



Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control

Guidance For Managers

If you are concerned for your own or someone else's immediate safety, contact the police on 999.

If you are currently in a crisis situation, please refer to section 2.5 below for information about internal and external support.

1. Introduction

Domestic abuse is a significant problem for society. The impact of domestic abuse can be chronic devastating, and life-threatening and can affect every aspect of the lives of those who experience it, including their work and studies. We recognise that members of our University community will be amongst those affected and are committed to safeguarding and ensuring the wellbeing of all staff who may be impacted.

Domestic abuse and coercive control are serious matters, recognised in law in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and can lead to a criminal conviction. The University views misconduct both inside and outside work seriously, and perpetrators of abuse, or anyone assisting them can be subject to disciplinary action.

The purpose of this guidance is for managers to understand what support can be offered should there be disclosures made of alleged Domestic Abuse by:

- Ensuring the University has effective, supportive and coordinated advice for responding to disclosures, and supporting all those affected by domestic abuse.
- Ensuring the University has appropriate resources which can be signposted for responding to alleged perpetrators within our community.
- Promoting gender equality, dignity and respect both on and off campus.
- Setting out the University's commitment to education and prevention in responding to domestic abuse

2. Guidance for Managers

If you are approached by an employee who informs you that they have or are experiencing domestic abuse, please:

- Take the employee seriously and take the time to listen to them
- Make sure that any conversation is carried out privately and that you respect their confidentiality
- Make sure that you have their formal consent before contacting a third party on their behalf. This is subject to the section on confidentiality and safeguarding - see below on page 4.
- Draw the employees' attention to the guidance that is available on the University webpages and from specialist support services
- Explore what internal help is available
- Seek advice from your HR Business Partner or Advisor
- Recognise the limits of your role
- Be careful to not disclose their whereabouts to a third party (for example where someone calls into the department and asks if the member of staff is at work today)

Listen - The most important aspect of this conversation is to encourage the individual to speak about their situation. You may be the first person they have approached and raising the issue takes a great deal of courage and the response that you provide may be a crucial factor as to whether they seek further support. There may also be situations where you initiate a confidential conversation with the staff member if you have concerns – see the section on identifying possible domestic abuse below. Such a conversation should be handled very sensitively and you should seek advice from your HR Business Partner or Advisor before initiating it.

Act - The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) have developed a list of ten actions (attached as Appendix 1) that can be taken to help manage domestic abuse in the workplace. These actions identify how managers can recognise the problem, respond to it, provide support and refer individuals on for further support. There is also the extremely useful Guidance to Universities provided by the HARM Network, which gives detailed guidance for Universities and the actions that we need to follow.

Support - As a manager you should encourage the staff member to seek support from specialist domestic abuse support services (see Appendix 2) and through the Employee Assistance Programme and Education Support Partnership which University staff are able to access and use free of charge. Support is also available through their accredited Trade Union.

Students who identify possible domestic abuse issues:

If a student makes you aware that they have experienced domestic abuse please encourage them contact Student Services directly on ext. 4321 / 01225 384321 who will be able to provide confidential support and advice to them.

3. Scope

This guidance applies to:

- all staff of the University of Bath and the University of Bath's Students' Union

Domestic abuse is any incident or patterns of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between those aged 16 and over who have, or have had in the past, a personal relationship.

A personal relationship can include:

- Intimate partners
- Ex-partners
- Family members
- Individuals who share responsibility for a child

Individuals do not have to be living in the same household for behaviour to amount to domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Economic or financial abuse
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Stalking
- Digital and online abuse
- 'Honour'-based abuse (including forced marriage) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Spiritual abuse
- Pet abuse

Further definitions of specific behaviour can be found in the appendices in section 5.

4. Related policies and their interactions

[The Dignity & Respect policy and procedure](#)

[Disciplinary policy and procedure \(bath.ac.uk\)](#) - for employees

[Domestic abuse: guidance for managers and staff](#)

5. Considerations

In line with the University's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all staff and students, it may be necessary to make changes to the work or study environment to protect and support victims or those at risk of domestic abuse.

For all, consideration could be given for additional time and support to attend appointments, special arrangements for arriving on or leaving campus, including considering special parking arrangements.

For staff, adjustments could be may to work tasks as well as consideration around work location and workplace layout. In addition, consideration could be given to flexi-time and additional leave.

Longer-term solutions could be achieved through flexible working as outlined in the [Flexible working and leave policy](#) These lists are not intended to be exhaustive.

Further information and support can be found in section 2.4 of this guidance.

6. Safety Planning

The University aims to ensure security for all on campus and has a duty to maintain a secure environment. Should there be a risk of harm to any individual whilst on campus, contact the security office emergency number on 01225 383 999 or if you require non urgent assistance, call the general security number on 01225 385 349. In some cases it is easier if colleagues and peers of victims are aware of the risks, especially if there are risks of incidents on campus, for example if the abuser also works or studies on campus or due to the victim's exposure to areas easily accessible by the general public.

Staff and Students have access to [The University SafeZone app \(bath.ac.uk\)](#) when on Campus, and can use this to contact Security. Users should understand that use of the emergency button results in a call back from a member of the Security team, if the call is unanswered then security will attempt to despatch officers to the location of the call. Should you require emergency assistance when not in University premises, you should call the relevant emergency service.

If the alleged perpetrator also works or studies at the University, it may be necessary to invoke University policies and procedures for example Support and Report or Staff/ Student Discipline.

7. Record Keeping

Any records taken will be retained for the period of time required to comply with legal requirements and meet operational needs.

8. Confidentiality

As far as possible the University will keep the details of any disclosures confidential. The University is not able to provide a blanket guarantee that the information will not be shared at all, as it may be necessary to do so in the interests of supporting and/or protecting the individual, or where there is a risk of harm.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

The following sections set out the expectations on individuals for the implementation and effective application of this policy.

a. All:

Anyone could be the recipient of a disclosure of domestic abuse. This policy and the supporting documents aim to provide accessible information and guidance to support all staff who are the victims of domestic abuse and/ or the recipients of a disclosure.

b. All staff:

All staff who receive a disclosure of domestic abuse should refer individuals to their line manager in the first instance. Where possible, staff could also refer individuals to possible support for victims. All staff have a responsibility to protect confidentiality in line with this policy.

All university staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of and ensuring they understand how to access the University's policies, procedures and support mechanisms.
- Having an awareness of what support a student or staff member can access and signposting support services at the earliest opportunity.

c. Victim:

Staff who make it known that they are experiencing domestic abuse will be treated in a supportive and sympathetic manner. They will not be judged and will be encouraged to help themselves out of their abusive circumstances. Staff are encouraged to discuss any issues of domestic abuse with their line manager or HR. The effects of domestic abuse can impact on standard of work and attendance. This will be taken into consideration with regards to any formal policies or procedures.

d. Alleged Perpetrators:

The University recognises it has a role in encouraging and supporting staff and students to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds.

- Domestic abuse perpetrated by staff will not be condoned under any circumstances, nor will it be treated as a purely private matter. Any employee alleged to have committed an act of violence and abuse in the workplace, during working hours or using our equipment will be subject to disciplinary proceedings in line with University policy. Conduct outside of working hours may also be treated as a disciplinary matter if we consider that it is relevant to the individual's employment with us.
- If a member of staff or student approaches any member of staff about their abusive behaviour, they will be provided with information and encouraged to access the support services available to them. We encourage all staff members to address their abusive behaviours of any kind and recognise that change may only be possible with external help.
- An employee of the University who is cautioned or convicted of a criminal offence in relation to domestic abuse may be subject to the University's disciplinary procedures.
- If a colleague is found to be knowingly assisting an abuser, for example by giving them access to telephone or email, they will be seen as having committed a disciplinary offence.
- Malicious allegations will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and action will be taken under the University's disciplinary procedures.

e. Security

Should there be an immediate risk of harm to any individual or an emergency whilst on campus, contact the security office emergency number on 01225 383 999 or if you require non urgent assistance, call the general security number on 01225 385 349.

Security will deal with any reports of domestic abuse using their [Report a crime or Incident](#) form and process.

f. Member of staff supporting a student:

Staff should appreciate that it may be very difficult for students to disclose domestic abuse and should always offer support in a supportive and non-judgmental fashion. Signs of abuse will often not be visible, and an individual may leave their abusive environment only to return some time in the future.

If a student makes you aware that they have experienced domestic abuse please encourage them contact Student Services directly on ext. 4321 / 01225 384321 who will be able to provide confidential support and advice to them.

Where a member of staff suspects that a student is experiencing domestic abuse, they should:

- Contact [Wellbeing Service \(bath.ac.uk\)](http://bath.ac.uk) for advice.
- Ensure all discussions take place in private.
- Handle the situation carefully and with sensitivity.
- Respect confidentiality but ensure individual is aware that confidentiality may need to be breached if there is a concern about their safety.
- Find out what the individual wants and be honest and realistic about what can be offered.
- Direct student to available support services.

All staff who are closely involved in student support or academic progression are responsible for:

- Instigating and conducting stage 1 of the [Health Wellbeing and Support for Study Policy and Procedure \(bath.ac.uk\)](http://bath.ac.uk)
- Referring students to the Student Casework team for consideration of which stage of the procedure is appropriate.
- Attending stage 2 and stage 3 meetings as required by the Panel Chair.
- This includes, but is not limited to: Personal Tutors, Doctoral Supervisors, Student Experience Officers, Case Managers, Wellbeing Practitioners

g. Line Manager:

Managers should appreciate that it may be very difficult for someone to disclose domestic abuse and should always offer support in a supportive and non-judgmental fashion. Signs of abuse will often not be visible, and an individual may leave their abusive environment only to return some time in the future.

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

- Contact HR for advice.
- Ensure all discussions take place in private.
- Handle the situation carefully and with sensitivity.
- Respect confidentiality but ensure individual is aware that confidentiality may need to be breached if there is a concern about their safety.
- Find out what the individual wants and be honest and realistic about what can be offered.
- Direct employee to available support services.

h. HR

HR are responsible for supporting staff members who are victims, alleged perpetrators or the recipients of a disclosure of domestic abuse in identifying the routes available to address concerns and accessing available support.

HR are responsible for providing advice and guidance to managers on the application of this policy and any actions taken under linked policies, e.g. Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

10. Appendices

a. Detailed definitions

Some of the most common forms of domestic abuse, pertinent to the University are outlined below: Please note - this list is not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive.

- **Physical abuse (violence)** This can include hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, choking, use of weapons and threats of violence.
- **Sexual abuse (violence).** This can be described as any behaviour (physical, emotional, verbal, online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, harmful, exploitative, or unwanted that is inflicted on a person and includes taking advantage of their incapacity to give informed consent.
- **Economic or financial abuse.** This is often an element of coercive behaviour, that co-occurs with other forms of abuse. It interferes with a victim's ability to acquire, use, and maintain economic resources such as money, transportation, and utilities. This can make the victim economically dependent on the abuser and limit their ability to escape to safety. Examples of economic abuse include having sole control of the family income, preventing a victim from claiming welfare benefits, interfering with a victim's education, training, or employment, not allowing or controlling access to mobile phone, transport, utilities, or food, and damage victim's property.
- **Controlling or coercive behaviour** (or emotional/psychological abuse). Coercive behaviour is an act or pattern of acts or assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten a victim. Examples include a victim being isolated from family or friends, to limit or prevent outside support; monitoring their activities throughout the day; denying them freedom or autonomy (such as preventing them from going to university, or if they go out, stalking their every move, and taking their phone and changing their passwords). This may also include controlling aspects of a victim's health and body, such as controlling how much they eat, sleep, or time spent in the bathroom.
- **Stalking.** Often committed by ex-partners, this is a specific type of harassment, often described as a pattern of unwanted, fixated, or obsessive behaviour that is intrusive and causes fear of violence or serious harm. For example, abusers may bombard victims with unwanted and often threatening phone contact, and physical stalking at their home or place of work or study.
- **Digital and online abuse.** This can be described as technology-facilitated abuse that can include controlling and coercive behaviours, such as cyber (or digital) stalking, threatening or nuisance phone calls and emails, location tracking, online harassment, and dissemination of intimate images; commonly referred to as 'revenge porn', this term minimises the harm it causes victims and is increasingly referred to as image-based sexual abuse. Digital and online abuse is a serious and widespread problem affecting people of all ages.
- **'Honour'-based abuse** (including forced marriage) and FGM. The Crown Prosecution Service (2017) defines 'honour' abuse as "an incident or crime

involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion, or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse) which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of an individual, family and/or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and/or community's code of behaviour." Types of 'honour' abuse are wide-ranging, including psychological, physical, and sexual abuse, forced marriage, withdrawal from education, isolation, imprisonment, kidnapping and trafficking. Although 'honour' abuse victims in the UK are typically young South Asian or Middle Eastern females, victims are not confined to one ethnic group, age or gender. For example, lesser acknowledged are victims from other minoritised and/or marginalised populations in the UK, including females of Mediterranean, Turkish heritage or of Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, or gay males.

- **Spiritual abuse.** This can be described as any attempt to exert power and control over someone using faith, religion, or beliefs.
- **Pet abuse.** Domestic abuse and pet abuse frequently co-occur.

b. Signs and Indicators of Domestic Abuse

Signs and indicators of domestic abuse that you might recognise in colleagues, peers, student groups and direct reports include: Please note that this list is not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive.

- Changes in work productivity or academic engagements
- Absenteeism/lateness and anxiousness about leaving on time.
- Drop in work performance or grades and ability to meet deadlines.
- Behaviour when working remotely for example around use of camera during video calls.
- Change in level and type of engagement with other students or staff.
- Increase in personal emails, texts, calls and the associated responses during work or study time.
- Psychological signs – fear, expression of risk of harm, crying, increased anxiety, casual mentions of inappropriate behaviours.
- Physical signs – fatigue, frequent or sudden medical problems, visible injuries, change in dress/ use of make-up, weight change.
- Gradual or sudden changes in behaviour in relation to any of the above.

c. Barriers to Disclosure

Internal Barriers	External Barriers
Fear of not being believed	Abuser's physical presence
Fear of blame	Abuser's controlling behaviour
Embarrassment/ Shame	Abuser's manipulation of professionals
Self-blame/ guilt	Lack of money/ financial support
Fear of 'dishonouring' family	Social isolation
Protect partner/ relationship	Cultural and societal norms

Fear abuse may escalate	Putting family/ friends at risk
Fear of losing children and/ or home	Upsetting family/ friends
Unawareness of options or available resources	Public perceptions and victim blaming attitudes
Fear of losing job/ failing course or impact on career/ studies	Unable to access policies/ guidelines/ support at University
Concern about confidentiality or privacy of disclosing at place of work/ study	Lack of available specialist support

Support and Referrals

The University has trained professionals to provide support for staff and students in times of crisis.

[Student Support \(bath.ac.uk\)](http://bath.ac.uk) - information, support and advice for students.

[Therapeutic Services & Mental Health \(bath.ac.uk\)](http://bath.ac.uk) - for students we provide talking therapies, mental health support and courses and workshops. We can also help you find the right support outside the university.

[Advice and Support \(thesubath.com\)](http://thesubath.com) - Honest and independent advice service provided by the Students' Union.

[Support and Report \(bath.ac.uk\)](http://bath.ac.uk) - Everyone at the University of Bath has the right to feel safe. We take reports of bullying, harassment, hate incidents and sexual misconduct seriously. We have specialist staff to support and advise staff, students and members of the wider university community on options and how to access professional support.

[Counselling services for staff \(bath.ac.uk\)](http://bath.ac.uk) - find out how to access our free and confidential services for staff.

[Contact Human Resources \(bath.ac.uk\)](http://bath.ac.uk) - find out who your department's HR contacts are.

[Staff wellbeing \(bath.ac.uk\)](http://bath.ac.uk) - information, advice and support for staff relating to wellbeing.

[Security \(bath.ac.uk\)](http://bath.ac.uk) - the Security team is available to help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Emergency number: 01225 383 999

[The University SafeZone app \(bath.ac.uk\)](http://bath.ac.uk) -the app contributes to the welfare of all staff and students

External support:

National Domestic Violence Helpline – 24/7 freephone 0808 2000 247 or email helpline@womensaid.org.uk

National LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline – call 0300 9995428, 10.00-17.00 Monday to Friday with extend hours until 20.00 on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Men's Advice Line – 0808 801 0327 or email info@mensadvice.org.uk

Southside Domestic Abuse - [Domestic Violence and Abuse Services - Southside \(south-side.org.uk\)](http://south-side.org.uk) - provides targeted and specialist support for people affected by domestic violence and abuse across Bath and North East Somerset.

Voices – Bath-based domestic abuse charity offering 1-2-1 help, peer support and recovery programmes. [Voices | Domestic Abuse Charity Bath \(voicescharity.org\)](https://www.voicescharity.org)

Under **Clare's Law** you can:

- apply for information about your current or ex-partner because you are worried they may have a history of abuse and are a risk for you.
- request information about the current or ex-partner of a friend or relative because you are worried they might be at risk.
- [Request information under Clare's Law: Make a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme \(DVDS\) application | Police.uk \(www.police.uk\)](#)