# Support for Employees Affected by Domestic Abuse at UON

The University is committed to supporting colleagues who are affected by domestic abuse. This guidance is for individuals directly affected and includes information on internal support and external specialist independent organisations.

We have a duty of care for your health, safety and wellbeing and want to create a safe and supportive workplace environment which includes providing a safe space for you to disclose domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse can take many different forms including physical abuse, sexual abuse, economic abuse, controlling or coercive behaviour, stalking, digital/online abuse, ‘honour’-based abuse, spiritual abuse and pet abuse.

We recognise the definition of domestic abuse as outlined by the [UK Government](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/157800/domestic-violence-definition.pdf) (2012)[[1]](#footnote-1):

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; emotional”.

We will support all victims of domestic abuse, (regardless of their age and background), and we understand domestic abuse as a gendered crime that forms part of wider violence against women and girls.

If you feel that you are at risk of harm or are a victim of abuse, you can be confident in seeking information, guidance or support from UON.

We respect your right to privacy and recognise you may not want to inform anyone at work that you have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse. If you would like to speak to someone, you can talk to your HR contact, your line manager or your trade union representative. Alternatively counselling and confidential advice is available via the Employee Assistance Helpline who can be contacted on 0800 328 1437.

We encourage you to discuss any issues of domestic abuse with your manager so they are aware and take this into account, especially if any formal policies or procedures, such as performance or attendance management are inadvertently activated.

We will prioritise your safety if you disclose that you are experiencing domestic abuse. If you make us aware of your situation we will ask you what support you may need but we will not pressure you into disclosing personal information if you are not comfortable to do so. We are aware that each individual’s needs will be different but we will try to be as flexible and adaptable as possible. Please let us know how you would like to remain in contact and whether there is a safe email or contact number you would prefer us to use.

Potential ways we can support you may include:

* Offering flexibility in your working hours
* Diverting phone calls or emails or changing your phone extension
* Ensure that you don’t work alone or in an isolated area
* Agree with you what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if your abuser telephones, visits campus or is present during a virtual meeting
* Agree code words or hand signals in video calls so if you don’t come onto campus or if you are in a threatening situation while working at home, there are set phrases both parties can say to flag if you are in danger.

You can be assured that disclosures will be dealt with sensitively. As your employer we have a duty of care so we may need to break confidentiality. This will only be if there is an immediate danger to yours or others safety or if we have a legal obligation to do so. In circumstances where it is necessary to breach confidentiality, we will discuss this with you where possible to explain why and to seek your agreement. Improper disclosure of information, e.g. breaches of confidentiality by any employee will be taken seriously and may be subject to disciplinary action.

## Alleged Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is a serious matter and misconduct inside and outside of the workplace is viewed extremely seriously.

UON may consider the use of the disciplinary procedure should your activities outside of work have a detrimental impact on your ability to perform your job and/or it is considered that you have brought the university into disrepute.

You may wish to access help and support such as the counselling and confidential advice that is available via the Employee Assistance Helpline who can be contacted on 0800 328 1437.

## Where to go for help

This is not an exhaustive list, for further details on support please visit [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/gender-violence/domestic-violence-and-abuse-getting-help/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/gender-violence/domestic-violence-and-abuse-getting-help/)

### Local organisations

Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service has an online chat service, drop in sessions and helpline. More information can be found at <https://ndas.co/> or the helpline on 0300 0120 154

Eve is a Christian domestic abuse charity based in Northamptonshire who run a Family Refuge <https://eveda.org.uk/>

Sunflower Centre is a partnership-funded service that works closely with Voice to provide specialist support to victims of domestic abuse. For more information visit <http://voicenorthants.org/victims/about-voice-northants/sunflower-centre/>

### Organisations for women

Refuge offers a 24 hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 2000 247, and information, support and an online chat function via <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>

Women’s Aid has an online chat function and support including a survivor’s handbook at [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

### Organisations for men

Respect – Men’s advice line has telephone or webchat support via [www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk) or 0808 8010327

ManKind Initiative is a charity offering information and support via [www.mankind.org.uk/](http://www.mankind.org.uk/) or 01823 334244

### Organisations for women and men

RCJ Advice Family Service can give legal advice to people who are affected by domestic abuse [www.rcjadvice.org.uk/family/](http://www.rcjadvice.org.uk/family/)

Respect Phoneline offers information and advice to partners, friends and family who want to stop someone’s violent behaviour <https://respectphoneline.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.

### Organisations for disabled people

Signhealth – Domestic Abuse Service provides a specialist domestic abuse service to help Deaf people <https://signhealth.org.uk/with-deaf-people/domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-service/>

Respond work with children and adults with learning disabilities who have either experienced abuse or abused other people [www.respond.org.uk/](http://www.respond.org.uk/)

1. Cross-Government definition of Domestic Violence – A Consultation [↑](#footnote-ref-1)