



GUIDE FOR MANAGERS

**SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES
AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE**

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INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence and abuse are crimes, and the police, with support services, are there to protect victims and bring perpetrators to justice. The Home Office definition of Domestic Abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or who have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

Domestic abuse may include a range of behaviours, such as (this list is not exhaustive) constant criticism, intimidation, threats to harm, withholding earned money, stalking, hitting, biting, grabbing, kicking, sexual assault and rape.

Anyone can be affected by domestic abuse. Abuse can be within same-sex relationships. Victims can be from any faith, community and any gender, ethnicity or from any background. Victims of domestic abuse are not confined to one group.

The purpose of this guide is to offer practical support for managers when a member of their staff has been identified as a victim of domestic abuse. This should include confidentiality being afforded to them in their workplace, unless there are safeguarding concerns which necessitates wider information sharing to prevent risk and harm. It should be recognised that as a manager you cannot solve the problem, but can offer support and take all reasonable action to ensure the

workplace is safe and secure for the individual and others who may be at risk.

You may become aware of a domestic abuse situation through sudden changes in behaviour or performance, absence monitoring, poor performance or an incident in the workplace. Some victims will work longer hours to avoid going home and may put in additional effort because they are desperate not to lose their job. Identifying an individual who is experiencing difficulties at an early stage can help to ensure appropriate support is provided. This can enable the individual to deal with their situation more effectively.

You must adopt a sensitive, empathetic and non-judgemental approach when dealing with an individual who is experiencing domestic abuse.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Coercive Behaviour

This is defined as an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten the victim.

Controlling Behaviour

This is defined as a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape, and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Domestic Violence and Abuse

This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Stalking and Harassment

This is repeated behaviour which is unwanted by the victim and causes the victim alarm or distress. It encompasses a wide range of behaviour and can include frequent, unwanted contact; following or watching the victim; damage to the victims property, and threats of harm.

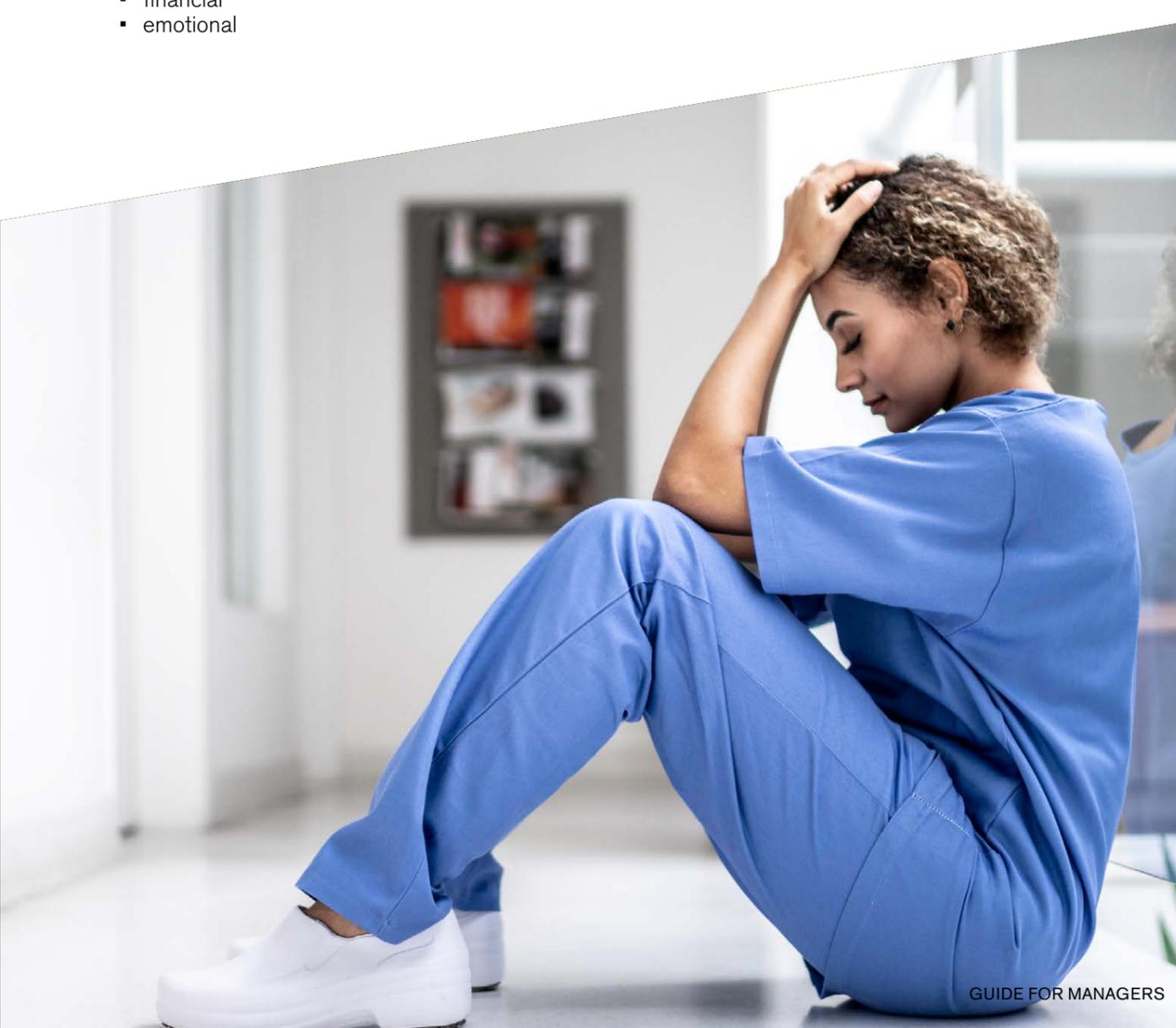
Harmful Practices

This is usually perpetrated by the victim's family, extended family and members of the community in order to protect or defend the 'honour' of the family. It includes honour based violence, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. Victims are not confined to one gender or ethnicity.

STATEMENT ON DOMESTIC ABUSE

Employers should make a clear statement regarding domestic abuse within their policies or handbook.

As an employer it is important that you state domestic abuse is unacceptable and abusive behaviour by your employees will not be tolerated. Furthermore, it is important to encourage an environment where domestic abuse can be talked about. You should make it clear to your employees that they will be listened to, that they will be believed, that they will be supported, that they will have control and that you will make them feel safe while at work.



MANAGER

YOUR ROLE AS A LINE MANAGER

The types of behaviours or skills that you will need when dealing with a domestic abuse concern include:

- making yourself approachable to the individual.
- providing an understanding and supportive environment for the individual to discuss their needs with you.
- ensuring any discussions about the individual's situation take place in private.
- ensuring the individual's confidentiality is respected as far as possible.
- listening to the individual and being non-judgemental. Avoid saying things that may unintentionally blame the victim for the abuse.
- understanding that the individual may not wish to approach you and may prefer to seek support from a colleague, staff association, staff support group, union or HR. If the individual does not wish to speak to you, you should advise them of the difficulties that may arise if you are not aware of the relevant facts, for instance if there is a potential health and safety issue or if other action is being taken such as performance or absence monitoring.
- asking the individual what support measures they may wish to explore.
- discussing the specific steps that can be taken to help the individual stay safe in the workplace.

Other points that you will need to consider include:

- explaining the options available to support the individual, which may include referral to an outside agency where the individual agrees to this action.
- providing details of Health and Wellbeing services and other external support organisations.
- being aware there may be additional issues faced by the individual because of a protected characteristic such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- understanding that you may disagree with the decisions being made regarding an employee's relationship, a victim of domestic abuse may make a number of attempts to leave their partner/ex-partner before they are able to do so. The role of a manager is not to deal with the abuse itself, but to provide support and ensure the safety of the employee at work.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Consent from the individual should normally be obtained before information is sought or passed on.

There may be circumstances when information must be shared without the individual's consent. For example, where there is significant concern for the individual's safety, or concern that another adult or child is, or is likely to, suffer significant harm.

The dangers associated with breaches of confidentiality in domestic abuse cases can be extreme.

Perpetrators of domestic abuse have been known to go to great lengths to obtain information on the whereabouts and movements of an partner/ex-partner.

Be mindful that the perpetrator may try to contact the victim through their place of work. You may wish to consider screening any calls or having a process in place for others to report anything suspicious.



POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Employees who are victims of domestic abuse may show signs at work that indicate what they are experiencing. Their behaviour may change significantly or they may demonstrate uncharacteristic behaviour for a sustained period of time.

Please remember that all victims respond differently to the abuse and not all of the indicators may be present. Likewise an employee who demonstrates these behaviours may not necessarily be suffering domestic abuse.

- Absenteeism, frequently arriving late or needing to leave early with poor explanation.
- Uncharacteristic displays of anxiety, distraction or trouble concentrating.
- Change in quality of work with no other explanation.
- Receives messages or phone calls that upsets them.
- Obsessed with time.
- Increase in hours spent at work with no other explanation.

- Changes to their dress sense.
- Significant weight loss or gain.
- Visible injuries, or attempts to hide them, with inconsistent or poor explanations.
- Frequent use of pain medication or alcohol or drug misuse.
- Frequent unexplained visits to the doctor or hospital.
- Panic attacks.
- Physical and emotional exhaustion.
- Appearing frightful or easily startled.
- Withdrawal or personal isolation.
- Low self-esteem.
- Secretive about home life.
- Evidence that their partner is limiting their activities or exerts an unusual amount of control over their life.

HOW AN INDIVIDUAL CAN REPORT DOMESTIC ABUSE

An individual who is the subject of domestic abuse is encouraged to raise such concerns at the earliest opportunity using one of the following options:

- contact a domestic abuse support service, details contained within this guide.
- informing you (as the line manager).
- informing a third party (for example second line manager, colleague).
- contacting any available employee support services.
- contacting the police.

If an individual believes that a colleague may be experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse, they should report their concerns to you as the individual's line manager.

While a robust approach is taken in respect of perpetration of abuse, individuals who recognise the impact of their behaviour should be encouraged to seek help and support to address their behaviour.

HOW TO RESPOND TO A DOMESTIC ABUSE CONCERN

If an individual discloses to you, or if you or one of the individual's colleagues believe that they are experiencing domestic abuse, you should:

- meet with the individual to discuss this sensitively and confidentially. You will need to familiarise yourself with this support guide in order to ensure the correct support and advice is offered.
- make sure appropriate support is in place, especially if the individual is absent from work, for example on maternity leave or sickness absence.

- consider what safeguarding actions you need to take, utilising the safety planning document and signposting to relevant specialised support services.

Under no circumstances should you conduct or suggest mediation between the victim and perpetrator.

“
REMEMBER THAT ALL VICTIMS RESPOND DIFFERENTLY TO THE ABUSE
”

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT AT WORK

The individual's safety must be considered. This should include the risks posed to the individual regarding their workplace/role and other factors to assess if adjustments are required.

Examples of changes that could help to ensure the individual's safety include:

- screening/diverting phone calls and email messages.
- providing an alternative phone extension or email address if the individual is receiving harassing calls/emails.
- agreeing with the individual what information to share with colleagues and how they should respond if the individual's partner or ex-partner telephones or visits the workplace. This is particularly relevant when disclosing personal details or the individual's whereabouts to anyone, including family members.
- ensuring the individual does not work alone or in an isolated area.
- supporting alternative arrangements for the individual to travel safely to and from home/work.
- changing the locks/codes to enter the workplace.
- providing a personal or workstation alarm.
- providing an alternative entrance to, or exit from, the workplace.
- screening access to the workplace.
- enabling reception/security to identify the perpetrator (photo, car registration), and advising them on what to do if the perpetrator arrives at the workplace.
- reviewing the security of all personnel records and personal information.
- have a group of colleagues walk with the person to/from their car or transportation means.
- consider referral to a local Citizens Advice Bureau or alternative methods of salary payment if suffering financial abuse.

RECORD KEEPING

You should record and respond to any notifications or disclosures of domestic abuse incidents including persistent phone calls, emails or visits to the individual by the perpetrator. Details of any witnesses to these incidents should also be noted.

Consideration should be given to whether the information should be 'protected' and so only available to named individuals directly involved.

FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUESTS

Offering temporary or permanent changes to the work base, working times and/or work patterns may help the individual to feel less at risk at work and on their journey to and from work.

You should discuss with the individual the support measures available, including a temporary change in hours or working arrangements.

Adjustments may include, for example, changes to the workplace to ensure the individual is not visible from reception points or ground floor windows.



ANNUAL LEAVE AND TIME OFF REQUESTS

Speak to your HR personnel to facilitate allowing leave in cases of domestic abuse and to look jointly with HR at enabling requests for reasonable time off.

You may receive requests for time off from the individual to:

- arrange appointments with support agencies during their normal working day.

- attend hearings as a witness in either the civil or criminal court if they have been called under a subpoena or a witness summons.
- attend court to seek an injunction or court order in cases of violence or harassment.

EMPLOYEES AS PERPETRATORS

Employees who are perpetrating domestic abuse outside of work are likely to breach company policy and should be subjected to disciplinary procedures. Furthermore, it must be considered whether the employee has used work time, telephones or emails to harass the victim.

Violent or abusive behaviour by an employee, whether inside or outside of work, must be viewed seriously and an investigation into the facts undertaken. Depending on the seriousness and complexity of the incident, you may:

- Encourage them to seek help from a specialist agency if they demonstrate obsessive or controlling behaviours in their relationships.
- Undertake company disciplinary procedures.
- Report the incident to the police.

Where the suspected perpetrator and victim are both employees, this guide should be followed with the following additional safety measures considered:

- Ensure the victim can speak privately to their supervisor or trusted colleague without the suspected perpetrator knowing.

- Consider putting steps in place so that the suspected perpetrator is unable to monitor the victim's activity at work, especially if the victim is being supported to access domestic abuse services.
- Consider off-setting break and/or shift times if the victim wishes.
- Consider temporarily relocating the suspected perpetrator, or the victim if they wish.
- Be mindful that additional safety measures may need to be put into place if the relationship ends.

Work with the victim to keep them safe and be conscious not to unintentionally penalise them when making arrangements for the suspected perpetrator. Do not meet with the suspected perpetrator and victim together or attempt to mediate.

WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Individuals should be advised of the local specialist services to support those affected by domestic abuse. Encouragement should be given to the individual to report the matter to the police.

Sussex Police has specially trained officers who can support the individual through an investigation as well as being able to offer bespoke safeguarding advice covering matters such as personal safety and home security. You can report online at www.sussex.police.uk or call **101**. In an emergency always call **999**.

ADULTS AND CHILDREN AT RISK OF HARM

If you are worried that a vulnerable adult or child is at risk of harm due to the domestic abuse, it is important that you make a safeguarding referral. These can easily be completed online and submitted to your local adult or child safeguarding team.

West Sussex

ADULT

www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/social-care-support/adults/raise-a-concern-about-an-adult

CHILD

www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/keeping-children-safe/raise-a-concern-about-a-child

Brighton & Hove

ADULT

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/adult-social-care

CHILD

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-and-education/child-protection

East Sussex

ADULT

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/socialcare/worried/report

CHILD

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies/worried-about-a-child

A staff association or union can offer information and workplace support as well as signposting to useful support organisations.

www.safespacesussex.org.uk provides an online directory of local victim and witness specialist support services as well as information about different types of crime and what happens at each stage of the criminal justice system, helping to 'demystify' the process for people when they may be at their most vulnerable.

The site has been built in close consultation with local victims' services and follows extensive user testing with victims to ensure it meets their needs, whatever stage they have reached in their recovery. Some users may not have reported the crime to the police, some may not even identify that they have been a victim of crime. Regardless of the circumstances, Safe Space Sussex provides

a secure environment where, at the click of a button, people who may be feeling unsafe can find out what local help and support is available to them.

For domestic abuse, Safe Space Sussex provides details of local and nationally support services. Such services can give advice and guidance, as well as providing extensive support to victims, in regards to safety, housing, legal advice and counselling.

Sussex Police is one of many organisations accredited by the White Ribbon campaign, the largest global effort of men working to end male violence against women. This gives us the opportunity to continue our work with our partners and other organisations to unite in our promise never to commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women.

White Ribbon's mission is to end male violence against women, by engaging with men in England and Wales so that they understand that women's safety is an issue for men too, and take action to end men's violence against women, and the social norms and inequalities which sustain it.

It encourages men to speak out and be active bystanders, challenging abuse and violence against women and girls; and to promote positive masculinity in men and boys.



To help support the White Ribbon campaign, we encourage you and your organisation to:

Make the promise: White Ribbon's core aim is to encourage people to take the pledge to never to commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women and girls in all forms. Only by standing up and being counted can we hope to end male violence against women.

Wear a White Ribbon: The White Ribbon is a symbol of hope for a world where women and girls can live free from the fear of violence and abuse. Wearing a White Ribbon reinforces your commitment to the pledge.

Become an Ambassador (Men): An ambassador practices tolerance, respect and kindness, and to stand up against male violence, bullying and sexism in all forms. To become a White Ribbon Ambassador, you need to complete online training after which you'll receive guidance on how you can help.

Become a Champion (Women): Women are encouraged to play an active role in this campaign, to ensure the issue is approached correctly and with sensitivity. Find out how to become a White Ribbon Champion.

Find out more about [White Ribbon UK](http://WhiteRibbonUK).



MANAGER'S CHECKLIST

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As the manager you are responsible for:

- ensuring the safety of individuals within your team while at work.
- being aware of the support available to individuals affected by domestic abuse both locally and nationally.
- meeting with the individual to discuss the support available to them and addressing any immediate safeguarding issues.
- encouraging them to report to the police.
- considering adjustments to their workplace and role which are necessary to address safeguarding concerns identified and deciding whether to implement where reasonable.
- maintaining appropriate standards of confidentiality.
- keep factual records of discussions with the employee.
- signposting the individual to further support agencies if required.
- risk-assessing the nature of the individual's duties and considering if temporary restrictions are needed until a fuller assessment can take place.

Individuals are encouraged to:

- advise you of any potential dangers, risks or domestic abuse that they are experiencing.
- alert you if they believe that a colleague may be experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse.
- work with you to ensure their own safety while at work, which may include temporarily withdrawing from certain operational duties.

The HR person who is supporting you (as the line manager) is responsible for:

- advising on application of this guide.
- supporting with case management.

The staff association or union representative is responsible for:

- advising/supporting their member/colleague.
- signposting their member to further support agencies.

“ YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THE SAFETY OF INDIVIDUALS WITHIN YOUR TEAM WHILE AT WORK ”

SAFETY PLANNING

One of the most important steps a victim of domestic abuse can take is to make a safety plan, both for home and the workplace. You can use the following tools to help an employee consider their options and plan for their safety.

Ask some of the following questions and record actions using the checklist “Employer Safety Plan”.

- In what way can I (and others) help you?
- What do you feel would help you keep safe?
- Do you have any concerns about your children's safety?
- What have you tried in the past to protect yourself, your children or other family members?
- Did any of these strategies help?

For specific safety advice in the workplace, see the checklist.

GENERAL SAFETY ADVICE

- Arrange where you might go if you have to leave urgently.
- Find places where you can quickly and safely use the phone. Always ensure your mobile phone is fully charged or carry a portable battery pack.

- Always carry a list of numbers with you in case of an emergency.
- Try to save money so that you have bus or taxi fares in an emergency. Ensure your car always has sufficient fuel.
- Get an extra set of keys for the house/car.
- Keep the keys, money and anything else you may need in a safe place, should you have to leave quickly.
- Talk to your children. Let them know it's not their fault. Children do not have to see abuse to be affected by it. They hear it, sense it and can be sad and frightened by it.
- Talk to friends, relatives, your doctor, nurse or others about how you feel.
- Talk through the Safety Plan Handout.
- Suggest, if appropriate, that the employee talks in more detail about safety outside the workplace with the police or other domestic abuse agency.

IF SOMEONE DECIDES TO LEAVE HOME, CONSIDER TAKING:

- Birth certificates
- Medical records
- Money
- Benefit books
- Work permits
- Several day's clothing
- Marriage certificate
- Driving licence
- Credit cards
- Rent books
- Visa
- School records
- Car documents
- Chequebooks
- Passports
- Medications
- Children's favourite toys
- Personal possessions with sentimental value

SAFETY CHECKLIST

EMPLOYER'S SAFETY PLAN CHECKLIST

You can use the following tools to help an employee consider their options and plan for their safety.

QUESTIONS TO ASK	ACTION
In what way can I (and others) help you?	
What do you feel would help you keep safe?	
Do you have any concerns about your children's safety?	
What have you tried in the past to protect yourself and your children?	
Did any of these strategies help?	

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS AT WORK	ACTION
Advise employee to keep emergency numbers at hand where possible.	
Emergency contact person and details in case you can't contact the employee.	
Have you identified the organisation's contact and given their details to the employee?	
Offer, if possible, changes to the employee's workplace location and work hours, especially if they do front line work or can be seen in the building.	

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS AT WORK	ACTION
Consider changing/increasing workplace security: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change keypad numbers 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind staff not to give out personal information, including contact details and working hours 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the HR/Personnel information is secure 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review parking arrangements – does someone need to escort the employee to their car? 	
Discuss the possibility of getting a restraining order – this can include the workplace and childcare locations	
If the employee consents, advise colleagues (on a need to know basis) what they should do to help	
Do I have the employee's consent?	
Are there any other measure that could help? Discuss with employee.	

GENERAL SAFETY ADVICE

- Talk through the Safety Plan Handout
- Suggest, if appropriate, that the employee talks in more detail about safety outside the workplace with the police

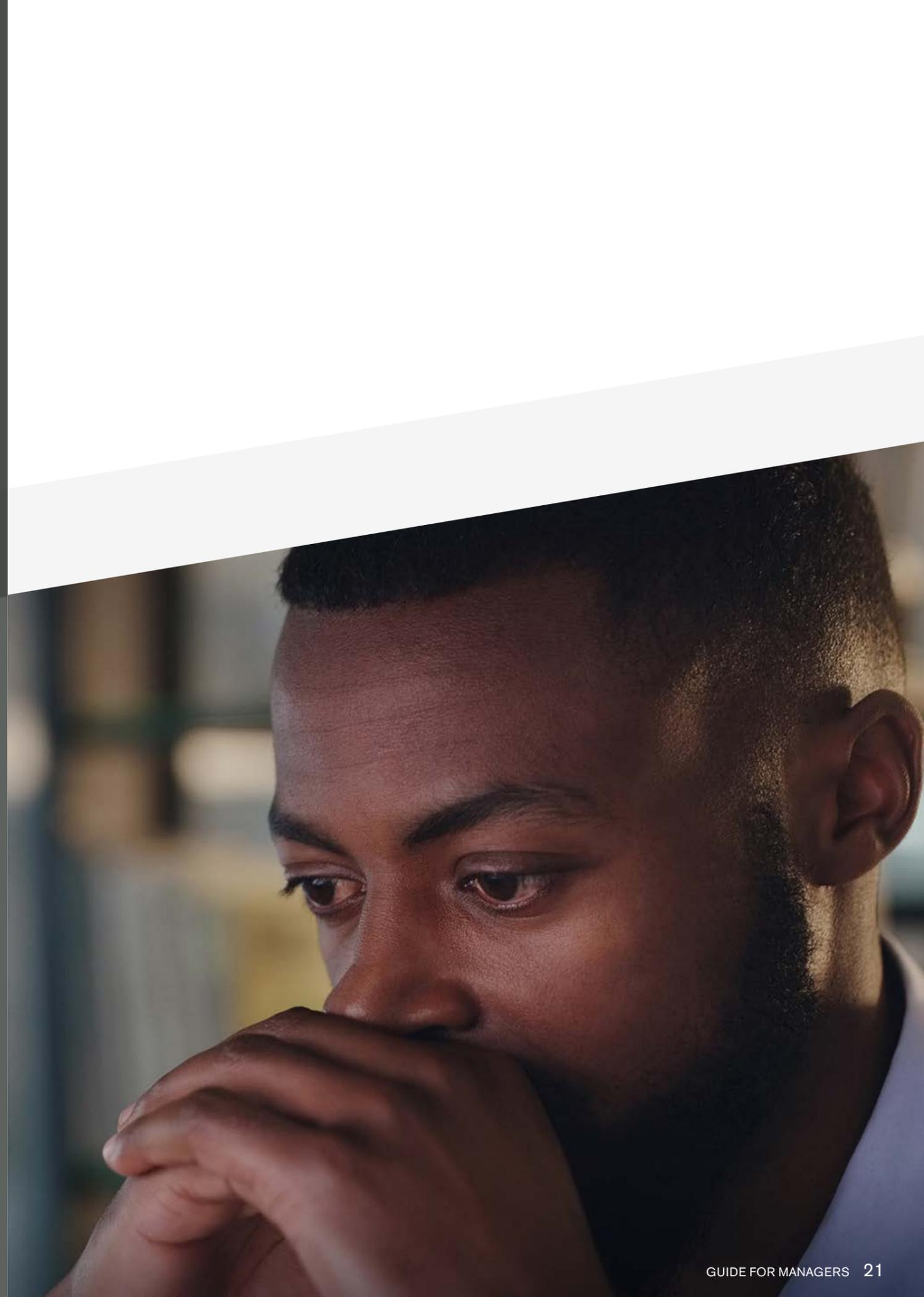
SAFETY PLAN

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS AT WORK

- 1 Keep emergency numbers easily accessible – consider the use of a mobile phone that connects directly to the police.
- 2 Know who your contact person is in your organisation if you need help or advice.
- 3 Give your organisation the name and number of an emergency contact person for you.
- 4 Tell someone if you are receiving any sort of threat or harassment at work.
- 5 Think about how you travel to and from work – try to make sure that you are not travelling alone or in the dark.
- 6 If there is anything you think your employer can do to help increase your safety, ask as soon as possible.

GENERAL SAFETY ADVICE

- 1 Arrange where you might go if you have to leave urgently.
- 2 Find places where you can quickly and safely use the phone. Always ensure your mobile phone is fully charged or carry a portable battery pack.
- 3 Always carry a list of numbers with you in case of an emergency.
- 4 Try to save money so that you have bus or taxi fares in an emergency. Ensure your car always has sufficient fuel.
- 5 Get an extra set of keys for the house/car.
- 6 Keep the keys, money and anything else you may need in a safe place, should you have to leave quickly.
- 7 Talk to your children. Let them know it's not their fault. Children do not have to see abuse to be affected by it. They hear it, sense it and can be sad and frightened by it.
- 8 Talk to friends, relatives, your doctor, nurse or others about how you feel.



SUMMARY OF EMPLOYER SUPPORT

RECOGNISE THE PROBLEM

- 1** Look for sudden changes in behaviour and/or changes in the quality of work performance for unexplained reasons despite a previously strong record
 - 2** Look for changes in the way an employee dresses i.e. excessive clothing on hot days, changes in the amount of make-up worn
-

RESPOND

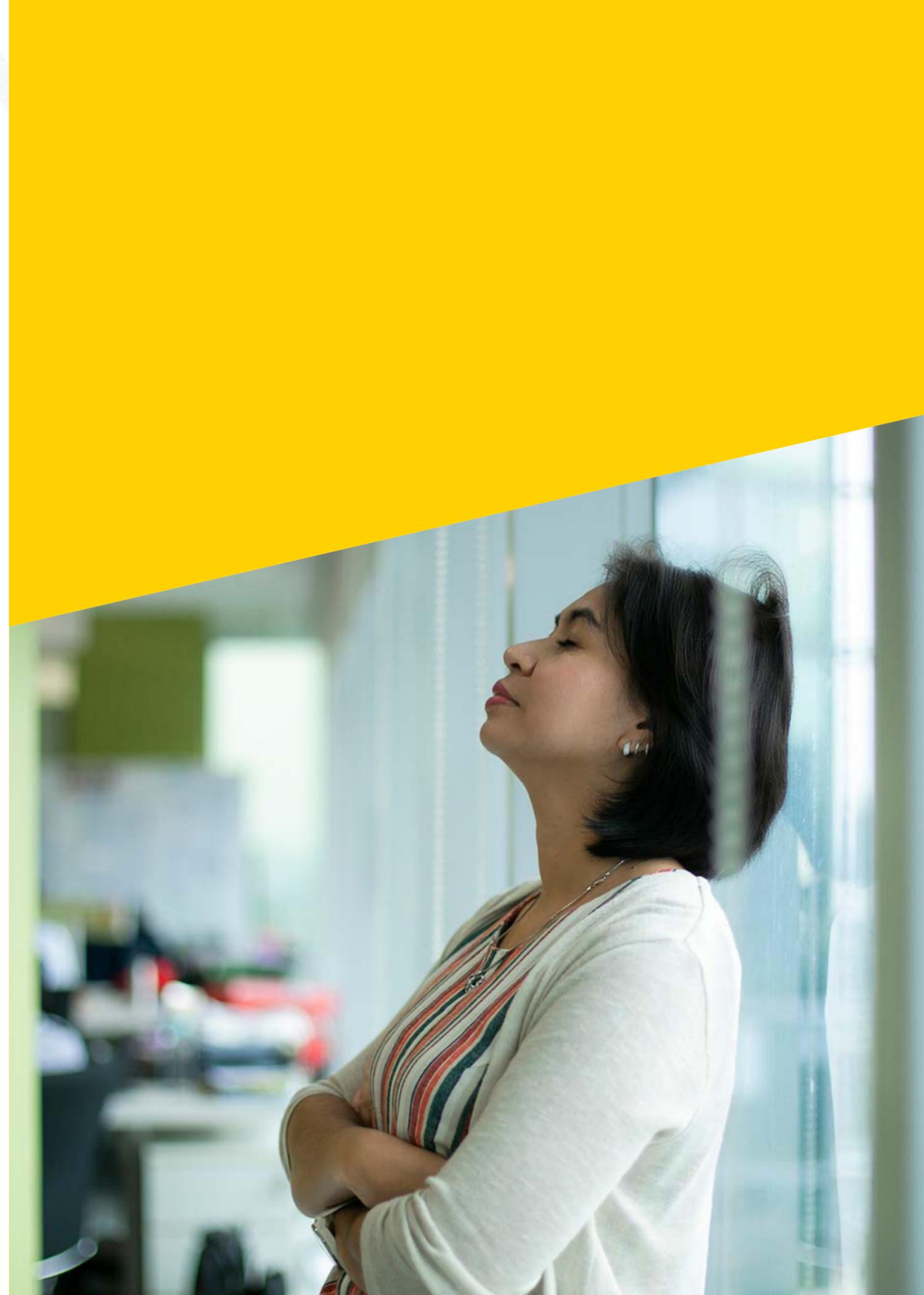
- 3** Believe an employee if they disclose experiencing domestic abuse – do not ask for proof
 - 4** Reassure the employee that the organisation has an understanding of how domestic abuse may affect their work performance and the support that can be offered
-

PROVIDE SUPPORT

- 5** Divert phone calls and email messages and look to change a phone extension if an employee is receiving harassing calls
 - 6** Agree with the employee what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if their ex/partner telephones or visits the workplace
 - 7** Ensure the employee does not work alone or in an isolated area and check that staff have arrangements for getting safely to and from home
 - 8** Keep a record of any incidents of abuse on the workplace, including persistent telephone calls, emails or visits to the workplace
 - 9** Put up domestic abuse helpline posters on the back of toilet doors
-

REFER TO THE APPROPRIATE HELP

- 10** Have a list of the support services offered in your area that is easily accessible and refer employees to appropriate organisations that deal with domestic abuse.





**Click
Call
Connect**

Reporting online could save lives

Report online at **www.sussex.police.uk** or **call 101**

In an emergency always **call 999**.

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