



Vodafone's Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy Guide: A Briefing for Business

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Foreword

Over the past ten years, Vodafone Foundation has connected over 700,000 people affected by domestic abuse to the help and advice they need. Research commissioned by the Foundation and conducted by Opinium in 2019 revealed that more than 1 in 3 (37%) working people surveyed across multiple industries and at varying levels of seniority have experienced domestic abuse. In addition, 67% said that it had affected their career progression.

Vodafone recognises our role as a global business to be proactive in making a difference, enabling our employees to fulfil their potential in a safe and supportive environment. In 2019, Vodafone launched a new global Policy, specifically designed to support those experiencing domestic violence and abuse, and a toolkit to help managers enable any affected employees to get the help they need.

We are proud to have developed a ground-breaking policy in this area to support our colleagues and are committed to supporting other organisations in progressing this essential agenda.

This Guide aims to raise awareness and inspire other organisations to implement a similar Domestic Violence and Abuse policy. It is a call to action for organisations to contribute to a step-change in the global landscape.

Our objective is to make it as easy as possible for companies to access the information required to successfully develop and embed programmes within their own organisation. We also look forward to learning from the examples of others and to drive this agenda forward together.

Leanne Wood, Vodafone Chief HR Officer





1. Vodafone's Approach



1.1 Summary of Vodafone's Approach

Building the Business Case

Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) is a prominent and sensitive societal issue. Vodafone wanted to understand what role it can play as a business in order to proactively support those people experiencing abuse.

Building on ten years work, Vodafone Foundation commissioned research, carried out by Opinium in 2019, to understand the scale and impact of DVA and how it affects the working population.

This complemented previous Foundation research outlining the barriers that prevent organisations from supporting employees.

We also engaged with experts to inform ourselves on impacts, challenges and potential ways to support.

Establishing a Policy

Once the business case for global action was established, Vodafone engaged with different parts of the organisation that were already addressing the issue.

Both Vodafone Australia and Vodafone New Zealand already had policies in place.

These policies were assessed against uptake, impact and cost to inform the business case and create a plan for a global roll-out.

Vodafone developed a global minimum standard for support to employees experiencing DVA. This was designed to be beneficial globally and practical to implement locally.

Providing Training and Support

Vodafone engaged with Gender Expert Dr Jane Pillinger to enable Vodafone senior leadership to fully understand the impact of DVA in the workplace.

Dr Pillinger develop a toolkit to enable all employees to feel more confident in beginning to address this issue using the Recognise, Respond and Refer framework.

HR teams were trained to understand how DVA impacts people at work and how to use the Recognise, Respond and Refer framework.

Employee Assistance Programmes (external vendors) providing advice to employees were required to include DVA within the scope of expert advice provided to employees.



1.2 Building the Business Case

Challenge: Why should a business get involved in domestic violence and abuse?

Vodafone Foundation commissioned research (see results on right) and engaged with experts to educate our teams and Senior Leadership to ensure that we understood the impact, challenges and how we could support those experiencing DVA, and to encourage other employers to take action.

We determined that as well as being the right thing to do, there is a business case for preventing domestic violence in the workplace and in giving colleagues the support that they may need. Key considerations when building the business case included:

- Between 30 and 40 per cent of victims of domestic violence and abuse will be in employment at some point in their lives. This means that most workplaces will be affected in some way or another.
- When domestic violence follows victims into the workplace it impacts on productivity, morale, wellbeing and workplace relationships. It puts limits on an employees' full and active participation in work.
- Companies that commit to supporting their employees in reaching their full potential are more likely to attract and retain workers.
- Sick leave and lost working hours will be reduced.

See more on the business case in the [Vodafone Toolkit](#)

Two-thirds say that domestic abuse affected their career

50% say that the abuse they experienced during their working life resulted in low self-esteem/confidence

1 in 2 say that the domestic abuse affected their co-workers

1 in 10 quit their job

1 in 5 say they sometimes stopped going into work/would take days off

38% said they were less productive at work



1.3 Developing a Global Policy

Challenge: What should be included in a Global Policy on DVA?

Our Vodafone businesses in New Zealand and Australia were the first to introduce local Policies on DVA. We evaluated these to understand uptake, impact and cost.

Based on the learnings, we developed best practice guidance for all Vodafone markets to develop Policy that is practical to implement locally and upholds the global minimum standards. Contents included:

- Purpose of the policy
- Definitions of domestic violence and abuse
- Statement of confidentiality
- Scope e.g. training, accommodating domestic violence at work, perpetrator accountability, wider community



1.4 Training

Challenge: How can we enable our colleagues to confidently address DVA in the workplace ?

Vodafone developed a toolkit to support managers to begin to confidently address the issue in the workplace.

The toolkit includes information on:

- Why DVA is a workplace issue
- Background research
- Definitions,
- Legal aspects of DVA
- Recognise, Respond and Refer framework
- Practical case studies and guidance in each area of the framework.

See more in the [Vodafone Toolkit](#)

HR colleagues were also trained to understand more about DVA and how to Recognise, Respond and Refer. HR are not positioned as experts, but provide the information to signpost line managers and employees as needed.

Employee Assistance Programmes (external vendors) now includes DVA within the scope of expert advice provided to employees.





2. Support and Resources



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Vodafone documents

- **Vodafone DVA Press Release:** <https://www.vodafone.com/content/index/media/vodafone-group-releases/2019/vodafone-foundation-announces-global-plans-for-app-to-help-those-affected-by-domestic-abuse.html>
- **Vodafone Toolkit:** [https://www.vodafone.com/content/dam/vodafone-images/foundation/news/Vodafone Foundation toolkit on domestic violence abuse at work Recognise respond refer.pdf](https://www.vodafone.com/content/dam/vodafone-images/foundation/news/Vodafone%20Foundation%20toolkit%20on%20domestic%20violence%20abuse%20at%20work%20Recognise%20respond%20refer.pdf)
- **Vodafone DVA digital assets -** <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmBbsvup>

Other useful documents

- **Employers Initiative on Domestic Abuse –** <https://eida.org.uk/>
- **‘Make it our Business’** resources for companies by the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women & Children, Western University, Ontario, Canada. <http://makeitourbusiness.ca>
- **EHRC/Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (UK)** Managing and supporting employees experiencing domestic abuse. https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/managing-and-supporting-employees-experiencing-domestic-abuse_2013_tcm18-10528.pdf
- **Male Champions for Change (Australia)** ‘Playing our part: Workplace Responses to Domestic and Family Violence. <http://malechampionsofchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Playing-Our-Part-Male-Champions-of-Change-Letter.pdf>
- **OurWatch Australia:** Workplace Equality and Respect (WER) Standards and suite of tools and resources. <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/Workplace-Equality-and-Respect-Hub/Home>



- **Refuge & Respect (UK)** Domestic violence resource manual for employers' 2nd edition.
http://www.safeineastsussex.org.uk/content/files/file/Respect_Refuge_DV_Manual_A4_76pp.pdf
- **UK Business in the Community Domestic Abuse Toolkit:** <https://wellbeing.bitc.org.uk/all-resources/toolkits/domestic-abuse-toolkit>
- **UN Women (Australia)** Taking the first step: Workplace responses to domestic and family violence, December 2017.
https://unwomen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Taking_the_First_Step_UNWNCA_Report.pdf
- **UN Women / ILO** Handbook to address violence and harassment against women in the world of work (2019)
- **UNISON (UK)** Domestic violence and abuse: A trade union issue. A UNISON guide, December 2015. Available at:
<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/02/24192.pdf>
- **Workplaces Respond to Domestic and Sexual Violence, National Resource Centre (US):** Model Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence and Stalking. Available at: <https://www.workplacesrespond.org/resource-library/modelpolicy/>



Best practice guidelines for drafting Domestic violence and abuse policies

1. Purpose of the policy

- The policy is a commitment by Vodafone to providing safety and support for victims of domestic violence at work, and in preventing domestic violence and abuse at work.
- Women are principally the victims of domestic violence and abuse, but men can also be victims. Domestic violence and abuse can affect any employee regardless of their age, economic and educational background, culture, race or religion. It can be perpetrated by intimate partners who are heterosexual or same-sex relationships.

2. Definitions of domestic violence and abuse

- Domestic violence (sometimes referred to as domestic abuse, family violence, intimate partner violence) can include physical and sexual assault, psychological abuse, stalking and dating violence, as well as economic abuse.
- The policy should cover domestic violence that takes place during work hours (including during work-related travel, business trips and meetings outside of the workplace, and work-related social events). The policy also covers domestic violence that takes place outside of work hours where it involves workplace resources such as email, internet, mobile phones etc.

3. Statement of confidentiality

- Vodafone recognises and respects an employee's right to privacy and the need for confidentiality. Vodafone will maintain the confidentiality of an employee's disclosure, unless there is a risk of violence spilling over into the workplace that may jeopardize safety within the workplace, in which case this will be discussed with the victim and an appropriate plan put in place.



4. Who is covered by the policy

- The policy includes full and part-time employees on Vodafone contracts, engaged by the company or in any workplace location.

5. Scope of the policy

The policy is informed by a range of best-practices in preventing domestic violence at work, and can include any or all of the following, taking into account existing laws or regulations:

Introduction to the policy

- A clear description of domestic violence and its potential impact at work, definitions of domestic violence and outline of procedures to assist employees of Vodafone who experience domestic violence;
- A statement that the company is committed to preventing and responding to domestic violence when it impacts on the workplace, and that confidentiality is observed and there is non-retaliation if a victim discloses.

Guidance and training on the policy and to enable Vodafone's managers and employees to respond effectively to domestic violence at work

- Training on the policy and steps for its implementation (for employees and managers) and the different ways in which managers, supervisors and colleagues can play a role;
- Training programmes in the workplace to prevent violence and build understanding of its link to social and cultural norms and gender inequality, and to contribute to creating an environment that women feel able to disclose domestic violence;
- Guidance on for managers and employees how to communicate with and provide support for a woman who discloses domestic violence to them will be provided by Group in a separate document (and can be adapted for local use).

Accommodating domestic violence at work – prevention, support and assistance for victims of domestic violence at work

- Provide immediate assistance and support to victims of violence, such as information and referrals to community resources and specialist domestic violence services (an up-to-date list of community and domestic violence support services to be made available via Employee Assistance programme (EAP) providers.
- Understand that women are most at danger after they have left a violence partner, as the workplace may be the only place where he knows how to track her down;



- In collaboration with a woman's line manager, and where work performance is affected, address temporary adjustments relating to work tasks, and draw up a work plan and make adjustments to work content;
- Provide safety planning and safety and practical support for victims and fellow employees (such as job transfer, reassignment of work roles and schedules, changing work telephone number or email address, relocation of car parking space, issuing a photo of perpetrator for reception and security staff etc.);
- Support employees to remain in work, particularly after they leave a violent relationship through flexible working hours and unpaid leave (up to a maximum of ten days paid leave) (to enable a victim obtain a protection order or put in place other safety measures, to seek legal assistance or attend court or legal appointments, to find a place of safety for her children, to find new accommodation, or seek counselling and other supports);
- Provide emergency financial assistance where needed – such as advance payment of a salary, access to low cost loans or help in opening a bank account - as some victims may be left with debts accumulated by the perpetrator or have no resources when they leave a violent relationship;
- Put in place procedures to enable managers and employees to respond to any potential breach of a 'protection order' in the workplace, including notification to police when violence or talking is perpetrated in the workplace and/or there is an infringement of a protection order.

Perpetrator accountability

- Where perpetrators are employees, hold perpetrators accountable for any use of Vodafone property to facilitate abuse e.g. mobile phones used to harass or bully will result in dismissal (using existing investigative and disciplinary procedures, for example, as set out in relevant policies on violence and harassment at work).

Wider community and trade union support to implement the policy

- Set up a partnership with domestic violence organisations locally and nationally, and work with them to put in place help and support, including training, in preventing domestic violence in the workplace;
- Consult with relevant trade unions in the workplace about the policy and its implementation, and to ensure that they also publicise the policy in the workplace and provide relevant support for victims that approach them directly for help.



Apps Against Abuse: Bright Sky

In 2019, Vodafone Foundation, Vodafone's philanthropic arm, announced the international expansion of Bright Sky, a free app which connects victims of domestic violence and abuse to advice and support services, as part of its Apps Against Abuse portfolio. Bright Sky has been available in the UK since April 2018 where it has been downloaded more than 10,000 times.

Bright Sky, created in partnership with the UK-based crisis support charity Hestia, enables users to locate their nearest support centre by searching their area, postcode or current location. A short questionnaire also helps users assess the safety of a relationship and provides information about different forms of abuse, the types of support available, steps to consider if leaving an abusive relationship, and how to help a friend affected by domestic abuse.

The app is also designed to log incidents of domestic abuse without any content being saved on the device itself. It enables users to record incidents in a secure digital journal, using a text, audio, video or photo function. Evidence collated through this function will enable police to intervene and can help secure prosecutions.

The international roll-out of Bright Sky builds on more than a decade's work by Vodafone Foundation to develop mobile services to support victims of domestic violence and abuse, including the TecSOS technology which has helped more 100,000 high risk survivors of domestic violence in five countries, Easy Rescue which has supported over 300,000 women in Turkey, and gender based violence hotlines in South Africa and Kenya which have connected over 300,000 women to help during crisis.

Vodafone Foundation's Apps Against Abuse portfolio aims to provide a single point of entry, in every country where Vodafone operates, for someone seeking information, advice and support in relation to domestic violence and abuse.

Bright Sky is available to download for free for both IOS and Android.

Vodafone Foundation is a UK registered charity (1089625).

