



**Guidance for organisations on  
producing a domestic abuse and  
sexual violence policy**

**2019**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	3
1.1 Purpose of Guidance	3
1.2 Definition of Domestic Abuse	4
1.3 Definition of Honour Based Violence	4
1.4 Definition of Forced Marriage	4
1.5 Definition of FGM	5
1.6 Definition of Sexual Violence	5
1.7 Definition of Stalking	5
<b>2. The importance of having an organisational DASV policy</b>	6
2.1 Employer responsibility to respond to DASV	6
2.2 Impact of DASV on the employer and other employees	6
2.3 Organisational responsibility to respond effectively to DASV	7
<b>3. Guidance on producing a DASV policy to respond to employees</b>	8
a) Definitions	8
b) Your organisational commitment	8
c) Confidentiality and record keeping	9
d) Organisational respond to employees who are victims of DASV	9
e) Organisational response to employees who are perpetrators of DASV	12
f) Training	15
g) Raising awareness in the workplace	15
<b>4. Guidance on producing a DASV policy for front line organisations responding to the public</b>	15
a) Definitions	15
b) Your organisational commitment to DASV	16
c) Confidentiality, information sharing and record keeping	16
d) Creating environments for disclosure	16
e) Risk assessment	17
f) Safety planning	17
g) Multi-agency working and processes	18
h) Referral to support	18
i) Training and guidance for staff	18
j) Awareness raising	18
<b>5. Resources for organisations</b>	18
<b>6. Specialist support for those affected by DASV</b>	20

## 1. Introduction

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) has a huge impact, with;

- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men experiencing domestic abuse in their lifetime<sup>1</sup>
- 20% of women and 4% of men have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16, with 0.9% of women and 0.1% of men estimated to have experienced rape in the last year<sup>2</sup>
- 1 in 5 women and 1 in 12 men will experience stalking in their lifetime<sup>3</sup>

These issues take place at all levels of society, regardless of gender, social class, race, religion, sexuality or disability<sup>4</sup>.

In addition, there are around 12 honour killings each year in the UK<sup>5</sup> and over 1000 forced marriage concerns raised each year in the UK<sup>6</sup>.

The cost of domestic abuse alone to business is estimated at £1.9 billion a year due to decreased productivity, time off work, lost wages and sick pay. It can potentially have an adverse impact on staff morale, as well as on an organisation's image and reputation<sup>7</sup>.

Employers have an important role to play in society's response to DASV. Employers owe a duty of care to employees and have a legal responsibility to provide a safe and effective work environment. Preventing and tackling DASV is an integral part of this<sup>8</sup>.

Public facing organisations also have a duty to ensure their staff are aware of their responsibility to effectively identify and respond to DASV.

This guidance has therefore been developed to support organisations within Gloucestershire to produce appropriate policies on DASV and to fulfil the commitments outlined in the Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Concordat.

### 1.1 Purpose of guidance

This document has been produced to:

- Outline the importance of having a domestic abuse and sexual violence (DASV) policy for employees within all organisations in Gloucestershire.
- Provide guidance on how to produce a DASV policy to respond to employees affected by DASV.

---

<sup>1</sup> BITC Domestic Abuse toolkit for employers

<sup>2</sup> CSEW ONS

<sup>3</sup> Suzy Lamplugh Trust

<sup>4</sup> Department of Health

<sup>5</sup> Honour Based Violence Awareness Network (2000)

<sup>6</sup> Forced Marriage Unit

<sup>7</sup> BITC Domestic Abuse toolkit for employers

<sup>8</sup> BITC Domestic Abuse toolkit for employers

- Provide guidance on how to produce a DASV policy for front line organisations to ensure appropriate identification and response to DASV disclosed to staff by members of the public.

This guidance is designed to support all organisations in Gloucestershire, and should be read in conjunction with individual organisations HR policies, practices and codes of conduct.

This guidance is not designed to provide an exhaustive list of possibilities for organisational responses to DASV, and organisational policies and practices must be driven by appropriate leads, for example, HR, safeguarding or DASV leads.

### **1.2 Definition of domestic abuse**

Gloucestershire operates under the cross-government national definition of domestic abuse:

*Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.*

*This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:*

- *Psychological*
- *Physical*
- *Sexual*
- *Economic*
- *Emotional*

*Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependant by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.*

*Coercive behaviour is: an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victims.*

*This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.*

### **1.3 Definition of Honour Based Violence**

Gloucestershire operates under the definition set by the Home Office and Crown Prosecution Service.

"Honour-based" violence (HBV) is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community.

*HBV can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.*

#### **1.4 Definition of Forced Marriage**

Gloucestershire operates under the definition set by the Home Office.

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used.

An arranged marriage is not the same as a forced marriage. In an arranged marriage, the families take a leading role in choosing the marriage partner, but both parties are free to choose whether to enter into the marriage or not without fear of repercussions.

#### **1.5 Definition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Gloucestershire operates under the definition set by the NHS.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but where there's no medical reason for this to be done.

#### **1.6 Definition of sexual violence**

Gloucestershire operates under the definition set by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2002).

“Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.”

Types of sexual violence include(not an exhaustive list):

- Rape/attempted rape
- Sexual assault
- Sexual harassment
- Childhood sexual abuse
- Child Sexual exploitation
- Female genital mutilation
- Trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation
- Forced prostitution
- Sexting
- ‘revenge porn’

#### **1.7 Definition of stalking**

Gloucestershire operates under the definition set locally by Gloucestershire Constabulary. This definition was developed in the absence of a nationally

recognised or legal definition. In the event that such a definition is adopted Nationally, Gloucestershire will also look to adopt such a definition.

‘A pattern of unwanted fixated and obsessive behaviour involving the intrusive following, contacting or monitoring of the victim causing fear of violence or serious alarm or distress’.

## **2. The importance of having an organisational DASV policy**

A detailed domestic abuse policy allows organisations to demonstrate that they take DASV seriously and have mechanisms in place to support employees in dealing with the effects of DASV; as well as ensuring they are able to respond to perpetrators of abuse where appropriate and necessary.

The nature of DASV means that it can impact on anyone, and all organisations should therefore be mindful that colleagues or employees may be experiencing DASV or still dealing with the impact of having previously experienced DASV.

For public facing organisations, a policy will provide the public with reassurance that DASV will be taken seriously with an effective response. This can improve public confidence in organisations and encourage victims of DASV to disclose to staff/managers, safe in the knowledge that they will know how to respond effectively.

Individual organisations can make the choice as to whether they develop a bespoke DASV policy, or ensure DASV is included in existing HR or safeguarding policies.

### **2.1 Employer responsibility to respond to DASV**

Health and Safety laws that are designed to ensure workers have a safe environment to conduct their work and have their health and wellbeing considered are also supportive of the response to DASV. The main areas of health and safety legislation that are relevant to DASV are<sup>9</sup>:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992
- Reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences Regulations 1995
- Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996

Any workplace DASV policy will need to ensure it is compliant with these laws, including where workers may work from home.

### **2.2 Impact of DASV on the employer and other employees<sup>10</sup>**

It is important for employers to recognise that if the organisation does not effectively respond to DASV being experienced by their staff, there could be a

---

<sup>9</sup> BITC Domestic Abuse: A toolkit for employers.

<sup>10</sup> Domestic violence resource manual for employers, second edition. Refuge and Respect

negative impact on the organisation and its other employees. Research indicates that DASV costs businesses an estimated £2 billion per year as a result of<sup>11</sup>:

- Negative impact on productivity, performance and morale
- Increase in sick leave and subsequent payments
- Employers invest time and resources into recruiting staff, yet employees experiencing DASV may be forced to leave work by the abuser; may have to move away and/or may have to give up work so that the abuser cannot locate them. Some employees may also be dismissed as a result of poor performance, absenteeism or disruptive behaviour caused by the abuser.
- Research also suggests that perpetrators may be late for work, leave early, take time off and use workplace resources (such as telephones, emails or company cars) to threaten, harass or abuse their victim.

Other staff members may:

- Have to fill in for absent or unproductive workers
- Feel resentful towards victims who take time off or receive extra attention; take part in gossip/rumours about the victim
- Try to protect the victim from unwanted phone calls or visits
- Feel helpless and unsure about how to intervene
- Be distracted from their own work
- Experience a negative impact on their own mental and emotional health, especially if they may also be experiencing abuse themselves
- Fear for their own safety e.g. be followed by the abuser and subjected to questioning about how to contact the victim, or where they can be found
- Unknowingly be used by the abuser as part of the abuse, perhaps by assisting the perpetrator to locate their victim or by covering up for the abuser at work
- Require additional support from experiencing secondary trauma
- Require safety measures to protect them if the perpetrator targets them due to their connection to the victim

### **2.3 Organisational responsibility to respond effectively to DASV**

Many front line organisations have a responsibility to effectively identify and respond to DASV in their dealings with members of the public. This responsibility is often placed on statutory services such as police, social care and health agencies.

It is important to note however, that any service that deals with members of the public has an important role to play in identifying and responding to DASV. Many services will be presented with the signs and symptoms that someone is experiencing DASV, and may be the only service that an individual discloses their experience to; and therefore the only service with an opportunity to appropriately intervene or support.

---

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-advice-to-help-employers-deal-with-domestic-abuse-and-stigma>

Having a DASV policy therefore ensures staff are aware of the role they have to play and how they can ensure victims are signposted to appropriate support. It also provides the public with confidence in the service and will subsequently ensure staff feel supported; clear in the expectations placed on them and the organisational support for the work that they do.

The nature of DASV means that it often stays hidden, but the more services that have policies in place for their staff to ask appropriate questions and risk assess, the better opportunities there are to prevent victims coming to serious harm or death. A multi-agency response to DASV is the best response.

It is also important to note that local areas have a statutory duty to conduct Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) when a person is killed, or commits suicide as a result of domestic abuse. In these reviews, agency contact with individuals is analysed to ensure lessons can be learnt to improve service responses to DASV in the future. In many cases, having a clear organisational policy on DASV is a recommendation for many agencies to ensure they respond effectively and their staff are aware of the expectations placed on them and support available for victims and staff.

### **3. Guidance on producing a DASV policy to respond to employees**

Set out below are the key areas that should be included in organisational policies, responding to DASV experienced by employees. This is not an exhaustive list and policies need to be specific to individual organisations and in line with codes of conduct, HR and Safeguarding policies and practices. Organisations will also need to consider an approach that is relevant and proportionate based on the size of the organisation/business and the structures in place.

#### **a) Definitions**

Outline the areas of DASV that the policy intends to cover and the definitions the organisation will adopt (suggestions for nationally recognised definitions are included in section 1).

This sets out the common language and terms the organisation will use when dealing with DASV in the workplace.

#### **b) Organisational commitment to DASV**

Outline the organisational commitment to tackling DASV and the way in which employees can expect to be responded to if they are experiencing or perpetrating DASV.

This can be a broad statement, or more detailed outline. This could include:

- That disclosures of DASV are taken seriously
- Staff safety, health and wellbeing is at the forefront of the organisations response and workplace culture



- Risks and consequences of DASV are understood and will not be tolerated in any form
- Employees experiencing DASV will be supported with staying safe in work and accessing specialist support
- Responses will be led from the top, with senior leaders advocating for the organisations response to DASV

### **c) Confidentiality and record keeping**

The policy should outline the organisational response to ensure confidentiality.

The policy should acknowledge that whilst the confidentiality of employees is of paramount importance, the organisation will be required to act within the limits of organisational safeguarding commitments. This may mean needing to share information with external agencies without the consent of the employee if the DASV disclosed:

- places a child at risk
- places a vulnerable adult at risk
- is considered high risk (in terms of the victim being at high risk of serious harm or homicide)
- details that a serious crime has been committed

The policy should also provide guidance to managers about the records to keep if they become aware of a staff member experiencing DASV and where such confidential records should be stored.

It is important that managers keep an accurate record of their concerns and the response of the organisation and that this is held securely and confidentially.

### **d) Organisational response to employees who are victims of DASV**

This section considers how to respond to employees who disclose they are experiencing DASV currently, or are struggling with the ongoing trauma of their previous experiences.

#### **Identifying the signs and symptoms of DASV and creating opportunities for disclosure:**

Consider how staff and managers in particular, will identify the signs that someone may be experiencing DASV and be confident in asking appropriate questions in the right environment.

Demonstrate how the organisation will create a positive work environment, which promotes staff wellbeing and enables staff to feel they can disclose their experience of DASV to a manager or colleague; and that the disclosure will be taken seriously and access to support promoted.

The signs and symptoms that someone may be experiencing DASV may be displayed in the workplace in the following ways (non-exhaustive list):

- A change in the persons working patterns, e.g. frequent lateness, absenteeism, needing to leave work early and spending increased time at work with no explanation
- Changes to productivity and performance
- Changes in the use of phone/email e.g. increase in personal calls, avoiding calls, or strong reaction to calls/texts/email
- Changes in behaviour/demeanour e.g. becoming quiet, anxious, frightened, tearful, aggressive, distracted, depressed, isolating self from colleagues, obsession with time keeping, secretive about home life, worried about children at home
- Visible signs of injury with unlikely explanations
- Change in appearance e.g. change in amount of make-up used, changes in dress, or clothing that doesn't suit the climate
- Partner or ex-partner attending work, or exerting unusual control or demands over work schedule, sending unwanted gifts/flowers

It is important to recognise that an employee may find it difficult to make a disclosure to an employer or colleague. They may be fearful of being judged, the risk to them may increase by disclosing to someone, fear they may be treated differently, have concerns about confidentiality, and the perpetrator may also work for the same organisation. It is therefore important to:

- Remain sensitive/non-judgemental/discreet/supportive
- Prioritise safety over work efficiency; reassuring them that the organisation has an understanding of DASV and how this may be impacting them at work
- Allocate time in private to listen
- Not seek proof of the abuse
- Not contact the abuser
- Not adopt the role of support worker, but advise of specialist DASV support available and support contact

#### **Risk Assessment:**

The policy needs to consider the expectations placed on managers to conduct a risk assessment following the disclosure of DASV.

The DASH Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Violence (DASH, 2009) risk assessment is the most commonly used tool to identify risk. Details on how to complete this risk assessment can be found within guidance documents available at [www.glostakeastand.com](http://www.glostakeastand.com).

Where high risk is identified, the policy should consider the role managers will play in making appropriate referrals to specialist DASV support organisations. Details on specialist support are provided in section 6 and can be found at [www.glostakeastand.com](http://www.glostakeastand.com).

Completing a risk assessment helps to better understand the current experiences of a staff member and will also identify those members of staff with more serious concerns which may need to involve external agencies to keep them safe.

**Support for staff and safety planning in the work place:**

This section should outline the support options for staff experiencing DASV. The support may be referral to external specialist support organisations, or may also include options within the workplace to be supportive and help to keep them safe.

Employers/ managers who become aware of DASV and understand the risks may want to consider:

- Making emergency and safe contact arrangements
- Adjusting responsibilities and workload
- Review communications and IT safety
- Arrange in advance when and who to contact if the employee doesn't come into work (family member/police/neighbour/friend etc.)
- Discuss changes in route to work, location of work base, start and finish time, flexible working and entrance to work (where possible and appropriate)
- Ensure employee records are secure and where necessary ensure other staff are aware not to reveal employees personal details to anyone or their whereabouts
- Consider (where appropriate and necessary) alerting security or reception staff of the concerns and details of the perpetrator to ensure they are screened from the workplace
- Consider special leave or time off if victim needs to attend court, or an appointment to seek support
- Facilitate contact with specialist support service where necessary and appropriate and offer to jointly work with a specialist to develop a safety plan
- Consider any other support the organisation can offer

It is important to remember that victims of DASV may be at increased risk of harm in their workplace if they leave an abusive partner, as it may be the only place where they can be located. As such, employers who are aware of DASV and fail to protect their employees from violence at work may be acting against Health and Safety legislation.<sup>12</sup>

**Expectations placed on line managers/staff:**

Throughout the policy, make the expectations of line managers and other staff clear so they are aware of their required response to DASV, but also ensuring a supportive environment for all.

The policy should include the plan for providing appropriate support to managers and staff, some of whom may experience the effects of secondary trauma, or may even be caught up in the circumstances of DASV if they are close to the victim, or

---

<sup>12</sup> Domestic violence resource manual for employers, second edition. Refuge and Respect.

have received any contact from the perpetrator. Such support may include opportunities for work base counselling or enhanced supervision.

**e) Organisational response to employees who are Perpetrators of DASV<sup>13</sup>**

The policy should reflect how the organisation intends to respond to employees who are perpetrating DASV, whether at home or in the workplace.

Employers and staff may become aware that someone in the workplace is perpetrating DASV; this may be through criminal conviction, disclosure from the victim and disclosure from the perpetrator themselves (may inform colleagues of their behaviour). Responding to perpetrators of DASV in the workplace is important for organisational reputation and to ensure victims feel safer and supported in the workplace.

All employers have a duty of care towards their employees. This includes perpetrators of DASV who, through their actions, are damaging their own lives as well as the lives of others. Engaging with perpetrators of abuse in a positive, respectful way does not mean excusing the abuse and can help to increase safety for the whole family.

Employers and staff may gain awareness of staff perpetrating DASV through:

**Indirect disclosure** of perpetrating DASV may come to light as a result of:

- A direct allegation to the employer from the victim
- An allegation from a third party e.g. an employee suspects or has witnessed another employee abusing their victim
- Notification by the police or through a CRB check
- The employee needing to take time off to attend court

**Direct disclosure**

Some may identify their abusive behaviour directly and ask for help to deal with their behaviour. This is likely to have been prompted by a crisis such as a particularly serious assault, an arrest or an ultimatum from the abused partner/victim.

There may be opportunity to speak to employees sensitively about their behaviour and ask if they are being abusive – for example if there is a decline in performance and concentration or unexpected absences. In these circumstances consider and be mindful to;

- not make the employee feel backed into a corner or expect an early full and honest disclosure about their behaviour; it may be difficult for them to discuss and feel like they can be honest about their behaviour.
- be aware of the barriers for the employee in acknowledging their abuse and seeking help (such as shame, fear of child protection process, self-justifying anger)

---

<sup>13</sup> Domestic violence resource manual for employers, second edition. Refuge and Respect.

- be aware that some – even when they have sought help voluntarily – are unlikely to disclose the seriousness or extent of their abuse, and may try to “explain” or blame it on other people or external factors. Even those who are concerned enough about the abuse to seek help may present with other problems such as alcohol, stress or depression, and may not refer directly to the abuse as the problem.

In these circumstances, organisations may decide that some managers/staff have specialist training to ask these questions, or may ask specialist organisations, such as voluntary perpetrator programmes, to support.

Be alert to the possibility of DASV if you hear the following:

- I need an anger management course
- I’m not handling stress at work
- My partner says I need help
- My partner and I are fighting a lot
- My partner and I need counselling
- My partner is not coping and is taking it out on me
- The kids are out of control and my partner is not firm enough
- I’m depressed/anxious/stressed/not sleeping/not coping/not myself
- I feel suicidal (or have threatened or attempted suicide)
- I’m worried about my rage at work, in the car, in the street, at the football

If the above are identified, you may wish to ask indirect questions such as ‘how is this affecting your family?’, ‘when you feel like that, how do you behave?’, ‘you must be worried about the impact on yourself, partner and family?’

### **Responding to perpetrators in the workplace:**

In identifying abusive behaviour:

- Be clear that abuse is always unacceptable and that it may constitute criminal behaviour
- Be clear that abusive behaviour is a choice
- Be respectful but do not collude
- Be positive, it is possible for perpetrators to change if they recognise that they have a problem and take steps to change their behaviour
- Be clear that you might have to speak to other agencies if there are grounds to breach confidentiality
- Be aware that on some level the perpetrator may be unhappy about their behaviour
- Be aware and tell the perpetrator that children are always negatively affected by living with DASV, whether or not they witness it directly
- Be aware, and convey to the perpetrator, that DASV is about a range of controlling behaviours, not just physical violence
- Be aware of the likely costs to the perpetrator of continued abuse (arrest/loss of relationship/impact on children)

**Disciplinary Action:**

Be aware that acts of DASV can be a criminal offence and lead to caution, arrest, prosecution and criminal conviction. As such employers need to consider what impact legal action would have on the workplace especially when it results in restrictive bail conditions, the employee being remanded in custody or if they are given a custodial sentence.

The fact that an employee has been charged with a criminal offence is not in itself sufficient grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal, unless this is specifically covered by the code of conduct. If a member of staff is perpetrating DASV, employers should consider whether there is a connection between the abusive behaviour and their role at work.

**The nature of the conduct and the nature of the employee's work:**

Where appropriate employers may need to take action to minimise the potential for perpetrators to use their position or work resources to find out details about the whereabouts of their victim. This may include a change of duties or withdrawing access to certain computer programmes.

If a perpetrator of abuse is using work resources such as the telephone, fax, e-mail or company car in the course of their perpetrating behaviour, this could be construed as misuse of the organisation's property and contrary to the organisation's code of conduct.

**The extent to which the employee's role involves contact with/poses a risk to other employees and the general public:**

It may be considered that there is a conflict between the offence and the job the employee is employed to do. In some cases the fact that an employee is a perpetrator of DASV may make certain duties inappropriate and justify redeployment/disciplinary action.

**Breaking professional codes of conduct:**

There may be circumstances in which an employee may be suspended or struck off by their professional body for being a perpetrator of DASV e.g. a social worker, a doctor etc.

**The status of the employee:**

Consideration will need to be given to whether the actions of the staff member have brought the organisation into disrepute. Such behaviour, whether convicted or not, may be against the aims and values of the organisation. Some employees represent the public face of an organisation and there may be considerable reputational damage to the organisation if an employee is a perpetrator of DASV.

Consider what the impact of the employee's behaviour is on other employees. Such behaviour may be regarded as gross misconduct.

In order to address the points above, start by assessing if the employee's behaviour has had an impact on the employment relationship, in order to do this information will need to be gathered to form an opinion and will need to be investigated as appropriate.

When you are considering how to respond to employees perpetrating domestic abuse, it is useful to review what HR policies are already in place and refer to the advice and guidance of HR staff and teams.

#### **f) Training**

The policy should outline the training to be made available to staff to identify and respond to DASV and the expectations placed on certain staff to attend such training.

Gloucestershire's DASV Concordat provides a training framework that can be referred to.

#### **g) Raising awareness in workplace**

The policy should outline how the organisation plans on raising awareness amongst staff about identifying DASV, how staff should respond in the workplace and where they can access support. This may include:

- Posters
- Intranet content
- Leaflets
- Bulletins
- Events for example, running events where private rooms are booked out and staff can be invited to come along to either learn about DASV, are a victim of DASV or are concerned about their own behaviour. Staff can then come along and make disclosures whilst informing colleagues that they are simply going along to find out more about DASV.

### **4. Guidance on producing a DASV policy for front line organisations responding to the public**

The below sets out the key areas that should be included in an organisational policy on responding to DASV disclosed through interactions with the public. This does not provide an exhaustive list of options, policies will need to be specific to individual organisations and in line with National and Local regulations and expectations of organisational Safeguarding policies and practices. Consideration should be given to an approach that is relevant and proportionate based on the size of the organisation/business and the structures that are in place.

#### **a) Definitions**

Outline the areas of DASV that the policy intends to cover and the definitions that the organisation will adopt (suggestions for nationally recognised definitions are included in section 1).

This sets out a common language and terms that organisations can use when dealing with DASV.

**b) Organisational commitment to DASV**

Outline the organisational commitment to tackling DASV and the way in which the public/clients can expect to be dealt with if they are experiencing or perpetrating DASV.

This can be a broad statement, or a more detailed outline. This can include that the organisation:

- Takes disclosures of DASV seriously and that they will ensure that those at risk are responded to effectively and appropriately.
- Is committed to a multi-agency response to DASV.
- Will promote awareness of DASV and how people can access support.
- Will strive for best practice and will monitor and continue to develop its response to DASV.

**c) Confidentiality, information sharing and record keeping**

Outline of the organisational response to confidentiality when responding to disclosures. This should include the organisational response to:

- Seeking and gaining consent to share information with other parties.
- Legal basis for sharing information without consent with other third parties in cases of;
  - High risk DASV
  - Risk to children
  - Risk to a vulnerable adult
  - A crime having been committed
- Information sharing agreements with other agencies/processes

This section should also outline record keeping processes for the organisation, including record retention.

**d) Creating environments for disclosure**

This section outlines how staff ensure members of the public are provided with appropriate opportunities and environments to make safe disclosures of their experiences of DASV.

This may include:

- Displaying posters and leaflets in public areas
- Private spaces where victims can be seen alone
- Outlining ways in which staff can request to see someone alone
- Routine enquiry processes for your organisation
- Outlining how staff can ask appropriate questions when they have identified the signs of possible DASV
- Outlining how staff can ask appropriate questions if they are concerned about the behaviour of a member of the public/client (identifying perpetrator behaviour)



- Identification schemes that allow a victim to highlight to your staff that they wish to be seen alone and asked the question, for example, placing a sticker on samples in doctors surgeries.

#### **e) Risk assessment**

The policy should consider the expectation placed on staff to conduct risk assessments on those who make disclosures of DASV.

The policy should consider:

- The risk assessment tool that you expect your staff to complete (this will likely include the DASH risk assessment and young person's DASH, but the organisation may have other agency specific tools that staff are required to use)
- The circumstances in which a risk assessment should be completed
- How your staff should complete the risk assessment
- The process staff should follow once completed, such as record keeping, onward referral, advice and safety planning.

Guidance on risk assessment can be found within locally produced guidance documents available at [www.glostakeastand.com](http://www.glostakeastand.com) and specialist services detailed in section 6 can also support.

#### **f) Safety Planning**

This section allows organisations to outline options available to staff to help protect the victim of DASV. This will be agency dependant, so may in some circumstances simply include the advice staff can provide to victims, or onward referral to specialist support; or it may include options that can be provided to increase safety, for example, changing locks, providing an alarm etc.

Guidance on safety planning can be found within locally produced guidance documents available at [www.glostakeastand.com](http://www.glostakeastand.com) and specialist services detailed in section 6 can also support.

#### **g) Multi-Agency working and processes**

This section outlines any multi-agency or partnership arrangements that are in place for identifying and responding to DASV. This will likely include references to established processes such as MARAC.

The policy will need to outline how participation in such arrangements/processes will occur and how staff can refer and engage in these processes. Staff should be clear on the expectations placed on them in how they interact with any multi-agency processes and how these processes work.

Guidance on MARAC is available at [www.glostakeastand.com](http://www.glostakeastand.com)

#### **h) Referral to support**

The policy should outline the options staff have for onward referral for specialist support for victims and perpetrators of DASV. Section 6 provides detail to support this.

This section should outline:

- What referral options are available
- The process for onward referral
- Action to be taken once referral has been made

#### **i) Training and guidance for staff**

The policy should outline the training to be made available to staff to identify and respond to DASV and the expectations placed on certain staff to attend such training.

Gloucestershire's DASV Concordat provides a training framework that can be referred to.

The policy should also outline where staff can access further guidance and support in identifying and responding to DASV.

A range of guidance documents to support a range of staff have been produced locally and are available at [www.glostakeastand.com](http://www.glostakeastand.com)

#### **j) Awareness raising**

The policy should outline plans on raising awareness amongst staff about identifying and responding to DASV, and also raising awareness to the public, including how they can expect the organisation to respond. This may include:

- Posters
- Intranet content
- Leaflets
- Social media content
- Website content
- Bulletins
- Events
- Participation in countywide awareness activity

### **5. Resources for organisations**

There are a range of resources that organisations can access to support the development of a DASV policy and guide organisational responses to DASV.

#### **Employer's initiative on domestic abuse**

A free to join network for all companies and public sector organisations that aims to provide employers with information on how to respond to DA. The network provides

a range of resources, network meetings, conferences and will pilot free training for employers.

The network can be accessed online:

<https://eida.org.uk/>

### **Business in the Community (BITC) Domestic Abuse: a toolkit for employers**

This toolkit provides advice and guidance for employers to respond effectively to employees and colleagues affected by domestic abuse.

The toolkit is specific to responding to incidents of intimate partner abuse.

The toolkit can be accessed online:

[https://www.bitc.org.uk/sites/default/files/bitc\\_phe\\_domestic\\_abuse\\_toolkit.pdf](https://www.bitc.org.uk/sites/default/files/bitc_phe_domestic_abuse_toolkit.pdf)

### **Bright Sky Mobile App**

The Vodafone Foundation, Vodafone's philanthropic arm, and Hestia, London's leading domestic abuse charity, have launched Bright Sky, a free and unique mobile app providing comprehensive support and information to people affected by domestic abuse, including a UK-wide directory of specialist support services. It is also a tool for friends, family and professionals seeking to support someone who is a victim. The app is free to download on the App Store and Google Play Store.

Information on the app can be found at:

Hestia: <https://www.hestia.org/brightsky>

Vodafone Foundation:

<https://mediacentre.vodafone.co.uk/news/bright-sky-launches/>

### **Working Without Fear Programme**

A locally developed tailor-made programme designed to help organisations recognise what domestic violence and stalking is, the implications and help them respond appropriately so that staff are protected.

The programme invites organisations to pledge their support to tackling domestic abuse and stalking in the workplace, offers a range of training workshops for relevant staff and supports the development of an organisational policy.

The programme has been developed by Nick Gazzard of the Hollie Gazzard Trust.

Information about the programme can be found at:

<https://holliegazzard.org/working-without-fear-programme/>

### **Local guidance documents**

A range of 'identifying and responding to' documents are available for all professionals in Gloucestershire to support them step by step in how they identify, risk assess and safety plan for victims.

The guidance documents can be accessed at: [www.glostakeastand.com](http://www.glostakeastand.com)

### **Local agency awareness and training sessions**

The range of commissioned support services listed in section 6 can be approached to run awareness raising and training sessions for organisations.

The local DASV Concordat also provides a local training standards and pathway available at [www.glostakeastand.com](http://www.glostakeastand.com)

## **6. Specialist support for those affected by DASV**

Full details on support available in Gloucestershire, and guidance documents to support agency response can be found at [www.glostakeastand.com](http://www.glostakeastand.com)

### **Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS)**

Website: <http://www.gdass.org.uk>

Email: [support@gdass.org.uk](mailto:support@gdass.org.uk) / Secure: [gdass.referral@gsg.cism.net](mailto:gdass.referral@gsg.cism.net)

Helpdesk line: 01452 726570

Professionals line: 01452 726561

### **Positive Relationships Gloucestershire (Voluntary Perpetrators Programme)**

Website: <https://www.splitz.org/gloucestershire.html>

Email: [PRGGloucester@splitz.org](mailto:PRGGloucester@splitz.org)

Phone: 01242 226150

### **Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (GRASAC)**

Website: <http://www.glosrasac.org/>

Email: [info@glosrasac.org.uk](mailto:info@glosrasac.org.uk)

Phone: 01452 526 770

### **Gloucestershire Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)**

Website: [www.hopehousesarc.nhs.uk](http://www.hopehousesarc.nhs.uk)

Email: [hopehousesarc@glos-care.nhs.uk](mailto:hopehousesarc@glos-care.nhs.uk)

Phone: 0300 421 8400

### **Survivors Pathway: Information on local SV support**

<https://www.survivorpathway.org.uk/>

### **Gloucestershire Stalking Advocacy Service (GSAS)**

Email: [jsac@splitz.org](mailto:jsac@splitz.org)

### **National Stalking Helpline**

Phone: 0808 802 0300

Website: [www.stalkinghelpline.org](http://www.stalkinghelpline.org)

Email: [advice@stalkinghelpline.org](mailto:advice@stalkinghelpline.org)

**Paladin: National Stalking Advocacy Service**

Phone line: 020 3866 4107

Email: [info@paladinservice.co.uk](mailto:info@paladinservice.co.uk)

Website: <http://paladinservice.co.uk/>

**The Suzy Lamplugh Trust**

Website: <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/>

**Kama Nirvana: Support for Honour Based violence and Forced Marriage**

Website: <https://karmanirvana.org.uk/>

Email: [info@karmanirvana.org.uk](mailto:info@karmanirvana.org.uk)

Phone: 0800 5999 247