

Business case: developing and implementing a workplace domestic abuse response for *[name of our organisation]*

[Adapt this template business case to meet the needs of your organisation. Instructions and content to provide are shown in italics.]

Introducing a workplace domestic abuse response to support our employees and their families impacted by domestic abuse is a powerful way of demonstrating that we care about the wellbeing of our people. Domestic abuse has a devastating long-term impact. Developing an effective response is the most responsible and cost-effective way for us to tackle this issue.

One in four women and one in seven men experience domestic abuse in their lifetimes, impacting people from all social classes, races, religions, gender identities, or sexual orientations, and people living with disabilities, whatever their role or seniority. It is a workplace issue, following people into the workplace, impacting on their wellbeing and performance.

As an employer, we have a duty of care to our employees. The statutory guidance accompanying the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 makes clear that employers should consider the impact of domestic abuse on employees as part of that duty of care.

How domestic abuse is impacting *[name of our organisation]*

It is likely that the national statistics for domestic abuse will be reflected in our workforce meaning that 5% of our employees could be experiencing domestic abuse. This can result in absenteeism, lost productivity and high staff turnover.

Our vision and aims for a workplace domestic abuse response

Our vision is to enhance our workplace by creating a safe and supportive environment that empowers employees affected by domestic abuse. This response will include policies, procedures, training, and support mechanisms to aid employees experiencing domestic abuse. The primary focus is on providing immediate assistance and guidance, and ensuring appropriate referrals to specialist services for long-term support, whilst also recognising that our employees may need support within the workplace over the longer term.

Strategic fit

[Link to your company core values, culture, and strategy around the health and wellbeing of your employees, and ensure alignment with the organisation's overall goals.]

Financial impact of domestic abuse

The estimated annual economic and social cost of domestic abuse in England and Wales is £78 billion, with at least £17 billion lost to businesses each year. We have estimated that the financial cost to our organisation each year of domestic abuse is: *[Provide the estimated total using the approach set out in the later section 'Estimating the cost to our organisation of domestic abuse'.]*

The benefits our workplace domestic abuse response will bring to our organisation

There is a wide range of benefits a workplace domestic abuse response will bring:

- Enhanced employee wellbeing
- Playing a key role in changing and saving lives
- Increased productivity
- Contributing to a positive corporate image
- Legal and ethical compliance.

Next steps

Please approve the proposal for us to implement a workplace domestic abuse response.

In the remainder of this document

The remainder of this document contains further details in these sections:

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- Estimating cost of domestic abuse to our organisation – page 4
- Our legal responsibilities – page 5
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The economic impact of domestic abuse

It is likely that national statistics on domestic abuse will be reflected in our workforce. For example, [The ONS report Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023](#) indicates that around 5% of the total population aged 16–59 experienced domestic abuse in 2023 and approximately one in five adults experience domestic abuse in their lifetimes.

The total economic and social costs of domestic abuse in England in 2022 are estimated at £78 billion. At least £17 billion is lost to businesses each year through decreased productivity, time off work, lost wages, and sick pay. For more details, see [Women’s Aid. \(2023\) Investing to save: the economic case for funding specialist domestic abuse support. Bristol: Women’s Aid.](#)

Research also shows that individuals experiencing domestic abuse find it hard to perform at their best at work. It can impact on their productivity, wellbeing, relationships, and participation at work. It is often possible for those experiencing domestic abuse to be targeted at the workplace – for example, harassing phone calls, unannounced visits to the workplace, and physical assault. This can also have a negative impact on colleagues who witness these incidents.

The impact of domestic abuse on our organisation can be summarised as follows:

Absenteeism: This includes employees taking additional days off work as a result of domestic abuse, arriving at work late or leaving early, and changes in shift patterns.

- In the [Vodafone Foundation Toolkit on Domestic Violence and abuse at work: Recognise, Respond and Refer](#) survey, results showed 21% of respondents who had experienced domestic abuse reported they had sometimes stopped going into work and/or would take days off.

Lost productivity: Employees experiencing domestic abuse may be less able to concentrate, produce lower quality outputs, or be at increased risk of causing accidents at work. The [Vodafone Foundation Toolkit on Domestic Violence and abuse at work: Recognise, Respond and Refer](#) survey respondents reported:

- My work decreased in quality – 12%
- I was less productive – 21%
- I couldn’t fulfil my potential – 23%
- I was distracted and found it hard to concentrate at work – 30%
- I couldn’t perform as well as before the abuse started – 14%
- I was injured and therefore couldn’t perform well at work – 15%
- I had more work-related accidents and made more mistakes – 5%.

Staff turnover: The cost of employees leaving their jobs (either voluntarily or involuntarily) and the cost of recruiting and training people to replace them.

Negative consequences for the organisation: Including internal costs of employees being witness to domestic abuse and the external reputation cost.

Estimating the cost to our organisation of domestic abuse

For the purposes of this business case, to justify the time and effort to implement a domestic abuse response and estimate the Return on Investment (ROI), it may be helpful to estimate the cost of domestic abuse to our organisation.

At the outset, we must acknowledge that the cost an individual bears through experiencing domestic abuse is immeasurable, given its physical, emotional, and long-term impacts both on them and on their family and friends.

At the same time, estimating the financial cost of an individual within our organisation being a victim-survivor of domestic abuse is complex. It depends on various factors, including the type of abuse experienced, its emotional and physical impact on the individual, and how it affects them.

To quantify the cost to our organisation, we can use research and government reports to make some provisional estimates:

- [The ONS report Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023](#) indicates that around 5% of the total population aged 16–59 experienced domestic abuse in 2023.
- The Home Office's 2019 Report [The economic and social costs of domestic abuse for England and Wales](#) estimates the average cost of lost output to be £7,245 per year per individual. (This annual figure of £7,245 is the result of estimating the average number of hours lost (383), multiplied by the average hourly wage, plus costs: (£18.93). This figure does not, of course, include the costs to the victim-survivor of the physical and emotional harm caused or to society in terms of health and victim services.

Using this information, we can estimate that if our organisation has [xx] employees and 5% of them are experiencing domestic abuse, the estimated cost to the organisation is £yy.

[For example, if our organisation has 1000 employees and 5% of them are experiencing abuse, the estimated cost to our organisation would be £362,509.5

This is calculated by:

- *Estimating the number of employees we have that may be experiencing abuse (5% of 1000): 50*
- *Estimating the total average number of hours lost at an average of 383 per person annually (50 x 383): 19,150*
- *Estimating the cost of these hours at an average wage of £18.93 per hour (19,150 x 18.93): £362,509.5 [You could adjust this hourly wage to match the rate in your organisation].*

Another way to estimate the cost is using the model developed in the publication [Equality and Human Commission of Wales – Domestic Abuse is your Business](#), which includes costs for a worst case scenario. Although this was developed in 2010 and therefore has costings from that year, it does provide a useful insight into possible related costs, including:

- Costs of presenteeism (£605 per year)
- Recruitment and training costs of replacing an individual (£6,125)
- Potential Employment Tribunal costs (£80,500)
- 5 weeks' sick pay (£545 per week).

Our legal responsibilities

A number of related laws and regulations set out the role of employers in relation to domestic abuse:

- Statutory guidance accompanying the Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The measures each of these requires for an employer to support their employees who are experiencing domestic abuse are outlined below.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

[The Domestic Abuse Act](#) is the latest law covering domestic abuse. [The statutory guidance](#) accompanying the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 states:

Employers have a duty of care to their employees. Legally, this means that they need to abide by relevant health and safety and employment law, as well as the common law duty of care. Employers must ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. Employers should consider the impact of domestic abuse on their employees as part of their duty of care.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

[The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#) states: *It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees.*

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

[The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#) require employers to undertake risk assessments to identify and put in place control mechanisms to eliminate or reduce risks to their employees' health, safety and wellbeing. When there is a known risk of domestic abuse, this can cover ensuring a safe work environment – including security measures to keep them safe from the person abusing them, and adequate training, for example for managers and HR professionals on how to respond to disclosures of domestic abuse.

Project scope and SMART objectives

The scope of our workplace domestic abuse response is likely to include:

- Developing and implementing a Domestic Abuse policy that outlines how we will respond and support employees who are experiencing domestic abuse.
- Setting up a Domestic Abuse Working Group with representatives from across the organisation to oversee and input into the development of the policy.
- Providing access to support services, both internal and external, for victim-survivors of domestic abuse.
- Creating a communications plan for all employees to raise awareness about domestic abuse and the policy, and related support being developed within the organisation.
- Training and awareness for HR professionals, managers, and everyone else who has responsibility for employee welfare. This will include recognising the signs of abuse, appropriate responses, referral and signposting processes.
- Identifying and appointing Domestic Abuse Champions within the organisation who could be the first point of contact for those people experiencing domestic abuse.
- Implementing reporting mechanisms to track effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

SMART objectives

[Define a set of SMART objectives– you can use the ones here as a basis for your organisation.]

With these SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timebound) objectives, the organisation can set clear and measurable targets, track progress effectively, and ensure that our workplace domestic abuse response achieves its intended outcomes.

Objective 1: Develop and implement a comprehensive workplace domestic abuse response to support employees experiencing domestic abuse and promote a safe work environment *[by date]*.

Objective 2: By the end of the first year, key employees will have completed the domestic abuse awareness training, and this will have received positive feedback from 90% of participants.

Objective 3: Collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to develop policies, procedures, and training materials that align with best practices and meet the specific needs of the organisation and its employees *[by date]*.

Objective 4: The domestic abuse workplace response will be fully developed, implemented, and operational within 12 months, and periodic evaluations will be conducted to assess its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

Benefits of a workplace domestic abuse response

Having a workplace domestic abuse response will bring these benefits:

Employee wellbeing: Having an effective workplace policy or guidance on domestic abuse sends a clear message that domestic abuse is not tolerated inside or outside our workplace and that we want to help. This shows that we are an employer that cares about our employees and want to create a safe and supportive environment. This will have a positive impact on recruiting and retaining skilled and experienced people. Our employees have told us that they place great value on an employer that supports their wellbeing.

Playing a key role in changing and saving lives: As an employer, we have a key role to play in responding to domestic abuse. When our colleagues understand the scope of domestic abuse, some of the signs to spot, and how to respond to someone who discloses that they are a victim-survivor of domestic abuse, our organisation is in a position to change and possibly save lives.

Increased productivity: Employees who feel supported and safe are more able to focus on their work and be productive. Moreover, employees facing domestic abuse often suffer from increased absenteeism and may consider leaving the job. A workplace domestic abuse response can reduce these negative outcomes by providing the necessary support.

Positive corporate image: A workplace domestic abuse response will enhance our reputation as a responsible employer demonstrating our commitment to our employees.

Legal and ethical compliance: Having an effective domestic abuse workplace response ensures compliance with relevant laws and demonstrates ethical responsibility in supporting our employees.

Appendix: Outline plan and costs

We plan to implement our domestic abuse workplace response in these stages:

Phase 1: Making a commitment and taking the first steps		
Step	Tasks	Time and resources needed
1	Project Set-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain senior management support Write the business case Set up a project team Devise an implementation plan with budget 	<i>[Estimate the time and costs for your organisation. For example: The initial cost of project set up requires six days of a Human Resource Lead, three days of a Domestic Abuse Lead, and one day for Union consultation]</i>
2	Set up a Domestic Abuse Working Group	<i>[Estimate the time and costs for your organisation. For example: The initial cost of identifying the members of the Working Group requires three days of a Human Resource Lead and three days of a Domestic Abuse Lead]</i>
Phase 2: Implementing our domestic abuse workplace response		
1	Write domestic abuse policy	<i>[Estimate the time and costs for your organisation. For example: The initial cost of writing the domestic abuse policy requires three days of a Human Resource Lead and three days of a Domestic Abuse Lead]</i>
2	Develop and launch an awareness and communications plan	<i>[Estimate the costs that may be needed for designing and distributing informational materials, organising events, and creating awareness marketing materials. For example: The initial costs for developing content, including three days of copywriting and photography and approximately six days of PR/Marketing]</i>
3	Identify Domestic Abuse Champions	<i>[Estimate the time and costs for your organisation. For example: The initial cost of identifying Domestic Abuse Champions requires three days of a Human Resource Lead and three days of a Domestic Abuse Lead]</i>
4	Develop and implement a training plan	<i>[Account for the cost of training materials, trainers' fees and any other resources. For example: The initial training days will cost xx per day. To include fees, administration and venue and materials. For 12 days training, the total xx]</i>
5	Identify our internal and external resources and partnerships	<i>[Estimate the costs associated with identifying, setting up and maintaining these services. For example: The initial cost of identifying resources requires three days of a Human Resource Lead and three days of a Domestic Abuse Lead]</i>

Following the initial implementation, we will refresh the implementation plan and consider our next steps. These could involve phases 3 and 4 shown below.

Phase 3: Embedding our workplace domestic abuse response for the long term

- Review and update our domestic abuse policy
- Embed domestic abuse in all related policies
- Establish ongoing communications and awareness-raising
- Ensure regular, refreshed, ongoing training

Phase 4: Leading the way and inspiring others

- Consider whether to become an EIDA Beacon or Strategic Partner
- Take a leadership position as an organisation
- Our senior sponsor takes a leadership position externally
- Support our customers
- Encourage our supply chain
- Work in our community