

Domestic Abuse: Support for our Colleagues Policy

Danske Bank:
We need to talk about
Domestic Abuse

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Introduction

Danske Bank: We Need to Talk About Domestic Abuse

Danske Bank recognises that its colleagues will be amongst those affected by domestic abuse; for example as a survivor of domestic abuse, an individual who is currently living with domestic abuse, someone who has been impacted upon by domestic abuse or as an individual who perpetrates domestic abuse.

We are committed to developing a workplace culture in which there is zero tolerance for abuse and which recognises that the responsibility for domestic abuse lies with the perpetrator. Danske Bank has a '**zero tolerance**' position on domestic abuse and is committed to ensuring that any colleague who is the victim of domestic abuse has the right to raise the issue with us in the knowledge that they will receive appropriate support and assistance. This policy also covers the approach we will take where there are concerns that a colleague may be the perpetrator of domestic abuse.

By developing an effective domestic abuse policy and working to reduce the risks related to domestic abuse, we will create a safer workplace and we will also convey a strong message that domestic abuse is unacceptable, **without exception**. We want to ensure our colleagues can work in a safe environment. This includes those who may work from home. Danske Bank is committed to providing support to those impacted, without judgement or prejudice.

Domestic abuse occurs right across our society and it has devastating consequences for the victims and their families. It has no boundaries as regards to age or gender, gender identity, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability or geography. Domestic abuse affects not only adults – it may be inflicted on, or witnessed by children. The potential adverse effects on children living with domestic abuse include poor educational achievement, social exclusion and juvenile crime, substance and alcohol misuse, mental health problems and homelessness.

This policy is part of Danske Bank's commitment to **Belonging**, to family friendly working, and seeks to benefit the welfare of individual members of staff; retain valued colleagues; improve morale and performance; and in our mission to be the Best Bank – fundamentally, we care about you.



Under applicable Health & Safety legislation Danske Bank recognises its legal responsibilities, and duty of care owed, in promoting the welfare and safety of all colleagues. Therefore this policy applies to colleagues across all sites including full and part-time staff, those on fixed term contracts, interns, apprentices, agency workers, self-employed contractors and other temporary workers.

Introduction

Danske Bank: We Need to Talk About Domestic Abuse

As a Responsible Business, Danske Bank is committed to raising awareness of domestic abuse in the community through the work of the PSNI, Women's Aid, the Men's Advisory Project and Onus, through its Safe Place initiative.

Danske Bank also recognises that where our colleagues (and potentially their family members) may be experiencing domestic abuse, that home and work issues cannot always be separated and that domestic abuse can impact greatly on the working life of colleagues and can result in:

- A deterioration in employee performance
- Increased and unexplained absenteeism (victims not being allowed out of the house to attend work or as a result of physical injuries and/or mental health issues)
- Poor timekeeping etc.

Danske Bank is therefore committed to providing appropriate support to affected colleagues, while they are in work, and in addressing their circumstances outside the workplace. Danske Bank also recognises that colleagues may be indirectly adversely impacted by a close family member experiencing domestic abuse.



Definition of Domestic Abuse

Domestic violence and abuse (sometimes defined as intimate partner violence, family/carer violence or domestic violence) is an incident or pattern of physical, verbal, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse. It can involve financial/economic abuse and control, and/or stalking and harassment that is perpetrated by one intimate partner over another. Domestic abuse frequently involves control, coercion, threatening behaviour and abuse. It frequently takes place over time, often starting with small acts of abuse.

Physical violence: involving hitting, kicking, burning, pushing, pulling hair, throwing objects, restraining the victim, threats of violence, use of weapons, leading to injury and in the worst cases death.

Sexual abuse: unwanted sexual attention, including rape. It does not have to be physical. The abuser may manipulate or coerce the victim into doing things they do not want to do. Includes consent to sex which is coerced or gained under duress.

Coercive control: a systematic pattern of behaviour with the purpose of undermining a victim and creating fear through threats, humiliation and intimidation and depriving an individual of support and independence. It is a psychological or emotional form of abuse that is used to control and limit the freedom of an intimate partner.

Financial/economic abuse: control of finances, and access to money or resources. Often used to prevent a victim from having the money to pay for transport to get to work, or to buy suitable clothing for work, or put the victim in debt. Without financial independence, it can be very difficult to leave a violent or abusive relationship.

Stalking: workplace stalking often results in the perpetrator following a victim to and from their place of work, or hanging around the workplace entrance. Stalking is not a 'one-off' crime. It is a series of incidents which when taken in isolation can appear trivial but when put together, they become more sinister. Stalking may also be seen in internal behaviours from a staff member to another staff member (who may never have been in a relationship together).

Tech abuse: many of the forms of control, threats and stalking are carried out virtually through email, text messages, telephone messages, online, social media, etc. The abuser might send abusive texts or emails, demand access to the victim's devices, track the victim with spyware, or share images of the victim online.

Definition of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse occurs between opposite or same-sex intimate partners of any age, who may or may not be married or living together. It can also occur between family members, or between carers and those they live with or care for in the home. Domestic abuse can continue, increase or begin, after a relationship has ended. **The first 24 months after ending a violent/abusive relationship is the most lethal time for a victim.**

One in four women and **one in six men** in Northern Ireland have been, or will be, at some point in their life be a victim of domestic abuse.

Global estimates published by WHO indicate that about **1 in 3 (35%) of women worldwide** have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.

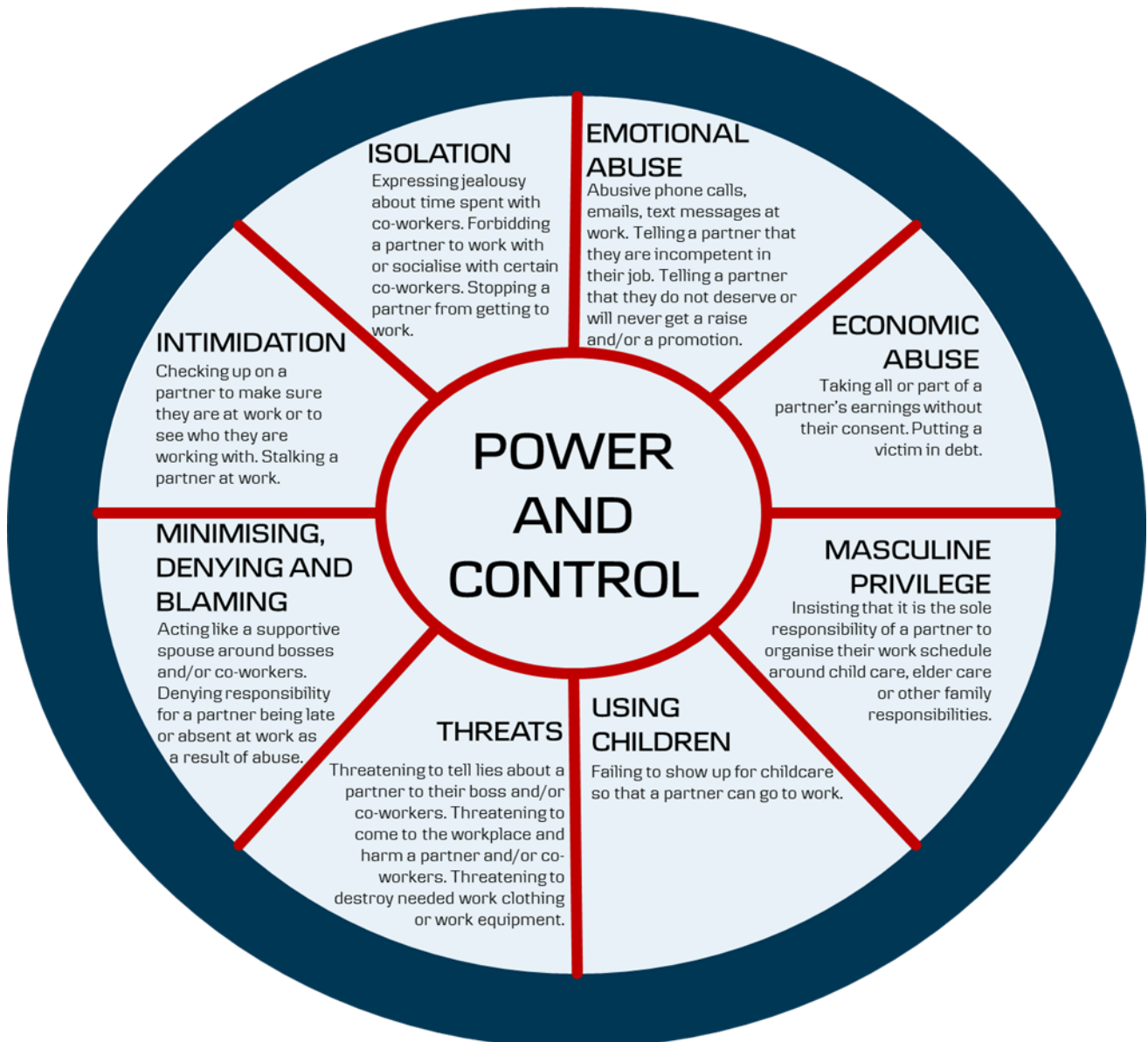
For **women**, they are, on average, **assaulted 35 times** before they seek help and **30%** of all domestic abuse **starts during pregnancy**. Domestic abuse **against men** has **increased 40%** in the last 9 years. For **children** living in homes with a perpetrator of domestic abuse, **90% were aware** that abuse was occurring.

The PSNI report that they are responding to a case of domestic abuse **every 17 minutes** and that there were five murders with a domestic abuse motivation during 2019/20.

It is important for us to understand that domestic abuse is a form of power and control. As the Power and Control wheel on the follow page shows, domestic abuse impacts on the workplace and on victims' capacity to work in different ways. Forms of power and control include isolating the victim, emotional abuse, economic abuse, masculine privilege, physical privilege, using children – loss of access, through to threats, visa status, sexuality – threats of outing, gender reveal for transgender victims, minimising, denying and blaming and intimidation.

Definition of Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse at Work



Identification of the Problem

This section looks at how to become more aware of the early signs of domestic abuse and how to take the early warning signs seriously. Remember to always seek advice if you are not sure if what you are witnessing poses a risk. Do not make assumptions! Even if you find out that it is not domestic abuse that is leading to changes in work attendance or performance, there may be other personal issues that a colleague is facing that you can help with (such as a recent bereavement, relationship break-up or mental health concerns).

Changes in attendance at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arriving at work late. • Wanting to change working hours for no particular reason, needing to leave work early. • Frequent unexplained absence from work. • Increase in sickness absence. • Spending an unusual number of hours at work for no particular reason.
Changes in work performance and productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of work has deteriorated – performance targets and deadlines are missed, and mistakes are made. • Work quality is affected by frequent text messages, emails, phone calls and/or visits to work by the colleague's partner. • There is an avoidance of phone calls and there are signs of distress or anxiety when a text or phone message is received. • There is an influx of phone calls that are made at specific times throughout the day. Could include photographs being sent to show where they are or report who they are with.
Changes in behaviour or demeanour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in behaviour – becoming quiet, anxious, frightened, aggressive, distracted or depressed. • Becoming isolated from colleagues – not joining colleagues for coffee or lunch breaks, not joining in work social events. • Secrecy about home life and relationships. • Fear about leaving children at home and not leaving work on time.
Physical changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible bruising or injuries with unlikely explanations. • Changes in the pattern or amount of make-up used. • Changes in clothing, such as wearing long sleeves to hide injuries. • Changes in appearance, for example, in the use and pattern of make-up • Tiredness and irritability. • Substance use/misuse.
Other factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner or ex-partner stalking a colleague in or around the workplace or on social media. • Partner or ex-partner exerting unusual amount of control or demands over work schedule. • Patterns of complaints – sometimes spurious or intended to show they can remove work from the victim at any time. • Isolation from family and friends.

Identification of the Problem

It is essential to understand that any of the above may arise from a range of circumstances, of which domestic abuse may be one. People Leaders who support staff in such matters should address the issue with discretion, ensuring that the colleague is aware that support and assistance can be provided.

Case Study 1

Kerry regularly arrives at work late and in a distressed state. Her People Leader has noticed that she has difficulties concentrating on her work, often makes mistakes and is regularly distracted. The most recent time she was late she told her manager she had lost her car keys and had to get the bus to work, the time before she was late because her husband couldn't take the children to school.

Her People Leader suspects that something is wrong. Kerry used to be an outgoing member of the team but now she is often withdrawn, stressed and tired. Her colleagues are also concerned about her and recently Kerry told her closest colleague at work about her problems at home, who encouraged her to talk to her People Leader. They spoke with Kerry in a sensitive and non-judgemental way. Kerry told her People Leader that her husband regularly controls her, including her money – he often hides her car keys and her purse – making it difficult for her to get to work. Sometimes when he is supposed to take the children to school he doesn't, which means that she arrives late at work.

Kerry's People Leader helped her to contact a domestic abuse organisation and they gave her specialist advice and support. Kerry was further supported by her People Leader to make temporary adjustments in her work. She also took 10 days' paid leave so that she could move house and settle her children into their new school.

Kerry sought support from Danske Bank's Staff Bank offering which allowed her to open a separate, secure bank account (into which a support fund was paid to enable her to take the necessary steps to leave the abusive relationship). Kerry said that the support from her People Leader and her colleagues enabled her to build the confidence to leave her husband, in accordance with the advice from the domestic abuse expert support services, and to stay in her job.

Danske Bank respects colleagues' right to privacy. Whilst Danske Bank strongly encourages victims of domestic abuse to disclose domestic abuse for the safety of themselves and all those in the workplace, we do not force colleagues to share this information if they do not want to. They may realise on some level that their risk level is high and fear disclosure. The person should be aware that there is a safe space for support, allowing them a chance to make plans for themselves. The key requirement is to work in collaboration with the individual affected to ensure a proportionate response to the level of risk.

Identification of the Problem

Danske Bank colleagues should recognise that domestic abuse takes many forms and affects different people in different ways.

Stigma, as well as social and cultural norms, often prevent victims from speaking about their experiences and seeking help. Some groups of women and men may experience additional difficulties or vulnerabilities and may be reluctant to disclose domestic abuse. Some may face multiple forms of prejudice that makes it difficult for them to seek help from a People Leader.

For example:

- **LGBTQ+ colleagues** experiencing domestic abuse may be reluctant to speak out or seek help from a People Leader, particularly if they have not made a self-disclosure of their sexual orientation or of their gender identity. They may fear that a perpetrator will threaten to disclose this personal information at work or to family members.
- **Women** may experience increased levels of domestic abuse when they are pregnant or after giving birth, and subsequently when they have childcare responsibilities.
- **Disabled people** experience higher levels of domestic abuse than non-disabled people and they may be less likely to speak out about their experiences if their work situation is insecure.
- **Minority ethnic** women and men may face added barriers to seeking help and disclosing domestic abuse and seeking support because of discrimination and racism as well as culture and immigration status. Some victims may be able to work, but they are not entitled to any benefit support therefore have no recourse to public funds. Others may be here on spousal visas or believe their partner has control over their visa status.
- **Older women and men** are less likely than younger women and men to report their experiences of domestic abuse and seek help.
- **Men** experiencing domestic abuse often find it difficult to talk about their experiences and to know where to access support services.
- **Perpetrators** of domestic abuse are often reluctant to acknowledge what they are doing and to ask for help.

Recognise what you can and cannot do

An important element of an effective response is knowing what a People Leader or a colleague can and cannot do. Knowing what your limits are and how you can respond is important.

- Remember you are not an expert and you should not try to 'solve the problem'
- Focus on work related impacts and let the colleague know what you can and cannot do (making sure that you are also familiar with this policy and what can be offered to support the colleague concerned).
- If you are not sure, do not make promises of what Danske Bank can provide, rather check what is possible with Human Resources.
- Ask what you can do to help, let the colleague know that you are there to help and that you can offer information and resources (internal and external).
- Be prepared to implement both safety and prevention measures, working closely with key personnel and relevant departments, including Human Resources, Health & Safety, Security and domestic abuse experts.
- Always respect the individual's decision to not disclose and listen and respond in a non- judgemental way.

Confidentiality and Right to Privacy

It is important to recognise the need for confidentiality. However, Danske Bank is also responsible for - and has a duty of care – in respect of colleague safety in the workplace. Balancing these two is important – this means understanding when it is relevant to respect confidentiality and at what point to disclose potential safety risks.

All records concerning domestic abuse will be kept strictly confidential. No local records will be kept of absences related to domestic abuse and there will be no adverse impact on employment records.

Information will only be disclosed with the express permission of the colleague, unless there are legal requirements connected to the disclosure (for example domestic abuse is linked to child abuse, and where a risk to children or vulnerable adults is identified, then Danske Bank's responsibility for public protection may lead them to notify social services or an equivalent regulatory authority. If this happens, the individual will be informed).

Improper disclosure of information i.e. breaches of confidentiality by any member of staff will be taken seriously and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Support for Colleagues

Danske Bank recognises that developing a life free from abuse **is a process not an event** and we will provide ongoing support for colleagues who disclose abuse.

Danske Bank and the Financial Services Union representatives will work cooperatively to help colleagues experiencing domestic abuse.

Danske Bank will respond sympathetically, confidentially (please see section entitled 'Confidentiality' above) and effectively to any member of staff who discloses that they are experiencing domestic abuse.

Where domestic abuse has been reported, People Leaders will treat unplanned absences and temporary poor timekeeping with discretion.

People Leaders may offer colleagues experiencing domestic abuse a broad range of support.

This may include, but is not limited to:

Support Offered	Some Examples
Special Leave (Paid) for relevant appointments	To include with support agencies, solicitors, to rearrange housing or childcare, and for court appointments.
Changes to arrangements for the payment of salary, if requested	To include a salary advance, if needed, e.g. to acquire alternative accommodation. For changes regarding salary payment and/or support funding please contact, Tracy Morris (TMCM).
Work schedule adjustments	Temporary or permanent changes to working times and patterns.
Changes to specific duties	For example, to avoid potential contact with an abuser in a customer facing role.
Redeployment or relocation	For example, moving the colleague away from the reception area or from working in a ground-floor office which is visible from the street if required.
Measures to ensure a safe working environment	For example, changing a telephone number to avoid harassing phone calls and/or ensuring that any provided work phone is not being externally monitored.
Using other existing policies	To include our Flexible Working and Special Leave Policies.
Signposting to key support services/subject matter experts	See Appendix 1 for examples of key support services. In accordance with the Special Leave Policy, People Leaders may afford colleagues access to counselling/support services in paid time.
Legitimate Monitoring	Monitoring organisation social media for harassment or abuse towards the colleague.
Paid Special Leave	Paid leave to recover from the stress/psychological impact of domestic abuse.

People Leaders will respect the right of colleagues to make their own decision on the course of action at every stage.

Other existing provisions (including Occupational Health, [Employee Assistance Programme](#), [Benenden](#)) will also be signposted to staff as a means of support.

Organisational Planning

All colleagues will be made aware of this policy through a range of methods including induction, appraisal, leaflets and posters.

Danske Bank will remind staff of the importance of not divulging personal details of other colleagues, such as addresses, telephone numbers or shift patterns.

This is paramount when dealing with Honour Based Abuse cases.

Disclosure of abuse

Colleagues experiencing domestic abuse may choose to disclose, report to or seek support from a Trade Union representative, a People Leader, or colleague. People Leaders and Trade Union representatives will not counsel victims, but offer information, workplace support, and signpost to other subject matter experts.

Danske Bank will respond sympathetically, confidentially and effectively to any member of staff who discloses that they are suffering from domestic abuse. Appropriate members of human resources will be nominated as an additional confidential points of contact for staff. HR will also provide guidance for People Leaders who are approached by staff who are being abused.

Training

Danske Bank is committed to ensuring all People Leaders are aware of domestic abuse and its implications in the workplace. Information, briefings or awareness raising sessions will ensure that all People Leaders are able to:

- Identify if a colleague is experiencing difficulties because of domestic abuse.
- Respond to disclosure in a sensitive and non-judgemental manner.
- Provide initial support – be clear about available workplace support.
- Discuss how the organisation can contribute to safety planning.
- Signpost to other organisations and sources of support.
- Understand that they are not counsellors.

Organisational Planning

Safety Planning Procedures for Workplace Incidents

People Leaders should consider particular factors if incidents involving domestic abuse occur. These incidents may involve violent partners or ex-partners visiting the workplace, abusive phone calls, or intimidation or harassment of a colleague/volunteer by the perpetrator.

These could be addressed by the following measures (this list is not exhaustive and specialist advice can be sought in the applicable circumstances):

- Alerting reception or switchboard staff not to divulge information about colleagues/volunteers, especially personal details, such as addresses, telephone numbers or shift patterns;
- Improving security measures, such as displaying personal identification, changing keypad numbers or ensuring that access to buildings is open to authorised colleagues only;
- Offering temporary or permanent changes in workplaces, work times and patterns, helping to make the workers/volunteers less at risk at work and on their journeys to and from work;
- Changing specific duties, such as answering phones or working in reception area, or in exceptional circumstances if an alternative is not easily found, re-deployment;
- Making other colleagues aware of those security measures that are in place in the workplace to protect the victim (e.g. withholding relevant personal information, such as telephone numbers and car registration numbers).
- Making sure that the systems for recording colleague whereabouts during the day are secure and, if a colleague's role requires them to make visits outside the office, consideration should be given to how risks can be minimised (e.g. changing duties or allowing another colleague to accompany them on certain journeys).
- Recording any incidents of violence in the workplace, including persistent phone calls or visits to staff by their partner/ex-partner. These records may be used if the colleague wishes to press charges or seeks to obtain an injunction against the perpetrator.

Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

Danske Bank prohibits abuse, coercive control and stalking in the workplace and views any such actions very seriously.

Such conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal, a report to the Regulator as a result of a breach of Conduct Rules, the notification of the PSNI and the relevant professional institution or association.

Colleagues who commit such acts outside the workplace but which impact the workplace will be managed appropriately. This may include taking disciplinary action against those who bring Danske Bank into disrepute, the notification of the PSNI and/or the notification of relevant professional institution or association. Please refer to our Disciplinary Policy and Code of Conduct for further details.

For the avoidance of doubt, [Danske Bank's Code of Conduct](#) is intended to inform all colleagues of the standards of conduct expected of them. It identifies a set of principles governing behaviour by which colleagues are expected to abide. Colleagues are also expected at all times to present high standards of personal integrity and conduct that will not reflect adversely on Danske Bank and its reputation.

Fundamentally, Danske Bank will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of a domestic abuse related offence on a case-by-case basis with the aim of reducing risk and supporting change.

Other important considerations are as follows:

- If a colleague is found to be assisting an abuser in perpetrating the abuse, for example, by giving them access to facilities such as telephones, email or fax machines then they will be seen as having committed a disciplinary offence.
- If it becomes evident that a colleague has made an allegation not made in good faith and was instead a malicious allegation that another colleague is perpetrating abuse, then this will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and action will be taken.

At Danske Bank we also recognise that people who perpetrate domestic abuse, coercive control or stalking may wish to seek help voluntarily. Danske Bank will provide appropriate support and access to specialist services. This may include time off to seek counselling or other services or meet with authorities to address the issues of perpetrator behaviour.

If the Victim and the Perpetrator both work for Danske Bank

In cases where both the victim and the perpetrator of domestic abuse work in the organisation, Danske Bank will take appropriate action.

In addition to considering disciplinary action against the colleague who is perpetrating the abuse, action may need to be taken to ensure that the victim and perpetrator do not come into contact in the workplace.

Action may also need to be taken to minimise the potential for the perpetrator to use their position or work resources to find out details about the whereabouts of the victim. This may include a change of duties for one or both colleagues or withdrawing the perpetrator's access to certain computer programmes or offices.

Danske Bank encourages all colleagues to report if they suspect a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating abuse. Colleagues should speak to their People Leader about their concerns. In dealing with a disclosure from a colleague, People Leaders should ensure that the person with concerns is made aware of the existence of this policy.

Case Study 2

Gavin started dating Chris six months ago. They both work for Danske Bank but in different offices. Recently Gavin ended the relationship but it wasn't easy. After a couple of weeks he started receiving offensive and threatening text and phone messages on his mobile phone. They became more and more regular, day and night, and they were interfering with his work. He was constantly worried and at times very scared. He told his friends at work and they advised him to change his phone number, and that he should not delete the messages as he may need them as evidence. His People Leader noticed that he was distracted and seemed anxious when he received text messages. Gavin and Chris both have mobile phones provided by Danske Bank. Gavin spoke to his People Leader and he was given a new telephone number and his work calls were redirected to his People Leader for a period of time. His People Leader advised him to keep relevant evidence of calls and text messages and not to delete them. Disciplinary action was taken against Chris and his employment with Danske Bank was terminated on the grounds of Gross Misconduct, namely, perpetrating violence at work and misusing workplace resources.

Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly by Danske Bank in light of any changing legislation and good practice. If revised it will be done so in consultation with the Financial Services Union.

Appendix 1—Support Services



The Danske Bank Belong Hub – Domestic Abuse: Support for Our Colleagues (including an emergency ‘escape from website’ function)



[The Employer's Initiative on Domestic Abuse](#)



[Local Women's Aid Groups across NI](#)



[The 24hr Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline](#)

Phone: 0808 802 1414 - there are also non-verbal ways for victims to reach out through the Helpline, for example via web and instant message.



[The Men's Advisory Project](#)

Phone: 028 9024 1929



[The Rainbow Project](#)

Provide support to those in the LGBTQ+ community affected by domestic abuse in NI.

Phone (Belfast): 028 9031 9030

Phone (Foyle): 028 7128 3030



[Galop](#)

An anti-violence charity who provides support to people affected by hate crime, domestic violence and sexual abuse, as well as the LGBT community.

Phone: 0800 999 5428



[Aware NI](#)

Phone (Belfast): 028 9035 7820

Phone (Derry): 028 7126 0602

Appendix 1—Support Services



The Halo Project Charity

Set-up to support victims of honour-based violence, forced marriages and FGM.

Phone: 01642 683 045

Other Helplines



- [Age NI](#)

Phone: 0808 808 7575



- [Childline](#)

Phone: 0800 11 11



- [NSPCC](#)

Phone: 0808 800 5000



- [Lifeline](#)

Phone: 0808 808 8000



- [Simon Community](#)

Phone: 0800 171 222



Police Service of Northern Ireland - Domestic Violence Officers

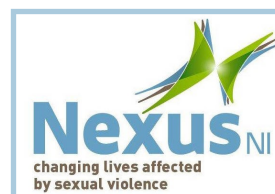
- In an emergency dial 999 or 18000 for text phone users.
- If you need to ring the PSNI but are too scared to speak, the 'silent solution' means you can call 999 and press 55 when prompted. This lets police know it is a genuine emergency.
- For non-urgent matters dial 101. Operators will pass your call to your local police station.

Other Priority Services



Rape Crisis & Sexual Abuse Centre NI

Phone: 0800 0246 991



Nexus

Phone: 028 9032 6803

Appendix 2—The Impact of COVID-19

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, lockdowns and confinement have led to an unprecedented increase in reported cases of domestic abuse, with the numbers contacting helplines more than doubling in some countries.

Guilt, shame, fear, victim blaming, along with the effects of coercive control that strip victims of their agency and confidence, are all reasons why survivors do not report domestic abuse. Working remotely during this COVID 19 crisis makes reporting and seeking help even harder. During confinement and when people are working remotely the situation can become far worse as financial stress, living in a confined space with tension and fear – means that giving support and help can be much more difficult.



Advice to Colleagues during lockdowns and confinement

During confinement abusers have a greater chance of exercising control and causing physical or psychological harm. There may also be much greater potential for there to be disruption of a colleague's work, making it more difficult to make a call to a help line or to talk to a People Leader or colleague to access workplace supports. An abuser may refuse access to a telephone to talk to a friend, work colleague or manager. There may be control over work resources, destruction of work equipment such as a telephone or computer, and controlling tactics such as interruptions, refusing to care for children, as well as constant surveillance and violence, to prevent someone from carrying out their work tasks. It could mean physical injuries which may make work difficult to carry out.

Appendix 2—The Impact of COVID-19

Recognise, respond and refer

People Leaders have an important role to play in supporting their team members. The Danske Bank Policy and Hub gives guidance on how to recognise, respond and refer. This means recognising the problem and making it possible for colleagues to speak about any problems they are facing, responding in effective and non-judgmental ways (giving help with safety or in providing support), and referring someone to a specialist domestic abuse service for information, counselling, legal support or safe housing.

Recognise:

- It is much harder to recognise the signs of domestic abuse during a lockdown where the only contact is through telephone, text, email and other online contact.
- **Be attentive** to potential signs e.g. if a colleague is **withdrawn** or **does not participate** in calls or online meetings or where they are **called away** or **interrupted** by a partner when on the phone or in an online meeting.
- Stay in **regular communication** and communicate **clear messages** to all employees as this may help those affected to disclose, such as: 'Danske Bank understands the heightened risk of domestic abuse during this crisis' and 'you are a **valued colleague and your job is safe**'.
- Communicating regularly with colleagues, staying in touch and building trust is crucial.

Respond:

- If colleague is affected by domestic abuse, **encourage them to seek support**. It is important to acknowledge that **victims** need to **set both the pace and direction** that they take.
- **Tailor responses and support** to the different situations that people are in, taking account of the fact that their situation may change.
- If a colleague is already being supported it will be necessary to adapt this support to remote working. A colleague **disclosing for the first time** who is currently living with the abusive person may need information about **where to go for online help** or to find a way to cope and stay safe during the lockdown. A colleague who has **separated from a partner** and has a protection order that may have been breached may need to be supported in **contacting the police** or other services. Advice and action taken may also depend on whether the victim and perpetrator are working in the same workplace.

Appendix 2—The Impact of COVID-19

- Keep contact up through regular one-to-one communications and find possible **safe ways to communicate** with a colleague.
- Provide information where **support or emergency help can be accessed** (e.g. keeping emergency numbers easily accessed on a mobile phone) or alternative safe options can also be offered.
- If there is **online or telephone abuse, divert calls and emails** to a colleague, and help a colleague set up new safe ways to communicate in the future.
- Support colleagues who have **moved into emergency/safe accommodation**, remain in regular contact with them and **provide the necessary resources** so that they can continue working.

Refer:

- Encourage colleagues to use **Special Leave** to attend court, legal, police or other appointments that are permitted under ‘essential services’ during lockdowns.
- Ensure you have **up to date information to signpost** and refer a colleague for help, guidance, support, counselling or legal advice – be aware that many of these services have changed and are provided online or by phone.

In addition, it is important to continue to hold perpetrators accountable (including applying disciplinary procedures during the lockdown) and encouraging perpetrators to change their behaviour, for example, through perpetrator treatment and counselling programmes.



Appendix 3—Dispelling Myths

Source: Hestia & Vodafone Foundation Bright Sky app.

Myth: Someone would not be abusive for no reason – ‘my cousin was probably only abusive because their partner did something to make them angry’.

Fact: There are **no excuses** for any form of domestic abuse. Perpetrators often try to exert control through intimidation and physical abuse, but that is no reflection on the person experiencing it and it is never their fault.

Myth: Continuous fighting at times is normal in a relationship. They will probably sort it out eventually.

Fact: Continuous fighting is not normal and can be a sign of an abusive relationship.

Myth: It is very unlikely that older people in long-term committed relationships experience domestic abuse - especially if one of them is acting as a carer for the other.

Fact: Anyone can experience domestic abuse regardless of his or her age. Older people can sometimes face even more barriers when it comes to seeking support than younger people. Their abuser may be their carer, too, making it difficult for them to access information and support.

Myth: It does not really happen to people with high incomes.

Fact: Domestic abuse affects people from all levels of income and backgrounds.

Myth: My brother only shouts at his girlfriend because he has a drug and alcohol problem. He cannot control it.

Fact: Many people use alcohol or drugs and are not abusive, and neither are they an excuse for any form of abuse.

Myth: My friend is manipulating her partner and puts him down emotionally, but that does not mean she is being abusive: it is just the way she is.

Fact: Being emotionally abusive and manipulative is never OK and can cause serious harm. If you are worried about someone you know, reach out to them and offer your support.

Myth: If they were really suffering from abuse in the relationship, they would just leave.

Fact: Leaving an abusive relationship is not an easy step. Many people stay because they believe their partner has the potential to change.