices that enhance the wellbeing of staff. Problems which affect emotional wellbeing may arise from many factors. The EWS Counselling Service provides confidential and independent counselling to all UHB staff offering an opportunity to focus on resolving or coping with any particular issue a staff member may be experiencing, including domestic abuse.

The EWS takes issues of risk very seriously. In extreme cases, where a situation of domestic abuse may be life threatening to a client or threatening

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the safety of a third party, for example a child or vulnerable adult, the counselling service may have a duty of care to instigate safeguarding procedures or alert relevant outside agencies. We would always aim to do so with the agreement and consent of the individual staff member and any potential breach of confidentiality would always be discussed with the client before any action was taken.

In addition the EWS may signpost staff to other more specialist domestic abuse services outside the UHB. The Employee Wellbeing Service is a self-referral service which can be contacted on **02920 744133** (internal **44133**).

Consultative support and advice is also available from the EWS service via the Organisational Health Psychologist for line managers wishing to discuss how best to support their staff.

- 8.5** The UHB also has a Case Management Team within the Health & Safety department. The Case Management Team aims to support victims of violence who wish to pursue criminal sanctions against those who assault them.

The services provided by the Case Management Team include:

- acting as a single point of contact with the Police and Crown Prosecution Service for individuals who choose to pursue legal action
- providing a meeting room within a secure environment to discuss options and possible outcomes
- Liaising directly with the security department to support internal controls
- working with individuals to diminish and control the risk of domestic violence occurring within the work environment

All advice is confidential and at the discretion of the individual member of staff.

Individuals can contact the team directly, or via their line manager by calling **02920746434** (internal **46434**) or **0785432155**.

- 8.6** The Executive Director of Workforce and OD is responsible for ensuring there is a robust and up to date policy for supporting staff experiencing domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence. Other policies, procedures and practices which are linked and could affect the implementation of this policy should also be reviewed and updated as appropriate.
- 8.7** The Executive Director of Nursing is the lead executive for Safeguarding Adults and Children within the Health Board which the domestic abuse portfolio sits. The Executive Nurse Director is responsible for providing the Board with assurance that the safeguarding agenda, including domestic

abuse, is being delivered and that partnership working arrangements with specialist agencies are in place.

The Assistant Director of Nursing ensures that Safeguarding Children and Adult teams work with the Clinical Service Boards and other departments to support them in the delivery of the domestic abuse agenda through the provision of training, advice and support to managers as well as signposting individuals to appropriate internal and external support.

## **9. THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE ON THE WORKPLACE**

Research shows that seventy-five per cent of those experiencing domestic abuse are targeted at work. It is often possible for perpetrators to use workplace resources, such as phones, email etc, to threaten, harass or abuse their current or former partner.

Domestic abuse can be a performance and productivity concern. The effects of domestic abuse can include decreased productivity, lateness, stress, absenteeism, errors and increased employee turnover. Research shows:

- 56% of abused women arrive late for work at least five times a month.
- 28% leave early at least five days a month
- 53% miss at least three days of work a month.<sup>4</sup>

Colleagues may also be affected; they may be followed to or from work, or subject to questioning about the victim's contact details or location. They may have to cover for other workers while they are off, try to fend off the abuse and fear for their own safety. Furthermore, colleagues may be unaware of the abuse, or not know how to help.

However, it is also important to recognise that for some the workplace can be a safe haven and provide a route to safety.

## **10. PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES ON DISCLOSURE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE**

Research has shown that whilst victims of domestic abuse may be reluctant to disclose what is happening to them, often they are also hoping that someone will realise that something is wrong and ask them about it. An early identification of a problem of this nature could also result in the employee being able to deal with their situation more effectively.

When dealing with situations of this nature, a sensitive, empathetic and non-judgemental approach should be used. This approach is important, as victims of domestic abuse often feel ashamed, humiliated and frightened and are prone to blaming themselves for the situation. In these circumstances

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even the slightest hint that their story is not believed, or that they are in some way responsible for the situation, can drive the employee back into isolation. Therefore:

- The employee should be taken seriously, with time being made to listen to them ensuring they feel heard.
- Ensure that any discussion about the employee's situation takes place in private and that their confidentiality is respected as far as possible. Please refer to section on confidentiality for further guidance.
- The employee may not wish to discuss the matter in detail when first disclosing domestic abuse but may prefer to involve a colleague, staff representative or a Domestic Abuse Liaison Contact.
- Ensure that the employee is made aware of the difficulties, which may arise if their manager is not aware of the relevant facts and circumstances, such as managing their sickness absence or under performance in accordance with the UHB's policies etc. Reassure them that the organisation has an understanding of how domestic abuse may affect their work performance and the support that can be offered.
- Be aware that there may be additional issues faced by the employee because of their age, sex, transgender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, religion / beliefs, disability, pregnancy, or marriage or civil partnership status. For example, it could be very compromising for an LGBT person to admit to an employer they have been abused by a partner as they may not want colleagues to be aware of their sexual orientation.
- As the employee may need some time to decide what to do and may try many different options during the process it is important to remain non-judgemental. Research has shown that it can take a long time to break free of a violent relationship with abuse often increasing when a relationship ends. It should not be assumed that because the employee returns or stays in a violent relationship that the abuse is not severe or does not take place.
- Offering available support and exploring the possible options with the employee. A list of support agencies is available in **Appendix 1**

A guide to asking appropriate questions of an employee suspected of experiencing domestic abuse is set out in **Appendix 2**

## **11. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Once an employee has confided in their manager or another appropriate person (e.g. a member of the Human Resources Department, Staff Representative or Domestic Abuse Liaison Contact) that they are experiencing domestic abuse, they should be reassured that this information will be kept confidential, as far as reasonably practical. Correspondence between the UHB and employee should be discussed and agreed regarding safe contact numbers and addresses.

However an exception to employee confidentiality may arise in circumstances of child protection or the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse. In these circumstances the individual must inform the employee that they are obliged to seek further advice from the UHB's Safeguarding team, therefore complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in these situations.

## **12. OPTIONS TO PROVIDE LEAVE FOR EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE**

The UHB has a Special Leave Policy, which allows managers to approve some paid or unpaid leave to deal with situations of domestic distress. Managers are encouraged to deal sympathetically and consistently with requests for reasonable time off from employees who have disclosed that they are experiencing domestic abuse. Applications for special leave must be recorded in accordance with the UHB's Special Leave Policy.

Managers should deal sympathetically and creatively in exploring options with staff where it is necessary for them to arrange appointments during the normal working day.

Managers should also discuss other supportive, flexible working options which are contained within the UHB's Flexible Working Policy, to assist employees who are experiencing domestic abuse, if they feel this is appropriate. The UHB recognises that not everyone experiencing domestic abuse is faced with the same set of circumstances. Managers and staff in this situation are therefore advised to contact Human Resources for personalised guidance in how to best manage these options.

## **13. ENSURING THE EMPLOYEE'S HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The responsibilities of the UHB, managers and employees and others are defined in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Where an employee advises that they are experiencing or are at risk of domestic abuse an attempt should be made to assess whether there is a threat to their personal safety during working hours. A risk assessment should be documented and

any mitigating actions identified/implemented. When considering the above measures the manager may have to take into account whether the measures are operationally viable. In all instances however, the health and safety of the employee and other members of staff and service users should be a primary consideration when managing the situation.

The UHB has developed guidance and incident reporting procedures to deal with incidents, where an employee is verbally abused or threatened or physically assaulted in the course of their duties. In these situations the manager should consider appropriate actions to safeguard the safety of the employee (see **Appendix 3**).

#### **14. DEALING WITH PERPETRATORS**

The UHB recognises that abusive and violent behaviour is the responsibility of the perpetrator. Employees should be aware that misconduct inside and outside of work is viewed seriously and can lead to disciplinary action being taken and the Professional Abuse Policy being implemented. Employees should also be aware that violence against women, including domestic abuse and sexual violence is a serious matter that can lead to a criminal conviction and that there is a professional obligation to report perpetrators to their professional body.

However, this does not mean that the UHB will not support an employee who is seeking help to address their behaviour and individuals who disclose themselves or are disclosed as a perpetrator of domestic violence will be provided with information about agencies who can help them.

It is recognised that in some situations both the victim and perpetrator are employees of the UHB and that there will be shared networks, friendships, professional relationships etc. In these cases, some managers may be unsure how to act towards either the colleague disclosing the abuse or the alleged perpetrator. Staff are reminded that such allegations are to be taken seriously, but that support and advice can be obtained through the Organisational Health Psychologist, Human Resources and the [All Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Helpline](#) telephone number **0808 8010800**.

#### **15. RESOURCES**

It is likely that there will be additional resources required as a result of the implementation of this policy e.g. publicity materials for the launch of the policy, recruitment and training of additional DALCs etc.

#### **16. TRAINING**

Employee awareness of safeguarding issues and responsibilities will be

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undertaken through both safeguarding induction and mandatory training.

Line managers must ensure that employees are made aware of this Policy, their role and responsibilities during their local induction. Line managers are also responsible for ensuring that new staff are aware of any local arrangement in place during their induction.

Existing forums e.g. Clinical Board Nurses Forum, Safeguarding Groups will be used as a means of raising awareness of this Policy

Additional training will be provided for Line Managers, DALCs, Human Resources and Trade Union Representatives as required.

### **17. EQUALITY STATEMENT**

Cardiff and Vale UHB is committed to ensuring that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the way we provide services to the public and the way we treat our staff, patients and others reflects their individual needs and does not discriminate, harass or victimise individuals or groups. These principles run throughout our work and are reflected in our core values, our staff employment policies, our service standards and our Strategic Equality Plan & Equality Objectives. The responsibility for implementing the scheme falls to all employees and UHB Board members, volunteers, agents or contractors delivering services or undertaking work on behalf of the UHB.

We have undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment and received feedback on this policy and the way it operates. We wanted to know of any possible or actual impact that this policy may have on any groups in respect of sex, maternity and pregnancy, carer status, marriage or civil partnership issues, race, disability, sexual orientation, Welsh language, religion or belief, transgender, age or other protected characteristics. The assessment found that there was a positive impact to the equality groups mentioned. Where appropriate we will make plans for the necessary actions required to minimise any stated impact to ensure that we meet our responsibilities under the equalities and human rights legislation.

### **18. AUDIT**

This policy may be subject to audit, and will be assessed in line with normal audit planning processes.

### **19. REFERENCES**

<sup>1</sup> Walby, S (2004): *The Cost of Domestic Violence*, London: Women and

Equality Unit

<sup>2</sup> Domestic Abuse : a Resource Manual for Health Care Professionals in Wales

<sup>3</sup> Coy, M., Kelly, L. and Foord, J. (2009) *Map of Gaps 2: The postcode lottery of Violence Against Women support services in Britain*, London: End of Violence Against Women

<sup>4</sup> Collins, D. Vallely, M. (2001) *Homophobic Crime and Same-Sex Domestic Abuse*

<sup>5</sup> [Guidelines on a domestic abuse workplace policy](#), Equality and Human Rights Commission

**20. DISTRIBUTION**

This policy will be available via the UHB Clinical Portal, Intranet and Internet web sites. Where staff do not have access to these resources, the line manager must ensure that they are aware of the content where appropriate.

Responsibility for distribution within Clinical Boards will be undertaken by the Head of Operations and Delivery.

**21. REVIEW**

This Policy will be reviewed a year after implementation (by 30 September 2014) and thereafter on a biannual basis, or sooner if there are any changes to relevant legislation.

## APPENDIX 1 – GETTING FURTHER INFORMATION

There are many organisations that can offer advice, practical guidance and support to individuals experiencing domestic abuse/violence. An up to date list is provided below:-

### **All Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Helpline**

A national free support and information service for women, children and men in Wales.

**Call 0808 80 10 800**

<http://www.allwaleshelpline.org.uk/>

### **Cardiff Women's Aid**

Support and advocacy for abused women, children and young people (11-25) operating a 24hr crisis service including emergency safe accommodation.

**Call 02920 460566**

<http://www.cardiffwomensaid.org.uk/>

### **Atal Y Fro**

Atal Y Fro offers support to women and children and an early intervention programme to help families in the Vale of Glamorgan break the cycle of domestic violence.

**Call 01446 744755**

<http://atalyfro.wordpress.com/about/>

### **BAWSO**

Provides practical and emotional support to people affected by domestic abuse and other forms of violence, including Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage, Human Trafficking and Prostitution primarily from BME communities.

**Call 0800 7318147**

<http://www.bawso.org.uk/>

### **The Dyn Project**

Provides support to men who experiencing Domestic Abuse from a partner

**Call 0808 801 0321**

<http://www.dynwales.org/>

### **Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)**

Have specially trained, experienced professionals who give help, support and advice to men, women, children and young people, following sexual assault in Cardiff and the Vale.

**Call 029 2033 5795**

<http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/sexual-assault-referral-centre>

## APPENDIX 2 – INDICATORS OF ABUSE AND ASKING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

Possible indicators that a member of staff is experiencing domestic abuse may include:

- Being persistently late/ needing to leave early without explanation
- Partner exerting control; employee dropped off & picked up from work, unable to do business trips.
- Needing regular time off for appointments
- Receipt of repeated upsetting calls or e-mails
- Reluctance to turn off mobile at work
- Increased hours being worked for no apparent reason
- Change in behaviours; more quiet, avoid interaction
- Depression, anxiety, distracted
- Secretive of home life
- Bruising explained away
- Frequent/ sudden medical problems
- Fatigue
- Sleeping/ eating disorder
- Avoiding socialising or lunch breaks
- Changes in the way an employee dresses or the amount of make up worn

If a manager suspects that an employee is experiencing a form of violence against women, domestic violence and sexual violence, they should facilitate a conversation to be able to discuss this and identify and implement appropriate support.

As this is a difficult subject to approach with an employee, it must be handled in a sensitive, empathetic and non-judgemental manner and with extreme care. However, shying away from the subject can perpetuate fear of stigma and increase feelings of anxiety. Often employees will not feel confident in speaking up, so a manager making the first move to begin a conversation can be key.

Managers should ask the employee **indirect questions**, to help establish a relationship with the employee and develop empathy. Below are some examples of questions that could be used:

- How are you doing at the moment? Are there any issues you would like to discuss with me?
- I have noticed recently that you are not yourself, is anything the matter?
- Are there any problems or reason that may be contributing to your frequent sickness absence/under-performance at work/conduct?
- Is everything all right at home?
- How can I help support you?

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**Avoid victim blaming.** It is important that managers are able to provide a non-judgemental and supportive environment. Respecting the employee's boundaries and privacy is essential.

The role of the manager is not to deal with the abuse itself but to make it clear that employees will be supported and to outline what help is available.

The All Wales domestic abuse and sexual violence helpline can provide further information and advice on discussing violence against women, domestic violence and sexual violence with employees. You are also welcome to contact a member of the Human Resources Department, who may refer you to the Employee Wellbeing Service or a Domestic Abuse Liaison Contact if appropriate.

### **APPENDIX 3 – A GUIDE TO PROVIDING A SAFE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT**

Before taking any further action it is important to agree with the employee what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if the violent partner / ex-partner telephones or visits the workplace.

In situations which compromise the employees or other colleagues safety, such as a violent partner or ex-partner visiting the workplace, abusive telephone calls or other acts of intimidation, these issues should be addressed by implementing the measures listed below as appropriate. Before you take these steps you may wish to seek advice and support from the Case Management Team, Health and Safety Department.

- Alerting security staff and / or the main reception staff that the alleged perpetrator is not allowed access to the building, unless they have a bona fide reason for doing so, such as a patient, service user, etc. It is not necessary to explain the reasons for this.
- Where appropriate and possible improve security measures, such as changing keypad numbers or ensuring that access to the building / department is not open to access from unauthorised staff or persons.
- Remind reception / switchboard staff and all other employees that they must not divulge information about employees, especially personal details such as addresses, telephone numbers or what time they are expected, shift patterns etc.
- Where practical consider offering a temporary or permanent change of workplace, working times / patterns, to help the employee to reduce the risk on their way to and from work. This could include a change to the office layout to ensure that the employee is not visible from reception points or from windows etc.
- Where practical, offer changes in specific duties, such as not expecting the employee to answer telephones or sit on the reception. Consider and discuss redeployment to another post, if an alternative, vacant, fully funded post is available.
- Divert phone calls and email messages
- Seek to ensure that the systems for recording the whereabouts of the employee during the working day are adequate and if their work requires them to work outside of the office / ward, consider how risks can be minimised.
- Check that staff have arrangements for getting safely to and from home.

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- Keeping a record of any incidents of abuse in the workplace, including persistent telephone calls, emails or visits to the employee by their partner / ex-partner. These records may be used if the employee decides to press charges or apply for an injunction against the alleged perpetrator of abuse. These records may also be used by the UHB if they decide to apply for an injunction, if the action of the alleged perpetrator impinges on the health and safety of an employee or service provision.
- Consider the appropriateness of using a Reliance GPS Lone Worker Device.

Additional practical measures which should be considered include:

- Reviewing the content of personal information, such as temporary or new addresses, bank or health care details
- Reviewing the employee's next of kin/significant other and emergency contact details