

Insights from EIDA Beacons: Global Policies and Practices

Our [EIDA Beacons](#) are an inspiring group of organisations leading the cultural shift among UK employers about domestic abuse. They meet regularly to discuss best practice for businesses to support their employees impacted by domestic abuse. Drawing on their own experiences of what works (and what doesn't), EIDA Beacons create resources that inspire and support others.

At their January 2023 meeting, Beacons were joined by Jemima Lovatt, Founder of [Thrive Future](#) who have a network of 400+ frontline charities and Pamela Zaballa, CEO of [No More](#), to discuss how to develop and deliver a global domestic abuse policy. Not many businesses have done this yet and it was good to understand the challenges and to share ideas.

Twelve key insights:

- 1. Global policy ...** Introducing a high-level global policy on domestic abuse provides a clear statement that the business takes domestic abuse seriously. It is an opportunity for an employer to raise awareness and to explain that support is available for all of its people who are impacted by domestic abuse, wherever they may live and work. Domestic abuse is a global issue: no country or market will be exempt.
- 2. ... local approach.** However, the way that the policy is implemented in each country will need to flex to respond to differences in local law (particularly in countries where domestic abuse is not criminalised) and local norms (for example, different understandings of what amounts to domestic abuse and / or domestic abuse being viewed as a private matter that should not be discussed outside the home). Ensure you seek input from victims / survivors from within your own local business.
- 3. Senior leadership buy-in.** It is critical to have senior leadership buy-in, both globally and locally. There may be resistance to ideas that are perceived to have been developed in North America or Western Europe being “imposed” in other parts of the world and so it is important to put in the work to ensure local leaders are on board. Support and leadership from all members of management is also necessary to create a culture where people feel comfortable to come forward and seek support.
- 4. The business case.** Be prepared to develop and share the business case for introducing a global domestic abuse policy, with figures on the numbers of those impacted by domestic abuse and the impact on business in terms of absence, loss of productivity, impact on morale. Consider whether to conduct an anonymous survey, but be aware that many people may be reluctant to disclose even on an anonymous basis. Understand what other businesses in your sector are doing about domestic abuse – your business will not want to be left behind.
- 5.** You may need to start by **building credibility** in one region where there is an appetite for change or the support for tackling domestic abuse is progressing more rapidly. You will then be able to demonstrate the business case to extend the work to other countries or regions. Tap into relationships with colleagues around the world and find out what other parts of your

business may be doing on domestic abuse. Form allies with like-minded people in other markets and work together to make change.

6. **Use a globally recognised definition of domestic abuse**, rather than a definition taken from legislation in one country. For example, the UN defines domestic abuse as “a pattern of behaviour in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner, child, relative, or any other household member”.
7. See if you can **identify synergies on other programmes**, which may make it easier or quicker to introduce a domestic abuse policy. Organisations all over the world are focussed on the wellbeing of their employees, particularly following the pandemic. You may be able to develop your response to domestic abuse as part of your global wellbeing programme. Link your domestic abuse policy to being a responsible business: supporting employees impacted by domestic abuse is part of the “S” in ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance).
8. Ensure **awareness raising and training** is led locally, while being supported globally. Speakers need to resonate with the audience and it’s best to deliver training in the local language. Tailor the training to the audience. For example, in male dominated organisations, you may want to discuss men’s experience of abuse and how to be a positive ally. There should be regular refresher sessions to remind employees of the policy and to update on any changes, for example using public campaigns like the 16 days of activism to keep this front of mind.
9. **Specialist support services**. Ensure that your EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) and any counselling services provided to your employees have the necessary skills to support those impacted by domestic abuse, including supporting perpetrators who want to change their behaviour. Know what specialist support is available locally and signpost people to appropriate services. Here is a link to the [No More – Global Directory](#) created in collaboration with the UN and the World Bank Group . The Global Directory includes up-to-date support service information for 200 countries around the world.
10. Identify **local partners** in each jurisdiction specialised in responding to domestic abuse. These partners can provide local knowledge to inform implementation of the policy in the relevant country and to provide practical support. Ask them to keep you updated on changes in law and practice. They may also be able to help to dispel local myths.
11. Think about your **products and services**. If your business provides products or services that could improve to ensure the safety of a victim / survivor of domestic abuse, there will be a lack of credibility internally and externally if those changes are not made.
12. **This will take time**. It will take time and effort to embed an effective domestic abuse policy across a global organisation. But it will be time and effort well spent. You will raise awareness of domestic abuse. You will equip people to respond. You will help people to stay in work and to thrive. You will change and save lives.

Thank you to all our EIDA Beacons for sharing these insights.

Resource created: 6 February 2023