

Employer's Toolkit

Practical Resources for Supporting Employees

A ready-to-implement guide for HR, managers, and workplace wellbeing teams. All provisions are informed by survivor experience, evidence-based research, and the practical reality of what works.



Licence and Use

© 2026 Safe Haven Education.

This document may be downloaded and used for internal organisational purposes only. It may not be reproduced, resold, or distributed externally without prior written permission from Safe Haven Education.

About this document

A ready-to-implement guide for HR, managers, and workplace wellbeing teams. All provisions are informed by survivor experience, evidence-based research, and the practical reality of what works.

Institutions investigate moments. Abusers operate across time.

Introduction

Domestic abuse affects 1 in 5 adults over their lifetime. For many victim-survivors, the workplace is the only stable, safe point of contact they have: the only place where they have access to independent income, supportive relationships, and a separate identity from the abuse they experience at home.

This toolkit provides practical, immediately actionable resources that organisations can implement. These are not aspirational suggestions. They are tangible tools, structured support mechanisms, and clear protocols that make the difference between an employee who stays, survives, and rebuilds, and one who loses their livelihood at the worst possible moment.

A Disclosure Log template for use by HR and managers is provided as Annex A, available as a separate document in the SafePolicy™ suite.

Section 1: Employee Benefits Package

These benefits can be embedded into your existing employee benefits structure. Many come at no or very low cost to the employer.

1.1 Free Legal Advice

Many employee benefits providers offer free legal advice helplines as part of their standard packages. For employees experiencing domestic abuse, this can be a critical lifeline at no additional cost.

- Check whether your current benefits provider includes a legal advice helpline and ensure employees know how to access it confidentially
- If not, consider adding it: providers such as Benenden Health, Cirrus, and many EAP providers include legal helplines as standard
- Partner with specialist organisations such as Rights of Women, who provide free legal advice to women on family law, criminal law and immigration
- Ensure the service is confidential and can be accessed without going through HR or line management

1.2 Financial Wellbeing and Paid Safe Leave

Economic abuse is present in the majority of domestic abuse cases. Victim-survivors often carry coerced debt, have no independent bank account, or have had their credit destroyed.

- Provide access to specialist financial advice through organisations such as Surviving Economic Abuse, StepChange Debt Charity, or the National Debtline
- Consider partnering with financial institutions that offer safe banking options, including accounts that cannot be accessed by a third party
- Offer payroll advance or emergency loan schemes for employees who need to leave an abusive situation urgently

Paid Safe Leave

As a matter of best practice, organisations should offer up to 10 days of paid safe leave per year. This leave can be used for legal appointments, housing searches, court hearings, accessing support services, or recovery. It should be treated as a distinct category of leave, separate from sickness absence, and should never be recorded in a way that disadvantages the employee.

Statutory context

The Employment Rights Act 2025 has received Royal Assent. Employers should monitor commencement dates for domestic abuse leave provisions.

1.3 Counselling and Mental Health Support

- Ensure your EAP provider has counsellors trained specifically in trauma and domestic abuse
- Extend the number of sessions available for employees disclosing domestic abuse. The standard six to eight sessions is typically insufficient for complex trauma
- Offer face-to-face as well as telephone counselling options, recognising that some employees may not be able to speak freely at home

1.4 Prepaid Mobile Phones

One of the most practical and high-impact supports an employer can offer is a prepaid mobile phone that an employee can use without their abusive partner knowing.

- Purchase basic prepaid phones with credit already loaded
- Keep a small stock available through HR or your designated Domestic Abuse Champion, to be provided discreetly on request
- Pre-programme with key contacts: National Domestic Abuse Helpline, local refuge services, Samaritans, and the employee's designated workplace contact
- Advise the employee on safe storage: not at home, ideally kept at work or with a trusted friend

IMPORTANT. Safety note

If an abusive partner discovers a hidden phone, it can escalate risk significantly. Employees should be advised on how to keep the phone secure, and reminded that they can return it or dispose of it safely at any time.

1.5 Prepaid Credit or Gift Cards

Victim-survivors experiencing economic abuse often have no access to independent funds. Prepaid cards provide a discreet, untraceable way to access money for essentials.

- Keep a small emergency fund of prepaid Visa or Mastercard gift cards (£50 to £100 each) that can be provided to employees in crisis
- Alternatively, provide gift cards for essential retailers such as supermarkets, pharmacies, or petrol stations
- Issue through your Domestic Abuse Champion or HR Safeguarding Lead with no requirement for the employee to justify or account for how the funds are used

- Document the provision internally for safeguarding records, while protecting the employee's confidentiality

1.6 Escape Bag Storage

Many victim-survivors prepare an escape bag containing essential items they will need if they have to leave urgently. Keeping this bag at home risks discovery. Offering secure storage at the workplace removes this risk.

- Allow employees to store a sealed bag with your designated Domestic Abuse Champion, HR, or in a secure location on-site
- The employee retains the right to collect the bag at any time, including outside of normal working hours if necessary
- Ensure the bag is stored securely and that only the employee and the designated holder know of its existence
- Suggested contents: change of clothes, toiletries, spare medication, copies of important documents, small amount of cash, phone charger, spare keys

1.7 Secure On-Site Lockers

- Offer personal lockers that only the employee can access: combination lock or key held only by the employee
- These can be used to store escape bags, important documents, prepaid phones, cash, or any items the employee needs to keep separate from their home environment
- Ensure lockers are in a discreet, low-traffic area
- If lockers are not feasible, allow employees to store sealed boxes or bags in a locked HR storage area with controlled access

1.8 Secure Document Storage (GDPR-Compliant)

Victim-survivors may need to store copies of critical documents (passports, birth certificates, driving licences, tenancy agreements) somewhere the abusive partner cannot access or destroy them.

- Provide a secure, locked filing system for employees to store copies of essential identity and legal documents
- Ensure access is restricted to the employee and one designated safeguarding lead
- All document storage must comply with UK GDPR: stored securely, access logged, and retention periods clearly defined
- Offer to scan and store documents digitally in a password-protected, encrypted file accessible remotely if needed

IMPORTANT. GDPR compliance

Any personal data stored by the employer must be processed lawfully, stored securely, and retained only for as long as necessary. Employees must give explicit consent for document storage and must be able to request return or destruction at any time. Ensure your Data Protection Officer is consulted when implementing this provision.

1.9 Safe Accommodation Support

- Develop relationships with local refuge services and domestic abuse charities so you can signpost effectively and, where appropriate, make direct referrals with the employee's consent
- Consider offering a relocation support payment or salary advance to cover deposit and first month's rent for employees who need to move urgently



- If your organisation has corporate accommodation, consider making it available on a short-term emergency basis

Section 2: Workplace Safety and Security Protocols

2.1 Reception and Front-of-House Protocols

- Train reception staff never to disclose an employee's location, department, or working hours to anyone without prior authorisation from the employee
- Implement a verification process: if someone claims to be a partner or family member, reception should offer to take a message rather than confirm whether the person works there
- Provide a discreet code word or signal that an employee can use to alert reception that a specific person should not be admitted
- Ensure reception staff know who the Domestic Abuse Champion is and can escalate concerns immediately

2.2 Safe Meeting Rooms and Private Spaces

- Designate specific meeting rooms or quiet spaces that can be booked discreetly for personal use, with no questions asked
- Ensure these spaces are lockable from the inside and are not overlooked by windows or open-plan areas
- Allow employees to use these spaces outside of normal working hours if needed
- If your organisation has shower or rest facilities, make these available to employees who may be staying temporarily in unsafe accommodation

2.3 Car Park and Travel Safety

- Offer reserved parking spaces close to the building entrance for employees who have disclosed safety concerns
- Provide security escort to vehicles at the end of the working day if requested
- Consider flexible start and finish times so that an employee can vary their routine and reduce predictability
- If an employee uses public transport, consider providing taxi or ride-share credit for safe travel during high-risk periods

2.4 Digital and Data Security

- Advise employees to change all work-related passwords and enable two-factor authentication on accounts that may be accessible from shared devices
- Ensure the employee's home address and personal contact details are not visible to other staff members who may have contact with the abusive partner
- Remove the employee from any publicly accessible staff directories, organisational charts, or team photos if requested
- Disable location-sharing features on work devices and advise on how to do the same on personal devices
- **Image-based abuse and deepfakes:** if an employee is being targeted through AI-generated or manipulated images, support them in reporting this to the relevant platform. For non-consensual intimate imagery, direct them to the Revenge Porn Helpline ([revengepornhelpline.org.uk](https://www.revengepornhelpline.org.uk)). For content appearing in search results, assist with submitting removal requests to Google and other search engines. Document all steps taken for safeguarding records.

2.5 Clare's Law: Supporting the Right to Ask

Clare's Law (the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme) allows individuals to request information from the police about a current or former partner's history of abusive behaviour.

Step-by-step for HR

- › Inform the employee that they have a legal right to ask the police for information about a partner's history
- › Advise the employee to contact their local police force by calling 101 or visiting their local police station
- › Provide a private space and uninterrupted time for the employee to make this initial contact during working hours. This should not be recorded as a deduction from leave
- › Grant paid time off for any subsequent police appointments related to the Clare's Law request, within the 10-day paid safe leave provision
- › Understand that police may also proactively contact an employee if they have intelligence suggesting that person is at risk: the Right to Know
- › Do not attempt to make the Clare's Law request on behalf of the employee. Your role is to provide information, private space, and practical support

2.6 Workplace Safety Planning

When an employee discloses domestic abuse, a workplace safety plan should be created together with the employee and the Domestic Abuse Champion or HR Safeguarding Lead. This is a living document that should be reviewed regularly.

Safety planning checklist: manager and employee to complete together

- › Does the perpetrator know where you work? If so, have security and reception been briefed, with your consent?
- › Does the perpetrator work for this organisation or have any connection to it? If so, escalate immediately to HR.
- › Have you been followed, monitored, or approached at or near the workplace?
- › Is the perpetrator contacting you during working hours? If so, do you need a new work phone number or email address?
- › Has the behaviour escalated recently, including threats or stalking?
- › Do you need a buddy system for arriving at and leaving work?
- › Do you want your start and finish times varied to make your commute less predictable?
- › Are there any upcoming work events, travel, or public-facing duties that increase your risk?
- › Do you want your desk or workspace relocated away from windows or entrances?
- › Is your home address and personal contact information restricted from staff directories?
- › Are there any immediate financial support needs: salary advance, payroll confidentiality, emergency fund?
- › What is your emergency contact for today, and does that person know to expect a call if needed?
- › Is there anything else that would help you feel safer at work right now?

Record the plan factually and store it securely, separate from the general personnel file. A structured template is provided in the Disclosure Log (Annex A).

Section 3: Contacts and Signposting

3.1 Internal Contacts

- **Domestic Abuse Champion:** a named senior member of staff trained as the primary point of contact
- **HR Safeguarding Lead:** the HR professional responsible for coordinating support and ensuring policy compliance
- **Occupational Health:** if available, ensure they are briefed on domestic abuse and can provide tailored support
- **Employee Assistance Programme:** provide the direct contact number and access details, including out-of-hours support

3.2 External Specialist Organisations

The following should be made available in multiple formats: printed wallet cards, posters in private areas such as toilets, intranet page, and digital wallet cards.

National

- › **Refuge National Domestic Abuse Helpline:** 0808 2000 247 (24 hours, freephone) | nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- › **Men's Advice Line:** 0808 8010 327 | mensadvice.org.uk
- › **Galop (LGBTQ+):** 0800 999 5428 | galop.org.uk
- › **Surviving Economic Abuse:** survivingeconomicabuse.org
- › **Rights of Women** (free legal advice): 020 7251 6577 | rightsofwomen.org.uk
- › **Karma Nirvana** (honour-based abuse): 0800 5999 247 | karmanirvana.org.uk
- › **Revenge Porn Helpline:** revengepornhelpline.org.uk
- › **Safelives:** safelives.org.uk
- › **The Hideout** (children): thehideout.org.uk
- › **Respect Phoneline** (for perpetrators): 0808 8024040 | respectphoneline.org.uk

3.3 Making This Information Accessible

- Printed wallet cards with key contact numbers, small enough to hide easily
- Posters displayed inside toilet cubicles, positioned so employees can photograph or note details discreetly
- A dedicated intranet page. Advise employees to use a private or incognito browser window so it does not appear in browsing history
- QR codes linking directly to external helpline websites, so employees can access support without typing URLs on a monitored device
- For any digital version, include a clearly visible Quick Exit button that immediately redirects the user to a neutral website if they need to close the page quickly

Section 4: Implementation Checklist

Use this checklist to track your organisation's progress in implementing the toolkit provisions.

Employee Benefits

- ☐ Free legal advice helpline access embedded in benefits package
- ☐ Financial wellbeing and debt support services identified
- ☐ Paid safe leave policy established (recommended: up to 10 days per year)
- ☐ EAP reviewed to ensure trauma-informed domestic abuse counselling provision
- ☐ Prepaid mobile phones procured and available through HR or Domestic Abuse Champion
- ☐ Prepaid credit or gift cards available for emergency use
- ☐ Escape bag storage protocol established and communicated
- ☐ Secure document storage process established and GDPR-compliant
- ☐ Safe accommodation support fund or referral pathway established

Workplace Safety Protocols

- ☐ Reception and front-of-house staff trained on confidentiality and verification protocols
- ☐ Safe meeting rooms or private spaces designated and bookable
- ☐ Car park safety measures implemented
- ☐ Digital and data security guidance in place for employees experiencing abuse
- ☐ Image-based abuse and deepfake support pathway established
- ☐ Clare's Law protocol documented and HR trained
- ☐ Workplace Safety Plan template in use

Contacts and Signposting

- ☐ Internal Domestic Abuse Champion appointed and publicised
- ☐ HR Safeguarding Lead identified
- ☐ External specialist organisation contact details compiled and verified
- ☐ Contact information distributed in multiple accessible formats
- ☐ Quick Exit button included on any digital or intranet version

Training and Governance

Domestic Abuse Champion named for current year:

Date of last domestic abuse awareness training for managers:

Date of last training for HR and safeguarding leads:

Toolkit review date:

Data Protection Officer consulted on GDPR compliance:

Ongoing

- ☐ Toolkit reviewed annually and updated as services or contact details change
- ☐ Employee feedback sought on accessibility and effectiveness of support
- ☐ Manager and HR training refreshed regularly

This toolkit forms part of the SafePolicy™ Free Baseline Series by Safe Haven Education. It may be reproduced and distributed within your organisation for non-commercial safeguarding purposes.

For training, consultancy, or SafePolicy™ Professional Series enquiries, contact Deniz Erdem at deniz@safehaveneducation.org.