



**RAISE THE
ROOF OF
DOMESTIC
ABUSE**

UNISON
the public service union

**Domestic
violence
is a trade
union issue**

You are not alone

Violence in the home is a trade union issue

UNISON is supporting its members by:

- negotiating workplace policies to support and assist workers suffering domestic violence
- providing emergency support through UNISON Welfare
- campaigning for better services for victims of domestic violence, including training for public service workers
- working with campaign groups to raise public awareness
- lobbying for government action to address the problem and to improve services.

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is abusive or violent behaviour between partners or ex partners. Overwhelmingly the abuser is a man and the abused a woman, though this is not always the case.

Domestic violence is not just physical, it can also be sexual, emotional or mental abuse.

The extent of domestic violence

- Domestic violence knows no boundaries of culture, class, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity or creed.

- One in four women will experience domestic violence at some time in their lives.
- Every week at least two women are killed by violent partners or ex-partners.
- Domestic violence accounts for almost one quarter of all reported violent crimes.

Workplace policies on domestic violence

UNISON has taken the lead in raising the issue of domestic violence in the workplace and negotiating workplace policies.

A workplace policy can include the following provisions:

- special paid or unpaid leave
- information about local help and support
- ensuring employees' confidentiality is protected if they raise this issue in the workplace
- raising awareness of the issue in the workplace.

If you have a workplace domestic violence policy you should make sure that you are familiar with it. If your workplace does not have a policy then you should raise the issue within your branch and suggest that they seek to negotiate a policy.

The UNISON Guide "Raise the Roof on Domestic Abuse" provides a checklist for negotiating a workplace policy.

UNISON is also campaigning for training for all workers who may come into contact with victims of domestic violence in their place of work, for example hospital workers, housing and care workers.

Are you suffering domestic violence?

Women's Aid is the key national agency for women and children experiencing physical, sexual or emotional abuse in their homes. They provide helplines, information, training and resources.

UNISON nationally is affiliated to Women's Aid Federation of England and works with them to raise awareness, improve services and lobby for improved legal rights and further government action on domestic violence. UNISON also works with Women's Aid in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales on these issues and to influence policy in the devolved parliament and assemblies.

Support from UNISON Welfare

UNISON Welfare provides support to members and their dependents at times of unforeseen financial hardship or personal difficulty.

Help is available to members who meet our criteria and urgent attention is always given in those cases where domestic abuse is highlighted. For example financial help may be given towards the deposit on rented accommodation if the member is escaping an abusive relationship.

In all circumstances, cases are handled with understanding, sensitivity and in complete confidence.

For further information you can contact UNISON Welfare on lo-call **0845 355 0845** or visit the website at www.unison.org.uk/welfare.

If you are suffering domestic violence, and need urgent help, call the Women's Aid Helpline:

England 08457 023 468 (24 hour, UK-wide info)

Northern Ireland 028 9033 1818 (24 hour)

Scotland 0800 027 1234 (10am-10pm)

Wales 029 2039 0874

You can visit their website at www.womensaid.org.uk

In an emergency you can call your local social services emergency duty team or your local police

About UNISON

UNISON is the largest trade union in the UK, with more than 1.3 million members working in the public services and utilities in health care, local government, higher education, gas, electricity, water, environment, transport, the voluntary sector and police staff.

Over two-thirds of UNISON members are women, and they have made sure that the issue of domestic violence is taken up as a trade union issue in our workplaces.

As a member of UNISON you will have a guaranteed voice in decision making as well as expert advice and help on a range of issues.

For more information or to join UNISON call UNISON*direct* on Lo-call 0843 355 0845 Textphone 0800 0 967 968 or visit our website at www.unison.org.uk

