

Domestic Abuse and the Workplace



Guide for members

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How to use this guide

Every day, thousands of women and children experience domestic abuse. In the UK, almost one in three women aged 16-59 will experience domestic abuse in her lifetime.¹ Two women a week are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales alone.²

In education, women make up the majority of the workforce. It is therefore likely that in any school and college, at least one woman will be at risk of, or experiencing, domestic abuse.

Often the workplace can be a key place of safety for victims/survivors.³ Employers and unions in the education sector can play a vital role in recognising, identifying and implementing effective measures to prevent - and protect workers from - domestic abuse; and they can ensure that no survivor is penalized or discriminated against.

This guide provides important information on why domestic abuse is a core workplace and trade union issue. It gives practical advice on what we can do individually and collectively to support women and any worker experiencing domestic abuse in the workplace. It should be read alongside our [model policy](#) on domestic abuse.

We recognise that, as educators, many of you will also be concerned about children witnessing or directly experiencing domestic abuse. While this guide does not cover this issue, we recommend that you follow usual safeguarding processes in your school/college if you have child protection concerns. The NEU has also produced and endorsed a [range](#) of resources that will help you to teach about healthy and abusive

relationships. Our resources empower children and young people to disrupt sexism and misogyny that can be linked to patterns of domestic violence.

When you read through this guide you may have questions about what happens in your particular school/college or workplace to support victims of domestic abuse. There are likely to be collective issues that affect other members. In most circumstances, you should discuss the matter with your workplace representative initially as they will know what guidance and support is available for colleagues as well as whether similar concerns have been raised by other members. If you do not have a representative at the moment it would be a good idea to get members together to elect one. Further advice on this is available at neu.org.uk/become-rep

You can also contact your regional or Wales office about ways you can get involved in local activities organised by NEU women or about joining your local NEU women network.

If you believe that you or someone else is in imminent danger, ring the police on 999.

If you or a friend needs help call the freephone 24 hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247.

¹ [Office for National Statistics](#) (2019) Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: OFS

² [Office for National Statistics](#) (2019) Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2018: OFS

³ This guide uses both the terms 'victim' and 'survivor' depending on the context. We recognise that some people who have experienced abuse prefer the term survivor rather than victim, as survivor emphasises an active, resourceful and creative response to abuse.

What is domestic violence and abuse?

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse in the UK is: "Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality."⁴

Domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence; it includes a range of damaging behaviour which includes but is not limited to:

- **Verbal abuse**

Belittling, insulting, or demeaning someone with words – alone or in front of others.

- **Physical violence**

Any type of violence against someone such as pushing, hitting, punching, kicking, choking or using weapons.

- **Controlling behaviour**

Attempting to restrict who someone sees or talks to. Preventing them socialising with friends or family.

- **'Gaslighting'**

Persistently undermining or manipulating someone, so they doubt their own sanity or become convinced that they are the problem.

- **Financial abuse**

Taking control of someone's finances to deny them money and limit their independence.

- **Sexual abuse**

Rape (pressuring or forcing someone to have sex when they don't want to), touching or groping, making someone watch pornography.

- **Online and digital abuse**

Insulting or threatening someone via social media, messaging, or email; sharing or threatening to share intimate photos (image-based abuse).

- **Stalking**

A pattern of persistent and unwanted attention that makes someone feel pestered, scared, anxious or harassed. For example, making unwanted communication, using threats, or repeatedly following a person or spying on them.

- **Coercive control**

An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten the victim.

- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

All procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

- **Forced Marriage**

When a marriage in which one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

⁴ Home Office (2013) [Information for Local Areas of the change to the Definition of Domestic abuse and Abuse](#): Home Office

- **So called 'honour' crimes or honour-based abuse**

So-called honour crimes or honour-based abuse is when a crime or incident has been committed ostensibly to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community. This can involve emotional abuse, physical abuse, family disownment and in some cases, murder. In most cases there are multiple perpetrators from the immediate family, sometimes the extended family and occasionally the community at large.

Anyone can be affected by domestic abuse. However, in the vast majority of cases, domestic abuse is experienced by women and is perpetrated by men. Women are also more likely to be subject to more frequent and severe domestic abuse. That is why domestic abuse is defined internationally as a form of gender-based violence "directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately."⁵

For some groups of people, the inequalities they face in society (such as racism, disablism, homophobia and poverty) will compound the impact of domestic abuse and pose challenges to seeking support.



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Domestic abuse seriously impacts on children's safety, wellbeing and life chances. Children and young people can witness or be subject to domestic abuse in the family home as well as experience domestic abuse in intimate partner relationships. The NEU has exposed how commonplace patterns of sexual harassment and sexual violence are for young women in secondary schools and colleges. This work highlights how important education is for disrupting gendered patterns of violence for the next generation.⁶

The NEU believes that domestic abuse is a result of the unequal status and power between men and women. Sexist and misogynist norms legitimise and normalise violence against women and girls, limiting their opportunities and freedoms and denying their human rights.

⁵ [Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\) General Recommendation 19 \(1992\)](#)

⁶ NEU and UK Feminista (2017) ['It's Just Everywhere' A study on sexism in schools and how we tackle it](#): NEU

Domestic abuse and the workplace

Domestic abuse is a workplace issue. It is very likely that in any workplace, education staff will be affected by domestic abuse, either as a survivor, a perpetrator, or as a colleague working with someone who is experiencing, or has experienced, domestic abuse. A TUC report on domestic abuse in the workplace found that over 40 per cent of respondents had experienced domestic abuse themselves and nearly 20 per cent knew someone in paid employment who had experienced domestic abuse.⁷

Domestic abuse continues into the workplace. It is not uncommon for workers experiencing abuse to receive harassing or abusive emails or phone calls at work. Abusive partners can also turn up to the workplace and/or stalk victims outside of their workplace. It may be particularly difficult for workers to escape their abuser if they are both employed at the same place of work. In a few rare and horrific cases, women have been killed by their abuser at work.⁸

Unsurprisingly, domestic abuse can have a significant impact on victims'/survivors' working lives. It can:

- negatively impact their performance, confidence and self-esteem
- increase workplace absence (short and long term). Nationally it is estimated over one in five victims take time off work because of domestic abuse⁹

- increase the amount of sick leave taken because of poor physical and/or mental ill health
- reduce their ability to get to work, for example, because they were injured, threatened or had car keys or money stolen by their abuser
- Force them to leave their workplace or move away to escape their abuser.

As well as affecting the safety of the individual, domestic abuse can also affect the safety of other staff. For example, co-workers can be threatened or harmed by a colleague's abuser, particularly if they are close to the victim. Other impacts for colleagues can include:

- being followed to or from work
- being subject to questioning about the victim's contact details or locations
- covering for colleagues when they are absent from work
- feeling increased distress and worry due to not knowing how to help the victim/survivor.

⁷ TUC (2014) [Domestic abuse And The Workplace](#): TUC

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Walby, S & Allen, J (2004) [Domestic abuse, Sexual Assault and Stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey](#): Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

Why do we need to take action?

The impact of domestic abuse is especially pertinent for education professionals.

Many teachers and support staff who have experienced domestic abuse have been so focussed on surviving that they haven't had the capacity to report the abuse, explain any change in performance and seek help. For some staff, this has meant being put on capability proceedings, losing workplace responsibilities and, in worst case scenarios, being dismissed.

The stigma of domestic abuse also means that many survivors do not feel able to talk to anyone at work about what they are experiencing. Workers who do disclose (often to a co-worker in the first instance) report that they have not always received a sympathetic or compassionate response. Where line managers and other staff have not been trained to recognise domestic abuse, they can miss opportunities to listen and offer appropriate support.

It is clear that more can and should be done to support victims/survivors at work. We – employers, staff and unions - all have a role to play to take action and make a difference.

Currently, the vast majority of women have lost their job by the time they get to a refuge. Early intervention in the workplace (often the only place of safety for victims/survivors) is key for supporting staff to stay in work, maintain their financial independence and prevent the escalation of abuse that can ultimately lead to murder.

Supporting victims of domestic abuse in the workplace is a social justice, equality and health and safety issue. We believe that if workplaces support victims and take the steps we outline below, it will also improve workplace relations, enhance wellbeing at work, retain workers, reduce absence and increase motivation and performance.



It is clear that more can and should be done to support victims/survivors at work. We – employers, staff and unions - all have a role to play.

¹⁰ Pillinger, J (2017) [Safe at Home, Safe at Work. Trade union strategies to prevent, manage and eliminate work-place harassment and violence against women](#): European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

What can I do?

If you are at risk of or are experiencing domestic abuse, know that you do not have to survive this on your own. There is support available and your union is here for you. You can call the **National Domestic Abuse helpline** on **0808 2000 247**. Other national and specialist helplines and support services are listed at the end of this document. If you are in imminent danger ring the police on 999. Schools and colleges can provide practical support to keep you safe at work and the range of support that workplaces can offer is outlined in this guide.

If you need further advice on the impact of domestic abuse at work, you can contact your NEU representative in the first instance. If there is no NEU rep in your workplace, contact the NEU AdviceLine on **0345 811 8111. Further contact details may be found at: neu.org.uk/contact-us**

If you are a member of staff wanting to support victims/survivors in the workplace, taking these simple steps can make a huge difference:

- 1. Download and put up a [NEU domestic abuse poster](#) in your staffroom** and in each staff toilet stall to raise awareness of domestic abuse and the specialist support available for survivors.
- 2. Start a conversation with your colleagues** about the facts and prevalence of domestic abuse. Talking about the issue will help to remove stigma and may help other staff to speak up or seek help.
- 3. Be aware of the signs of domestic abuse** and follow our steps (below) on how to respond to suspected or disclosed abuse.
- 4. Check whether your workplace has a domestic abuse policy** – if not, work with your workplace reps to introduce one and get it agreed by the governing board.

If your workplace doesn't have a rep, check with your employer about what support is in place and introduce them to the [NEU model policy](#). Your NEU district can support you to get changes in your workplace.

If you are a rep, you can also look at our [checklist of actions](#) you can take.

What steps should schools and colleges take?

The NEU has created a checklist for [leaders](#) and [reps](#) to support schools and colleges to take practical steps to support survivors of domestic abuse in the workplace.

The NEU believes that all schools and colleges should:

- Implement an inclusive domestic abuse workplace policy. See our [model policy](#)
 - Acknowledge and raise awareness that domestic abuse is a significant, systemic problem, which has a devastating impact on victims (overwhelmingly women) and their families.
 - Take all reasonable steps to support survivors and mitigate the impact of domestic abuse in the workplace. No victim/survivor should be penalized or discriminated against because of the abuse they are experiencing or have experienced.
 - Ensure all staff with management responsibilities attend high quality, inclusive training on identifying domestic abuse and how to support staff who are experiencing abuse. All staff should have domestic abuse awareness training.
 - Ensure that at least one woman colleague is trained and nominated as a point of contact on domestic abuse issues.
- Ensure that there is a clear response to alleged perpetrators in the workplace, using disciplinary processes as necessary. The [NEU model domestic abuse policy](#) sets out how employers can respond to perpetrators; the objective is to reduce risk and support change.

Legal context

All employers have a duty of care under the [Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974](#) and associated health and safety legislation, to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees. Under the [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#), employers are required to undertake general risk assessments which should include specific risks related to domestic abuse.

Employers in the education sector also have duties under the Equality Act 2010 to consider the need to eliminate unlawful harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Applying an effective whole school or college approach to tackling sexual harassment and gender-based violence in the workplace will go some way to meeting this duty.

Identifying and responding to survivors of domestic abuse in the workplace

Identifying domestic abuse

It might not be immediately obvious that a colleague is experiencing domestic abuse.

Possible signs of domestic abuse can include:

- changes in behaviour including uncharacteristic withdrawal, depression, anxiety, distraction or problems with concentration
- changes in the quality of work for no apparent reason
- arriving late or leaving early
- reduced attendance or increased sick leave or high presenteeism without an explanation
- needing regular time off for appointments
- taking frequent or excessive calls during work time from a partner
- repeated injuries or unexplained bruising or explanations that do not fit with the injuries
- substance use/dependence
- inappropriate or excessive clothing (that might be hiding injuries or bruising).

This list of possible signs is not exhaustive, the signs could manifest themselves over time and the behaviours may be indicative of other concerns.

Responding to suspected or disclosed domestic abuse

The NEU recommends taking what is known as the 4Rs approach:

- Recognise the problem.
- Respond appropriately.
- Refer on to appropriate help.
- Record the details.

Recognise the problem

All staff with line management responsibility should look out for signs of domestic abuse and, if they suspect that a colleague is being abused, they should consider asking sensitive, non-threatening questions in a one-to-one meeting in a private setting.

If the head teacher or another member of staff needs further advice or assistance before speaking to a member of staff about domestic abuse, they should seek advice from human resources¹¹ and from their trade union.

¹¹ Different school and college settings will have access to a range of human resources, support and advice.

It may often be the case that a member of staff chooses not to disclose information about domestic abuse during a first discussion as they may feel ashamed and worried about the consequences of doing so. We advise that staff should be given details of a nominated person(s) to contact, including at least one female member of staff, should they wish to discuss any matters that might be affecting them in the future. Trade union representatives or a friend should be allowed to attend any future meetings if that helps them to discuss what is happening.

Respond and refer appropriately

If a colleague discloses that they are experiencing domestic abuse, these steps will support them:

- Listen, believe and take the disclosure seriously.
- Don't be judgmental about the victim's response to the perpetrator's behaviour.
- Respect and accept the victim's thoughts and ideas on the way forward outside work; the victim will know best how the perpetrator may react.
- Alert them to workplace support available under the domestic abuse policy.
- Reassure them that the discussion will remain confidential unless an exception applies, including an immediate risk to life (see [NEU model policy](#) for examples of where information might have to be disclosed).
- Don't give advice beyond your expertise eg don't pressurise the victim to leave the perpetrator.
- Provide information about specialist domestic abuse organisations that can offer expert support.

Line managers can offer additional support in liaison with the victim/survivor and the head teacher:

- Consider requesting a workplace risk assessment to ensure that the potential risk to the employee and work colleagues is minimised.
- Offer practical support within the organisation.
- Suspend any capability or disciplinary procedures arising from absence or performance issues which are related to domestic abuse.
- Adjust working patterns as appropriate to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the victim/survivor.
- Offer to work with domestic abuse specialists to develop an appropriate and joined up workplace safety plan (see the end of this guidance for further information on specialist domestic abuse support and helplines).
- Provide ongoing support to ensure the victim/survivor's safety and wellbeing is monitored.
- Help the victim/survivor build up their self-confidence.

If you are affected by the disclosure, you can seek counselling from the [Education Support Partnership](#).

It is recognised that this is a difficult area to discuss; all staff who are affected by a domestic abuse disclosure can seek support from the nominated point of contact for domestic abuse issues or human resources.

Record the details

Line managers should record details of all discussions and actions agreed. This should be stored securely and labelled and treated as 'strictly confidential'.

Practical support for victims/survivors

It is essential that survivors feel able to disclose that they are experiencing domestic abuse and they should be encouraged to discuss this with their head teacher. If they feel unable to do so, support should be available from human resources¹² and their trade union and/or they can self-refer to specialist support services.

All practical domestic abuse support should be victim/survivor-led; the right of a member of staff to make their own decisions about the course of action at every stage should be respected. Victims of domestic abuse may need some time to decide what they want to do and that they may try different options during the process.

The role of the head teacher should not be to deal with the abuse itself (unless the abuse is taking place on site) but to make it clear that staff will be supported and to set out what help is available.

Head teachers should work with staff experiencing domestic abuse, and specialist services, to carry out a safety plan and offer a broad range of practical support. In our model policy, we outline that this includes:

- establishing steps to allow a victim/survivor to continue to attend the workplace, as work is often a place of safety
- offering confidential, approachable and non-judgmental meetings with a designated support person
- ensuring arrangements are in place for safe travel to and from work
- providing a secure entry system and, if appropriate, car-parking space
- alerting reception (and any security staff) to the issue and providing them with a photograph of the perpetrator
- reviewing the security of the victim/survivor's personal information, including email, phone, bank details and home address (which may be new or temporary), and remind office staff not to disclose this information to third parties
- agreeing a response if the perpetrator contacts or visits the workplace
- screening telephone calls to the victim/survivor and, if necessary, blocking calls from the perpetrator
- blocking emails from the perpetrator, if necessary
- giving the victim/survivor the option of changing their work location,¹³ working hours or work patterns on a temporary or permanent basis
- offering changes to specific duties, for example to avoid potential contact with the perpetrator, or to curriculum delivery to ensure that the victim/survivor is not distressed by the subject matter of a lesson
- offering paid time off to move home or for relevant appointments, for example with support agencies, solicitors, to rearrange housing or childcare, and for court appointments
- offering further special leave or compassionate leave for counselling, recovery or respite from the perpetrator

¹² Different school and college settings will have access to a range of human resources, support and advice.

¹³ A change in location might be feasible if the school/college runs across multiple sites or is part of a wider group of school/college premises.

- recording any time off related to the domestic abuse separately and confidentially
- advising other colleagues on a need-to-know basis
- ensuring that the victim/survivor is not subjected to capability or disciplinary procedures before the safety plan and support systems have been discussed and implemented
- adjusting performance targets and reviewing the victim/survivor's workload
- if the victim/survivor requires financial support, supporting them in a request for an advance of pay, an interest free loan or bursary
- bolstering the victim/survivor by referring to a support platform such as the [Freedom Programme](#) or other reputable organisations.

If the abuse is taking place on the school/college site, the head teacher should take all reasonable steps to protect staff and students. This should include calling 999 if the perpetrator is on site, informing other appropriate agencies, warning staff, agreeing a safety action plan with all staff in the event that the perpetrator contacts the school/college or contacts staff outside work or gains access to the site.



It is essential that survivors feel able to disclose that they are experiencing domestic abuse and they should be encouraged to discuss this with their head teacher.

How domestic abuse can affect different people

Domestic abuse affects people in different ways. For some victims/survivors their characteristics, circumstance, community, or wider societal misconceptions about domestic violence can be weaponised and used against them by a perpetrator(s) in order to exert further power and control.

For some survivors, access to support can also be extremely difficult if services do not understand or meet their needs. This in turn can compound the abuse and prolong an abusive relationship.

The following section gives examples of these different experiences and what support employers and workplaces can offer.

Age and Domestic abuse

Young women aged 20-24 are significantly more likely to be victims/survivors of domestic abuse than any other age group.¹⁴ There is some evidence to suggest that young women are more at risk of abuse through new technologies and social media, which can be used as a monitoring or harassment tool by the perpetrator.¹⁵

Older people can experience domestic abuse too. Research shows that, on average, older victims experience abuse for twice as long before seeking help as those aged under 61, and nearly half have a disability. Older victims are also significantly underrepresented among domestic abuse

services and this may be linked to a range of social, cultural and health factors, including generational attitudes about abuse that can create barriers to seeking support.¹⁶

Both younger and older workers can face additional barriers in the workplace. Younger staff may be more likely to be on precarious contracts and may not have established strong workplace support networks. Older women in schools and colleges are at greater risk of capability procedures.

Employers should support all survivors in the ways highlighted above, including ensuring online domestic abuse in the workplace is addressed. It should not be assumed that just because a member of staff is a certain age that they are not likely to experience abuse. Ensuring all staff have domestic abuse awareness training will make it more likely that the victims/survivors get the support they need in the workplace.

¹⁴ ONS (2019) [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2019](#): ONS

¹⁵ Safe lives (2017) [Safe Young Lives: Young people and Domestic Abuse](#): Safe lives

¹⁶ Safe Lives (2016) [Safe Later Lives: Older people and domestic abuse](#): Safe Lives. Age UK (2019) [No Age Limit: The Hidden Face of Domestic Abuse](#): Age UK

LGBT+ people and domestic abuse

A common misconception about domestic abuse is that it only happens within heterosexual relationships. This is not the case. Many people in same sex relationships experience domestic abuse and trans men and women and non-binary people can also experience abuse. Evidence shows bi women and trans women are particularly affected by domestic abuse.¹⁷

LGBT+ people can face additional abusive and controlling behaviours where their sexuality and/or gender identity is used against them as a tactic by the abuser to keep the power and control in the relationship.

Threats by an abuser can include disclosing the victims/survivors' sexual orientation and/or gender identity to work colleagues.

The latter point highlights how abuse continues into the workplace and that LGBT+ workers may not be 'out' in the workplace for a range of reasons, including homo/bi/transphobia in the workplace. The NEU has advice for LGBT+ workers about their rights [here](#).

An LGBT+ inclusive work environment is critical for helping LGBT+ staff experiencing abuse to feel able to seek support at work, regardless of whether they are out. We expect all workplaces to challenge and address all forms of unlawful discrimination.

It is important that with any disclosure, workers do not assume that the survivor is heterosexual and that confidentiality is maintained. It is already the case that LGBT+ survivors [face specific barriers](#) to getting support from domestic abuse services and domestic abuse remains [acutely underreported](#) by LGBT+ people.

All workplace responses should be victim led and ensure that the range of services to support survivors are highlighted, including specialist services for LGBT+ people such as [Galop](#).

Black* women and domestic abuse

Research shows Black women experience higher levels of domestic homicide and sexual violence. They are also more likely to experience so called 'honour' killings, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and abuse driven suicide.¹⁸

Black women face a range of barriers to getting support, including experiencing inappropriate and insensitive responses from statutory services. In some cases, Black women are more likely to be criminalised and viewed as complicit in the violence towards them and thus less likely to be considered victims.¹⁹ It is estimated that between five and 12 contacts are made by women experiencing domestic abuse before they receive a positive response. This rises to 17 if the woman is Black.²⁰ For some types of abuse that are more likely to involve the collusion of wider family members, such as so called 'honour' killings, women may find it particularly difficult to seek help. This can be because of the multiple perpetrators involved, as well as other issues, such as interpreter services not being provided or that are inadequate for victims whose first language is not English.

¹⁷ Scottish Transgender Alliance (2010) [Out of sight, out of mind? Transgender People's Experiences of Domestic Abuse](#): Scottish Transgender Alliance. See also: ONS (2018) [Women most at risk of experiencing partner abuse in England and Wales: years ending March 2015 to 2017](#): ONS

¹⁸ Siddiqui H (2018) Counting the cost: BME women and gender-based violence in the UK, [IPPR Progressive Review](#), Vol 24:4

¹⁹ Thiara, R and Roy, S (2020) [Reclaiming Voice: Minoritised Women and Sexual Violence Key Findings](#): Imkaan and the University of Warwick

²⁰ Women's Resource Centre; Women&Girls Network (2011) [Young Women and Violence](#): London Councils

Specialist services are a vital lifeline for Black women in helping them to overcome these additional and systemic barriers.

We recommend that workplaces should signpost local specialist services as much as possible. [Imkaan](#), a UK Black feminist organisation, has a list of national and local services run by and for Black women that workers and employers can signpost to.

It is important to acknowledge that Black women are underrepresented in the education workforce. Many Black staff feel isolated at work and may lack a support network. Racism experienced by Black staff can compound difficulties in seeking support in the workplace. NEU research²¹ about the experiences of Black members found that many feel isolated and stereotyped at work which affects pay progression and other opportunities. This in turn can impact on the likelihood of disclosures if it is felt this will impact on progression opportunities or lead to being put on capability.

The [NEU's Anti-Racism charter](#) will help your workplace to combat racism to ensure all Black staff feel able to speak out and get support if they are experiencing abuse. Training on domestic abuse should ensure that information is given on all forms of domestic abuse including forced marriage and so-called honour-based abuse.

***The NEU uses the term Black as a political and inclusive term of unity to signify the anti-racist organising of all people of colour – African, African Caribbean, Asian and all those that face racism as a result of the colour of their skin.**

Disabled women and domestic abuse

Disabled women can be particularly exposed to abuse and violence. A Women's Aid report, *Making the Links: Disabled Women and Domestic abuse*²², found that disabled women are twice as likely to experience gender-based violence than non-disabled women. They are also likely to experience abuse over a longer period of time and suffer more severe injuries as a result. They are less likely to seek help and often the help they do receive is not appropriate. The lack of accessible refuges and temporary accommodation, the scarcity of information on tape or in Braille, and the unavailability of sign language interpreters may compound the problems that disabled women fleeing abuse face.

Workplace support networks will be vital for disabled women who may have smaller support networks outside of the workplace or feel more socially isolated than their non-disabled peers (eg because they might be excluded from social activities due to physical and environmental inaccessibility or because of stigma or discrimination.) It is also important that disabled women can be directed to appropriate and specialist support services.

Employers and line managers should be aware that disabled women may need a significant number of days of paid leave to leave their abuser. For example, it may be more difficult and time consuming for a disabled woman to find a new home or refuge that is accessible, and they may also need time to arrange for new health care arrangements. Finding appropriate care may be particularly difficult if the survivor's primary carer was their abuser. Workplace policies, practices and environments must be flexible and inclusive enough to accommodate any additional needs that disabled women experiencing domestic abuse may have.

²¹ NEU (2017) [Visible and Invisible Barriers: the impact of racism on BME teachers](#): NEU

²² Hague, G et al. (2008) [Making the links. Disabled women and domestic abuse](#): Women's Aid

Pregnant women and domestic abuse

Pregnancy can be a trigger for domestic abuse, and existing abuse may get worse during pregnancy or after giving birth. It is estimated that four to nine in every 100 pregnant women are abused during their pregnancy or soon after the birth.²³ Nearly 60 per cent of survivors using domestic abuse services are also mothers.²⁴

Unfortunately, pregnant women and women returning from maternity leave can also be treated poorly and unlawfully by employers. Some are unjustly subjected to capability procedures, others are selected unfairly for redundancy, others are simply driven out of work through poor treatment.

Workplace discrimination will compound the impact of domestic abuse on pregnant women and make it unlikely that they will seek workplace support.

The NEU will support any member who believes they have been discriminated against. If you think you may be experiencing pregnancy or maternity discrimination, you can find out your rights [here](#).

Economic status and domestic abuse

Economic insecurity can increase a victim/survivor's vulnerability to domestic abuse. This is because economic insecurity and poverty reduces a victim/survivor's ability to leave their relationship, particularly if they are financially dependent on their abuser.

Research by the TUC shows that Black workers are more likely than white workers to be in insecure work, such as zero hours or casual contracts. Migrant educators can also be particularly vulnerable to exploitative terms and conditions as well as facing additional barriers to getting support from public services. We provide further advice and support for migrant educators [here](#).

Increasing numbers of education workers are in insecure work, such as zero hour or casual contracts. Insecure working conditions may also increase a survivor's reluctance to disclose domestic abuse if they feel it may negatively impact on their employment contract.

Employers and line managers should respond to victims/survivors' circumstances on a case by case basis, using the advice outlined above. In situations where it becomes apparent that a member of staff experiencing abuse needs financial support, employers should make efforts to address this, such as through supporting a request for an advance of pay, an interest free loan or bursary.

²³ Taft, A (2002) [Violence against women in pregnancy and after childbirth: current knowledge and issues in healthcare responses](#): Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, UNSW

²⁴ Women's Aid (2019) [The Domestic Abuse Report 2019.The Annual Audit](#): Women's Aid

Further information and resources

Helplines and specialist support for victims/survivors or perpetrators of domestic abuse

The freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge

Freephone: 0808 2000 247

Website: nationaldahelpline.org.uk or refuge.org.uk

Women's Aid

You can find your local domestic abuse service on their website.

Women's Aid also offer:

Online Chat Service: chat.womensaid.org.uk/

Email service: helpline@womensaid.org.uk

Survivor's Handbook: womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/

Survivor's Forum: survivorsforum.womensaid.org.uk/

Wales - Live Fear Free (24 hour) Helpline

In Wales, contact the 24-hour Live Fear Free Helpline.

Helpline: 0808 80 10 800

Text support: 07860 077 333

Website: welshwomensaid.org.uk/ or gov.wales/live-fear-free/domestic-abuse-wales

Email: info@livefearfreehelpline.wales

Scotland-Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline

In Scotland, contact Scotland's 24-hour Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage helpline.

Helpline: 0800 0271234

Website: sdafmh.org.uk/

Email: helpline@sdafmh.org.uk

Northern Ireland - Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline

In Northern Ireland contact the 24 hour Domestic & Sexual Violence helpline.

Helpline: 0808 802 1414

Text Support: 07797 805 839

Website: womensaidni.org/24-hour-domestic-sexual-violence-helpline/

Email: 24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org

Specialist services for LGBT+ survivors

Galop runs the National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse specialist helpline.

Helpline: 0800 999 5428

Website: galop.org.uk/domesticabuse/

Email: help@galop.org.uk

Specialist services for Black survivors

Imkaan

Imkaan is a women's organisation addressing violence against black and minority women and girls.

Phone: 020 7842 8525

Website: imkaan.org.uk/

Email: info@imkaan.org.uk

Karma Nirvana

Supporting victims of honour-based abuse and forced marriage.

Helpline: 0800 5999 247

Website: karmanirvana.org.uk/

Email: support@karmanirvana.org.uk

Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)

Advocacy, information and support for migrant women provided in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

Helpline: 0771 928 1714

Email: referrals@lawrs.org.uk

Website: lawrs.org.uk/violencia-domestica-durante-el-aislamiento

Southall Black Sisters

Southall Black Sisters offer specialist support, advocacy and information to Asian and Afro-Caribbean women suffering abuse.

Phone: 0208 571 9595 / 020 8571 0800

Website: southallblacksisters.org.uk

Email: info@southallblacksisters.co.uk

Specialist services for Disabled survivors

These services are run by Deaf and/or disabled people.

Stay Safe East

Stay Safe East provides specialist and holistic advocacy and support services to disabled victims and survivors of abuse.

Phone: 0208 519 7241

Website: staysafe-east.org.uk

SMS/Text: 0758 7134 122

Email: enquiries@staysafe-east.org.uk

SignHealth

SignHealth provides domestic abuse service support for deaf people in British Sign Language (BSL).

Telephone: 020 3947 2601

WhatsApp or Facetime: 07970 350366 ~

Website: signhealth.org.uk

Email: da@signhealth.org.uk

Specialist services for male survivors

Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men

This helpline is for men experiencing domestic violence.

Helpline: 0808 801 0327 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Email: info@mensadvice.org.uk

Other services

Hestia

Hestia has a free mobile app - Bright Sky which provides support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or to those concerned about someone they know.

Phone: 020 7378 3100

Website: hestia.org

Email: info@hestia.org

Mobile App: brightsky@hestia.org

Chayn

Chayn provides online help and resources in a number of languages about identifying manipulative situations, and how friends can support those being abused.

Website: chayn.co/

Respect helpline

Respect is a helpline that has been set up for anyone worried about their own behaviour. If you are worried about hurting the ones you love while staying at home, call the Respect Phoneline for support.

Helpline: 0808 8024040

Website: respectphoneline.org.uk/

Email: info@respectphoneline.org.uk

Domestic Abuse Training Providers

[Women's Aid](#) can offer in-house training to organisations to raise their awareness of domestic abuse and support the implementation of policies and procedures.

[The Freedom Programme](#) offers an online course and regional support groups for victims and survivors of abuse.

[AVA \(Against Violence & Abuse\)](#) run training on gender-based violence and abuse.

[Galop](#) run training for professionals, informed directly by the needs of LGBT+ communities on a range of areas, including domestic abuse.

[Imkaan](#) offer training programmes to education institutions who are seeking to improve awareness of violence against women and girls within a BME context.

[Respect](#) offer one-to-one work with perpetrators of domestic abuse. They also offer training for frontline workers on perpetrators of domestic abuse, male victims and young people's violence in close relationships. Respect also run accreditation for other perpetrator programmes to ensure they are effective in reducing harm and do not risk increasing risk for victims.

NEU resources for the workplace

[Domestic abuse in the workplace: Model Policy](#)

[Domestic abuse in the workplace: Leaders' Checklist](#)

[Domestic abuse in the workplace: Reps' Checklist](#)

[Domestic abuse poster](#)

Domestic abuse in the workplace relates to a number of other workplace issues. Relevant NEU advice includes:

Women's health and safety: neu.org.uk/advice/womens-health-and-safety

Online safety- protecting school staff and pupils: neu.org.uk/advice/online-safety-protecting-school-staff-and-pupils

Violence and assaults against staff in schools: neu.org.uk/advice/violence-and-assaults-against-staff-schools

Maternity rights: neu.org.uk/advice/maternity-rights

Pregnancy and maternity discrimination: neu.org.uk/advice/pregnancy-and-maternity-discrimination

Flexible working: neu.org.uk/advice/flexible-working

Sick leave: neu.org.uk/tags/sick-leave

Capability advice: neu.org.uk/advice/capability-procedures-model-policy-checklist

Misconduct and the Teaching Regulation Agency: neu.org.uk/advice/misconduct-and-teaching-regulation-agency

Other resources

[Domestic abuse resource manual for employers](#), Refuge and Respect

[Domestic abuse: workplace policies and managing and supporting employees](#), EHRC