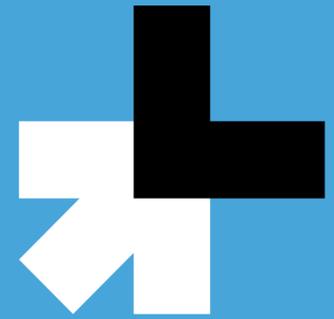


**Proven  
Solution**

Ending Gender-Based Violence



**HeForShe**



# **Vodafone**

## **Supporting survivors of domestic violence and abuse through a global workplace policy**

## Global Context

**Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) is a global issue that has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. UN Women described this as the Shadow Pandemic<sup>1</sup>.**

**In 2019, independent international research commissioned by Vodafone showed that 80m working women across 107 countries – approximately 15% of women in the workforce – had experienced domestic violence and abuse in the previous 12 months. 38% of survivors surveyed said they suffered from reduced productivity. 22% sometimes stopped going to work and/or would take days off.**

\$2.1bn in economic output is lost each year as a result of work absences related to abuse. Four million women missed out on a promotion as a result of domestic violence and abuse – suffering a related annual average salary loss of \$2,900 per woman. This equates to approximately \$13bn in total potential earnings lost each year.<sup>2</sup>

In March 2019, Vodafone Group announced its global HR policy supporting survivors of domestic violence and abuse. Employees now have access to support, specialist counselling and 10 days additional paid leave. Training has been provided for HR

and people managers to help them support employees experiencing domestic violence or abuse.

In March 2021, estimates published<sup>3</sup> by the World Health Organisation indicate that 1 in 3 women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence. Research across numerous organizations reiterates the prevalence of domestic violence and abuse globally underscoring the importance of employers supporting survivors at work.

“In 2019, Vodafone launched a global policy to support our employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse. We want our employees to know that Vodafone is a safe and supportive environment, and in addition to individual assistance, we are training managers and raising awareness with all our employees. We encourage other employers to do the same so that employers and society as a whole take action on this serious issue.”

**Nick Read, CEO, Vodafone Group**



15%

Approximately 15% of women in the workforce – had experienced domestic violence and abuse in the previous 12 months

<sup>1</sup> [Shadow Pandemic](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Vodafone DVA Research](#)

<sup>3</sup> [WHO Research](#)

## Key Stages of Implementation

# 1

### Step 1 Building a business case that Domestic Violence and Abuse is a workplace issue.

Identifying Domestic Violence and Abuse as a workplace issue is critical to achieving gender equality and business performance.

Building on ten years of work, Vodafone Foundation commissioned research, carried out by Opinium in 2019, to understand the

## Identifying Domestic Violence and Abuse as a workplace issue is critical to achieving gender equality and business performance.

impact of Domestic Violence and Abuse and how it affects the working population – global data on this subject was not previously available. Experts were also engaged to advise on the impact, challenges and ways to support survivors in the workplace.

In addition to being the right thing to do, there is a business case for preventing domestic violence in the workplace and in giving colleagues the support to end the cycle of abuse.

Key considerations when building the business case included:

- Between 30-40% of survivors of domestic violence and abuse will be in employment at some point in their lives. This means that most workplaces will be affected.
- When domestic violence follows survivors into the workplace it impacts productivity, morale and wellbeing. It puts limits on an employees' full and active participation at work.
- Companies that commit to supporting their employees in reaching their full potential are more likely to attract and retain workers.

### Step 2 Establishing a global policy to enable a consistent and scalable approach to supporting survivors.

Vodafone developed a global minimum standard to support survivors based on external expert advice and learnings from parts of the business that had a policies in place. These learnings informed the development of best practice guidance for all Vodafone markets.

# 2

Contents include:

- Purpose of the policy and definitions of domestic violence and abuse
- Recognition that domestic violence, in all of its forms, is a world of work issue and that Vodafone's employees have the right to support and protection in employment
- Statement of confidentiality, non-discrimination and non-retaliation against employees
- Policy scope including provision of
  - 10 days paid domestic violence leave, on top of existing leave entitlements, which can be extended.
  - Support including counselling, referrals to Employee Assistance Programmes, flexible working, and assistance in the event of financial abuse
  - Safety in the workplace (including remote working), change in work locations or work tasks, and protection against cyber-harassment and stalking at work.
- Training for HR and people managers
- Information and regular communications with employees, aimed at building trust and awareness of the policy.
- Holding perpetrators accountable, including immediate dismissal if workplace resource such as mobile phones, tablets and computers are used to perpetrate abuse inside and outside of working hours; support to perpetrators to change behaviour and referrals to perpetrator treatment and counselling programmes.

Global minimum standards and consistent local implementation ensured a comprehensive and sustainable approach to supporting survivors at Vodafone.

## Global minimum standards and consistent local implementation ensured a comprehensive and sustainable approach to supporting survivors at Vodafone.



### Step 3 Embedding a system of support for survivors through training, resources and awareness

Provision of training, resources and ongoing awareness are critical in successful policy implementation and in providing a support system for survivors. Leaders, managers, HR and employees are given access to training and information.

Senior leadership training was provided by gender expert Dr Jane Pillinger to develop an understanding of the impact of DVA in the workplace. A toolkit was developed by Dr Pillinger to help employees support survivors using the Recognise, Respond and Refer framework. This toolkit was shared externally to support other companies considering a DVA policy.

HR training was provided to develop an understanding of how DVA impacts people at work, how to apply the policy and use the Recognise, Respond and Refer framework. HR are not positioned as experts, but

provide the information to support line managers and employees as needed.

Manager training is provided in partnership with local NGOs on the policy and the Recognise, Respond and Refer framework. Podcast and webinars are available to all employees to increase awareness of the policy and how to access support in a remote working environment or in the office.

Employee Assistance Programmes providing advice to employees are required to include DVA within the scope of expert advice provided to employees.

For over ten years, Vodafone Foundation has used technology to connect people affected by domestic violence and abuse to advice and support through Apps against Abuse. Vodafone Foundation has expanded international access to Bright Sky, a free app available on Apple Store or Google play, which connects survivors of domestic violence and abuse to advice and support services.

**Provision of training, support and resources ensures the policy is embedded and a system of support is available for survivors.**

## Resources

[!\[\]\(626ce8ac21792b9405bfddfea8e0c96a\_img.jpg\) Vodafone DVA Research](#)

[!\[\]\(a8f9309f944226d1420f5fed22e2b6e6\_img.jpg\) Vodafone Toolkit](#)

[!\[\]\(248b91fcdac4810ffd15cf33fb6aec6f\_img.jpg\) Vodafone Foundation Apps Against Abuse](#)

[!\[\]\(899d8b7697d64725bf017d3296cfcf1b\_img.jpg\) Vodafone Policy Research](#)

[!\[\]\(c1168d6a8b365d11e842ece304635fa7\_img.jpg\) Vodafone DVA digital assets](#)

Other useful documents

[!\[\]\(d3e32d099174a7c248ec1f564ee4f69c\_img.jpg\) Employers Initiative on Domestic Abuse](#)

[!\[\]\(40770d9ed6ed4f1222ebf89a1396e8b2\_img.jpg\) 'Make it our Business' resources for companies by the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women & Children, Western University, Ontario, Canada](#)

[!\[\]\(ccd39a0dc6d5afcc151e1371f9462f58\_img.jpg\) Male Champions for Change \(Australia\) 'Playing our part: Workplace Responses to Domestic and Family Violence](#)

[!\[\]\(c724c83fe216b2427610afdbd31f92cc\_img.jpg\) OurWatch Australia: Workplace Equality and Respect \(WER\) Standards and suite of tools and Resources](#)

## Contact

For more information please contact:

[Claudine.McMahon@Vodafone.com](mailto:Claudine.McMahon@Vodafone.com)

[Claire.Harvey@Vodafone.com](mailto:Claire.Harvey@Vodafone.com)