

Policy

Domestic abuse – support for staff

Key messages

- This policy is to support Trust staff who are subject to domestic abuse which can cause: deterioration of performance, absenteeism or poor timekeeping, a rise in health and safety issues, an increased risk of workplace violence and a loss of productivity.
- All managers should be informed about and be aware of domestic abuse and feel able to enquire of their staff if they suspect they are victims of such abuse.
- The Trust is committed to ensuring that staff suffering abuse are treated sympathetically from their managers and are signposted to sources of support.
- The Trust is committed to ensuring that staff are safe from threats of domestic abuse at their workplace.
- The Trust will adopt a zero tolerance approach and take appropriate action against the perpetrators of violence/ abuse as part of their duty of care to ensuring a safe workplace as far as reasonably practicable.

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1 Scope

Trust-wide: This policy applies to all Trust staff.

Patients who are suspected victims or disclose domestic abuse are covered under the Trust's [safeguarding adults policy](#).

2 Purpose

This policy aims to provide assistance and guidance to staff 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. The Trust is also committed to heightening awareness of domestic abuse.

The aim of any intervention around domestic violence is to increase the safety of those at risk of harm. Follow 'the four Rs':

- recognise the problem (look for signs and ask)
- respond appropriately
- refer onto appropriate help
- record the details

3 Definitions

Domestic abuse is best described as the use of physical and/or emotional abuse or violence, by any person, who is or has been in a close relationship with the victim, including abuse of parents or adult children.

The legal definition of domestic abuse is:

"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 can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

* This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage."

This policy is therefore applicable whatever the nature of the intimate relationship. It can include:

- undermining of self confidence
- verbal abuse
- sexual/ physical violence or the threat of violence
- the destruction of a partner's property

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- causing isolation from friends, family or other potential sources of support
- control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone
- stalking
- abuse inflicted on, witnessed by or threatened against children
- forced marriage, so called 'honour' based violence

4 Introduction and context

Domestic abuse is a serious health issue in society affecting the lives of many people. It impacts the ability of those affected to be productive in the workplace as well as to provide care for themselves. Domestic violence currently costs UK businesses over £1.9 billion annually according to Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence (CAADV). Refer to [appendix 1](#) for important facts and statistics regarding domestic abuse.

The issue of domestic abuse on the NHS is twofold, both as an employer of staff that may fall victim to domestic violence and as the service that deals with the physical and mental problems resulting from it. One woman in four and one man in six will suffer domestic abuse in their lifetime. Two women die every week in England and Wales, and one man every fortnight, as a result of domestic violence.

For victims of domestic abuse it is very often the case that the workplace provides the only potential channel of escape from the abuse. The Trust is therefore committed to tackling domestic abuse as and where it affects become apparent in the workplace and to raise awareness amongst staff about these issues.

- Domestic abuse occurs in all social classes, cultures, and age groups whatever the sexual orientation, mental or physical ability.
- Once started it often becomes more frequent and more violent.
- It can severely affect children emotionally and physically.
- Victims are sometimes beaten or harassed by members of their immediate or extended family.
- Domestic abuse is gendered – the majority of perpetrators are men and between 80-95% of those who experience it are women, although it does also occur against men in heterosexual relationships, in same sex relationships and against bisexual and transgender people.
- Domestic violence/ abuse is not a 'one off' occurrence but is frequent and persistent, aimed at instilling fear into and compliance from the victim. On average a victim of domestic violence/ abuse is assaulted 35 times before they report the matter to the police.
- Everyone has the right to live a life free from abuse in any form. Domestic violence/ abuse is wholly unacceptable and inexcusable behaviour, and responsibility for the abuse lies with the perpetrator.

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Often going to work can provide an escape from violence and abuse for survivors and many see work as a haven.

Domestic violence impacts the workplace in:

- absenteeism
- poor performance
- tardiness
- lost productivity
- turnover
- ancillary recruiting and training costs

Domestic abuse facts in [appendix 1](#) highlight the need for action by employers.

5 Responsibilities

5.1 Trust's legal obligation

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992, the Trust recognises its legal responsibilities in promoting the welfare and safety of all staff.

5.2 The chief executive and board of directors

The chief executive and board have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy and for promoting an environment where violence and abuse is considered unacceptable.

5.3 Directors/ senior managers/ heads of department, managers and supervisors

Directors/ senior managers/ heads of department, managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that they and their divisional/ departmental managers and supervisors are familiar with this policy and act appropriately in accordance with its contents. They are also responsible for the safety of their staff and to promote an environment where violence and abuse is unacceptable. Where they become aware of instances of abuse they will follow the guidance as detailed below in [section 6](#) and contact OD for guidance.

5.4 All staff

All staff have a responsibility towards other members of staff. If a colleague discloses they are the victim of abuse, believe and listen to them and advise they contact either their manager, HR, their union representative, Care first, chaplaincy or one of the organisations listed in [appendix 2](#) for support.

All staff have a duty of confidentiality (see the [protecting and keeping confidential employee data policy](#)) and must not disclose any information about anyone else working within the Trust to visitors or telephone enquirers, regardless of who the caller says they are (please see the section

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on access to employee data in the [protecting and keeping confidential employee data policy](#)).

It is understandable that staff may want to advise colleagues, however it would be more helpful to direct them to sources of support listed in [appendix 2](#).

6 Process for supporting staff who are experiencing domestic abuse

6.1 Recognise: identification of the problem at work

Whilst it is for the individuals themselves to recognise they are a victim of domestic abuse, there are signs which could indicate an employee may be a victim including:

- the member of staff may confide in their colleagues/ manager
- staff may inform their manager that a colleague is suffering from domestic abuse
- there may be obvious effects of physical abuse (it is important not to make assumptions)
- it may come to light as a result of enquiries into a drop in performance or a significant change in behaviour
- it may reveal itself as the background to poor attendance or conversely working an extended number of hours

It is essential to understand that any of the above may arise from a range of circumstances of which domestic abuse may be one. Managers/ supervisors who have to support staff in such matters should address the issue positively and sympathetically ensuring that they are aware that advice and assistance can be provided.

The Trust respects the right to privacy for all staff. Whilst strongly encouraging the disclosure of domestic abuse for the safety of themselves and all those in the workplace, the Trust does not force staff to share this information if they do not want to.

6.2 Respond: options for supporting staff experiencing domestic abuse

The Trust will respond sympathetically, confidentially and effectively to any member of staff who discloses that they are experiencing domestic abuse and will make every effort to assist.

If a member of staff needs to be absent from work due to domestic abuse, the length of absence will be determined by the individual's situation in collaboration with them and their manager with the support of the OD manager/ HR adviser and their union representative as applicable.

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Line managers may offer a broad range of support. This may include:

- compassionate leave under the Trust's [special leave policy](#) for relevant appointments, including with support agencies, solicitors, to rearrange housing or childcare and for court appointments
- access to counselling/ support services in paid time
- consideration of flexible working options using the [flexible working procedure](#)

6.3 Safety at work for employees experiencing domestic abuse

The Trust will actively provide a variety of options for employees to minimise the risk to their safety while at work. This may include:

- temporary or permanent changes to working times and patterns
- changes to specific duties, for example to avoid potential contact with an abuser in a customer facing role
- redeployment or relocation
- measures to ensure a safe working environment, for example changing a telephone number to avoid harassing phone calls
- using other existing policies, including flexible working
- agreeing use of an assumed name at work
- enabling car parking nearer to work entrance
- identifying an emergency contact person at work
- agreeing an emergency contact with the individual in case of unexpected absence from work
- maintaining and agreeing contact where an individual is on long term sick leave
- with consent, advise colleagues on a need to know basis so they can take appropriate action if the perpetrator turns up at work
- member of security team or work colleague (if in agreement) to chaperone member of staff to car park/ transport

6.3.1 Risk assessment and work safety plan

The member of staff, their manager and the one of the Trust security managers will **carry out a risk assessment** and write a **work place safety plan** which could include the following measures:

- increase the levels of routine security guard patrols in the area
- provide a personal audible alarm
- alert reception, security, staff in workplace nursery (if relevant) with a copy of any non-molestation/ occupation orders/ police incident number, a photo of the abuser, details of their vehicle (registration number and description)

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- allowing staff to use an assumed name at work
- issuing the staff member with a mobile phone with pre-programmed emergency response numbers
- priority parking close to the building and or varying the parking area as well as offering escorts to and from the on-site car parks
- as an option in the immediate short term arranging for the employee to stay in onsite hospital accommodation by contacting the Trust's head of commercial services on extension 3388 who will liaise with sanctuary housing to book short term accommodation for the employee's safety. For out of hours contact bleep 156 0697 shift facilities manager
- obtaining a restraining order to keep the perpetrator off Trust property

As part of the risk assessment, if someone discloses something that makes you believe a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk then contact the [safeguarding team](#) for advice, **safeguarding children office:** extension 3673.

The link for the safeguarding vulnerable adults team is the specialist advisor for safeguarding vulnerable adults (bleep 157 597).

The person making the referral to safeguarding should inform the victim of the referral.

6.3.2 Legal injunction

Where an order is sought by the member of staff to restrain the perpetrator from assaulting, harassing, threatening, pestering or otherwise interfering with them, directly or indirectly, and from communicating with them in any way the Trust will work closely with them and the police for implementing a system of protection and support. The following statutes could be used :

- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Telecommunications Act

6.4 Refer: providing support for employees and refer for help

The Trust will provide support through our managers, security adviser, human resources, Care first, chaplaincy, union representatives and occupational health; named midwife for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Their role is to:

- be available and approachable to employees experiencing
- domestic abuse
- listen to and support individuals to seek counselling
- keep information confidential (subject to the requirements of safeguarding children and adults)

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- respond in a sensitive and non-judgemental manner
- discuss the specific steps that can be taken to help the person stay safe in the workplace eg risk assessment (see [safety at work](#) section above)
- ensure the employee is aware of the options available to them
- encourage the employee to seek the advice of relevant agencies (see [appendix 2](#))
- encourage participation in courses developed to support female survivors of domestic abuse, for example [The Freedom Programme](#) or assertiveness training
- encourage the staff member to seek help from other appropriate agencies eg police, social services, religious groups

Line managers must respect the right of staff to make their own decision on the course of action at every stage and should avoid being judgemental. It must be recognised that the employee may need some time to decide what to do and may try many different options during this process.

The Trust will maintain a comprehensive up to date list of support agencies on Connect (see [appendix 2](#)).

Line managers can make referrals to the Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) based in the emergency department five days a week. The advocate will take referrals from staff as well as patients and can be contacted by email moreblessings.mawema@addenbrookes.nhs.uk or by mobile phone 07827 880327 or via the IDVA service central office number 01480 847718.

If someone discloses something that makes you believe a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk then contact the [safeguarding team](#) for advice (extension 3673). The referrer to the safeguarding team should also inform the member for staff of the referral.

Appendix 3 has a CAADV case study for an example as to how an employee be supported in the workplace.

6.5 Record

6.5.1 Incident forms

A Trust incident form should be completed following any violence or abuse that takes place on Trust premises and in line with procedures set out in the Trust's [violence and aggression management policy](#).

Any incidence of violence or threatening behaviour at work must be recorded and monitored eg harassing phone calls/ emails, visit to workplace of perpetrator. The Trust's security manager should be advised at the earliest

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opportunity and will be able to give advice over appropriate action and carry out a risk assessment.

6.5.2 Recording

With staff agreement, it is good practice to keep detailed records if domestic abuse is disclosed. Discussions and any actions agreed should be documented and placed in a sealed envelope marked with the date and 'confidential' for the manager and member of staff only to view and placed in their personnel file. It is for staff to determine when these records should be removed.

Sickness absence records, when the absence is as a result of domestic abuse, this should be recorded on MAPS (the Trust's e-rostering system) as 'other'. Recording such incidents could provide useful information in case of court proceedings/ injunctions.

6.6 Confidentiality

The Trust respects an employee's right to confidentiality and recognises that employees experiencing domestic abuse normally have the right to complete confidentiality. However, in some circumstances confidentiality cannot be assured eg when there are concerns about children or vulnerable adults or where the employer needs to act to protect the safety of staff.

In circumstances where confidentiality may need to be breached, specialist advice will be sought before doing so by contacting the safeguarding team or out of hours bleep holder for 707. Subsequently, if the Trust proceeds in breaching confidentiality, the manager will discuss this with the member of staff and seek their agreement where possible. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

Where domestic abuse in a same sex relationship is disclosed, due regard will be given to the double disclosure of confidential information particularly where the member of staff may not have disclosed their sexual orientation at work.

Improper disclosure of information ie breaches of confidentiality by any member of staff will be taken seriously and may be subject to disciplinary action.

6.7 Right to privacy

The Trust respects a member of staff's right to privacy in the event they do not wish to inform the organisation that they have experienced domestic abuse.

6.8 Anti-discrimination

The Trust will not knowingly discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to domestic abuse, in terms of his or her existing employment or

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career development. The Trust is aware that such staff may have performance problems such as chronic absenteeism or reduced productivity. When addressing performance and safety issues, OD and line managers will make reasonable efforts to consider all aspects of the employee's situation and/or safety problems and take such mitigation into account.

7 Trust process for dealing with staff who are perpetrators of domestic violence/ abuse

Domestic abuse perpetrated by Trust staff will not be condoned under any circumstances nor will it be treated as a purely private matter. The Trust recognises that it has a role in encouraging and supporting employees to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds. All staff are expected at all times to present high standards of personal integrity and conduct that will not reflect adversely on the organisation and its reputation.

The Trust will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of a domestic abuse related offence on a case-by-case basis with the aim of reducing risk and supporting change.

There are four potential strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- risk assessment
- disciplinary action
- providing specialist support (see [appendix 2](#))
- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence

An individual cautioned or convicted of a criminal offence may be subject to the Trust's [disciplinary procedure](#). The Trust reserves the right to consider the use of this policy should any activities outside of work have an impact on their ability to perform their role and/or be considered to bring the organisation into disrepute.

In some circumstances it may be deemed inappropriate for the member of staff to continue in his/her current role(s), especially if they are in contact with children or vulnerable adults or due to a caution or conviction. In these circumstances the possibility of redeployment into an alternative role should be considered.

These procedures can be applicable in cases where a member of staff has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed or threatened his/her partner
- possibly committed a criminal offence against his/her partner
- had an allegation of domestic abuse made against him/her
- presented concerns about their behaviour within an intimate relationship

The Trust is committed to ensuring that:

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- allegations will be dealt with fairly and in a way that provides support for the person who is the subject of the allegation or disclosure
- all staff will receive guidance and support
- If a member of staff approaches their manager/ HR and discloses their abusive behaviour, the manager/ HR will provide information about the services and support available to them such as the organisation Respect (see [appendix 2](#))
- confidentiality will be maintained and information restricted only to those who have a need-to-know

The alleged perpetrator will be:

- treated fairly and honestly
- helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved
- kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary process
- advised to contact their union or professional organisation.

8 If the victim and perpetrator are both Trust staff

Where the victim and perpetrator are both Trust staff, the Trust will take appropriate action. This could include investigation which could lead to disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator and action to ensure that the victim and perpetrator do not come into contact in the workplace.

The Trust will need to minimise the potential for the perpetrator to use their position or work resources to find out details about the whereabouts of the victim. This may include a change of duties for one or both members of staff or withdrawing the perpetrator's access to certain computer programmes or offices.

However, it is also recognised that in certain circumstances, those experiencing and perpetrating domestic abuse in a relationship may choose to seek solutions jointly, and in such situations appropriate support should be given.

More detail is outlined in [section 6](#) and [section 7](#) of this policy.

9 Other staff involvement

If a work colleague is found to be assisting an abuser in perpetrating the abuse, for example, by giving them access to facilities such as telephones, email or fax machines then they will be seen as having committed a disciplinary offence.

If it becomes evident that anyone has made a malicious allegation that a member of staff is perpetrating abuse then this will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and action will be taken.

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10 Raising awareness in the workplace

The Trust will raise awareness of domestic abuse through the following measures:

- publishing, maintaining and posting in locations of high visibility a list of external resources for survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse
- publicising and distributing information on the Trust's policy including this document as 'policy of the week' on Connect
- post leaflets giving information about signs of abuse

11 Monitoring compliance with and the effectiveness of this document

The OD directorate will monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with staff side colleagues, line managers and the Trust's security advisor and risk management. Trust incident forms will be audited.

Use of online confidential surveys on Connect will be used to audit awareness in the Trust of the policy.

12 Associated documents

- [Disciplinary procedure](#)
- [Domestic violence \(DV\): identification by use of routine antenatal sensitive questioning guideline \(LR1.13\)](#)
- [Flexible working procedure](#)
- [Protecting and keeping confidential employee data policy](#)
- [Safeguarding adults policy](#)
- [Violence and aggression management policy](#)
- [Special leave policy](#)

Equality and diversity statement

This document complies with the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust service equality and diversity statement.

Disclaimer

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Document management

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Appendix 1: Domestic violence/ abuse – the facts

1 in 4 women have been affected by domestic violence [British Crime Survey, 2009/10]

Around two women are killed every week by a current or former male partner [British Crime Survey, 2009/10].

One incident of domestic violence is reported to police every two minutes [Home Office data].

On average, domestic violence accounts for 14% of all violent crime. However, this figure can be higher in certain local authority areas [British Crime Survey, 2009/10].

68% of domestic violence incidents results in physical injury. It is also a major risk factor for psychiatric disorders, chronic physical conditions and substance abuse [British Crime Survey, 2009/10].

Domestic violence often starts or increases during pregnancy [S Bewley and GC Mezey (1997)].

In 30-66% of cases where women are being abused, children are also being abused by the same individual.

Domestic abuse impact on the workplace

Key statistics from Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence ([CAADV](#)):

- 56% of abused women arrive late for work
- 53% are absent from work at least three days per month
- 75% of domestic abuse victims are targeted at work – from harassing phone calls/ text messages and emails to abusive partners arriving at offices often lead to physical assaults and in some cases homicide at the work place

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Appendix 2: help lines and agencies

National 24-hour national domestic violence freephone helpline:
0808 2000 247

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

Run in partnership between [Women's Aid](#) and [Refuge](#)



Women's aid is a national organisation working to end violence against women and children. Run refuges throughout the 4 countries and provide advice on housing, legal and other issues, provide support, offers training and runs campaigns.

Women's aid **Survivor's Handbook** can be downloaded in [English](#) and in [many other languages](#).

[Cambridge Women's Aid](#) is a local organisation:

- Monday-Friday 01223 460947
- refuge@cambridgewa.org.uk
- Out of hours emergency line 07730 322098



Refuge offers a range of services which gives women and children access to professional support whatever their situation. These services include:

- national domestic violence helpline
- a network of refuges across the country
- independent legal advocacy
- outreach services
- culturally specific services

Women and children from minority ethnic groups often find it difficult to access mainstream support services. Refuge provides culturally specific refuges and outreach programmes for Eastern European, African, and Asian families.

[Men's advice line](#) Advice and support for male victims of abusive relationships 0808 801 0327 Monday - Friday 10:00-13:00 & 14:00-17:00
[Men's Advice Line Leaflet](#)

[Respect](#) (support for domestic violence perpetrators): Respect run the [Respect Phoneline](#), an advice and referral line for perpetrators 0808 802 4040 (free from landlines and most mobile phones).

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Southern Cambridgeshire Domestic Abuse Task Group have produced a comprehensive directory of national and local support/ advice organisations see the following link to [domestic abuse and sexual violence directory](#)

Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence (CAADV) is a leading force in fighting against domestic violence in the UK. It is a progressive group of companies working collectively to raise awareness of the impact of domestic violence in the workplace and provide policies and procedures for member firms and their employees.

Northern Ireland Women's Aid: 0800 917 1414

Scottish Domestic Abuse: 0800 027 1234

Wales Domestic Abuse: 0808 80 10 800

Dyn Wales/Dyn Cymru: 0808 801 0321

Forced Marriages Unit: 0207 088 0151

[Broken Rainbow UK](#) for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender victims: 0300 999 5428; opening hours for this helpline are:

Mon 14:00-20:00

Wed 10:00-13:00

Thu 14:00-20:00

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Appendix 3: CAADV case study

Ann had worked for the NHS at a London hospital as a senior member of staff for five years. Her annual review with her manager was due. Her manager had recently received domestic violence (DV) awareness training at the launch of the hospital's DV policy.

During the performance meeting, Ann's manager discussed her attendance record and asked if there was a reason for her late arrivals.

Ann explained that she had recently left her partner and that she was being stalked by him. She had been trying to come to work later to make it more difficult for her partner to follow her.

Ann's manager, by having the DV policy and CAADV toolkit of resources, was able to find information to suggest how she could help Ann through this difficult period. She referred Ann to a specialist DV agency.

In the short term Ann and her manager agreed that she could be escorted to and from home by one of hospital's security team and that she could work flexi-hours so that she was not leaving and returning home at the same time every day. Over the next several weeks Ann's manager worked with HR and, because of multiple site locations, the hospital was able to offer Ann a trial placement at another office. Ann continued to perform her specialist role and contribute to the performance of the hospital.

By taking these cost effective, simple steps, the hospital was able to retain a talented and skilled member of staff. Ann continues to thrive and be a productive member of the hospital.

Source: http://www.caadv.org.uk/case_study_ann.php