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Foundation

Domestic Violence and Abuse: Working together to transform responses in the workplace



Foreword

Domestic Violence and Abuse

by Andrew Dunnett
Vodafone Foundation Director

The Vodafone Foundation began its work supporting those at risk of domestic violence over ten years ago. The Foundation, along with the Red Cross (Spain), was asked to create a mobile solution to support those at risk from violent partners. The TecSOS handset was created, which enables direct access to the police via an adapted handset, with the user being able to activate the device without saying a word. TecSOS has been used by over 81,000 people in Europe, over 13,000 of those in the UK, with 3,000 devices currently in use. The John Jay College of Policing evaluation of the Metropolitan Police programme demonstrated clearly that TecSOS not only helps reduce repeat violence, but is a critical factor in users being able to feel safer and conducting their lives beyond a climate of fear.

Arising from this work of how TecSOS technology is supporting those at risk, the Foundation was asked to fund a study to look at responses in the workplace to domestic violence. As little had been commissioned on this, the Trustees were happy to support this study, to be written by Durham University Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse (CRiVA) and with Ipsos MORI data. Given current discussions and considerations around a possible Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill, the authors summarise their research outlining legal, policy, organisational and research priorities.

I would like to thank the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse for engaging the Foundation in this work and CRiVA and Ipsos MORI for their research. The Foundation Trustees hope the enclosed study and research will break new ground in thinking through the role employers should play in supporting both the victim-survivors and the perpetrators of domestic violence.

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Written for The Vodafone Foundation by Professor Nicole Westmarland, with support from Professor Clare McGlynn, Katy Parkinson and Ana Maria Cirstea, using data collected by Ipsos MORI.

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Executive summary

Durham University Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse (CRiVA) and Ipsos MORI were commissioned by the Vodafone Foundation to conduct research to understand the barriers that prevent organisations from doing more to support employees who are experiencing domestic abuse, as victim-survivors or as perpetrators. This included interviews with four experts, a survey of 200 human resources directors/leads from large and medium-sized UK organisations, interviews with eight HR directors and an international review of current workplace responses to domestic violence and abuse.

The findings are encouraging:

86% of HR leads in medium and large UK organisations agree that employers have a duty of care to provide support to employees on the issue of domestic abuse, and nearly three-quarters believe that companies can empower victims by giving them guidance on how to deal with domestic abuse. HR leads in medium and large UK organisations that have had disclosures or who believe employees are affected by domestic abuse felt that domestic abuse had impacted upon their organisation in a variety of ways over the last 12 months (see below).

We asked affected companies about the impact of domestic abuse on employees in the past year***

54%

said it caused the quality of an employee's work to suffer

16%

said it caused an employee to leave the organisation

49%

said it caused lateness to work

56%

said it led to absenteeism

17%

said it caused security issues for other employees

However, despite this awareness, only 5% of organisations have a specific policy or guideline

in place to cover domestic abuse among the workforce. Lack of disclosures and the lack of an organisation's preparedness to receive disclosures have a cyclical relationship, resulting in low numbers of disclosures overall.



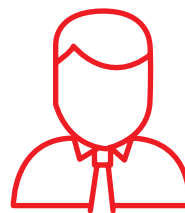
Over 1 in 4

women has experienced domestic abuse, as a victim, within their adult lifetime*



1 in just over 7

men has experienced domestic abuse, as a victim, within their adult lifetime*



For all medium and large organisations, there was an average of only

0.5

disclosures per organisation in the last 12 months**

* ONS, *Domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking*; year ending March 2016 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) self-completion module on intimate violence, asked of adults aged 16 to 59; release date 9 February 2017

Research by Ipsos MORI for the Vodafone Foundation, survey of human resources directors/leads from 200 large and medium-sized organisations in the UK; conducted between 19 June and 14 August 2017

** Base: all organisations answering number of disclosures (excluding 'don't know', 'there have been cases but not sure of the number' and 'prefer not to say') (179)

*** Base: all organisations that have had disclosures or who believe employees are affected by domestic abuse (69)

Given current discussions and considerations around a possible Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill, the report includes key recommendations across legal, policy, organisational and research priorities.

Recommendations

Legal



Provide a legal right to flexible working requests for those experiencing domestic abuse



Ensure statutory guidelines on PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) include mandatory education on domestic abuse and its effects



Introduce a minimum entitlement of ten days' paid leave in any year to an employee experiencing domestic abuse

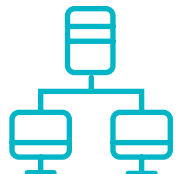


Ensure the role of the new Domestic Violence and Abuse Commissioner extends to reviewing and monitoring employer action, including in the private sector

Organisational



Given the central role of employee assistance programmes (EAPs) to some organisations, greater partnership working needs to take place



A UK National Resource Centre should be established to consolidate and share best practice



A national campaign should be developed to raise awareness of domestic abuse in the workplace and signpost to local support



Greater consideration, training and awareness raising is needed in the UK around health and safety responsibilities in relation to domestic abuse, including risk assessments of perpetrators

Research



Researchers should move beyond 'making the case' and seek funding for longitudinal work in partnership with organisations to develop the 'what works' literature in this field

This report and its recommendations aims to help employers recognise and identify the role they can play to address the issue of domestic abuse. This report is not intended to be a 'what to do' guide for employers – such guides and toolkits already exist. Rather, it is hoped that the recommendations can provide a springboard to the next level of action – a step change in the breadth and depth with which employers are willing or indeed required to recognise and respond to domestic abuse.

Background and research methods

In the 1970s, campaigners started raising awareness about the extent of domestic violence and abuse in society and its often devastating impacts. From the daily, coercive and controlling restrictions on a person's freedom to whole family annihilation we see reported as 'murder suicides', domestic abuse is all around us in the news, in our communities, our groups of family and friends, and in our workplaces. Over the decades, there has been an increasing awareness of the nature and extent of domestic abuse, and responses have become more mainstreamed. Policing and criminal justice, healthcare, and education are all sectors that have come to realise the role they must play in reducing violence and abuse in society. The time has now come for more employers to recognise and identify the role they can play. It is hoped that this report and its recommendations will help to fast track this process.

What is domestic abuse and why is it an employment issue?

The terms domestic violence and domestic abuse are used interchangeably to refer to a pattern of behaviour where one person uses violence, abuse, coercion and/or control over another person who they are or have been in a relationship with or who is a family member. It is a form of gender-based violence, whereby there is a disproportionate number of women and girls who experience it as victim-survivors and a disproportionate number of men and boys who perpetrate violence and abuse. However, men can and do experience domestic abuse in heterosexual or same-sex relationships and women similarly can and do perpetrate it. Therefore, it is important to be alert to the different dynamics and needs of male victims and of same-sex victim-survivors.

There exists a raft of evidence documenting the negative impact that domestic violence and abuse can have in the workplace. The use of 'interference tactics' whereby a perpetrator exerts control over a victim-survivor's employment or job opportunities is estimated to affect up to 75% of employed partner violence victims (Swanberg, Logan and Macke, 2005). At its most extreme, there are examples of women being killed in or around their workplace by their partners or ex-partners. Work-related stalking is also common, and can be a popular place to target victims because their work location often remains unchanged even if their home address changes (Chenier, 1998). Two high-profile cases of this include Jane Clough, who was knifed to death by her ex-partner as she arrived for work at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, and Clare Bernal, who was shot at work in Selfridges by an ex-member of staff who she had previously been dating.

At the organisational level, there is a large body of evidence that documents the costs – financial and otherwise – of domestic violence and abuse. Research has focused on victim-survivors and found that employees experiencing domestic abuse are more likely to be absent from work and have reduced job performance and productivity (Glass et al., 2016). Businesses may experience negative publicity if a serious incident occurs within the workplace (Duda, 1997). In England and Wales, £1.9 billion in economic output is lost annually through domestic abuse (Walby, 2009).

Only one study was found to specifically focus on job performance among abusive men (Mankowski et al., 2013). It found that different abusive behaviours had different impacts on the perpetrators' work performance, whereby the highest levels of domestic abuse tactics and interference techniques had the highest negative impacts on job performance. This study is limited to some extent in terms of generalisation, as it was based on men who were on court-mandated batterer intervention programmes with a high proportion (60%) of Latino men.

Research process and methods

In March 2017, Durham University Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse (CRiVA) and Ipsos MORI were commissioned by the Vodafone Foundation to conduct research that would link into a set of recommendations for law, policy and practice. This consisted of four phases that took place between May and September 2017:

- 1 In-depth interviews with four domestic abuse experts conducted by Ipsos MORI. Interviews were conducted by phone and lasted around 45 minutes.
- 2 A survey of 200 human resources directors/leads from large and medium-sized organisations in the UK, conducted by Ipsos MORI, using the CATI method consisting of 20-minute interviews. Data was weighted to be representative of the UK medium and large-business population by overall sector and region. The quantitative survey was supplemented by in-depth interviews with eight HR directors/leads in medium and large UK organisations, from a mix of regions and industry sectors. Interviews were conducted by phone, each lasting around an hour. The fieldwork dates were 15 May-14 August 2017.
- 3 An international review of the current landscape in terms of workplace responses to domestic violence and abuse – including policy and practice initiatives and academic studies – conducted by CRiVA.
- 4 A review of the first three phases to develop comprehensive, evidence-based recommendations to give the employment sector the necessary knowledge and confidence to move forwards.

About this report

The following sections in this report mirror the four phases above. *The expert view* section reports on the in-depth interviews and the *Views from the sector* section reports on the survey. The *Mapping the landscape* section presents the findings from the international review, and the report concludes in the *What next?* section with the key findings and recommendations.

The expert view – interview findings

“Very rarely have we seen or come across businesses who proactively thought ‘This is an issue that I should think about because it’s important and affects my staff’ despite the evidence base.”

(Interviewee)

The four expert interviews supported much of the existing literature in the field. They described seeing organisations acting only when there was either a particular activist within an organisation (for example, someone senior who was him or herself a survivor of domestic abuse) or if they had been in crisis because of an incident that had affected their workplace.

One interviewee suggested that it may be because of the gendered nature of domestic abuse that it is not getting the mainstream attention it needs; that it is being dismissed as a “women’s issue” – similar to the sidelining of issues such as breastfeeding and the menopause. From this perspective, tackling domestic abuse faces overlapping barriers – it is a topic that is considered sensitive and difficult to talk about (with similarities drawn with mental health) and it is also an issue that is gendered.

There was agreement between the interviewees that even for those organisations that do want to do something, they usually do so with a focus on victims, not on perpetrators. One interviewee who had supported workplaces on responses to domestic abuse explained:

“... largely I think they see domestic violence as a view of victimisation, not one of perpetration. So I think it is quite difficult, we found it sometimes quite difficult, to engage private sector companies on issues around helping employees who are possible perpetrators of abuse. They were much warmer around victim issues but reputational risk issues about employees who are perpetrators are more difficult to engage them on [...]. They don’t want to be seen as employing people who are violent against women.

... Preparedness means receiving the answer in a believing way. It means already knowing what your local service provision is, what your employment support schemes are, being able to give them information. There’s no point in asking someone and saying, ‘Oh right, I’ll go and find out, we’ll see what we can do.’ They need to feel that the person they’ve asked is able to support with information, with advice, with practical things. And they need to embed it, in a way that when it’s introduced everyone is told about it, but as each new person starts, it just becomes part of the set of all the policies.”

(Expert interview)

Another described work with perpetrators as “a whole different can of worms”.

In terms of what could be done, suggestions included policy development (with some support for including domestic abuse within wider employee wellbeing policies) and specific interventions, including the use of a resettlement budget for employee rehousing, training and the development of a toolkit. Examples of good practice were given, but these were felt to be ‘one-offs’ rather than part of a broad willingness for organisations to engage. In terms of perpetrators, it was suggested that time off work could be given for them to attend domestic abuse perpetrator programmes. One interviewee felt it should be treated no differently to time off needed to attend counselling for a mental health problem, or time to attend stopping smoking groups:

“This is an individual who has a condition for which we have a treatment intervention, they need work time to go and attend that.”

Therefore, the overall view from the expert interviewees was that there is good practice out there to be found, but we are a long way from a broad understanding of domestic abuse as an issue for employers to be taking seriously. Where good practice does happen, it is focused almost exclusively on domestic abuse victims. There is a need for good practice to be developed in response to perpetrators.

Views from the sector – survey and interview findings

This section describes the Ipsos MORI survey and interview data, showing that HR leads, while having a good level of awareness of the prevalence of domestic abuse in society and in principle recognising the employer's role in supporting employees who might be experiencing domestic abuse, tend to think their organisation is unaffected by the issue, have done little to implement formal processes for dealing with it and do not see it as a priority policy area in the immediate future.

Positive general attitudes to their role in responding

According to the Ipsos MORI data, there is reason to be hopeful in terms of the general attitudes that HR leads hold regarding the role of responding to domestic abuse.

- 86% agreed that employers have a duty of care to provide support to employees on domestic abuse.
- 74% agreed that companies can empower victims by giving them guidance on how to deal with domestic abuse.
- Only 9% agreed that it is a personal matter and not an appropriate issue for employees to raise with their employers.

HR leads in organisations that have had disclosures or who believe employees are affected by domestic abuse felt that domestic abuse had impacted upon their organisation in the following ways over the last 12 months*.

58% – an employee's productivity had declined

56% – absenteeism

54% – quality of an employee's work has suffered

51% – time off to seek professional help

49% – lateness to work

46% – impact on other work colleagues' productivity

36% – financial cost to organisation

25% – harassment/abuse has occurred at the workplace

17% – caused security issues for other employees

16% – caused an employee to leave the organisation

2% – damage to the reputation of the organisation as an employer

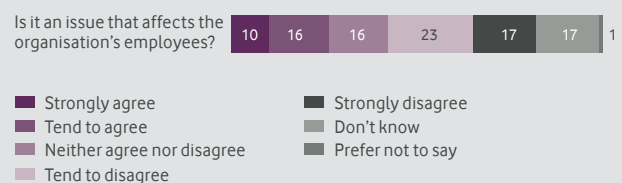
However, it is interesting to note that the financial cost to the organisation was seemingly not always seen as an obvious follow-on from the factors higher up, such as a decline in productivity among affected employees and their colleagues, absenteeism, work quality and lateness. The survey showed that 90% of organisations that have had disclosures or believe employees are affected by domestic abuse are not aware, even roughly, of the cost of domestic abuse to their business.

* Base: all organisations that have had disclosures or who believe employees are affected by domestic abuse (69)

Workplace 'NIMBYism'

The Ipsos MORI data shows a large degree of workplace 'NIMBYism' – whereby HR leads, on average, had a good understanding of the levels of domestic abuse in the community, but tended to minimise how much of it was happening in their organisations. It happens – but 'Not In My Back Yard', not in my organisation. There was also the perception that at a senior level within their organisation, domestic abuse is not seen as an issue that affects the organisation's employees.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following attitudes to domestic abuse exist at a senior level within your organisation? (%)

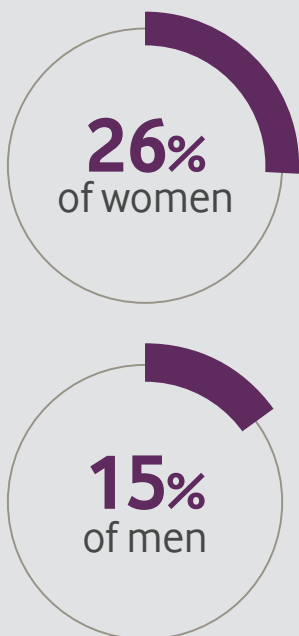


Base: all organisations (200)



57% agree that the attitude exists at a senior level within their organisation that there is a stigma attached to the issue of domestic abuse

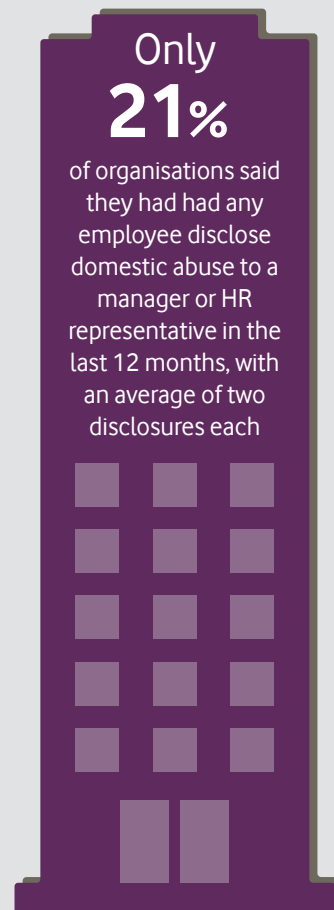
The proportion of people in the UK **estimated by HR leads, on average, to be victims of domestic abuse** during their adult lives:



On average, HR leads who were willing to estimate said **4%** of their workforce could be currently affected by domestic abuse*



Overall, on average, there were only **0.5** disclosures per organisation in the last 12 months**



Base: all organisations (200)*

* Base: all organisations giving estimate of employees currently affected (100)

** Base: all organisations answering number of disclosures (excluding 'don't know', 'there have been cases but not sure of the number' and 'prefer not to say') (179)

Limited action or intention to act

Only one in 20 (5%) HR leads said they had a specific policy or guideline in place to cover domestic abuse among the workforce, and around the same number strongly agreed that domestic abuse is an issue that is on the agenda for HR policymakers.

It is clear from the data that domestic abuse appears to sit outside of the more commonly developed set of 'duty of care' policies and guidelines that organisations have worked to develop.

Beyond adhering to employment statute, in which of the following areas has your organisation developed its own specific employee policy or guideline? (%)



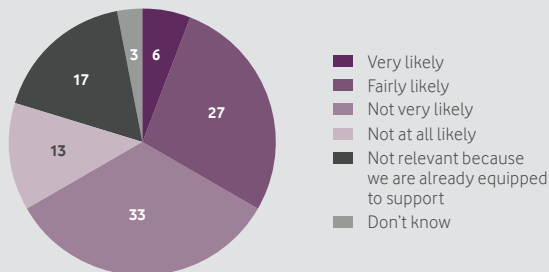
Note: bars do not total 100% due to rounding

* While 8% said they had developed their own policy, after domestic abuse had been defined only 5% said they actually had a specific policy or guideline to cover domestic abuse among their workforce.

Base: all organisations (200)

There was also a lack of intention to take steps to develop policy in the area of domestic abuse, with only a third describing it as very or fairly likely.

In the next 12 months, how likely or not is it that your organisation will take steps to develop policy to support employees experiencing domestic abuse, or do you think your organisation is already equipped to support employees experiencing domestic abuse? (%)

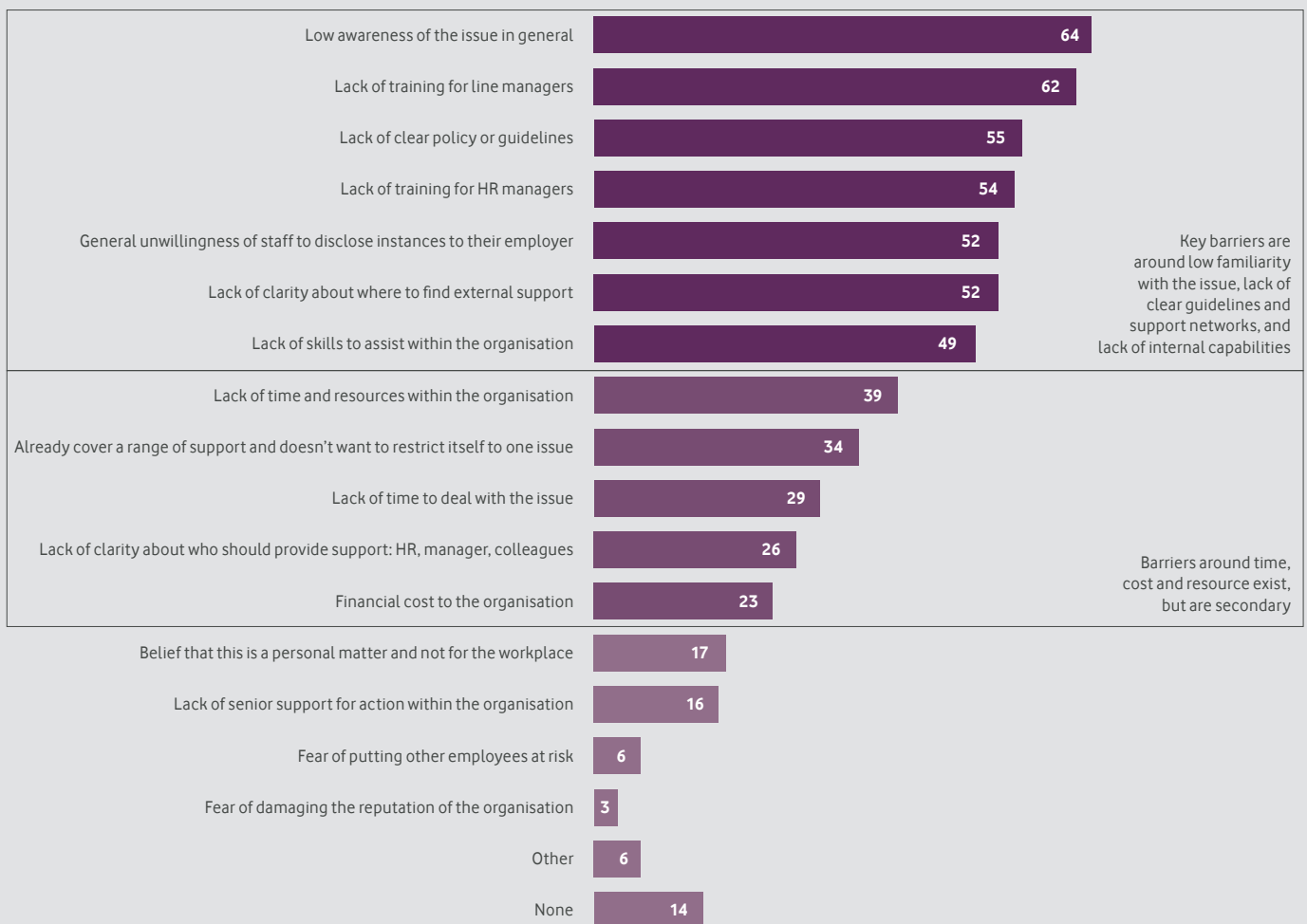


Base: all organisations (200)

Interestingly, of the 17% above who said they are already equipped to support, very few of these (just 11% of this 17%) actually have a domestic abuse policy or guideline in place.

The main barriers identified by HR leads in providing more support were a low awareness of the issue in general, a lack of training for line managers, a lack of clear policy or guidelines, a lack of training for HR managers, a perception of a general unwillingness of staff to disclose instances of domestic abuse to their employer and a lack of clarity about where to find external support. Time and resources within organisations appeared to be of secondary concern.

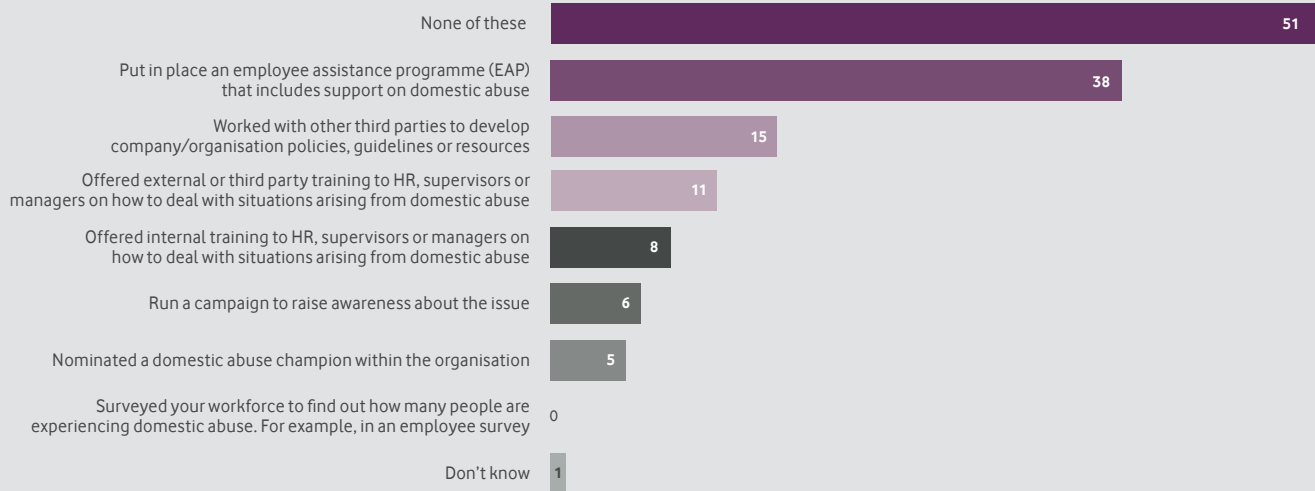
Please tell us which, if any, of the following barriers your organisation faces in providing more support to employees enduring domestic abuse? (%)



Base: all organisations (200)

In terms of actions that had been taken, the most frequent was to implement an employee assistance programme (EAP).

Has your organisation ever done any of the following things specifically to address the issue of domestic abuse amongst its workforce? (%)



In terms of intentions to act, just 6% strongly agreed and 20% tended to agree that it is an issue that is on the agenda for HR policymakers. As some of the HR leads who participated in an in-depth qualitative interview explained, this is partly a circular problem whereby the low numbers of disclosures feed into the limited activities, which in turn leads back into the low number of disclosures:

“Because we have had nobody raise the issue, I suppose ignorance is bliss and I don’t think we’re affected by it. But I don’t think we’re proactive enough in saying to employees that if anyone is going through this then we could help.”

(HR lead, Manufacturing Sector)

“I would be very concerned at the moment if we put posters up that employees would expect more than we could offer.”

(HR lead, Services Sector)

“I think it is the case that we don’t know it is going on because people are not disclosing it and we are not in a position to help.”

(HR lead, Services Sector)

There is therefore a funnel that exists whereby far more agree that there is a duty of care, understand it is not a personal matter and that companies can empower victims versus those who have a policy or are likely to take steps to develop one in the next 12 months.

Overall, despite the lack of barriers in principle, few organisations are ultimately prepared for disclosures (%)



Confidence to act

Some concerns within the organisation emerged about having the skills, knowledge and confidence to act. The majority of HR leads (54%) agreed that line managers would not know how to manage and support an employee who was experiencing domestic abuse.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about those who directly manage other employees in your organisation? (%)

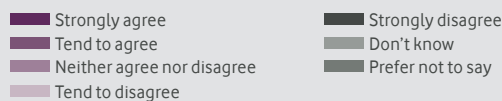
Line managers would not be confident discussing domestic abuse with employees for fear of doing or saying the wrong thing



Line managers would not know how to manage and support an employee who was experiencing domestic abuse



Line managers would not see handling a domestic abuse disclosure as part of their role



Base: all organisations (200)

When referring to the organisation overall, there were higher levels of confidence, with 69% very or fairly confident that their organisation would know how to manage and support an individual who was a victim of domestic abuse. However, confidence markedly drops when it comes to dealing with perpetrators. Where 69% say they feel confident their organisation would know how to manage and support an employee who was a victim of domestic abuse, this figure falls to 43% for a perpetrator. This attitude was reflected in the in-depth interviews, and echoes the findings from the expert interviews in the previous section:

“ I suppose from a human angle, people would have a lot of sympathy for a victim, and that would be consistent right across the organisation. Whereas I think for a perpetrator, while some people may admire the fact that they have come forward and want to sort themselves out, there would be others that would have no sympathy for them whatsoever.”

(HR lead, Services Sector)

“ We wouldn't be the experts in dealing with a perpetrator of domestic abuse, that would be down to the police to deal with that.”

(HR lead, Services Sector)

What could help?

When asked about what would help, for each of the following, HR leads said that they would be useful:



Base: all organisations (200)

Mapping the landscape – international evidence assessment

In assessing the international literature on this topic, it is worth first of all making the following general observations. First, that more of the literature is about documenting the effects of domestic abuse in the workplace and the potential benefits of acting ('making the case for intervention') than it is about developing an evidence base for particular interventions. Second, it is clear that North American researchers and workplaces are ahead in some ways in their thinking and action compared to the UK (though not in terms of employers leading on policy development, which is led by the UK). Third, that virtually all of the literature on this topic considers domestic abuse primarily and often exclusively in terms of primary victims, leaving children, other employees and – crucially – perpetrators largely out of focus. This means that there is a low volume of 'what works' evidence to review – particularly in relation to the UK. As such, this section is as much about mapping the landscape – what is happening that looks promising – as well as evaluating international evidence where available and where appropriate to do so.

Domestic abuse policy development

As the earlier sections have shown, many organisations do not have stand-alone policies or specific interventions around domestic abuse and are not actively working on the issue. However, where an organisation has identified domestic abuse as an issue for their workforce (and/or customers), one of the most frequent first responses is to write or adopt a specific workplace policy.

In the USA, Swanberg, Ojha and Macke (2012) conducted a content analysis of 369 state-level employment protection policies for domestic abuse victims. They found that such policies fell into three broad categories, according to whether they were primarily a) work leave policies (eg leave from work related to domestic abuse or sexual harassment, leave from work to attend court), b) policies that prohibit employers from discriminating against domestic abuse victims (eg protect against discrimination or retaliation, ensure right to benefits and wages), or c) workplace awareness and safety (eg employee awareness strategies, workplace restraining orders). Policies relating to a) leave from work and b) prohibiting discrimination were the most common. In relation to c) workplace safety and awareness, just three of the 369 policies they analysed covered employee education and awareness and ten covered workplace restraining orders.

The picture in the USA, therefore, appears to be one of a 'top down' approach – with individual states passing a variety of policies for employers to adhere to. Financial penalties exist for employers who do not comply, although these were found to be of a relatively low level (between US\$250–500). A similar audit has not been conducted at a UK level. However, a surface analysis suggests that UK policies are different in nature – consisting of a more 'bottom up' approach whereby (some) employers themselves are designing and implementing policies rather than them being government imposed. This has, perhaps not surprisingly, led to a greater (though not exclusive) emphasis on workplace safety and awareness rather than frameworks of leave from work and protection from discrimination. This 'bottom up' approach is supported by the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA), which is a network and provider of free resources to help its members (currently 120 UK employers) to share good practices.

While many workplace policies focus on victims and provide minimal information about responses to domestic abuse perpetrators who may be members of staff, Newcastle City Council worked with Respect to ensure that their policy was more comprehensive.

Newcastle City Council DV Policy

Newcastle City Council's 2013 Domestic Violence (DV) Policy for Staff includes a policy statement, aims and definition, as well as sections on the following: identifying and responding to victims; domestic violence officers; ensuring safety and confidentiality; special leave and other supportive measures; the perpetrator (discussed below); raising awareness; occupational health; and monitoring and review of the policy. The policy is supported by staff training.

There is a specific section within this policy titled 'The Perpetrator: what to do if you suspect a Newcastle City Council employee is a perpetrator of violence'. The policy reminds employees that domestic violence is a serious matter than can lead to criminal convictions and outlines four potential strands that should be considered:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- disciplinary action;
- facilitating access to specialist, safety-focused support and behaviour change services; and
- identifying risk.

It is noted that behaviour conducted outside work can still make certain work-related duties inappropriate and justification for dismissal. Similarly, it is highlighted that disciplinary action may be taken if there is harassment and intimidation by one employee against another employee who is or has been in a relationship. The policy cites improper use of email as an example of behaviour that may lead to such action being taken.


It is also important to remember that sometimes those that are tasked as part of their employment to respond to domestic abuse can also be victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse. North Wales Police have a 'Protocol for Handling Reports of Domestic Abuse, Violence against Women and Sexual Violence in the Workplace Involving North Wales Police Members', which undertakes to fully support colleagues and take action against the perpetrators.


Evidence summary: Research from the USA shows a largely 'top down' policy approach, in contrast to the 'bottom up' approach taken in the UK. A combination of the two would be the ideal situation.


Toolkits and guides


Linked to policy development, there exist a number of toolkits and guides that exist to support employers to develop their policy but also wider responses. Some of the most comprehensive are:

 **Refuge/Respect** – *Domestic violence resource manual for employers;*

 **Department of Health/SafeLives** – *Responding to colleagues experiencing domestic abuse: practical guidance for line managers, Human Resources and Employee Assistance Programmes;*

 **EHRC/Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development** – *Managing and supporting employees experiencing domestic abuse;*

 **Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales** – 'Domestic abuse is your business toolkit'; and

 **Public Health England/Corporate Alliance/Latimer Group** – 'Violence toolkit for businesses'.

Some of the trade unions have also developed toolkits and offer ongoing support. For example, UNISON provided a guide in 2015 entitled *Domestic violence and abuse: A trade union issue* and the Scottish Trades Union Congress developed a Women's Health and Safety at Work Toolkit.

There has been some research on the impact of UK-based toolkits and guides. The Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales toolkit was evaluated by GVA (2013). It found that the toolkit had helped raise awareness of domestic abuse in the workplace and the need to implement a staff policy, but that there was still work to be done to ensure a domestic abuse policy was in place for all public bodies in Wales. In particular, it found that strategic partnership had been important in ensuring leaders' support and for raising awareness of domestic abuse and the workplace. Although it was difficult to quantify the impact of policies that had been developed following the use of the toolkit, many organisations mentioned increased confidence of staff to report and confidence of line managers to respond. The evaluation of the

Refuge/Respect resource manual also found it difficult to quantify change in terms of the number of victims/perpetrators coming forward because of a lack of monitoring, but did find that there was evidence of a better understanding of domestic abuse and how to respond following the pilot in one large organisation.

Evidence summary: A number of toolkits exist, although some are now dated, and those that have been evaluated show a range of benefits, particularly in terms of awareness raising.

Training

A range of training has been implemented, in order for employers to 'Recognise, Refer, Respond and Record' (the '4 Rs' in the Refuge/Respect toolkit). Many domestic abuse organisations now run training on domestic abuse as an employment and HR issue, including Scottish Women's Aid and Zero Tolerance. Sometimes this training is 'stand-alone', sometimes it is underpinning a specific intervention such as ambassador/champion schemes (discussed next), or sometimes it is part of a holistic, whole systems-based approach such as in some of the toolkit approaches discussed earlier. In the UK, the Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence is a key provider of on-site training for employers, and their training sits as one option within a more holistic approach.

Evaluating the long-term impact of interventions such as training can be time-consuming, expensive and sometimes detract from the core delivery of an organisation. However, it is also very important to know whether what is being provided is actually making a difference.

Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence (UK)

The Corporate Alliance was founded in 2005 and is a membership organisation that works with employers to lessen the impact of domestic violence in the workplace. They estimate that they reach 5 million employees in the private, public and third sector per year, reducing the cost of domestic violence to the UK economy. They offer businesses the opportunity to undertake a self-assessment via their website, and also a more bespoke package consisting of assessment (policy review, gap analysis, awareness sessions, employee survey, etc) and development (new policies and implementation support, communications strategy, on-site training, rollout, evaluation, etc), and the option for businesses to be part of their ongoing campaign, including troubleshooting and maintenance support and continued work towards excellence.

For this, we rely on evidence from a large-scale, longitudinal study from Oregon, USA. Glass et al. (2016) evaluated the effectiveness of training on 'intimate partner violence and the workplace' by comparing 14 intervention counties with 13 control counties across Oregon. Oregon had passed an intimate partner violence leave law in 2007, which provided victims with reasonable unpaid work leave, but research had found that few supervisors had been trained or had awareness of the law (Laharnar et al., 2015). The training was computer-based in format, and had previously been developed and piloted with 300 survivors and 200 perpetrators (Glass et al., 2010). The training covered defining inter-personal violence (IPV) in the workplace, survivors and perpetrators in the workplace, how IPV affects the workplace, positive workplace climate: supervisor support for survivors, Oregon's protective leave law and developing an IPV workplace policy. The main way they assessed change was through a 21-item 'Workplace Climate Towards Domestic Violence' measure. They found statistically significant increases in the provision of IPV leave information to employees as a result of the training, and on supervisors' knowledge. Workplace climate towards IPV was also improved, and this was maintained over time.

Evidence summary: There is international evidence that demonstrates the positive effects workplace training can have, but there is also the need for some UK-based longitudinal outcome studies.

Domestic abuse ambassadors and/or champions

Having specific, named, people/positions that people can approach to discuss domestic abuse is a relatively new development in the UK. The 'Ask Me' intervention, led by Women's Aid, highlights that many victim-survivors are not formally engaged with services, and they may feel that there are limited opportunities to talk about domestic abuse. It trains people to become 'ask me ambassadors' – either as an individual or as part of a business. The ambassadors are then asked to play a role in 1) breaking the silence, 2) raising awareness, and 3) responding respectfully to disclosures. The scheme was launched in 2016 and is currently being evaluated.

Another example is the organisation Male Champions of Change in Australia, which started off in 2010 concerned with increasing women's representation in leadership and in 2015 widened its concerns to workplace responses to domestic and family violence in its report *Playing our Part*. Affirming that gender-based inequality is both a cause and consequence of domestic abuse, the organisation states: "We realise now that we can't champion gender-balanced leadership without addressing domestic and family violence, whose victims are overwhelmingly women."

In the UK, one of the most developed (though not yet evaluated) workplace ambassador schemes is the Champions Network, which covers the Northumbria Police area.

Northumbria Domestic and Sexual Violence Champions Network

The Champions Network has trained over 780 Champions since its launch in 2013 across local authority areas. It chose to use the term 'Champions' because of its dictionary definition of 'a person who vigorously supports or defends a cause'. All trained Champions are part of the network, and are drawn from across the public, voluntary and private sectors.

The role of the Champions is to be a point of contact for their colleagues and to raise awareness around the issues of domestic and sexual violence and abuse in their workplace. Northumbria Office for Police and Crime Commissioner provides web-based facilities to allow communications across the Champions network, including the circulation of relevant promotional materials such as service provision leaflets and awareness-raising posters. They and the local authority also train the Champions to be a point of contact who can offer a confidential, sympathetic and well-informed response within the workplace. An internal evaluation in 2016 found that 36 victims had been supported by the 137 Champions who participated in the survey.

Evidence summary: Workplace ambassador/champion schemes are one of the ways that organisations in the UK have built upon training and policy approaches. More research is needed into the uptake and impact of such schemes.

'Target hardening' techniques

'Target hardening' is a popular form of situational crime prevention whereby the 'target' – usually a building – is made more difficult for an offender to access/damage. Examples in general crime prevention include installing toughened glass, alarms and emergency buttons, adding deadbolts to doors or fitting window bars. In the context of domestic abuse, it refers to options such as personal attack alarms, panic alarms attached to a police control room, the installation of safe rooms, improved lighting, and better door and window locks. Research shows that target hardening in the context of domestic violence can help victims feel safer (Hester and Westmarland, 2005).

In the workplace, target hardening the premises means adding security measures to make it more difficult for the perpetrator to access it (presuming he does not also work there/has been excluded from the premises). According to Savard and Kennedy (2013), 'access control' is important here. They suggest that security managers should look towards installing parking gates, electronic access control systems, reinforce doors and strengthen locks in order to increase the efforts needed for a perpetrator to successfully commit a crime. They also emphasise the importance of natural surveillance – 'having clear and direct sightlines' (p. 259) – particularly overlooking car parks, which can be common places to confront victims and sometimes commit fatal violence.

One example of a successful target-hardening intervention is that of TecSOS by the Vodafone Foundation.

Vodafone Foundation TecSOS handset

The Vodafone Foundation started working with Thames Valley Partnership in 2012 to help victims at high risk of further domestic abuse to connect more easily with the police. They connect via a free TecSOS handset that recognises and prioritises emergency calls and ensures the police can respond even if the victim is unable to speak. Following the Thames Valley pilot, the intervention was rolled out across 32 London boroughs within the Metropolitan Police Service.

Both the pilot and the rollout received positive evaluations. For example, Natarajan (2016) found that victims reported few problems with the phones and reported feeling more safe and secure; the police responded faster to TecSOS calls than to routine service calls or to non TecSOS domestic abuse calls; and offenders were more likely to be arrested and prosecuted, possibly deterring other offenders from committing domestic abuse.

Evidence summary: There is evidence that target hardening can help make victims feel safer, but more research is needed in relation to its use within the workplace.

Responsibilities under health and safety legislation

As already mentioned, there has been little ‘top down’ policy in the UK, meaning there are not currently any specific legal responsibilities that relate to domestic abuse, although there is obviously a general duty of care in relation to health and safety law. The four main areas of health and safety law that are relevant to violence at work are: Health and Safety at Work Act 1974; Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992; Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995; and Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996.

In the UK, there is arguably a gap in terms of the full consideration of how health and safety legislation could be developed/applied fully in relation to domestic abuse. Failing to see domestic abuse as potentially constituting a risk in terms of health and safety within the workplace was one of the problems that emerged within the Westmarland report into domestic abuse at University of Sussex (see <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/broadcast/read/38671>), and Sussex is unlikely to be alone in having this problem. The University of Sussex established a working group to respond to the Westmarland report, which has revolutionised its response to domestic abuse, including a new policy on definitions of violence, statement on violence, clarification of disciplinary procedures for perpetrators, the development of a staff-student and staff-staff relationship policy, and the empowerment of staff and students to respond.

In the USA, many states have enacted laws permitting employers to obtain restraining orders on behalf of the victim. In the state of Arizona, for example, employers can ask for an injunction against workplace harassment. If approved, this prevents the perpetrator from entering the employer’s property, contacting the employer or another employee. In British Columbia, a mandatory reporting requirement has been placed on employers, which requires them to take action if an employee’s health and safety is endangered – if there is an imminent threat they are required to contact a law enforcement agency and if it is non-imminent they are required to implement policies and an action protocol to manage the risk.

Evidence summary: In the UK, health and safety legislation needs to be fully applied in relation to domestic abuse. Mandatory reporting and the ability for employers to obtain restraining orders have been enacted elsewhere, but these have not been introduced in the UK and their impacts have not been researched.

Paid domestic abuse leave

There is currently no legal requirement in the UK to have paid leave for those experiencing domestic abuse, for example, to attend court, move house or attend legal appointments. However, this is a common requirement in some US states (as described earlier), has recently been considered in Australia, and some UK organisations have chosen to include it as part of their workplace domestic abuse policy. Others may include it under the banner of a more general ‘special leave’, but this would be more discretionary than for those who specifically name domestic abuse in policy.

Earlier this year in Australia, the Fair Work Commission rejected a bid by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) for ten days’ paid domestic abuse leave to be included in all modern workplace agreements, arguing that they were not satisfied it was necessary. Instead, they agreed that all employees should be able to have access to up to ten days’ unpaid family leave, which should include domestic abuse leave. While this fell short of what was hoped for in terms of paid leave, it did make Australia the first country to have a national right to unpaid family and domestic abuse leave. Despite this, in Australia in 2016 a survey of over nearly 5,000 private sector organisations, responsible for over 4 million employees, found that 12% had access to paid domestic abuse leave (despite it not being mandatory), and over half had access to some form of leave (Workplace Gender Equality Agency data).

There is no research in the UK about how many organisations currently offer paid leave, nor of those who do what proportion of employees take the leave. More research is available from Australia, where one of the key areas of disagreement on whether to introduce paid leave was what cost the initiative would have on employers, with different groups giving very different estimates of uptake. In terms of those employers who had already introduced the leave, the number (and therefore cost) is reported as low. A review by Stanford (2016) found that only 22 Telstra employees (0.001% of their 32,000-person workforce) had taken the leave in a two-year period, with an average of 2.3 days per employee.

Surf Coast council in Victoria reported that 354 employees had accessed their domestic abuse scheme, which offers up to 20 days' paid leave at a cost of AU\$2,324. Stanford estimated that only about 1.5% of female employees and 0.3% of male employees are likely to use paid domestic abuse leave provisions per annum. He estimated that the incremental wage payouts would be just 0.02% of existing payrolls and that such costs were likely to be largely or completely offset by the productivity benefits that this leave would bring.

Evidence summary: Employees in Australia have the right to unpaid domestic abuse leave, and some organisations in the USA, Australia and the UK (and likely elsewhere) are known to have paid domestic abuse leave schemes. Only Australia has researched the actual or potential financial costs of these, which have been found to be relatively low.

Employee assistance programmes

Employee assistance programmes (EAPs) are an employment benefit that were first introduced in the USA in the 1950s to help employees receive support on alcohol addiction. Now, they are also widespread in the UK, under the banner of the UK Employee Assistance Professionals Association (UK EAPA) and provide information, support and counselling for employees in relation to personal or work-related issues.

EAPs are able to provide employees (and sometimes their family members) with support if they are or have experienced domestic abuse. What they are able to offer varies, but often includes confidential counselling, referrals to external sources of support and financial advice. Internationally, some EAPs have specialist domestic abuse coordinators who can provide advocacy, counselling, safety planning, support groups and liaison with work-based security departments. The UK EAPA is a member of the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse. It is not known how many EAPs in the UK have specialist domestic abuse staff, or how skilled EAP workers are at safety planning and risk assessment. One of the benefits of using an EAP for domestic abuse is that it may allow a more anonymous way for employees to seek help if they are feeling embarrassed about raising it directly in their workplace. One of the risks is that employers begin passing all responsibility for domestic abuse over to EAPs and fail to implement holistic approaches of their own. However, with EAPs increasingly becoming a key part of an employer's health and wellbeing strategy (almost half of the UK workforce now has access to an EAP), their role is arguably a central one that has not been given the attention needed to date.

Evidence summary: EAPs are located in an important position to respond to domestic abuse by and against employees, but more information on their approach is needed.

Corporate partnerships and campaigns

A number of organisations have developed partnerships, for example, Women's Aid have built partnerships with Avon, Stella & Dot and the Co-operative Energy to name but a few. The benefits of such a partnership can work both ways, raising funds for the domestic abuse charity while providing training and other domestic abuse expertise and potentially improving brand reputation for the corporate partner.

Some partnerships include specific interventions or requests, rather than simply linking to a product. For example, in the Body Shop's campaign with Refuge, the Body Shop sold badges to raise funds but also encouraged customers to recycle their mobile phones in store, which raised £2.75 per phone. As mentioned earlier in this section, the Vodafone TecSOS handset is another example of a specific intervention.

Liz Claiborne Inc. (USA)

Liz Claiborne Inc. is a multi-billion dollar company founded in 1976. According to case study research by O'Leary-Kelly et al. (2008), Liz Claiborne Inc. started its campaign around domestic violence as a form of promotional corporate social responsibility (CSR). This approach has the dual benefit of showing that a company is not solely about profit and legal obligations, but such a campaign may also have a beneficial knock-on effect on sales and company image. What started off as a 'straightforward cause marketing campaign' (p. 64) in the 1990s soon evolved, however, and there developed 'an authentic interest in the issue itself and a pride that the company was tackling such a difficult social problem' (p. 64).

As the project and 'authentic interest' grew, O'Leary-Kelly et al. documented how the focus began to shift to an internal concern about the corporation's employees. In the context of this being the early 1990s, this was argued to be a bold and innovative move. The internal approach consisted of educational workshops for employees, a company policy and promotional material on other available resources.

Being one of the earliest corporations to address intimate partner violence internally on top of their marketing campaign has led Liz Claiborne Inc. to be seen as a corporate leader on the issue in the USA.

Evidence summary: A number of corporate partnerships and joint campaigns have been developed in the UK. Those that are seen as corporate leaders go beyond a basic marketing campaign and build a two-way partnership with internal and external-facing resources and communications.

Perpetrator interventions

Some workplaces in the USA, including the military, have introduced their own dedicated perpetrator programmes (known as ‘batterer intervention programmes’). One of the key studies on the effectiveness of such programmes was conducted using a workplace-based sample of Navy servicemen and is widely known in criminology as the ‘San Diego Navy experiment’ (Dunford, 2000). In this experiment, three different 12-month interventions were introduced for servicemen who had physically assaulted their female partners. Although these interventions did not show a significant reduction in their use of physical violence when compared to a control group, this experiment is relevant here because it shows that perpetrator interventions can be delivered within the workplace. More recent research, although not based on workplace-based programmes, has shown promising results in terms of the potential of domestic abuse perpetrator programmes. Kelly and Westmarland (2015) found that domestic violence perpetrator programmes could create positive change across a number of measures, with physical and sexual violence in particular reducing substantially following attendance at a programme. In the UK, Army Welfare Services are currently piloting a perpetrator programme based on 20 individual sessions.

Evidence summary: A limited number of perpetrator interventions exist within the workplace. However, there is evidence outside the workplace of the positive changes that can be created through domestic abuse perpetrator programmes.

Holistic approaches

Many of the approaches already mentioned within this section can be considered holistic approaches. Holistic approaches are those that are internally and externally facing and have a number of strands to their approach, including a policy (which may include domestic abuse leave), training, champions/ambassadors, coordinators, good multi-agency links, and support and resources for both staff and customers/clients.

One of the ways that such an approach might be recognised is via a charter scheme. Such a scheme has been established in Northern Ireland, where ONUS (a Women’s Aid spin-off) runs a scheme whereby organisations can be recognised as a bronze, silver or gold Safe Employer. A number of Northern Irish organisations have participated in this, including housing associations, city councils and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. This is a good way of having a standardised framework across organisations and a means of recognising and promoting best practice.

One UK organisation that has developed a particularly comprehensive response both inward and outwards facing is Gentoo Housing.

Gentoo

Gentoo is a housing organisation in the northeast of England that manages 29,000 properties. Gentoo recognises that housing has a wide range of information at its disposal and is therefore ideally placed to support victims and tackle perpetrators. It takes a proactive approach to domestic abuse in terms of its customers and in terms of its employees. For example, it has a dedicated domestic abuse business manager, provides a free legal clinic for staff (accessed by over 70 people since 2015), has access to a domestic violence perpetrator programme for staff and their clients, and allows paid leave to attend the perpetrator programme the Freedom programme for victim-survivors or to attend court or other appointments. It has a domestic abuse policy and 25 trained domestic and sexual violence champions as part of the Northumbria approach described earlier. As well as the Champions, all managers attended a mandatory ‘Justice for Jane’ session to set a key message from the CEO that domestic abuse was a workplace issue. Screenings of the docu-drama *Murdered by my Boyfriend* and a Q&A with the director were given, which resulted in more disclosures and more volunteers to be Champions.

Gentoo has gone on to play a central role in leading the housing sector’s response to domestic abuse through the business manager’s role in setting up the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA). Domestic abuse is kept on the agenda by regular news items within the internal staff newsletter, and there is a leaflet for all new staff members that details the support that is available to them. The leaflet recognises that: ‘For some staff, the workplace is a safe haven and the only place that offers a route to safety.’

Evidence summary: Holistic approaches are those that are internally and externally facing, and have a number of strands embedded in their approach.

The final section considers what recommendations should be made following the findings of this and the previous two sections.

What next? Conclusions and recommendations

Many of the interventions identified in the previous section operate at an organisational rather than a broader structural level. They give us hope and encouragement that things can be done to improve matters in individual cases. They demonstrate what can be done to make a difference and stand as beacons of best practice. However, the Ipsos MORI data reported in *The expert view* and the *Views from the sector* sections of this report show that this may not be enough. There exists a generally good awareness among HR leads of medium and large businesses of domestic abuse in society and some of the problems that not tackling it in the workplace can lead to. However, when they look inwards rather than outwards, the problem seems to diminish. Domestic abuse exists 'out there' but not so much inside their own organisation. The harms of domestic abuse are well known, but the intention to do anything about it in their own organisation remains minimal.

The rest of this section is divided into three areas: legal, organisational and research opportunities.

Legal opportunities

This report comes at an opportune moment with the Government currently consulting on the scope and content of a new 'landmark' Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill. In particular, the Government is recognising that there is 'no single solution to ending domestic abuse' (Home Office 2017). Further, the Home Secretary has stated that:

“[tackling domestic abuse] requires a multipronged approach which includes legislation, a concerted police response and a culture shift across agencies and within our communities”.

This provides the opportunity to emphasise the role of employers, and the importance of the employee-employer relationship, in helping to support those experiencing domestic abuse and engage in prevention activities. This approach chimes with the recently published Ofsted report on domestic abuse that called for a step change in responses to domestic abuse, focusing on prevention and support beyond the justice system (Ofsted, 2017).

Accordingly, the new Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill provides the opportunity to enshrine in law a number of key provisions enabling those experiencing domestic abuse to better manage their experience in a supportive workplace environment. There are particular opportunities around a) flexible working, b) special circumstances/domestic abuse leave, c) education in schools, and d) the role of the new Commissioner.

Recommendation 1: Introduce a new provision in the Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill that amends the current law such that: there is no minimum qualifying period before being able to ask for flexible working for those experiencing domestic abuse; and those experiencing domestic abuse may make more than one application for flexible working in each year.

At present, employees are able to ask for flexible working from their employer if they have been continuously employed for over 26 weeks (Employment Rights Act 1996, as amended). They are entitled to make only one request a year. The employer has a right to refuse the request if they have good business reasons for doing so. The requirements of this policy may adversely impact on those experiencing domestic abuse. For example, they may be in need of changing working conditions before they have been employed for 26 weeks. Or they may make a request to change conditions (that is refused), but later experience domestic abuse and seek changes to their conditions before the 12-month limit has passed.

Recommendation 2: That a new provision is included in the Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill that provides that the Government introduce a minimum entitlement of ten days' paid leave in any year to an employee experiencing domestic abuse. This must be paid leave (equivalent to annual leave and sick pay) with job protection. Many employers currently offer their employees sick leave, annual leave or compassionate leave where they are experiencing domestic abuse. This may be necessary for such matters as attending medical appointments or dealing with legal claims. Examples of best practice described in the *Mapping the landscape* section include employers granting additional paid leave where their employee is experiencing domestic abuse.

In view of the time required to deal with domestic abuse, including the physical and mental effects and managing legal and other processes, it is recommended that current laws on family and annual leave are extended to grant those experiencing domestic abuse additional leave. This leave should be treated in the same way as entitlements to holiday pay and sick pay, such that there is no qualifying period of employment before the entitlement commences.

Recommendation 3: That the statutory guidelines on PHSE include mandatory education on domestic abuse and its effects.

In order for the employers and employees of tomorrow to better understand domestic abuse and support those experiencing it, education in schools needs to be enhanced. Domestic abuse should be a compulsory part of school PHSE education programmes. While the Government has stated its commitment to the teaching of 'healthy relationships', regulations must ensure that this specifically covers domestic abuse.

Recommendation 4: Ensure the role of the new Commissioner extends to reviewing and monitoring employer action, including in the private sector.

The Government intends to create the role of Domestic Violence and Abuse Commissioner whose role will be ‘to stand up for victims and survivors, raise public awareness, monitor the response of statutory agencies and local authorities and hold the justice system to account in tackling domestic abuse’. It will be vital that this person is tasked with reviewing and reporting on employer actions to respond to domestic abuse, support employees and other prevention initiatives.

Organisational opportunities

While most of the work on this topic has been done so far at an organisational level rather than a legal or research level, there is still room for further development. It is proposed that a consolidation of good practice is developed via the following two recommendations:

Recommendation 5: A UK National Resource Centre should be established to consolidate and share best practice.

In writing this report it became clear that there is no single UK place that brings together all the toolkits, research and other resources that already exist. The US National Resource Center ‘Workplaces Respond’ (www.workplacesrespond.org) would be a useful model to replicate, which offers three routes into their freely available resources – as an employer, a survivor or co-worker, or as an advocate. The Employers’ Initiative on Domestic Abuse, the new Domestic Violence and Abuse Commissioner, and/or the Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence may be well placed to lead on this, in partnership with trade unions and organisations such as Women’s Aid, Refuge, Rape Crisis, SafeLives and Respect. The National Resource Centre could also introduce a kitemark/charter scheme to recognise and reward holistic approaches to responding to domestic abuse in the workplace following the Northern Irish ONUS model. It may be useful for a UK delegation led by the new Domestic Violence and Abuse Commissioner to visit initiatives in the USA, Ireland and Australia on a fact-finding mission.

Recommendation 6: A national campaign should be developed to raise awareness of domestic abuse in the workplace and signpost to local support.

In the *Views from the sector* section, we reported that low awareness of the issue in general was seen as the greatest barrier in providing more support to employees experiencing domestic abuse (listed as a barrier by 64% of HR leads). However, only 6% of organisations had run a campaign to raise awareness about the issue. When asked what could help, the top two answers were guidance on where to find local domestic abuse support and a national campaign to raise awareness of the issue of domestic abuse. A national campaign should be developed with space to customise posters and other materials with the details of local support services.

Recommendation 7: Greater consideration, training, and awareness raising is needed in the UK around health and safety responsibilities in relation to domestic abuse, including risk assessments of perpetrators.

Health and safety is usually associated with physical (and increasingly psychological) harms caused by the workplace. The vision as to what constitutes a health and safety concern has therefore been limited and not generally encompassing the impact and effects of domestic abuse. Nonetheless, it is clear that health and safety provisions do extend to situations where the employee is being abused or harassed in a workplace context, or the (in)actions of an employer exacerbate a situation making it potentially more risky. There is a need, therefore, for more awareness raising for employers on the health and safety implications of experiencing domestic abuse, including what ‘best practice’ looks like in terms of perpetrators.

Recommendation 8: Given the central role of employee assistance programmes (EAPs) to some organisations, greater partnership working needs to take place.

In the *Views from the sector* section, we described how the most frequent action that had been taken by organisations was to put in place an EAP that includes support on domestic abuse. With 38% of respondents listing this, this was by far the most frequent response. However, it is unclear what level of training EAP staff have, their level of partnership working with local and national domestic abuse organisations, or their ability to feed into local multi-agency risk assessment conferences given their national remit. There currently exists a disjuncture between the survey findings in the *Views from the sector* section (EAPs as the most frequent workplace response) and the evidence assessment in the *Mapping the landscape* section (more information about their approach is needed) that must be aligned.

Research opportunities

Recommendation 9: Researchers should move beyond ‘making the case’ and seek funding for longitudinal work in partnership with organisations to develop the ‘what works’ literature in this field.

Most of the UK research has focused on victim-survivors not perpetrators, and on ‘making the case for intervention’ rather than on establishing a body of ‘what works’ literature. Violence and abuse research teams should consider this report as a springboard on which to develop a research programme with questions relevant to the needs of employers and employees. Research should be focused on victim-survivors and their families, but also on perpetrators, colleagues and the workplace in coordinated multi-agency responses.

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