



Office for  
Nuclear Regulation

# Domestic Abuse Guidance



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# Domestic Abuse Guidance

██████████ and ██████████

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# 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Office for Nuclear Regulation acknowledges that its employees may be amongst those affected by domestic abuse; we are committed to ensuring that **any** employee who is the victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse has the right to raise the issue with their employer in the knowledge that they will receive an appropriate response, support, and assistance.
- 1.2 We will develop a workplace culture where there is zero tolerance for abuse, and one which recognises that the responsibility for domestic violence and abuse lies solely with the perpetrator.
- 1.3 In addition to this, we endorse the view that everyone has the right to a life free from abuse in any form and that violence against people is unacceptable.
- 1.4 We recognise our duty of care towards our workforce and appreciate that tackling domestic abuse is an integral part of this. Our approach to wellbeing at work is complimented by relevant health and safety legislation; acknowledging the right to work in a safe environment where risks to health, safety and welfare are both considered and dealt with effectively.
- 1.5 Through our 'supporting you, supporting each other' mental health and wellbeing programme, we will continue to foster a supportive workplace culture where colleagues can feel able to talk openly about their wellbeing experiences if they wish to and can obtain the right support should they need it. More information can be found on our [Domestic Abuse page on Nucleus](#).

# 2. Definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse

- 2.1 **Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) is a crime.** It happens in all communities, regardless of gender, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, geography, social background, educational achievement, or social-economic status.
- 2.2 With effect from December 2021, ONR is fully accredited to the Merseyside Domestic Abuse workplace scheme co-ordinated by the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner's Office; further demonstrating our commitment to engage, educate and embed ways of working that maximise the health safety and wellbeing of all our colleagues. Further information can be found on the [Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner's website](#).
- 2.3 It is estimated to affect one in four women and one in eight men in their lifetimes, with women suffering significantly higher rates of repeat victimisation and serious injury. It accounts for offences ranging from common assault to rape and murder. It

has a massive impact on victims, their children and families, employers, and the wider community.

- 2.4 DVA is the misuse of power and control by one person over another within the context of an intimate or close family relationship. In March 2013, DVA was defined as:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or 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.

This definition encompasses, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- **Psychological:** being repeatedly belittled, put down or told you are worthless
- **Physical:** having bruises, burns or bite marks on you
- **Sexual:** being pressured into sex or sexual contact
- **Financial:** having your finances controlled, or not being given enough to buy food, medication or pay bills
- **Emotional:** being told that abuse is your fault, or that you're overreacting

In the Serious Crime Act 2015, a new offence was created of controlling and/or coercive behaviour in intimate or familial relationships (section 76). Definitions include:

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

**Coercive behaviour:** an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to control, harm, punish, or frighten the victim. This definition includes so-called "honour" based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

### 3. Signs that an employee may be experiencing domestic abuse

- 3.1 The signs of domestic abuse can show itself in many ways. It is important to understand that the prevalence and type of abuse as well as the barriers to getting the necessary support, can vary depending on ethnicity, sexuality, gender, disability or even pregnancy.

3.2 An employee experiencing domestic abuse **could** display any of the following:

- Changes in working pattern or ways of working
- Missing deadlines or a reduction in the quality/quantity of work in general
- Many personal calls/texts, avoiding calls or a strong reaction to calls/texts/emails
- Spending an increased number of hours at work for no reason
- Frequent visits to work by the employee's partner, which may indicate coercive control
- Changes in behaviour: for example, becoming very quiet, anxious, frightened, tearful, aggressive, distracted, or depressed
- Being isolated from colleagues
- Obsession with leaving work/going offline on time/indicating difficulties with adapting to flexible and/or any requirements to work at home
- Worried about leaving children at home
- Visible bruising or single or repeated injury with unlikely explanations
- Change in the pattern or amount of makeup used
- Change in the manner of dress: for example, clothes that do not suit the climate which may be used to hide injuries
- Partner or ex-partner stalking employee in or around the workplace or on social media
- Partner or ex-partner exerting unusual amount of control or demands over work schedule
- Isolation from family/friends

3.3 All employees should always role model and have a proactive approach to wellbeing at work; and should consider 'stepping in' if observing indicators outlined at 3.2. But they should also be respectful; we respect the employee's right to privacy if they do not wish to tell us that they are or have been experiencing domestic abuse.

## 4. Action to be taken if an employee confides that they are being abused

4.1 It is important that all employees can provide a non-judgemental and supportive environment. Respecting the employee's boundaries and privacy is essential. Even if a colleague may disagree with the decisions being made regarding an employee's relationship/s. Treating victims with respect while caring for them often helps them to contrast this with the domestic abuse they are being subjected to; they see it for what it is and are empowered not to blame themselves and to seek for a better way of relating.

The right of employees to make their own decision about the course of action at every stage will be respected. It is recognised that an employee may need some time to decide what to do and may try different options during this process.

- 4.2 It is equally important to understand that those in abusive relationships may make several attempts to leave their situation, before they are finally able to do so.

Colleagues need to be aware that an employee is most at risk of life threatening or fatal abuse when they are attempting to leave or have recently left an abusive or violent partner.

- 4.3 Confidentiality is of utmost importance when dealing with an employee who informs a colleague that s/he is experiencing domestic abuse. However, sometimes, there may be a requirement to discuss with the employee the benefits of disclosing the information confidentially to an appropriate advocate such as our [Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions](#), a HR colleague, trade union (TU) representative or a relevant manager so that they can provide more support. More information on the support we have available is on Nucleus [Get Help Now](#).
- 4.4 The only acceptable reason for sharing information without consent is when you believe that the individual or any children are at risk of serious harm, injury, or murder. If that is the case, it becomes a safeguarding issue to increase a victim's safety and that of any children. It is important that all employees understand when, why and how they should share information, so they can do so confidentially and appropriately. If in doubt, especially where the doubt relates to a concern about harm to a child/ren or serious harm to others, advice and guidance must be sought from either: the [Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions](#) (see item 6), your CDM (or alternative relevant manager if appropriate), a HR colleague, TU representative or alternatively the police service on 101 or a specialist domestic abuse service (see item 9. Other resources)

Any immediate risk of harm should be called through to emergency services via 999.

- 4.5 A colleague should not directly involve themselves in the situation by, for example, confronting someone accused of being abusive. This could make the situation more difficult for the employee. Instead, the role of the colleague in this situation is:
- to provide support to the employee in the workplace and consider signposting to our [Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions](#)
  - to help and encourage the employee to find professional help

- 4.6 In terms of practical assistance, considerations as part of a risk assessment may include:
- arranging for the employee's work's mobile number to be changed if the employee is receiving harassing telephone calls
  - improving security measures such as changing security door codes and reminding other staff not to disclose staff contact, personal details or work patterns to others
  - agreeing with the employee how they should respond if the perpetrator attends the workplace
  - ensuring that the employee does not work alone or in an isolated area
  - checking that the employee has arrangements for safe travel between home and the workplace
  - keeping a record of incidents which occur in the workplace e.g. harassing telephone calls or visits
  - considering a temporary change to the employee's working patterns so these are not predictable to others
  - considering providing other staff with details of the abuser so they can provide an alert if the abuser attends the workplace
  - discussing whether the employee needs any time off to attend professional services etc (see below 4.8)
  - discussing with the employee what further reasonable temporary changes might support them
  - other more bespoke assistance e.g. facilitating temporary shelter and/or access to alternative locations and places to work in circumstances when working at home has been suitably risk assessed and considered an unsafe environment to perform their role responsibilities.

**Note:** Our duty of care and statutory responsibilities do extend to considering appropriate health, safety and wellbeing measures for all our colleagues working at home; this is an extension of the workplace.

If circumstances arise where a colleague confides that they are at risk of abuse whilst working at home; suitable assessment of the identified risks should be made and where appropriate steps taken to address them.

- 4.7 In accordance with [our values](#) we are reasonably expected to:
- not blame the person experiencing domestic abuse
  - be non-judgmental and supportive and respect the employee's privacy
- 4.8 We encourage all involved in a situation like this to speak to a professional support organisation i.e. Employee Assistance Programme; depending on the employee's situation, they may also need to attend meetings with advisors and to arrange new



accommodation and education for their children. We can help by allowing reasonable time off work for visits to take place confidentially to any suitable organisation and for time off as required for court hearings, legal meetings and/or to arrange housing/alternative education provision etc. Where possible, the employee should request time off in advance with their CDM and refer to our [Special leave](#) policy for general guidance.

4.9 In the instance of a colleague witnessing domestic abuse, our [Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions](#) will be able to offer support, advice and guidance (please see 6.4).

4.10 Where a decision is taken to share information; that information must be:

- accurate
- up to date
- necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared
- shared only with those who need to know it
- shared securely
- a record of the **decision to share information**, including reasons for that decision, must be made
- a record of the **decision not to share information**, including reasons for that decision, must be made

All employee records concerning Domestic Abuse will be kept strictly confidential and retained by the ONR Scheme Contact in the Health Safety and Wellbeing team. Improper disclosure of information e.g. breaches of confidentiality by any member of staff will be taken seriously and may be subject to disciplinary action.

**Confidentiality will be maintained, and information restricted only to those who have a need-to-know**

## 5. Action to be taken where a colleague suspects that an employee is being subjected to domestic abuse

5.1 Equally where a colleague suspects that a colleague may be subject to domestic abuse and/or where it is felt that a direct approach may be challenging our [Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions](#) are able to offer support, advice and guidance (please see 6.4)

We expect all staff to report their concerns if they suspect a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating abuse. Our trained Domestic Abuse Champions will also be available to provide advice, support, and guidance to both members of staff and relevant managers and/or leads.

## 6. Merseyside Domestic Abuse Workplace Scheme and ONR Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions

- 6.1 We presently have two [Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions](#) that through their roles volunteering as Mental Health Ambassadors, have subsequently been identified to support colleagues who are affected by domestic abuse.
- 6.2 After completing specialist training to spot signs of domestic abuse our Champions are equipped with the understanding, knowledge, and skills to respond safely and effectively to anyone wishing to speak up and seek support. They ensure appropriate information is available to colleagues at a time when they may need it most and will be able to signpost victims to specialist support.
- 6.3 The Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions along with our Domestic Abuse Scheme Contact will work in partnership with the Workplace Scheme Network, to continually develop and share best practice between the other organisations accredited within the Scheme. Contact details are:

Domestic Abuse Scheme Contact:

[REDACTED]

Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## 7. Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

- 7.1 We will not tolerate domestic abuse by any of our employees, nor the use of any of our equipment to carry out such abuse. Perpetrators will be made aware of the potential cost of carrying out abuse continually. This could include arrest; prison; loss of their relationship, long term physical and emotional damage to their partner and children; loss of contact with children; loss of their home; financial losses; damage or loss of relationships with family and friends; potential loss of employment.

- 7.2 Equally, we will be respectful, open-minded and positive about the possibility for any abuse to stop where a perpetrator recognises that they have a problem and are taking steps to change their behaviour. We will provide information about professional services and support available and encourage them to seek support and help from such services.
- 7.3 We will take seriously any allegations towards an employee of domestic abuse and investigations; whilst each case will be based on its individual merits with a focus on support and prevention; poor standards of professional behaviour may lead to disciplinary action being taken in line with our disciplinary policy and procedures.
- 7.4 When speaking with an alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse, a colleague should, if considered necessary, take measures to ensure their own safety such as taking another member of staff to a discussion.
- 7.5 If both the individual experiencing domestic abuse and the perpetrator work for the organisation, measures will be taken to reduce the impact after discussion with the individual experiencing the abuse, such as:
- reassigning duties/roles; and
  - restricting the perpetrator's access to information about the person they are targeting.
- 7.6 We will retain confidential records of any disclosure or action taken in relation to an alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse.

## 8. Implementation

- 8.1 To achieve the aims of this guidance we will:
- Publish the guidance within the [Staff Handbook](#).
  - Raise awareness of the Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions (██████████) and (██████████) and our Scheme Contact (██████████) and other internal support services where help and guidance are accessible including:
    - [Get Help Now](#)
    - [Supporting you, supporting each other](#)
    - [Mental Health Ambassadors](#)
  - Share the contact details of [external local support agencies](#)
  - Continue to engage, educate, and embed that there is no health without mental health and that we continue to support each other and ask for or encourage others to seek help when they need it
  - Review and monitor effectiveness of this guidance through the Diversity and Inclusion Group (DIG) and Health and Safety Group (HSG)

## 9. Other useful resources

Domestic Abuse Support Services	
Bright Sky app	<a href="http://www.hestia.org.brightsky">www.hestia.org.brightsky</a>
Galop LGBT & Domestic Abuse	0800 999 5428 <a href="mailto:www.galop@org.uk">www.galop@org.uk</a>
Karma Nirvana (honour-based violence/Forced marriage)	0800 599 9247 <a href="http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk">www.karmanirvana.org.uk</a>
ManKind	<a href="http://www.mankind.org.uk/help-for-victims">www.mankind.org.uk/help-for-victims</a>
Men's Advice Line (male victims)	0808 801 0327 <a href="http://www.mensadvice.org.uk">www.mensadvice.org.uk</a>
National Domestic Violence Helpline, run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge Freephone	Freephone 0808 2000 247 <a href="http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk">www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk</a>
Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service	0203 866 4107 <a href="mailto:info@paladinservice.co.uk">info@paladinservice.co.uk</a>
RASA (Rape & Sexual Abuse) Merseyside	0151 666 1392 (Tues and Thurs 6-8pm, Fri 12-2pm)
RASASC (Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre)	01925 221 546 / 0330 363 0063 (9.00 am to 4.30 pm Mon-Friday)
Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre	0808 802 9999 (12.00 noon to 2.30 pm and 7.00 pm to 9.00pm every day)
Respect Phone Line (male perpetrators)	0808 802 4040 <a href="http://www.respectphoneline.org.uk">www.respectphoneline.org.uk</a>
Women's Aid Helpline	0808 2000 247 (24 hours)

Liverpool	
Liverpool Domestic Abuse Service	0151 263 7474 Freephone: 0800 084 2744 <a href="http://www.liverpooledomesticabuseservices.org.uk">www.liverpooledomesticabuseservices.org.uk</a>
South Liverpool Domestic Abuse Service	0151 494 2222 Freephone: 0800 083 7114 <a href="http://www.sl-domesticabuseeervices.org.uk">www.sl-domesticabuseeervices.org.uk</a>

<b>Knowsley</b>	
Safer Communities (All referrals)	0151 443 4608
The First Step (self-referral only)	0151 548 3333 <a href="http://www.thefirststep.org.uk">www.thefirststep.org.uk</a>

<b>Sefton</b>	
Sefton Women and Children's Aid	0151 922 8606 <a href="http://www.swaca.com">www.swaca.com</a>

<b>Wirral</b>	
Tomorrows Women Wirral	0151 647 7907 <a href="http://www.tomorrowswomen.org.uk">www.tomorrowswomen.org.uk</a>

<b>St Helens</b>	
Chrysalis Centre for Change	01744 451 309 <a href="http://www.chrysaliscentreforchange.co.uk">www.chrysaliscentreforchange.co.uk</a>

<b>Legal Helplines</b>	
<b>Rights of Women:</b> Family Law Advice Line	020 7251 6577 (Tuesday to Thursday 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm and Friday 12.00 noon-2 pm)
Criminal Law Advice Line	020 7251 8887 (Tuesdays only 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm)
Immigration and Asylum Law	020 7490 7689 (Mondays 10.00 am to 4.00pm and Thursdays 10.00 am to 1.00 pm and 2.00pm to 5.00pm)

<b>Other Useful Organisations</b>	
Savera UK	0800 107 0726 <a href="http://www.saverauk.co.uk">www.saverauk.co.uk</a>
Imkaan	020 7842 8525 <a href="http://www.imkaan.org.uk">www.imkaan.org.uk</a>

Jewish Women's Aid	0800 591 203 <a href="http://www.jwa.org.uk">www.jwa.org.uk</a>
Forced Marriage Unit	020 7008 0151 <a href="http://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage">www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage</a>

<b>Other Useful Services</b>	
Samaritans	Freephone 116 123 <a href="http://www.samaritans.org">www.samaritans.org</a>
Citizens Advice Bureau	0344 111 4444 <a href="http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk">www.citizensadvice.org.uk</a>
Endeavour Pet Fostering Service North-West	01204 394 842 <a href="http://www.pawsforkids.org.uk">www.pawsforkids.org.uk</a>