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## Domestic Abuse, Violence Against Women and Sexual Violence Procedure (DOMESTIC ABUSE PROCEDURE)

### Introduction and Aim

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (the UHB) will not tolerate and takes a stand against all forms of domestic abuse, violence against women or sexual violence for **all staff**, regardless of their gender or other personal characteristics. The UHB recognises that each individual's experiences can differ and they may require different support.

Domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence have 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 managers.

Domestic abuse and other forms of violence can impact negatively on an employee's health and wellbeing and staff morale. In addition, in England and Wales domestic abuse has economic costs of £14 billion arising from lost output due to time off work and reduced productivity (The Home Office, 2019). The most common type of domestic abuse occurs in relationships, but the definition of domestic abuse also covers abuse between family members, such as adolescent to parent violence and abuse. However, this Procedure also applies to all other forms of violence against women and sexual violence including stalking and instances when the perpetrator is not known.

This Procedure covers all forms of gender based violence and recognises that both men and women are victims of violence, threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation, and also forced marriage. The Procedure reflects this and whilst the umbrella term "violence against women" is used in line with legislation, this should be read as also including male victims of gender-based violence (GBV) unless the context suggests otherwise.

### Objectives

- To provide reassurance to victims of domestic abuse that the issue will be dealt with sympathetically, seriously and confidentially (as far as reasonably practical) with no fear of stigmatisation
- To enable staff to remain in a safe and supportive working environment
- To provide assistance and guidance to employees and managers in identifying and dealing with incidences of domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual abuse
- To provide resource and referral information
- To retain skilled and experienced staff
- To improve performance, self-confidence and morale and reduce levels of sickness and absence

### Scope

This procedure applies to all staff employed by the UHB. For the purpose of this procedure other individuals and groups including agency workers, contractors, honorary contract holders, volunteers and trainees are treated as employees.

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This procedure is relevant to both heterosexual and same sex couples and to male, female or those staff who identify as non-binary.	
<b>Equality and Health Impact Assessment</b>	An Equality and Health Impact Assessment has been completed and found there to be a positive impact.
<b>Documents to read alongside this Procedure</b>	<a href="#">Dignity at Work Policy</a> <a href="#">Professional Abuse Policy</a> <a href="#">Disciplinary Policy</a> <a href="#">Capability Policy</a> <a href="#">Managing Attendance at Work Policy</a> <a href="#">Special Leave Policy</a> <a href="#">Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy</a> <a href="#">Employee Health &amp; Wellbeing Strategy</a> <a href="#">Flexible Working Policy</a> <a href="#">Adaptable Workforce Policy</a> <a href="#">Redeployment Procedure</a> Violence & Aggression (Personal Safety) Policy and Procedure <a href="#">Security Services Policy</a> <a href="#">Lone Worker Procedure</a>
<b>Accountable Executive or Clinical Board Director</b>	Executive Director of Workforce and Organisational Development
<b>Author(s)</b>	Workforce Governance Manager / Assistant Human Resources Officer / Independent Domestic Violence Advisor / UNISON
<b><u>Disclaimer</u></b> <b>If the review date of this document has passed please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date either by contacting the document author or the <a href="#">Governance Directorate.</a></b>	

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<b>Summary of reviews/amendments</b>			
<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Date Review Approved</b>	<b>Date Published</b>	<b>Summary of Amendments</b>
1	21/01/2015	07/04/2015	List title and reference number of any documents that may be superseded Content previously included within the Domestic Abuse, Violence Against Women and Sexual Violence Policy. The revised policy is in the new shorter format and this procedure has been written in support of the new policy. Key changes as a result of the review include: Definitions updated Section on safeguarding children added DALCs removed
2	13/02/2020	13/02/2023	Key changes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name of the policy changed in line with legislation (Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Procedure (Domestic Abuse Procedure)).</li> <li>• New and more definitions on the variety of domestic abuse, violence against women or sexual violence</li> <li>• Definitions and examples added to an Appendix</li> <li>• More emphasis on the Safeguarding Team and the role of the IDVA</li> <li>• More Legislation and Law relating to the topic of domestic abuse, added to a Appendix</li> <li>• More external support networks</li> <li>• Indicators of abuse added to Appendix</li> <li>• A Guide to Providing a Safe Workplace in a checklist format and added to Appendix</li> <li>• Reference to Special leave incorporated</li> </ul>

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<b>1.</b>	<b>A DUTY OF CARE</b>
<b>1.1</b>	<p>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 Procedure can help the UHB to meet its human rights duties in relation to incidents of domestic abuse, violence against women or sexual violence.</p> <p>For the purposes of this Procedure we will refer to ‘Domestic Abuse’ as a generic term. However, the principles and actions described apply in a much wider range of scenarios including (but not necessarily limited to) those described in <a href="#">Appendix 1</a>.</p> <p>It is important to note that domestic violence and abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychological</li> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Sexual</li> <li>• Financial</li> <li>• Emotional</li> </ul> <p>Children living with domestic abuse may be suffering significant harm and this must be considered when discussing domestic abuse with a member of staff. All health employees have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children. Staff can seek advice from the UHB Safeguarding Team if they have any concerns that children may be at risk due to living in a domestic abuse environment. Information regarding the Safeguarding Team can be found in section 3.3.</p> <p>Legislation relating to domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence can be found under <a href="#">Appendix 2</a>.</p> <p>Further guidance on understanding and managing employees dealing with these issues can be obtained via the Human Resources Department or specialist agencies listed in <a href="#">Appendix 3</a>.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<p><b>Managers</b> should look for the possible signs of domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence, which are listed in <a href="#">Appendix 4</a>.</p> <p><b>Managers</b> should encourage the disclosure and discussion of abuse and help identify appropriate support. They should endeavour to support those experiencing domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence in a sympathetic, non-judgemental and confidential manner. They can also assist by keeping a record of any incidents of abuse on the workplace including persistent telephone calls/texts, emails or visits to the employee by their partner/ ex-</p>

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	<p>partner. Advice on supporting a member of staff to disclose abuse can be found in section 3.3 and <a href="#">Appendix 5</a>.</p> <p><b>Managers</b> are not expected to be experts in the issues of domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence. Therefore should seek further advice from the Human Resources Department, the Safeguarding Team or see <b>Appendix 3</b> for further support available.</p> <p>Members of staff may need time off work to access legal or financial advice, to arrange child care or alternative accommodation and to seek medical advice. Managers should be flexible when supporting a member of staff who is experiencing domestic abuse and treat each instance sensitively and individually. There may be scope for paid leave under the Special Leave Policy. Managers should seek guidance from the HR Operations Centre in these circumstances.</p>
<p><b>2.2</b></p>	<p>Domestic Abuse is everyone’s business. <b>Employees</b> can take action to assist colleagues experiencing domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence. By behaving in a supportive manner, an employee can assist colleagues in gaining confidence to tackle and report the problems they’re experiencing. If an employee has concerns about a colleague but does not want to approach them directly, they can talk to their line manager, Human Resources staff or a staff representative.</p>
<p><b>2.3</b></p>	<p>The UHB has a <b>Health Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA)</b> within the <b>Safeguarding Team</b> who can support all staff who disclose domestic abuse. Managers can use the IDVA for domestic abuse risk assessing, having difficult conversations and providing ongoing support.</p> <p>Other examples of support include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Assessment</li> <li>• Support to access emergency accommodation</li> <li>• Safety measures in the home</li> <li>• Safety advice/ planning including referrals to MARAC</li> <li>• Support reporting and liaising with the police</li> <li>• Support through criminal justice process</li> <li>• Emotional support</li> <li>• Referrals to other support agencies</li> <li>• Safety planning within work</li> </ul> <p>Seeking Health IDVA support is voluntary. Employees can self-refer by calling <b>02920 748 748 / 07815506334</b> (Monday – Friday, 9-5pm) or they can be referred by their managers/ colleagues <i>with the employees consent</i> via the <a href="#">Ask and Act UHB Domestic Abuse Form</a>.</p> <p>Employees may prefer to access support outside the UHB – please see Appendix 3 for organisations that provide support around domestic abuse,</p>

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	<p>sexual violence and violence against women. Many of the organisations have out of hours service and can be contacted if urgent advice is needed out of hours.</p> <p>Support for managers asking difficult questions and completing the Ask and Act Assessment can be found in <a href="#">Appendix 5</a>.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE ON THE WORKPLACE</b>
	<p>Seventy-five percent of those experiencing domestic abuse are targeted at work for example, it is often possible for perpetrators to use workplace resources, such as phones, email, etc, to threaten, harass or abuse.</p> <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than one in five victims of domestic abuse take time off work in any one year</li> <li>• 56% of abused women arrive late for work at least five times a month</li> <li>• 28% leave early at least five days a month</li> <li>• 53% miss at least three days of work a month 2% of women experiencing domestic abuse will lose their jobs as a result of the abuse</li> </ul>
<b>4.</b>	<b>PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES ON DISCLOSURE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p>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. Early identification of a problem of this nature could also result in the employee being able to deal with their situation more effectively.</p> <p>A sensitive, empathetic and non-judgemental approach should be used when dealing with situations of this nature. This approach is important, as victims of domestic abuse often feel ashamed, humiliated and frightened and are prone to blaming themselves for the situation.</p> <p>A guide to providing appropriate support to an employee suspected of experiencing domestic abuse is set out in <a href="#">Appendix 5</a>.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Confidentiality</b>
	<p>Once an employee has disclosed to their manager or another appropriate person (e.g. a work place colleague, a member of the Human Resources Department or Staff Representative) they should be reassured that this information will be kept confidential, as far as reasonably practical. Correspondence between the UHB and the employee should be discussed and</p>

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agreed, including safe contact numbers, addresses and emergency contact details.

Managers should consider where they keep the employee’s personal information and who can access it.

An exception to employee confidentiality may arise in circumstances of child protection or the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse. In these circumstances the manager 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

**4.3 Options To Provide Leave for Employees Experiencing Domestic Abuse**

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.

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 for 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 also discuss other supportive, flexible working options to assist employees who are victims of 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 and therefore managers and staff are advised to contact Human Resources or the Safeguarding Team for personalised guidance in how to best manage these options.

**5. ENSURING THE EMPLOYEE’S HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The responsibilities of the UHB, managers, 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.

In all instances, the health and safety of the employee and other members of staff and service users should be primary consideration when managing the situation. Managers should not put themselves in danger when supporting employees experiencing domestic abuse and they should also not put pressure on the victim to receive support, contact the police or try to leave their situation.

Managers are not expected to be experts in the issues of domestic abuse, violence against women or sexual violence but there are specialist organisations that can help you help your employees. If managers are in a situation where they are dealing with a member of staff experiencing abuse they should contact the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) from the Safeguarding Team

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	<p>who can discuss support options.</p> <p>For support with completing Risk Assessments relating to the workplace, managers can contact the Health and Safety department for support and advice.</p> <p>For further information on how to provide a safe working environment see <a href="#">Appendix 6</a>.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<b>DEALING WITH PERPETRATORS</b>
	<p>The UHB recognises that abusive and violent behaviour is the responsibility of the perpetrator. Domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence is a serious matter that can lead to criminal conviction and employees should be aware that conduct outside of work could lead to action being taken in line with the Disciplinary Policy and/ or the Professional Abuse Procedure.</p> <p>However, this does not mean that the UHB will not support any employee who discloses themselves or are disclosed as a perpetrator of domestic abuse and who is seeking help to address their behaviour. Organisations which can advise and support managers in dealing with perpetrators can be found in <a href="#">Appendix 3</a>.</p> <p>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 to be reminded that such allegations should be taken seriously and that support and advice can be obtained through the Human Resources Department or the Safeguarding Team.</p>

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## Appendix 1 – DEFINITIONS AND TYPES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic violence and abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

**Violence Against Women** is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women.

**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 sort of sexual contact and behaviour that is unwanted.

**Controlling behaviour** is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/ or dependant by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

**Coercive behaviour** is an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.

**Stalking** can be defined as persistent and unwanted attention that makes you feel pestered and harassed. It includes behavior that happens two or more times, directed at or towards you by another person, which causes you to feel alarmed or distressed or to fear that violence might be used against you.

**Honour based crimes** are violent crimes or other forms of abuse that are carried out in order to protect so-called 'honour' of a family or community.

**Human trafficking** is the trade of humans for the purpose of forced labour, sexual slavery or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker or others.

**Sexual exploitation** is an act or acts committed through non-consensual abuse or exploitation of another person's sexuality for the purpose of sexual gratification, financial gain, personal benefit or advantage, or any other non-legitimate purpose.

**Female genital mutilation (FGM)** is the collective term for a range of procedures which involve removal of partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

**Forced marriage** is defined as marriage without consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor.

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## **Appendix 2 – LEGISLATION RELATING TO DOMESTIC ABUSE, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

### **Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015**

This legislation aims to improve the Public Sector response in Wales to such abuse and violence.

The purpose of this Act is to improve:

- Arrangements for the prevention of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Arrangements for the protection of victims of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Support for people affected by gender-based violence and sexual violence

### **Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2018-2023**

The vision of this strategy: people who live, work and visit Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan have the opportunity to live positive, independent lives without being affected by violence and abuse. With the aims:

1. PREPARE – improve strategic planning and commissioning of VAWDASV services through a more coordinated partnership approach across the region
2. PURSUE – address perpetrators of VAWDASV by improving intelligence sharing across services and the use of legal powers to disrupt and convict
3. PREVENT – proactively address negative attitudes and behaviours that have the potential to result in VAWDASV, recognising that this is everyone’s business
4. PROTECT – improve the multi-agency response and support to all victims and their children regardless of risk levels and needs
5. SUPPORT - ensure that innovative, flexible and evidence based services are available to meet the needs of victims experiencing any form of VAWDASV

### **The Human Rights Act 1998**

This Act lets you defend your rights in the UK Courts and compels public organisations – including the government, police and local councils – to treat everyone equally, with fairness, dignity and respect.

- Everyone’s right to life shall be protected by law
- No one shall be subjected to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment
- Prohibition of slavery or forced labour
- Everyone has the right to liberty and security

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## **Equality Act**

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.

## **Health & Safety Law**

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 Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995
- The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996

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

## **10,000 Safer Lives**

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

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### Appendix 3 – GETTING FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

There are many opportunities for additional support available within the UHB, which include:

<b>Occupational Health Department</b>	<p>The Occupational Health Service is a self-referral and management referral service which can be contacted on 029 2074 3264 (43264 internal) for UHW and 029 2071 5140 (25140 from an internal phone) for UHL.</p> <p><a href="#">Occupational Health Management Referral Form</a></p>
<b>Employee Wellbeing Service</b>	<p>The Employee Wellbeing Service is a self-referral service which can be contacted on 02920 744 133 (internal 44133).</p> <p><a href="#">Employee Wellbeing Self-Referral Form</a></p>
<b>Case Management Team</b>	<p>The UHB Case Management Team within the Health &amp; Safety Department. The Case Management Teams aims to support victims of violence who wish to pursue criminal sanctions against those who assault them.</p>
<b>Ynys Saff</b>	<p>Ynys Saff Sexual Violence Assault Referral Centre is a 'one stop' location where victims of sexual assault have an opportunity to receive assistance during any police investigation into alleged offences, including facilities or video interviewing, a high standard of forensic examination, immediate medical care and ongoing support from an Independent Sexual Violence Advocate and access to counselling if required. Ynys Saff can be contacted via <b>029 2033 5795</b></p>
<b>The UHB Safeguarding Team</b>	<p>To support staff who are experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence or violence against women a Health IDVA can be contacted on the following numbers:</p> <p>02920748748 or 07815506334 (during Monday to Friday 9am-5pm)</p>

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## **External Support and Advice**

<b>Advice and Support Networks</b>	<b>Web Address</b>
<p><b>Live Fear Free</b> Advice on Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Violence Against Women 0808 8010 800</p>	<p><a href="https://livefearfree.gov.wales/?lang=en">https://livefearfree.gov.wales/?lang=en</a></p>
<p><b>RISE</b> Support and advocacy for abused women, children and young people (11-25) operating a 24hr crisis service including emergency safe accommodation. 029 2046 0566</p>	<p><a href="https://rise-cardiff.cymru/">https://rise-cardiff.cymru/</a></p>
<p><b>Dyn Wales</b> Advice and support for men experiencing domestic violence and abuse 0808 801 0321</p>	<p><a href="https://www.dynwales.org/">https://www.dynwales.org/</a></p>
<p><b>Respect</b> Provides support and advice to male and female perpetrators of domestic abuse 0808 802 4040</p>	<p><a href="http://respectphoneline.org.uk/">http://respectphoneline.org.uk/</a></p>
<p><b>Galop</b> A national LGBT+ domestic violence helpline 08009995428</p>	<p><a href="http://www.galop.org.uk">www.galop.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Karma Nirvana</b> Supporting victims of honour-based abuse and forced marriage within the UK. 0800 5999 247</p>	<p><a href="https://karmanirvana.org.uk/about/">https://karmanirvana.org.uk/about/</a></p>
<p><b>Atal Y Fro</b> Providing support to women and children within the Vale of Glamorgan who have experienced – or are experiencing domestic violence 01446 744755</p>	<p><a href="https://atalyfro.org/">https://atalyfro.org/</a></p>
<p><b>BAWSO</b> Providing specialist services for Black and Minority Ethnic Communities 029 20644 633</p>	<p><a href="http://www.bawso.org.uk/">www.bawso.org.uk/</a></p>
<p><b>Safer Wales</b> An independent charity based in Cardiff who work to help people feel safer in their daily lives 029 2022 0033</p>	<p><a href="http://www.saferwales.com">www.saferwales.com</a></p>

In cases where there is reason for genuine concern over a member of staff's safety then you should not hesitate to contact 999.

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## Appendix 4 – INDICATORS OF ABUSE

**Possible indicators that a member of staff is experiencing domestic abuse may include some of the following:**

- Sudden changes in behaviour and/ or changes in the quality work performance for unexplained reasons
- High absence rate
- Partner exerting control; employee dropped off & picked up from work, unable to do business trips
- Changes in the way an employee dresses. E.g. excessive clothing on a hot day
- Being persistently late/ needing to leave early without explanation
- Needing regular time off for appointments
- Receipt of repeated upsetting calls or e-mails
- Reluctance to turn off mobile phone at work
- Increased hours being worked or no apparent reason
- Unexplained injuries and bruising
- Isolating themselves from colleagues, including avoiding socialising or lunch breaks
- Depressive symptoms including suicidal tendencies, low self-esteem self-harm, fatigue, eating disorders (drastic increase or decrease in weight loss) and anxiety
- Alcohol or substance misuse

However, it is important to note that some people can experience domestic abuse but not show any sign of these indicators or that these indicators can be a sign of other issues.

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**Appendix 5 - SUPPORT FOR THE DISCLOSURE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE**

If a manager suspects that an employee is experiencing a form of domestic abuse, violence against women or sexual violence, they should approach them about this to try to identify and implement the appropriate support. Alternatively, if an employee suspects a colleague is experiencing abuse then they must inform the appropriate manager.

When approaching this subject with an employee it must be handled with extreme care, in a sensitive, empathetic and non-judgemental manner. In these circumstances even the slightest hint that their story is not believed, or they are in some way responsible for the situation, can drive the employee back into isolation.

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 or that if they leave the relationship they're now free from danger.

Managers should be remember that everyone is different and that they may face additional issues in disclosing information because of their age, sex, transgender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, religion/ belief, disability, pregnancy or marriage/ civil partnership. 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.

<p><b>Do:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure any discussion with the employee takes place in private with no disruptions</li> <li>• Make employees aware of the support available to them</li> <li>• Explain that their absence can be better and more sympathetically managed if the UHB is aware of possible difficult domestic situations</li> <li>• Offer members of staff the opportunity to discuss their situation with someone they may feel more comfortable with e.g. someone of the same gender</li> <li>• Protect the individual's confidentiality</li> <li>• Be respectful, sympathetic and non-judgemental</li> </ul>	<p><b>Don't:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek proof of any abuse disclosed</li> <li>• Blame the victim or be judgemental</li> <li>• Pressure the member of staff to leave their situation, seek support or contact the police</li> <li>• Try and contact the perpetrator or put yourself in any danger</li> <li>• Think you need to be an expert – there is a lot of support available for you and your team member</li> <li>• Stop trying if the individual isn't ready to disclose domestic abuse yet – keep an eye on them and be ready to help when the time is right</li> </ul>
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The following questions are used as a domestic abuse screening tool in clinical settings as part of the **Ask and Act assessment**. Managers are encouraged to use the same questions when dealing with members of staff who they think may be experiencing domestic abuse:

- Do you ever feel frightened or anxious of your partner or other people at home?
- Do you feel things are getting worse or out of control?
- Do you feel isolated from family and friends?
- Would it help if you were able to talk this through with someone in confidence?

If the answer to these questions is YES, offer to pass this information on to the Health Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) who will be able to support your team member

**Remember: 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.

More information on the 'Ask and Act' assessment is available on the [Safeguarding pages of the intranet](#)

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## APPENDIX 6 – 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, emails or visits the workplace. The following options **MUST** be discussed with the member of staff beforehand, as in some cases these changes can raise suspicions with the perpetrator and create even more danger.

### **A CHECKLIST FOR PROVIDING A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

#### **Have you considered ...?**

- Seeking advice from Human Resources or Safeguarding
- Alerting security staff/ main reception that the alleged perpetrator is not allowed access to the building, unless having reason for doing so
- Improving security measures
- Reminding reception/ switchboard staff that they must not give away information about employees
- Offering temporary or permanent change of workplace/ working patterns/ hours. (This could be as simple as changing office layout or the area where a district nurse travels.)
- Diverting phone calls / emails
- Changing specific duties e.g. not expecting employee to answer the phone
- Checking that the member of staff has arrangements for getting to and from work safely. If not try to organise temporary security escort.
- Keeping a record of any incidents of abuse, and meetings with the member of staff
- Reviewing the employee's content of personal information, such as temporary addresses, bank details
- Reviewing the employee's emergency contact/ significant other
- Establishing up-to-date communication arrangements in the case of an employee not attending work. This could include a neighbour or family member.
- Maintaining communication throughout the member of staff's absence
- The appropriateness of using a Reliance GOS Lone Worker Device