

Tackling Domestic Abuse

a checklist for reps

Why is this Important?

A TUC report on domestic violence and the workplace found that over 40% of respondents had experienced domestic violence. Government data shows that around one in three women and one in seven men experience some form of domestic abuse in their lifetime. The Equality and Human Rights Commission found that 75% of victims are targeted at work by their abuser. Domestic abuse is a workplace issue, and a trade union issue.

Having a domestic abuse policy in place will help and support everyone in your workplace. Those experiencing or escaping abuse will know that help is available and what support they should expect from their employer, including what support they can expect from their line manager.

It is important to be aware that, as a workplace rep, there may be times when you are asked to support or represent a member who is either a victim/survivor or a perpetrator of domestic abuse. Talk to your union mentor or district or regional office if you are struggling to deal with something you have heard or experienced. You should also have access to an employee assistance program through your employer for counselling and other wellbeing services.

What reps should do:

- ✓ **Read the NEU domestic abuse model policy** and discuss it with your union colleagues, including your health and safety rep if you have one.
- ✓ **Download the NEU domestic abuse awareness poster** and place it where it can clearly be seen by staff – where the staff store their belongings, behind the door of each toilet stall, by the photocopier, etc.
- ✓ **Start the conversation.** The more we talk about the issues, the less stigma there will be around it.
- ✓ **Check** if your school/college has anything in place already and if it needs to be improved.
- ✓ **Call a union meeting** and have the model policy on the agenda.
- ✓ **Share the policy** beforehand but also be prepared to summarise it in the meeting.
- ✓ **Involve all members** in the development of the policy.
- ✓ Ask members to **vote** on taking it forward to the SLT. Ask what compromises they are prepared to accept and what is the **bottom line**?
- ✓ **Talk to workplace reps** from other unions (if applicable) and ask them to support the negotiation.



- ✓ **Read our checklist for leaders** – and give a copy to your head or principal.
- ✓ **Arrange a meeting with your SLT**, share the model policy and ask them to be prepared to discuss its implementation.
- ✓ Before you go in, **make a plan**. How will the SLT respond and how will you deal with that?
- ✓ **If the SLT agree** to implement the policy, also agree a date on which it will be reviewed. Inform your branch that the agreement has been reached and send a copy to equality@neu.org.uk.
- ✓ Include a link to local **services available in your area**. You can get this from the Safeguarding Lead or by doing a post code search in the [Womens Aid Directory](#).
- ✓ If the SLT will not agree, take this back to your members. Gauge how **widely felt and deeply felt** this issue is and contact your [Branch Secretary and Organising](#) Forum rep to ask for advice and support if you need it.

- ✓ **Keep pushing** for implementation through a workplace campaign. Maintain a dialogue with the employer and the union group. Find out what the barriers are and how you will get past them – this could be a petition or some other form of collective solidarity.
- ✓ **Include your membership group at every stage of the process**; keep them informed of the negotiations and encourage their input to approve changes so that everyone is fairly represented, and nobody suffers a detriment due to a protected characteristic.
- ✓ **Remind the employer** of the NEU Checklist for Leaders and check that they have followed the steps set out in the agreed policy.

Share your success – please send a copy of the agreed policy to equality@neu.org.uk



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