



RAISE THE
ROOF
ON
DOMESTIC
ABUSE

A UNISON GUIDE
TO CAMPAIGNING AGAINST
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE


UNISON
the public service union

Raise the Roof

A UNISON guide to campaigning against domestic violence

Preface

For far too many women, the reality behind the saying 'there's no place like home' is the experience or threat of domestic abuse.

For far too long, it's been a hidden problem – respect for the privacy of the home has meant women suffering in silence, women being turned away when they have sought help. But at last, it's coming into the public arena, and the problem is being addressed as one of public policy. And in UNISON we are addressing it as a trade union issue.

Men and women in UNISON are united in saying no to violence against women. We are working with organisations like Women's Aid to raise awareness about this issue, to offer support to those experiencing domestic abuse and to raise the issue with employers.

I hope you find this booklet helpful in campaigning to improve services and in negotiating workplace agreements to help those who are subjected to violence in the home.



Rodney Bickerstaffe

General Secretary

November 1999

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Action against violence against women

This guide is to assist branches in negotiating workplace policies on domestic violence. It also advises branches on how to work with community groups to raise awareness and about this issue. It contains a negotiating checklist, case studies and information on where outside help and advice can be found. It also contains information about national and European initiatives at governmental level.

Violence in the home is a trade union issue, and UNISON is committed to working with community groups on this issue and to raising it in the workplace.

Did you know?:

One in five of our work colleagues are affected by domestic violence at some time in their lives — the majority of them women.

- every week at least one woman in Britain is killed by her violent partner.
- domestic violence accounts for 25% of all reported crime and research suggests that only a tiny proportion of violent attacks are ever reported to the police.

Domestic violence affects job performance and therefore job prospects and security. It threatens the health and safety of those who suffer and it can even threaten their lives.

Increasingly employers are recognising that they have a responsibility for the well-being of their employees. Increasingly employers are negotiating workplace agreements to support and assist employees suffering domestic abuse.

UNISON's campaign focuses on negotiating good workplace policies and practices and will raise awareness of the issues among members and full time officials. Negotiators will be asked to prioritise the issue and to work with appropriate UNISON bodies such as the national and regional women's committees. Education and training courses will be organised. It is important that branches develop a relationship with their local Women's Aid group who can provide expertise and experience when developing local strategies for action.

The Government has also recognised that women have a right to live their lives without fear of violence and is developing a national strategy. It will be issuing inter-departmental guidance to agencies dealing with domestic violence, emphasising the importance of working in partnership.

What is violence in the home?

Violence in the home or domestic violence is abusive or violent behaviour between partners or ex-partners. Overwhelmingly the abuser is a man, the abused a woman. The violence will often be physical or sexual, its visible effects ranging from bruising to permanent injury, and it may even result in death.

However, it is often emotional, mental and verbal: threats, belittlement, isolation and control of money and activities. Less visible but equally damaging effects include diminished self-esteem, lack of concentration, fear, guilt, insomnia, depression, agoraphobia and difficulty in forming or maintaining trusting or intimate relationships.

Domestic violence cuts across all social, economic, racial and religious boundaries. There is no typical male perpetrator or typical female 'victim'. Violence in the home has its roots in inequality, control and power. Tackling domestic violence requires a raft of social changes including improvements in women's economic status: pay, job security and benefits; improved public housing and changes in housing policy; changing social attitudes including work in schools on strategies to handle conflict; changing attitudes and practice of the police and criminal justice system: greater consistency and integration of services and multi-agency support.

An International Issue

Violence against women knows no national boundaries. Women throughout the world are subject to violence, and women across the world have joined together to demand action to tackle this violation of human rights.

UN Platform for Action

At the fourth UN world conference in Beijing in 1995, the world's governments committed themselves to eliminating all forms of violence towards women and girls. Such violence is defined as any act of gender based violence that results in physical, sexual or psychological harm to women. It can occur in the home, at work, in institutions and the general community and in situations of trafficking, forced prostitution and armed conflict.

The Beijing report states 'Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relationships between men and women which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women's full advancement'. The Platform for Action called for national governments to draw up action plans to combat such violence.

European Year Against Violence Against Women

In 1996 the Council of Europe established a group of specialists to examine the scale of the problem and develop a plan of action to combat violence

against women. One of their findings was that one in four women were the victims of violence, with 10% of women experiencing violence each year.

During the UK presidency of the European Union it promoted and secured agreement that 1999 should be a year of activities to combat violence against women. It was launched on International Women's Day with a White Ribbon campaign to encourage men and women to speak out against violence against women.

The aims of the year are to:

- raise awareness of the prevalence of violence against women
- encourage member states to review their legal, economic and social support systems for the victims of violence
- allow all public authorities to make a commitment to 'zero tolerance'
- enable voluntary organisations to work together and share good practice
- provide more research into the causes of such violence and how to prevent it.

The DAPHNE programme

The DAPHNE programme was set up in 1997 by the European Parliament. Its purpose is to contribute to the work of combatting violence against women, young people and children. 1999 is the second year of a three-year pilot programme and includes 49 new projects including funding for computer software for Hammersmith and Fulham's Standing Together Against Domestic Violence project to enable the tracking of domestic violence offenders. Thirteen of the projects address domestic violence, paying particular attention to the collation of accurate data, the co-operation of the police and help for victims in rural areas.

A National Issue

Living without Fear

The UK Government has developed a policy programme to implement the UN Platform for Action. The Government reported on progress in 'Delivering for Women: Progress so far' published in November 1998. This has been followed by the report 'Living Without Fear: an integrated approach to tackling violence against women'.

This report sets out the Government's commitment and approach to addressing the circumstances surrounding violent crimes against women. The document promotes good practice and encourages more effective multi-agency partnerships which will deliver the support and services women need. It is particularly aimed at service providers in local government, the health service and the voluntary sector, as well as women themselves. It provides practical advice, information and contacts to those at the sharp end.

The Government's approach is to:

- **provide timely support and protection** – co-ordinated and effective help at the right time can save lives
- **bring perpetrators to justice** – the legal system must deter crimes of violence against women and provide support and protection for women pursuing cases through the courts
- **prevent violence** – like other crimes, violence against women is unacceptable.

It includes:

- £6m for projects to reduce crime against women;
- proposals for a new 24 hour helpline for women;
- £6.3m more for Victim Support to assist victims through the legal process

The report contains examples of better guidance to police to encourage them to arrest perpetrators of domestic violence. There is more focus on making our streets and public transport safer for women. And there is practical guidance for those working in the field based on what has been found to work best for women.

This report is available free of charge from the Government Women's Unit, details in Appendix 4.

Breaking the silence

There are many myths and prejudices surrounding domestic violence which make abused women fearful of speaking out and which may lead to negative responses when they do seek help. Outsiders may not understand why a woman does not simply leave or, having left, why she sometimes returns, perhaps more than once. It is important to understand that leaving an abusive relationship is not a single act but a process.

Women stay for many reasons ranging from love to terror, through to crude economics. Leaving is an act requiring strength and resourcefulness that may have been eroded by fear and despair. A woman may hope that her partner will change and that the family can stay together. A violent partner may exhibit periods of loving behaviour and show genuine remorse.

Support services for women fleeing domestic violence vary widely around the country – while good in some areas, in other places the options are very limited. Difficulties with housing and money, as well as a range of emotional pressures, may force a woman to return to an abusive partner, leaving again might not seem to be an option.

Many women face multiple obstacles in escaping violence. Language may be an obstacle to women's access to information and services: a woman may usually depend on school-age children or relatives to interpret for her, which may not be possible in this context. Women may feel they are betraying their black partner to authorities who they believe to be racist. Disabled women may be abused by their principal carer. They may fear institutionalisation and be even more dependent on remaining in the family home. The fear that their children could be taken away may also be present. Lesbians experiencing violence from male ex-partners or within their current relationship may receive little sympathy.

Women experiencing domestic violence must know that they are not alone. Many others have been through what they are experiencing and there are places to go for help. This must include their union.

Women's Aid

Women's Aid federations of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are umbrella groups of refuges for women and children escaping domestic violence. They provide help lines, information, training and resources and monitor policy and practice. They campaign for better legal rights and support and protection for women and children experiencing violence.

UNISON nationally is affiliated to the Women's Aid Federation of England. To affiliate your branch women's group or to enlist your branch as a 'Friend of Women's Aid', see contact details in Appendix 1.

The Women's Aid Millennium Campaign

Women's Aid has organised a Millennium Campaign to raise public awareness around the issue of domestic violence and its effects on women and children. The campaign, sponsored by UNISON, coincides with the 25th anniversary of Women's Aid.

The millennium campaign aims to:

- raise public awareness of the issue of domestic violence and its impact on women and children
- communicate the message that domestic violence is unacceptable
- promote violence-free family relationships and encourage those who suffer violence to seek help
- develop new and innovative ways of raising public awareness of the nature and extent of domestic violence and its impact on women and children
- raise the profile of Women's Aid, the expertise within the organisation and the services Women's Aid provides both locally and nationally.

Women's Aid produce posters and leaflets which you can use to raise awareness of this issue. You can also work with Women's Aid to campaign in the wider community on this issue.

The millennium campaign is launched by a week of action called 'A Future without fear: stop domestic violence' in the week of 22nd November 1999, coinciding with the international day against violence against women.

A national event in London will launch the campaign and lead into a series of events across the country organised by local Women's Aid groups and other interested parties.

Zero Tolerance Campaign

The campaign, launched by Edinburgh City Council 1992, raises awareness of domestic violence through leaflets, educational materials and posters on billboards, bus stops and other prominent sites. The Campaign has since been adopted by other local authorities and has worked with the employers and trade unions to develop workplace policies. UNISON nationally is affiliated to the Campaign. To affiliate your branch contact the Zero Tolerance Campaign (Details in Appendix 4)

Best Interest Campaign (Children Act 1989)

The 'best interest' campaign is questioning the basis on which courts decide whether to grant a violent ex-partner visiting rights to his children by way of a court order known as a 'contact order'.

Section 1 of the Children Act 1989 provides that when determining whether or not to make an order, 'the child's welfare shall be the court's paramount consideration'. The court must therefore consider whether it is in the best interest of the child for an order to be made.

Over recent years judges have been deciding increasingly that it is always in the best interests of the child to have contact with the father, whatever the circumstances. This can have an adverse impact not only on the women but also on the children.

The Lord Chancellor's department has issued a consultation paper on 'contact between children and violent parents' which contains proposals for good practice guidelines. If these are approved, they could significantly improve practice in the family courts and lead to better case law precedents. Contact the Women's Aid Federation for further details about this campaign.

Personal Support

If a woman talks to someone from the union, it may be the first time she has ever spoken about the abuse she and her children are experiencing. It is vital that the person she talks to reacts sensitively. The most important thing is understanding. The second most important thing is information. Branches should consider appointing a woman branch officer as named contact for

members seeking advice or information on violence in the home. Such an appointment should be widely advertised so that any woman wanting to get in touch knows who to approach directly, without having to ask other stewards or branch officers. Anyone supporting a woman suffering abuse should be aware of the need for:

- complete confidentiality – nothing should be said to anyone else without the permission of the woman concerned. The only exception to this would be if the person was going to injure themselves or someone else
- a non-judgemental attitude which allows the woman to make her own decisions at her own pace, regardless of whether this may seem to the onlooker to be the “wrong” thing
- continued support, whether through a group or an individual, for as long as it is needed. The process of recovery may take a long time
- information on outside support, both personal and practical, such as the local Women’s Aid, rape crisis centre, lesbian line, the black women’s group etc.

Help is also available from the UNISON regions. Each region has a Women’s Officer or designated officer who deals with women’s issues and networks of women members, black members, disabled members and lesbian and gay members who can provide support and information.

Black Women and Domestic vViolence

UNISON’s National Black Members’ Committee has prioritised domestic violence as a campaigning issue in 1999. Black women face some very different problems and difficulties when dealing with domestic violence. There are cultural and economic barriers as well as the impact of immigration laws on black women.

The National Black Members Committee has made this a priority because they felt that domestic violence remains one of the biggest taboos in the black community. This is because:

- Women are afraid to report incidents to the police for fear of reprisals to their partners.
- Black women run the risk of being isolated by the community if they expose a violent partner
- Language barriers prevent many black women from seeking help.

Southall Black Sisters

Southall Black Sisters (SBS) is an organisation that works largely with South Asian women, and in close alliance with Women’s Aid and other groups dealing with domestic violence in Britain.

SBS have consistently campaigned for changes to the One Year Rule in immigration law (see below). The Government consulted SBS before the recent reforms were made.

In 1998 SBS dealt with more than 1,200 cases and enquiries. The main issues were domestic violence and other forms of family abuse which can lead to problems around matrimonial and child care issues, homelessness, welfare rights, debt counselling, immigration and mental health problems.

Women are referred from an ever wider range of sources, including councillors, MPs, solicitors, health professionals, nurseries, colleges, employes and church groups.

It is only recently that the need for provision and support for black women has started to be addressed. Out of 200 refugees in Britain only 19 are specifically for black women and five for Asian women. The lack of refuges which cater for black and Asian women's cultural needs make it even more difficult to leave a violent home.

Domestic violence and immigration laws

Black women can also fall foul of the immigration laws. Under the One Year Rule, a person from abroad is granted 12 months' leave to enter or remain in the UK on the basis of their marriage to a person settled here. If the marriage breaks down within this period, the person is required to leave the UK unless they qualify to remain on another basis.

This rule has its impact on women who experience domestic violence during the 12-month period – if they stay in the marriage they may face continuing violence and abuse; if they leave the relationship they are required to return to their own country.

The Home Office has introduced a concession to the One Year Rule to allow applicants whose relationship breaks down during the first year as a result of domestic violence to apply for indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom. Qualification for the concession depends on the applicant producing one of the following forms of evidence that domestic violence has taken place:

- an injunction, non-molestation or other protection order made against the violent partner
- a relevant court conviction against the violent partner
- full details of a relevant police caution against the violent partner.

Although this concession does provide some security and protection, for the cultural and community reasons listed above, there are fears that it will have little impact.

Negotiating with employers

A number of UNISON branches have negotiated comprehensive policies with employers including Portsmouth Health Trust and in local government — Fife, Edinburgh, Northampton and Nottingham.

The issue of domestic violence and its effects should be raised with employers and among members. Branches should ensure that UNISON's policy on domestic violence is well publicised.

If you have negotiated domestic abuse policies or have had a successful campaign, please send the information to the National Women's Officer. This will help to measure the success of the campaign and build on good practice.

As trade unionists, human rights arguments about helping those escaping domestic violence may be at the forefront of our minds. However, there are good 'business' reasons why employers should help employees who have difficulties in their personal lives. These are similar arguments used to persuade employers of the value of equal opportunities policies.

Reasons to introduce a policy:

a) recruitment and retention

Building up a team of trained and experienced staff costs money - good support will reduce the cost that occurs when staff leave. A workplace policy is a good investment, helping to retain skilled and experienced staff, and contributing to motivation and job satisfaction.

The costs of replacing an employee include

- recruitment advertising
- possible cost of temporary cover
- training new recruits
- management time for new recruits

b) more effective staff

Support and security at work play a vital part in the well being of any organisation. Staff will feel fully supported and confident in approaching their employer for help. This can only increase commitment to their organisation.

c) getting the best people for the job

An employer with family friendly policies will be attractive to a much wider pool of potential applicants.

d) an improved public image

Employers who have a policy on domestic abuse are demonstrating a

powerful commitment to the principles of equal opportunities and community investment.

e) equal opportunities

Domestic abuse policies constitute an essential part of a strategy to achieve equal opportunities in the workplace for women.

Issues to address in negotiating a policy

Look at the checklist for negotiating a policy in Appendix 1 at the back of this guide.

Key issues to address include:

- **Confidential and sympathetic response by managers and colleagues:** this is crucial if women who are experiencing domestic abuse are to come forward for help and support
- **Awareness training for all staff:** this is important if managers and colleagues are to understand why there is a need for a workplace policy and know how to behave and help in the situation
- **Extended special or compassionate leave:** women who are experiencing domestic abuse will need time off to visit solicitors, arrange rehousing and to get advice and support from the appropriate agencies
- **Advanced pay:** money may be tight and advances in pay may help in the short term
- **Relocation:** there may be requests to be redeployed or relocated for safety reasons. This is key if work is to provide a safe environment. Changes in working hours or other temporary measures to working time may help
- **Practical help:** the employer should keep telephone numbers of appropriate agencies which can offer help and assistance, for example, housing and benefits agencies, women's aid etc.

Good practice

Below are two case studies of branches who have successfully negotiated policies:

Portsmouth Health

UNISON's Portsmouth health branch and the city's Healthcare Trust negotiated a workplace policy in 1998.

A seminar for managers and UNISON representatives was held in February 1999 with presentations from UNISON, the local police service and other organisations. Working groups identified actions which management and

UNISON could take to raise awareness in the workplace and also to signal to staff that there would be support from the Trust. A corporate policy was agreed which includes a statement of intent, the policy and a practical help pack.

The branch secretary and assistant branch secretary worked hard on the policy. It has received praise from the Cabinet Office Women's Unit and is cited as an example of good practice in 'Living Without Fear'.

The policy has been used to help women experiencing domestic abuse. There have been cases of people's shifts being altered to accommodate changes in home life and assistance in being rehoused. Laminated cards were distributed with the salary slips which listed all the local telephone helplines and publicised the new policy.

Edinburgh City Council:

Edinburgh City Council was the first UNISON branch to negotiate a policy, in 1994. Lothian District branch benefitted from the policy when the two councils merged in 1996 to form City of Edinburgh Council.

Irene Stout the Branch Equalities Officer who negotiated the policy has noticed the impact the existence of the policy has had on members. The policy has been used by many members who now have the confidence to come forward and seek help from their union and employer. The agreement is given to all new employees in their recruitment pack.

The time off and the redeployment clauses of the agreement have been instrumental in helping women turn their lives around. Managers and colleagues have been supportive and this has been helped by the training given by the employer. Managers have welcomed the agreement as it gives them a framework in which to assist staff in a supportive and practical way.

Quick tips on UNISON's Raise the Roof Campaign

Negotiating a workplace policy on domestic abuse forms part of a wider campaign to raise awareness. Your campaign will be aimed primarily at your employer and at members and it will be important to raise your concerns and campaign aims with them. You can also link up with your local Women's Aid group to campaign in the wider community.

Below are a few tips on starting the campaign and ensuring you keep to schedule. UNISON has produced a 'How to' series of leaflets to help you develop campaigns. See UNISON's publications catalogue for details.

What is campaigning?

Campaigning is about achieving change. When you campaign you are trying to persuade someone to do something, to take a particular course of action. This means that when you campaign you need to be clear about what you want done, why you want it done and who you want to do it.

Identify the issues

Think carefully about what your objectives should be — those things you need to achieve in order to turn your campaign aims into reality. Make sure your objectives are **SMART** —

- S**-pecific — defines a clear, precise outcome, not a vague, general intention
- M**-easurable — should result in clear, noticeable change
- A**-chievable — should be possible for people to do it
- R**-ealistic — should have the commitment and resources to see it through
- T**-imed — should have completion date built in

Here are some points to consider:

- **Your approach**— should be positive and constructive.
- **Your arguments** — should be thoroughly researched, factually correct and convincing.
- **Your presentation** — should be clear, well thought out, free of spelling mistakes and other inaccuracies, factual and written in language that can be easily understood.
- **Your tactics** — should be consistent with and relevant to the campaign; further the campaign objectives; should not alienate the people you are trying to persuade; should be non-violent; and should be lawful.

Draw up a plan of action

Look at all your campaign ideas and plan how and when you will use them. You will want to keep up the campaign momentum, so you should keep some of your ideas for later. Some of your timings may be predetermined if you are fitting campaign activities to a specific event or date.

Review the action plan

To be absolutely sure that everything is going to plan, you should review the action plan at regular intervals. You should ask:

- Are we on target?
- Do we have sufficient resources?
- Are our objectives still achievable?
- Are any changes needed?
- What successes have we had?
- Is it time to stop?

Getting your message across

Newsletters, leaflets, posters, stickers

An effective way to raise awareness of an issue and get people interested is to distribute materials carrying your campaign message. These can range from simple stickers and posters to leaflets or special newsletters with information about the issues and details of campaign activities.

UNISON nationally has produced this booklet, an A4 poster (stock no. 1687) and a leaflet for members (Stock no. 1448). Order these from the Communications Department and also check out what is available from your region and the Women's Aid Federation. There is no point in re-inventing the wheel – make use of materials already produced by UNISON and other agencies.

Meetings

Another way to raise awareness is to hold a special meeting on domestic abuse. The meetings might be branch meetings or open meetings to which non-members are also invited.

The speaker could be someone from within the union, including someone from another branch or someone from an outside organisation.

Raising public awareness

Raising public awareness of an issue will help you get wider support for your campaign and so help you to achieve your campaign objectives. It will also raise UNISON's profile in the community by showing the public how UNISON is tackling domestic abuse. This will in turn strengthen your own members' support for the campaign and help attract new members.

The branch has an important part to play in local campaigns. Part of its function is to develop and maintain contacts in the community and also to develop and maintain contacts between workplace groups and other local branches. The region should also be involved in campaigns which extend into the local area. If not, you can propose they do so, or ask them to support your activities in the community.

You may want to get media coverage of your campaign activities so contact the local radio and TV and the local press to let them know in advance what

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you are planning. You could write to the local newspapers and encourage your members to do the same.

Sometimes it can be useful to involve local, national or even international politicians and decision makers. You may decide to organise a letter writing campaign to councillors, MPs or MEPs or to lobby them directly.

There are various ways in which you can raise public awareness and obtain further support, such as mounting an exhibition in the local library, organising a public meeting or providing speakers to other groups or schools.

Whatever form your campaign takes, make sure you let your members know what is happening. Make sure you let people know that UNISON is campaigning on this issue. Tell your region and the National Women's Officer what you are doing and what success you have had. Raise the roof on domestic abuse.

Appendix 1

Check list for negotiating a workplace policy on domestic abuse

A workplace policy on domestic abuse will need to be tailored to your particular workplace and employer. The following check list identifies the major points, which should be considered. It is based on the model policy developed by UNISON's Southern Region and the policy introduced by City of Edinburgh District Council.

1. Policy Statement

- Recognise that domestic abuse is a serious issue in society.
- Ensure that those who are victims of domestic abuse can raise the issue confident that it will be dealt with sympathetically and seriously.
- Recognise that domestic abuse can affect an individual's work performance.
- The policy is part of the commitment to promoting dignity at work and responsibility for health, safety and welfare at work.

2. Aims of the Policy

- To assist and support employees requesting help in addressing problems arising from domestic abuse.
- Remove fears of stigmatisation.
- Ensure confidential and sympathetic handling of the situation.

3. Definition of Domestic Abuse

- Domestic abuse is abusive or violent behaviour perpetrated by a partner or ex-partner. It can take place within heterosexual or same sex relationships.
- Overwhelmingly the abuser is a man, the abused a woman. Children are often involved. The abuse will often be physical or sexual, its effects ranging from bruising to permanent injury, and it may even result in death. However, it is often emotional, mental and verbal, involving threats, belittlement, isolation or control of money and activities. Less visible but equally damaging effects include diminishing self-esteem, fear, guilt, insomnia, depression, agoraphobia and difficulty in trusting other people.
- The majority of those affected are women, but this policy applies equally to men and women.

4. Identifying the Problem

- It must be for the individual concerned to recognise they are a victim of domestic abuse and to decide to take action.
- However managers should be aware of signs which may indicate that an employee may be a victim. These may include: visible bruising; loss of self-confidence; frequent absenteeism; lower quality of work; out of character conduct.

Guidelines for providing Assistance and Support

5. Raising the Issue

- Because of the sensitivity of the situation normal reporting procedures may not be adequate
- Allow for informal approach for advice and assistance.
- Recognise that staff may not wish to go through normal line management to discuss this issue.
- Specially trained, designated contacts may be appointed who can be approached in confidence by staff to discuss problems relating to domestic abuse
- These contacts can advise staff of the provisions of this policy and procedure to assist in resolving the problem.
- Contacts will be supportive and sympathetic.
- An employee may require support on a number of occasions as they go through the process of leaving a violent relationship. The same standard of support should be provided throughout.
- It is for the employee to decide their course of action at every stage.

6. Providing Information

- The employee should be enabled to select a suitable course of action for themselves.
- Contacts should provide information to ensure that employees seeking assistance have immediate access to appropriate professional assistance – including access to appropriate aid agencies, police etc.
- Contacts should provide information on local refuges and/or helplines.
- It is for the employees to decide their course of action.

7. Confidentiality

- Issues raised under this policy will be treated in confidence.
- Disclosure of information will only occur with the employee's permission.
- Unauthorised disclosure of details concerning confidential records will be taken seriously and dealt with under disciplinary procedures.
- Records of employees who are victims of domestic abuse will be treated as strictly personal and confidential.
- A change of work location should not be disclosed.

8. Counselling

- Provide access to appropriate, confidential, independent professional counselling.
- Provide for referral to an appropriate aid agency, if requested.

9. Time Off

- Special paid leave should be provided for appointments where necessary, e.g. with support agencies, solicitors, for re-housing, to alter childcare arrangements.
- Other requests for paid leave and extended unpaid leave should be considered sympathetically.
- No record of the specific reasons for such absences should be held on the employee's file.
- Periods of absence during this period, including sickness absence, should not have an adverse impact on the employee's employment record.

10. Other Provisions

- Requests for advance of pay should be considered sympathetically.
- Flexible working arrangements may assist an employee in this situation.

11. Re-location/Re-deployment

- Threats of domestic abuse may carry over into the workplace. Where an employee requests a change of workplace this should be treated sympathetically.

12. Information, Training & Publicity

- The employer should publicise this policy widely
- Line Managers should receive awareness training.
- Specialised training should be provided for designated contacts.
- The issue of domestic abuse should be included in induction and other training courses as appropriate.
- Since domestic abuse can affect self-esteem, confidence building or assertiveness training should be available to victims of domestic abuse.
- Information on local advice and aid agencies and helplines should be readily available.

Appendix 2

UNISON policy on action against domestic violence/abuse against women

(Resolution Composite L carried at UNISON's National Delegate Conference 1999.)

Conference welcomes the decision to make 1999 the Year of Action Against Violence Against Women, which will raise awareness of the extent of this problem and the need for government action to deal with it. The main objectives are to:

- 1) Raise awareness of the prevalence of violence against women;
- 2) Encourage member states to review their legal, economical and social support systems for the victims of violence;
- 3) Allow all public authorities to make commitment to zero tolerance;
- 4) Enable voluntary organisations to work together and share good practice;
- 5) Provide more research into causes of such violence and how to prevent it;

Conference particularly welcomes the action taken by UNISON to highlight the role which trade unions can play in taking action against domestic violence and abuse and calls on the National Executive Council in conjunction with the National Women's Committee to build on the campaign against violence/abuse against women by:

- a) Supporting the Women's Aid agenda for action against domestic violence, Families Without Fear;
- b) Lobbying for an amendment to the Children Act 1989 to ensure protection from violent and abusive ex-partners for women and children;
- c) Raising the issue with service groups to publicise the National Women's Committee pamphlet on Violence in the Home and highlight the negotiating issues which branches can take up with the employers;
- d) Identifying and publicising good workplace practice/strategies that have already been negotiated by UNISON branches with employers;
- e) Seeking to raise awareness of issues related to domestic violence/abuse at all levels of UNISON and working with appropriate UNISON bodies, such as regional women's groups, education and health and safety committees, and non-UNISON bodies, such as Women's Aid Federation in England and

Scottish and Welsh Women's Aid and their Northern Ireland equivalent, to identify active strategies to address these issues, which can be adopted at national, regional and local levels;

f) Seeking to develop and distribute information packs for lay representatives which include guidance on giving positive assistance to UNISON members who are affected by domestic violence or abuse;

g) Developing a training/education programme for lay representatives and full time officials to deal with this issue, utilising outside agencies as appropriate;

h) Making this issue a priority campaign for UNISON for the forthcoming year.

Southern Region Women's Committee has already launched its campaign against domestic abuse, preferring the term abuse to violence as this covers all forms of ill treatment. Its main objectives are to:

i) Urge all branches to 'raise the roof' and start talking about the issue;

ii) Raise awareness of the importance of domestic abuse as an issue for all UNISON members;

iii) Make employers raise it as a workplace issue which affects job performance, causes absenteeism and stress;

iv) Identify it as a threat to the health and safety of those who experience it.

Conference also welcomes the Labour Government's recognition of the serious and endemic nature of domestic violence within British society, and its commitment to develop a national strategy to tackle this.

One in five of our workmates is abused at home and the majority of them are women. UNISON must take the initiative, fall in line with the proposal coming from the European Parliament, and follow the lead of the Southern Regional Women's Committee. They must 'raise the roof' and get domestic abuse on the agenda in all areas of UNISON.

Appendix 3

UNISON Regional Offices

For more information about UNISON campaigns in your area, contact the women's officer at your regional office.

Eastern

Church Lane House
Church Lane, Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1UW
01245 287524

East Midlands

15 Castle Gate,
Nottingham NG1 6BY
01159 567200
Greater London

Greater London

UNISON
Congress House
Gt Russell Street
London WC1B 3LS
0171 535 2100

Northern

140-150 Pilgrim Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 6TH
0191 245 0800

Northern Ireland

Unit 4|
Fort William Business Park
Dargan Road
Belfast
01232 770813

North West

3/5 St John Street
Manchester M3 4DL
0161 8325625

Scotland

UNISON House
14 West Campbell Street
Glasgow G2 6RX
0141 332 0006

Southern

8 Church Street
Reading
Berks RG1 2SB
01734 596466

South East

Glen House, High Street
Banstead, Surrey
SM7 2LH
01737 733300

South West

UNISON House
The Crescent
Taunton, Somerset
TA1 4DU
01823 288031

Wales

3rd Floor
1 Cathedral Road
Cardiff CF1 9SB
01222 398333

West Midlands

24 Livery Street
Birmingham B3 2PA
0121 685 4200

Yorkshire & Humberside

332/334 Cemetery Road
Sharrow Head
Sheffield S11 8FT
0114 268 4783



Appendix 4

Further information and campaign organisations

Women's Aid Federation of England

PO Box 391, Bristol, BS99 7WS
Telephone: 0117 944 4411
National Helpline: 0345 023 468
Email: wafe@wafe.co.uk
Website: www.womensaid.org.uk

Northern Ireland Women's Aid

129 University Street,
Belfast BT7 1HP
Telephone: 01232 249041
24 hour helpline: 01232 331818

Scottish Women's Aid

Norton Park, 57 Albion Road,
Norton Park, Edinburgh EH7 5QY
Telephone: 0131 475 2372

Welsh Women's Aid:

South Wales: 38 Crwys Road,
Cardiff, CF2 4NN
Telephone: 01222 390 874
Fax: 01222 390878
email: wwa.cardiff@tesco.net

North Wales: 26 Wellington Road,
Rhyl, LL18 1BN
Telephone: 01745 334767
Fax: 01745 331502
email: wwa@ll181bn.freereserve.co.uk

Mid Wales: 4 Pound Place,
Aberystwyth, SY23 1LX
Telephone: 01970 612748
Fax 01970627892
email:
wwa@welshwa.freereserve.co.uk

Southall Black Sisters

52 Norwood Road, Southall,
Middlesex
Telephone: 0181 571 9595

Zero Tolerance Campaign

25 Rutland Street,
Edinburgh EH1 2AE
Telephone: 0131 221 9505
Fax: 0131 228 2500

Lesbian and Gay Employment Rights

Unit 1G, Leroy House, 436 Essex
Road, London N1 3QP
Telephone: 0171 704 8066
(Lesbian line),
0171 704 6066 (Gay men's line)

The Women's Unit

Cabinet Office, 2nd Floor, 10 Great
George Street, London SW1P 3AE
Telephone: 0171 273 8880
Email: womens.unit@gt.net.gov.uk
Website: www.womens-unit.gov.uk
For copies of 'Living Without Fear'
and information on the
Government's programme for
women

The European Policy Action Centre on Violence against Women

22 rue du Meridien, B-1210,
Brussels, Belgium.
Telephone: 00322 217 9020
Set up by European Women's Lobby
as a tool for women's non-
governmental organisations which
help women in situations of
violence.

United Nations Information Centre

Millbank Tower, 21-24 Millbank,
London SW1P 4QH
Telephone: 0171 630 1981.
For copies of the UN Platform for
Action

Appendix 5

Advice, support and helplines for those experiencing domestic abuse

Women's Aid National Helpline:
0345 023 468 (referrals nationwide)

Northern Ireland Women's Aid:
24 hour helpline: 01232 331818

Refuge 24-hour national crisis line:
0990 995 443. (referrals nationwide)

Southall Black Sisters:
0181 571 9595

Jewish Women's Aid:
0800 591203

Women with learning difficulties:
0181 522 0675

London Lesbian Line:
0171 251 6911. Advice for lesbians.
(referrals nationwide)

Lesbian and Gay Employment Rights:
0171 704 8066 (Lesbian line)
0171 704 6066 (Gay men's line)

Men's Advice Line and Enquiries
(MALE): 0181 644 9914
PO Box 402, Sutton, Surrey,
SM1 3TG
Advice and information for men
suffering domestic abuse.

In an emergency you can call:
Your local social services emergency
duty team
Your local police
Samaritans: 0345 909090

Other useful numbers:

Freecall Message Home: 0500
700740.

Confidential, non-traceable, free
service for those who want to pass
on a message to family and friends
without communicating directly and
without giving details of where they
are.

The National Child Protection
Helpline (NSPCC): 0800 800500
Free confidential service for anyone
concerned about children at risk,
including children themselves. The
service offers counselling,
information and advice.

Careline: 0181 514 1177
A national confidential counselling
line for children, young people and
adults on any issue including family,
marital and relationship problems,
child abuse, rape and sexual assault,
depression and anxiety.

Rights of Women: 0207 251 6577
Specialist legal advice for women by
women solicitors, barristers and
trained legal advisors.

Law Centres Federation: 0171 387
8570 (referral to local centres)



If you would like more information
about UNISON, or would like to join
call FREEPHONE UNISONdirect on:

0800 5 97 97 50

You can visit our website on:
<http://www.unison.org.uk>


the public service union

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