

Small steps, big difference:

How FTSE 100 companies can make a positive impact on the lives of domestic violence and abuse survivors through workplace support



Findings from an independent survey of FTSE 100 companies,
commissioned by UN Women

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Acronyms & abbreviations

DVA	Domestic Violence and Abuse	ILO	International Labour Organization
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme	NGO	Non-governmental Organization
EIDA	Employers Initiative on Domestic Violence	WEPs	Women's Empowerment Principles
FTSE 100	Financial Times Stock Exchange 100 Index	WHO	World Health Organization
GBV	Gender-based Violence	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
HR	Human Resources		

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Executive Summary

Nearly one in three women will experience gender-based violence (GBV) in their lifetime.¹

While GBV can affect anyone, it disproportionately impacts women, especially those from marginalized communities in the least developed countries.

Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) is the most widespread form of gender-based violence (GBV) globally.

It not only devastates lives, families, and communities but also exerts a significant impact on workplaces and economies, serving as a substantial barrier to women's progress and economic empowerment. The global cost of violence against women (VAW) is staggering, amounting to at least USD 1.5 trillion or roughly 2% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per year.²

Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5, aimed at "achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls," is unattainable without putting an end to all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls.

DVA is a workplace issue because it prevents women's engagement in employment and education and their career advancement, resulting in profound physical, economic and psychological repercussions for survivors.

Having a safe and supportive work environment that can respond to and prevent DVA (such as providing referrals to specialist services, financial support to escape and raising awareness to help prevent DVA) can make all the difference to employees experiencing DVA, protecting their lives and livelihoods. Ultimately, this will advance gender equality and women's empowerment overall.

While the primary responsibility for protecting human rights lies with States under international law, employers also play a critical role.

This role is outlined in international and regional conventions, as well as in certain national legislation. Employers can offer various response and prevention options that address both the immediate needs of survivors of DVA and its long-term impact. Additionally, efforts to promote gender equality in the workplace, communities, markets, and society at large can effectively tackle the root causes of DVA, leading to overall gender equality outcomes.

As the foremost entities listed on the London Stock Exchange in terms of market capitalization, FTSE 100 companies have considerable influence on global markets, workforces, communities and societal norms.

With an estimated global workforce of four to five million employees,³ these companies, operating in diverse industries such as finance, energy, pharmaceuticals, consumer goods and

telecommunications, are well positioned to address the pervasive issue of DVA, particularly in regions with limited state support and human rights protections.

While some FTSE 100 companies are already recognized as exemplary models in the provision of support for employees experiencing DVA, and examples documented, comprehensive research on these practices across the entire FTSE 100 group remains lacking. There is a critical need for further investigation and documentation to understand the scope and impact of existing initiatives and to identify areas for improvement.

Hence, in this ground-breaking initiative, as a part of its HeForShe Initiative UN Women has commissioned the first-ever, research into FTSE 100 companies' workplace support for employees experiencing DVA.

This report documents the key findings and recommendations from the survey providing a unique resource and database on what some of the most influential companies in the world are doing to support survivors, what the lessons and challenges are, and what opportunities lie ahead to collaborate on initiatives that can lead to transformative action on DVA for gender equality outcomes.

The willingness of the FTSE 100 companies to take part in this survey, share information, compare, and learn is unprecedented and signals a commitment to collaborate on addressing DVA both individually and collectively. The survey serves as a baseline for measuring progress over time, providing valuable insights and standards for companies addressing DVA.

Key findings:

Twenty-two FTSE 100 companies, spanning various sectors, participated in the survey: these companies collectively employ over 1.6 million people, 43% of whom are women, across 180 countries globally.

82% of surveyed companies offer support to survivors of DVA:

- The most common support measures available are referrals for employees experiencing DVA to external specialists and support organizations, flexible working options and leave.
- Half of the surveyed companies also focus on preventive support, that can help employees before DVA occurs, such as raising awareness of DVA risks and promoting available assistance.

○ Several companies provide options to tackle the medium-to-longer-term impact of DVA, for example to support survivors' economic independence, including financial support and temporary protection against dismissal.

○ Some companies responding to the survey reported providing the above support for survivors of DVA but not specifically labeling this as relevant to DVA.

○ **Lessons learned from the survey respondents show that, unless these options are clearly labeled as relevant to DVA survivors, employees experiencing issues may not understand or know about the support available.**

90% of companies responding to the survey have recognized violence and harassment as a workplace issue in general through policies and/or guidance, of which:

○ **59% have specifically integrated DVA as a workplace issue within these policies and/or created stand-alone policies or guidance on DVA.**

○ 32% are also addressing DVA across multiple countries of operation, reaching employees in up to 67 countries worldwide.

○ Having specific company policies on DVA is seen as a crucial initial step in fostering a culture of trust, support, and protection, within a commitment to zero tolerance for all forms of violence and harassment.

○ Leadership commitment and workplace policies on DVA make a tangible difference, prompting survivors to share how these measures impact their ability to remain employed.

A key challenge in supporting DVA survivors is addressing stigma and negative beliefs among employees and supervisors, especially regarding DVA as a workplace issue. This is complicated by diverse cultural and social norms across various markets and countries.

○ 23% of companies surveyed reported providing practical guidance and training for managers and HR professionals how to recognize and respond to DVA.

FTSE 100 companies experienced in implementing global DVA support offer valuable insights. Sharing information serves as a small step towards making a big difference for employees experiencing DVA. Through this survey, learning can be shared about the step-by-step process for enhancing support within organizations, some working across complex markets and contexts.

45% of responding FTSE 100 companies reported providing support to the wider community on DVA and/or GBV related issues.

○ There is a clear link between prioritizing and making commitments on support for survivors of DVA in the workplace and expansion of support for customers and communities, as well as gender equality initiatives at large.

Respondents shared ideas for enhancing support inside their company:

○ **Training and education** for all employees on DVA as a workplace issue, especially for managers and HR professionals.

○ **Improving the visibility of available support options** and embedding these within existing employee assistance programs (EAP) and standard well-being initiatives.

○ **Expanding avenues for DVA survivors to access support** (beyond managers) to other professionals, such as a DVA survivor advocate network.

○ **Creating a culture and workplace environment of trust and support** in which survivors feel safe to seek support and share stories of impact.

○ **Linking internal efforts on DVA support with broader corporate social responsibility initiatives.**

○ **Partnering with external organizations and specialists in DVA support.**

○ **Improving collection of data and monitoring of evidence** on uptake and effectiveness of DVA survivor support, to inform improvements.

Respondents shared ideas for enhancing support collaboratively with other companies:

○ **Sharing of best practices** and tools across the FTSE 100 network, including opportunities to discuss and share lessons in person.

○ **Developing a joint stance and commitment** across the FTSE 100 network to addressing DVA as a workplace issue.

○ **Joining forces on national, global, or multi-country awareness raising campaigns** to address the root causes of DVA.

○ **Investing in learning opportunities, tools, and resources (including with the United Nations)** that are adaptable to different contexts, countries, and markets.

Researcher's conclusions and observations:

1. Making a corporate commitment and implementing specific policies is the first step in prioritizing DVA as a workplace issue. With nearly two thirds of surveyed companies having such policies, there is an opportunity for further information sharing, especially in extending coverage across multiple countries.

2. **The support package for DVA survivors at work should include immediate protective measures and long-term response and prevention provisions.** While companies are making progress, there need to be more types of each support available. Learning from advanced companies with global policies and toolkits can aid in moving from short-term to long-term measures.
3. **Competing priorities and diverse corporate agendas reportedly hinder targeted support for DVA survivors.** Recognizing that DVA is a workplace issue, that can affect all employees, disproportionately women, is key **and** understanding that it intersects with all other aspects of employee health, wellbeing and inclusion issues. When DVA is prioritized, survivors feel safe to ask for support.
4. **Addressing the challenge of raising awareness about DVA and changing negative beliefs requires collaborative efforts.** Companies can benefit from shared lessons, which save time and resources. The survey identifies practical opportunities for collaborative and individual support that other employers can adopt.
5. **FTSE 100 companies can collaborate on ways to raise awareness of and prevent DVA, and join forces in supporting survivors in the workplace.** Exploring specific case studies and step-by-step processes will deepen understanding of **how** to do this. Learning from each other's experiences across countries, contexts and markets is essential.
6. **Measuring the success of workplace support for DVA survivors is crucial for building a business case and informing FTSE 100 companies.** Listening to and learning directly from survivors is essential, alongside monitoring the uptake of support to enhance effectiveness. This survey can serve as a baseline, with indicators that can measure progress over the next one to three years.
7. **Prioritizing support for DVA survivors in the workplace links to broader corporate commitments on gender equality,** impacting customers, communities and society. FTSE 100 companies can leverage their influence and extend support on DVA across the workplace, markets **and communities,** advancing gender equality and women's empowerment outcomes.
8. **The participation of 22 FTSE 100 companies in the survey signals a commitment to collaborative action on DVA.** With significant global influence, these companies can serve as role models to other employers, supporting survivors globally and influencing gender equality outcomes where state support is lacking.

Recommendations for FTSE 100 companies and other employers:

1. **Implement good practices outlined in this research in the workplace:** (i) recognize DVA as a workplace issue; (ii) commit to gender equality and ending GBV at leadership levels; (iii) allocate resources; (iv) introduce specific policies, guidance and support provisions; (v) raise awareness and foster a supportive environment; (vi) train managers and HR professionals; and (vii) provide diverse support options across markets and countries. Companies should also refer to UN Women resources and initiatives and the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Violence (EIDA)⁴ for further guidance.
2. **Form a community of practice or coalition with the FTSE 100 network to drive collective progress, sharing information, agreeing on standards and taking collaborative action on DVA.** As role models, these companies can set global standards for DVA support, potentially benefiting millions of people. This could include joining and promoting existing networks (e.g. EIDA) and coalitions with other employers, particularly multinational companies (see recommendation five for more suggestions).
3. **Invest in research, mass communications and awareness campaigns to understand effective approaches for changing the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors contributing to DVA.** Collaboratively address barriers and challenges hindering action to support survivors. FTSE 100 companies could conduct a joint campaign to raise awareness of DVA as a workplace issue across employers and conduct research on campaign effectiveness.
4. **Provide financial support for DVA, GBV and broader gender equality initiatives by investing in NGOs and specialist support organizations.** Companies should offer flexible, long-term funding nationally and globally for such organizations (including for networks such as EIDA) and create partnerships to address root causes and consequences of gender equality and DVA in their markets and communities.

5. Join a UN Women initiative to drive gender equality at scale. For example:

○ **Sign and adopt the WEPs**, if not already a signatory, accessing tools and resources, including Principle 3 on Employee health, wellbeing and safety and the DVA “policy and procedure” template.⁵

○ **Join the Generation Equality Gender-Based Violence Action Coalition**,⁶ by committing to end GBV and joining the collective target of “4000 private sector organizations adopting and

implementing GBV policies by 2026”.⁷ And join Generation Equality’s collective commitment for eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work in general.⁸

○ **Become a HeForShe champion**, making tangible commitments and leveraging impactful resources for gender equality.⁹

○ For United Kingdom-based companies, **connect with UN Women National Committee UK** for resources, networking and initiatives focused on the United Kingdom.¹⁰

1

Introduction

Violence against women effects one in three globally

Violence against women is a major human rights violation and a global health problem.

According to recent data from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 736 million women — almost one in three — or 31%, have been subjected to some form of gender-based violence (GBV) at least once in their lifetime (since the age of 15).¹¹

GBV can affect anyone and it is not confined by social or economic boundaries. However, it disproportionately impacts women and girls.

Women and girls from diverse and marginalized communities face an elevated risk, as gender inequality combines with other forms of oppression. The highest recorded rates are, on average, found in Micronesia (37%), southern Asia (35%) and sub-Saharan Africa (33%).

Intimate partner violence¹² (or domestic violence and abuse, as outlined in Box 1) is the most widespread form of violence against women globally, with as many as 53% affected in some countries.¹³ Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) not only devastates lives, families and communities, but also has a significant impact on workplaces and economies, and is a significant barrier to women's progress and economic empowerment.

DVA is not only a cause but also a consequence of gender inequality. It violates and nullifies the ability of women and girls to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is a formidable obstacle to achieving gender equality, as it reinforces power imbalances and perpetuates harmful stereotypes. DVA not only inflicts direct harm on individuals, but also creates an environment that inhibits women's full participation in various aspects of life.

Tackling DVA is essential for dismantling systemic inequalities, as it addresses a fundamental violation of human rights and lays the foundation for a society where everyone, regardless of gender, can enjoy equal opportunities, dignity and freedom from violence and discrimination. The world cannot achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5, namely to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls", without ending all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls.

Definition of domestic violence and abuse
For the purposes of this research the term "domestic violence and abuse" (DVA) has been used because it is a commonly used term understood and used by the sample of companies.

UN Women defines DVA as: "*Domestic violence (sometimes referred to as intimate partner violence, family violence or domestic abuse) includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence, as well as coercive control, carried out by an intimate partner. This can include, for example, control over women's social interactions and autonomy, control of children and parenting, verbal, emotional, economic control, and threats of abuse and violence. All of these can have devastating psychological consequences, affecting a woman's confidence, her ability to leave a violent relationship and to sustain meaningful employment*".

Box 1: Definition of domestic violence and abuse

Domestic violence and abuse are a workplace issue

DVA is a workplace issue because it prevents women's engagement in employment and education and their career advancement, resulting in profound physical, economic and psychological repercussions for survivors. DVA, rooted in power and coercive control, strips survivors of agency and confidence, often deterring them from reporting violence. Abusive partners frequently disrupt survivors' working lives through hindering job searches, forcing them to quit or causing them to miss out on career opportunities. Working from home can amplify these risks if women are living with a perpetrator.

Studies reveal that lateness, absenteeism and decreased productivity and performance are associated with employees experiencing DVA, impacting their overall well-being, health and safety.¹⁴ The cumulative impact of these factors can result in long-term economic consequences for survivors, including lower lifetime earnings, diminished retirement savings and challenges in building financial stability. This hampers overall progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

Having a safe and supportive work environment that can respond to and prevent DVA can make all the difference to employees experiencing DVA, protecting their lives and livelihoods. Ultimately, this will advance gender equality and women's empowerment overall.

The global cost of violence against women is huge

Addressing DVA through workplace support also makes economic sense. The global cost associated with violence against women is staggering, amounting to at least \$1.5 trillion, or roughly 2% of the global gross domestic product per year.¹⁵ In the EU alone, DVA is estimated to cost €151 billion per year,¹⁶ and in England and Wales it is estimated to cost £78 billion per year.¹⁷ This includes the cost of lost output resulting from absenteeism and decreased productivity in the workplace. In other countries where Financial Times Stock Exchange 100 Index (FTSE 100) companies operate, estimates of the economic cost of violence against women vary from \$2.3 billion in Bangladesh to \$0.3 billion in Uganda.¹⁸ While costs are not directly comparable, it is evident that the economic impact of violence against women is universal and significant.

\$

1.5 Trillion

ESTIMATED GLOBAL COST OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Employers have an obligation to provide workplace support

While the primary responsibility for protecting human rights lies with States under international law, employers also play a critical role. This role is spelt out in the International Labour Organization's (ILO's) Convention No. 190 and accompanying Recommendation No. 206 on eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work.¹⁹ (See Box 2). This convention recognizes the link between DVA and the world of work. It calls upon States and employers to recognize the effects of DVA and mitigate its impact in the world of work, setting out some specific measures that can be taken.

International Labour Organization measures on DVA in the "Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206)"

"Appropriate measures to mitigate the impacts of domestic violence in the world of work referred to in Article 10(f) of the Convention could include:

- (a) leave for victims of domestic violence.*
- (b) flexible work arrangements and protection for victims of domestic violence.*
- (c) temporary protection against dismissal for victims of domestic violence, as appropriate, except on grounds unrelated to domestic violence and its consequences.*
- (d) the inclusion of domestic violence in workplace risk assessments.*
- (e) a referral system to public mitigation measures for domestic violence, where they exist; and*
- (f) awareness-raising about the effects of domestic violence."*

Box 2: International Labour Organization measures to mitigate the impact of DVA in the world of work

Employer obligations are also described in the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)²⁰ and in the laws of some countries (such as Spain and New Zealand), where protection of employment, workplace support and paid leave for survivors is enshrined in national legislation.²¹ In the UK, Statutory Guidance on DVA states that all employers need to consider what action they can take in relation to their role in helping victims of DVA (see Box 3).²²

UK Government "Domestic Abuse: Statutory Guidance" (Home Office: July 2022)

"Employers have a duty of care to their employees. Legally, this means that they need to abide by relevant health and safety and employment law, as well as the common law duty of care. Employers must ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare at work of their employees. Employers should consider the impact of domestic abuse on their employees as part of their duty of care".

Box 3: UK Government Statutory Guidance on domestic abuse

Employers can provide a range of response and prevention options that support the immediate needs of survivors of DVA and address its long-term impact (see Box 4). These range from immediate response measures to support DVA survivors to longer-term initiatives that can help address the root causes of DVA, including ensuring an overall commitment from companies to women's empowerment. Employers and companies play a crucial role in supporting DVA survivors in the workplace. By fostering a safe and supportive work environment, employers can contribute to identifying, responding to and preventing the impact of DVA on employees and gender equality outcomes overall.

UN Women (Women's Empowerment Principles) recommendations for employer support to address the impact of domestic violence on the workplace

(adapted from WEPs guidance²³):

Commitment, communication, and awareness-raising:

- Ensure leadership commitment and support for DVA survivors, through clear messaging from senior executives.
- Run awareness-raising campaigns and regular training sessions for management and employees about the effects of DVA and consider expanding this to business partners and suppliers.
- Disseminate regular messaging from leaders about the company's commitment to supporting employees affected by DVA, confidentially and without recrimination.
- Consult and engage women workers in the above, listening to ideas, experiences, and suggestions.
- Communicate regularly with all employees and team members, stay in touch, and build trust.
- Encourage survivors to seek help, stressing that this will be without recrimination from their manager or the company.
- Develop a specific corporate policy, procedure and/or guidelines on DVA as a workplace issue.
- Link this policy to corporate commitments on gender equality overall – e.g. the WEPs on advancing gender equality in the workplace, marketplace, and community.
- Regularly conduct DVA and security training for all management and staff, and particularly for managers, training them on 'non-judgmental' listening skills. Train managers and employees to be attentive to potential signs of DVA.
- Create a network of trained workplace advocates / champions who provide confidential advice and information for survivors.
- Engage in wider, multinational corporate awareness raising, funding and networks of influence.

Box 4: UN Women recommendations on workplace support for domestic violence and abuse survivors

Measures for supporting DVA survivors:

- Include DVA in broader workplace risk assessments.
- Provide paid leave for victims and survivors of domestic violence, and offer financial support, advanced salary payment and/or loans in situations of economic abuse.
- Establish flexible work arrangements, reorganization of tasks or work location, as necessary, for victims and survivors of DVA.
- Provide temporary protection against dismissal or other forms of recrimination for victims and survivors of DVA, as appropriate.
- Provide necessary work-related protections to employees at risk of DVA (for example, facilitating the victim to change work-related telephone numbers or work from alternative sites, providing an escort to the company parking lot, or to and from work, providing personal alarms or company mobile phones etc.).
- Provide information about available support services and referrals to support organizations.
- Implement procedures for DVA survivors who are remote/home working, for example, by introducing a safety code or hand signal for employees to ask for emergency help through co-workers or their manager during video-assisted meetings.
- Establish a company hotline/dedicated email monitored by a health and safety team that can offer support and information about available services.
- Offer advice about protection/restraining orders and about contacting the police if the order has been breached.
- Take disciplinary action against any employee who is determined to have engaged in DVA.
- Support offered should always be tailored to the individual survivor and be led by them.

Many employers recognize their role and have been doing their part

The United Nations, led by UN Women, has been documenting promising practices for several years, including in partnership with companies and multilateral institutions.²⁴ In response to the global surge in rates of violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic and the UN Secretary-General's appeal,²⁵ UN Women issued a "call to action" under the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) initiative to prompt immediate steps by private sector companies to prevent and address the issue.²⁶

Effective strategies from employers during that period emphasized the importance of leadership commitment, awareness-raising campaigns and the establishment of workplace policies and support systems. Chief Executive Officers and executives play a pivotal role in fostering a workplace culture where survivors feel safe to disclose DVA and seek assistance. Lessons learned from this period demonstrated that basic initiatives such as implementing a DVA workplace policy can significantly impact the lives of survivors, as they signal that DVA is a priority workplace issue.

FTSE 100 companies have a significant influence on the issue

As the foremost entities listed on the London Stock Exchange in terms of market capitalization, FTSE 100 companies have considerable influence on global markets, workforces, communities and societal norms.

With an estimated global workforce of four to five million employees,²⁷ these companies, operating in diverse industries such as finance, energy, pharmaceuticals, consumer goods and telecommunications, are well positioned to address the pervasive issue of DVA, particularly in regions with limited state support and human rights protections.

While some FTSE 100 companies are already recognized as exemplary models for employee support on DVA, as acknowledged by UN Women and partners, comprehensive research on these practices across the entire FTSE 100 group remains lacking. Therefore, there is a critical need for further investigation and documentation to understand the scope and impact of existing initiatives and to identify areas for improvement.

About the research:

This research seeks to bridge this knowledge gap by documenting practices across the FTSE 100, in collaboration with participating companies. This publication presents the findings of the first independent survey of global FTSE 100 companies, focused on gathering information about workplace support for employees experiencing DVA. It is intended to be practitioner focused, i.e. based on the practical experience of employers – especially personnel involved in employee support – to ensure its utility and feasibility.

The research serves as the basis for specific recommendations aimed at all employers assisting DVA survivors through workplace support, ultimately contributing to the achievement of broader global gender equality goals. Although targeted primarily at FTSE 100 companies – because of their worldwide reach as multinational companies with influence across markets and society, with the ability to have an impact on employees, customers and – the recommendations are for all employers, for implementation in collaboration with UN Women, survivor support organizations and other partners. (See Box 5 for more details on the methodology)

Research methodology:

The research primarily utilized an online, self-administered survey sent to FTSE 100 company representatives. It included 20 mandatory yes/no questions assessing the provision of specific support to survivors. Follow-up multiple-choice questions categorized support based on UN Women, ILO, and other best practices. Companies had the option to provide specific examples of support, along with information on barriers and recommendations. Responses could be confidential or disclose company support details. The survey ran from September 4, 2023, to January 19, 2024. Survey findings were complemented by a desk review of additional research, literature, and company information on the topic. Refer to the endnotes for study limitations, ethical considerations, safety measures, and data protection protocols and the survey questions are available upon request from UN Women.

Box 5: Research methodology

2

The findings

Survey response:

- 22 FTSE 100 companies participated in the survey.
- Operating in 180 countries.
- Employing over 1.6 million people.
- 43% of whom are women.

The findings are documented in seven main sections. These are: FTSE 100 companies' (i) support for employees experiencing DVA; (ii) lessons learned in providing support; (iii) barriers in providing workplace support for DVA survivors; (iv) workplace policies and guidelines on DVA; (v) awareness of DVA as a workplace issue; (vi) opportunities to enhance support for DVA survivors; and (vii) support for wider community initiatives relating to GBV and gender equality. The paper concludes with overall observations and recommendations.

Twenty-two FTSE 100 companies, spanning various sectors, participated in the survey. Primarily headquartered in London, they operate in 3 to 180 countries globally, covering all regions of the world. Notably, a substantial number are active in Europe (95%), North America (86%), sub-Saharan Africa (68%), Australia and New Zealand (68%) and eastern Asia (64%). These companies collectively employ over 1,609,000 people worldwide, including over 686,700 women, who account for 43% of the workforce.

2.1. Support for employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse

Key findings:

- 18 (82%) of companies responding to the survey are providing some kind of support to survivors of DVA.
- This includes immediate support to respond to DVA when it happens including referrals to external support organizations and DVA specialists; flexible working arrangements and leave (including additional paid leave), as critical options to help survivors escape DVA when it happens whilst keeping their job.
- Twelve (or 53%) of companies responding to the survey are raising awareness of the risk and impact of DVA on employees and promoting the support available for employees/survivors of DVA.

- Nine (41%) of companies are providing longer-term support to support women's economic independence, including through financial support and temporary protection against dismissal.

- Five (23%) companies reported providing practical guidance and training for managers and HR professionals to recognize and respond to employees affected by DVA.

Most FTSE 100 companies that responded to the survey are providing some kind of support to employees experiencing DVA and have DVA prevention activities in place, aligned with ILO and UN Women recommendations. Eighteen FTSE 100 companies (82% of respondents) are offering support to survivors of DVA and/or taking action to raise awareness of DVA as a workplace issue.

Companies reported primarily providing support through immediate response methods when DVA happens (if survivors ask for this support). These include referrals for employees experiencing DVA to external specialists and support organizations (e.g. hotlines, counselling services, domestic violence support groups, legal aid, etc.), along with offering flexible working options and leave (including additional paid leave, on top of other leave allowances). (See Table 1 for details of how companies responded and good practices in Box 6).

These options are vital to help survivors escape DVA and access immediate support when DVA happens, with assurance that their job and livelihood is secure even if they need to take time off work or work alternative hours to handle the situation or seek help. Having these support options available signals to employees that the company is aware of the issue and that workplace support is essential to mitigating and managing its impact on employees, especially women.

Companies can also provide a range of options to tackle the medium- to longer-term impact of DVA, especially in cases when survivors cannot immediately escape the situation or need to support dependent family members and children. This includes financial support (such as advance payment of salaries or one-off loans) and temporary protection from dismissal, if, for example, survivors of DVA require extended absence from work (which can occur if a survivor needs to attend court or deal with the long-term trauma and impact of DVA).

The findings

Fewer FTSE 100 companies reported providing this kind of support (nine (41%) and seven (32%) of respondents, respectively). Companies responding to the survey reported that these options can be more complex for them to provide, given the administrative hurdles that can be encountered in negotiating such corporate support internally; however, these options can have enormous benefits for the longer-term social and economic recovery of survivors of DVA, and hence gender equality outcomes overall. These options are vital within the package of support options available to ensure that workplace support for DVA survivors not only provides an immediate response but tackles the root causes of DVA, which can lie within the economic inequality women face at home and in the workplace.

Innovative support cited by some companies in this area included offering financial assistance such as airfare costs to travel to a safer location than home (for example, to the nearest city where extended family are located), and longer-term options such as relocation to a different office, site or location if appropriate. These options were more frequently cited by companies with global operations and polices spanning multiple countries. Such options enable economic empowerment of women employees in the longer term, balancing immediate safety needs with long-term economic empowerment options to address the root cause of DVA and enable gender equality.

Prevention of DVA by raising awareness of the issue and spotting the signs early are also crucial elements of workplace support. Twelve (53%) of companies responding to the survey reported providing awareness-raising sessions and/or campaigns about the risk and impact of DVA on employees and/or the support available for employees/survivors of DVA. Awareness-raising efforts should communicate a clear commitment to addressing DVA as a workplace issue by the top leadership and encourage employees at all levels to

take a stand against DVA. They should promote the support options available, reducing the stigma that can be felt by survivors of DVA, and emphasize that any disclosures are confidential.

Awareness raising should be coupled with practical guidance and training to enable managers and human resource (HR) professionals to recognize and respond to employees affected by DVA. The introduction of workplace advocates and champions who provide information to survivors of DVA and can be approached as an alternative to talking to HR and managers, if desired, can be useful in this regard, to supplement this support. However, only five (23%) companies reported providing training for HR professionals and/or supervisors on how to support employees experiencing DVA.

Integrating DVA into standard workplace risk assessments can also be a clear sign of and practical step in prioritizing it as a workplace issue, but only three (14%) companies who responded to the survey reported such provisions. Companies that have done so provided some practical, innovative options of using workplace risk assessments to prevent DVA occurring in the work environment, including providing an escort to and from the car park, setting up new telephone numbers and screening/blocking abusive calls and emails.

Some companies responding to the survey reported providing support for survivors of DVA but not specifically labeling this as relevant to DVA. Instead, such support options were seen as standard options that supervisors and HR could offer to employees in different circumstances, integrated into general employee assistance programs (EAPs). However, lessons show that unless these are clearly labeled and signposted as relevant to DVA survivors, employees experiencing issues may not understand or know about the support available.

Table 1:

Types of support that can be provided to employees experiencing DVA (aligned with ILO/UN Women recommendations) Number of companies

<input type="radio"/> Referrals to external specialist/s and support organizations for survivors such as hotlines, counselling services, domestic violence support organizations, legal aid, etc.)	18
<input type="radio"/> Flexible work arrangements for survivors of domestic violence and abuse.	16
<input type="radio"/> Leave for survivors of DVA.*	15
<input type="radio"/> Awareness-raising sessions and/or campaigns about the risk and impact of domestic violence on employees and/or the support available for employees/survivors of DVA.	12
<input type="radio"/> Financial support/advance payment of salary or loans.	9
<input type="radio"/> Temporary protection against dismissal for survivors of DVA (e.g. if requiring extended absence from work)	7
<input type="radio"/> Other kinds of support.	6
<input type="radio"/> Training for human resource professionals and/or supervisors on how to support employees experiencing DVA.	5
<input type="radio"/> Workplace advocates/champions who either provide confidential advice and information to survivors of DVA and/or champion the cause.	5
<input type="radio"/> Inclusion of domestic violence in workplace risk assessments.	3

Table 1: Number of FTSE 100 companies offering support to employees experiencing DVA, by type
 *Note that in the ILO recommendations it does not specify whether this should be paid leave, however in UN Women guidance and best practices it must be paid leave.

Good practices of FTSE 100 companies in providing a comprehensive package of support for employees experiencing DVA

Anglo American provides a range of support options under the auspices of their global policy on recognizing and responding to DVA, supported by a toolkit and engagement materials covering 15 countries worldwide. This includes: (i) risk assessments and safety plans; (ii) provision of safe accommodation for employees (and members of their immediate family who live with them, including children) who need to leave their home in an emergency; (iii) paid leave of up to 10 days in each 12-month period; (iv) flexible working time (in addition to the paid leave); (v) one-off financial assistance to support survivors to become financially and physically independent from their abuser; (vi) survivor support advocates; (vii) line manager support; and (viii) referrals to specialist counselors and support.

HSBC UK provides support for employees experiencing DVA in the United Kingdom through its EAP, offering: (i) 10 days of paid time off; (ii) discretion in performance and/or absence management; (iii) flexibility in the job role, with consideration given to relocation and/or changes in working patterns; (iv) employees also have access to financial grants awarded through the Bank

Box 6: Good practices of FTSE 100 companies in providing support for employees experiencing DVA

Workers Charity (HSBC UK resources are intentionally flexible in order to be able to provide support to employees where they need it); (v) regular awareness-raising webinars and; (vi) the company takes part in the United Nations UNITE to End Violence against Women campaign and the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign, and has lit up its head office in the color orange in recent years to help raise awareness and educate employees.

Vodafone launched the first known global domestic violence policy (with coverage for 19 countries worldwide) in 2019, which set out a comprehensive range of workplace support options, security and other measures for employees at risk of, experiencing and recovering from DVA. This includes a toolkit based on the “Recognize, Respond and Refer” model of support for survivors. Vodafone’s policy includes provisions for: (i) ensuring confidentiality and non-retaliation against survivors disclosing DVA; (ii) paid safe leave; (iii) financial support (payroll advance); (iv) safety measures at work (such as physical, cyber security, flexible working); (v) specialist referral support; (vi) training and awareness raising for all employees; (vii) training for HR and people managers; and (viii) partnerships with local domestic violence organizations.

2.2. Lessons in providing support for domestic violence and abuse survivors

Key findings:

○ Support that is working well: leave, flexible working arrangements, financial support, temporary protection against dismissal and inclusion of DVA in workplace assessments. A ‘standard’ of providing a minimum of 10 days paid ‘safe leave’ per year (separate and on top of other leave allowances) for employees experiencing DVA is a particularly effective strategy to support DVA survivors.

○ Support that is working less well: awareness raising. Respondents highlighted challenges in maintaining awareness about DVA policies and support options across the company, especially across multiple countries and amidst competing corporate priorities.

○ Some FTSE 100 companies reported challenges in answering this question as insufficient information was available and/or it had not been measured.

Survey respondents were asked to rank support options (listed above in Table 1) by what had worked well and less well, or to note if the support was not applicable to their organization or it was not possible to measure progress.

While only a few companies offered options such as financial support, temporary protection from dismissal and inclusion of DVA in workplace risk assessments, 100% of those companies reported them as working well. All the other support options were mainly assessed as working well, with only one option reported as working less well by 11% of respondents: awareness-raising sessions and/or campaigns about the risk and impact of domestic violence on employees and/or the support available for employees/survivors of DVA.

Although challenging to measure (without direct feedback from employees experiencing DVA, and in most cases this information is confidential), some companies were able to share anecdotal evidence from employees about the options that had worked the most well, for example that flexible working and leave options were well received by staff.

A standard of providing a minimum of 10 days of paid “safe leave” per year (separate and on top of other leave allowances) for employees experiencing DVA was mentioned by several companies as an effective strategy to support DVA survivors.

The findings

For example, **NatWest Group** has a “Safe Leave” policy that exists to provide paid leave to employees impacted by domestic abuse. This provides employees with paid time off to relocate to a safe environment if needed, as well as reasonable time off to attend appointments (e.g. court, police, solicitors). NatWest Group reported that:

“Our Safe Leave policy was introduced in 2021 [and] received great feedback from colleagues who thought that it was a really positive initiative – helping to reduce anxiety experienced by colleagues during situations of abuse.”

Anglo American reported that providing flexible support for survivors accessed through, and generally managed by, senior HR and security employees had worked well. This includes specific security and protection support for survivors to escape DVA through the provision of safe, emergency accommodation and safe transit to and from the office as needed. Anglo American also reported that general training and awareness raising on DVA for all employees globally had worked well, coupled with deeper, tailored training for workplace risk assessors.

Companies responding to the survey were also asked about what had not worked so well in employee support, or what needed to improve. There were mixed reviews on the effectiveness of

awareness raising and training, with most companies reporting success but a few indicating lower effectiveness, yielding important insights.

Respondents highlighted challenges in maintaining awareness about DVA policies and support options across the company, especially amid competing corporate priorities. Companies also reported challenges in reaching all employees with awareness raising (given the extent of their operations), and in training managers across global markets and multiple countries in how to recognize, respond to and refer DVA survivors.

Some companies reported success in providing DVA support in one country or market but not in others, with consistency in communication and outreach proving difficult across all operational contexts. To help manage this, some recommended staggering the launch of workplace initiatives across markets (e.g. starting support for DVA survivors in one country). However, respondents felt that, ideally, such initiatives should have global reach from the start.

Interestingly, some companies found greater success in communicating and raising awareness about their strategies for supporting customers experiencing DVA, rather than employees (FTSE 100 company support for customers is elaborated upon later in this report).

2.3. Barriers in providing workplace support for domestic violence and abuse survivors

Key findings:

The most significant barriers and challenges in providing workplace support for DVA survivors were reported as:

- **Low awareness** of DVA as a workplace issue and the obligations of employers to respond.
- **Lack of training** and skills to support survivors of DVA amongst HR staff, supervisors and /or senior management.
- **Beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions** about DVA amongst employees and/or supervisors (e.g., that it is not for workplace discussion).
- **Local context** requires a tailored response: respondents reported that each market needed to be handled differently and sensitively depending on cultural and social norms

Survey respondents were asked to rank 10 common barriers and challenges experienced by companies aiming to provide support for employees experiencing DVA, from the most to the least significant (see Table 2). Respondents elaborated on these barriers and challenges, repeating some of the findings above on lessons learned.

Among the companies responding to this question, the majority highlighted low awareness of DVA within the company as a key issue. This extended to low awareness generally of DVA and its impact on employees, as well as low awareness of company obligations to mitigate these impacts in

line with national, regional and international legislation and conventions.

Notably, addressing (potentially negative) beliefs, attitudes and perceptions about DVA among employees and/or supervisors, along with a lack of training and skills to support survivors, also emerged as significant barriers.

Negative perceptions about DVA and stigmatization of the issue act as deterrents to survivors seeking support. In some locations, employees were less willing or able to disclose and talk about DVA than in others, as it is considered a private and personal topic, and even taboo, in some communities. This links to perceptions about gender equality overall and the important role FTSE 100 companies can play in tackling the root causes of DVA through targeted action.

Several companies cited stigma as a key reason for why policies and support options were less successful, as managers were less keen to identify issues and promote support options, and survivors were not reaching out. Respondents reported that each market needed to be handled differently and sensitively depending on cultural and social norms. One company reported that: **“Operating in west Africa, the biggest challenge is societal, women are not comfortable talking about DVA.”**

Table 2: Barriers and challenges in providing support to DVA survivors (ranked by respondents from most significant, 1, to least significant, 10) Ranking

<input type="radio"/> Low awareness in the company of the issue of DVA and its impact on employees	1
<input type="radio"/> Low awareness in the company about private sector obligations to take appropriate measures to mitigate the impacts of DVA*	2
<input type="radio"/> Lack of training and skills to support survivors of DVA among HR staff, supervisors and/or senior management	3
<input type="radio"/> Beliefs, attitudes and perceptions about DVA among employees and/or supervisors (e.g. that it is not for workplace discussion)	4
<input type="radio"/> Lack of time/human resources within the organization to put in place appropriate measures and/or provisions to support survivors	5
<input type="radio"/> Lack of resources (e.g. a dedicated budget) within the organization to put in place appropriate measures and/or provisions on DVA	6
<input type="radio"/> Lack of commitment or prioritization by the organization to support survivors of DVA (i.e. limited senior management attention)	7
<input type="radio"/> Lack of tools, support and guidance from external experts, inclusive of guidance from the United Nations to help your organization support survivors of DVA	8
<input type="radio"/> Lack of a clear organizational policy or guidelines on supporting survivors of DVA (or lack of inclusion in existing policies)	9
<input type="radio"/> Financial cost (or perceived financial cost) to the organization of supporting DVA survivors	10

Table 2: Barriers reported by FTSE 100 companies in providing support to employees experiencing DVA

Barriers to awareness raising were also attributed to the challenge of reaching everyone who needs to know about the policies and support options, with one company reporting that all the resources and leadership commitment were in place, but organization-wide awareness was still lacking. Critical analysis of the reasons for this was provided by some companies, with at least two respondents citing the absorption capacity of managers as a barrier:

“We have a lot of different support on offer within the organization and making our colleagues aware of it all ... is difficult. We also face issues of absorbability when it comes to line manager training.”

Resource constraints, in terms of both personnel and finances, ranked lower on the list of obstacles. However, notably, lack of time and human resources appeared more significant than financial constraints. Several companies cited managing numerous competing priorities as a key challenge, as this made it difficult for managers to keep the support options for employees at the top of their priority list.

Limited resources and capacity, along with the need for a prioritized approach, create challenges in making meaningful and sustainable changes. One organization talked about managing this through a transition to “an empowerment approach” whereby employees rely less on HR and managers and are able to directly access the support they need, but acknowledged that this transition was an ongoing journey. In addition, another respondent reported a need to balance which topics to highlight to managers and to consider budget constraints when providing support for employees on specific issues.

Finally, while the absence of clear organizational policies or guidelines on supporting DVA survivors was not widely viewed as a significant barrier, companies without integrated or stand-alone policies, provisions and guidelines acknowledged it can be a challenge that prevents the effective implementation of all other options.

FTSE 100 companies with existing DVA-specific policies and guidance that have global and multi-country coverage, and have already faced many of the challenges and barriers above, have further important lessons to share on this topic.

2.4. Workplace policies and guidance on domestic violence and abuse

Key messages:

- 20 (90%) of companies responding to the survey have recognized violence and harassment as a workplace issue in general through policies and/or guidance, of which:
 - 13 (59%) companies have recognized DVA as a workplace issue within these, of which.
 - 7 (32%) are addressing the issue across multiple countries of operation, reaching employees in up to 67 countries worldwide.

A first step in providing support for survivors is recognizing DVA as a workplace issue. UN Women recommends doing so through either stand-alone workplace policies on DVA or by integrating the issue into a policy on all forms of violence and harassment in the world of work.

While 20 companies reported having workplace policies and/or guidance on violence and harassment in general (in the world of work), only 13 of these (59%) have specifically integrated DVA as a workplace issue within these policies and/or guidance or created stand-alone policies of guidance.

Among companies integrating DVA into existing policies, most included it in other official company policies, for example on anti-discrimination or employee well-being. For example, **Spirax Group** included a commitment on supporting colleagues experiencing DVA as part of the company's "Group Inclusion Commitments", launched in February 2022 as part of its global Inclusion Plan, **"Everyone is Included"**. **They committed to "Stand up for colleagues who experience domestic violence or abuse"** and introduced paid 'safe leave' globally for colleagues experiencing DVA and needing time away from work as a result.²⁹

Examples of stand-alone guidance include **Diageo's** "Domestic and Family Abuse Guidelines" and supporting toolkit, launched in November 2021, outlining the company's zero-tolerance approach to all forms of domestic and family abuse, while providing practical guidance to employees and line managers on where to go for expert and confidential support.³⁰ (See Box 7).

Companies with operations across multiple countries have a significant opportunity to support employees experiencing DVA by ensuring global coverage of relevant workplace policies, guidance and provisions (rather than national, single-country coverage alone). In addition, it is recommended that companies tailor global guidelines to accommodate in-market nuances and local contexts, including relevant national legislation (if it exists).

FTSE 100 companies are demonstrating success in this area, with important lessons to share: of the 13 companies with stand-alone and/or integrated policies, guidance or other provisions on DVA, seven (54%) have multi-country or global coverage. Notably, those with stand-alone policies and/or guidance were more likely to have multi-country or

global coverage than those without (only 44% of companies with integrated policies/guidance had global or multi-country coverage). **Companies with global coverage are already reaching employees in up to 67 countries worldwide.**

Diageo's Domestic and Family Abuse Guidelines (with multi-country coverage)

Designed to demonstrate an understanding of domestic and family abuse as a human rights issue, a health and safety issue and a workplace productivity issue, the approach combines practical workplace support and greater flexibility. Diageo's approach is based on four key pillars of action:

- **Raising awareness** - recognize and build awareness of domestic and family abuse at both the individual employee and community level.
- **Reaching out** - support and encourage impacted employees to report any concerns.
- **React** - respond appropriately to disclosure by employees and provide appropriate employer support.
- **Refer** - refer employees to resources to provide appropriate help.

Box 7: Diageo's Domestic and Family Abuse Guidelines

Critically, for those companies with stand-alone policies, guidance and provisions on employer support for DVA survivors (13 companies), all reported providing three or more support options (from the list in Table 1), whereas those without (nine companies) included some that did not provide any options at all, or were unaware of the support that could be made available.

Workplace policies and guidance on DVA make a real difference to employees. According to **Vodafone's** experience, survivors have come forward to share their story on the impact of the policy on their ability to stay employed. One survivor interviewed for a lessons learned review commissioned by Vodafone, spoke about the personal value of the policy, which enabled her to realize that her experience of domestic abuse was legitimate and that she could take steps to change her situation:

"The launch of the Vodafone Domestic Violence and Abuse policy had really a powerful impact on me, it gave me the language to describe my experience and to be able to know what was happening to me."³¹

Line managers in Vodafone have also spoken out about the importance of the policy to their team members: **"without the policy, and trust in it, none of their employees would have come forward for support"**.³²

2.5. Awareness of domestic violence and abuse as a workplace issue

Key messages:

- 17 (77%) of FTSE 100 companies responding to the survey reported good or fair awareness of employer obligations to support employees experiencing DVA.
- Five (23%) reported poor awareness.
- Introducing specific workplace policies and DVA as a workplace issue increases awareness: companies reporting good awareness typically had standalone policies or provisions dedicated to domestic violence and abuse.
- Improving awareness creates a safe workplace environment in which DVA survivors seek support.

Noting that awareness raising is a significant first step in gaining corporate support for DVA as a workplace issue, the survey explored this in more depth.

The survey assessed respondents' perception of their company's awareness about employer obligations to support employees experiencing DVA (in accordance with relevant national, regional and international frameworks).

Among the 22 respondents, 18% reported good awareness, 59% indicated some awareness and the remaining 23% noted very limited awareness. No companies reported no awareness (see Figure 1).

Percentage of FTSE 100 companies reporting awareness of employer obligations to support DVA survivors

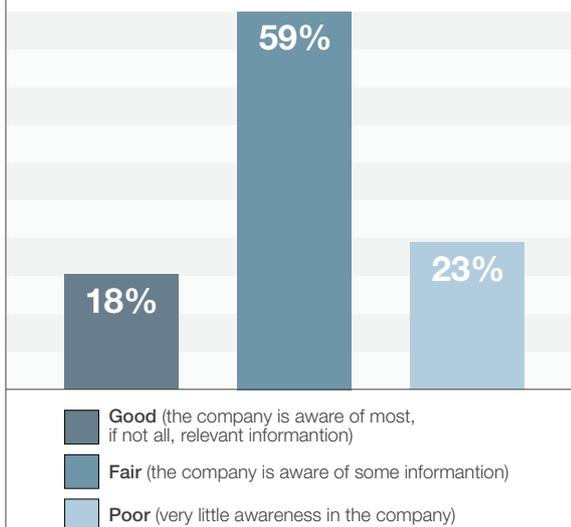


Figure 1: Awareness of employer obligations to support survivors of domestic violence and abuse

Companies with poor to fair awareness were less likely to have stand-alone policies, provisions or guidelines for supporting DVA survivors in the workplace, or to include DVA in workplace policies and guidance on violence and harassment in general. In contrast, those with good awareness typically had stand-alone policies or provisions dedicated to DVA (see the following section for more on policies).

FTSE 100 companies responding to the survey were asked if there had been any disclosures of DVA in the previous 12 months. As confidence in employer support for DVA survivors grows, there is an expectation that disclosures may increase, indicating that individuals experiencing DVA feel safe to seek support from supervisors, HR or other professionals within the organization. This indicator thus acts as a proxy for measuring employee confidence in disclosing experiences, recognizing that such information may not always be systematically tracked or readily available, as DVA disclosures typically occur in confidence.

Among the 22 respondents, nine organizations reported disclosures or reports of employees experiencing DVA in the past 12 months (e.g. to HR professionals or supervisors when seeking employer support). All nine organizations reporting disclosures had stand-alone policies, provisions or guidelines for supporting DVA survivors in the workplace, or had included DVA in workplace policies or guidance on violence and harassment. In contrast, those reporting no disclosures or a lack of data on this were less likely to have stand-alone policies or include DVA in workplace policies or guidance on violence and harassment, suggesting a correlation between the two. Policies help to reduce the stigma of disclosure.

Hence, some FTSE 100 companies are seeing evidence that having workplace policies, guidelines or provisions specifically on DVA has an immediate positive impact. One company reported in the survey that on the day they launched specific commitments to support employees experiencing DVA, an employee contacted its local HR team for support for the first time. It reinforced the importance of talking openly about challenging topics at work and signposting leadership and corporate commitment.

Having a company policy and/or guidance on DVA is a critical step in creating a workplace culture of trust, support and protection, with zero tolerance of all forms of violence and harassment. UN Women recognizes that policy development can take time and requires clear commitment from top leadership as well as buy-in from company boards, shareholders and employees to be effective. An essential first step towards having effective policies and guidance is therefore raising awareness of DVA as a workplace issue and its impact on gender equality and women's empowerment overall. This can help prevent DVA from occurring in the first place through supporting employees to spot the signs and risk factors.

HSBC UK shared an experience of raising awareness about DVA as a workplace issue through the publication of an HR article available to all employees on the support options available to employees experiencing DVA. The article educates employees on the definition of domestic abuse, what it may look like and the support tools available, and signposts how survivors can access support from local DVA support organizations.

Awareness of DVA as a workplace issue clearly correlates with the likelihood of developing integrated or stand-alone policies on DVA. Of the nine companies without either, all reported lower awareness about DVA across the organization than those with such policies. Positive steps are being made by some companies to raise awareness that could lead to the introduction of policies and guidelines, and three companies deemed it very likely or somewhat likely that the company would be taking steps to develop policies and/or guidance on DVA as a workplace issue within the next 12 months.

One such company described being in the early stages of spearheading a DVA initiative as part of its diversity and inclusion commitments, and reported that raising awareness with its company's board and leadership was essential to gaining traction and commitment. This included making proposals to the company's board over several years. Only with the support and buy-in of the board has the company been able to commit to the development of a specific policy in 2024. **There are, therefore, significant lessons to be learned from FTSE 100 companies that have been through this process, in terms of the business case and other arguments used to support the introduction of policies and guidance.**

From an alternative perspective, a company that reported no intention of introducing specific or integrated policies or guidance in the next 12 months reported it as a **“conscious choice to reduce the number of individual policies to ensure those we have get sufficient share of mind space”**. This correlates with those companies reporting that a key barrier to providing support for DVA survivors is the competing priorities for managers' attention.

2.6. Opportunities to enhance support for domestic violence and abuse survivors

Key findings:

Opportunities for individual FTSE 100 companies to enhance support for DVA survivors:

1. Training and education for all employees on DVA as a workplace issue, especially for managers and HR professionals.
2. Improving the visibility of available support options and embedding these within existing employee assistance programs (EAP) and standard well-being initiatives.
3. Expanding avenues for DVA survivors to access support (beyond managers) to other professionals, such as a DVA survivor advocate network.
4. Creating a culture and workplace environment of trust and support in which survivors feel safe to seek support and share stories of impact.
5. Linking internal efforts on DVA support with broader corporate social responsibility initiatives.
6. Partnering with external organizations and specialists in DVA support (e.g. EIDA).
7. Improving collection of data and monitoring of evidence on uptake and effectiveness of DVA survivor support, to inform improvements.
8. Learning about how to address cases when employees are the perpetrators of DVA.

Opportunities for FTSE 100 companies to work together and with the United Nations include:

1. Sharing of best practice tools across the FTSE 100 network, including opportunities to discuss and share lessons in person.
2. Developing a joint stance and commitment across the FTSE 100 network to addressing DVA as a workplace issue (including with EIDA).
3. Joining forces on national, global, or multi-country awareness raising campaigns to address the root causes of DVA.
4. Investing in learning opportunities, tools, and resources, including with the United Nations, tailored to different contexts, countries, and markets.

FTSE 100 companies report clear opportunities for expanding and enhancing support for employees experiencing DVA, both internally and by joining forces with other companies to raise awareness of DVA as a workplace issue at scale and support more survivors worldwide.

Insights on how FTSE companies - could enhance support for employees experiencing DVA internally through workplace initiatives included the following eight main areas, provided by the respondents themselves.

The findings

1. More training and education for all employees, especially for managers and HR professionals, with a focus on incorporating DVA messaging into existing training such as training on workplace anti-harassment and violence initiatives and other subjects. Plans were already in motion within some companies to host company-wide educational sessions promoting DVA guidelines, amplifying support options and increasing awareness among employees.
2. Improving the visibility of available support options and embedding these within existing EAPs and standard well-being initiatives was also recognized as an opportunity, as was expanding options for survivors to seek support, for example beyond HR professionals.
3. Developing a DVA survivor advocate network that may also encourage survivors to share stories of how support had positively impacted their lives. Some respondents expressed optimism that, as employee awareness and confidence grows, survivor stories will be shared to educate employees about the significance of DVA as a workplace issue. Experience from EIDA supports this assumption.
4. Create a culture and workplace environment of trust and support in which survivors feel safe to seek support and share stories of impact. Emphasizing the importance of gaining employee trust, one respondent noted that:
“As we build trust in the organization and enhance the capability of our leaders, there is an opportunity to create an environment of safety where more survivors feel able to come forward and receive support.”
5. Respondents also identified opportunities in linking internal efforts on DVA support with broader initiatives on gender equality and corporate social responsibility initiatives, and partnering with external organizations and specialists in DVA support. One company reported an aim to align their stance against GBV in the community with internal prioritization of support for employees facing DVA. Another saw the value of partnering with external initiatives and NGOs, such as EIDA and the Hestia Life Beyond Crisis “Everyone’s Business Award”, in bolstering leadership commitment to supporting employees impacted by domestic abuse.³³
6. Some respondents shared experiences of prioritizing gender equality overall in the workplace as the fundamental axis for prioritizing DVA as a workplace issue. For example, NatWest Group has an employee-led “gender network”³⁴ whose vision is that: “NatWest Group is a gender-equal environment; a place where everyone, whatever their gender, can achieve their potential.” The network focuses on motivating and empowering employees, providing development opportunities, recognizing the talent and success of women employees and supporting cultural change towards gender equality.
7. Several companies raised the important issue of measuring success and effectiveness in

providing employee support, with the opportunity of improving uptake of support for DVA survivors through the improved monitoring of data and evidence on uptake and effectiveness.

8. Two companies are looking at ways to address cases in which employees are the perpetrators of DVA, and are hoping to learn from this.

Respondents were also asked their opinion on what opportunities they could see for the broader FTSE 100 company network to work on the issue collaboratively with other corporate entities and the United Nations, to encourage or enable action to support employees experiencing DVA. Insights from respondents included the following four main recommendations:

1. Sharing of best-practice tools, including policies, guidelines and toolkits, across the FTSE 100 network was cited frequently as a major opportunity to avoid “reinventing the wheel”. The chance to discuss lessons, challenges and opportunities in more depth was also highlighted. Learning about the process by which more advanced FTSE companies managed to achieve significant reach in terms of DVA support, and how this was done, step by step, could be highly useful for organizations just starting out.
2. Several respondents shared insights on how powerful the FTSE 100 network could be if working collectively on the issue of DVA at scale. Recognizing that DVA is a societal issue that requires a significant shift towards gender-equal attitudes, beliefs and behaviors, FTSE 100 companies have power – due to their global network and market value – to advocate for gender equality, including for an end to violence against women. Respondents recommended that FTSE 100 companies develop a clear, joint stance on DVA as a workplace issue to demonstrate their commitment, which could have a significant influence on other employers. One respondent’s recommendation was to:
“Push a culture change. If enough big companies get behind it, especially globally, then it could cause a real shift in this space.”
3. Respondents recommended joining forces on awareness-raising campaigns, with a focus on universally recognizing DVA as a workplace issue, to normalize workplace policies that support survivors. DVA policies need to become more mainstream, and information sharing between companies could help. One respondent commented that: ***“It may not be considered practical but until this is recognized, supporting policies won’t materialize and so communicating the productivity and economic impact of DVA would help.”***
4. Finally, FTSE 100 companies responding to the survey identified opportunities for working with the United Nations, especially UN Women. These included a request for more learning opportunities and resources from the United Nations on the topic, with one company stating: ***“Bitesize learning in different languages and to reflect different cultures – with signposting to support organisations in different countries – would be ideal.”***

2.7. Support for wider gender equality initiatives

Key messages:

10 (45%) of FTSE 100 companies responding are providing support to the wider community on DVA and/or GBV related issues. This includes:

- Financial support for specialist support organizations, non-governmental organizations and women’s organizations working on DVA and GBV worldwide.
- Partnering with NGOs to address barriers to gender equality across the business and value chain and/or to reduce potential harm in markets and communities where the FTSE 100 companies work.
- Supporting customers and society at large to prevent and respond to DVA and GBV by, for example, establishing "Safe Spaces" in company branches to support individuals experiencing DVA through referrals and/or financial support.
- Developing innovative technological solutions to connect people affected by DVA and other forms of violence to advice, support, and education.

Notably FTSE 100 companies that are signatories to the Women’s Empowerment Principles show more support for prioritizing DVA as a workplace issue, as an integral step towards gender equality outcomes overall.

Lastly, respondents were asked if their organization offered any additional support to the wider community regarding DVA and/or GBV and related issues. Ten companies (45.5%) reported providing such support (see Figure 2).

Percentage of FTSE 100 companies reporting that they provide support to the wider community on DVA and/or GBV and related issues

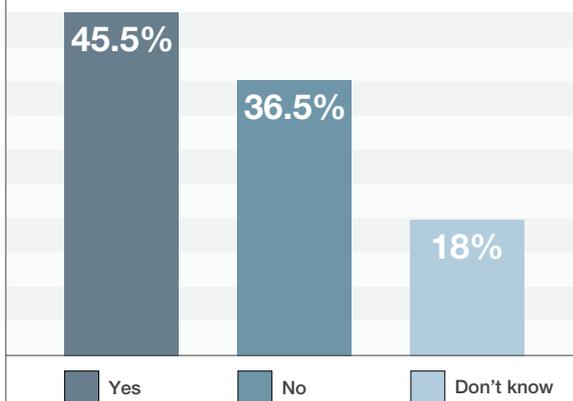


Figure 2: Awareness of employer obligations to support survivors of domestic violence and abuse

Several companies have put in place innovative and impactful initiatives for customers to prevent and respond to DVA, and several more are partnering with – and financially supporting – specialist support service providers, women’s rights organizations and other NGOs that aid survivors or work on gender equality issues at scale.

Often, this support is provided through company foundations and social impact programs, rather than through employee assistance initiatives (see Box 7 for examples).³⁵

Notably, 90% of those FTSE 100 companies providing support to customers and/or the wider community on DVA and/or GBV and related issues have stand-alone policies, guidance and/or provisions for employee support on DVA. This suggests that prioritizing DVA as a workplace issue correlates with recognition of the role these companies can play in supporting broader gender equality initiatives.

Some respondents reported an opportunity to expand support for DVA survivors from employees to customers and communities, and vice versa.

Spirax Group, for instance, intends to make its DVA workplace toolkits publicly available for use by customers, other employers, suppliers and anyone seeking to implement similar initiatives who lacks the necessary resources. In addition, other FTSE 100 companies in the sample have publicly shared their DVA workplace toolkits and contributed to external research and awareness-raising efforts on the subject.

Ten companies (45%) responding to the survey are signatories of the WEPs, with five of these responding positively to the above question on provision of broader support. While not all the companies that are WEPs signatories are working on external support initiatives, 90% of those that are WEPs signatories reported having stand-alone or integrated policies and/or guidance on DVA as a workplace issue.

WEPs signatories are expected to make efforts to advance gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community. The fact that 90% reported prioritizing DVA as a workplace issue suggests a correlation between such commitments and the WEPs, through its Principle 3 on employee health, wellbeing and safety, demonstrates the clear added value of positioning support for DVA survivors within broader corporate commitments to gender equality overall.³⁶

Good examples of FTSE 100 companies' support for GBV-related initiatives in markets, communities and society

Anglo American, South Africa, is championing the implementation of law and policy advocacy reforms by partnering with government, civil society and academia to bring about systemic change to end GBV. This includes the “Living with Dignity” intervention that aims to eliminate harassment and GBV at work, and prevent violence against women and children in homes, schools and mining communities. Anglo American partners with organisations such as the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI), National Shelter Movement and Business Fights Poverty to support the fight against GBV and to provide support for victims in its mining communities.

Diageo has collaborated with Care International UK, a prominent global NGO in gender equality, since 2016 to address barriers to gender equality across the business and value chain. The partnership ensures that GBV is a crucial consideration in all community program designs, incorporating the “do no harm” principle when engaging with communities. Initiatives include hosting community dialogues to address harmful social and cultural norms that impede gender equality, including GBV.

HSBC UK has implemented a domestic abuse strategy for its customers, establishing “safe spaces” in all branch locations during opening hours for individuals experiencing DVA. These dedicated areas offer confidential support, regardless of whether the individual is a bank customer. HSBC UK also provides access to a

Box 8: Good examples of FTSE 100 companies' support for GBV-related initiatives

confidential hotline for contacting support services or talking to friends or family, along with utilizing the Bright Sky application (refer to Vodafone below). In addition, the bank has partnered with the UK charity Shelter to assist individuals without a fixed home address in opening a bank account, helping to mitigate financial abuse.

NatWest Group has partnered with SafeLives, a UK charity committed to ending domestic abuse, to enhance support for customers affected by DVA, including financial abuse. The bank has educated retail banking employees to identify signs of customer distress and provided a “Spotting the Signs Guide” on banking websites. In 2020, NatWest contributed £1 million to SafeLives for counseling and financial aid, establishing a small grants fund for domestic abuse victims. This support was extended for three more years in early 2024, accompanied by an additional donation of £1 million.

Vodafone Foundation has used technology for over 10 years to connect over 2.8 million people affected by DVA and hate crime to advice, support and education. This includes Bright Sky, a safe, easy-to-use app and website that provides support and information on how to respond to DVA. Created in partnership with the UK-based crisis support charity Hestia and Hope After Harm, Bright Sky is for anyone experiencing DVA or who is worried about someone else. This app has now been used as a referral tool by several other FTSE 100 companies and many more organizations beyond that. The app saw a 75% increase in downloads during the COVID-19 pandemic, underlining the “shadow pandemic” that took place throughout lockdowns.

3

Key conclusions and observations

The researcher's conclusions and observations include:

Conclusion 1: Making a corporate commitment and implementing specific policies is the first step in prioritizing DVA as a workplace issue.

With nearly two thirds of surveyed companies having such policies, there is an opportunity for further information sharing, especially in extending coverage across multiple countries. There is a significant opportunity to exchange further knowledge across FTSE 100 companies on how to do this effectively, especially in extending coverage to multiple countries.

Conclusion 2: The support package for DVA survivors at work should include both immediate protective measures and long-term response and prevention provisions to address risk and vulnerability factors.

While companies are making progress, there are gaps in the range and types of support available across response and prevention, including support to address the long-term impact of DVA on survivors. Learning from advanced companies with global policies and toolkits can aid in moving from short-term to long-term solutions.

Conclusion 3: Competing priorities and diverse corporate agendas reportedly hinder companies from providing targeted support for DVA survivors.

Recognizing that DVA is a workplace issue that can affect all employees, disproportionately women, and understanding that it intersects with all other aspects of employee health, wellbeing and inclusion issues, is key to prioritisation. When DVA is prioritised, survivors feel safe to ask for support. Guidance, tools and resources from EIDA, UN Women and other UN agencies can help with prioritizing DVA as a workplace issue and improving targeted support.

Conclusion 4: Addressing the challenge of raising awareness about DVA and changing negative beliefs, attitudes and perceptions about DVA amongst employees and/or supervisors can benefit from collaborative efforts.

Companies can benefit from sharing information and lessons, to save time and resources. The survey respondents identified some practical lessons and opportunities to enhance support for DVA survivors on a collaborative and individual basis that can be taken up by other employers.

Conclusion 5: FTSE 100 companies can collaborate on ways to raise awareness of and prevent DVA, and jointly implement innovative solutions on DVA as a workplace issue.

Exploring specific FTSE 100 companies' case studies and step-by-step processes will deepen understanding. The nuances and complexities of developing and implementing policies and measures across multiple countries, contexts and markets requires time. Learning from each other's experiences across countries, contexts and markets is essential.

Conclusion 6: Measuring the success and effectiveness of workplace support for DVA survivors in the workplace is vital to continue to build the business case for action and to learn lessons that inform FTSE 100 companies and employers at large.

The survey results serve as a solid baseline for measuring progress by FTSE 100 companies over time, with good indications from the respondents that steps will be taken over the next one to three years, to address the barriers and challenges, and make use of the opportunities cited. **It is vital to listen to survivors themselves, in partnership with survivors' support organizations and advocates.**

Conclusion 7: There is a clear link between prioritizing and making commitments on support for survivors of DVA in the workplace and expansion of support for customers and communities, as well as gender equality initiatives at large,

demonstrating the clear added value of positioning support for DVA survivors within broader corporate commitments on gender equality overall. There is an opportunity for FTSE 100 companies to consider their impact and influence on DVA and broader gender equality outcomes across the workplace, markets, communities, and society, linking initiatives whenever possible.

Conclusion 8: Finally, the participation of 22 FTSE 100 companies in the survey signals a positive step and important commitment to collaborative action on DVA.

With significant global influence, these companies can serve as role models, supporting survivors globally and influencing gender equality outcomes where state support is lacking. With operations in 180 countries and over 1.6 million employees, 43% of whom are women, this sample represents the reach this group has with the potential for transformative action on a global scale.

4

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the researcher proposes the following recommendations for FTSE 100 companies and other employers:

Support for wider gender equality initiatives

Recommendation 1: Implement good practices outlined in this research in the workplace: (i) recognize DVA as a workplace issue; (ii) commit to gender equality and ending GBV at leadership levels; (iii) allocate resources; (iv) introduce specific policies, guidance and support provisions; (v) raise awareness and foster a supportive environment; (vi) train managers and HR professionals; and (vii) provide diverse support options across markets and countries. Companies should refer to UN Women’s recommendations and resources for employers (Box 4 and Endnotes) and the resources of the UK Employers’ Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA) which is a network of over 1,500 employers committed to providing a workplace domestic abuse response and to sharing best practice.

Recommendation 2: Form a community of practice or coalition of the FTSE 100 network to drive collective progress, sharing information, agreeing on standards and taking collaborative action on DVA. As role models, these companies can set global standards for DVA support that will be replicated by other employers, potentially benefiting millions of people worldwide. This could include joining and promoting existing networks (e.g. EIDA) and coalitions with other employers, particularly multinational companies (see recommendation five). Use these networks to dig deeper into the examples here-in and invest in step-by-step guides for other companies to replicate, tailored to contexts and markets.

Recommendation 3: Invest in research, mass communications and awareness raising campaigns, and innovative approaches to learn what works in changing beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to DVA, across the workplace, markets, and communities. As a collective, the group has the power to investigate and tackle the barriers and challenges that reportedly prevent more action on supporting survivors of DVA, towards the end goal of achieving gender equality, for the benefit of society. It is recommended that FTSE 100 companies collaborate on a joint campaign to raise awareness of DVA as a workplace issue, including a research component to measure the effectiveness of such campaigns.

Recommendation 4: Provide financial and other support for DVA, GBV and broader gender equality initiatives, including by investing in NGOs and specialist support organizations. Companies should provide flexible, long-term funding to NGOs and specialist support

organizations both nationally and globally, (including networks such as EIDA), and create partnerships to address root causes and consequences of gender equality and DVA in their markets and communities.

Recommendation 5: Join a UN Women-led initiative to drive gender equality at scale and to access a network, resources, tools, and support to implement the above recommendations.

For example:

O Sign and adopt the WEPs if not already a signatory, accessing tools and resources, including a DVA “policy and procedure” template.³⁷ Join the WEPs network of nearly 10,000 committed CEOs and companies across 160 markets. As a WEPs signatory, companies have access to a plethora of tools and resources, including a DVA “Policy and Procedure Template”³⁸ and documented good practices.

O Join the Generation Equality Gender-Based Violence Action Coalition,³⁹ committing to end GBV and aligning with the target of “4000 private sector organizations adopting and implementing GBV policies by 2026”.⁴⁰ (See Box 9). The Generation Equality Action Coalitions also have a collective commitment on eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work.

Generation Equality, Gender-Based Violence Action Coalition

This initiative, launched in 2021 by UN Women, is designed to accelerate investment in and implementation of gender equality commitments, including those associated with GBV across governments, UN agencies, NGOs, and the private sector over five years. Through its comprehensive blueprint, the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence (GBV) is mobilizing governments, civil society, women’s rights and youth led organizations, international organizations, philanthropies and the private sector to take concerted action and deliver concrete change for women and girls worldwide, through four concrete actions: (1) Creating enabling policy, legal and resource environments; (2) Scaling up evidence driven prevention programming; (3) Scaling up comprehensive, accessible and quality services for survivors; and (4) Enabling and empowering autonomous girl-led & women’s rights organizations to exercise their expertise.

Box 9: About the Generation Equality, Gender-Based Violence Action Coalition

○ **Become a HeForShe champion**, making tangible commitments and leveraging impactful resources for gender equality. As a global movement, HeForShe partners (CEOs and business leaders) make tangible commitments towards accelerating gender equality. Each partner generates a Proven Solution based on their commitment (which could include a public commitment on supporting employees experiencing DVA). HeForShe provides impactful resources to supporters, a systematic approach and targeted platform where a global audience can engage and become change agents for the achievement of gender equality in our lifetime.⁴¹

○ **For United Kingdom-based companies, connect with UN Women National Committee UK for resources, networking and initiatives focused on the United Kingdom**⁴² an NGO that operates in support of UN Women, for further resources, networking opportunities and access to initiatives targeting the UK public, in efforts to raise awareness about gender equality issues, advocate for women's rights.

Research Limitations:

The study faced some constraints in reaching out to FTSE 100 companies for the survey. Not all companies were accessible, and some were unable to participate within the available time frame. Consequently, the response rate may not accurately represent the comprehensive interest and commitment of all 100 companies in this area. Additionally, certain respondent companies opted to remain anonymous, limiting the public sharing of potentially valuable practices and lessons learned. The survey's scope may also have been limited by the recipients of the requests; UN Women contacts primarily resided in the diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing sectors of corporations. This focus potentially resulted in a missed opportunity to gather information from other corporate sections, such as sustainable business and corporate social responsibility teams, within FTSE 100 companies. If the research continues in a second phase, these limitations can be bridged through more strategic outreach.

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