

Gender-based Violence and Harassment Policy

1. Introduction

Gender-based Violence and Harassment is an umbrella term that includes a range of behaviours, including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment; violence and harassment that is physical and/or psychological; and financial abuse. GBV can be perpetrated as a one-off act or as an ongoing pattern of behaviour. Although GBV can take many forms, what sets it apart from other types of violence and harassment is that it:

- is directed at people because of their gender, or
- disproportionately affects people of a particular gender

2. Policy statement

Best Practice People is committed to promoting a zero-tolerance concerning Gender-Based Violence and Harassment (GBV). It includes a zero-tolerance towards domestic violence, violence against women and girls (VAWG), stalking, rape, sexual assault, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriages, honour-based abuse and trafficking. Best Practice People will ensure that the working environment promotes the view that GBV is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We strive to create an environment where employees and learners can all feel safe from harm.

Best Practice People recognises that every employee or learner who is experiencing or has experienced abuse has the right to raise and discuss the issue with their manager, tutor or the Safeguarding Official, in the knowledge that the matter will be dealt with in a sensitive, non-judgemental, confidential and effective manner.

We acknowledge that GBV:

- Is a crime, is disruptive and socially harmful
- May have an impact in the workplace and that Best Practice People has responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its employees and learners
- Can affect an individual's performance
- Does not discriminate based on sex, class, race, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, marital status, or sexual orientation and therefore, this policy applies to all Best Practice employees.

3. Definitions

Gender-Based Violence and Harassment (GBV): is violence and harassment directed against a person because of that person's gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately.

Violence against women is understood as a violation of human rights, and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of GBV that result in or are likely to result in:

- physical harm
- sexual harm
- psychological harm
- economic harm, or
- suffering to women.

It can include violence against women, domestic violence against women, men or children living in the same domestic unit. Although women and girls are the main victims of GBV, it also causes severe harm to families and communities.

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months by Best Practice People Limited. Last Update: 1st August 2024

4. Legal Context

We took the following legislation and guidance into account in the development of this policy:

- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Stalking Protection Act 2019
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- Government Strategy to tackle Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- Home Office 'Domestic Violence & Abuse' guidelines
- The Domestic Abuse Bill 2019

Reference to other Best Practice Policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Equal Opportunities and Anti-Harassment Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints & Procedures Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Leave, Sickness and Absence Policy
- Flexible working policy
- Disclosure and Barring Policy

5. Responsibilities

- Raise awareness of the policy.
- Raise awareness of unacceptable behaviours.
- Support provision of appropriate training, e.g. through the range of topics on Violence Against Women and Girls and Domestic Violence
- Provide appropriate help and support to victims of Gender-Based Violence and Harassment.
- Take appropriate action where incidents occur or where allegations are raised.

Managers have a responsibility to:

- Read the Policy and related Guidance and understand how it can help to manage situations where GBV is affecting employees at work.
- Complete appropriate training courses to ensure they have an awareness of the impact of GBV, including its effects in the workplace.
- Ensure that they act in a manner which ensures that employees feel confident that any disclosures made will be treated respectfully and in accordance with this policy.

All employees have a responsibility to:

- Be aware of this policy and the scope it offers to all employees who may be affected by the issues it covers.
- Ensure that their language, behaviour, and actions in the workplace do not condone or support GBV, e.g. by not participating in, encouraging or condoning gossip relating to victims of this violence.

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- Refrain from using Best Practice People's resources to assist perpetrators or perpetrate GBV and/or make malicious allegations against another employee.

6. Forms of Gender-based Violence and Harassment

GBV can take various forms:

- Physical: it results in injuries, distress and health problems. Typical forms of physical violence are beating, strangling, pushing, and the use of weapons
- Sexual: it includes sexual acts, attempts to obtain a sexual act, acts to traffic, or acts otherwise directed against a person's sexuality without the person's consent.
- Psychological: includes psychologically abusive behaviours, such as controlling, coercion, and blackmail
- Economical: includes restricting access to financial or other resources
- See Annexure B for types of abuse

7. Gender-based Violence and Harassment in the workplace and non-discriminatory and responsive procedures

Best Practice People shall not discriminate in hiring, staffing or other terms and conditions of employment against any person (i) for disclosing his or her status as a victim of Gender-based Violence and Harassment, (ii) because such person is perceived as a victim of Gender-based Violence or Harassment, or (iii) because such person has submitted a complaint or disclosed concerns about Gender-based Violence or Harassment to Best Practice People.

Best Practice People shall not retaliate or take punitive employment actions against an employee for submitting a complaint under this policy, for disclosing his or her status as a Victim, or for acts of Gender-based Violence against such employee that occur in or have an impact on the workplace. This Section shall not preclude Best Practice People from taking adverse action against an employee who perpetrates Gender-based Violence or Harassment (whether within or outside the workplace).

8. Safety Planning

Best Practice People will make every reasonable effort to collaborate with a Victim to develop a Safety Plan. The Safety Plan should recognise and encourage workplace modifications designed to reduce the risk of harm and increase security measures. Such security measures may include making the abuser's identity known to security personnel, changing locks, modifying work schedules, changing workplace locations, arranging telecommuting options or other measures tailored to an individual's circumstances that are designed to increase safety. Best Practice People, with consent, advise colleagues of the situation on a need to know basis and agree on the response, should the perpetrator/alleged perpetrator contact or visit the workplace.

9. Leave Arrangements

Best Practice People recognises that Employees may need time off to secure medical assistance, legal assistance, counselling or to attend to other matters related to the GBV for themselves or a Family Member, such as court proceedings, relocation or Safety Planning. Best Practice People will make every reasonable effort to assist an employee in maintaining employment when the employee is experiencing or has experienced GBV or is helping a Family Member who has experienced GBV.

Best Practice People will work to provide reasonable and flexible leave options when an Employee or a child, spouse, parent, or parent-in-law of an Employee is a victim of GBV. We will make every reasonable effort first to provide paid leave before requiring an Employee to utilise unpaid leave. When the need for time off is foreseeable, an employee must give reasonable advance notice to Best Practice People unless advance notice is not feasible. To request leave, an Employee should contact his or her manager or the Management to arrange leave.

10. Resources and Support

Best Practice People shall, to the best of its ability, make available a list of resources for Victims (See Annexure A) and will make every reasonable effort to refer Victims to appropriate specialists who can offer assistance with respect to Safety Planning, counselling, and advice in identifying legal and other options.

Depending on their situation, some employees affected by abuse may refuse support or only take up partial support. It can be concerning, especially if the employee has begun to accept assistance and then decides to go back to an abusive situation or tries to minimise their abuse.

Dealing with abuse is a process that takes time, and it is crucial to be aware of the reasons that can make it difficult for an employee to access support. For example, they may have pressure from family or community to remain silent/stay in their relationship or financial pressures, especially if children are involved.

For further information, see Annexure C - Barriers to Seeking Support. It is the choice of the employee whether to accept support and Best Practice People cannot share what they have disclosed with anyone unless there are reasons to break confidentiality. In this situation, we will respect the employee's decision, reassure them that our primary concern is for their safety and remind them that support is available if they need it in future.

There may, however, be circumstances where the employee does not wish to take up support but where Best Practice People's concerns regarding the impact of suspected abuse on the employee's performance and/or on their health and safety are severe enough and where we believe it necessary to take further action. In these circumstances, Best Practice People would refer through normal Adult and Child Protection Procedures or seek advice from the Public Protection Office.

11. Confidentiality, recording and data protection

Once an employee has confided in their manager or the Safeguarding Official that they are experiencing GBV, they should be reassured that this information will be kept confidential.

Confidentiality can only be broken in the following circumstances:

- With the consent of the individual
- If it is required by law

- If it is unequivocally in the public interest where failure to disclose information may expose the individual or others to the risk of death or serious harm. In such circumstance, the information would be disclosed promptly to an appropriate person or authority
- If it will prevent a serious risk to public health and serious crime
- If a child is involved

In line with Best Practice People policies, we shall:

- Keep detailed records if an employee discloses abuse; any discussions and actions agreed shall be documented to provide as full a picture as possible; disclosure shall be recorded as an allegation, not fact. The consent shall be obtained before we register the allegation. Should the person refuse to give consent, we cannot record the disclosure.
- In accordance with Best Practice People's procedures and the Data Protection Act 2018, records shall be kept strictly confidential and will not be placed on the Employee's HR file; it shall be made clear that recording information on abuse will have no adverse impact on the employee's work record, and we shall document all absences in line with standard procedures, but if they relate to gender-based violence then Best Practice People will discuss it with the employee how these are recorded on the internal Leave system;
- Any reason for breaching confidentiality should be detailed, and Best Practice procedures on data protection and sharing information shall be adhered to.
- Best Practice People has a legal duty to maintain a safe place of work, and this requires monitoring and recording all incidents of violence or threatening behaviour in the workplace.
- Best Practice People can use the information if the member of staff wishes to press charges or apply for an interdict.
- If the actions of an alleged perpetrator affect the health and safety of the employee in the workplace, records may be used to assess risks to children/others and might also be used in criminal proceedings or if the employee wants to apply for a court order. As such, it is vital that records are clear and accurate and should include dates, times, locations, and details of any witnesses.

12. Managers' responsibility

Managers should appreciate how difficult it may be for an employee to discuss his/her personal circumstances and should always offer support in a sensitive and non-judgemental fashion. They should remember that signs of abuse will often not be visible and that an individual may leave their abusive environment only to return again sometime in the future.

Where a manager suspects that an employee is experiencing domestic abuse, they should:

- Contact the Safeguarding Official for advice before any discussion takes place with the employee
- Ensure that any discussion about the employee's situation, or with the employee, takes place in private
- Handle the situation with care and sensitivity. Employees should never feel pressurised into disclosing personal information that they do not feel comfortable sharing. Be aware that the employee may need some time to decide what to do.
- Respect confidentiality
- Understand that the employee may not wish to discuss any details with their line manager and may prefer to involve a third party, such as a trade union representative, colleague or someone from an outside agency
- Find out what the employee wants and whether a manager or another agency can help them achieve it; find out what support is available and explore these options with the employee.
- Be honest and realistic about what can be offered
- Be aware of any additional issues faced by the employee due to their protected characteristics

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- Introduce and encourage employees to contact the support services available, workplace and/or external (see Annexure A for relevant support agencies contact details), but avoid taking on a counselling role themselves
- Be aware that in many cases there would also be the involvement of police

13. Employees who are alleged perpetrators or perpetrators of domestic abuse

GBV perpetrated by employees will not be condoned under any circumstances, nor will it be treated as purely a private matter. Best Practice People recognises it has a role in encouraging and supporting employees to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds.

If an employee approaches their line manager or a colleague in Best Practice People about their abusive behaviour, Best Practice People 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.

Best Practice People will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of a GBV offence on a case by case basis with the aim of reducing risk and supporting change in behaviour.

An employee who is cautioned or convicted of a criminal offence in relation to GBV may be subject to Best Practice People disciplinary procedures.

Best Practice People also reserves the right to consider the use of the disciplinary procedure should an employee's activities outside work have a detrimental impact on their ability to perform their role for which they were employed and/or be considered to have brought Best Practice People into disrepute.

If a colleague is found to be knowingly assisting an abuser in perpetrating abuse, for example, by giving them access personal information or to facilities such as telephones or email, then they will be seen as having committed a disciplinary offence.

If it becomes evident that an employee has made a malicious allegation that another employee is perpetrating abuse, then this will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and action will be taken under Best Practice People disciplinary policy.

In cases where both the survivor and the alleged perpetrator work in the same location or office, Best Practice People will take immediate and appropriate action. Harassment procedure will be used promptly if abuse takes place at work.

14. Ensuring employees' Health and Safety

Best Practice People as an employer has responsibilities towards its staff, learners and others for their health, safety and welfare at work and in the classroom, as defined in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Where an employee advises that they are experiencing or are at risk of experiencing GBV, an attempt should be made to assess whether there is a threat to their personal safety during working hours. A risk assessment should be documented, and any mitigating actions identified/implemented.

Possible work-related adjustments could include:

- Periods of reasonable absence in line with sensitively applied flexi and special leave policies (time off to visit solicitors, attend counselling or attend court, etc.).
- Favourable consideration to any request for a change of workplace, work arrangements or patterns and adjustment to the workload for a temporary period to make it more manageable.
- At times when the employee needs to be absent from work, mutually agree a safe, confidential method of communication and consider any safety implications that may arise when working from home.
- Security of information held such as temporary or new addresses, bank or healthcare details.
- With consent, advise colleagues of the situation on a need to know basis and agree the response should the perpetrator/alleged perpetrator contact or visit the workplace, e.g. alert reception and security staff where the alleged perpetrator is known to come to the workplace and ensure the employee does not work alone or in an isolated area
- Use of an assumed name at work where appropriate.
- Change telephone numbers, divert phone calls and emails.
- Implement particular security arrangements that may have to be put in place to ensure the safety of the employee, colleagues or learners, and
- To record any threatening or violent incidents by the perpetrator in the workplace, including visits, abusive/persistent phone calls, emails and other forms of harassment which can be used by the police or the employee at a future date if they wish to seek a court order.

Implement safety measures which might include:

- Reminding all staff never to divulge personal information about employees to callers (such as addresses, telephone numbers, or working patterns)
- Review security of information held by Human Resources or elsewhere such as temporary or new addresses, bank details, telephone numbers, work locations etc.
- Review the employee's next of kin information
- Remove the victim's name and number from automated phone directories; change the victim's telephone number
- Ensure access to buildings is open to authorised staff only
- Ensure car parks have adequate lighting
- Set up security cameras in public entrances and in the area where the employee works
- Conduct environmental surveillance, for example, keeping intruders easily observable, maintaining areas such as car parks visible
- Place silent alarms or buzzers at the employee's workstation
- Change keys or key-pad numbers/codes for gaining entry to work premises
- Alert reception, security staff, staff in the workplace; with consent, provide a copy of any existing non-molestation/occupation orders, a photo of the abuser, details of the abuser's vehicle (car registration and description)

15. Options to provide leave for employees experiencing GBV

Best Practice People has a special leave policy which has provisions to allow for some paid or unpaid leave to deal with situations of GBV, at Management's discretion. Managers should deal sympathetically and consistently with requests from employees who have disclosed they are experiencing GBV, for reasonable time off, which should be referred to Management for approval.

Employees will be entitled to special leave to attend civil or criminal court hearings as a witness. They will also be entitled to special leave if they are required to attend court to seek an injunction against a perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse.

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Managers must record applications for special leave following Best Practice People special leave policy. The applications should be kept securely to ensure confidentiality.

Managers should be sympathetic and creative in exploring options with staff where it is necessary for them to arrange appointments during the typical working day. These appointments may include arranging re-housing, appointments with support agencies (Social Services, Women's Aid, counsellors, etc.), and meetings with solicitors, making alternative childcare or education arrangements.

16. Prohibited Use of Workplace Resources

Employees are prohibited from using any workplace resources, such as work time, phones, email, computers, or other means to threaten, harass, intimidate, embarrass, or otherwise harm another person. An Employee is considered to be in the workplace while in or utilising the resources of the Best Practice People, including but not limited to facilities, worksites, working from home, equipment, or vehicles, or while on work-related travel.

17. Disclosure of Court Orders and GBV

An employee who is subject to a final court order, or who has been convicted in a criminal or civil action as a result of a threat or act of Gender-based Violence and Harassment (GBV), must disclose the existence of the final court order to his or her manager or Management. Failure to disclose the existence of such a final court order in these circumstances may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If a manager becomes aware (through Employee self-disclosure, reports by a third party or any other means) that an employee may have committed an act of GBV, the manager shall direct, or refer the matter to Management to conduct, appropriate investigations, interventions and referrals. Management shall initiate and immediate investigation and shall take disciplinary action, up to and including termination, against any employee who threatens to commit, who commits or has committed incidents of GBV. In the event an employee discloses to a manager within Best Practice People that he or she has committed an act of GBV, Best Practice People will make endeavour to take more reasonable disciplinary actions and to provide appropriate references (medical or otherwise, as appropriate) to assist the employee.

18. Training

Best Practice People shall conduct regular and mandatory awareness programs for all employees to raise awareness of the ways Gender-based Violence and Harassment may impact the workplace, for all Employees to take all reasonable measures to create a harmonious working environment, which is free from intimidation, hostility, offence and any form of violence, and to encourage Victims to seek assistance in negotiating abuse through Safety Planning.

Training will include information on the physical, social and cultural realities that may affect victims of Gender-based Violence and Harassment; how such violence impacts the workplace, including the potential impact on worker productivity and safety risks; and the steps that all employees can take to reduce the risk of violence and to support Victims.

Employees are responsible for familiarising themselves with the policy and with the various options and support channels available for addressing such conduct.

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19. Implementation

To achieve the aims and objectives of this Policy, Best Practice People shall:

- Publicise this Policy
- Enable staff to attend relevant training
- Publicise contact details of local support agencies

20. Review

Best Practice People will review this policy every three years, on an as and when required basis considering the following:

- Legislative changes
- Good practice guidelines
- Incidents Reported
- New vulnerabilities identified
- Changes in practice
- Changes in Company infrastructure

21. Safeguarding Officer Details

The Safeguarding Officer for Best Practice People is:

Grant Basson

Contact Details: grant@bestpp.co.uk

Direct Contact number: 07807 058006

Office Number: 0800 888 6064

22. References

See Annexure D

ANNEXURE A

Where to go for help

Organisations for women

National Domestic Abuse helpline

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline is a freephone 24-hour helpline which provides advice and support to women and can refer them to emergency accommodation.

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline is run by Refuge.

There are translation facilities if your first language is not English. The Helpline also offers BT Type talk for callers with hearing difficulties. The Helpline worker contacts the Type talk operator so that the caller can communicate through them.

Website: www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Refuge

Their Helpline offers advice and support to women experiencing domestic violence.

Refuge also provide safe, emergency accommodation through a network of refuges throughout the UK, including culturally specific services for women from minority ethnic communities and cultures.

Their website also includes some information for men who are either being abused or who are abusers.

Website: www.refuge.org.uk

Women's Aid

The Women's Aid website provides a wide range of resources to help women and young people.

This includes [The Survivor's Handbook](#) which provides a range of information including legal and housing advice, tips on how to create a safety plan and advice for people with specialist housing needs. It's available in 11 languages and in audio.

They also [run a website to support to children and teenagers](#) who may be living in a home affected by domestic violence, or who may be in a violent relationship themselves.

Website: www.womensaid.org.uk

Rights of Women

Rights of Women offers confidential legal advice on domestic and sexual violence. You can find out more about what they do and when they're open on their website.

Website: www.rightsofwomen.org.uk

Finding Legal Options for Women Survivors (FLOWS)

FLOWS give legal advice to women who are affected by domestic abuse - they also give advice to front line workers.

Website: <https://www.rciadvice.org.uk/family/flows-finding-legal-options-for-women-survivors/>

Southall Black Sisters

Southall Black Sisters provide advice for Black (Asian and African-Caribbean) women with issues including domestic abuse, forced marriage, immigration and homelessness.

Website: www.southallblacksisters.org.uk

Organisations for men

Respect - Men's Advice Line

The Men's Advice Line is a confidential helpline for all men experiencing domestic violence by a current or ex-partner. They provide emotional support and practical advice and can give you details of specialist services that can give you advice on legal, housing, child contact, mental health and other issues.

Website: www.mensadvice.org.uk

ManKind Initiative

The ManKind Initiative is a charity offering information and support to men who are victims of domestic abuse or violence. This can include information and support on reporting incidents, police procedures, housing, benefits and injunctions. They can refer you to a refuge, local authority or other another support service if you need it.

Website: new.mankind.org.uk

SurvivorsUK

This is a helpline for men who have been victims of rape or sexual abuse.

They may be able to arrange counselling or a support group if you live in the London area, or provide details of an appropriate service if you don't.

Website: www.survivorsuk.org

Everyman Project

The Everyman Project offers counselling to men in the London area who want to change their violent or abusive behaviour. It also has a national helpline which offers advice to anyone worried about their own, or someone else's, violent or abusive behaviour.

Website: www.everymanproject.co.uk.

Organisations for women and men

RCJ Advice Family Service

RCJ Advice Family Service can give legal advice to people who are affected by domestic abuse or need family law help – [find out more on the RCJ Advice website](#).

Rape Crisis

Rape Crisis (England and Wales) is an umbrella organisation for Rape Crisis Centres across England and Wales. The website has contact details for centres and gives basic information about rape and sexual violence for survivors, friends, family, students and professionals. Rape Crisis (England and Wales) also runs a freephone helpline.

Website: www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Honour Network Helpline

The Honour Network Helpline is a national helpline run by Karma Nirvana, a national charity which advises victims and survivors of forced marriage and honour-based abuse.

Website: www.karmanirvana.org.uk

Action on Elder Abuse

Action on Elder Abuse gives confidential advice and information to older people who are victims of violence or abuse. A relative or friend of the person being abused can also contact the Helpline on behalf of the older person. The Helpline can be used in the case of older people who live at home, in a care home or who are in hospital.

Website: www.elderabuse.org.uk

National Stalking Helpline

The National Stalking Helpline can provide advice on how to deal with any type of stalking behaviour. This includes advice on how to report the behaviour to the police, and what you can expect if you report something. Website: www.stalkinghelpline.org

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months by Best Practice People Limited. Last Update: 1st August 2024

Respect Phonline

Respect Phonline offers information and advice to partners, friends and family who want to stop someone's violent behaviour.

Website: www.respectphonline.org.uk

Organisations for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Galop provides support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic violence.

Website: www.galop.org.uk/domesticabuse/

Organisations for disabled people

SignHealth - Domestic Abuse Service

SignHealth provides a specialist domestic abuse service to help Deaf people find safety and security. You can find out how to contact them on their website.

Website: www.signhealth.org.uk/with-deaf-people/domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-service/

Respond

Respond work with children and adults with learning disabilities who've either experienced abuse or abused other people.

Website: www.respond.org.uk

Available APPS

Bright Sky app

www.hestia.org/brightsky

TecSOS

Website: <http://www.tecsos.co.uk/?LMCL=fdQYwy>

TecSOS (Technical SOS) is a mobile solution for people experiencing domestic abuse, which provides immediate connection to the police at the touch of a button, 24/7.

The TecSOS handset provides an enhanced level of confidence, protection and reassurance for those experiencing domestic abuse:

- Users activate the device which initiates a 999 call
- The call is immediately identifiable to the 999 operator and is routed to the nearest police call handling centre
- The user's location and details are available to the police and call handler

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months by Best Practice People Limited. Last Update: 1st August 2024

TecSOS is managed in the UK by Thames Valley Partnership and is supported financially by the Vodafone Foundation. TecSOS is only available via the police.

ANNEXURE B

1. Types of Abuse

- **Domestic abuse** is a pattern of assaultive and coercive control, including emotional, sexual, psychological and physical abuse that affects around 1 in 4 women over the course of their lives.
- **Child sexual abuse** is defined as exploitation of a young person by an individual for their own or others' sexual gratification. It is physically and emotionally abusive and often involves serious and degrading assault.
- **Rape and sexual assault** are defined as unwanted or coerced sexual activity, including anal, oral or vaginal penetration, sexual touching; usually committed by a man known to the victim.
- **Commercial sexual exploitation** includes prostitution, pornography, lap dancing and sex trafficking.
- **Harassment and stalking** are defined as unwanted, persistent often threatening attention, e.g. following someone, constantly phoning, texting or emailing at home or work. Stalking and harassment is a common feature of domestic abuse. It occurs in isolation or as a component of the wider profile of abuse. High severity stalking and harassment can include behaviours such as constant communication, uninvited visits, loitering and threats to kill.
- **Harmful practices include** female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and so-called 'honour' crimes which are culturally condoned as part of a tradition. These are likely to be a form of domestic abuse or the basis for it.
- **Forced marriage** is a marriage which takes place against the wishes of either or both parties. This is not the same as an arranged marriage, where the individuals have a free choice as to whether to proceed.
- **'Honour' crimes** constitute violence excused as a form of punishment for behaviour which is perceived as deviating from what the family or community believes to be the 'correct' form of behaviour, sometimes referred to as 'family honour'.

2. Recognising that an employee may need help

It is not always easy to recognise that an employee is experiencing domestic violence and may require some assistance. Certain indicators such as a sudden change in behaviour, depression, inability to concentrate, obvious injuries or regular but unexpected absence from work may be indicative of a variety of problems, of which domestic abuse may be one.

Domestic abuse can present itself in many different forms:

Physical violence - Punching, slapping, hitting, biting, pinching, kicking, pulling hair out, pushing, shoving, burning, strangling

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Sexual violence - Using force, threats, or intimidation to make the victim perform sexual acts, having sex with the victim when they don't want to have sex, any degrading treatment based on the victim's sexual orientation

Psychological abuse - Destructive criticism, harassment, stalking, being controlling, verbal abuse, pressure tactics, disrespect, breaking trust, isolation, making threats, denial that the abuse is happening

Financial abuse - Withholding money, controlling money, not allowing the victim to earn their own money, denying access to financial information

Potential signs of abuse include:

Work productivity

- Persistently late without explanation, needing to leave work early
- Constraints on work schedule; employee may be dropped off and picked up from work and unable to attend work related events
- High absenteeism rate without explanation
- Needing regular time off for 'appointments'
- Changes in quality of work performance for unexplained reasons, e.g. may start missing deadlines and show additional performance difficulties despite a previously strong record
- Interruptions at work, e.g. repeated upsetting calls/texts/e-mails; Reluctance to turn off mobile phone at work
- Increased hours being worked for no apparent reason, e.g. very early arrival at work or working late.

Psychological indicators

- Changes in behaviour: may become quiet and withdrawn, avoid interaction, making acquaintances or friends at work; may always eat alone
- Uncharacteristic distraction, problems with concentration
- May cry at work or be very anxious
- Obsession with time
- May exhibit fearful behaviour such as startled reactions
- Fear of partner/references to anger
- Is seldom or never able to attend social events with colleagues
- Expresses fears about leaving children at home alone with partner
- Secretive regarding home life
- Appears to be isolated from friends and family.

Physical indicators

- Repeated injuries such as bruises that are explained away; explanations for injuries that are inconsistent with the injuries displayed
- Frequent and/or sudden or unexpected medical problems/sickness absences
- Sleeping/eating disorders
- Substance use/dependence
- Depression/suicide attempts
- Fatigue
- Change in the way the employee dresses, e.g. excessive clothing in summer; unkempt or dishevelled appearance, change in the pattern or amount of makeup worn.

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These are just a few characteristics. Different people will react in different ways. A more important sign is when an individual behaves in a way that is unusual for her or him.

Those who suffer violence at home are often targeted at work; they may receive unwanted telephone calls or text messages or be assaulted on their way into or out of work. However, it is unlikely, in the first instance, that employees experiencing domestic abuse will inform other members of staff of their situation or approach their manager with problems.

It is far more likely that the manager will become aware of the situation through associated issues such as sickness absence monitoring or poor performance.

As with other welfare issues, identifying that an employee is experiencing difficulties at an early stage will lead to appropriate help being offered, and allow that employee to deal with their situation far more effectively.

Our mission: To improve employment opportunities through the delivery of high quality, high impact skills training, coupled with a strategy to move every learner to a better destination

ANNEXURE C

Barriers to seeking support

Although widespread, Gender Based Violence is often hidden, generally occurring in a private or domestic setting, away from the workplace. The vast majority of cases of abuse are not disclosed to public agencies (including the police) and of those which are, relatively few results in criminal conviction. The covert nature of abuse and the impact it has on individuals can act as barriers to disclosure.

For example:

- People who have experienced abuse are often silenced by the perceived shame and stigma that surround it; they may feel they will be judged or blamed for the abuse and may therefore be reluctant to seek help within the workplace
- Issues around trust and concerns about confidentiality, especially if children are involved or if the perpetrator is also a Best Practice People employee, can make it difficult for individuals affected to come forward
- Staff may fear that seeking help could impact on how they will be treated by managers or colleagues, e.g. that they may be perceived as less competent or ineffective in their post and/or that it may prejudice career advancement

It is equally important to be mindful of diversity within the workforce, and that staff may have other experiences of discrimination or inequality which could affect, or indeed compound, the impact of abuse.

For example:

- People in lesbian, gay or bisexual relationships who have not disclosed their sexual orientation may be reluctant to discuss domestic abuse, thereby 'outing' themselves in an environment which they may fear to be unsupportive or homophobic
- Whilst gender based violence is predominantly experienced by women, it does impact on some men; disclosing abuse can be difficult for men who may fear being seen as 'weak' or 'unmanly'; male survivors of rape or childhood sexual abuse may also fear being regarded as potential abusers given the widespread acceptance of the myth of the 'cycle of abuse'
- Black and minority ethnic (BME) staff may be concerned that they will be ostracised in their communities, or accused of bringing dishonour on their families if they disclose abuse; they may be fearful of feeding racist or stereotypical views within the workplace which may minimise or dismiss their experiences
- Forms of domestic abuse can vary, e.g. forced marriage or so-called 'honour' based violence, which may be perpetrated by extended family members of both sexes as well as a husband/partner.

ANNEXURE D

References and further reading

Citizens Advice: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/gender-violence/domestic-violence-and-abuse/>

European Commission: What is Gender-based Violence: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence_en

EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality): <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/what-is-gender-based-violence>

Gender Trust: <http://www.gendertrust.org.uk/gender-based-violence/>

Home Office: Abuse against men and boys: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unveils-commitments-to-tackle-abuse-against-men>

Home Office: Domestic Abuse: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help#recognise-domestic-abuse>

ILO (International Labour Organisation: Eliminate Violence and Harassment in the World of Work: <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/violence-harassment/lang--en/index.htm>

Public Health Scotland: Overview of Gender based violence: <http://www.healthscotland.scot/health-topics/gender-based-violence/gender-based-violence-overview/overview-of-gender-based-violence>