



HM Government

DOMESTIC ABUSE COVID-19 CAMPAIGN

#YOUARENOTALONE



Employer pack
April 2020

DOMESTIC ABUSE COVID-19 CAMPAIGN

Introduction for employers

Measures announced over recent weeks to tackle coronavirus (COVID-19) have seen people's day-to-day lives drastically altered. These changes are essential to beat coronavirus and protect our NHS.

The government acknowledges that the order to stay at home can cause anxiety for those who are experiencing or feel at risk of domestic abuse. There is never an excuse for domestic abuse, no matter what the circumstances are.

The household isolation instruction does not apply if members of the public need to leave their home to escape domestic abuse.

As an employer, you can play an important role in reassuring employees that there is help and support available, including online support, helplines, refuges and local support services. The police also continue to respond to calls relating to domestic abuse.

The government supports and funds several charities who can provide advice and guidance and we are in regular contact with the charity sector, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and the police to ensure that these support services remain open during this challenging time.

More information on coronavirus and domestic abuse can be found here: [gov.uk/domestic-abuse](https://www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse)

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What is domestic abuse?

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background.

There are different kinds of abuse that can happen in different contexts. The most prevalent type of domestic abuse occurs in relationships. But the definition of domestic abuse also covers abuse between family members, such as adolescent to parent violence and abuse.

Domestic abuse is not always physical violence. It can also include:

- coercive control and 'gaslighting'
- economic abuse
- online abuse
- verbal abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse

There are signs of domestic abuse to look out for, including:

- being withdrawn
- having bruises
- having finances controlled by someone else
- not being allowed to leave the house
- having technology or social media use monitored by someone else

More information on coronavirus and domestic abuse can be found here: [gov.uk/domestic-abuse](https://www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse)

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How can you support as an employer?

Employers can be a lifeline for those living with domestic abuse. As a manager or a colleague, you can play an important role in reassuring employees that they are not alone and there is help and support available. You should encourage staff to look out for one another and reassure employees that if they are facing domestic abuse, you are willing to support them. We have included guidance on the next page.

The Home Office has recently launched a campaign to raise awareness that support is still available to domestic abuse victims, despite the COVID-19 'stay at home' guidance. People who are affected by domestic abuse may be harder to reach at this time and we really need everyone to get behind the campaign and raise awareness of this important message.

You can signpost employees to **[guidance on gov.uk](#)**, which includes a list of organisations that can provide help and advice on domestic abuse. This list includes organisations that can provide support in other languages and to those living with disabilities.

It is also important that we continue to send out a clear message that there is no excuse for abuse. If an employee is worried about the impact of their own behaviour on others, there is an anonymous and confidential helpline listed. This helpline is also open to friends, family, community members and professionals who are concerned about someone they know.

More information on coronavirus and domestic abuse can be found here: [gov.uk/domestic-abuse](https://www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse)

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How can you support a colleague or employee?

If a colleague or employee confides in you that they're experiencing domestic abuse, this is what you can do to support them:

- Listen to them without judgement. Do not blame them, excuse the perpetrator's behaviour, ask them why they have not left or tell them to leave
- Acknowledge it takes strength to talk to someone about experiencing abuse
- Give them time to talk, but don't push them to talk if they don't want to
- Acknowledge they're in a frightening and difficult situation
- Tell them nobody deserves to be abused, despite what the abuser has said
- Support them as a colleague or manager – ask them what they need and be guided by them. It is important to be patient and allow them to set the pace
- Ask if they have suffered physical harm – if so, offer to go with them to a hospital or GP
- If the situation is critical, advise them to call 999 and ask for the police. If they are in danger and unable to talk, they should listen and try to respond to the operator's questions by coughing or tapping the headset. On a landline, the operator will automatically connect to the police if they cannot establish if an emergency service is needed. On a mobile, the caller can use the **silent solution system** by pressing 55 when prompted by the operator to transfer the call to the police. If they are unable to call because of hearing or speech impairments, suggest the **emergency text service**
- If you are worried that someone is in danger, you should call 999. You can also report a crime by calling the police on 101
- Be ready to share information about specialist support. You can refer to: **gov.uk/domestic-abuse**
- If possible, offer to keep in touch by phone or online, and ask them what the safest way to do this is
- Do not take on too much or put yourself at risk. Many of the organisations who provide support to victims are also willing to support and advise concerned colleagues, neighbours and friends. There is also support available if you are worried about a child

More information on coronavirus and domestic abuse can be found here: gov.uk/domestic-abuse

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Campaign assets

We have developed campaign assets with key partners and charities. These are available for employers to share with their staff and raise awareness of where people can get further advice and support. You can download the campaign assets, including posters, leaflets, animations, email signatures and social media assets, [here](#).

On the following pages, we have included draft staff intranet and newsletter text that you can use in your regular communications to employees.

The [Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse](#) website has a range of resources to support employers. Business in the Community also have a [toolkit with information](#) to help employers deliver their duty of care in relation to domestic abuse.



If you have any questions or feedback on the campaign, please contact the Home Office campaigns team on domesticabusecampaign@homeoffice.gov.uk

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Staff intranet and newsletter text

Staff intranet text:

Measures announced over recent weeks to tackle coronavirus (COVID-19) have drastically altered people's day-to-day lives. While it is essential that the vast majority of people stay home to protect the NHS and save lives, the government acknowledges that the order to stay at home can cause anxiety for those who are experiencing or feel at risk of domestic abuse. Therefore, if you are experiencing domestic abuse, you can leave your home to seek help, and police and support services remain available.

Domestic abuse is unacceptable in any situation, no matter what stresses people are under. There is no excuse for abuse.

Domestic abuse is not always physical violence. It can also include:

- coercive control and 'gaslighting'
- economic abuse
- online abuse
- verbal abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse

If you're worried or suspect that someone you know, including a colleague, is experiencing or may be at risk of experiencing domestic abuse, you can get more information here: [gov.uk/domestic-abuse](https://www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse). You can also speak to a colleague or your line manager.

Many of the organisations that provide support to victims of domestic abuse are also willing to support and advise colleagues, managers and friends if they suspect someone they know is experiencing domestic abuse. There is also support available if you are worried about the impact of your own behaviour on others.

More information on coronavirus and domestic abuse can be found here: [gov.uk/domestic-abuse](https://www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse)

Staff newsletter text:

Staying at home in accordance with the coronavirus (COVID-19) advice can cause anxiety for anyone experiencing or feeling at risk of domestic abuse. There is no excuse for abuse. If you're worried or suspect that someone you know, including a colleague, may be a victim of domestic abuse, you can get more information here: [gov.uk/domestic-abuse](https://www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse)

Use the campaign assets from the previous page to accompany this post. This text is a guide to help you promote the campaign. It may be appropriate to tailor it to better suit your organisation and staff.

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