



Guidance for Managers on the Completion of the Domestic Abuse Support Assessment

The Aim of the Assessment

This guidance has been produced for University of Exeter managers with the aim of giving guidance to successfully support employees experiencing domestic abuse, harassment or stalking.

The aims of the assessment are:

- To provide a safe and supportive work environment
- Provide a quiet, supportive forum for employees to feel able to speak openly and in confidence about their situation
- To provide a structure to the conversation to ensure that all aspects are considered
- To identify support available at the University and to implement that support

Identifying employees who would benefit from this assessment

It would be appropriate to undertake this assessment for anyone who has disclosed they are experiencing domestic abuse, harassment or stalking.

Preparing for the assessment

To prepare for an assessment, managers should consider the following:

- Agree a suitable venue and time with the employee
- Agree who will be there. It is not appropriate to have multiple people in the room, but the employee can be supported by a friend or colleague. The employee should be able to feel comfortable to be open about issues they are facing
- Be prepared
- Prepare the environment. Switch off phones and emails and ensure you are not going to be disturbed by anyone else. Try to arrange furniture to ensure it is a supportive space and not feeling like an interview room

- Prepare yourself. You need to feel calm and ready to support the employee. It may be a good idea to try and keep your diary free for a couple of hours- it may take longer than you expect and it wouldn't be appropriate to have to leave mid-way through the assessment

Approach and Completing the Assessment

You will need a blank assessment recording sheet and will complete the assessment by hand. At the beginning of the meeting you should:

- Set out the process that you are going to be taking the employee through (i.e. show them the assessment and explain how it is used)
- Explain the aims of the process and that you would like to try and identify issues and establish how the University may provide support
- Ask the employee to be as open as they feel able. Suggest that you can stop at any time if things become too difficult
- Explain that you anticipate it will take an hour, but you have plenty of time so no need to watch the clock
- Consider referring/using other HR policies and procedures which may be appropriate (e.g. compassionate leave policy, sickness absence policy, emergency leave policy, capability/performance procedures)

You should listen carefully and above all, believe the employee when they disclose issues they may be experiencing. Reassure the employee that the organisation has an understanding of how domestic abuse may be impacting them at work and what can be done about this.

Confidentiality

Employees experiencing domestic abuse may feel concerned about disclosing abuse to a line manager. Managers should reassure individuals that discussions will be held in confidence, although there are some circumstances in which it may not be appropriate for confidentiality to be maintained (i.e. safeguarding of children and/or vulnerable adults, or if a serious offence has been committed). However, if you are concerned we advise you to discuss this with a domestic violence expert first such as the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA), contact details of which can be found in the University's Domestic Abuse web pages. Please ensure that employees know that some details will need to be shared to ensure the recommended actions from the risk assessment can be completed.

Things to avoid in the assessment process:

- Do not be judgmental and make comments i.e. about the perpetrator's behaviour or the employee's response
- Do not give advice to the employee – for example do not pressurise them into leaving
- Do not dismiss issues.

Review and next steps

At the end of the assessment, summarise the steps that you will now take to support the employee.

If you are not sure how something can / should be taken forward, commit to finding out and add this to the action plan. Support can be sought from your manager, HR, Occupational Health or specialist services such as the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) - full list of support services can be found at the end of this document.

Set a date for reviewing the support put in place, consider repeating the assessment if the situation has changed. This process can be reviewed as periodically while the situation is ongoing.

Appendix

External Support groups/helplines

Cornwall

Services	Description	Phone and/or Website
IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advocate) service for Cornwall is provided by First Light	Independent Domestic Violence Advocate	https://www.firstlight.org.uk/
Clear	Enables children and young people having experienced an abusive relationship to flourish within a therapeutic setting.	https://clearsupport.net/

Domestic violence help and advice	Sanctuary Scheme is available for high risk victims of domestic abuse and/or sexual violence.	https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/domestic-violence-help-and-advice/ You can contact First Light on 0300 777 4777 during normal office hours. Alternatively contact Cornwall Domestic Abuse 24hr Helpline on 01872 225629.
East Cornwall Women's Refuge		You can contact on 01726 871244
Galop (previously Broken Rainbow Cornwall)	DV advice for Lesbian, Gay, Bi Sexual and Transgender	http://www.galop.org.uk/domesticabuse/
The Women's centre	Run by women, for women, we are here to provide a safe, supportive environment in which you are both valued and respected, listened to and believed: empowering you to live the life you want.	https://www.womenscentrecornwall.org.uk/
West Cornwall Women's Aid	West Cornwall Women's Aid (WCWA) has been working in the field of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) in West Cornwall for over 30 years.	https://www.wcwaid.co.uk/

Devon

Services/Company	Description	Phone and/or Website
Devon County Council	Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse	https://www.devon.gov.uk/dsva/

		Devon's domestic abuse helpline 0345 155 1074 Rape crisis helpline 0808 802 9999
Splitz	For medium or high risk of domestic abuse and/or where the experience of domestic abuse is at acute or chronic levels.	https://www.splitz.org/devon Tel: 0345 155 1074
North Devon Against Domestic Abuse	We offer the services of an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) to support you through the criminal and civil justice system and specialist IDVA's who work within the health arena	http://www.ndada.co.uk/ Call 01271 321 946
Victim care unit	The victim care unit will help victims navigate and make informed choices about the organisation they wish to receive support from	http://www.victimcaredevonandcornwall.org.uk/
SAFE	Group Programmes	https://www.safe-services.org.uk/support-for-families-and-individual

National

Services/Company	Description	Phone and/or Website
24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline (Freephone)	A service for women experiencing domestic abuse, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf. It is run by Refuge.	Callers may first hear an answerphone message, before speaking to a person. 0808 2000 247 www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Men's Advice Line (Freephone)	A confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic abuse by a current or ex-partner. Caters for all men: whether in heterosexual or same-sex relationships. Offers emotional support, practical advice and information on a wide range of services for further help and support.	0808 801 0327 Days and times of phone support vary. www.mensadvice.org.uk
Respect Phone Line (Freephone)	A confidential helpline for people who are abusive and/or violent towards their current or ex-partner. Offers information and advice to support perpetrators to stop their violence and change their abusive behaviours. The main focus is to increase the safety of those experiencing domestic violence.	0808 802 4040 Days and times of phone support vary. www.respectphoneline.org.uk
National LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline	Providing confidential support to all members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) communities, their family and friends, and agencies supporting them.	0300 999 5428
Karma Nirvana Helpline	supports victims and survivors of forced marriage and honour based abuse	0800 599 9247 www.karmanirvana.org.uk/
The Man Kind Initiative	Is a national charity that provides help and support for male victims of domestic abuse.	www.mankind.org.uk
Southall Black Sisters	provides advice and information on domestic abuse, racial harassment, welfare and immigration, primarily for Asian, African and African-Caribbean women.	www.southallblacksisters.org.uk
National Stalking Helpline	provides information and guidance to anyone affected by harassment or stalking.	The helpline is open 0930-1600 Monday–Friday (except Wednesday when they open at 1300). They also offer advice via email and on their Forum which can be found on our website.

		0808 802 0300 advice@stalkinghelpline.org and www.stalkinghelpline.org/
Bright Sky Mobile App	Hestia and the Vodafone Foundation have launched Bright Sky, a free and unique mobile app providing comprehensive support and information to people affected by domestic abuse.	The App is free to download from the App Store and Google Play Store