

# University of York – Department of Health Sciences

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE POLICY

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND KEY PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 University of York Department of Health Sciences (UoYDoHS) seeks to ensure staff that see work as safe place that will protect them if they are subject to or at risk from domestic violence and abuse (DV/DA). We will treat every report of domestic abuse with the utmost standards of confidentiality and with sensitivity. We will treat every report with equal seriousness, regardless of the victim's gender or sexuality and will ensure all reports are dealt with efficiently and not ignored. Our aim will be to support victims to access services, to be safe and to reduce the risks to victims and others including children.
- 1.2 This policy applies to anyone working for UoYDoHS affected by:
  - Violence in the home from partners, former partners or family members;
  - Abuse or coercive control from partners, former partners or family members;
  - Sexual violence;
  - Stalking;
  - Forced Marriage;
  - Female Genital Mutilation;
  - Honour based violence or threats
  - Any other circumstances of DV/DA
- 1.3 UoYDoHS will offer safe spaces to anyone working for us who is affected by domestic abuse or violence to allow them to check information online safely and to contact agencies that can support them.

### 2. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

- 2.1 Police receive over 100 calls relating to domestic abuse every hour.<sup>i</sup> One in four women, and one in 6 men will experience Domestic Abuse in their lifetime.
- 2.2 UoYDoHS recognises that DV is not limited to specific demographic groups and that DV is experienced by individuals regardless of age, gender, income, ethnicity, sexual orientation.
- 2.3 The government defines domestic violence and abuse as:  
*“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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”.*
- 2.4 Acts of domestic violence and abuse are most often systematic and are designed to gain power and control over the victim. Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Psychological and/or emotional abuse;
  - Physical or sexual abuse;

- Financial abuse;
- Verbal abuse
- Harassment and stalking;
- Online or digital abuse;

2.5 **Coercive control** is a crime. It is part of the pattern of domestic abuse and is an offence. It is when a person with whom you are **personally connected** repeatedly behaves in a way which makes you feel controlled, dependent, isolated or scared. The following types of behaviour are common examples of coercive control:

- isolating you from your friends and family
- controlling how much money you have and how you spend it
- monitoring your activities and your movements
- repeatedly putting you down, calling you names or telling you that you are worthless
- threatening to harm or kill you or your child
- threatening to publish information about you or report you to the police or authorities
- damaging your property or household goods
- forcing you to take part in criminal activity or child abuse

2.6 Violence and abuse often increase in frequency and severity over time. There are some known risk factors for the violence to become more severe or to occur for the first time (this is not an exhaustive list):

- If the perpetrator believes the victim is leaving, planning to leave or when the victim has recently left;
- If the victim is pregnant, or recently given birth;
- Where sexual and physical violence are both used;
- The victim is being stalked;
- Violence has escalated;
- Where the perpetrator has a history of substance misuse and/or mental health problems, or a history of violent offending including domestic abuse/coercive control;
- If the perpetrator has made threats towards the victim or close relatives including their children or has attempted or threatened to attempt suicide.

### 3. SUPPORTING STAFF

3.1 Where UoYDoHS staff report to any other member of staff that they are at risk from domestic abuse and/or violence that person must offer the victim **safe space**. The victim should always be believed. It is imperative that the person hearing the report advises the victim to seek immediate professional support during work time. This can be done by contacting a national helpline (see Section 4).

- 3.2 UoYDoHS is committed to ensuring staff at risk have access to safe spaces. This means that if any member of staff approaches a manager or DV advocate/champion saying that they need a safe space, they should be offered reasonable access to:
- The use of a phone and a computer in a private space.
  - Confidential space to meet with professionals such as Police, Social Services, Solicitors or Domestic Abuse service workers.
  - The facilities to scan, print or produce reasonable amounts of documents necessary to deal with immediate housing/rehousing or immediate safety needs, including preparing evidence for Police and/or legal teams.
- 3.3 UoYDoHS may offer reasonable access to additional support to staff who are victims of abuse or violence up to and including:
- Leave and/or flexible working arrangements to enable staff to take legal action or manage immediate safety or medical needs;
  - A safe space to prepare and/or store documents or evidence;
  - Putting workplace safety in place, such as managing approaches from the perpetrator to the workplace.
    - Reception and Security staff should be informed by [Departmental Manager / Line Manager] and a process be in place for alerting security if the perpetrator tries to access the victim at work or is known to come into the University grounds/buildings.
    - Escort to a safe space / taxi etc should be made available, or parking spaces close to their building. Ensuring the victim has arrangements for getting to and from home safely.
    - If an injunction is in place, police should be called if the perpetrator breaches this.
    - Agreeing with the victim what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if the abuser telephones or visits the university.

Level of support should be driven by victim request and need.

- 3.4 Personal information, generally, should never be shared with third parties. **In addition to this, it is important that information about any victim must NEVER be shared with family members, partners and spouses who make enquiries to UoYDoHS. They have no automatic right to information**

- 3.5 UoYDoHS will respond to all disclosures by:
- Taking all reports seriously;
  - Taking a victim-centred approach;
  - Ensuring confidentiality and consent except where the risk to life, public protection or safeguarding case is too high to rely on consent;
  - Signposting specialist agencies to manage the victim's safety;

UoYDoHS also understands that it can be difficult for employees to make a disclosure of domestic abuse, and appropriate support is important.

Staff should:

- be sensitive/non-judgemental/ practical/supportive/discrete.
- prioritise safety over work efficiency.
- allocate some private time and space to listen.

Staff should not:

- seek proof of abuse.
- contact the abuser.
- compel a victim to accept support.
- adopt the role of being a support worker

3.6 Confidentiality is very important when dealing with allegations of abuse or violence however where a member of staff makes any disclosure to another member of UoYDoHS staff that would leave children at a risk of significant harm, where there was a need for public protection or where threats are made against any person, the member of staff should not keep that information confidential. They must inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity. It is the expectation of UoYDoHS that no child or adult be at risk of significant harm because of confidentiality.

3.7 If a member of staff reports DV and is in a relationship with another member of UoYDoHS or UoY staff consideration must be given to ensuring the safety of the victim first and actions and decisions must be focused on their safety above all other considerations.

3.8 If a staff member is concerned that a colleague may be a victim of domestic abuse/violence they should inform/remind the potential victim that UoYDoHS offers safe space to victims to contact agencies for support and help and that you are there to listen if they have any problems. If you have any concerns for a person's immediate safety, then you should call the police. In an emergency always dial 999, if it is safe to do so call 101. You can also contact IDAS or one of the agencies listed in Section 4 for advice/support.

You can offer people details of helplines but they may not wish to take them. You can only do so much.

3.9 If a staff member is concerned that a colleague may be a perpetrator of DA/DV do not approach or discuss this with the potential perpetrator but contact a Domestic Violence agency for advice, particularly if you think their partner or children may be at risk. See contacts for agencies in Section 4.

3.10 If a staff member approaches another staff member for help with their own abusive behaviour, UoYDoHS will provide them with information about the services and support available to them and will encourage the perpetrator to seek support and help from an appropriate source. The aim of UoYDoHS will be to reduce risk and support change in behaviour. All discussions will be treated in confidence. If a staff member is a concerned about the welfare of a partner or children in this situation, please refer to 3.9 above.

3.11 All staff will be encouraged to access the online IDAS Domestic Abuse Awareness course: <https://courses.idas.org.uk/courses/domestic-abuse-basic-awareness-training/>

In addition, IDAS Champion training will be arranged, open to all staff and particularly encouraged for Line Managers.

## WARNING SIGNS OF DV

- ❖ Injuries, bruises and marks - which may be difficult to explain or leave marks and bruises that don't seem to match the explanation. People may try to hide their injuries with clothing or make-up.
- ❖ Constant jibes, criticism, being called names or being blamed for everything.
- ❖ Always being accompanied to appointments, never allowed to do things alone, being ferried around.
- ❖ Partner inundating them with emails, messages, or social media posts
- ❖ May never want to leave home or avoid going back.
- ❖ Become anxious or withdrawn,
- ❖ Changes in behaviour, demeanour or outward appearance
- ❖ Reduced quality and quantity of work: missing deadlines, a drop in usual performance standards.
- ❖ Change in the person's working patterns: for example, frequent absence, lateness or needing to leave work early.
- ❖ May seem inseparable from their phone or insistent that they check it very often or check-in with their partner
- ❖ May be isolated from friends and family
- ❖ May socialise less
- ❖ May fail to turn up for appointments, cancel last minute, need to leave early to get back to their partner or be accompanied everywhere by them.
- ❖ People experiencing financial abuse may not have access to their own money or be unable to do the things they used to, for example: nip for a quick coffee without checking in with their partner or have to ask permission to spend money. They may be given an allowance where previously they had autonomy over their own finances. They may begin to socialise less, avoid going out and stop taking part in activities that they previously enjoyed.

## 4 AGENCIES

### 4.1 Domestic Abuse support agencies for women:

#### Local Support:

- IDAS <https://www.idas.org.uk/> - 03000 110 110 (North Yorkshire and Barnsley) or 0808 808 2241 (Sheffield) provides support across North Yorkshire, York, Barnsley and Sheffield.

#### National Support:

- The 24hr Freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline (run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge) is available on 0808 2000 247 - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
- Women's Aid: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/>

- Refuge: <https://www.refuge.org.uk/>
- IKWRO: <http://ikwro.org.uk/> helps Middle Eastern and Afghan women and girls who are living in the UK. give advice on issues including “Honour” Based Violence, Forced Marriage, Child Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation, Domestic Violence, separation and divorce, child custody, housing and benefits.

#### 4.2 **Domestic Abuse** national agencies for men:

- Mens’ Advice Line: <http://www.mensadvice.org.uk/> 0808 801 0327 Freephone, available Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm or email [info@mensadvice.org.uk](mailto:info@mensadvice.org.uk)
- ManKind Initiative: [www.mankind.org.uk/](http://www.mankind.org.uk/) 01823 334244. Confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence. Weekdays 10am to 4pm

#### 4.3 **National Stalking Helpline**

Run by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust [www.stalkinghelpline.org](http://www.stalkinghelpline.org)

0808 802 0300 (Freephone) The Helpline is open 09:30 to 16:00 weekdays except for Wednesdays when it is open 13:00 to 16:00 and offers support to victims of stalking and their families.

#### 4.4 **Forced Marriage Unit**

[fm@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fm@fco.gov.uk)

Telephone: 020 7008 0151

From overseas: +44 (0)20 7008 0151

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Out of hours: 020 7008 1500 (ask for the Global Response Centre)

#### 4.5 **Honour Based Violence**

Karma Nirvana: is a UK registered Charity that supports victims and survivors of Forced Marriage and Honour-Based Abuse. T: 0800 599 9247

W: [www.karmanirvana.org.uk](http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk)

#### 4.6 **Female Genital Mutilation**

- **Childline** for any child who needs support or advice now Freephone 0800 1111. (If a child is at risk UoYDoHS staff MUST report this)
- **NSPCC FGM Helpline** if you know a child or young woman is at risk:  
Email: [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk)  
Freephone 0800 028 3550

#### 4.7 For men or women who are worried they may be or know that they are **perpetrators of abuse or violence** and want help to address their behaviours:

**Respect Phonenumber** - <http://respectphonenumber.org.uk>

email [info@respectphonenumber.org.uk](mailto:info@respectphonenumber.org.uk) or Freephone Monday – Friday 09:00am – 5:00pm - 0808 802 4040

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<sup>i</sup> HMIC, *Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse* ([Published online: HMIC, 2015](#)), p. 28