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# Union strength, and freedom from domestic abuse

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women Day serves as a call to unions to play their part.

There are many forms of violence against women, and domestic abuse is an issue that unions can often encounter. It's also an issue where unions can be well placed to support those experiencing abuse and pressure employers and governments to work together to end violence.

Domestic abuse is a trade union issue. A fifth of UK adults will experience domestic abuse during their lifetime (one in four women, one in six or seven men). The Trade Union Council's (TUC) [survey](#) of people experiencing domestic abuse found for more than 10% that violence continued in the workplace, for nearly half that their partner came to their workplace, and that 16% had the same place of work as their abuser.

As well as social reforms and measures by employers, Nikki stressed the need for colleagues and reps to be ready to help colleagues being abused.

Chair of the PCS Women's Forum, Jackie Green, says:

"The sheer number of cases, queries and questions coming into to us during lockdown highlighted to us the difference between how prevalent domestic abuse is and how it is so often endured in silence. It can be financial control, emotional control, bullying, sexual violence... You might think you know someone you work with but their life might be very different when they leave the office.

"In developing this guidance, we're ultimately trying to support people to escape domestic abuse. That might be through a rep simply being a listening and trusted ear in first place, or signposting to professional services. But it can also mean helping someone speak to their manager to arrange a transfer or campaigning for an employer to adopt stronger policies for awareness and support. I hope this guidance helps deliver a platform for those without a voice."

The reps' guidance, which will be ready early next year, has been produced by a working party of PCS National Women's Forum. It is in line with TUC policy as well as PCS' Education Department and is designed to be easily adoptable and adaptable.

Need to speak to your rep? Find them on [PCS Digital](#)