



## Women's Equality Party Conference

26 November 2022

---

Title: **Improve workplace provision and support for domestic abuse survivors**

Proposed by: **WE Wales**

Proposer: **Hanna Andersen**

---

Type of motion: **Policy motion**

---

### **Motion text:**

1 The Women's Equality Party is concerned by the limited provision and support for domestic abuse  
2 survivors who are in employment and fall outside of existing welfare support. To improve the support  
3 available, the Women's Equality Party is calling upon the UK Government, and the devolved  
4 governments, to:

5 **Introduce a statutory entitlement to ten days' paid leave for those experiencing domestic**  
6 **abuse** (*not devolved in Wales*)

- 7 • This should be paid by employers and claimed back in the same way as existing work-based  
8 benefits, such as Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).  
9 • The provision must be made available to all employees regardless of tenure so as not to trap  
10 people in unsafe, unsuitable working environments.  
11 • Evidence requirements should be limited to reduce the burden on survivors.

12 **Update the relevant legislation to include a 'workplace domestic abuse policy' requirement**

- 13 • All employers must have a domestic abuse policy, this should be easily accessible for  
14 employees and signposted during onboarding.  
15 • The policy should include training for line managers, both on how to spot signs of domestic  
16 abuse, and on how to support survivors.  
17 • The policy should include fast-track access to further workplace reasonable adjustments such  
18 as:  
19 ○ Employers to immediately remove survivors' details from any publicly available sources, and  
20 provide a new email address and telephone number, to mitigate the high risks associated  
21 with fleeing the home;  
22 ○ Wherever possible, employers should allow survivors to work from another location.
-

---

23 **Develop an ‘Employers’ Code’ which outlines additional ways employers could support**  
24 **survivors, including:**

- 25 • further paid leave;
- 26 • removing evidence requirements;
- 27 • salary advances;
- 28 • access to counselling;
- 29 • managerial discretion for longer-term support.
- 30 • named contact with specialist training to support employees.

---

31 **Motion rationale:**

32 Domestic abuse is a gendered issue, with two-thirds of the estimated 2.4m people experiencing  
33 domestic abuse in the UK every year being women<sup>1</sup>. It has significant costs for society, including the  
34 monetary costs and the cost to health and well-being of those who experience it. For many, the  
35 process of leaving an abusive relationship is not straightforward, and requires the weighing up of  
36 many factors, predominantly safety and economic means. Currently in the UK, most financial support  
37 is aimed at those who are out of work, providing limited provision for survivors who are employed.  
38 Improving workplace support for domestic abuse survivors will have many benefits including: reducing  
39 stigma, maintaining independence, and broadening options.

40 There are many barriers in the way of survivors leaving the home; this policy focuses on the  
41 financial barriers because those who feel they have some degree of control to terminate the  
42 relationship are more likely to do so<sup>2,3</sup>. Workplaces are an important site for those experiencing  
43 domestic abuse, often being the only place where they can be separate from the abuser, making it a  
44 place where support could be sought more easily<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, the workplace can become a  
45 site of target because the abuser may know where to find the survivor. With 1/5 survivors needing to  
46 take time off from work, and between 25-50% of female survivors reportedly losing a job as part of  
47 their domestic abuse experience<sup>5</sup>, it is critical that workplaces are set up to both understand and  
48 support<sup>6,7</sup>. Currently only 5% of companies have any specific policies in this area, despite domestic  
49 abuse costing UK businesses over £1.9 billion a year<sup>8</sup>.

50 This policy will deliver practical support to domestic abuse survivors in their workplace through a  
51 series of interventions. The introduction of statutory paid domestic abuse leave not only acknowledges  
52 the health reasons which may require time off, but also the time required for attending appointments  
53 and arranging childcare and safe accommodation. Without a paid leave provision, employees are  
54 forced to use holiday entitlement or sick leave, which is often subject to absence management  
55 processes. The requirement for a ‘workplace domestic abuse policy’ will ensure that employers have  
56 training and procedures in place, signalling that domestic abuse is taken seriously. Finally, the fast-  
57 track access to reasonable adjustments will protect survivors in the immediate time after fleeing the  
58 home, when they are most at risk<sup>3</sup>. In addition to this, the Women’s Equality Party also calls on the  
59 governments to develop a code for employers, providing examples of enhanced support.

---

60 These policy recommendations will make it easier for survivors to remain in employment, reduce  
61 further benefits claims through the welfare system, and allow survivors to remain financially  
62 independent. This policy sits comfortably within the existing Women's Equality Party policy area  
63 'Ending Violence against Women and Girls', under the sub-heading "Sanctuary for those fleeing  
64 abuse".

## References:

- 1 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-overarching-factsheet>
- 2 - <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518816325>
- 3 - <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/women-leave/>
- 4 - <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/supporting-employees-experiencing-domestic-abuse/>
- 5 - [https://www.vodafone.com/content/dam/vodcom/files/vodafone\\_domestic\\_violence\\_toolkit\\_2020.pdf](https://www.vodafone.com/content/dam/vodcom/files/vodafone_domestic_violence_toolkit_2020.pdf)
- 6 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy>
- 7 - <https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/news/articles/domestic-abuse-victims-should-be-given-extra-paid-leave/>
- 8 - <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/domestic-abuse-workplace-policies-and-managing-and-supporting-employees>

65