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POLICY

University Policy on Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence & Stalking

Contact Officer

Director of Personnel
Head of Student Services

Senior Project Manager: Corporate Policies (Author)

Policy Statement and Purpose

The University condemns domestic abuse, sexual violence and stalking in all forms.

The University believes that every member of the University who is experiencing, or has experienced, domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking should be enabled to disclose. The University is committed to dealing with any such disclosure in a supportive and where possible, confidential manner (see page 6 for notes on confidentiality).

The University's Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults¹ outlines some broad principles relating to abuse and, specifically, domestic abuse. This Policy is designed to outline the assistance and support available both to victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, sexual violence and stalking, under the definitions immediately following this section.

This Policy offers guidance to any member of the University who has concerns about a colleague or student experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking, whether or not there is explicit evidence that such acts are taking place.

Definitions

Domestic Abuse

In relation to this Policy, the University broadly adopts the Cross Government definition of domestic abuse (2013), recognising that these acts are not only unacceptable but criminal, as follows:

'any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate² partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

¹[UW Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults](#)

²The term 'intimate' does not mean sexual relationship but 'close relationship' in this context.

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- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional'.³

In association, the definition states that controlling behaviour is:

'a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent 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'

And that coercive behaviour is:

'an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim'.

Data suggests that some two million people (60% women, 40% men) experience domestic abuse or significant threats each year (Crime Survey for England and Wales, 2013). Experts in the field suggest that at least one in ten people are affected by domestic abuse during their lives, regardless of gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity or disability.

The Cross Government definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

With this in mind, and taking into account perpetrators as well as recipients, it is reasonable to assume that a significant proportion of staff and students will encounter domestic abuse during their relationship with the University.

The Cross Government definition highlights that sexual violence is one form of domestic abuse (see above) but also indicates that this is between those who are, or have been 'intimate² partners or family members'. Sexual violence can however also be perpetrated by friends and acquaintances (including peers and colleagues), people in positions of authority and strangers.

Sexual Violence

Sexual Violence is defined in the UK by the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The act lists 52 sexual offences differentiated between those deemed 'serious' and 'less serious' (See Appendix 1).

Serious sexual offences include rape and sexual assault by penetration. Rape is defined in the Act as '*the penetration by a penis or other object; of the vagina, anus or mouth of another person without consent*'.

Sexual Assault is defined as '*any act of physical, psychological and emotional violation, in the form of a sexual act, which is inflicted on someone without consent. It can involve forcing or manipulating someone to witness or participate in any sexual acts*'.

³<https://www.gov.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

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According to the Sexual Offences Act 2003, 'a person consents if she or he agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice'

'Less serious' sexual offences include indecent exposure, sexual threats and unwanted touching. It should be remembered though that all sexual offences are serious to the 'victim'.

Stalking

Stalking is repeated, unwanted contact from one person to another which causes the victim to feel distressed or fearful. It differs from harassment in that a perpetrator of stalking will have an obsession with or fixation on the individual(s) they are targeting. Stalking is a criminal offence under the Protection of Freedoms Act (2012).

A note on terminology

The following terms apply throughout this document:

The terms domestic abuse, sexual violence and stalking will be understood as defined by the legislation outlined under 'Definitions' above. It should be noted however that the terms domestic abuse and domestic violence are commonly used to describe the same phenomenon.

The term 'perpetrator' is used in relation to those who perpetrate any acts of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking as defined in this legislation.

The terms 'victim' and 'survivor' are used interchangeably to refer to those who have experienced, or who are experiencing domestic violence.

The term 'members of the University/organisation' includes students studying an award offered by the University and all staff directly employed by the University.

Rationale for this Policy

There are multiple reasons why organisations establish policy and procedure relating to domestic abuse, sexual violence and stalking. In relation to the University, these are as follows:

Legislation: The University recognises its duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees at work. The University further recognises responsibilities highlighted under The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1992) which requires employers to assess the risk of violence to employees and make arrangements for their health and safety. Further, the University has interpreted safeguarding legislation; particularly the Protection of Freedoms Act (2012), in broad terms and seeks to mitigate risks to the safety of staff and students.

Values: The University's Strategic Plan (2013-18) states clearly that the organisation places value on 'supporting staff to achieve highest possible levels of professional attainment' and seeks to 'provide a working environment in which people are included and respected and where health and well-being are assured' (p.31).

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The University takes seriously the need to create and maintain a safe and secure environment in which both staff and students can reach their full potential. In this context, there are a number of underlying and supportive initiatives regarding safeguarding of potentially vulnerable staff and students, the adoption of a compassionate approach to social and domestic issues and beliefs around the concepts of wellbeing and work/life balance.

Effects on efficiency and productivity: Actions taken in line with legislation and in accordance with the values of the University have a far-reaching effect on the ability of the organisation to function efficiently. Supporting staff and students helps to retain valued members of the University and ensure successful outcomes for both students and staff. More directly, reduced productivity, diminished motivation and absenteeism are all recognised issues associated with recipients of domestic abuse, sexual violence and stalking. Indirectly, such issues can affect others who may need to take on additional work for absent or non-productive colleagues, 'protect' victims from unwanted phone calls or visits and/or, ultimately, fear for their own safety.

Scope

This Policy applies to all staff and students at the University and is also of potential relevance to those visiting University premises such as agency and contractual staff. Staff or students at partner organisations, as well as visitors and contractors should normally approach their own organisation in the first instance but are welcome to contact the University for help and advice through this Policy.

As noted above, the Policy applies to both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, sexual violence and stalking. It also applies equally to ongoing (current) domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking or that which has taken place in the past that affects an individual's ability to work or study. Further, the Policy aims to be relevant to those who are close, professionally or personally, to any individual directly involved, including colleagues, other students or staff.

The Policy

1. The objective of this Policy is to create opportunities for any member of the University experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking to disclose this to the organisation. Disclosing abuse either current or historic, can be a difficult decision and the University recognises that it is important for the victim/survivor to be in control of that decision. We therefore provide information on internal support in addition to specialist independent organisations where disclosures can also be made (see Appendices 7 & 8). The University further recognises that potential difficulties may arise if the organisation is not made formally aware of experiences of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking. Such difficulties may include health and safety issues, staff concerns or complaints or action being taken with regard to performance issues.
2. This Policy is intended to reassure members of the University that the organisation is a safe place to disclose and one in which they will receive a sensitive and supportive response. It is also aimed at helping those who have concerns that a colleague or peer may be experiencing abuse, or who may receive a disclosure, to respond appropriately. As such, literature including but not exhaustive of posters, leaflets and toilet door stickers will be displayed around the organisation, showing helpline numbers.

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Key Points of Contact

Staff

3. University staff who decide to disclose experiences of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking should do so to a trained member of staff who will respond according to the ABCDE model (see Appendix 4) and can signpost or refer to internal or external support services as appropriate (see flowchart in Appendix 2). A referral to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) may follow if risk is assessed as high (see criteria in Appendix 6).
4. University staff may choose to disclose their experiences to an untrained colleague; in such cases that colleague should follow the ABCDE model. In such cases, confidentiality should normally be maintained, but the untrained colleague should aim to support the person to talk to a trained adviser, explaining the benefits of the specialist services and support that is available (see also paragraph 12 below).
5. Specifically, confidentiality should only be broken where:
 - (i) the untrained colleague believes that there is immediate danger to the safety of the person, to other staff or students, or to children or vulnerable adults; or
 - (ii) where the alleged perpetrator is another member of the University, or a contractor working on site.

In either case, should the untrained colleague be unable to obtain permission to contact a trained adviser they are required to advise the person that it is necessary to break confidentiality, and to contact the Director or Deputy Director of Personnel. Should they be unavailable, contact should be made with a member of Security staff.

6. Staff who are concerned that a colleague may be experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking may wish to ask that person directly in an attempt to help. Asking someone if they are experiencing abuse can be very effective, however it is vital that it is done in a safe way. Firstly, it must only be done when the person is on their own and not around other colleagues. It is important to ask sensitively and with understanding. If someone does disclose their experiences of abuse, it is important for the staff member to recognise that they are not a specialist and that the person who has disclosed needs to be informed of specialist services (Appendix 7) as well as this Policy detailing methods of disclosure. Confidentiality will normally be maintained (see paragraphs 4 and 5 above and 20-24 below for further detail).

Students

7. University students who decide to disclose experiences of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking are advised to contact **firstpoint**, a trained member of staff or a trained member of the Students' Union (see flowchart at Appendix 3) who will utilise the ABCDE model (Appendix 4) and signpost or refer on to internal or external support services. A referral to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) may follow if risk is assessed as high (see criteria in Appendix 6).
8. It is recognised that students may disclose to an untrained member of the University; in such cases the ABCDE model should be followed but consent should be sought to discuss the case with a trained member of staff. In such cases, confidentiality should normally be maintained, but the untrained person should aim to support the student to talk to a trained adviser, explaining the benefits of the specialist services and support that they can make available (see also paragraph 12 below).

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9. Specifically, confidentiality should only be broken where:

- (i) the untrained person believes that there is immediate danger to the safety of the student, to other staff or students, or to children or vulnerable adults; or
- (ii) where the alleged perpetrator is another member of the University, or a contractor working on site.

In either case, if the untrained member of the University is unable to obtain permission to contact a trained adviser they are required to advise the student that it is necessary to break confidentiality, and to contact the Head of Student Services or nominated deputy. Should they be unavailable, contact should be made with a member of Security staff.

10. Students are reminded that potential difficulties may arise if the University is not made formally aware of their experiences of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking. Such difficulties can include potential health and safety issues or the nature of any action being taken by the University in relation to attendance or academic performance.

11. Students who are concerned that a peer may be experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or Stalking may wish to ask that person directly in an attempt to help. Asking someone if they are experiencing abuse can be every effective, however it is vital that it is done in a safe way. Firstly, it must only be done when the person is on their own and not around other peers. It is important to ask sensitively and with understanding. If someone does disclose their experiences of abuse, it is important for the student to recognise that they are not a specialist and that the person who has disclosed needs to be informed of specialist services (Appendix 7) as well as this Policy detailing methods of disclosure. Confidentiality will normally be maintained (see paragraph 9 above and 20-24 below for further detail).

Roles of Untrained Colleagues/Fellow Students

12. Should experiences of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking be disclosed to untrained colleagues or fellow students, they are advised to consider the following advice:

- ☐ first and foremost, understand that as a colleague/student they are not counsellors and should aim to listen, rather than provide specific advice and guidance;
- ☐ signpost/refer the person disclosing their circumstances to trained staff within the University or seek specialist advice;
- ☐ signpost/refer the individual concerned to this Policy for information and guidance;
 - speak to their own line manager, elected Officer or Student Advisor from the Students' Union or a trained member of staff, as appropriate, maintaining full confidentiality (i.e. anonymity of the individual(s) concerned) and take advice accordingly;
- ☐ signpost/refer the individual concerned to the appropriate helpline number which can be found on posters, leaflets and door stickers across the University and included in this Policy (Appendix 7).
- ☐ Consider breaking confidentiality only if there is a concern about immediate danger to other staff or students, or to children or vulnerable adults (see paragraphs 5 and 9 above and 20-24 below).

Responding to suspicions of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking

13. If either a student or a member of staff suspects that a student/colleague is experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking, it is considered to be good practice to ask them directly whilst bearing in mind the points made above regarding levels of expertise or specialism in the area. If a disclosure is made, the

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process shown in the flowcharts (Appendices 2 & 3) should be followed. If there is no disclosure but domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking are still suspected, the door has been opened for any future disclosure.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)

14. Government guidance and academic research stress the importance of agencies working together to promote the welfare and safety of victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence and stalking and it is widely acknowledged that all agencies have a vital role to play in identifying levels of risk in these situations.
15. The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a regular multi-agency meeting where information is shared in order to increase the safety and well-being of high risk victims of domestic abuse and their families. The meeting develops an Action Plan to reduce the risk of harm, the risk of repeat victimisation and to increase levels of support to the victim (see MARAC criteria at Appendix 6).
16. The Domestic Abuse Stalking and harassment and Honour based crime (DASH) Risk Assessment Tool can be found at Appendix 5 and has been nationally adopted for use by agencies involved in the MARAC system. DASH uses a risk identification checklist which helps workers to identify high risk cases which need to be referred into the MARAC. Only trained staff should use the DASH tool to assess risk.

Training

17. Training and annual refresher training on domestic abuse, sexual violence and stalking, including understanding these issues, the impact of them, responding to disclosure and referral/signposting, as well as indicators of these issues, will be offered to staff via the staff development programme. For key staff, including members of Personnel, line managers, Student Services staff (particularly in **firstpoint**), Security and elected members of the Students' Union, such training will be mandatory.
18. A list of trained staff with contact details will be distributed in induction packs for new students and updated annually.
19. Contact details of external support services will be made available via the University website for the purpose of signposting and referral.

Confidentiality

20. The University assures everyone who discloses experiences of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking that any information provided will usually be kept confidential and will not be shared without their permission.
21. Staff and students should be aware that in certain circumstances the University is obliged, legally, to share information both internally and with certain outside agencies without consent. Typically such circumstances include those where there are concerns about the safety of children or vulnerable adults or where the University may need to act immediately to protect the safety of its employees or students (see paragraphs 5 and 9 above).
22. Similarly, whilst aiming always to seek consent, referral to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) may be made with or without consent in cases deemed high risk (see Appendix 6).
23. The University will normally seek specialist advice where confidentiality may need to be breached for such reasons. If a decision is taken to breach confidentiality the University will endeavour to discuss implications with the person disclosing beforehand and take any reasonable action to protect that individual. In all such

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cases, information will only be shared on a 'need-to-know' basis in line with good practice according to the Home Office report 'Sharing Personal Information in the Context of Domestic Violence'. The information shared therein is also applicable to sexual violence and stalking.

24. Any improper breaches of confidentiality will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action.

Right to Privacy

25. The University respects the right to privacy of all members of the organisation, whether staff or students. Therefore, whilst strongly encouraging those experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking to disclose this information, no member of the University is required to do so.
26. Notwithstanding the above, any member of staff convicted of an offence (including receiving a caution or community resolution or other out of court disposal where guilt is admitted) must disclose this to a member of Personnel in line with the University Policy on the Recruitment and Employment of People with Criminal Records⁴. Members of staff are encouraged to inform Personnel in cases where an investigation into allegations is underway, whether they are considered to be the victim or alleged to be the perpetrator of domestic abuse, sexual violence or stalking. The University will aim to manage any risks associated with such investigations on a case by case basis.
27. Similarly, students on any programme that operates within a professional code of conduct (eg. education, nursing, social work, etc.) who are convicted of an offence (including receiving a caution or community resolution or other out of court disposal where guilt is admitted) must disclose this to Registry Services.
28. All students of the University are encouraged to inform Registry Services in cases where a police investigation into allegations is underway, whether they are considered to be the victim or alleged to be the perpetrator of domestic abuse, sexual violence or stalking. This will enable the organisation to seek to manage any associated risks on a case by case basis.
29. Members of the University wishing to disclose or discuss their experience of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking may choose to be accompanied at any meetings on the matter by a colleague, trade union representative or a friend. In certain cases, particularly where there is a potential conflict of interests, the individual and role of the accompanying person may need to be discussed and agreed prior to any such meetings in accordance with the relevant policy or procedure.

Anti-discrimination or prejudice

30. The University will not discriminate or act prejudicially towards any member of the organisation who discloses experience of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking, either in terms of current employment or study, or future opportunities for development or qualification that may arise.

In particular, the University will not discriminate or act prejudicially towards any member of the organisation because of their refusal to engage with, or their rejection of, support and/or assistance in relation to experiences of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking, whether that support is offered internally or externally.

31. Notwithstanding the above, it will not be considered discriminatory for the organisation to consider whether

⁴<http://www.worc.ac.uk/personnel/documents/Policy-crimrecords-FINAL.pdf>

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certain job roles or qualification pathways remain appropriate (either in the short- or long-term) in line with legislation, any approved internal policies (such as those relating to safeguarding), professional body requirements and/or the employment of those with criminal records.

32. If a member of the University discloses experiences of domestic abuse and/or sexual violence as part of a performance, disciplinary or exceptional mitigating circumstances process, this information will be taken into account. Documentary evidence of disclosure can be made to support such cases at the individual's request; otherwise such information remains confidential.

Support and Safety Planning

33. Support and safety planning will vary depending on whether staff/students disclose domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking or a combination of these forms of abuse; whether those who disclose are students or staff, whether they are victims or perpetrators and whether the experience is current, in the past or potential.
34. Flowcharts (Appendices 2 & 3) show the process from disclosure to safety planning. Each disclosure and associated support and safety planning will be dealt with on a case by case basis.
35. The University will work with the member of staff or student concerned, alongside a specialist agency (if appropriate and with the individual's consent) to identify a course of action to increase their personal safety and to mitigate risks to other members of the University.

Managing allegations about, or disclosure by, perpetrators of domestic violence or abuse

36. The University recognises that it plays an important role in encouraging members of the organisation to address violent and abusive behaviour, including that which takes place outside of University premises. The University therefore will assist those seeking to address such behaviour by signposting specific services where this is disclosed.
37. Any member of staff convicted of an offence (including receiving a caution, police bail, etc.) must disclose this to a member of Personnel in line with the University Policy on the Employment of People with a Conviction⁵. Any disclosure of a conviction of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis in line with associated policies including the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy, with the overarching aims of mitigating risk to members of the University and supporting behavioural change.
38. Allegations of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking made against a staff member or student from any member of the University will be managed in accordance with this Policy, in conjunction with any other relevant policy/procedure (eg. the University's Disciplinary Policy or the Student Code of Conduct) with an overarching aim of mitigating risk to members of the University and supporting behavioural change. If deemed appropriate the University will involve the police. Those making the allegation will be supported as outlined within this Policy.
39. The organisation will fully comply with any police investigation in relation to allegations of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking made against any staff member or student by any member of the University or from a third party (someone who is not a member of the University).
40. In particular, allegations or disclosures are subject to the following key principles:

⁵<http://www.worc.ac.uk/personnel/documents/Policy-crimrecords-FINAL.pdf>

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- individuals who disclose, or who are subject of an allegation, will be treated fairly and in a way which is supportive;
- they will receive guidance in relation to their role as a member of staff or as a student;
- they will be advised to seek external support, for instance through a trade union or the Students' Union;
- any internal investigation will be carried out without prejudice and will be, as far as reasonably practical, independent;
- cases will be investigated as quickly as possible, avoiding unnecessary delays;
- The organisation will fully comply with any external investigation in relation to allegations of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking made against any staff member or student by any 'member of the organisation' or from a third party (i.e. someone who is not a member of the University).

41. There are four key potential outcomes leading from disclosure or an allegation:

- identification of risk to a third party, a member or the University or to the reputation of the University;
- provision/referral to safety-focused, specialist counselling or group programme
- potential disciplinary action,
- potential police investigation of a criminal offence.

42. In cases where both the victim and the perpetrator of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking are members of the University, immediate action will be taken to best ensure that parties do not have contact in the workplace/place of study. This includes ensuring that systems prevent the disclosure of personal information such as addresses.

43. The University will take seriously any action taken by a perpetrator involving use of their position or work resources (including time) to find out the whereabouts of a victim. Accordingly, pre-emptive action may be taken by the University including withdrawal of facilities and/or action under the Disciplinary Policy or Student Code of Conduct should it be deemed necessary. In all such cases, a perpetrator will be informed as to the reason for such action in writing.

Monitoring Effectiveness of the Policy

44. The Policy will be reviewed by Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee annually in the first instance, instigated by the Director of Personnel and the Head of Student Services.

Date Approved	<i>29 April 2015</i>
Approval Authority	<i>Initial approval by University Executive, thereafter the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee</i>
Date of Commencement	<i>July 2015</i>
Amendment Dates	<i>Update to amend minor errors – Aug 2017</i>
Date for Next Review	<i>July 2018</i>
Related Policies, Procedures, Guidance, Forms or Templates	Dealing with Harassment and Bullying Policy Safeguarding _____ Policy Recruitment and Employment of People with Criminal Records

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	Disciplinary Policy and Procedure Student Code of Conduct
Policies/Rules Superseded by this Policy	<i>None</i>

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Appendix 1

The following offences are created for England and Wales by the [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#):

1. Rape (s.1)
2. Assault by penetration (s.2)
3. Sexual assault (s.3)
4. Causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent (s.4)
5. Rape of a child under 13 (s.5)
6. Assault of a child under 13 by penetration (s.6)
7. Sexual assault of a child under 13 (s.7)
8. Causing or inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity (s.8)
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21. Inciting a child family member to engage in sexual activity (s.26)
22. Sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder impeding choice (s.30)
23. Causing or inciting a person, with a mental disorder impeding choice, to engage in sexual activity (s.31)
24. Engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a person with a mental disorder impeding choice (s.32)
25. Causing a person, with a mental disorder impeding choice, to watch a sexual act (s.33)
26. Inducement, threat or deception to procure sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder (s.34)
27. Causing a person with a mental disorder to engage in or agree to engage in sexual activity by inducement, threat or deception (s.35)
28. Engaging in sexual activity in the presence, procured by inducement, threat or deception, of a person with a mental disorder (s.36)
29. Causing a person with a mental disorder to watch a sexual act by inducement, threat or deception (s.37)
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38. Causing or inciting prostitution for gain (s.52)
39. Controlling prostitution for gain (s.53)

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40. Trafficking into the UK for sexual exploitation (s.57)
41. Trafficking within the UK for sexual exploitation (s.58)
42. Trafficking out of the UK for sexual exploitation (s.59)
43. Administering a substance with intent (s.61)
44. Committing an offence with intent to commit a sexual offence (s.62)
45. Trespass with intent to commit a sexual offence (s.63)
46. Sex with an adult relative: penetration (s.64)
47. Sex with an adult relative: consenting to penetration (s.65)
48. Exposure (s.66)
49. Voyeurism (s.67)
50. Intercourse with an animal (s.69)
51. Sexual penetration of a corpse (s.70)
52. Sexual activity in a public lavatory (s.71)

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Appendices 2 & 3 detailing the processes for managing disclosures by staff and students respectively are available through the University website at the following address:

<http://www.worc.ac.uk/personnel/657.htm>

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Appendix 4

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE: THE ABCDE MODEL

Research shows that those who disclose domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking are more likely to disclose to a friend/colleague than an organisation. The ABCDE model is suitable for use by staff and peers/colleagues but this Policy should be adhered to after any disclosure.

Ask to be alone

When a member of the University/organisation discloses and wishes to discuss domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking, they will want to do so in private. The information they disclose will be of a sensitive and personal nature. Make sure you respond to requests for privacy seriously.

Believe the disclosure

A big fear of disclosing domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking is that they will not be believed. They may have tried to disclose before and were not taken seriously or they may have been told by the perpetrator that they will not be believed.

In addition, there may not be any observable evidence because not all domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking results in physical injury.

'Victim's rarely lie about their experiences. If anything they minimise them. Believe the disclosure unless there is any direct contradictory evidence and recognise the need for a positive response and appropriate support

Respond to disclosures using the three core conditions of listening skills i.e. empathy, congruence (honesty) and unconditional positive regard (being non-judgmental).

Call in 'appropriate' resources

Appropriate resources will depend on if the disclosure is about domestic abuse, sexual violence or stalking or a combination of these.

Resources may include literature that will help, signposting to an appropriate internal or external support services or making a referral.

All trained staff will be aware of internal and external support services to which they can signpost/refer. Peers/colleagues will be able to access these via Personnel, Student Services or the NCSPVA and posters, leaflets and toilet door stickers with this information will be displayed across the University. It should be remembered though that the person disclosing should be encouraged to make their own choices about whether or not to contact services or be referred.

Any information disclosed to a service through referral should be with the consent of the person disclosing and should be on a 'need to know' basis unless there is a safeguarding issue.

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It may be appropriate to provide written information about services and support available locally but it is important to ensure that it is safe to do so. Never provide written information which could be found by an abuser thus placing the victim in even more danger

Document

All information disclosed should be accurately recorded. Good documentation will help to build up a picture of the nature and scale of the abuse. This information can be released to a third party if authorised to do so and may help in future legal proceedings to secure a prosecution against the perpetrator and safeguard the victim. This is important even if the person disclosing does not want to press charges at this point. If they later change their mind, or if the police press for victimless prosecution; this evidence could be vital. It can also be used for evidence for mitigating circumstances.

Written documentation should be factual and not supposition but it is also important to record any concerns and the basis for these, Records are better stored by Personnel, Student Services or the NCSPVA than by a peer/colleague.

Recording should include injuries, symptoms and any disclosure of abuse. Photographic evidence is also useful. Missed appointments and unanswered calls should also be noted.

Ensure safety

Priority should be given to the safety of members of the University/organisation disclosing domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or stalking.

The person disclosing should be asked directly if they fear for their safety. If they say yes they may be referred to the NCSPVA for a risk assessment. If the risk assessment indicates a high risk, they will be referred to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) where an Action Plan will be agreed. The Director of the NCSPVA will represent the University at MARAC and will feed any Action Plan back to appropriate staff who will play their part in implementing the Action Plan and thus addressing safety needs.

It should be noted that a person can be referred to the MARAC without consent where necessary so breaching confidentiality. This should be made clear to the person disclosing.

A breach of confidentiality will also take place where the person disclosing is deemed vulnerable or where there are children involved in line with the University of Worcester Safeguarding Policy.

It should also be noted that people disclosing domestic abuse should not be told to leave the relationship. Research consistently shows that leaving is the most dangerous time. Most domestic abuse homicides occur at the point of leaving and thus leaving should not be encouraged without support and a safety plan.

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Appendix 5

DASH RISK ASSESSMENT

This Risk Assessment should be used within the framework of the University's Safeguarding Policy

Revealing the results to the victim:

Telling someone that they are at high risk of serious harm may be frightening and overwhelming for them to hear. It is important that the risk assessment and ensuing results are offered by a trained member of staff.

The results from a checklist are not a definitive assessment of risk. They should provide you with a structure to inform your judgement and act as prompts to further questioning, analysis and risk management whether via a MARAC or in another way.

Aim of the form:

- To help front line practitioners identify high risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'-based violence.
- To decide which cases should be referred to MARAC and what other support might be required. (A completed form becomes an active record that can be referred to in future for case management).
- To offer a common tool to agencies that are part of the MARAC process and provide a shared understanding of risk in relation to domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'-based violence.
- To enable agencies to make defensible decisions based on the evidence from extensive research of cases, including domestic homicides and 'near misses', which underpins most recognised models of risk assessment.

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<p>Please explain that the purpose of asking these questions is for the safety and protection of the individual concerned. Tick the box if the factor is present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>. Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer. It is assumed that your main source of information is the victim. If this is <u>not the case</u> please indicate in the right hand column</p>	Yes (tick)	No	Don't Know	State source of info if not the victim e.g. police officer
1. Has the current incident resulted in injury? (Please state what and whether this is the first injury.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Are you very frightened? Comment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. What are you afraid of? Is it further injury or violence? (Please give an indication of what you think (name of abuser(s)...) might do and to whom, including children). Comment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Do you feel isolated from family/friends i.e. does (name of abuser(s)) try to stop you from seeing friends/family/doctor or others? Comment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Are you feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Have you separated or tried to separate from (name of abuser(s)...) within the past year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Is there conflict over child contact?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Does (.....) constantly text, call, contact, follow, stalk or harass you? (Please expand to identify what and whether you believe that this is done deliberately to intimidate you? Consider the context and behaviour of what is being done.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Are you pregnant or have you recently had a baby (within the last 18 months)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Is the abuse happening more often?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Is the abuse getting worse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12. Does (.....) try to control everything you do and/or are they excessively jealous? (In terms of relationships, who you see, being 'policed at home', telling you what to wear for example. Consider 'honour'-based violence and specify behaviour.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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13. Has (.....) ever used weapons or objects to hurt you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tick box if factor is present. Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer.	Yes (tick)	No	Don't Know	State source of info if not the victim
14. Has (.....) ever threatened to kill you or someone else and you believed them? (If yes, tick who.) You <input type="checkbox"/> Children <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
15. Has (.....) ever attempted to strangle/choke/suffocate/drown you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
16. Does (.....) do or say things of a sexual nature that make you feel bad or that physically hurt you or someone else? (If someone else, specify who.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
17. Is there any other person who has threatened you or who you are afraid of? (If yes, please specify whom and why. Consider extended family if HBV.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
18. Do you know if (.....) has hurt anyone else? (Please specify whom including the children, siblings or elderly relatives. Consider HBV.) Children <input type="checkbox"/> Another family member <input type="checkbox"/> Someone from a previous relationship <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
19. Has (.....) ever mistreated an animal or the family pet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
20. Are there any financial issues? For example, are you dependent on (.....) for money/have they recently lost their job/other financial issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
21. Has (.....) had problems in the past year with drugs (prescription or other), alcohol or mental health leading to problems in leading a normal life? (If yes, please specify which and give relevant details if known.) Drugs <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
22. Has (.....) ever threatened or attempted suicide?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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<p>23. Has (.....) ever broken bail/an injunction and/or formal agreement for when they can see you and/or the children? (You may wish to consider this in relation to an ex-partner of the perpetrator if relevant.)</p> <p>Bail conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Non Molestation/Occupation Order <input type="checkbox"/> Child Contact arrangements <input type="checkbox"/> Forced Marriage Protection Order <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>24. Do you know if (.....) has ever been in trouble with the police or has a criminal history? (If yes, please specify.)</p> <p>DV <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual violence <input type="checkbox"/> Other violence <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Total 'yes' responses</p>				
<p>For consideration by professional: Is there any other relevant information (from victim or professional) which may increase risk levels? Consider victim's situation in relation to disability, substance misuse, mental health issues, cultural/language barriers, 'honour'- based systems and minimisation. Are they willing to engage with your service? Describe:</p> <p>Consider abuser's occupation/interests - could this give them unique access to weapons? Describe:</p>				
<p>What are the victim's greatest priorities to address their safety?</p>				
<p>Do you believe that there are reasonable grounds for referring this case to MARAC? Yes / No If yes, have you made a referral? Yes/No</p> <p>Signed: _____ Date: _____</p>				
<p>Do you believe that there are risks facing the children in the family? Yes / No If yes, please confirm if you have made a referral to safeguard the children: Yes / No Date referral made</p>				
<p>Signed: _____ Name: _____</p>			<p>Date: _____</p>	

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Appendix 6

Recommended Referral Criteria to MARAC

Professional judgement:

If a professional has serious concerns about a victim's situation, they should refer the case to MARAC. There will be occasions where the particular context of a case gives rise to serious concerns even if the victim has been unable to disclose the information that might highlight their risk more clearly. ***This could reflect extreme levels of fear, cultural barriers to disclosure, immigration issues or language barriers particularly in cases of 'honour'-based violence.*** This judgement would be based on the professional's experience and/or the victim's perception of their risk even if they do not meet criteria.

Visible High Risk

The number of 'ticks' on this checklist. If you have ticked 14 or more 'yes' boxes the case would normally meet the MARAC referral criteria.

Potential Escalation:

The number of police callouts to the victim as a result of domestic violence in the past 12 months. This criterion can be used to identify cases where there is not a positive identification of a majority of the risk factors on the list, but where abuse appears to be escalating and where it is appropriate to assess the situation more fully by sharing information at MARAC. It is common practice to start with 3 or more police callouts in a 12 month period for a MARAC referral

Pay particular attention to a practitioner's professional judgement in all cases. The results from a checklist are not a definitive assessment of risk. They provide a structure to inform judgement and act as prompts to further questioning, analysis and risk management whether via a MARAC or in another way.

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Appendix 7

Useful Contact numbers

Domestic Abuse Support Services

- National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247
- Worcestershire 24hr Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 980 3331

NB this helpline offers support to 'victims' and professionals needing advice

- Stonham 0845 155 0395
- West Mercia Women's Aid 0800 980 3331
- The Asha Women's Centre 01905 767552
- Broken Rainbow (LGBT) 08452 604460

Sexual Violence Support Services

- Rape and Sexual Abuse National Helpline 0808 802 9999
- West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre – Advice for professionals -
01905 611655
- Worcestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Helpline 01905 724514
- The Glade Sexual Assault Referral Centre – Advice for Professionals
01886833555
- The Glade Sexual Assault Referral Centre – 24 Helpline
01886 833555

Honour' Based Violence

National Helpline 0800 5999247

Stalking

National Stalking Helpline 08088020300

Advice and Information

- Adult Protection (Access Centre) 0845 607 2000
- Ethnic Access Link 01905 25121
- Relate Worcestershire 01905 28051

Children's and Young People Services

- Bromsgrove Youth Enquiry Service 01527 570027
- Home Start Worcester and Wychavon 01905 29377
- Sure Start Children's Centres Information 01905 790560

Professional support/guidance can be obtained from staff at the *National Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence and Abuse* (01905 542355 or 01905 542693) or the Worcestershire Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Co-ordinator on 01905 822357

In emergencies always ring **999**