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University Health Board

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE: A WORKPLACE POLICY FOR SUPPORTING STAFF

N.B. Staff should be discouraged from printing this document. This is to avoid the risk of out of date printed versions of the document. The Intranet should be referred to for the current version of the document.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) are large scale, pervasive issues which every year cause harm and suffering to thousands of people across Wales. This policy focuses on supporting **all** employees who have experienced or are experiencing this. The umbrella term of violence against women is used, due to the disproportionate affect on women. Nevertheless, it is recognised that men can experience domestic abuse and sexual violence from their female partner and that these forms of abuse also occur within same sex relationships. It is also recognised that forced marriage and honour based violence affect both men and women. This workplace policy includes men and acknowledges that their experiences are likely to be different to women's and their support needs may be different.

Every year across the UK at least **three million** women experience violence and many more are living with the legacies of past abuse. The Health Board recognises the enduring social problems of domestic abuse of which violence against women and sexual violence are key elements. These can greatly impact on an individual's working life. It is estimated that in the UK, **1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men** will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives. Research shows that **75%** of domestic abuse victims are targeted at work.

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

Colleagues may also be affected, as they may be followed to or from work or subject to questioning about the victims contact details or location. They may have to cover for other workers when they are off, try to fend off the abuse, and may fear for their own safety.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board takes domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour based violence against all gender and violence against women and sexual violence against both women and men seriously. We are committed to understanding the risks and consequences in the work place and aim to support all staff. We will also take appropriate action against staff who are perpetrators.

These forms of abuse are not just an issue for external agencies that provide services directly to the public. The University Health Board recognises that within its workforce there are potentially a significant number of employees who have, or who are currently, experiencing abuse in their personal or professional lives, and there will also be those who are perpetrators of abuse.

The following policy has been produced to help staff to deal with these issues in an appropriate and empathetic manner.

1.1 Scope of Policy

This policy focuses on supporting all employees who have experienced or are experiencing forms of abuse falling under the umbrella term of VAWDASV. It is important to recognise that whilst employees are more likely to be affected by domestic abuse, sexual violence and harassment are often interlinked.

1.2 Essential Implementation Criteria

- Knowledge of VAWDASV issues
- Staff are aware of how to respond appropriately
- Ensuring employees health and safety
- Importance of confidentiality
- Knowledge of how to deal with child and adult protection issues
- Awareness raising and training for staff with guidance on how to deal with potential perpetrators.

2. AIMS

To ensure that all Aneurin Bevan University Health Board staff feel able to raise, discuss and seek support in relation to VAWDASV with their Manager, Human Resources or if appropriate Staff Side representative.

To equip managers to be able to respond helpfully and appropriately to staff presenting with these issues.

3. DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

3.1 'Violence against women' has been defined by the United Nations as any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. The term violence against women is used to describe violence perpetrated against a woman because she is a woman, being recognised internationally as a violation of human rights.

Whilst the overwhelming majority of victims are women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are **NOT** exclusively experienced by women. Data collected in Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) and by projects that support male victims of domestic abuse demonstrate this across Wales and evidences that violence has no boundaries in terms of geography, wealth, race, religion, disability,

age, gender identity or sexual orientation. It is recognised as encompassing, but is not limited to:

- Domestic abuse
- Rape and sexual violence
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced and child marriage
- Crimes in the name of 'honour'
- Human trafficking and sexual exploitation
- Sexual harassment
- Prostitution

3.2 There have been a number of documents that give a definition of domestic violence and abuse, however, for the purposes of this policy the definition published by the Home Office has been used. This definition of domestic violence and abuse includes young people aged 16 and 17 and wording to capture coercive control.

Definition

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

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or 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 is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their 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.

3.3 Honour Based Violence

This is a term used to describe a collection of practices which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural beliefs/and or honour. Such violence can occur where perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family or community by breaking their honour code and may include murder, fear of or actual forced marriage, controlling sexual activity, domestic abuse, rape, kidnapping, false imprisonment and forced abortion.

Such crimes cut across all cultures, nationalities, faith groups and communities. ***It is a fundamental abuse of human rights.***

3.4 What is Forced Marriage?

A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the full consent of both parties and where duress (emotional pressure in addition to physical abuse) is a factor. It is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage and the two should not be confused. In an arranged or assisted marriage, the families take a role in choosing and introducing the marriage partners, but the marriage is entered into freely by both people, without duress. In a forced marriage, this consent does not exist. ***It is an abuse of human rights*** and cannot be justified on any religious or cultural basis.

3.5 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a procedure that includes partial or the total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences. It is illegal in the UK and it is also illegal to arrange to send an individual abroad for this procedure. It is ***an abuse of human rights.***

4. FORMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

The following section sets out the various forms of abuse, which an employee may experience in an abusive relationship: (*Source: Women's Aid Federation*).

- **Physical abuse:** using weapons, punching, head butting, suffocation, hair pulling, kicking, slapping, strangulation, drowning, burning, sleep deprivation, rape and murder.
- **Psychological:** mind games, constantly moving the goalposts, blaming the other person for the abuse, blaming other factors in the

relationship for the abuse, undermining parental authority, telling the person they are mad.

- **Emotional:** saying no one else will want them, telling them that they are fat, ugly, stupid, lazy, sexually unappealing or a bad parent.
- **Economic:** no access to money (has to ask), no access to salary, child allowance or other benefits, not on the mortgage / tenancy papers, no access to the bank account.
- **Destructive criticism and verbal abuse:** shouting, mocking, accusing, name calling, verbally threatening.
- **Pressure tactics:** sulking, threatening to withhold money, disconnect the telephone, taking the car away, taking the children away, reporting the individual to welfare agencies unless they comply with the demands regarding bringing up the children; lying to friends and family, telling the individual that they have no choice in any decisions.
- **Disrespect:** persistently being put down in front of other people, not listening or responding when they talk, interrupting telephone calls, refusing to help with childcare or housework.
- **Breaking trust:** lying, withholding information, being jealous, having other relationships, breaking promises and shared agreements.
- **Isolation:** accompanied everywhere for example, shopping, doctors, locked in, allowed out for time periods only, not allowed contact with friends / family, leaving visible signs of injury to embarrass and deter from going out, monitoring or blocking telephone calls.
- **Harassment:** being followed or being checked up on, opening mail, repeatedly dialing 1471 to see who has telephoned, embarrassing them in public.
- **Threats:** making angry gestures; using physical size to intimidate, shouting down, destroying possessions, breaking things, punching walls, wielding a weapon.
- **Sexual:** bestiality, drugs, use of objects, rape, unwanted touch, pornography, buggery, forced sex with others.

- **Denial:** saying the abuse doesn't happen, saying the individual has caused the abusive behaviour, being publicly gentle and patient, crying and begging for forgiveness, saying it will never happen again.
- **Spiritual:** mocking religious beliefs, forced religion or not being allowed to practice own religion/beliefs.

Domestic abuse can vary in both frequency and intensity. Employees may experience a violent or abusive attack as a one off or rare incident, or more commonly, it can be part of a regular pattern of abuse of increasing intensity. Given that the pattern of domestic abuse is one of escalation, there is no level of abuse⁷ which should be viewed as acceptable or insignificant.

5. IDENTIFYING DOMESTIC ABUSE

Often an employee who is experiencing domestic abuse may be reluctant to tell people at work of their situation or approach a manager with their problem. Research has shown that an individual will on average experience 35 episodes of domestic abuse before they decide to seek help. Reasons for reluctance include:

- shame and embarrassment because of what is happening to them;
- cultural stigma – particularly from for women from certain black and minority ethnic groups;
- unsure of what help is available to them;
- unsure where they can go for help;
- fearful of doing anything that might make the situation worse;
- fear that their children may be taken away from them;
- belief that the abuse will stop.

A manager, therefore, may only become aware that an employee is experiencing domestic abuse related problems through employment issues such as frequent short-term sickness absences due to re-occurring physical injuries such as bruises and abrasions, fractured bones, lost teeth, internal injuries, gynaecological problems and miscarriages, or psychological and psychiatric problems such as depression and anxiety or

because the employee begins to under perform in their role, for no apparent work related reason.

By identifying an employee who is experiencing domestic abuse at an early stage, timely, appropriate support and assistance can be offered. Managers should therefore offer employees the opportunity to discuss personal issues, which may be affecting their health, performance etc. during each stage of the ABUHB Sickness Absence and Capability Policies.

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. The manager should reassure the employee that any information they disclose as part of these meetings, will be treated in confidence unless it becomes clear that an individual or a child is placed at serious risk. 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, managers should develop a sensitive, empathetic and non-judgemental approach. 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 this state even the slightest hint that the manager is sceptical about their story or feels that they are in some way responsible for the situation can drive the employee back into isolation. The manager's role is therefore crucial.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Manager's Role

- Respond in a manner that reassures the employee that they recognise that domestic abuse is wrong, it is a crime and not the employee's fault.
- Take the employee seriously, taking time to listen to them and believing what they tell you;
- Ensure that any discussion about the employee's situation takes place in the privacy of an office and that you will respect their confidentiality as far as possible.

The manager may keep a diary note of the discussion, if the employee does not object, given the sensitive and confidential nature of this information.

- Understand that the employee may not wish to discuss the matter in detail with them, but prefer to involve a colleague, staff side representative or a Human Resources Manager who will be able to advise them of where they can go for help and how to contact local services.
- Be aware that there may be additional issues faced by the employee because of their age, gender identity, sexuality, ethnic background, religion / beliefs, disability etc.
- Be non-judgemental, as the employee may need some time to decide what to do and may try many different options during the process. Research has shown that it can take a long time to break free of an abusive relationship. The manager should not assume that because the employee returns or stays in an abusive relationship that the abuse is not severe or does not take place.
- Offer support and explore the possible options with the employee (see Section 8). A list of support agencies for women and men is attached in Appendix 1 of this document.
- When advised of a case of domestic abuse, the manager may seek help and advice from a member of the Human Resources Department.

A manager's guide to asking appropriate questions of an employee they suspect may be experiencing domestic abuse is set out in **Appendix 2** of this document.

6.2 Role of Human Resources (HR)

HR can provide advice to managers who are supporting staff who are victims of domestic abuse. They may also be contacted directly for advice and support by members of staff who are victims of abuse or by colleagues who wish to be supportive of a colleague, but are unsure of what they can do. In line with the policy review cycle the human resources team will review and update other relevant HR policies, procedures and practices that are linked and could affect the implementation of this policy.

6.3 Role of Employees

All employees have a part to play in tackling domestic abuse. Behaving in a supportive way by listening and by being non judgemental can give the victim confidence to tackle and report the problems that they might experience. Sign posting them to the Live Fear Free Helpline will support them in getting the help they need.

Staff should undertake the training on offer commensurate with their role. All staff are required to undertake VAWDASV Group 1 awareness-raising training.

6.4 Ensuring the Employee's Health and Safety

The responsibilities of ABUHB, managers and employees and others are defined in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. ABUHB 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. Please refer to the ABUHB's Policy and Procedure for Incident Reporting.

The procedures outlined in the Incident Reporting Policy will apply to most situations of abuse in the workplace. Managers, however, may have to consider additional factors if these incidents occur as a result of domestic abuse, which spills over into the workplace. These incidents may involve the violent partner or ex-partner visiting the workplace, making abusive telephone calls or sending abusive emails, and / or other acts of intimidation or harassment.

If such situations arise, these issues should be addressed by implementing the following measures as appropriate:

- 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 if they were a patient/ service user etc.
- Provide a copy of any existing orders against the abuser and a photograph of the abuser to reception and security staff.
- Where appropriate 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 staff that they must not divulge information about employees, especially personal details such as addresses, telephone numbers or shift patterns etc.
- Check that staff have arrangements for getting safely to and from home.
- Review content of personal information, such as temporary or new addresses, bank or health care details.
- Review the employee's next of kin information – the ex-partner may still be listed.
- 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.
- Agreeing with the employee what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if the abusive partner / ex-partner telephones or visits the workplace.
- Identify a work contact for support and an emergency contact should the organisation be unable to contact the employee.
- 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/department, consider how risks can be minimised by changing their duties or allowing another colleague to accompany them on certain journeys for example. (Refer to Lone Worker Policy).
- In keeping with the ABUHB's Incident Reporting Policy, a record should be made 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 ABUHB if they decide to apply for an injunction, if the action of the alleged perpetrator impinges on the health and safety of a member of staff or service provision.
- Further advice on safety in the workplace may be sought from the ABUHB Health and Safety Team.

N.B. 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.

6.5 Employee Confidentiality

Once an employee has confided in their manager or a member of the Human Resources Department that they are experiencing domestic abuse, they should be reassured that this information will be kept confidential, as far as reasonably practicable.

An exception to employee confidentiality would arise if the employee indicates that their children are also experiencing abuse. For example, that children may be or are at risk from physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect. Also, if the employee or another adult was at risk of serious harm / death.

In these circumstances the manager must inform the employee that they are obliged to seek further advice from the ABUHB's Corporate Safeguarding Team, or from Social Services (or the Police, if they are at immediate risk).

Managers have a duty to maintain a secure environment for all of their employees. When they become aware that one of their employees is a victim of domestic abuse, it may be easier to maintain the secure working environment if all employees within the department are aware of the problem and potential risks. It is however, essential that the manager agrees with the employee concerned, how much and what information, if any, their colleagues will be told.

Managers should remind their employees that this information is confidential and any unauthorised breaches of this information could result in disciplinary action being taken.

This is important, as the consequences of breaching confidentiality could have serious effects for the employee experiencing domestic abuse.

Statistics have shown that the risk of more serious assaults, permanent injury and murder take place when a victim of abuse decides to confide in others or decides to leave or immediately after leaving home. It is therefore important that the manager and the employees do not underestimate the dangers or assume that the fear of abuse by the employee is exaggerated.

6.6 Child Protection Issues

There is a considerable overlap between domestic abuse and its effect on children. According to child protection experts, there is significant evidence that demonstrates that men who are abusive to their female partners are more likely to physically abuse their children. In some instances the children may also be injured in the course of an assault on their mother.

As previously noted in this policy, abusers may use pressure tactics, such as threaten their victim that their children may be taken into care if the abuse is reported. Consequently, it is vital to deal with issue of child protection sensitively when discussing suspected domestic abuse with employees.

When dealing with suspected cases of domestic abuse, the manager should establish if the employee has any children living at home and if so assess whether there's a need to make a child protection referral. Advice should be sought from the ABUHB's Safeguarding Children Team and the All Wales Child Protection Procedures followed.

If child abuse is suspected by the manager, they should refer to the ABUHB's Safeguarding Children Team, and the All Wales Child Protection Procedures followed.

7. SPECIAL LEAVE

The ABUHB has a Special Leave Policy, which has provisions to allow for a period of paid or unpaid leave to deal with situations of domestic emergency, at the manager's discretion. Managers should therefore deal sympathetically with a request from employees who have disclosed that they are experiencing domestic abuse, for reasonable time off.

Managers should also deal sympathetically with requests for time-off from these employees, to arrange appointments during the normal working day. These appointments may include:

- appointments with support agencies, such as specialist support services, Social Services, Counsellors, etc;
- arranging re-housing;
- meetings with solicitors; and / or
- making alternative childcare or education arrangements.

Managers should also explore other supportive, flexible working options which are contained within the ABUHB's Flexible Working Policy, to assist employees who are experiencing abuse, if they feel this is appropriate.

Employees will be entitled to special leave to attend civil or criminal court hearings as a witness, if they have been called under a subpoena or a witness summons. They will also be entitled to special leave if they are required to attend court to seek an injunction against their abusive partner / ex-partner.

Managers must record applications for special leave in accordance with the ABUHB's Special Leave Policy.

8. OTHER SUPPORTIVE MEASURES

An employee who has decided to leave or has recently left an abusive partner may face considerable financial hardship. If an employee raises these matters with their manager, they should be referred to their local Credit Union for confidential and impartial financial advice and assistance. Such a referral may be made regardless of whether the employee is an existing member of the Credit Union. Additional free advice and support can also be sought from the Consumer Credit Counselling Service or Citizens Advice.

If an employee discloses to their manager that their partner has access to their finances or is exerting economic pressure upon them, they should be advised to contact the Human Resources Helpline for advice and the ABUHB's Payroll Department to discuss an alternative method of salary payment. Bank details can be changed via ESR.

It may also be appropriate to refer the employee to the ABUHB's Occupational Health Service and Employee Wellbeing Service for

professional support and signposting to other services. The Chaplaincy service is also able to provide support.

9. DEALING WITH STAFF WHO ARE PERPETRATORS OF ABUSE

Domestic abuse, and other forms of abuse which fall within the VAWDASV umbrella are viewed to be unacceptable behaviour, and will therefore not be tolerated by the ABUHB. Employees of ABUHB should also be aware that such abuse is a serious matter that can lead to criminal convictions.

If ABUHB is informed of incidents of such abuse that occur outside of the workplace, whether it leads to a criminal conviction or not, it can also lead to disciplinary action being taken against an employee.

This is because of the employment implications, as it undermines the trust and confidence in the employee. Such action, if taken would be in accordance with the ABUHB's Disciplinary Policy.

Any disciplinary investigation of this nature would include the following factors:

- the nature of and the seriousness of the conduct;
- the nature of the work undertaken by the employee concerned;
- the extent to which it involves contact with other employees or members of the general public; and

In addition such conduct may make certain duties inappropriate and justify consideration for redeployment. For example it may be inappropriate for a perpetrator of domestic abuse to be providing services to vulnerable adults or children and therefore a change of duties or transfer may need to be considered in such circumstances.

Proven harassment and bullying of a ABUHB employee by their partner or ex-partner, who is also employed by the ABUHB, will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the ABUHB's Disciplinary and/or Dignity at Work Policy.

In the event of any of the above circumstances coming to the attention of a manager, they should immediately inform the Human Resources Department of the situation, to seek appropriate advice, regarding the appropriate course of action to take.

Perpetrators of abuse may contact the Human Resources Department, to seek information and advice regarding where they can go for help. The

Live Fear Free Helpline has information on perpetrator programmes (Tel: 0808 8010 800).

10. TRAINING

Wales has introduced the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. To ensure the effective implementation of the Act there is a National Training Framework (NTF) which outlines the training required for staff at **all** levels.

It is vital that relevant staff working within the Health Board are skilled in recognising potential indicators of such violence and abuse, and feel competent and confident to offer support and take appropriate action commensurate with their role.

ABUHB will aim to raise awareness of VAWDASV and provide training, as appropriate, through the following measures;

- publicising the ABUHB's Policy on Domestic Abuse;
- implementing the National Training Framework
- displaying posters with helpful information on employee notice boards, intranet site, social media and in toilets and staff rooms etc;
- asking Trade Union colleagues to raise awareness of the policy among their members;
- inclusion of issues relating to domestic abuse and other forms of VAWDASV in relevant in-house training sessions, such as Dignity at Work, Special Leave, Child Protection etc;
- provide information on dealing with domestic abuse in the workplace, in the ABUHB's Corporate Induction.
- publicising specialist domestic abuse training via the Intranet Safeguarding pages, and Safeguarding Newsletter.
- working collaboratively with other external partners to publicise other relevant training available.

11. MONITORING AND EFFECTIVENESS

Annual review of the policy via the Safeguarding Group. This will include consideration of any feedback on the use of the policy and any updating required.

12. FURTHER INFORMATION

There is a range of further information and useful telephone numbers in the Appendices.

13. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This policy has undergone an equality impact assessment screening process using the toolkit designed by the NHS Centre Equality & Human Rights. Details of the screening process for this policy are available from the policy owner.

14. REFERENCES

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

The National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: Statutory guidance under section 15 of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and section 60 of the Government of Wales Act 2006

Home Office (2013) Definition of Domestic Violence

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-government-domestic-violence-and-abuse-definition>

Health and Safety Executive (1974) Health & Safety at Work Act.
Equality Act (2010).

Local Safeguarding Children Boards in Wales All Wales Child Protection Procedures

Equality and Human Rights Commission (2016) Domestic Abuse is your Business <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/domestic-abuse-workplace-policies-and-managing-and-supporting-employees>

Appendix 1

GETTING SUPPORT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

It is not easy for someone to accept that a loved one can behave in such an abusive manner. Because they can't explain their partner's behaviour, many people assume that they themselves are to blame. They are not. No one deserves to be abused, least of all by a partner in a supposedly caring relationship. It is the abuser's behaviour that needs to change; there is no excuse.

DOMESTIC ABUSE AND CHILDREN

Children who are exposed to or used in domestic abuse respond in different ways. They may show an increase in aggressive behaviour, emotional problems such as depression and/or anxiety, lower levels of social competence and lower levels of academic achievement. Children who witness traumatic events, such as domestic abuse, may feel helpless and see the world as unpredictable, hostile and threatening.

A crucial element in the way a child copes with the exposure to domestic abuse is the relationship with the non-abusive parent and that parent's ability to parent and keep themselves and the children safe. If that ability is compromised because of the abuse, support enabling that parent to meet the children's needs or a close relationship between the child and another caring adult may help.

DOMESTIC ABUSE AND TEENAGERS

Teenagers can be affected by domestic abuse either through exposure to domestic abuse in their own family or by becoming victims or perpetrators of abuse in their own relationships.

SEEKING HELP

The most important thing someone in an abusive relationship needs to do is to recognise that relationship for what it is and to tell someone about the abuse. For some the decision to seek help is quickly and easily made. For many the process will be long and painful as they try to stop the abuse and make the relationship work. The process of leaving an abusive relationship can be as frightening as the prospect of staying. People may return to their abusive partner a number of times before they finally make the break. Victims should always be reassured that they can ask for help again.

CRISIS PLAN

If an adult victim and children are in danger due to domestic abuse, they should leave immediately if possible and contact one of the agencies listed in this pack.

If there is time, it is advisable to contact the Live Fear Free helpline or involve one of the specialist support services (such as Women's Aid, Llamau, Hafan, Cyfannol etc) who will advise on a safety plan.

It is worth considering the following:

- When is it safe to leave?
- Is it possible to set aside any money for emergency use?
- Is it possible to pack a change of clothes for themselves and the children?
- Can they take identification such as passports, birth certificates, and bank details?

Can they take any items needed for babies, such as formula milk, nappies etc.

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP?

If someone is experiencing or has experienced domestic abuse, there are a range of organisations that can help. Agencies can provide information to enable victims to make decisions which are right for them. They also provide advocacy. They are not there to tell anyone what to do or judge the decisions made. They can also help to access other agencies. Information about what various agencies can offer, together with useful telephone numbers and addresses are provided here, but there are many others: libraries, local authorities and Citizens Advice Bureau are good sources of further information.

The Live Fear Free Helpline which is open 24hrs a day every day will be able to give you more information

Tel 0808 8010 800



The service is available in Welsh or English and has access to Language Line the 24 hour Interpreting Service.

Text phone users can contact the Helpline via **Type Talk on 1800108088010800**. It offers free confidential information and support to women and men experiencing domestic abuse. It is also an information service for people who are concerned about someone they know, and for agencies that need information on the support available in Wales for adults and children.

WELSH WOMEN'S AID

www.welshwomensaid.org

Welsh Women's Aid is a national umbrella organisation representing local women's aid groups situated throughout Wales. Welsh Women Aid can provide specialist training, support and information to member groups and outside organisations.

BLACK ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN STEP OUT (BAWSO)

www.bawso.org.uk

BAWSO are a specialist agency which can provide culturally sensitive and appropriate information and services to black and other minority ethnic groups.

WALES CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUS

The Citizens Advice Bureau Service offers free, confidential, impartial and independent advice on a range of issues including debt, benefits, housing and legal matters. Advisers can help you to fill out forms, write letters, negotiate with creditors and represent you at court.

CORPORATE ALLIANCE AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

www.caadv.org.uk

The corporate alliance aims to raise awareness and reduce the social and economic impact of domestic violence in the workplace. Working together their vision is to create a work environment where employees have the opportunity to seek practical support and advice and ultimately, take positive action to end domestic violence. Membership is open to any employer, trade union or representative body in the UK.

REFUGE

www.refuge.org.uk

Refuge is one of the largest single providers of specialist accommodation and services to women and children escaping domestic violence, supporting over 1,000 women and children every day.

RESPECT

www.respect.uk.net

Respect is the UK association for professionals, working with domestic violence perpetrators and associated support services. The organisation's key aim is to increase **the** safety of those experiencing domestic violence through promoting effective interventions with perpetrators.

BROKEN RAINBOW

www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

Every individual's experience of domestic abuse will be unique. However gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals are likely to face additional concerns around homophobia and gender discrimination. They may also be concerned that they will not be recognised as victims or believed and taken seriously. Abusers may also be able to control their victims through the threat of 'outing'

Broken rainbow provides support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic abuse.

DYN PROJECT

www.dynwales.org

The Dyn Project works across Wales to support men who experience domestic abuse.

APPENDIX 2

A MANAGERS GUIDE TO ASKING EMPLOYEE'S QUESTIONS ABOUT SUSPECTED DOMESTIC ABUSE

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. As it is not easy to ask or be asked personal questions about domestic abuse, it is important that the actual questions asked or observations made, put the employee at ease and that the manager helps them to feel comfortable about disclosing information on their experiences.

Such questions could be asked for example, during a routine return to work interview, following a bout of sickness absence, during an informal or formal sickness absence interviews or an informal / formal managing under-performance meetings etc.

If you feel you require further advice or guidance before dealing with such an issue, you should contact a member of the Human Resources Department.

Training that will support you

Undertaking the Group 1 Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness on line module is mandatory for **all** staff and Group 2 'Ask and Act' training is advised for those managing staff.

Indirect Questions

If a manager suspects that an employee is experiencing domestic abuse, they should ask the employee indirect questions, to help establish a relationship with the employee and develop empathy. For example:

- Are there any issues you would like to discuss with me?
- I have noticed recently that you are not yourself, is anything the matter?
- Is everything all right at work?
- Are there any problems or reason that may be contributing to your frequent sickness absence / under performance at work?
- Is everything all right at home?
- Are you being looked after properly?
- Is your partner taking care of you?
- Are you getting on alright with your partner at the moment?

(Source: Domestic Violence: A Resource Manual for Health Care Professionals in Wales)

By asking indirect questions it may prompt the employee to disclose information, if they are hesitant about opening up.

If the employee replies that there are no problems at home, but the manager continues to suspect that there may be a problem, as they have identified possible evidence or signs of domestic abuse, they should seek advice from the Human Resources Department or continue to ask if there are any problems at home, at appropriate meetings or ask more direct questions.

Direct Questions

The manager should ask 'direct questions' to prompt the employee to discuss any possible experiences of domestic abuse, if they are displaying signs of physical assault or injury. **The following questions must be asked with great sensitivity and care.**

This may be approached as follows:

"I am sorry to ask you this and I don't wish to cause you any offence, but I noticed that you have a number of bruises / cuts / burns etc. I know that in the UK, **1 in 4 women, or 1 in 7 men** experience domestic abuse in the home, can you tell me how you got your injuries"?

The following are some examples of follow up direct questions, which it might be useful to ask the employee, once it has been established that there maybe or is a problem related to domestic abuse:

- Have you ever been slapped, kicked/punched etc. by your partner?
- Do you feel frightened of your partner or someone else at home?
- Are you currently in a relationship where you are experiencing abuse or abuse?
- Does your partner lose their temper with you? If so what happens to you as a result?
- Has your partner threatened to hurt you or your children?
- Does your partner get jealous of you seeing friends, talking to other people, going out? If so what happens?
- Does your partner blame alcohol or drugs for the behaviour towards you?

(Source: Domestic Violence: A Resource Manual for Health Care Professionals in Wales)