



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE POLICY

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1.Introduction

1.1. Purpose

This policy covers the internal and external support available to employees who have been or are being subjected to domestic violence and abuse, or where the employee is supporting a relevant person. The policy incorporates relevant provisions of the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023, which introduces domestic violence leave.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Provide for a period of paid time away from work for an employee who has experienced, is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing domestic violence and abuse.
- Promote a workplace culture that facilitates disclosures of domestic abuse.
- Support employees through a range of policy provisions, including paid leave.
- Support employees subjected to domestic violence and abuse in maintaining employment.
- Promote a safe work environment for all staff.

1.2. Scope

1.2.1. To whom does domestic violence leave apply?

This policy applies to all employees of the University of Limerick. There is no minimum service required to qualify for domestic violence leave.

1.2.2. In what situations does domestic violence leave apply?

Domestic violence leave may be availed of by an employee directly experiencing domestic violence and abuse, or is at risk of experiencing domestic violence and abuse or where an employee is supporting a 'relevant person' (see definition below). The domestic violence to which the supports relate includes experiences that are ongoing, as well as past experiences.

1.2.3. Who is responsible for ensuring that the procedure is implemented and monitored?

Ownership of the policy ultimately rests with Director, Human Resources (HR) with the relevant Head of Department / Division / Line Manager playing a key procedural role.

1.3. Definitions

1.3.1. Domestic Violence and Abuse

For this policy and in line with the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, domestic violence and abuse is defined as: violence, or threat of violence, including sexual violence and acts of coercive control committed against an employee or a relevant person by another person. See Appendix 1 for further guidance on the types of domestic violence.

For the purposes of eligibility for domestic violence leave the 'other person' must:

- a. Be the spouse or civil partner of the employee or relevant person,
- b. Be the cohabitant of the employee or relevant person,
- c. Be or have been in an intimate relationship with the employee or relevant person, or
- d. Be a child of the employee or relevant person who is of full age and is not, in relation

to the employee or relevant person, a dependent person.

1.3.2 A Relevant Person

A 'relevant person' in relation to an employee is:

- a. The spouse or civil partner of the employee,
- b. The cohabitant of the employee,
- c. A person with whom the employee is in an intimate relationship,
- d. A child of the employee who has not attained full age, or
- e. A person who, in relation to the employee, is a dependent person.

2.Context

2.1. Legal and Regulatory Context

2.1.1. Domestic Violence Act 2018

2.1.2. Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023

2.1.3. Circular 16/2023: Domestic violence and abuse - Civil Service policy and supports

3.Policy Statements

3.1. Principal Policy Statement

The University of Limerick is committed to developing strong mechanisms to support employee health, wellbeing and resilience in a safe and secure working environment and to creating a workplace culture which does not tolerate domestic violence and abuse or the attitudes which underpin it.

The University recognises the increasing prevalence and impact of domestic violence and abuse in wider society and the negative impacts it can have on the morale, performance and working life of staff who are directly affected and as well as on their colleagues in the workplace. This policy affirms the Universities commitment to supporting staff and colleagues impacted by domestic violence and abuse by creating awareness and providing workplace supports, including statutory domestic violence leave and direction to the appropriate services. This will be achieved by promoting a safe, supportive and inclusive work environment where those impacted by domestic violence and abuse feel comfortable to speak about the issue and can be directed towards appropriate supports.

3.2. Domestic Violence and Abuse Leave Entitlements

Domestic violence and abuse leave can be availed of for up to a maximum of 5 days in any period of 12 consecutive months and can be taken as individual days or a block / blocks of days. An absence for part of a day is counted as one day for the purposes of domestic violence leave.

The purpose of the leave is to enable the individual who is a victim of domestic violence/abuse or who is assisting a relevant person to do any of the following:

- a. Seek medical attention;
- b. Obtain services from a victim services organisation;

- c. Obtain psychological or other professional counselling;
- d. Relocate temporarily or permanently;
- e. Obtain an order under the Domestic Violence Act 2018;
- f. Seek advice or assistance from a legal practitioner;
- g. Seek assistance from the Garda Síochána;
- h. Seek or obtain any other relevant services.

While advance notice of the leave is preferable, in certain circumstances, this may not be possible. However, an employee should notify their manager of their intention to take or remain on domestic violence or other leave for this purpose as soon as reasonably practicable.

3.3. Responsibilities

3.3.1. Role of the Manager

Managers interact with their teams on a regular basis and are often in a prime position to notice changes in performance, attendance and behaviour. These changes may not always be indicators of domestic violence and abuse. However, becoming familiar with this policy allows managers to become more attuned to the issue and gauge when to start a conversation with the employee with a view to providing supports.

The role of a manager includes:

- Becoming familiar with this policy document.
- Having an open mind when there are changes in performance and attendance, for example, having particular regard to the signs outlined in Appendix 2.
- Ensure that lines of communication are kept open with employees in a blended working environment.
- Be familiar with the supports that are available, such as domestic violence leave, temporary change of work patterns or adjustments of workload and additional workplace security measures (see section 4.5 below).
- Consider and approve applications for domestic violence leave as soon as practicable, having regard to strict confidentiality.
- Seek advice from their [Human Resources Business Partner](#) if additional information on specialist services or guidance on having a sensitive conversation is required.
- Keep information on domestic violence disclosures strictly confidential.
- Where agreed with the employee, take note of the safety measures that have been put in place.

3.3.2 Role of Colleagues

Employees spend a considerable amount of time in the workplace and can develop friendships and positive relationships with their work colleagues. As a consequence, a victim of domestic violence or abuse may feel comfortable confiding in someone they trust in the workplace. A trusted colleague may also be in a position to recognise some of the signs of domestic violence and abuse set out in Appendix 2. The manager therefore should be mindful that there may be circumstances where an employee is not comfortable making a disclosure to them and may share a confidence about domestic violence or abuse with a colleague who they trust. Where an employee confides in another colleague, that colleague should be supportive, non-judgmental and treat information in the strictest of confidence. They should bring this policy to the attention of the employee and signpost them towards appropriate internal and external supports as outlined. All employees need to be mindful that they should be fully respectful of the need for strict confidentiality and should not pass on information to others – this includes managers, HR

or other colleagues - without the consent of the person themselves (except in very limited cases as outlined in section 4.4 Confidentiality). Where someone confides in a trusted colleague, they should signpost their colleague towards appropriate internal and external supports as outlined in section 4.9.

3.3.3 The role of Human Resources

The Human Resource Division plays an important role in ensuring that there is an open and inclusive workplace culture that supports employees who are impacted by domestic violence and abuse in the workplace. HR can not only direct employees towards appropriate supports where required; they also play a key role in creating organisational awareness and facilitating training. HR also has a role in reminding managers and colleagues to maintain clear boundaries and not assume the role of counsellor or problem solver. HR should clearly signal the correct pathways to access information so that employees can avail of appropriate supports and guidance when required.

4. Related Procedures for Domestic Violence Leave

4.1. How to access the provisions of this policy

4.1.1. An employee who may benefit from University support under this policy is encouraged to raise the issue with either their Head of Department/Division, line manager, or their [Human Resources Business Partner](#)

4.2. Disclosures

4.2.1. Disclosing to a colleague

If an employee discloses to a colleague, the colleague will treat the disclosure in a supportive, nonjudgmental, and strictly confidential manner and bring this policy to the attention of the disclosing employee. It is not appropriate for the employee receiving the disclosure to pass on any information to others, including to managers or [Human Resources Business Partner](#), without the consent of the disclosing person except in very limited cases (see section 4.4 below on Confidentiality).

4.2.2. No requirement to disclose

For the sake of clarity, there is never any obligation on an employee to disclose that they are currently or have in the past been subjected to domestic violence / abuse.

4.2.3 The person responding to a disclosure will:

- Listen and respond in a non-judgmental and compassionate manner.
- Support the employee in making their own decisions.
- Provide practical support as appropriate (see supports available in section 4.9 below).
- If the line manager and if required agree and implement supportive, flexible working arrangements, in line with section 4.5 below.

4.3 How to Apply for Domestic Violence / Abuse Leave

- 4.3.1 If an employee wishes to avail of Domestic Violence and Abuse Leave they should complete the Paid Special Leave application form, which can be found [HR Procedures, Processes & Forms A - Z](#) and submit the completed form to their line manager for approval.
- 4.3.2 Where possible, employees who avail of domestic violence leave should notify their line manager of their intention to take the leave (for example, if an employee / and employee assisting a relevant person has been given advance notice of a future court date or legal/scheduled appointment). Where this is not possible, the employee should, as soon as is feasible, confirm to their manager that they have taken the leave and specify the dates on which it was taken.
- 4.3.3 Once an application is made for this leave type, the details will be treated in the strictest of confidence and are only accessible to the line manager and to certain staff in the HR Division.
- 4.3.2 Once approved the HR Compensation and Benefits Team will contact the employee and advise that the leave has been approved and processed for the specified date.

4.4 Confidentiality

Domestic violence and abuse should always be discussed in a private and confidential space. All information regarding domestic violence will be kept strictly confidential and shared on a need-to-know basis only and ideally with the consent of the employee concerned. For example, information may be shared with colleagues who need to implement a workplace safety plan or with administrative staff dealing with domestic violence/special leave. Only information necessary to carrying out those roles/ tasks will be shared.

The University will retain :

- Details of agreed workplace safety plan (if required and in place)
- Administrative data such as approval of special leave
- Details of abuse occurring in/near the workplace or using workplace equipment (see Maintaining records)

The above records will be stored securely in HR, kept strictly confidential, and retained only for as long as necessary.

Colleagues to whom a disclosure is made (initial or as part of risk management) are required to keep the disclosure strictly confidential save on a need to know basis, with the consent of the employee. Improper disclosure of information may be subject to the University invoking [Statute No. 4: Statute on Disciplinary Matters, Suspension, Termination and Capacity](#).

There are limited occasions where strict confidentiality cannot be maintained. These are:

- Where there is a requirement under law.
- When ordered by a court.
- Where it is necessary to share the information to protect the safety of employees and/or the public.

In these circumstances, the employee will be informed of the reasons why strict confidentiality

cannot be maintained, the information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, and care will be taken to ensure that the sharing of information does not put the employee at greater risk. In any of these instances where strict confidentiality cannot be maintained, the employee will be encouraged to contact a specialist domestic abuse service for support.

4.5 Supports Available

4.5.1 Domestic violence leave

In line with the provisions of the Act, employees are entitled to paid time off ('domestic violence leave') for up to five days in any 12 consecutive months (See section 3.2 above).

4.5.2 Other leave

Where an employee has exhausted their entitlement to paid domestic violence leave, they may request other types of leave with or without pay. This may include annual leave, parental leave / sick leave (if applicable) and unpaid leave. Where additional leave is required an employee should contact their [Human Resources Business Partner](#) to discuss options available in line with [University HR Policy & Procedures](#)

4.5.3 Workplace Safety

The impacts and risks of domestic violence and abuse necessitate a safety conscious response at all times. Following a disclosure, the person to whom the disclosure was made (Head of Department/Division, line manager, or [Human Resources Business Partner](#) will consult with the employee on their safety needs in and around the workplace. Depending on individual circumstances, safety measures that may be proposed include:

- Temporary (subject to review) changes to work duties, location, contact details, hours, and/or working patterns.
- Risk assessment of the workplace for the affected employee, other employees and/or students as appropriate.
- Improved security measures on premises or other work locations, in traveling to/from work, and on work related equipment.
- Offering information on specialist support services to the affected employee (see section 4.9 Specialist services and workplace contacts below).

This workplace safety plan will be treated as strictly confidential and shared on a need-to-know basis only (see section 4.4 above on confidentiality). See Appendix 3 for guidance on completing a workplace safety plan.

Where there is a serious threat to someone's life or health, the University will take action to address this risk (see section 4.4 above on confidentiality).

4.5.4 Referrals

A list of domestic abuse specialist organisations is available in section 4.9 below. This information will be provided to employees disclosing domestic violence and abuse. Where appropriate, the employee will be supported to access a safe physical space and/or method of communication from which to contact these services.

4.5.5 Financial Assistance

Relevant financial support for employees will be considered, such as:

- Salary advance
- Speedy change of arrangements and/or method for payment of salary (e.g. banking details)

4.5.6 Employment Protections

Domestic violence and abuse can impact work attendance, performance, and productivity. In cases where an employee discloses domestic violence and abuse, the employee will be supported with temporary protection from any adverse actions if they have difficulties performing tasks at work. Subsequent reviews of the employee's performance targets or workload will be completed in consideration of the impacts of the violence and abuse.

4.5.7 Maintaining Records

Records of any form of violence and abuse, including stalking or harassment of the employee in the workplace, may be supportive to the employee should they decide to seek redress through the justice system. As such, the employee will be supported to retain any such records at their request. Any records maintained by the University will be stored securely and kept strictly confidential (see section 4.4 above on confidentiality).

4.5.8 Blended Working

Working from home can have a negative impact on employees subjected to domestic abuse. It is important that managers stay attuned to the wellbeing of employees when they work remotely. Where possible, opportunities to work in a separate physical location will be encouraged and requests facilitated.

4.6 Conduct in the Workplace

Employees will be held accountable for their conduct in the workplace, in work time, or through work equipment. Where domestic violence and abuse is committed in the workplace, the University may invoke [Statute No. 4: Statute on Disciplinary Matters, Suspension, Termination and Capacity](#) with potential sanctions up to and including dismissal, in accordance with the Statute.

Employees who knowingly facilitate domestic violence, for example by providing access to equipment or information in respect of another employee, such as contacts/location/hours of work, will be subject to disciplinary procedures in line with [Statute No. 4: Statute on Disciplinary Matters, Suspension, Termination and Capacity](#)

Domestic abuse may be reported to have occurred, or be occurring, where both parties are employees of the University, or employees of different entities but sharing a work location. In such cases, particular arrangements will be put in place. Safety and well-being are paramount, while recognising that all individuals have a right to fair process and procedure.

4.7 What to do if an employee / manager suspects a colleague is being subjected to domestic violence and abuse

Line managers and/or colleagues can play an active role in providing support and information, and may be the first ones to suspect or hear about a colleague's experiences of domestic violence and abuse. In situations where this is suspected, it is important to address the concern with sensitivity and caution. Knowing what the limits / boundaries are and how to respond is important.

Where a manager / colleague has concerns they may, if appropriate:

- Check in with the individual and, if comfortable to do so, sensitively share their observations and personal concern. Consider asking open questions in a private setting to allow the employee to disclose their experience if they wish to do so (see Appendix 2

below)

- Respect their colleague's boundaries. If an individual is unwilling to discuss, don't force a conversation.
- Where a disclosure is made, provide or support access to available support as appropriate (see supports available in section 4.8 below).

4.8 Awareness Raising and Training

Training and awareness events will be made available for People Managers, HR and colleagues, to assist in learning how to recognise the signs of domestic violence / abuse in the workplace, how to respond appropriately and sensitively and importantly, how to refer and signpost a colleague who may be impacted by domestic violence towards further advice and supports.

4.9 Specialist Services and Workplace Contacts

The University of Limerick is committed to providing a safe environment for all employees, and to responding appropriately to any incidents. There are a number of supports available to employees should they feel they are being subjected to or are in danger of being subject to any form of domestic violence / abuse. These supports are outlined in the below table in addition to some external supports that can be availed of.

Sources of Specialist Domestic Violence and Abuse Services

Women's Aid: <https://www.womensaid.ie/>, national freephone helpline **1800 341 900**
Women's Aid operates the 24hr National Freephone Helpline for victims-survivors of domestic violence. Support can also be accessed through the Instant Messaging Support Service, available on the relevant websites.

Men's Development Network: <https://mensnetwork.ie/>, helpline 051-844260/1
Men's Development Network operates the Male Advice Line, the national Freephone Helpline offering confidential advice and support to male victims-survivors of domestic abuse

Local services

There are specialist domestic abuse services located in towns right across Ireland. Details of your local service can be accessed through these websites.

<https://www.safeireland.ie/>

<https://www.alwayshere.ie/>

<https://www.womensaid.ie/get-help/%20support-services/find-support-locally/>

Sources of Other Services

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

National Sexual Violence 24hr Helpline: 1800 77 8888

<https://www.drcc.ie/>

Local rape crisis centres

<https://www.rapecrisishelp.ie/>

LGBT Ireland National

LGBT Helpline: 1800 929 539

<https://lgbt.ie/>

An Garda Síochána

call **999** if in immediate danger
<https://www.garda.ie/en/crime/domestic-abuse/>,

Sources of Internal UL Support

Any of the HR Business Partners

[HR Business Partners | University of Limerick \(ul.ie\)](#)

Campus Security

[Security | University of Limerick \(ul.ie\)](#)

Employee Support Service

The University provides a free, independent and confidential counselling and general support service to staff and their immediate family members. Freephone:1-800-201-346, for access, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Further information is available on the HR website here: <https://www.ul.ie/hr/current-staff/employee-relations/employee-support-service> .

Occupational Health Physician

An appointment can be arranged with the University's Occupational Health provider in order to provide support and medical advice to the staff member. To arrange an occupational health referral, contact the Employee Relations or the relevant HR Business Partner for your area.

Getting Further Help

The Human Resources Division is available to support any employee in understanding or implementing the content of this policy and procedure.

5 Policy Review

This policy will be kept under review to include any changes in legislation and good practice.

6 Related Documents

This policy is aligned with our policies on:

- Workplace Dignity and Respect Policy & Procedure
- Sexual Harrassment and Sexual Violence Policy & Procedure
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Safety Statement

Other relevant policies and procedures include:

Absence Leave Application Form
Sick Leave Scheme
Sick Leave Form
Force Majeure Leave
Shorter Working Year Scheme
Shorter Working Year Form
Flexible Working Hours Scheme
Flexitime Request Form
GDPR Privacy Notice

All of which are available on the HR Website: [HR Procedures, Processes & Forms A - Z](#)

7 Appendices

Appendix 1

What is domestic violence and abuse?

Domestic violence and abuse occurs when a person tries to gain and maintain power and control over their current or former partner, or in some cases a family member, by using a pattern of intimidation, isolation, manipulation, coercion and assaults. Domestic abuse takes many forms. It can be physical, emotional, sexual, and economic, including coercive control. Abuse rarely takes one form; perpetrators of abuse use different tactics as part of a larger pattern of controlling and abusive behaviour. Importantly, physical abuse does not always have to be a factor in abusive relationships.

Emotional abuse	<p>Emotional or psychological abuse refers to behaviours designed to isolate and undermine the victim-survivor in order to control them.</p> <p>It can include non-physical behaviours like threats, insults, humiliation, intimidation, isolation, stalking, and gaslighting.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yelling, shouting or name calling• Abusive texts, emails, and calls• Threatening to harm the victim - survivor or themselves• Monitoring the victim-survivor through the use of technology, e.g. checking phone log and messages, using social media to monitor movements, installing hidden cameras
Economic abuse	<p>Economic abuse is when the abusive person restricts, exploits and sabotages the victim-survivor's access to money and other resources, such as food, clothing, transportation and a place to live. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forbidding or preventing the victim-survivor from being in education or employment• Taking the victim-survivor's pay• Controlling use of property such as cars, mobile phones or laptops• Refusing to contribute to the cost of the household or childcare
Sexual Abuse	<p>Sexual abuse is when an abuser forces, pressures, or coerces the victim-survivor to do something sexually that they don't want to do. It is harder for people who are being abused to negotiate a free and equal sexual relationship with a partner, so the likelihood of sexual coercion is high.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Telling the victim-survivor they owe the abuser sex or oral sex• Unwanted kissing, touching or other sexual activity• Refusing to use a condom or restricting access to contraception• Taking, sharing or threatening to share sexually explicit images or videos without consent (also known as 'image-based sexual abuse')

Physical abuse	<p>Physical abuse is perhaps the most recognisable form of abuse. It doesn't always leave visible marks or scars but it can get much worse over time. It can result in physical injury and in some cases it can be life threatening.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slapping, shoving, scratching, punching, biting, strangling, choking, kicking, or burning • Pulling the victim-survivor's hair or grabbing their face • Throwing things at the victim-survivor or near them • Physically preventing the victim-survivor from leaving somewhere
Coercive control	<p>Coercive control is a persistent pattern of controlling, coercive and threatening behaviour including all or some of the forms of domestic abuse. It tends to escalate over time, entrapping the victim-survivor in the relationship and making it feel impossible or dangerous to leave. Coercive control is a crime in Ireland.</p>
Digital or online abuse	<p>Digital or online abuse is the use of technologies such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner. In most cases, this type of abuse is emotional and/or verbal and is perpetuated online.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sending negative, insulting or even threatening emails, Facebook messages, tweets • online "put downs" on status updates • sending unwanted and/or explicit pictures • stealing or insisting on being given online passwords • constantly checking of mobile phones for pictures, texts and calls • unkind comments/tags on Instagram or Tumblr etc.

Domestic violence can have a lasting impact on all aspects of a victim-survivor's life: Physical, psychological, emotional, sexual & reproductive, social, and economic

Examples of impacts of domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of freedom and autonomy • Living in fear/'walking on eggshells' • Isolation • Difficulty retaining employment • Poverty • Homelessness • Physical disabilities • Unwanted pregnancy • Depression and anxiety • Chronic pain • Death
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Source: Women's Aid website [Here](#)

Appendix 2

Spotting the signs of domestic violence

Recognising the signs of domestic violence can be an important element of supporting an employee who is being subjected to domestic violence. The signs may vary from one person to the next and may not be at all apparent. There will usually be more than one sign occurring that creates concern about that employee. If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't – while it should not be assumed that it is domestic violence, it could be. Examples of some common indicators are grouped into the categories below.

Managers or work colleagues should never assume that any of these factors mean the existence of abuse and should take the approach of enabling disclosure rather than diagnosing or presuming abuse. Also, the absence of such signs should not be assumed to mean the absence of abuse.

Work attendance, productivity and/or participation	Social behaviour	Escalating signs of abuse
<p>Frequent unexplained absence from work or an increase in sick leave.</p> <p>Unexplained changes to start times or being late for meetings, online or in person.</p> <p>Does not participate in calls or online meetings, or is on mute/video off for prolonged periods.</p> <p>Work hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending an unusual number of hours at work for no obvious reason • Wanting to change working hours for no obvious reason • Fear about not leaving work on time <p>Performance targets and deadlines are missed, and mistakes are made.</p> <p>Work quality is affected by frequent texts, emails, calls or visits/interruptions to work by the employee's partner. Signs of distress when these occur.</p>	<p>Becoming isolated from colleagues – not joining colleagues at break times, not joining in work social events</p> <p>Secrecy about home life and relationships.</p> <p>Isolation from family and friends.</p>	<p>Changes in behaviour – becoming quiet, anxious, frightened, aggressive, distracted or depressed.</p> <p>Physical changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible bruising or injuries with unlikely explanations • Changes in clothing, such as wearing long sleeves to hide injuries • Changes in appearance, e.g., in the use and pattern of make-up • Tiredness and irritability • Substance use/misuse • Partner or ex-partner stalking an employee in or around the workplace or on social media • Partner or ex-partner exerting unusual amount of control or demands over work schedule.

Adapted from the Women's Aid website here.

Follow your instincts. If you've noticed these warning signs and expect that someone you know is being abused, don't wait for them to approach you. Look for a private moment where you can express concern and let them know you're there to support them.

Here are some ideas for beginning this conversation:

1. Express concern

Tell your friend/colleague that you've been concerned for them or that you're worried. This is a non-judgmental approach that might make them feel comfortable about opening up. If they deny that anything is wrong, don't push, simply communicate that you'll be there for them if they ever want to talk.

2. Assure them that the violence is not their fault

This can be such an important thing for a victim of violence to hear. Some useful things to say might be, "No one deserves to be treated this way," "You are not to blame," or simply, "What's happening is not your fault."

3. Support, but don't advise

This can be so hard to do, especially if the victim is someone close to you. But remember that you cannot make someone leave a relationship if they are not ready to do so. Also be aware that leaving an abusive relationship is the most dangerous time for a victim. The victim is best placed to assess the danger for themselves. Give them options and offer to help and support them along the way, but pressuring a victim to leave a relationship who does not want to may only isolate them further by making them feel like they can't confide in you. Remember that abusive behaviour is a pattern of getting power and control over someone else. Validating a victim's choices and encouraging them to make their own decisions can help to break the cycle of power and control.

4. Give resources

There are plenty of services in Ireland who can offer help and support to the person you are concerned about (see section 4.9 above).

5. Keep it Strictly Confidential

Assure the victim that anything that has been said will stay between the two of you. Breaking a victim's trust after they have opened up to you may only isolate them further, and could even put them in danger (except in very limited cases as outlined in section 4.4 above Confidentiality).

Source: Department of Justice website [What Would You Do](#)

Appendix 3

Workplace Safety Plan Guide

This sample workplace safety plan guide gives an overview of different areas of potential consideration when supporting an employee subjected to domestic violence to be safe at work. It offers examples of actions that the University can take to meet this objective. The support options listed are optional and not exhaustive.

Instructions for use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule a private, in-person meeting with the impacted employee in a safe location. • Explain the objective of the workplace safety plan: To determine what the University can do to help the employee be safe at work. • Reassure the affected employee that the contents of the workplace safety plan will be based on their own needs and wishes. • Discuss each area of consideration in the table below, asking the employee to identify any relevant concerns they have around their safety as a result of the abuse. • Outline any reasonable actions the workplace can take to support the affected employee for each concern raised, being sure to explain any limits to strict confidentiality that may result from certain actions being adopted. • Record any actions the impacted employee agrees to include in the workplace safety plan. • Store the workplace safety plan securely. • Implement the actions on the workplace safety plan.

Area of consideration	Examples of potential support options
Travelling to/from work	Establish safety measures around employee's journey to/from work. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine alternative means of transport to travel to/from work
Safety on and off site	Establish safety measures to support employee while working on or off site. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain strict confidentiality around the employee (hours of work, contact details) • Remind employees of safe workplace access procedures • Ensure employee does not work alone, especially when working in a public facing role • Relocate employee to an alternative on-campus work location • Set up additional check-in procedures with co-workers/manager when employee is working off site
Working from home	Establish safety measures for employees working from home fully or partially.

	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a 'safe word' or gesture an employee can use to indicate help is needed and agree a response to this • Establish regular in-person meetings for unmonitored contact with the employee • Provide an alternative work location, if feasible
Workplace communication	<p>Establish safety measures around workplace communications to prevent or lessen the impacts of abuse, harassment, or stalking.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change employee's contact information (phone, email, etc.) • Update emergency contact number if currently set to perpetrator (without alerting them of the change)
Flexible working arrangements	<p>Establish flexible working arrangements that support the employee's safety while at work and when navigating their way to safety.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change/vary start/finish times • Relocate to different on-campus work site • Domestic violence leave / Other leave
Financial/economic needs	<p>Establish ways of supporting the employee to retain/regain financial independence.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reroute some or all of the employee's pay to a different account • Support employee to engage with financial institution(s) regarding economic abuse • Assist with short term accommodation and relocation options
Performance and behaviour	<p>Establish whether the employee requires employment protection measures if their work performance and behaviour are impacted by the abuse.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary protection from dismissal and other disciplinary actions • Reduced workload • Reassignment to less demanding work responsibilities
Employee absence	<p>Establish how to respond to the employee being unexpectedly absent from work.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop response system if employee unexpectedly does not show up for work • Ask for permission to check in with employee while on domestic violence leave (includes establishing frequency and method)
Perpetrator presence/contact	<p>Establish a process for safely responding to the perpetrator's presence or contact attempts.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop response system if perpetrator shows up at work or

	<p>contacts workplace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review workplace security measures and procedures
Specialist support	<p>Connect employee to specialist support services for sustained and expert support.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer information to access additional, specialist support (see 'Referrals' section of domestic violence policy) • Provide safe location and device to contact specialist support services
Ongoing workplace support	<p>Determine employee's preferred approach to ongoing workplace support following a disclosure.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish preferred frequency/approach to follow-up conversations about the issue • Schedule review of workplace safety plan
Sharing information	<p>Depending on the outcome of each section of the workplace safety plan, information about the employee's disclosure may need to be shared with others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine which employees information may need to be shared with to implement workplace safety plan and request consent to do so • Establish a secondary contact for the safety plan in case the primary contact is unavailable

Source: Women's Aid website [Here](#)